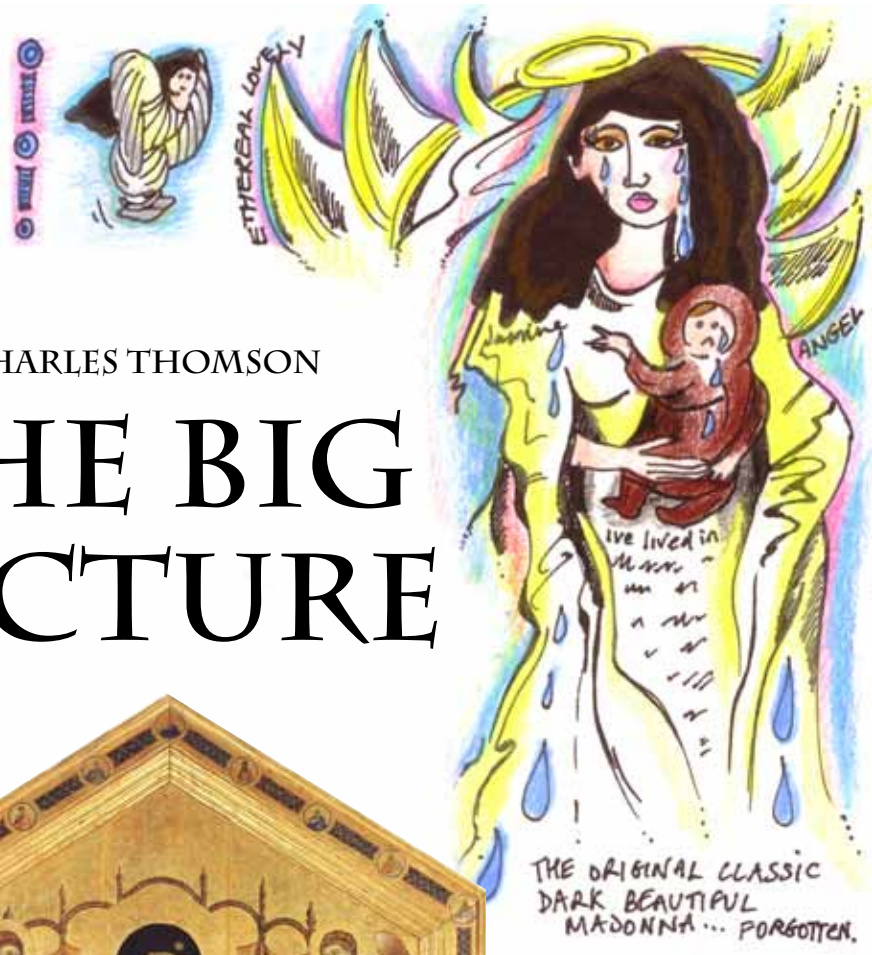
NEW ART examiner
Established 1973

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE VISUAL ARTS
Volume 31 No. 2 November/December 2016
£4 UK/ $6.00 US/ $7.75 Canada/ €6.50 Europe



IN THIS ISSUE

SPEAKEASY
by FEIER LAI

ARTICLES

The Big Picture
CHARLES THOMSON re-examines art's role in our culture

Two Pioneering Institutions of Modern Art at 100
TOM MULLANEY interviews the Arts Club of Chicago and the Renaissance Society

REVIEWS U.S.

Roger Brown and Andy Warhol at Kavi Gupta

Camille Iemmolo and Jon Langford at Thomas Masters

REVIEWS EUROPE

El Bosco at Museo del Prado, Madrid

"CAPITAL—DEBT, TERRITORY, UTOPIA" at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin

BOOK REVIEWS

"Rene Romero Schuler: Paintings and Sculpture"

"A Northern School Revisited"

"Salvador Dali & Andy Warhol: Encounters in New York and Beyond"

SCOUTING THE BLOGS

The Money Grab

CHARLES THOMSON

THE BIG PICTURE

Today it requires considerably more ability, not to mention courage, to build something up. …The real enemy is the terminology which we accept unthinkingly…

CONTENTS

5 LETTERS

6 SPEAKEASY

FEIER LAI discusses Bureaucracy in the Art World

7 THE BIG PICTURE

CHARLES THOMAS, co-founder of the Stuckist movement, discourses on art history and its application in today's world

14 A SMALL PICTURE OF THE BIG PICTURE

JASMINE SURREAL explains the symbolism of her title illustration

15 TWO PIONEERING INSTITUTIONS OF MODERN ART AT 100

TOM MULLANEY interviews Janine Mileaf of the Arts Club of Chicago and Solveig Ovstebo of the Renaissance Society as the two organizations celebrate their 100th birthday

23 Johannesburg—A City in the Making

DANIEL NANAVATI explores the use of art in the revitalization of the city

24 Team Art and Allen Vandever Host a Talk with Derek Guthrie

Chicago's art community turns out to hear the founding publisher of the NAE

26 Some Thoughts on Expo Chicago

THOMAS FELDHACKER reflects on the outcome of Expo Chicago

27 New Lines in Chelsea?

MICHEL SÉGARD notices a mini trend in Chelsea gallery exhibitions

(continued on page 2)

CONTENTS

(continued from page 1)

28 Chicago Reviews

28 "**Politics, Rhetoric, Pop"** Roger Brown and Andy Warhol at Kavi Gupta Gallery by EVAN CARTER

30 **A Room of Surreal Mindscapes** Camille Iemmolo and Jon Langford at Thomas Masters Gallery, by TOM MULLANEY

31 Europe Reviews

31 "**Heaven and Hell"** El Bosco (Heironymous Bosch) exhibition at Museo del Prado, Madrid, by SUSANA GÓMEZ LAIN

32 **"CAPITAL—DEBT, TERRITORY, UTOPIA"** exhibition at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, by RICHARD SHARLAND

34 Book Reviews

34 "**Rene Romero Schuler: Paintings and Sculpture"** (2016) by RICHARD SIEGESMUND

35 **"A Northern School Revisited"** (2015) by DEREK GUTHRIE

36 **Soul Bros in Art** review of "Salvador Dali & Andy Warhol: Encounters in New York and Beyond" (2015) by TOM MULLANEY

37 SCOUTING THE BLOGS

The Money Grab THOMAS FELDHACKER looks at the international art market

To have any worth, art, like agriculture, needs to be part of the worldwide movement to discern and rediscover what has been injudiciously trashed in the past and to integrate it with what is of value in the present–just as the Renaissance did with its re-evaluation of Greek culture.

Charles Thomson

New Art Examiner

Derek Guthrie, Publisher and Co-founder
Michel Ségard, Associate Publisher

Tom Mullaney, US Editor
useditor@newartexaminer.net

Annie Markovich, US Managing Editor
annie.markovich@newartexaminer.net

Daniel Nanavati, UK Editor
ukeditor@newartexaminer.net

Thomas Feldhacker, Social Medial Editor
thom.feldhacker@gmail.com

Anne Godden Ségard, Copy Editor

Contributing Editors
John Link, Michigan
David Houston, Georgia
Donald Kuspit, New York
Darren Jones, New York
George Touche, New Orleans
John Steppling, Norway
George Care, UK
Frank Corrigan, Oxfordshire

WEB SITE:
www.newartexaminer.net

Cartoons
John Dunbar Kilburn
Jonathon Xavier Coudrille
Steve Harmann

UK Distributor: Capital Books

Cover Image:
Jasmine Surreal and Michel Ségard

Would you like to write for the
New Art Examiner?
contributor@newartexaminer.net

The New Art Examiner is indexed in :
Art Bibliographies Modern, Art Full Text &
Art Index Retrospective and Zetoc

UK Office:
Rosehill, Altarnun, Cornwall. PL15 7RL. UK.

US Office:
P.O. Box 15462, Chicago, IL 60615. USA.

Inquiries:
advert@newartexaminer.net
contributor@newartexaminer.net
subscribe@newartexaminer.net

All Letters to the editor are printed
without editing.
letters@newartexaminer.net

Chris Smith, Chair of the UK Associates

Roland Gurney, Treasurer

NEW ART EXAMINER STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The New Art Examiner is a not-for-profit publication whose purpose is to examine the definition and transmission of culture in our society; the decision-making processes within museums and schools and the agencies of patronage which determine the manner in which culture shall be transmitted; the value systems which presently influence the making of art as well as its study in exhibitions and books; and, in particular, the interaction of these factors with the visual art milieu.

Subscriptions

The **New Art Examiner** is the product of the thinking and life-long contribution of Jane Addams Allen. We thank you in her name for reading her independent journal of art criticism.

If you have any interest in our venture, please consult Google, also Art Cornwall, for an interview with the publisher, Derek Guthrie, a painter who keeps his art practice private.

The **New Art Examiner** has a long history of producing quality and independent art criticism. Chicago and Cornwall, as any art scene, needs writers to keep a professional eye on art activity. Otherwise, independent trading will determine success in this troubled art world.

You can participate directly by sending letters to the editor which are published unedited.

All editions include the digital issue sent via e-mail.

Subscription rates include six issues, print and digital

UK	£39.50	postage incl.
Europe	€45	postage incl.
USA	$42	postage incl.
Rest of World	$78	postage incl.

Queries: subscribe@newartexaminer.net

Please send cheques made payable to New Art Examiner with your name and address to:

UK Office: The Editor, Rosehill, Altarnun, Cornwall. PL15 7RL. UK

US Office: P.O. Box 15462 Chicago, IL 60615. USA.

Boxed Ads: Made for artists. Classifieds. All for £10 (US $13) each box.

Dear Artist make your girlfriend or boyfriend happy, and the **New Art Examiner**. Send a few love words which will cost no more than 3p a word or tell the local art critic/curator what you think of them or write a letter for free to the Editor.

Available from the following outlets:

UNITED KINGDOM

Arnolfini Books; Capital Books, London; Camden Arts Centre Bookshop; Charlotte Street News; Daily News; HOME; ICA Bookshop, London; Walter Koening Books, Serpentine; White Cube Bookshop; Tate Modern.

Cornwall: Belgrave Gallery, St Ives; Cafe Arts, Truro; Camelford Art Gallery, Camelford; Exchange Gallery, Penzance; Penwith Gallery, St.Ives; Anima-Mundi, St.Ives; Falmouth Art Gallery, Falmouth; Redwing Gallery, Penzance; Tate, St Ives; Terre Verte Gallery, Altarnun; Walter Koenig Books, Truro; Waterstones, Truro.

EUROPE & ASIA

Athenaeum Boekhandel, Amsterdam; Do You Readme?! GbR, Berlin; Multi-Arts Corporation, Taipei; Pandora Ltd, Istanbul.

UNITED STATES

Chicago: Hilton | Asmus Contemporary, Carl Hammer Gallery, Corbett vs Dempsey Gallery, Firecat Projects, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Linda Warren Projects, Printworks, 57th Street Books.

Advertising Rates 2016

FULL PAGE Inside front cover	£375 – US $500
Inside back cover	£295 – US $400
FULL PAGE	£225 – US $300
HALF PAGE – portrait/landscape	£120 – US $150
QUARTER PAGE – landscape (editorial page)	£45 – US $100
QUARTER PAGE – portrait/landscape	£35 – US $75
EIGHTH PAGE – landscape (editorial page)	£25 – US $40
(other pages)	£20 – US $30
EIGHTH PAGE BOX	£25 – US $33
TWELFTH PAGE 'Tweet' (suggested for artists and others)	£12 – US $25

CLASSIFIEDS & PERSONALS £10 (US $13)a box

Black and white or colour prices the same. Please specify your preference.

All charges are free of VAT (an EU only tax)

All charges are fixed to January 2017.

For US rates please inquire.

NAE Facebook page £100 – US $125 month

advert@newartexamniner.net

Dear Editor,

The September/October issue of the NAE was fascinating, thanks to the intrigue intrinsic to our struggle to survive, and the way 30 year old essays remain relevant when they nail something important, even when the importance is negative. But your review of SLOW PAINTING was truly the jewel of the issue, the statement that put a gleam of tiny light on a future that must be positive, if art is to have any future at all.

The French Impressionists—or "Independents," as Degas preferred—remain the root to which art today must attach itself, if it is to be any good. That is as shocking today as it was when they first declared a path forward by mining the past. They were against contemporary art, not tradition, because contemporary art was in the way. But many if not most of our own contemporaries will say it is impossible that a 150 year old movement remains relevant to our hyper-accelerated cultural conquests.

But what have we conquered? Everything but that which satisfies the eye.

That's because we suffer under the conceits of a mucked up but controlling majority that does not serve art directly but rather leverages it to serve "issues" that should be its means, not its end. And so John Santoro's return to the basics, as they were restored by the Impressionists, is completely relevant to our time. By avoiding "issues" he raises the only really important "issue" for art, which is how to be good. Nothing else counts unless that is achieved. And you, dear Derek, brought him to our attention. That is art writing at its most effective. Thank you very much.

John Link

Dear Editor,

I write this letter because I am very, very excited! I had the pleasure to meet Derek Guthrie for the first time last week at a special discussion group in Chicago regarding the history of the New Art Examiner as well as the general "art politics" history of the city. As well as hear his desire and plans to re-boot and expand the Chicago organization and consider the creation of a new, more mass market, sister publication.

