

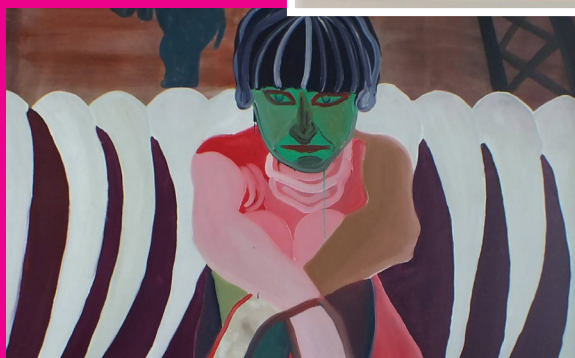
NEW ART examiner

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THE INDEPENDENT VOICE
OF THE VISUAL ARTS

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Museum of Modern Women Kathryn Zazenski in Warsaw
Oh Chicago, my Chicago Maggie Leininger in Chicago
Jane Addams Allen on French Impressionist Berthe Morisot
The Whitney with Jody B. Cutler-Bittner
Artist MFU Miklos Legrady on Art Education
After the Art Fair Bubble Bursts Phil Barcio on Chicago Expo

Warsaw showcases 50 modern women



Partnered with

THE ST. IVES
TIMES & ECHO

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 an 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, insider trading will determine success in this troubled art world.

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

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What is it to be an artist in Washington DC? The New Art Examiner will co-sponsor an ongoing forum with the DCAC Gallery once a month starting in the fall of 2019 with midweek meetings. Our first speaker is with Derek Guthrie, the founder and publisher of the New Art Examiner in 1973; he will present a short history of this international magazine and how it has continued to thrive since the mid 70's. We look forward to special speakers every month to help advance and support the artists of Washington DC and the surrounding area and welcome all to come, listen and participate.... And talk with our fellow artists. Please look for our schedule and plan to come.



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The New Art Examiner is a not-for-profit organization 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.

Open Letter to James Green and the Newlyn Orion Trustees

Thank you, Sian, for your answer, as once again we receive a refusal from Newlyn Art Gallery in Newlyn, Cornwall in the UK, to stock the New Art Examiner.

I consider this unwise and inappropriate but adequate considering the status of the Newlyn Orion and Exchange. Let us consider some facts. From a dying magazine (as are most art publications today) with a previous readership of around 2,000 a month just over 2 years ago, we have become a thriving magazine with an international reputation. We now have over 40,000 readers a month from all over the world, with that number growing by the month. More than Art Monthly. Our writers are based in Washington DC, Chicago, New York City, Toronto, London, Cornwall, Paris, Spain, Italy, Belgrade, Warsaw, Greece, the Seychelles, Taipei and with more writing us every day and offering their services as art critics. It's not for what we pay, as at the moment we can only offer peppercorn remuneration per issue. Writers engage with us because they want to be part of this lively dialogue we offer them encompassing the art world; it's exciting and it's vibrant and it's real.

Sorry, Newlyn that you missed out. As indeed some of the art community insists on doing. We'll still cover your shows, even though your exhibitions are frequently mundane. We suggest that you need considerable reform and a wake-up to what's going on in the wider community around you. The New Art Examiner, with calculated indifference from the art officiantos in Cornwall, has managed to put the visual arts in Cornwall on the international map. It's a disgrace that Cornwall has degenerated into provincialism. This was not so in the old days when it was the avant garde. However, Newlyn is just an example of what is debased thinking in the art world.

Another example is Ken Turner at the Tremeneheere Sculpture Garden, Penzance, whose painting "Anthem for Doomed Youth" was not hung because it overpowered the other works! It was rejected (after being selected) because it was too good. (See Writing Challenges <http://group.newartexaminer.net/ken-turner-anthem-for-doomed-youth-wilfred-owen/>) We invite you reader to share your stories with us, as these events happen far too often for reasons of politics and power play, as operators exploit their own agendas.

These agendas, which underpin the decision not to stock the New Art Examiner, are defined by the power brokers. Even Sir Nicholas Serota said we had the right to publish the opinions which we do. The NAE is unique in that we value dissent. Who could imagine an art world without dissent? In this, I think, lies the profound differences between the NAE with Newlyn Orion and the Exchange. If you had an opinion, we would be delighted to publish it. We offered a Speakeasy to the director of the Exchange. 600 unedited words on any subject of his choice. He never even replied.

The Newlyn Orion is so politicized your decision against stocking the NAE was not even supported by the advance of any substantial reason for your refusal. It would be interesting if you justify your director counselling leading authorities in Cornwall not to talk to the NAE. The fight in Cornwall is for status, not for engagement and discussion. A wholly unnecessary problem which does not enthuse writers to write about art. You act like Big Brother, and you deprive by so doing, Cornwall's right to a dynamic continuation of its once high regard in the art world. I cannot help but wonder what the opinion of this matter would be if presented to the Arts Council! Or the Trustees of Newlyn/Orion. Cornwall in the old days supported much art criticism and art writing and huge debates in which it was hard to find two people with the same opinion. But they held to the slogan 'One for all and all for one'. This is the

art world today as defined by our readers and writers.

As invitations arrive for the New Art Examiner to participate in art fairs and events across the world, from the US, Europe and Asia, what our dedicated team of volunteers have achieved is beyond belief. We are working to get many more writers involved. Our readers are art lovers, artists, museum and gallery staff, writers, and newcomers to the art scene, as can be seen from the numerous comments that come in from them.

What is also very beautiful is the communication that has grown among writers across the world, the connections that have been built. Cornwall attracts not only artists, but also writers. We are lucky to have such strong qualified writers with experience in journalism and art criticism. Toronto is doing the same, starting their own writers' group, thanks to the Olga Korper Gallery and Miklos Legrady, our Toronto Editor. More writers' groups will start as Italy, Spain, and France grow stronger.

The New Art Examiner

Fish Out of Water

Vol 33 Issue 5

Editor,

It would be lovely to see a photo of this window, since it sounds like it's one of the most artistic aspects of this mountain of cement built in a very picturesque town. I once went on holiday to St Ives in the 60s and remember well the town then. It must have changed a lot since then, and also the artists. The works of Patrick Heron and Peter Lanyon are those that I remember the most.

George Abbott
09/08/2019

George,

I agree with with Ben; St Ives Tate is a sell-out to postmodernism. Trendy, badly designed and

flamboyant. This building reminds me of Saddam Hussein's palaces built on the banks of the Tigris or in Las Vegas. The alarming truth is that the building denies the core values of the St Ives School of Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, Naum Gabo and others. The Sense of Place resides in the native architecture of St Ives and Cornwall, the aesthetic of granite – not the wedding cake of self-conscious decorative features that St Ives Tate orchestrates. The mountain of cement would be appropriate in Las Vegas next to Caesar Palace, in my opinion. Yes, the view out of the window is spectacular, but the architects did not design the view which inspired the aesthetics of the St Ives artists, instead of an Art Museum which denies the legacy of those whose memory should be respected. I often speculate to myself what Ben, Barbra, Naum and Bernard Leech would say if they returned to visit the topsy turvy resting place of their highly refined art. I am sure the education department of the St Ives Tate has a hard job explaining this conflict of purpose.

Derek Guthrie

09/08/2019

Hi George,

You're a nostalgic, but I am too I suppose. I remember St Ives when it wasn't an outdoor shopping centre mobbed by tourists in the summer. It used to have a relaxed, easy going atmosphere, where you could breathe the art in the air. It was there, and it was intense. Though I know the Tate St Ives is trying to do their part to return the town to its old glory, I'm not so sure this is the way. The Tate building disturbs me too, as it definitely doesn't fit in with the local architecture, though the view from the upstairs windows is truly spectacular. You should come back to see St Ives, when the tourists have gone home in October.

Edward Morgan

10/08/2019

Hi George,

I'm a nobody, who also used to go to St Ives in the sixties so that I could find inspiration and paint. It was a stunning little town, but I imagine it still is. There was the feeling that it was the place to be if you wanted to go anywhere with your work, a kind of momentum. Nice memories.

Thomas

11/08/2019

Film Review Beauty and the Beast

Volume 33 no 5

Hi Lynda

This review is very timely, as the US has produced monkey-human chimeras in China ("to avoid legal issues"); I would like to write "recently produced", but imagine it's something that's been going on for quite a while. In any case, we will soon have our monkey-human chimeras joining society as human beasts, though they say it is for growing organs that humans won't reject – nice prospect! Some of them may be smart enough to escape and....

Jason Johnston

04/08/2019

Jason,

Even better, their portraits will soon be hanging in the National Portrait Gallery in London!

Thor Galloway

05/08/2019

New Ways of Seeing Ken Turner

Volume 33.6

Hello Mr Codswallop,

It was about time you wrote another article for the New Art Examiner! I rather enjoyed this one, and as with your other writing have had to read this a few times to get the whole sense of it, even though I'm still not sure of it all. I have some problems when I read the contradiction that your sense of being is about knowing the unknown. I also had difficulty understanding the meaning of this sentence, "These posters did not really benefit one's life, but ensnared a public into believing that they did and of course still do." Could you elaborate a little and explain what you mean by "they did and of course still do"? What is it they do?

Jonathan Dabbs

14/08/2019

Comments on a Picture by Edvard Munch in Contemporary BBC English

Volume 33 no 6

Hi Monique,

At least you got the punctuation right! Vocabulary building, grammar structure and punctuation seem to be missing from the English curriculum, along with reading and writing. As people read less and less, the problem you highlight in your beautiful satire will no longer exist, since any information, reviews included, will be done as videos. As public libraries and bookshops close across the world, reading will become obsolete, just as doing arithmetic has.