I was completely blown away. By the nature of the discussion, which ranged across a large number of art and "art politics" issues from medieval times to the present day and involved everything from "How artists succeed" and "How the game is played" to the impact of the current political and commercial paradigms in the United States are having on both the arts community and artists in general. Even though I have lived in the city for 30 years, and have been extremely active in the arts for over 10 years, as both a patron and entreprenuer, and consider myself "well educated on the topic" …it was still an incredible influx of new knowledge and really made my neurons pop and got my mind racing.

But what really struck me as the most interesting was the story behind the New Art Examiner itself. Its genesis, ups and downs and twists and turns, over its grand 43 year history. And its incredible untapped potential. And the obvious need for this fantastic jewel to be dusted off, polished up and put on display again. Not only from a "historical justice" standpoint, but also because it does and can serve a great purpose that is much needed and always missing from the Chicago arts community. And independent, critical voice that will shake things up, get people to think and add an incredible overall value.

So I am hooked. We have already reached out to dozens of very interested Chicago area artists, publication pros and well wishers. As well as other interested parties nationwide. The response has been nothing short of amazing. Some people just love the concept and want to be involved, in some way. Others fondly remember the NAE and felt it was formative for them over the years. And would like to see it thrive again

I believe that the NAE will rise again. And I believe that again is "now". It has the momentum , interest and support. And "now" is the right time. For a variety of reasons. So. Let's get to work. Let's rebuild this fine institution and get this party started…

Gratefully yours,
Michael Ramstedt

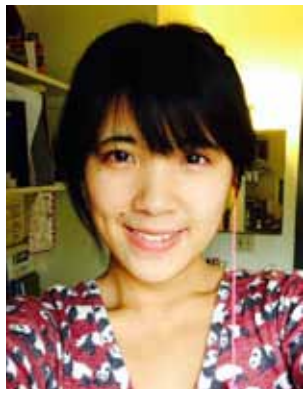
Bureaucracy in the Art World

Each issue the New Art Examiner invites a well-known, or not-so-well-known, art world personality to write a speakeasy essay on a topic of interest—whatever it may be.

by Feier Lai

There is a tiny room in Chicago that everyone wants to enter. Thousands of artists are trying to break into a space that only has room for ten. Competition exists wherever there is an excess demand for resources and opportunities. The problem in the art world is that certain types of competition are artificially eliminated. Artists compete to be seen but institutions do not, and these institutions try their best to maintain their monopoly. Four years ago, the NEXT Chicago art fair was disintegrated and succeeded by Art Expo. NEXT Chicago featured many innovative up-and-coming artists, but the smaller galleries representing them siphoned revenue from established galleries who sought a more exclusive space. Some of the established galleries split the community in order to gain more sway in the market and migrated to Art Expo. They brought with them the original founders of NEXT Chicago. Smaller establishments trying to exist outside of the mainstream art world today struggle to gain traction because those with the influence to help them do so are absorbed into the system.

It's difficult to disturb an establishment that many are invested in. At the same time, most people feel insecure within it: this includes artists, art personnel, art faculty, and gallery owners alike. People fear being kicked out should they do anything to upset the status quo. This has costs for the art community. To draw an analogy from another time and place: In imperial China, an official's career depended heavily upon his loyalty to the central government, so he prioritized maintaining governmental connections over solving local problems. This was the result of sending bureaucrats to foreign provinces where they couldn't rally locals to oppose the central government. Because loyalty to the system was the only way to maintain their position, officials who tried to implement radical change in the lands they governed didn't last very long. The alienation of bureaucrats from their areas of governance was intended to create central political stability, but resulted in a government that often became blind to local problems and needed to be periodically overthrown. Corruption kept returning because the system it existed within was broken.



Having grown up within both a Chinese and American culture, I learned that each community has its own set of values, and these values influence its decisions. I developed the ability to think from multiple viewpoints and to connect ideas rather than arguing with politics. But a crucial component to connecting ideas is being able to unveil the decision-making behind them. The cultural and political milieu we live in inform the works we produce. In the context of the art world, the story of how a piece of work ends up on the wall says as much about the art as the subject of the work itself.

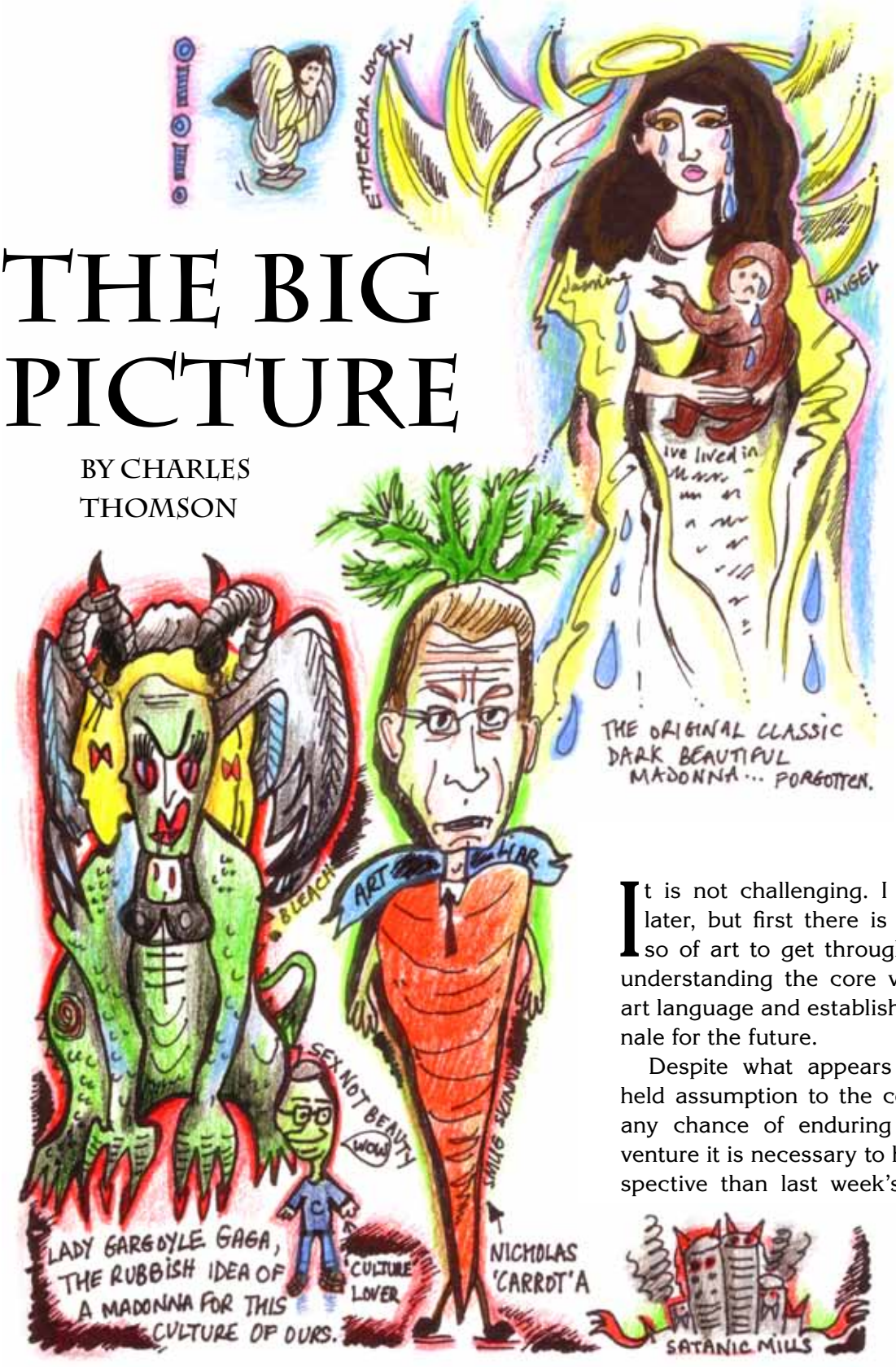
Professor David J. O'Brien, instructor of Romantic Art at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, once told our class that until the Romantic period, people thought of art as being a mirror—imitating life. Then towards the end of the 18th century, they began to view art as being more akin to a lantern. I think it is both; Art reflects our world, while understanding how it is made illuminates our understanding of the world we live in. For real conversations to exist about the art world, transparency needs to exist. I hope we can write to generate honest dialogue. By the time this is published, we will have reached out to local galleries, artists, and museums to talk about the current Chicago art world, on behalf of the New Art Examiner.

Jane Addams, founder of the Hull House and great-great aunt of Jane Addams Allen (co-founder of the NAE) brought people from different communities together, uniting them through dialogue as a path to mutual understanding and ultimately, progress. This is my hope for what the New Art Examiner will begin to accomplish. ■

THE BIG PICTURE

BY CHARLES THOMSON

Today it requires considerably more ability, not to mention courage, to build something up. …The real enemy is the terminology which we accept unthinkingly…



It is not challenging. I will explain this later, but first there is a millennium or so of art to get through with a view to understanding the core values of current art language and establishing a valid rationale for the future.

Despite what appears to be a widely held assumption to the contrary, to stand any chance of enduring success in this venture it is necessary to have a wider perspective than last week's sensationalised art star news stories, or even the last century's for that matter. I will, for ease of comparison, be limiting my survey to the legacy of two dimensional painted surfaces, but it is not difficult to transpose observations and conclusions into other forms and media.

The Middle Ages are an appropriate dialectical place to begin, being the thesis with the Renaissance as the antithesis and the last century or so of Modernism as the striving for synthesis, which has, to date, proved as elusive as it is alluring.

The Medieval period was nothing if not theological with a biblical fixation and fervour shaping all areas of life, including art, albeit that this activity was then the province of journeymen rather than celebrities. The material world was one of sin and the only world of any worth was God's heavenly one for the impossibly pure in heart, polarised with Satan's somewhat less heavenly alternative for the rather less deserving.

As the heavenly world was not the material one around us, observation of the latter was of little use in depicting it. A degree of abstraction was appropriate for an abstract dimension —not the complete geometrical abstraction of Islamic art with a similar goal, but at least abstraction to a degree that flattened forms, defined shapes with clean contours, depicted folds of cloth as stylised patterns, and minimised depth (please remember these characteristics, as they will reappear many centuries and a few paragraphs later),

Madonna on Throne by unknown Italian-Byzantine artist, 13th century

In 1979, I had the distinction of being the only student in 10 years to fail the painting degree at Maidstone College of Art, which was being remorselessly hijacked by aesthetic technocrats, a seemingly endless supply of whom were emerging from a production line at the Royal College of Art. One of the dying breed of artistic savants still surviving this invasion was a tutor in his sixties called Paul Harris. He had previously been a monk and also a soldier evacuated in 1940 from Dunkirk. He decided not to fire at a German plane on the basis that he would probably miss anyway, but would still have to clean his rifle afterwards.

One thing he bothered about, apart from his painting and friendly female students, was knowledge in general and history in particular. Various of his epigrams have stayed with me over the years, including the way he contrasted the Medieval and Renaissance periods by the example of how each would go about establishing the number of teeth in a horse's mouth, the former by looking in scripture to find the answer and the latter by looking in a horse's mouth.

The origin of this comparison is, I have subsequently found out, subject to some mystery and may be satirical, but is still nevertheless illuminating. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) only apocryphally mentioned angels dancing on a pin, but he did actually discuss whether several angels could be in the same place at the same time, an enquiry scorned by the Renaissance but deserving of a rectified reverence in our own times—something else I will return to later.

Medieval art was, to put it crudely, all the same: over 1000 years of adoration and piety with saints, saints and more saints, not to mention identikit Madonnas with child, gruesome crucifixions and angelic confabulations, Christ's poverty being communicated to the masses by profusions of gold leaf enhanced with the rich blue pigment of powdered semi-precious lapis lazuli stone. Sorry, that wasn't poverty, of course —it was the splendour of heaven. Easy to confuse these things.

In contrast to this, the Renaissance was a marvellous liberation from the Byzantine-biblical-aesthetic-straightjacket of flatness and pattern. Its inauguration is apparent in what now seems a small step towards naturalism and humanisation in art, but at the time was as stunning in its potential as the advent of internet has been to us today. All the shops were shut and a fourteen-foot wide panel painting, The Rucellai Madonna, commissioned in 1285 from the artist Duccio di Buoninsegna (opposite), was carried in a solemn celebratory procession from his studio to the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella.

From this point on, the Renaissance got in its stride like a 100 metre sprinter when the gun is fired. You can literally walk through the subsequent rapid evolution of art by visiting London's National Gallery and doing a chronological tour starting at the earliest work of around 1250. The experience is like watching a pop-up book being unfolded, as the relentless development of three-dimensional rendering takes place over the following two-and-a-half centuries, until the mastery of it is demonstrated around 1500 with

the High Renaissance triumvirate of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael.

The next 400 years then became as static in their imposition of key artistic techniques as the previous 1000 years had been, and maintained an orthodoxy every bit as rigid and (ultimately) as stultifying as the orthodoxy it replaced. Every artist, again, did the same thing—not this time the flatness of the ethereal world, but the complete opposite, circumscribed by the distant horizon of the material world.

Rucellai Madonna by Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1285

Gold leaf fell distinctly out of favour, as did patterned emphasis on the picture surface, hard edges, flat drapery, brilliant colouration and the attendant iconography of halos, until the heavenly landscape was replaced by the landscape of Flatford Mill and the limp body of the dead Christ by the limp body of a dead pheasant in a still life, while the power and patronage previously bestowed by the Holy Church descended through royalty and nobility to burghers and finally owners of satanic mills in Lancashire.

There were several major and unquestionable requirements of the new artistic faith, the fundamental one being the necessity of rendering an illusion of the external world as perceived by the eye. The scenic backdrop was created by a universally endorsed mono-point linear perspective, commonly demonstrated in more recent text books by a receding railway track which gets narrower the further away it is meant to be, fooling the brain into a sense of horizontal distance behind the physical surface of the picture, rather than pointing out what is really there, namely a vertical triangle.

This is allied with aerial perspective, which comes about through the cumulative effect of atmospheric moisture, effectively acting in the same way as a series of veils to progressively diminish the intensity of colour, tonal extremities and detailed definition of objects the further away they are, so that in the distance everything becomes a hazy mid-grey (or pale blue, according to taste). Objects in close-up do not necessarily fare much better, because in order to render naturalism the relatively dulling effect of daylight must be rendered by de-saturating colour (in common parlance, making it less brilliant).

To depict realistic-looking foliage, the first thing to do with a standard green colour squeezed out of the tube is to mix into it a substantial dollop of the complementary (i.e. opposite) colour —red—so that the result on the palette can seem dull, while still appearing artificially gaudy as a tree in the landscape on a canvas.

This is allied with modelling of form and texture, where the perspectival and colour systems already described are further refined to accommodate the change of light observed with the curves, recesses, highlights and shadows of solid objects. The order of the day—still being drilled into emergent artistic minds through at least most of the twentieth century—was, to quote today's estate agents, location, location, location, which translates into traditional art tutor speak as observation, observation and observation.

The problem with this obsessive observation was its exclusive focus on what the eye can see, rather than what the mind might think or the heart might feel. It is of course far easier to do the former than the latter activities, particularly if you don't think that much or feel too deeply, or at least if you don't care to reveal too much of such matters. Artists, who wished to do so, were limited in the extent to which they could by the technical structures which they had to employ.

There was no significant deviation possible from these aesthetic strictures, and it is surely

Small Cowper Madonna by Raphael Sanzio, 1505

symbolic that the Renaissance system of linear perspective is the viewpoint of someone whose head is fixed in a clamp and who stares rigidly at a fixed spot in the distance. Within its fixed parameters, there is variation and development, often indeed genius, but the over-riding consideration for my present purposes is the static nature of these parameters, seen for a long time as triumphantly manifest in the sweet, if not saintly, vision of Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino known as Raphael (died 1520).

Hence the outrage when, 328 years after his death, a group of daring and fervent painterly upstarts transgressed with the coded initials "PRB" on their canvases, standing, it was quickly revealed, for "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." Their bark was worse than their bite and though they valued the transcendent clarity of art before Raphael's influence was corrupted (as they saw it) by Mannerism, their endeavours remained funnelled down the rigid lines of the Renaissance.

The crack in the dam came with Post-Impressionism and quickly turned into a torrent. The Impressionists themselves certainly provided a strong hint, but were too well schooled in Renaissance skill to make the break with it. It was left to the ham-fisted triumvirate of Vincent and the two Pauls (more commonly known as Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne) to manifest what has become a hallmark of subsequent art, namely to invent their own personal rules—although it should be stated emphatically that these are not whimsy or arbitrary, but necessary structures to embody the response to life it was their drive to communicate.

Before pursuing this further, it is a good time to refresh the themes so far. In a nutshell, the Medieval was spiritual and the Renaissance was material, culminating in scientific materialism—if you can't measure it, it isn't there or at least it isn't important—compared with the Medieval legacy—if you can measure it, is isn't there or at least it isn't important.

The logical conclusion of the Renaissance was the Victorian era, in particular the solid faith of the industrial revolution (and for many the British Empire) reaching its culmination and nemesis in the First World War. It was not the war itself that brought about the change, but it was certainly the most apparent and vehement manifestation at the time.

Rather more instrumental and far-reaching in terms of change was a different understanding of reality, brought about by Einstein's relativity in perception of the outer world and Freud's psychology in perception of the inner world. These developments posited a vision of the unseen, which, though as an unintended by-product, effectively made a lot more sense of the hitherto-derided Medieval world view, which also posited a

La Berceuse by Vincent Van Gogh, 1889

vision of the unseen, albeit using different language to do so.

Aquinas's previously mentioned dilemma of whether more than one angel could exist in the same place was updated by quantum physics' notion that something could be two things at the same time, existing simultaneously as a particle and a wave. Freud's psychology was bad enough in revealing unacceptable subterranean compulsions behind daily facades, but its development through Jung succeeded in cunningly relabelling many medieval notions with apparently-scientific respectability. The four medieval humours, or temperamental types, of earth, air, fire and water reappeared in smart new suits as the cognitive functions of sensation, thinking, intuition and feeling.

In 2012, I took part in a debate at the Oxford Union about conceptual art. The critic and broadcaster Matthew Collings was on the other team and subsequently said in his blog on the Saatchi Gallery website not only that I was like Hitler (I like to think this means I upstaged Collings) but that I also used words I didn't understand. I certainly didn't understand why he thought I didn't understand them, as they are common parlance in my circles, and I began to wonder whether he didn't understand them himself.

I suspect one of the problems may have been "paradigm", a particularly useful word for my present purposes, but first I had best come clean about exactly how I don't understand what a paradigm is. It is, in my misunderstanding, a mutually agreed, or at least understood and acted on, model or structure of inter-relating concepts, values, thoughts, procedures and protocols (and no, I didn't look all that up in Wikipedia) or, more colloquially: "this is what's right and this is the way we do things round here".

A paradigm shift, then, is when such a matrix or viewpoint is replaced by another. To be a paradigm, you have to have some degree of substance. To switch preference from tuna to cheddar sandwiches would not be viewed by most informed people as a paradigm shift. To move from the Medieval period to the Renaissance would be.

Likewise, there is a paradigm shift with the transition from the Renaissance to Modernism, whose frenetic beginnings we can place, for the sake of a memorable round number, around 1900. Modernism partakes of both a continuation of the Renaissance exploration of the material world and a revival of the Medieval access to the inner world. With the renewed interest in the spiritual, aka the psychological, there was a need, as expressed by Van Gogh "for us to lift up our eyes at times, as if to see the invisible."

This reiteration of medieval focus was paralleled by an equivalent revival of medieval aesthetic, although not specifically recognised as such, because it was primarily conveyed through the vogue for Japonisme and imported woodblock prints by the likes of Hokusai and Hiroshige.

Medicine (detail) by Gustav Klimt, 1900

Depth was no longer a necessity; patterning on the picture surface was emphasised and shapes could be defined with hard contours; the modelling revealed by light was replaced by local or invented colour; folds of cloth could be stylised patterns (marvellously demonstrated by Klimt); anatomical proportion became disposable and a matter of choice—eyes, ears and noses could be wherever Picasso wanted them to be, not where they "ought" to be. As promised a few paragraphs earlier, many of the characteristics of medieval art were reborn. Modern art is to that extent a renaissance of the Medieval.

Modernism has to reject the rigidities—even if it can be awed by the achievements—of Renaissancism. The beginnings of Modernism

Sylvette by Pablo Picasso, 1970

throughout the twentieth century were a knee-jerk rejection of the swan song of the Renaissance in the nineteenth century. Rather unsubtly, Victorian values were simply swapped with their mirror image opposites. Sentiment gave way to cynicism; belief to nihilism; tradition to novelty; craft to carelessness; skill to improvisation; narrative to meaninglessness; communication to obscurantism; history to immediacy; continuation to severance; veneration to condemnation.

This characterised the infantile beginning of a new era, but it is unfortunately a mentality which the current worldwide art establishment has not yet managed to progress beyond. A quick look at the language used shows this immediately, and a leading figure such as Sir Nicholas Serota, director of Tate (where they embarrassingly refuse to use the definite article in the gallery's name) is a fine example of the retrograde with his artistic fundamentalism of "new media" and work which always has to be "challenging".

I began this text by promising to say what is not challenging. The answer is that "challenging" is not challenging. It was challenging in 1917 or even in 1967 and just about in 1977. This was during the time when baby Modernism still needed to make exciting (another word past its sell-by date) new (ditto) discoveries and frequently throw toys out of the pram. The twentieth century was a time of "progress" (or so it was thought) where "new" was automatically equated to "desirable" and "beneficial", although in retrospect much of the benefit was discovering what was not desirable.

In farming it was automatic to hallow science for insecticides which would enable carrots to annihilate weeds and insects. The "progress" of more powerful insecticides enabled even more powerful annihilation. Unfortunately, the fairy-land of their efficaciousness ended up looking more like a horror film, as many pesticides are neurotoxicants (i.e. they annihilate human brain cells), which can seep into the water table and end up coming out of the kitchen tap, a situation about which, according to the United States Geological Survey, "we don't have sufficient scientific data to draw reliable conclusions".

Enlightened public opinion considers it has quite sufficient data, scientific or otherwise, to draw conclusions about neurotoxicants and to prefer organic vegetables. These are the things of course which, in the distant past, always used to be known simply as vegetables. To truly play a useful contemporary role, art too has to contribute to the global phenomenon of holism and conservation, the former being an integrated view of all aspects of a situation (in contrast to the twentieth century's specialisation), while the latter

Sir Nicholas Serota Makes an Acquisitions Decision by Charles Thomson, 2000

regards the past and nurtures the present in order to preserve the future.

Language embodies and reinforces values, which can be a help or an impediment to understanding. The wrong language leads to the wrong understanding and consequently to the wrong actions. The word "challenging" is a good example of a word which has been imbued so extensively with importance and force that it automatically engenders a favourable response, which it no longer merits. "Challenging" evokes sentiments of all that is best in a democracy with freedom of speech; it suggests the resistance against tyranny; it is confident that it is the finder and upholder of truth. It was once, but now we don't need challenge. What we need is affirmation.

Today it is easy to knock something down. We have had a century of practice in knocking down the conventions of the past. That job has been done repeatedly to the extent that it has now in turn become a mindless convention. Today it requires considerably more ability, not to mention courage, to build something up. The task that now presents itself is one of construction by discerning and affirming values that will lead to insight and advantageous action—starting with the understanding and belief that this is not just desirable but possible and practical.

To have any worth, art, like agriculture, needs to be part of the worldwide movement to discern and rediscover what has been injudiciously trashed in the past and to integrate it with what is of value in the present—just as the Renaissance did with its re-evaluation of Greek culture. In order to do this, there needs to be a re-assessment of language and that can only come about by an understanding of the history which informs it.

As a parting thought, it is worth highlighting that in language it is not the blatantly absurd theoretical pseudo-scientific gobbledygook terminology which is pernicious: it is easy to ridicule such pretentions as "recontextualise" and "appropriate" (I appropriated some recontextualised banknotes, m'lord).

The real enemy is the terminology which we accept unthinkingly and this applies of course to the wider social context, not just the artistic. I have already given examples, but will return to one of my favourites, namely the epithet "new", particularly in its vamped up version "new improved", as if these two conditions are intrinsic to each other and something to boast about. Whenever I see the words, I always wonder why they hadn't made something good enough to last in the first place, and, as they hadn't, exactly why we should believe them now. ■

Charles Thomson is an artist, writer, and co-founder of "The Stuckists." The Stuckists movement is now international with active chapters in Europe and beyond.

Madonna by Paul Harvey, 2004

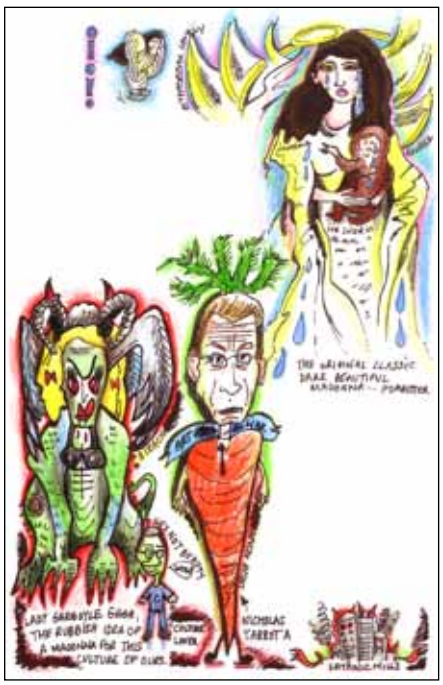
A Small Picture of the Big Picture

Description of the title illustration

By Jasmine Surreal

The illustration comprises of elements picked out from the article, and from there using it as a springboard, namely a mention of the words/name 'carrot', Madonnas, Satanic Mills and Nicholas Serota. I selected resonant words that could be richly illustrated. As a lover of puns, I hatched the moniker 'Nicholas Carrot-a', as he's quite slim, hence could be depicted as a carrot, and carrots were mentioned in the article. Nicholas is in his own way partially responsible for the cultural downshifting from awe inspiring Rene Magritte's and Dorothea Tanning paintings of surreal mastery to the bland splotchy daubs of canvas and unmade beds deemed as art today. This art fits in well with the general downwards spiral of culture and society at large today. I hope that Bugs Bunny does not mistake him for a carrot and decide to consume him.