Nick Bates

23/07/2019

Hi Francie,

Tis is too “incredibly incredible”!
Please write more of these; they
are too good to be true. The BBC
definitely should see your satire.
Many thanks for the pleasure
your tiny review gave me!

Sandra Hawthorne
15/07/2019

Thanks so much for your
feedback. I do hope to do more of
these, as English shows no sign of
improving.

Frances Oliver
16/07/2019

Fashionably Unborn

Volume 33 no 6

Pendery Weekes,

Fashionably unborn, embryo
jewellery is similar to Damien
Hirst's embalmed animals, but
only this is worse, far worse. I
checked the babybeehummingbirds'
link and found that this is for
real. I believe this belongs to the
category of disgusting art, of
which there are many examples. I
think everyone remembers the
stray dog tied up in an art
exhibition and starved to death
all in the name of art. If you have
forgotten, read on....

[https://www.theguardian.com/
artanddesign/2008/mar/30/art.spain](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/mar/30/art.spain)

The pretext to call something art
when it's offensive goes beyond
the realms of what it should
represent in a visual arts context
in order to elicit a response, albeit
strong.

Jordan Ames
22/07/2019

Pendery,

Is this something serious? Are
embryos really being made into
jewellery? If it's true, it is rather
macabre and sinister and says
something about a society that

accepts this.

Rachel
17/07/2019

Art As Blood

Volume 33 no 6

Hi Rob

I didn't know Gregg Lambert's
work and I thank you for your
citation. However, I don't agree
with him about the lack of
freshness of contemporary art. I
think that in every time the artist
is influenced by previous masters
but the important thing is that
his style is unique and personal. I
saw this in the Baroque
exhibition. I agree with Tuymans
when he says that in the Baroque
art is inherent the concept of
populism, and I see it in our
modern times, in a lot of
countries, including Italy.

Also, Italian cultural heritage
influences very much our taste,
because the artistic works aren't
only closed in the museums but
scattered around all the country.
Unfortunately, not always our
artistic heritage is preserved and
improved.

Liviana Martin
24/07/2019

Liviana

When one says Baroque one often
refers to spacial grandeur and
swirls of color and action
inference of largess, mythic and
bigger than life. I would think in
our contemporary visual language
of this ..ie –cinema –is reduced to
puffery and exaggeration
psychologically–along these
lines... how could we really ever
be Baroque?? and hence it's
allure, a visual drama that is often
fantasy as the Baroque
degenerated into Rococo- class
power dreaming... pure style and
over the top-ness, a largess that
never is real,... fantasy and lies of
power — a delusional sense. So

our bourgeois egos dream of the
Baroque ... a reality that is
illusory and inescapable
simultaneously.

Al Jirikowic
25/07/2019

Hi Liviana,

you wrote, “the common thread
that links the works of the
seventeenth century to
contemporary art is not so much
the style or content of the works
as the concept of “Baroque” and
its implications.” Do you agree
with what Gregg Lambert says in
his “Return of the Baroque in
Modern Culture”? He sees our
contemporary moment as one
marked with “profound
Repetition, of having nothing
'new' to say, except that we have
heard it all before and have
become dreadfully bored (and
boring as well). ... It is the last
sign of our failing modernity,
which in, or at the end can also
be compared to a flawed and
imperfect pearl.”

Since you seem to write more
about works from Italy's rich
cultural heritage, is it because you
identify more with these works
than with contemporary art? How
much does living in Italy
influence someone's artistic taste?

[https://www.academia.edu/213543/
The_Return_of_the_Baroque_in_Modern
Culture](https://www.academia.edu/213543/The_Return_of_the_Baroque_in_Modern_Culture)

Rob Tallack
22/07/2019

letters@newartexaminer.net

#1 Mission Moon (<https://youtu.be/pl46Ab0bgGk>)



QR code of Chinese Sound Art
- Missing Moon, scan and listen

**THE ST. IVES
TIMES & ECHO**
**THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF
THE VISUAL ARTS**

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EDITORIAL

One can fall in love with a magazine. With a passion for its attempt to trust its writers, edit lightly to allow for varied opinion, and its invaluable outlook inherited from the twentieth century pragmatic philosophers in Chicago. A time when America had philosophers everyone with an interest in American power and how it would be wielded, read and discussed. When alternative opinions were valued.

It is not hard to find either good writers or deep readers in the USA, it never has been. But the element of the population that thinks it knows all it will ever need to know, has spread to use modern media as a conduit to shout so loud, it is their agenda that occupies everyday discussion.

Their voices have been heard as far afield as in the UK, Hungary, Brazil and Slovakia. In such a politically fascist maelstrom it is a comfort to find places to write and be read; where you are certain the conversation flows with respect for thought and is not partisan, or bigoted or infected with the many elements of small-minded thinking that places ego above community, pits individual against individual as if it was a law of life and had no measure of that most precious of all human attributes: peace.