The Satanic Mills were depicted tiny, hinting that their 'satanic' power is reduced, particularly by the beautiful, dark, fair skinned Madonna above, a traditional idea of beauty as depicted in Medieval to PreRaphelite and Victorian times until quite recently, when the concept of the Madonna culturally shifted, and to my mind, deteriorated, into meaning a painted and sexually provocative woman, not beautiful, dark haired and fair skinned, (or a natural blonde or redhead) and ethereal looking, the once high standard of beauty, but bleached hair and heavily sexualized, as opposed to delicately beautiful and graceful.



Standards have fallen since the 1960s, the society where drugs proliferated, people forgot deodorant, and trousers were wider than the Atlantic Ocean, and, in my opinion, not very decent music, with the exception of Raymond Scott and Joe Meek, and morals, manners and society declined, as did most things in society, culture, ideas of beauty, TV, films, etc. I depicted Lady Gaga, who symbolises the modern 'icon', as Lady Gargoyle, as that is how I feel a lot of modern culture and ideas are, and the kind of man who finds her beautiful. I realise of course an icon and beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but to my beholding, the Gay appropriated icon like her, Madonna, Beyonce, Kate Moss, Kylie, etc, fall short of icon qualities, natural beauty, gentility, etherealism and religious piety, philanthropy and a certain kind of intelligence.

Thankfully there still is an appreciation of more traditional and less grotesquely sexualised beauty around, and beautiful modern icons/Madonnas, such as Kate Bush, Rachel Weisz, Nigella Lawson, Daryl Hannah, Alison Goldfrapp, Lady Diana Spencer, and of course Sophia Loren, Joan Collins, Grace Kelly and Zsa Zsa Gabor. However, technically, even these lovely ladies are not true icons in the original sense of the word since icons were depictions of heavenly beings and religious experience. The meaning has changed over time.

Sexy does not to me mean iconic, or beautiful. And really, is it sexy even? Is not hinting at allure more sexy rather than a brazen display of crotch? It's like comparing a beautiful 1930s Bugatti racer with a current day mass produced nondescript Ford Ka. Like comparing 'To Catch a Thief' with Grace Kelly with a Kristen Stewart film.

We may have advancements in medicine and technology, but with that has come a dismantling and attempted destruction of the niceties and graces of life, which is a crying shame, hence why my beautiful Madonna is crying and slightly fading into the background, hoping to be taken back to a more elegant time... ■

Jasmine Surreal is the artist who created the title illustration for The Big Picture. She is part of the Stuckist group in Cornwall.

Two Pioneering Institutions of Modern Art at 100

By Tom Mullaney

The Arts Club of Chicago and the Renaissance Society celebrated their Centennial Anniversary this year and last, respectively. Each was formed in the wake of the infamous Armory Show of 1913 to show support for Art to counter the withering criticism of that show and many of its displayed works.

That did not mean these institutions, both currently champions of cutting-edge contemporary art, were ready to accept the art of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso or Marcel Duchamp with open arms. Not until fifteen years later did both begin to embrace modernist artists. The Arts Club has had five homes over the years while the Renaissance Society has had three.

To learn more of each's past history and current state of affairs, US Editor **Tom Mullaney** sat down with **Janine Mileaf**, executive director at the Arts Club and **Solveig Ovstebo** at the Renaissance Society to hear their thoughts and plans.

Arts Club

TM: The Arts Club was founded after the Armory show to be more accommodating to modern art of the time. But you'd probably have to say that the Arts Club was still more traditional with a more historical approach to art. How would you respond?

JM: That's a great question. So, in fact, having just written this book and worked with my co-author, we have a new take on that very question to some extent. We were founded in 1916 and it is true that some of the founders were very interested in response to the Armory Show. But we were partnered for two years with the Artists Guild, a very traditional arts and crafts institution, which was in the Fine Arts building.

Then, in 1918, the Artists Guild president stepped down and Rue Winterbotham Carpenter took over, moved the location and lent the club some money. She broke with the Artists Guild and that's when we sort of became much more avant-garde.

Renaissance Society

TM: You too were begun after the Armory Show on the University of Chicago campus. Yet, while the university wanted to be more receptive to modern art, the early days of the Renaissance Society were not progressive, right?

SO: It was both. The Renaissance Society was founded by 11 faculty members. At the beginning, it was part of the university. It had a mission statement…

TM: "a society to stimulate the love of the beautiful and to enrich the life of the community" which is very 19th Century.

SO: Absolutely. But what it also did from the start was to create a platform for new thought. It was a lot of lectures, a lot of seminars, a lot of discussion. So, at the beginning, it had this institutional model. Some of the model that we still have with symposiums and events. But then, quite quickly, it became a pretty avant-garde institution.

Arts Club

TM: It's true that Ms. Carpenter and her assistant, Alice Rouillier, had the right art connections but they still faced criticism for showing "usurpers." You have a sort of dual purpose: you're a private club as well as promoting more non-traditional art. Would you say that, in the eyes of the public, the Arts Club may still be seen as a genteel club?

JM: Yes and no and we're working on that. I think you are right to pick up on the diversity of interests within the club from day one. And it's true, when you look back on the exhibitions—there were hundreds in the first few years. By 1927, there were like 400 exhibitions. They would do very short and very diverse shows.

Not like me. I put a show up every four months. I spend a lot of money and people come and see it. Those shows had everything from Egyptian artifacts, Chinese and even Islamic art, and also a steady flow of monographic European artist exhibitions.

The club is two different institutions at once in some ways. It's a public, not-for-profit and, from very early on, it has had very landmark showings of international artists.

TM: Would you say the main focus of the Arts Club is the visual programs and maybe music programs. The other areas of the arts—theater, dance have waxed and waned over the years. Would you say that's accurate?

JM: I would say, for the public for sure, that the visual arts is the main, steady flow but that the music program has been active. I would add architecture to those two of our four interests. In our current programming, we hit all of those fields. Dance and literature have other venues in the city where they have stronger followings. So, I think you are fully right.

TM: Give me a brief synopsis of your training prior to coming to the Arts Club.

JM: Sure. I have a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania and I was a tenured professor at Swarthmore College for a little more than a decade. I moved to Chicago only because

Renaissance Society

I think the Renaissance Society is a platform where contemporary art is a voice in our society. It's a form of communication and we want it to be that place where that communication can be heard.

TM: So, the 1915 mission statement I just read versus the 2015 mission as a "laboratory of art." They kind of encapsulate two visions. Can you show how 1915 is still reflected in 2015?

SO: Obviously, the exhibition program presents contemporary art expressions over time. Some of them are "beautiful," some of them are formal, but, at the same time, it's not to say the beautiful cannot be political because it certainly can but it's not the goal itself.

I think the Renaissance Society is a platform where contemporary art is a voice in our society. It's a form of communication and we want it to be that place where that communication can be heard. The institution is not a passive institution with four walls but an active place where art is presented and the content of a particular exhibition is discussed.

TM: Just to stay in the 2016 moment. You say that art can be political. I'm thinking of a period of Imagism and Postmodernism where you really did have people, like Jenny Holzer, Hans Haacke, Cindy Sherman who really had a political bent. Are we in a more quiescent period of art these days?

SO: I think it's different. Our times have so many fragments. It's hard to say we have one direction that goes against the other. I think we have many different directions and many different contradictions.

TM: One of the things about the Ren is that, since it's a non-collecting institution, it has relied on a publishing program to extend awareness and its influence beyond these four walls. Is that something that will continue?

SO: Oh definitely. It's an incredibly important

Arts Club

this institution was intriguing to me for its history and that it had been mythic in my training. And, honestly, I didn't know it still existed (laughter).

And then I realized, "Wow, this is a living institution." So, I've been working in the last five years to make it even a more dynamic institution.

TM: It seems that the Shaws, from mother to daughter to granddaughter, have been very instrumental in its history. And, even as much as Ms. Carpenter and "Bobsy" Goodspeed did for the club, the defining figure in the club's history has been Rue Shaw (director from 1940 to 1979). In doing this book, what have you picked up about Ms. Shaw?

JM: I wish I knew her. She was a force, for sure. I think the club would have closed without her. After World War II, there was a moment when we were losing our lease at the Wrigley Building and that was in 1949. She put everything in storage and looked for new space.

And it took her genius to reach out to Mies van der Rohe to design the new space. She found rental space in a commercial building (109 East Ontario). It was the only space that Mies ever designed that wasn't his own building. He designed our interior. So, she rebirthed the club in 1951. And then she invited John Cage, and then Jean Dubuffet right after that. So I think her impact is really material in the actual existence of the club, in the programming and in the people she met and reached out to.

But it's also that she was the president at a challenging time. And then her tenure was a long time to be president and she was the guiding force. She had a strong exhibitions committee chair but I feel her thing wasn't the exhibitions as much but more the social life and the speakers she brought in and the building and Mies and her presence. Whereas, in different moments in the life of the club, there are more landmark exhibitions rather than the general atmosphere.

TM: Even though the club had good intentions at the beginning, it wasn't until the 1920s that Matisse and others, like Brancusi, were exhibited.

Renaissance Society

part of our practice and institutional focus. It's important to contextualize what we do and create the dialogue around those works of art we exhibit. And now, we are aiming to get a publication for each show we do.

TM: I read in your centennial history volume about a project that Jordan Stein was undertaking, some kind of archive. Can you say more?

SO: This was a program for the 2015 Fall season where we celebrated our 100 years. We had different events—as many as five exhibitions that Fall, we had two symposiums, two galas and one big publication of all the history. So, we had a lot of activity going on.

The archive show was to open all of these boxes on the wall in my office and look into the past. So you can basically go back and see handwritten letters, different messages from the artist, different artist sketches. Stein presented all of this material in a show that November.

TM: Looking at the history, we can say this is an institution that has had two larger-than-life figures—Eva Schutze (1929-35) and Suzanne Ghez (1974-2013).

SO: Definitely.

The most important thing with programming here at the Ren is that it has been, and still is, very uncompromised in the sense that it's really what feels relevant at that time artistically and content-wise.

TM: The Ren, since the '70s has had an incredible record of giving many artists their first show. That list is quite impressive: Dan Flavin, Donald Judd and Daniel Buren. Very confusing shows to me at the time.

SO: As it should be (laughter). I think it was not a chase to be the first but that it was artists that were not so appreciated at that time. They didn't have a place to be shown that much and the Ren

Arts Club

We had a gallery in the Art Institute from 1922 to 1927 and we basically parted ways because there were many trustees who were strongly against it. It wasn't until the "Art of This Century" show that the Art Institute started embracing art of the 20th Century.

In the book, it says "Not only was there no institution at the time devoted to showing modern art in Chicago but there was none anywhere in the United States." You should get points for that.

JM: I think so. It was the first non-gallery institution to show 20th Century art.

TM: And you have to say that the Art Institute was pretty hidebound back then.

JM: Oh, completely against it. I think there were some forward-thinking trustees. We had a gallery in the Art Institute from 1922 to 1927 and we basically parted ways because there were many trustees who were strongly against it. It wasn't until the "Art of This Century" show that the Art Institute started embracing art of the 20th Century.

TM: There was this group called "Sanity in Art" committee. I think a lot of them were over at the Union League. Have you come across members who would fit in that category?

JM: Don't tell me. They keep it from me (laughter).

TM: Is that still a struggle, the acceptance of difficult contemporary art, or do you think that struggle has been won, Now that contemporary art is so accepted and valued, it would seem you wouldn't have that problem.

JM: We don't really have strong reactionary responses to what we're doing. It would be hard to be shocking in the contemporary art world. We have indifference if we have anything.

You know, in our music front, we have some of

Renaissance Society

was a much more independent space.

TM: Do you feel that, with your background in Norway, there will be any more of a tilt toward more under-represented European artists to America?

SO: Not necessarily more European because the Ren has always been very European, actually. I think it will be more or less the same level of international. Because the time is very different from the '70s and the '80s, and even the '90s.

The art world has exploded, the art world looks so different. I think what is important today is for institutions and the Ren to figure out what is their role in the bigger landscape. And I think that the Ren, being so lean and so focused, should cherish that and further develop that very close dialogue with artists and in commissioning new work.

TM: Do you feel that a motto for you, like it was with Suzanne, is "You formulate the dream, we'll make it happen"? Can you see that as your own?

SO: Yeah, I don't want to copy her. That was a method she used with artists and the results were amazing. Obviously, our approach towards making exhibitions and our approach towards what we think is important to focus on is similar. This is not a place for retrospective exhibitions but a place where artists can experiment and test boundaries within their own practice. So, for me, it's a question of opening up and creating the best possible frame around an artist's production.

TM: I think you moved into this facility in 1978, a space that is almost 40 years old. Is there any thought that the Ren now needs a slightly bigger space?

SO: The question has come up because the Ren is such an important platform and important institution in this country. But, at the same time, there has been a conclusion that the Ren space is big enough for the exhibitions that we are structured to do. The type of solo shows, the new commissions. It's not the place you go to see this huge new retrospective but where you can actually see a project.

Arts Club

the most challenging stuff to people because you have to be there and sit through it. And we've been doing a lot with new music, both in our public programming and for the members. That area is a growth area and we're bringing people along.

TM: There is a phrase in the book, "the hurried breath of modernity." Was that meant as a compliment or not?

JM: I chose that as the title for my essay because I was very much interested in the conversational nature of the institution. That's what we really distinguish ourselves by is the live interaction between the members and the speakers and the art. And so it seemed to me there was a live feeling in a room with lots of people deeply engaged. I meant it as a compliment that there was active engagement and that I think carries through to today—to keep a conversation going.

TM: We're now at 100. There will be a major public event on October 22nd. How do you want to take the Arts Club out five years to 2020?

JM: Well, when I got here, I was so impressed by the exhibition history, {but} the institution's community was a little bit quiet. And I really wanted to bring in a dynamism—to our programming and our engagement with the city.

We've always had a very special role within the cultural institutions in the city, the CSO and Steppenwolf and all these things. And Chicago, in general, isn't a competitive place as much as a collaborative place and I feel we're very specially

---

The Arts Club has always had its exhibition programs focused internationally and I've maintained that as a very important role. On the other hand, I've launched an exhibition program out in the garden of Chicago-based artists. And that's been an exciting way to engage the community that's already here. They're just as world-class. They just happen to be living in Chicago.

Renaissance Society

If you look at the art scene and the institutional world today, I think the problem is not that the spaces are too small but that they are too big. So, the Ren can play an important role and just show that it's possible to make a great, solid, in-depth program without the massive machinery of a large institution.

TM: But you have talked about expanding.

SO: It's been in discussion for a long time. We don't own our building. As an institution, we're happy campers at the university. But we're not part of the university so, in that sense, it's natural that it has come up but I'm still very happy and I love the space.

TM: What do you think made Suzanne so successful and able to lead for so long?

SO: Oh, so many things. Obviously, she is a brilliant curator, first and foremost. She is a great manager. Those two things are paired. I think also she was able to go with her gut and not think too much about what was next to her. That, combined with the two previous characteristics, is actually what kept her going. She had the possibility to then work with artists she felt were important and needed the space to do the work.

TM: And it seems that the artists trusted her and kept giving her names.

SO: Yes.

TM: You have a lot of contact with artists. What do artists say makes doing art so hard today, aside from the stars at the art fairs? There's this whole substrata that don't get recognition or have access to shows or gallery representation. What do you hear about the art life?

SO: That's a good question. I think there is really a lot of fatigue these days in the art world because it has exploded and the market is really in charge. It's a very, very strong force. Let's not be naïve. It's important to make the mechanism go around. I know a lot of artists who feel disempowered by it because it is so strong.

Arts Club

positioned to enable to bring in all those other people to promote their programs and give our members a backseat view of what's happening.

I also thought we had some work to do in engaging the actual makers in the city. The Arts Club has always had its exhibition programs focused internationally and I've maintained that as a very important role. On the other hand, I've launched an exhibition program out in the garden of Chicago-based artists. And that's been an exciting way to engage the community that's already here. They're just as world-class. They just happen to be living in Chicago.

So, that's my goal. To just maintain the international reputation for the world class exhibitions that we do but, in our daily life, to really become imperative to the cultural life of the city by being in the nexus of everything that's happening.

TM: Are you're thinking along the lines of establishing a memorial lecture series. Is there some way of doing that or giving a prize that would give the club more public visibility?

JM: We just started a fellowship for a local, recent MFA grad and that had to do with donors being interested in using the institution to mentor.

There's a generation of artists in this city where being connected to this institution could be very useful to them.

TM: You and the Renaissance Society are both at year 100 and the reason for your existence is not as pressing as it was in 1915 and 1916. The public is pretty engaged with Art now. I wonder, are you under pressure to remain relevant?

JM: Well, I think that happened almost 30 years ago and then it went away after the MCA was founded and the Art Institute has such an incredible contemporary art function. There was a moment in the 1970s when the Arts Club couldn't get the same resources and artists that those bigger institutions could.

We have been reconsidering our function. I think we're incredibly important right now but for

Renaissance Society

Only in the 20 years that I've been in the art world, it's exploded with the number of biennials, the number of museums, the number of kunthalles for that matter, the number of art schools, the number of art books and magazines. It's vast. It's meta.

TM: And artists feel like they have to promote their art with social media, websites.

SO: And then you have artists who say what I need is to do my own work and take away this noise. The importance of what people like me do is to try to see and be open to some strategies that is not part of this mainstream. That's the job that needs to be done and we have to be careful about that.

TM: Like the Arts Club, the Renaissance Society has a relatively small audience. Within Chicago, the Arts Club is exclusive for membership. Do you feel there is a need, this being the 2016 art world, that the Ren can do more? I have a feeling, based on my 40-year history with the Ren that it's more a place for people who are "in the know".

I think there is really a lot of fatigue these days in the art world because it has exploded and the market is really in charge. It's a very, very strong force.

SO: Well, the Ren is free and is an open institution to the public. Now, obviously when you are working in a niche we don't work very broad but focused. With an artist practice, we tend to do artist research and go more in-depth. So, that means that the audience can sometimes see us as too narrow and not welcoming enough and too difficult. And this is something we discuss a lot because how do you open up and make things broader without compromising the artistic expression.

So, my view to this is that Art is art. Artists should make their exhibitions or projects not with the thought of who is going to see it. That job is ours. We know there is also an audience that hasn't a large knowledge about contemporary art

Arts Club

…by being old-fashioned, we are refreshing ourselves. Because there is a pressure on our community to find places where you are really talking to one another face to face. And so, by maintaining this anachronistic institution, we are credibly cutting-edge.

different reasons. Like you said, it's not like the only place showing modern art in the country anymore and the Ren is just down the street and has a different mission than we do. But we are a place for live conversation and one-to-one experience. And so the art is the core of what we do but it's only relevant if there are people here talking about it.

We were always founded to bring art to the city and continue that conversation. So, I think with the digital and with everybody thinking they've seen everything…

TM: Yes, but it seems like so many institutions are saying they need to redefine and refresh who they are and what they do.

JM: You know, by being old-fashioned, we are refreshing ourselves. Because there is a pressure on our community to find places where you are really talking to one another face to face. And so, by maintaining this anachronistic institution, we are credibly cutting-edge.

TM: What is the current membership?

JM: About 1150 members. And it was more like 1040 when I got here.

TM: What haven't I asked you that you'd like to state?

JM: That it remains a unique institution, even though there are other places to see contemporary art. The Arts Club history, the gorgeous building that John Vinci designed, its membership and its structure, as both a non-profit and a private club, make it pretty much a unique insti-

Renaissance Society

but there are also people who come here and love what they see. It's important for us to open up so they find us. We work with signage. We now have a gallery sitter that welcomes you and can talk about the show. But we don't want to make it easier than it is. It is what it is.

TM: You said in an interview that the Renaissance Society has this interesting quality of "inbetweenness." When you think of that concept, what does that connote?

SO: When we talk about institutions, it's about how it's described. It's not a museum, it's not a university gallery although it is at the university, it's not even a *kuntshalle*, though that is how it is often described. [deleted repetitive fragment] The board structure is much different. A kuntshalle is also much more public. And, first of all, it has much more public support in Norway.

TM: The Ren has had two periods in its history when it nearly went under before some benefactors stepped in. Financially, is the Ren in good shape today?

SO: Yes, we are. And I also initiated a campaign, called the Next Century Fund, to make sure that we had the means to make possible the core activities that we do which goes directly to the artist and to the exhibition. And we are still in the midst of that. We're a healthy organization. That's also an advantage of being a small organization so that, when you do this kind of initiative, this goes to the program. We don't have a large machinery to support.

TM: Janine told me that, while the Ren and the Arts Club, have historical connections, you are planning a new show collaboration in Spring of 2018. What will the concept be?

SO: Yes, we are. We are doing a solo presentation of Chicago artist, Richard Rezak. And while we are doing that show, Janine will do an outdoor sculpture of the same artist.

TM: Have you thought of doing either a public lecture or an artist award?

Arts Club

tution in the world. There are other clubs but the Arts Club is history.

When I approach other artists to come here, they're ecstatic. It still has an aura. ■

Janine Mileaf's pick of key art events in the Arts Club's history include:

- Exhibit of Pablo Picasso (1923)
- Visit by Igor Stravinsky (1925)
- Brancusi exhibition (1927)
- John Cage lecture (1942)
- Lecture by Jean Dubuffet (1951)

More recently:

- The Josiah McElhiny's *Two Clubs at the Arts Club* exhibit (2013)
- Jean-Luc Mylayne collaboration with the Art Institute for a pavilion in Millennium Park (2015).

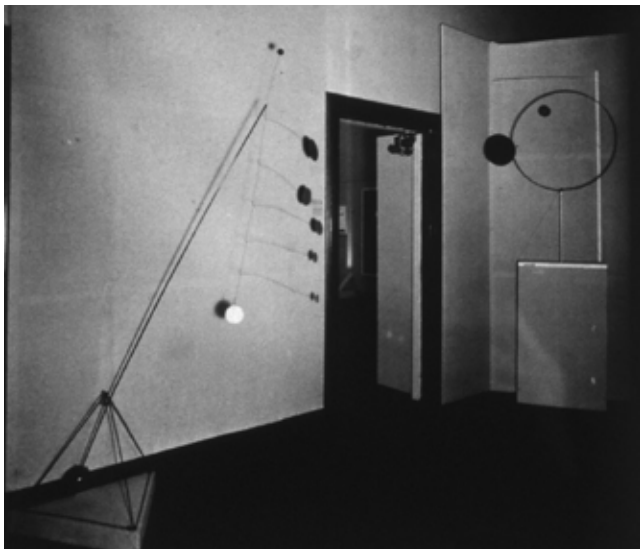
Installation shot of Janice Kerbel exhibition in 2012

Renaissance Society

SO: That has not been discussed. We focus more on the program—so, the artists that come here and the history. We are putting all of our money and our time into those exhibitions. That's our focus. We don't have a prize connected to that. Every show at the Ren is a prize! ■

Solveig Ovstebo's pick of the five most important events in the Renaissance Society history are:

- *A Selection of Works by Twentieth Century Artists*, 1934
- Mike Kelley, *Three Projects: Half a Man, From My Institution to Yours, and Pay for Your Pleasure*, 1988
- Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Traveling*, 1994,
- Gonzalez-Torres, *Black Is, Black Ain't*, 2008
- Nora Schultz, *parrottree—building for bigger than real*, 2014



From an exhibit the Ren gave Alexander Calder in 1934.

Johannesburg—A City in the Making

by Daniel Nanavati

Johannesburg is a city in the making, with all the crime, good intentions and missed opportunities that that entails. But being just 130 years old this year and still in the throws of independence, it gives us a window into how important symbols are to a country, and how those symbols are chosen and how those symbols spring from art.

No one who studies art history is in any doubt as to the vital role art plays in a country's view of itself. That view is held by the people through education and conditioning, and art reinforces the choices of the powerful throughout millennia but in Johannesburg we haven't had the millennia that many cities in Europe enjoy. What we have is sight of the very generation creating those symbols that will, and are, defining a country. You see street artists breaking down the bricks that housed prisoners of conscience being reused in the interior fabric of the highest court in the land, and Post Modernist sculpture and graffiti being used to draw lines between crime ridden areas and new areas of middle class affluence. As everywhere else in the world's busy cities, you find an innovative use of materials—whether it be reusing tyres for sculpture or shining up zips and nuts to create brass and copper jewelry.

And the purposing of art to revitalise a city is deliberately employed in gathering people of all ages together in regular markets and trails through the city. It is not for me to judge the efficacy of these efforts, what interests me is that before my eyes I see the symbols being made that will define South Africa as every bit as truly as Nelson's Column defines a part of Britain or Chenonceau Castle defines a part of France. Art is a way of thinking and in the hands of the people it becomes a way of thinking about belonging, shared symbolic experience becomes identity and a country, which is never more than an agreement amongst a people to be 'a people', becomes a modern country.

The images of suffering, of victory, of new birth—that most redolent political clichés—are all here painted on walls, sculptured in wood or wire. Through the poverty and criminality, paint is flowing all over the city, people are speaking their own poetry on the streets to anyone who will listen, and if you do listen, it will come with the message that we are all one under the skin. Having a national gallery with great Western masters is almost superfluous in a city that is one large gallery. The growing Soweto middle class is dictating the speed of the progress but for the outsider the art is the key to understanding what is happening—this is a people finding themselves.