We now know, biodiversity is essential for natural environments to thrive and continue to sustain all life. So too, human diversity of thinking with its challenges and joys, inherent mutual respect and imparting of knowledge so that individual experience can be shared, is vital if we are to fight our way out of the limiting, valueless system of vanity that economics has become. Conversation has created all we know of civilized values; the lack of conversation has created all we know of conflict.

So we here, at the New Art Examiner delight in the questions. We are on a journey which has no ending; we assume nothing; we expect dangers, intellectual or otherwise. Should these fascists and neo-Nazis take over more countries, and should they rise to abuse free-thinkers, historians, artists and contrary opinions as they always do, the spark that is originality will be as needed as a life-saving medicine.

We have been here before, we know how it works. We can see millions of people losing their sense of where their thinking leads or more frighteningly, not caring.

So we will continue to be a place of thinkers who love the discussion because ultimately we know only from our discussions and those of others like us, comes a future of co-existence.

Daniel Nanavati / Lily Kostrzewa



CiC

SEPTEMBER 2019

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QUOTE of the Month:

"Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one."

Stella Adler

Each issue the New Art Examiner will invite a well-known, or not so well-known, art world personality to write a speakeasy essay on a topic of interest. Pendery Weekes is a Boston born traveller and writer who lived and worked in Italy for most of her career. She is now based in Penzance, Cornwall where she runs the New Art Examiner writers' groups, tends her garden and swims all year round.



"The art world is desperately in need of writers and art critics. What it doesn't need is people who write boring press releases that nobody reads, promoting exhibitions which glorify artists' work. Try and read one; they are almost all the same with their endless repetition of flowery words of praise."

Most of my life was spent in Italy surrounded by Giotto's frescoes, paintings by Piero della Francesca, Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, archaeological ruins and works by numerous modern to contemporary artists such as Boccioni, Balla, Severini, Morandi, De Chirico, Schifano, Burri, Guttuso, and countless others. This can't but influence someone's cultural makeup and imaginarium. Italy is a country that is one visual performance or show after another, everywhere from north to south. For centuries and centuries Italy has been the patria of countless works of art, going back to the Etruscans and even further back to the artefacts of the Bronze Age, not to mention Roman art. This immense patrimony and cultural heritage is still with me in my dreams at night and when I look at an artwork or talk to an artist, even though I was born and educated in Boston. Now in Cornwall, I breathe another type of cultural heritage, supported by the numerous artists and writers who live and thrive in this varied community. It, too, has its fascination for the arts. What is exciting is that the art community here is finally waking up and rebelling against the past apathy and lack of creativity after the period of the St Ives School. People are talking more and more about its revival or of a new St Ives era, of which the New Art Examiner is playing its part.

The art world is desperately in need of writers and art critics. What it doesn't need is people who write boring press releases that nobody reads, promoting exhibitions which glorify artists' work. Try and read one; they are almost all the same with their endless repetition of flowery words of praise. If no one really writes about the visual arts, about the "good, the bad, and the ugly", our art world as we know it will die out, doomed to eternal extinction with just the finance sector of the art world thriving with its money laundering avenues.

My job as publisher is to look after my writers, who are precious resources for the art world and also work on the expansion of the magazine, finding more venues for readership, writers, and at the same time, funding opportunities. As our writers are dispersed around the world, (NYC, Washington DC, Chicago, Toronto, Paris, London, Cornwall, Warsaw, Leipzig, Berlin, Madrid, Belgrade, the Seychelles, and more), it means that correspondence with each writer is essential in order to maintain a dialogue and a feeling of team. The writers' meetings are very valuable to the writers, as they receive immediate feedback on their reviews and support for their courageous work. It isn't always easy to tell the world one's opinion, often not in line with what the institutions are tending to the public. We aren't all Derek Guthrie, though we try to learn from his vast experience and fearless attitude.

Our writers' meeting in Penzance has grown so numerous that we are starting another one in St Ives with Mary Fletcher, in Bodmin with Daniel Nanavati and one in Toronto with Olga Korper and Miklos Legrady. I count on starting other writers' meetings in Chicago and in Italy before the year ends. Now we are waiting for a review from a new writer in Hong Kong...

There's a feeling of, it's a new day for the New Art Examiner!

Pendery Weekes



Editorial Team in Penzance, UK

MUSEUM OF MODERN WOMEN

PAINT, ALSO KNOWN AS BLOOD: WOMEN, AFFECT, AND DESIRE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING -
Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw

7 June - 11 August, 2019



Tschabalala Self, Pop, 2017

It's the pleasures of painting. The poses of pleasures. The privilege of being looked at. The ploys of seduction. The light of the night. It's nothing personal. It's plain delight. Aside from title cards, this poem by Marlene Dumas is the only text present in this exhibition of over 100 works by 50 (women) painters. Taken from a novel by Polish writer Zenon Kruczynski—the coy playfulness of the Dumas text becomes almost comical set against the title of the show. This exhibition swings across the thin line between pleasure and pain. The watched becomes the watcher, the oppressed becomes empowered. Canvas is the skin from which we contemplate the complex and interconnected narrative of female experience.