And it is a lesson. For we are too. No matter what the symbols are, we all share with our grandparents—and there are many—each generation has to add, subtract and gain its own understanding of what their country means by its symbols. In Johannesburg the visions are more acute and far more approachable. We sometimes lose sight of vitality in being educated into acceptance without much thought. We often only see what we want to see or have been told to see. But the bare, naked heart of South Africa leaps off the figurative canvas of the city. It is brash, it is derivative, it is colourful and yet it is put together as nowhere else. Because the artists know what they are doing. They know the history they are making but they don't know if their names will become part of that history. That is for the people to decide in coming generations.

If you want to see past the unique history of South Africa and understand why we use art as we do, and find out why art defines the human psyche and is defined by the human psyche, you will see it clearly in Johannesburg. ■

David Nanavati is the UK editor of the New Art Examiner.

Team Art and Allen Vandever Host a Talk with Derek Guthrie

Derek Guthrie (left) talks with Allen Vandever

Opposite Page: Guests talk and mingle with Guthrie

Allen Vandever

Team Art, a collective of artists, invited Derek Guthrie, publisher of the New Art Examiner (NAE) to speak to the group about the NAE and the NAE's revival on October 13th at the studio of Lynn Tsan. Allen Vandever of Team Art moderated.

Guthrie gave a brief history of the magazine that he and his late wife, Jane Allen Adams began in 1973. "The NAE speaks its mind and will not deter from that. It made us many enemies. Art in this town is sewn up by the gangster culture of money men," he exclaimed.

Guthrie went on to describe the politicization and corruption in Chicago's current art scene to an intent audience.

Some Thoughts on Expo Chicago

by Thomas Feldhacker

This autumn traditionally starts a new season in the art world, commencing with EXPO Chicago during a period of tumultuous politics and social activism. This turmoil is leading to more revelations of spiraling greed. The art world has long been inside this grip of greed and we are exhausted at the revelations that the world is still in no shortage of greed. In fact, we have come to expect greed to make a regular appearance. One such revelation came just in time for the beginning of the art fair season. The IRS in an unexpected move as reported by Forbes introduced a new tax loophole that allows art investors to sell works in a way that they can avoid paying capital gains and federal and state income taxes from the sale. A reminder that art does not function in the mainstream as objects of cultural and/or intellectual significance, but has been hijacked to function as a commodity.

Law firms such as the Fox Rothschild LLP are already promoting the strategy through their blogs saying that this is an "opportune time." This loophole works by using intermediaries in the form of trust funds called Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) to sell and redistribute the proceeds. In short, allowing investors to invest in more profitable and liquid endeavors as long as the "remainder" or a predetermined small amount is set aside annually to be donated to a charity. If these guidelines sound vague it's not hard to understand why.

The consequences exacerbate the current problem of art market greed in making the profits higher and easier to achieve. This will lead to more investors buying art to manipulate the prices upward to resell at a significant premium. The effect will be to drop the artwork back into the market and possibly ruin the market value of the practicing artists. Taking the profits and exiting the market is already a practice that has had huge negative consequences for the art industry and struggling artists who have to cope with the trickle down effects. For years art prices have progressively outperformed themselves as they continue to become more outrageous with easy profitability. With a loophole like this, we should not be shocked if demand and prices for art jump again and more emerging talent or "stars" are fabricated just to be punished by the later market in their careers.

Bad At Sports, a prominent Chicago-based weekly podcast about contemporary art assembled a list of its favorite galleries at the fair:

1. Zuecca Project Space (Venice)
2. Charlie James Gallery (LA)
3. Gallery MOMA (New York)
4. Rene Schmitt (Westoverledingen, Germany)
5. Sky Over Coney Island (EXPO In-situ)

Art Critic for NewCity Art, Luke Fidler, also assembled a list of his top gallery picks at the fair:

1. Charlie James Gallery (LA)
2. Galerie Thomas Schulte (Berlin)
3. Anat Ebgi (LA)
4. The Breeders (Athens)
5. Kimmerich (Berlin)

The two Chicago critics have only one overlap, the Charlie James Gallery. The gallery exhibited a solo show for Sadie Barnette. The body of work on display was a set of vibrant collages with very simple imagery exhibited in white, square frames (15x15 inches) uniformly hung one-by-one at a gallery standard height. The work has thus far lacked any true criticism, positive or negative, but it appears to have left a visual impression on the viewers.

The overall impression of EXPO Chicago was towards dull: not much seemed new, refreshing or intellectually significant. Perhaps the most consistent message from the fair was that the art world is not progressive and/or experimental, but rather it desires to challenge the past. I was struck by the large amounts of works aligning themselves with past artistic movements and current politics. In the end it felt like a plethora of open conversations without much closure signaling that it is not enough to be provocative to foster a meaningful conversation. Connoisseurs and artists are searching for alternative narratives and culturally relevant work. ■

Thomas Feldhacker is the Social Media Editor for the New Art Examiner

New Lines in Chelsea?

by Michel Ségard

On a recent visit to Manhattan, I looked in on a half-dozen Chelsea galleries. It seems that there is a mini-trend regarding the use of line as a dominant element in the works of four of the artists whose work I saw: Walter Darby Bannard at Berry Campbell, Jeff Elrod at Luhring Augustine, Charles Hewitt at Jim Kempner Fine Arts, and Oscar Murillo at David Zwirner. All four artists use prominent gestural lines in their works in broadly similar ways.

Why? They are not of the same generation. Bannard, who died on Oct 2 of this year, was born in 1934 and Charlie Hewitt was born in 1946—these are the old timers. Elroy on the other hand was born in 1966, and Murillo, the "youngster" was born in 1986.

Charlie Hewitt, *Pepper Club*, 2016

Barnard was known in the 50s for color field abstraction and was included in Clement Greenberg's 1964 exhibition "Post-Painterly Abstraction." It was only much later that he started including gestural marks in his canvases to enliven his color field-based paintings.

Charlie Hewitt came to the line via printmaking and evolved his present painterly style more recently. But he is just as well known for his sculptures which have a Miro-like playfulness.

Jumping a generation, Jeff Elrod's lines originate from the movement of a computer mouse while working in Photoshop or Illustrator and are translated into paintings, sometimes starting with an inkjet on canvas image that is meticulously overpainted. Because of his lines' sometimes awkward path, they often resemble graffiti.

Finally Oscar Murillo presents large canvases that are filled with images of his life in Columbia overlain with obsessive scribbles (like those of a child just learning to draw). His multi-layered approach faintly evokes the texture of late Rauschenbergs.

Each artist seems to have a different starting point for his lines. But they may have a similar motivation, hinted at in the evolution of Bannard's work. His early paintings were Albers-like in their cool formalism. The lines and marks in these late pieces humanize and personalize the paintings, making them more approachable—easier to digest and comprehend, more consumer friendly.

Then the answer to "why this mini trend" seems to be found in the marketing decisions of the galleries. Friendly, emotionally approachable paintings sell more easily than difficult, more cerebral works. Even Renoir recognized this when he said that to be a financially successful painter, one has to learn to paint a pretty picture. ■

Michel Ségard is the Associate Publisher of the New Art Examiner.

Walter Darby Bannard, *The Crave*, 2016

Jeff Elrod, *Brutalist Study II*, 2016

Oscar Murillo, *AV 245 (39,700 ft)*, 2016

"Politics, Rhetoric, Pop"

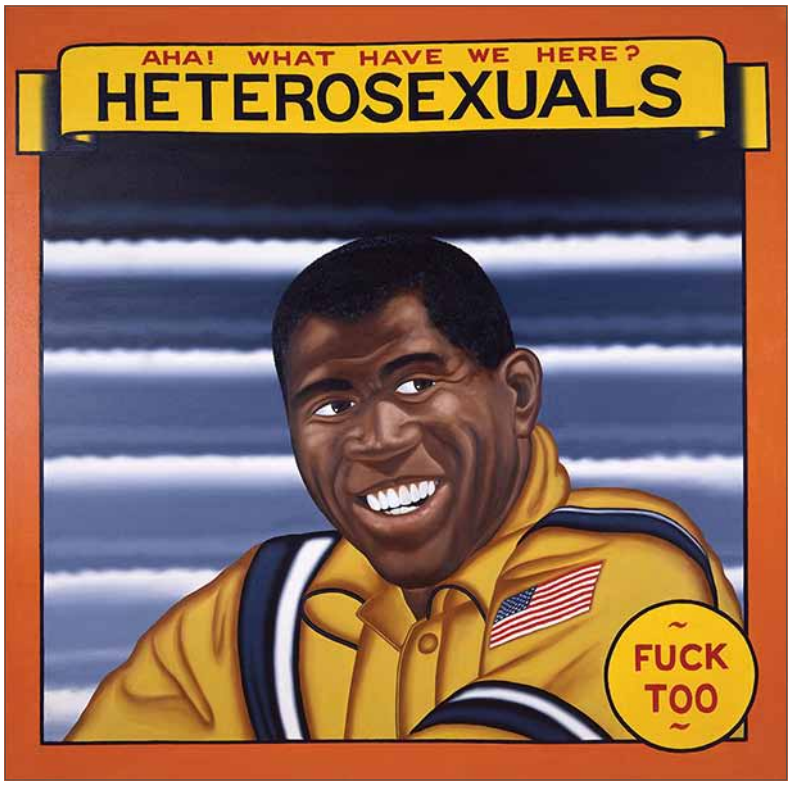
Roger Brown and Andy Warhol at Kavi Gupta Gallery (September 23–November 22, 2016)

by Evan Carter

For many of those engaged in Chicago's art community, the work of the Imagists or the Hairy Who collective is a prominent milestone in the city's artistic legacy. For others, this work plays second fiddle to the art historical moment happening in New York around the same time.

Some arguments have been made that collectors of Hairy Who continue to promote the work in an effort to at least bolster its market value if not place it on equal footing with more predominately known artists and movements. This is after all, the most basic function of the art world.

The exhibition "Politics, Rhetoric, Pop" at Kavi Gupta in Chicago featuring work by Chicago artist Roger Brown and New York artist Andy Warhol could be viewed with that same brand of cynicism but, regardless of where you stand, it manages to achieve something more thoughtful.



Roger Brown, *Aha! Heterosexuals Fuck Too*, 1991, oil on canvas 72" x 72"

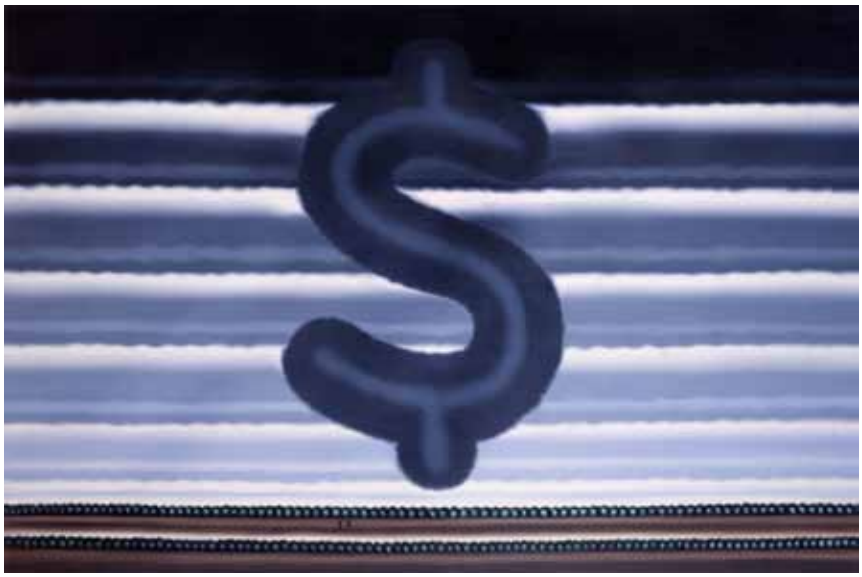
The parallels begin with the artists' lives. Both were gay men who grew up in rural parts of the country and took interest in art at an early age. Their pursuits of art carried them to big cities where they not only established themselves as makers but also as collectors.

Their work looks quite different at a glance. Walking into the exhibition we are greeted with one of the largest pieces, *The War We Won*, is a painting by Roger Brown depicting Boris Yeltsin, Mikhail Gorbachev, George H. W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan. Gorbachev and Bush are in the center shaking hands. This painting shows the distinct figurative style of Brown's work whose degree of editorial authorship is something Warhol would strongly avoid.

Throughout the room, Brown's well modeled but cartoon-like faces of familiar celebrities and politicians hover over the eye-popping backdrops of repeated color gradients. These accompany Warhol's very graphic portraits and occasional printed still life, interiors, or landscapes. The stylistic range creates the sense that we are looking at a left-wing propagandist and a subversive ad-man.

Brown may take on the role of activist with a piece *Aha! Heterosexuals Fuck Too* which cites Magic Johnson to dismantle the argument that only gay people are susceptible to HIV and AIDS. Warhol utilizes pop culture icons with as much agency but to different effect. In discussing the work with the gallery's representative, Jessica Campbell, she described Warhol's work as vacant by comparison to Brown's. I agree but would argue that the same kind of vacancy exists in Brown's work, just in a different location.

Throughout his paintings, the only figures that are given identities are famous celebrities or politicians. This rule would seem to apply to Warhol as well. You can only be in a Warhol if you are famous or worthy of the fame that being in a Warhol can afford you. The only place for the average citizen in a Warhol is to be the person looking at the object. The function that the



Roger Brown, *Landscape with Dollar Sign*, 1991, Oil on canvas, 48 x 72 in.

Andy Warhol, *Dollar Sign*, acrylic and silkscreen ink on canvas, 10" by 8"

viewer of a Warhol performs is the same function that Brown narrates by including the tiny black figures in his paintings.

In *Hollywood with Stars* we see large versions of recognizable celebrities like Elvis or Marilyn Monroe towering over small, nameless black figures who are presumably the characters the viewers of the painting are more likely to relate to since they are neither Marilyn nor Elvis.

The parallels continue formally throughout the work of these two artists. Brown's sense of manufactured color and repetition of forms echoes Warhol's appropriation of reproducibility in printed ads and his 'Factory' studio model. We see both artists deal with architecture and landscape in different registers of cynicism.

Brown depicts his silhouetted figures in crumbling skyscrapers both in painted and sculptural form. In Warhol's colorful *Oberkassel*, the surface glitters with diamond dust to simultaneously glamorize and assign a minimum value to the object.

No matter how many dots we can connect between these two artists, the conversation around the relationships between people, mass culture, and the complexity of industry seem the most poignant in this exhibition.

Presenting these artist works not by chronology but rather by form and subject, "Politics, Rhetoric, Pop" gives us a glimpse into how two different visions of a historic cultural moment took shape. ■

Evan Carter hails from Worcester, Massachusetts. He studied Painting at Mass. College of Art in Boston and is currently an MFA candidate in the Department of Visual Art at the University of Chicago.

Newsbrief: *New York Times Reports Aggressive Collector Duped by Fake Golubs*

Reported in the October 18th 2016 issue of the New York Times, Andrew J. Hall a trader in the oil markets known for aggressive speculation and earning $100 million bonuses, has amassed an art collection of 5,000 works by hundreds of artists. The collection includes 40 pieces supposedly by Leon Golub. When Mr. Hall went to stage an exhibition of his Golubs at the private museum he operates in Reading, Vermont, he discovered that more than a third of the Golubs he bought were forgeries.

Mr. Hall claims that he was defrauded by Lorettann Gascard, a 68-year-old art history professor at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire and her 34-year-old son. Hall had purchased two dozen so-called Golubs from Ms. Gascard, who claimed to be and avid fan and collector of Golubs. Mr. Hall is suing for $676,250 in restitution, the amount he spent on the paintings, according to court records. Both Ms. Gascard and her son have disappeared.

Before the exhibition, Ms. Samm Kunce, a representative of a foundation established to promote Golub's work, examined the paintings and found problems. She found no records of Gascard's Golubs in the foundation's database and noticed "a number of unusual formal characteristics during in-person examinations of the paintings," according to papers files in the case.

A Room of Surreal Mindscapes

Camille Iemmolo and Jon Langford Exhibit: The Lonely Stage

Thomas Masters Gallery, September. 9–23, 2016

by Tom Mullaney

Strolling along North Avenue one sunny September afternoon, I entered Thomas Masters Gallery on a whim. As I entered the back room, I was transfixed by the sight of a stage at the front of the room and artworks lining the three adjacent walls. This all-encompassing installation/performance piece, "The Lonely Stage," placed me as much within Camille Iemmolo's world as within her art.

The room was akin to being inside a dream. Besides the stage, three large (60" x 60") mixed media works dominated the room. Clothing, presumably Camille's, hung from the gallery's lighting track. Four of artist/musician Jon Langford's tables and a dozen western-themed tabletop wall hangings completed the picture.

Iemmolo calls her works "surreal mindscapes." A baby's crib was titled "Emergency Cart of Lost Dreams and Forgotten Words." Several works, like "The Telling Tree," made use of thick, shiny white cord knotted like a hangman's noose. Combined with Langford's western-themed art, as in "Bonehead," the overall impression was quite fey.

As I walked around the installation, I had the impression that Camille's pieces were conveying loss, absence and death. The stage had a drum set along with burlap bags of seed corn in which two womens' legs were sticking out upside down. The image evoked pure fun but I also thought of the saying, "robbing the seed corn," connoting a depletion of future crop harvests.

Only later did I learn that the loss was real: her brother, Paul, had died last November. He was a special needs sibling who loved listening to music and dancing with Camille. That musical connection was captured with two performances in the gallery by Langford's band, the Mekons.

Iemmolo's art may seem playful and naïve but, as her largest mixed media installation warns, "Danger—Do Not Mistake Me for the Wall Flower." She is an artist with a fertile imagination who shapes her collage-like materials with complete command into haunting works. ■

Tom Mullaney is currently the New Art Examiner's U.S. editor.

Left: Jon Langford and Camille Iemmolo (atop drums) on set of "The Lonely Stage"

Below: Camille Iemmolo, *The Telling Tree*, mixed media, 60 by 60 in.

"Heaven and Hell"

A review on El Bosco exhibition for the V Centenary in Museo del Prado (Madrid)

by Susana Gómez Laín

After being extended for two weeks more, due to people's demand, you are still on time not to miss the exhibition commemorating the fifth anniversary of the death of Hieronymus Bosch (born Van Aken), colloquially called in Spain "El Bosco". It only takes sixteen euros and two hours waiting on a queue to be transported to heaven, hell and all the imagined intermediate situations. It is worthy.

Promoted by BBVA Foundation and curated by Pilar Silva specialist in Flemish painting at the Museum, this spectacular, innovative exhibition, showcases the masterpieces of drawing and painting of this enigmatic Renaissance man (h. 1450-1516), as ever before. You follow a circuit that will remind you of being inside a Richard Serra´s sculpture; all the triptychs, and some of the drawings and paintings are exempt so you can go around them, see the front and painted backs, feel it, fuse with the piece.

The difficulty on the chronology of the works, symptom of genius, has forced to order them by themes. Seven sections, like the number of deadly sins that always inspired his works and that depict one of the most popular and controversial piece of the show, lately attributed to a follower, the table top painting "The seven daily sins and the four last things". The first section, dedicated to his hometown in 's-Hertongenbosch (now Netherlands, then Flanders and from where he took his artistic name); Childhood and public life of Christ; The Saints; Paradise and hell; The garden of earthly delights; Man´s world: Deadly sins and secular works and Passion of Christ.

Eight of his best-known works, including *The Garden of Earthly Delights*; *The Haywain Triptych* and *The Adoration of the Magi*, belong to the Museum and National Patrimony. That is so, because, even being considered at his time as a renowned heretic due to his interpretations of the human and the divine, his greatest fan and collector was the fanatic Catholic King Philip II of Spain, so connected with Plymouth and with both British Queens, the Catholic Maria I, "Bloody Mary", his wife, and his sister in law the Protestant Elizabeth I, "The Virgin Queen" and whose freak last will was to die surrounded by his works in "El Escorial" Monastery in Madrid and so he did, being in

Continued on Page 33.

El Bosco (Hieronymus Bosch), *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1495–1505

"CAPITAL—DEBT, TERRITORY, UTOPIA"

An exhibition at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. 2 July to 6 November 2016

by Richard Sharland

Joseph Beuys, *DAS KAPITAL RAUM,* 1970–1977, 1980, Detail, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie

"Capital – Debt, Territory, Utopia" is an exhibition as vast and diverse as its grand title. Vast and diverse, but not daunting. Collected into a slightly too confined space, the huge canvas of this show draws you down a corridor of fascinating objects, images, experiences and video screens, challenging and exhausting you with an assault of wonder, ideas, connections and juxtapositions, as it tries to tell a story about capitalism—from every viewpoint, including several you had never thought of.

The links between an ancient Egyptian idol and a clip of Hedy Lamarr's film orgasm in 'Ekstase' seem as obtuse as the juxtaposing of Ghanian slave leg irons beside Heidegger being interviewed by a Buddhist monk; yet this show brims with connections—like those in a loose weave tapestry, often more cerebral than visible, but criss-crossing one another, disappearing then reappearing in unlikely guises in unlikely places.

Loosely grouped in three 'phases' linked to the three sweeping concepts of its title, this exhibition continually shifts your horizons. It doesn't wait for the viewer, it draws you along while coming at you from every angle—now a Babylonian slave contract and videos of Rihanna or Bob Dylan; now a huge canvas by Warhol, then first edition books by Kant, Martin Luther and Rachel Carson, sound recordings of Ezra Pound and a choir singing Swing Low, Sweet Chariot. Here is a Renaissance altar piece beside film clips by Paolo Pasolini and Charlie Chaplin; paintings by Caspar Friedrich, Paul Klee and Gerhard Richter alongside a recruitment video for Goldman Sachs, sculptures of tiny paper birds, video film from the trenches, the rainforest, Bonaparte, Tusalava… you wonder if you are walking through the curator's carefully assembled playlist of artefacts or into Pandora's box, then its theme comes back to you unexpectedly, commanding your interest then digressing again.

The gallery feels full: none of the 130 pieces are given much reverential space, creating the

sense of an eclectic and personal experience. Hence the playlist. The spate of modern installations and historic moments, images and exotic objects does feel connected, if loosely woven. Momentarily, the show seems like Berlin itself, city of contradictions, telling the tangled story of its being, lusting after territory, driven by debt, dreaming of utopia. Could this show happen in London, Paris or New York—or is it too provocative, too modern, too questioning, too thoughtful?

Just when it feels like the assault has become too much, that you need respite to think and absorb, you arrive at one last room size exhibit: Joseph Beuys' huge installation for the 1980 Venice Biennale. *Das Kapital Raum* incorporates motionless film projectors and tape recorders, a grand piano, an array of floored objects beneath a high wall filled with chalk-marked blackboards. Stimulating. Silent. And mysteriously linked to Beuys' allusive definition of capital as a concept pertaining to freedom and human ability.

For no reason, I began thinking about the link with earlier exhibits, such as Lafargue's manifesto *The Right to be Lazy*: and wondering how the huge turtle shell or Mendelssohn's exquisite wood and ivory travelling case connects with the photograph of the Singapore Stock Exchange beside a bizarre crocodile skin hat, how they fit in a coherent tale of capital and whether the undoubtedly powerful experience of this show addresses or merely illustrates its theme. Flickering cameos by Andre Breton, Kurt Schwitters, Auguste Rodin, Rachel Whiteread, images of Mao, Athena and Atlas all flitted through my brain and the mass of a mighty leaden bas relief by Anselm Keifer leans over me as I leave. Capital illustrated, imagined, redefined, ploughed up, stretched over and over. ■

Richard Sharland is an artist and writer who runs a small gallery—Terre Verte—in north Cornwall.

"Heaven and Hell" (continued from page 31)

his last moment unaccountable untruthful to his own strong Catholic believes.

Other masterpieces have been kindly lend by other Museums from London, New York, Lisbon, Paris, Vienna, Venice, Rotterdam, Berlin, Philadelphia or Washington.

Focusing on the art of "El Bosco", you discover everything, every vision, every colour and besides many other art movements and modern trends, like cubism, impressionism, surrealism…even comic and cartoons, illustration and animation. He was a free mind in a time of obscurantism, a forerunner, and that it is why he raises so much passion nowadays. An icon. Universal and unique.

Need to appreciate, for its modern vision, the simultaneous showcasing of drawings and paintings from unknown artists belonging to his workshop or following his influences.

To end with a walk in the clouds, touching paradise, you can visit upstairs the video installation "Infinite garden" where you will feel inside the painting, listening to the sounds of heaven. Congratulations to their creators Álvaro Perdices and Andrés Sanz for the originality of the site and the new sensations.

If you absolutely cannot make it, at least visit it through the webpage www.museodelprado.es/actualidad/exposicion/el-bosco-la-exposicion-del-v-centenario/, where you will find much more information; have a look at the multimedia videos, a must; and be conscious of what you have missed.

If you can, be aware that you will have to leave your magnifying glass at the cloakroom. They are forbidden. ■

Susana Gómez Lain is an ex-student of PDP at the College of Art in Plymouth, England.

Chicago Artist's Visceral Sculptural Sense

Review of the book "Rene Romero Schuler: Paintings and Sculpture (2016)

by Richard Siegesmund

Whether working 2-dimensionally in paint or fabricating 3-dimensionally, René Romero Schuler is a sculptor. In her work, there is a visceral sense of material scraped, carved, and incised by hand. Her painting largely eschews brushes and is constructed with trowels and knives. Her sculpture—composed in a variety of media such as tightly wound coils of wire or in cast bronze that retains the inscribed trace of thumbs that have probed clay—contains an energy of the hand in pursuit of form.

Schuler is a self-educated artist and therefore lacks formal academic training. Artists so classified are generally associated with outsider art: artists who work beyond immediately acceptable formal definitions of style or artworld conceptions of proper practice. However, Schuler's work does not fit into these categories, for her work is not naïve. She is an autodidact. In particular, she has paid close attention to Bay Area figuration.

In the early 1960's when the formal Abstract Expression of Clement Greenberg dominated painterly discourse in the New York centered art world, the painters in the San Francisco Bay Area began to champion an unapologetic return to the figure. This was often achieved with a bravura application of paint to canvas, evidencing the human struggle to shape form through mass and color was evident. This kind of painting was best exemplified in the work of David Park, but others of influence in this scene included Elmer Bischoff, James Weeks, Richard Diebenkorn, Joan Brown, and Nathan Oliveira.