The museum of modern art is housed in a temporary space along the Vistula river, a large white-cube with a rather interesting history: it's a transitory pavilion that is the former home of the Kunsthalle in Berlin, which is now on loan to the MSN by the Viennese Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary foundation. For this exhibition, the gallery has been subdivided into four wedge-shaped spaces by a

gigantic X, orienting the work by themes like the performative body, romanticism, surrealism, fragmentation, the hybrid, the landscape, home/domestic life, and trauma.

pause in front of a work by the Polish artist Paulina Ołowska. The grey-scale canvas depicts a figure that is roughly life-size, hung so that her gaze barely grazes the top of the viewers head, she looks beyond us, somewhat blankly. In this 2013 work Ewa Wawrzo in a Costume from the Performance The Rhinoceros (1961), Ewa wears a bodysuit with two notable features: breast-like protrusions that sit on top of her chest simulating impossibly perky, contained, and absolutely synthetic, fantasy approximation of the real thing. The second adornment is a loin cloth-esq wrapping with some sort of portal/ornament resting atop her womb space. With a hand on one hip and one leg slightly pitched in front of the other she assumes a statuesque pageant pose, a woman somehow performing the role of 'woman', like a body in drag.

Frieda Toranzo Jaeger's Autoeroticism (2018) takes this notion of performance, machine, and female-ness a step further by introducing the automobile. Car culture, which typically entangles notions of labor, class, desire, and deeply-objectified sexuality, is depicted here in the format of a triptych, exposing the bowels of a nondescript car. Hoses and pumps morph into vines and flowers towards the edges of the panels while three disembodied, fuchsia hands slip fingers into holes. A massive, ultramarine tarp-like tongue hangs down from the central panel and flops onto the floor space of the gallery. The beauty of this piece is its altar-like configuration, forcing us to stand in front of it in adoration, confronted by the nature of the cyborg—somewhere she is human.

Many of the bodies depicted throughout the exhibition are distorted and are counters to popular or contemporary notions of beauty, often bordering on the grotesque. The prostitute, the whore, the sexualized, hybrid, machined body, deformed not only in physicality. Yet somehow, despite the weight of womanhood, these bodies are also full of desire, power, and humanity. We confront this blurred line in three works by Chelsea Culprit. Cheeseburger in Paradise, Double Happiness, and Girl with Pizza (all 2016) depict sex workers while eating, yet another highly politicized and policed act of the female experience—



Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 7 June - 11 August, 2019

exploring not only external control but self-imposed control, in the exhausting pursuit of presenting the right kind of feminine, female, woman.

When manipulation of bodies can be used for power, when the physical body can be abstracted from the human, emotional body—ogled, lusted-after, possessed, posed, prodded and shaped, one space that cracks open is the biological machine, or, the body as an ecosystem. A stacked diptych by Agnieszka Brzezanska confronts us with the abject. *Untitled* (2015) it is one of the few works where the body doesn't feel readily sexualized but rather through abstraction we are faced with deeply textured swirls of paint that recall the traces of a body, as if they were painted directly with fingers. Not identifiable as male or female with a scatological, earthen palette, the body is depicted as a system, part of a greater organism that shifts the notion of scale in both physical place and time.

The hybrid or fantastical body in many ways can be seen metaphorically as the non-heteronormative body, manifesting a collapsing of truth and fiction, of clear boundaries and borders. This fractured, fantastical form, framing the potential for both pleasure and/or violence, is what we see in *Now Now* by Ambera Wellmann. The palette is soft, pastels with a posey-like pattern offset by stark black, for both depth and respite from the chaos of the body-plane. Wellmann's technique is taken from 18th c European porcelain painting, further conflating notions of

the female body as decoration, as prop, as a mass rather than individual, as well as a direct engagement with domestic life. When bodies spill out of their boundaries they become something unsettlingly other, forcing viewers to renegotiate the borders between inside and outside, themselves and the source of the discomfort, all the while assessing the potential for threat. This is something that cultural writer Tess Thackara addresses in her recent text 'Why Contemporary Women Artists Are Obsessed with the Grotesque' 2019". The long, black lines running down the arm echo the raking or clawing of a hand, a record of a touch, of contact. Ambiguous, fluid, slippery, it is powerful and terrifying in its refusal to be contained and known.