Chandrika, 2015, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 in.

While one can see the influence of David Park's dense handling of the materiality of paint in Schuler's work, it is Nathan Oliveira's influence the most readily jumps to mind. In particular, it is Oliveira's ability to capture, with his heavy use of impasto, the delicacy of the Mediterranean-like light and atmosphere for which the Bay Area is famous. This appears to be a powerful influence on Schuler as exemplified in her 2015 work "Carino." It is not surprising, that Schuler spends time away from Chicago in the fragile Pacific luminance of Carmel, California.

As noted in the catalogue essay by Elizabeth K. Whiting, next to Oliveira, Schuler is clearly influenced by the Swiss modernist Alberto Giacometti. In her elongated figures she evokes the shimmering phenomenological presences of personality. What perhaps makes her works distinctive, and moves them beyond echoing these previous artists, is her ability to pair her painting with sculpture.

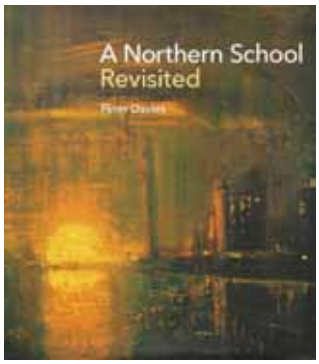
Although her sculptures are modest in scale, generally ranging between 12" to 36" in height, (see the work "Tally"). However, these works contain a concrete specificity of form that render the accompanying paintings— that tend to range in height from 48" to 60"—as evocative shadows cast by the smaller sculptures (refer to web site, *reneschuler.com* to see these gallery installations). This further accentuates the performance of light within the two dimensional works. Thus, the ways she installs her work becomes critical to a full understanding of her artistic vision. While the painterly glow of Schuler's use of color attracts initial attention to her work, it is the visceral sculptural sense of form and the play of space, best represented in her three-dimensional work, that demonstrate the distinctiveness of her voice. ■

Richard Siegesmund is Professor of Art+Design Education at Northern Illinois University. He has received individual fellowship awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Getty Trust, and has served as a Senior Fulbright Scholar.

A Northern School Revisited

by Derek Guthrie

Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham are great 19th century English cities brought forth by the proceeds of manufacturing by the Industrial Revolution. British Society changed which naturally evolved a new patronage for the arts. The story of this book then, "A Northern School Revisited" (published in 2015 by ClarkArt Ltd) by Peter Davis, is a most welcome revisiting of a narrative art practice from that time of recent forefathers which still has a presence in today's art culture, now known as community art.



London, the nation's capital, had other ambitions—signified by epic nature, epic battles, heroes, and stories of Gods, where needed (Christian and otherwise), to illustrate the legitimacy of pomp and circumstance on the stage of international politics. There was also a possible urge to compete with the glories of the Vatican and to demonstrate the worthiness of the nation state—to parade into a world stage of diplomacy.

The Industrial Revolution urbanized a rural, land-working people into a modern urban proletariat by transforming the rural landscape into an urban scape. The dark satanic mills invaded the pleasant green land of England and spawned an empire. New realities of smoke, grime, and pollution became the backdrop of life and sensibility for the working class.

This elegant book provides a selection of over a hundred reproductions of very worthwhile 19th century picture-making—not decided by intellectual speculation but by a response to the work of an artisan-based culture dealing with an industrial environment through observation.

L.S. Lowry, rightly so, takes pride of place with a lead photograph on page 6. The now well-established, revered, and basically self-taught artist's work has captured the interest and respect of the cognoscenti of the art world. Lowry's well-known stick figures circulate through an elegant structured industrial landscape, achieving a larger statement, free from the romantic overworking and often sentimental renderings of the Academy.

A fascinating subplot is offered by the author. His acute sensitivity to the nuances of form and expression characterises the different natures of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham. "A Northern School Revisited" comprises works drawn from these different industrial locations. For example, Liverpool has a unique space. It is the great sea port of the North of England where cramped slum-terraced housing is a stone's throw from the sea and where the horizon is seen that leads the longing imagination into distant worlds.

Manchester and Birmingham are landlocked and each city, with its own historical configuration of town planning and architecture, produce different narratives. The reader will experience this within the elegant text, well illustrated by a choice selection of paintings that make the point clear.

The present day art world of Postmodernism in which technology presents new options such as video, performance, conceptual, and installation art are promoted and encouraged by art schools. The new space of the computer along with unhinged philosophical speculation tempt the young artist into new horizons.

"A Northern School Revisited" is a journey into the new horizons of yesterday, which happen to be a backyard, confined and domestic, poignant in the sense of turning the pages of the family photographic album. This is an important reminder that yesterday is a narrative and memento of lives recently lived—a beauty that has a different form shaped by other aspirations of an emerging mass audience. But fashion lurks in a beauty appreciated by a mass audience. When fashion is triumphant, art suffers.

The lesson this writer learned from this book was a reacquainted respect for the now lost craft of pictorial painting. It is a timely reminder that technology may change but human nature does not. The danger of "A Northern School Revisted" is that its experience could be easily watered down by the all-too-easy danger of an imported sentimentality. ■

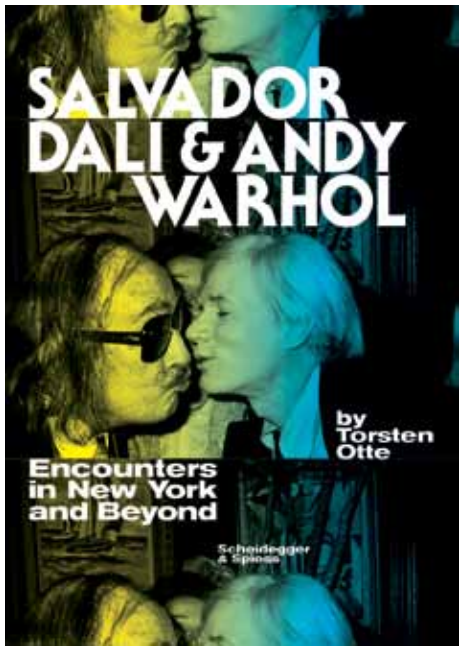
Derek Guthrie is the Founding Publisher of the New Art Examiner.

Soul Bros in Art

A review of *Salvador Dali & Andy Warhol* by Torsten Otte (Scheidegger & Spiess, 2015)

by Tom Mullaney

Who knew that Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol were art bros? When they met and hung out in the mid-60s and '70s, Dali's star was fading while Warhol's was shooting up to the heavens. Yet, on reflection, their association makes perfect sense. Both were among the last century's most famous art celebrities who drew public and media attention to themselves. Both men's love of publicity is legendary. Warhol once said, "Publicity is like eating peanuts. Once you start you can't stop."



Salvador Dali & Andy Warhol: Encounters in New York and Beyond, by Berlin attorney and art historian, Torsten Otte, reveals that Dali and Warhol had many encounters in New York and beyond. Their meetings were known only in a very small circle. He shows in this definitively-researched volume that each artist admired the other's personality and practice. While Dali followed Warhol's career with interest, he had a low opinion of pop art. Warhol held Dali in high esteem and once said, in his deadpan way, "Dali's one of my favorite artists because he's so big."

Otte seems less the author of this hefty, 400-page book than its compiler. Every meeting and assertion about their respective entourages and art practices is annotated to the nth degree. Each citation, rather than appearing at the back of the book, actually appears along the margin of each page. Otte's obsessive, almost eight-year, goal of bringing this little-known area of art history to light began with his phone interview with Isabelle Collin Dufresne (aka Ultra Violet) in August, 2008. He interviewed over 120 art figures who knew and worked with both men. He was supported in his efforts by the Centre for Dalinian Studies and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh and the Warhol Film Project at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The book is divided into six sections: Biographies, Personalities and Biographical Parallels, Entourage, Work, Encounters and Views of Each Other's Work and Personality. Befitting the case with two such fascinating, often outrageous figures, there are many fascinating quotes and incidents noted throughout. Dip into almost any page and you'll find some new tidbit, particularly the sections on Entourage, Work and Views of Each Other's Work. It's an experience like eating peanuts.

One sample revelation is that their earliest meeting was in the mid-'50s at the St. Regis Hotel in New York, where Dali held court at teatime each afternoon. Warhol, at the time, was a window dresser at the fashionable 5th Avenue shop, Bonwit Teller. He brought some drawings he had made of shoes and Dali reportedly told him he had talent and should set his sights higher. Otte suggests that Dali may have spurred Warhol's later career. Both men also made films and published newspapers to further their careers--Dali's effort was the hilarious Dali News which informed Warhol's decision to start Interview magazine.

Otte's art pilgrimage is to be commended for his total commitment in unearthing this rich trove of material. It lends notable detail to the picture we and future generations will have of these two art personalities. Spanish artist Victor Mira once wrote that Warhol and Joseph Beuys were the two cleverest sons of Dali. Might it be said that Warhol and Dali's cleverest son is Jeff Koons? ■

Tom Mullaney is the U.S. Editor of the New Art Examiner.

Scouting the Blogs
The Money Grab

By Thomas Feldhacker

Gallery owner in New York City, Jane Kallir of Galerie St. Etienne, wrote an excellent narrative overview of the market in 2016 on her blog. She makes an astute observation saying that the current practice incentivizes "individuals to go astray when they expect the art market to provide monetary returns in which it is incapable." This practice models itself very closely to venture capital, an industry that finds starting businesses and invests in them in the hopes of large returns later. Lauding emerging artists is much like an IPO, and much like an IPO, values can crash if expectations do not meet the hype. As Kallir also notes, this may be why auction houses such as Sotheby's are restructuring and reprioritizing their efforts to the contemporary market when in the past the Impressionist and Modern market was the money maker. I believe she is correct. The contemporary market will be an interesting spectacle to watch.

Widewalls reported on contemporary artist Matty Mo, who also goes by the title The Most Famous Artist (MFA), who is making a career by responding to the art market with satire. The MFA is an outsider artist and marketing guru who emulates Duchamp and criticizes the elite institution of art. In New York City last spring he gained fame after releasing a video of himself attending the Context Art Fair with cash bricks worth $1 Million in a plastic, transparent duffel bag and a bodyguard. The day before he had tried to gain gallery representation by hustling his work but was shunned. The next day he returned with the money bricks, a bodyguard and camera crew. He quickly gained gallery representation from those who rebuked him the day before. Was this great art? No. But it was clever and we adore a rebel who can entertain while also bringing discourse back into the spotlight on the meaning of art in a digital era.

Artnet reported the French courts finished hearing the testimonies in the Wildstein tax evasion and money laundering case between French-American art dealers and the French tax authorities. The family is accused of hiding assets in trust funds and shell companies abroad to avoid inheritance tax. France does not legally recognize trust funds and has not established an effective process for monitoring, valueing and taxing these foreign entities. A verdict is expected by the French high court after the new year. Blogs such as Art Fix Daily and Tax Justice Network are advocating for the harsh guilty sentencing. After the revelations of the Panama Papers, it has become apparent that many of Europe's wealthy have used vague and unenforced transnational laws to hide estate wealth. Tax authorities, art enthusiasts, and perhaps a global jaded working class is eagerly waiting for an example of the super-rich to be punished in what will be a drawn out witch-hunt.

Volume 30 – Can you Believe What You've Missed?

September

Issue 1 :

We visit the Venice Biennale with the co-founder of the Eden Project, Jonathan Ball.
Derek Guthrie is interviewed by Sam Thorne, director of the Tate St Ives.
US Editor Tom Mullaney, writes about arts journalism in the digital age.

November

Issue 2 :

Chicago's Architectural Biennale.
Henri Giroux's book Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism, reviewed.
The Berlin Art Fair with George Care.

January

Issue 3 :

Screenwriter John Stepping on the Art of Identity.
Derek Guthrie on the Englishness of English Art.
Hit and miss Royal Academy Curating with gallery owner Richard Sharland.

March

Issue 4 :

How the moving image makers mold conformity.
The widening chasm between artists and contemporary art with John Link.
Daniel Nanavati on artists going off grid and being successful.

May

Issue 5 :

Orwell's Newspeak haunts the contemporary art world.
Jackdaw partners with the NAE and David Lee talks about the hype of arts council funded sculpture.
Carinthia West on Saatchi Gallery's exhibition about the Rolling Stones.

July

Issue 6 :

Raymond Salvatore Harmon's Speakeasy: THE CONTEXT OF CREATION
THE CHANGING TREASONS by Darren Jones.
John Link on how art gave up the detached authority that gives it the freedom to succeed as art.
From The JACKDAW: THE DEGENERATION OF THE AVANT-GARDE INTO FASHION by Edward Lucie Smith.

Subscriptions to the New Art Examiner are £39.50/$42 for six issues.

Want all six back copies of Volume 30? Special offer price: £36/$32.
Send cheque made out to New Art Examiner, to UK Editor, Rosehill, Altarnun, Cornwall, PL15 7RL
or US Editor, P.O. Box 15462, Chicago, IL 60615