This work also brings to mind the notion of consent and voyeurism. Sandwiched between a rendering of a grotesque, baroque bust by Ewa Juszkiewicz and an almost entirely black canvas by Lena Achteplik, *Diva* by Sasa Lubinska provides a pivot, a moment of surprise and connection back to the bourgeois, back to this notion of looking. Depicting a 3/4 portrait of an androgynous figure with large lashes adorning the lower brim of the eyes, red triangles of 'blush', and pouty, red, feminine lips. A neon-pink beard made from a wig of cheap synthetic hair is attached to the chin line creating an early 20th century circus/'bearded woman' vibe. Made as part of a series for 'decorations prepared for a queer party', in both form and scale, this work strongly echoes banners hung from

windows and terraces during protest. Lubinska's statement, connecting the work to a play on gender expectations, feels heavy-handed. None the less the work itself as an object, as a prop in the contemporary theater of life, feels apt. Similarly relevant is *Kiev 19.02.2014* by Belarusian painter Celina Kanunnikava. A public building is being overtaken by a surveilling periscope-like camera eye that rises out of and drips down from the roof. The actual building is located in Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Kiev's Independence Square, and refers directly to the 2014 Ukrainian revolution. The inclusion of this work in the exhibition on the surface feels out of synch as it is one of the few works that is not located squarely in the body but rather confronts the notion of the gaze from the systemic, political perspective—the authoritarian or surveilling gaze, and relates this dynamic to institutional rather than individual power. The Belarusian artist reflects on totalitarian systems, nostalgia, greatness...the red baseball cap is not symbolic of a solely American tragedy. Protest, power, watching, watched: compelling, relevant, bold, providing a moment of rest and perhaps context, pulling us out of our own bodies for a moment to recognize other systems of power and oppression within which we are engaged.

Approaching transgression, fantasy, and power from yet another angle is Reba Maybury's *POLICEWOMAN*



Martyna Borowiecka, He threw a silver sheaf between slightly curtained curtains, 2018



Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 7 June - 11 August, 2019

'HANDSUP!'. An 'exquisite corpse' 1 made by a few of her white-collar, white, male clients. Mistress Rebecca is a political dominatrix, working to prolong the shifted power dynamics explored during sessions with her clients. By having them make her artwork, she renegotiates value systems of gender, art, and time. Through her, the fantasy of the powerful woman begins to bleed into lived reality; a radical, revolutionary, redistribution of wealth and power, staged behind closed doors. Curator Natalia Sielewicz sat in conversation with the artist to discuss the shame and chic of sex work, power, politics, fantasy, and transgression, during which Maybury noted, 'nostalgia is a luxury.'

I am stirred and overwhelmed by this exhibition. It has taken several visits and conversations to fully comprehend this impressive collection, and because of this I am frustrated for its demands over me. But what this frustration smartly and subtly reveals is the weight and nuance of the female experience, and how it unfolds in time and context. It's important to note that Poland is the country that gave birth to the *czarny* (black) protests in 2016 which provoked a series of women-led demonstrations internationally. Abortion, sex-work, abuse, feminism, #metoo: its Polish, it's world-wide. Its female, it's queer, it's other, it's here and now, yesterday and tomorrow. Bodies are political and complicated. Bodies hold pain, bodies are messy, and yet somehow simultaneously powerful, resilient, beautiful, and knowing. But, it's not only about the power dynamics or struggles between men and women, individuals and governments, but rather the struggles within our own bodies. The power plays between what we want and what we need, between what we want and what we're taught to want. It's a deeply intimate struggle that is played out through every choice we make, in public or in private, in every drop of blood, every deeply held emotional experience, and every note of desire coated in a terrifyingly thin skin of shame.

Kathryn Zazenski

Oh Chicago, My Chicago

Chicago, like most large cities, is a melting pot of cultures, languages, and rhythms. It is not a city necessarily known for the elite galleries and star-studded cultural events of New York or Los Angeles. The glamour festooned events commonly associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, are not a part of the Chicago art scene. Innovative creativity and community support for the arts is more the keynote of Chicago's art presence. It is a place recognized as a testing ground for the creative community. Many musicians, actors, writers, and artists have benefitted from an environment that supports an expansive array of creative ingenuity and community interactions that happen between artists and their local neighborhoods. Having access to such a space for experimentation provides opportunities to delve into the realm of possibilities and envision alternative forms of creating, co-creating, and cross pollination that makes Chicago a very unique place to be as an artist. From the indie-pop up spaces, apartment galleries, neighborhood projects, and artist collectives such as Temporary Services, Links Hall, Compound Yellow, The Franklin, Three Walls, and others, the permaculture of this city fosters creative practices that expand upon participatory, accessible, and collaborative ways of creating. One place in the Logan Square neighborhood specifically has become a beacon of such practice with roots imbedded in community driven actions. It all started in 2005 when the Logan Square Preservation (a neighborhood organization) actively began restoring an abandoned comfort station that was built in the 1920's. These comfort stations originally were built to shelter pedestrians waiting for the trolley cars that used to line the parkway and connect neighborhoods to the downtown area of the city. Nine other comfort stations were built along an expansive boulevard parkway system developed by West Parks Commission in 1869 connecting various parks along the greater west side of Chicago. However, by 2005, only two of these buildings remained. Logan Square Preservation envisioned restoring the unused and abandoned space to serve the community as it had once done as a public space. The activation of Comfort Station as an interactive public space began in 2010 when a group of artists came together to begin what started off as loosely organized organic series of programs that include music, poetry, film, performance, exhibitions, and other creative events. Jordan Martins, the current director of Comfort Station, recalls that these early years, while chaotic and schizophrenic, were critical in

developing an identity of the Comfort Station as a space that embraced all voices and was responsive to the community creative spirit in a way that the public space of a park serves the community. There is room for everyone. While not intentionally created as a space that emblemized a highly successful model of social engagement, Comfort Station from the beginning is such a model for collaborative, socially engaged practice. There are several key parts to this success that could easily be replicated elsewhere throughout the city as well as in other cities and towns across the country. First, there was the mobilization of community members from Logan Square Preservation to address the conservation of a building that had fallen into disuse. This neighborhood organization was able to negotiate a nominal lease for only \$1 with the City of Chicago for the abandoned comfort station. Logan Square Preservation then actively petitioned for funds from the local alderman in addition to other financial resources

that were needed for restoring the building to a usable and functional space for free public programming. The artists from the community who activated the space entered without the need to worry about high overhead such as the cost of rent. While the artists later organized into a functional non-profit for fundraising and additional operating expenses, the minimal financial investment needed provided an environment that was not driven by



Chicago Landmark, Cloud Gate: mirrored, bean-shaped sculpture

financial outcomes. Artists became active stakeholders in the community space as they volunteered their services to expand the conversation of what a creative practice can be and to develop a rhizomatic network with other art groups and organizations such as the Poetry Foundation, Links Hall, Rebuild Foundation, Spudnik Press, Co Prosperity Sphere, 6018 North, and University of Chicago's Arts & Public Life initiative that are all active partners in the current project of Comfort Square, funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

Another inventive cultural pollinating endeavor, *Close to There<>Perto de Lá*, is a year-long project launching in



photo in public domain

August 2019, when Comfort Station will host eleven artists from Salvador, Brazil. Then, in 2020, eight Chicago artists will have the opportunity to connect with these artists as they travel to Brazil. *Close to There<>Perto de Lá* expands upon Projeto Ativa, a project developed in 2014 by Brazilian artists Lanussi Pasquali, and Joaozinho Pereira. Projeto Ativa, similar to the Comfort Station, uses sites that have been abandoned or are in disuse for contemporary art

spaces. While Projeto Ativa is more nomadic in scope due to the nature of cultural support in Brazil, it offers another model for activating space for creative purposes. Jordan Martins, who spent several years in Salvador, explained that the main goal of this project was to break down the elitism that currently surrounds contemporary art in Brazil, as most of the cultural programming is funded by

the government and can shift dramatically with each administration. In 2015, Jordan Martins worked with both Pasquali and Pereira to create *Perto de Lá*, a project that explored the notion of plurality that comes from grassroots, community driven activation of abandoned spaces thus creating the groundwork for the current exchange program. The goal of the project is to foster dialogue between two cultural identities that might on the surface appear to not have much in common. However, upon deeper examination, it is interesting to read how Brazilians are coping with their current leadership in government. From an earlier interview in February of 2019, Lanussi Pasquali commented that, "We are evaluating, now, that in spite of the catastrophe that this government will be—because he is not only sexist, homophobic, and racist, he is also dumb. He is ignorant. He has no clue how to govern. But this moment worked to unmask that Brazil is not kind, Brazilians are not cordial, Brazilians are racist, sexist, and homophobic. The falling of this mask also has a positive side, because we wake up from that myth that in Brazil everyone is happy, joyous, and good people; that everybody hugs; that everybody is decent, and we are beautiful...." 1 Other areas of commonality that artists will be contemplating during the exchange include examining and sharing of ideas around the African Diaspora, migration, settlement, and contemporary Latinx/Latin American identities. The US and Brazil both share a sordid history of enslavement and colonialism that is still far reaching into contemporary psyche.

Brazilian artists who will be in residence during *Close to There<>Perto de Lá* include Lanussi Pasquali, Edbrass Brasil, Patricia Almeida, Candai Calmon, Edgard Oliva, Inae Moreira, Daniel Saboia, Adriana Araujo, Vanessa Coelho, Alex Simoes, and Joao Oliveira. Chicago artists currently participating in the exchange include Alexandria Eregbu, Angel Bat Dawid, Amina Ross, Anna Martine Whitehead, Ayanna Woods, Ben Lamar Gay, Damon Locks, Edra Soto, and Josh Rios. One of the unique components of this international exchange is that it supports the gestation of cultural exchange rather than focusing on a product driven result. Often, grant funded artist residencies or exchanges anticipate a formal outcome from an artist, such as a performance, a publication, or an exhibition. Artists will have the opportunity and space (in collaboration with venues throughout the city identified above) to fully engage with their respective places without being beholden to producing a significant body of work. This will encourage deeply immersive experiences that will facilitate in meaningful dialogue with fellow artists.



Aram Sifuentes Protest Banner Workshop at Comfort Station 2016

For example, artist Joao Oliveira is a printmaker and appropriates personal experiences in order to create artworks with a forged autobiographical nature that are created from small rituals of self-fiction. He will have the opportunity to work with Spudnik Press to experiment with a variety of processes that he has been eager to incorporate into his work. Spudnick Press is also excited to host Joao Oliveira since part of their programmatic goals include some form of international exchange, as they value the opportunity to share printmaking practices with artists from around the world. While at Spudnik, Oliveira will be experimenting with melting and smashing plastic animal toys into flattened shapes that will form the substrate for his prints. Titled, *I'm going to love you, hold you, squeeze you, until you are in pieces*, this series of prints form a body of archeologically categorized images that simultaneously references roadkill as well as the once beholden now discarded objects.

Inae Moreira is another Brazilian artist participating in the exchange. Moreira will be performing TEMPO at Dorchester Art + Housing Collaborative. This performance considers the black female body as a grounded form that is buried in sand but then transcends into a form of freed release. Moreira, trained in dance and movement, incorporates issues lived by the female, Afro-Brazilian and diasporic body into her performances. In addition to the performance, she will be leading a workshop that will consider the body as an expressive and theatrical form. Jordan Martins has taken great care in connecting the visiting artists to community resources here in Chicago that will support a creative exchange between the artist and the community in the way that Comfort Station has provided programming

to meet the needs of the local community of Logan Square. As with all projects that incorporate some form of social engagement, the structure of the programming is organic, and dependent upon a multitude of uncontrollable factors. However, this is the nexus of what makes this exchange extremely provocative. While Martins and the parameters of the grant do not intend to steer the conversation or overdetermine particular outcomes, the opportunity exists for artists and citizens to become active disruptors as they challenge the common issues around identity, power, and cultural histories that tie the two communities of Salvador and Chicago together. Close to There<>Perto de Lá promises to expand upon Lanussi Pasquali's interpretation of art as a way of reimagining a world that allows people the space to breathe, to be heard, to denounce, expose and create a public space that provides room for all. Follow the outcomes and upcoming events of this project by visiting <https://comfortstationlogansquare.org>.

Maggie Leininger

Maggie Leininger is a Chicago artist, teacher, and writer who explores the intersection of community and practice within alternative systems of art production.



Daniela Moura-Time 1

After the Art Bubble Bursts

Chicago EXPOses itself



Google the phrase “too many art fairs,” and you’ll see a consensus is building about an impending “art fair bubble.” Dozens of recent articles contemplate the glut, not just in art magazines, but in publications like *Forbes*, *Bloomberg*, *The Economist*, and *The New York Times*.

When Artnet News published “the Definitive Calendar of International Art Fairs for 2018,” it listed 80 major fairs. Where once there was an art fair season, the season now lasts 12 months. For now, Chicago’s showcase fair—EXPO Chicago—is holding its own. But history suggests that will not always be the case.

If you travel to multiple fairs, even on multiple continents, you notice many of the same dealers and see work by many of the same artists. Yet even as novelty wanes, new fairs continue popping up.

For dealers, the economics are dire—booth fees can top \$100,000 if they are lucky enough to be invited to show. Add shipping costs, travel expenses for employees, and factor in a 50/50 revenue split with artists, and the break-even mark for galleries can surpass \$200,000. A fair with 100 participating dealers must generate \$20 million in art sales just to maintain the myth that profits are possible.

Here’s some historical context to show how far the art fair phenomenon has come. If anyone had published a “Definitive Calendar of International Art Fairs” in 1980, it would have listed only two entries: the Chicago International Art Exposition and Art Basel.

Art Basel was the mother of the modern art fair concept. It was founded in 1970 in Basel, Switzerland, by Ernst Beyeler, Trudl Bruckner and Balz Hilt, three art dealers who believed that if they invited enough prestigious sellers to show their best stuff at the same time in one place, wealthy collectors from across the globe might consider it worth their while to travel there to take advantage of one-stop shopping. The first Art Basel included 90 galleries and 30 publishers and attracted around 16,000 visitors.

Michigan-based print dealer John Wilson was the first to believe Chicago could support a similar fair. His inaugural Chicago International Art Exposition in 1980 included 80 dealers and attracted around 10,000 visitors. Over time, however, the Basel and Chicago art fairs evolved in quite different ways.

Art Basel grew steadily, becoming the most prestigious annual gathering of art dealers and buyers in the world.

After being purchased in 1994 by the

multinational Swiss bank UBS, the brand expanded to Miami Beach and Hong Kong and sprouted other fairs focused on luxury assets besides art, like cars.

The Chicago International Art Exposition (CIAE) meanwhile, lasted 13 years of which, at least half the time, it was recognized as the top American art fair. For the first nine years, it was held in the strangely cool, rickety old barns of Navy Pier. It earned both local and international respect from artists, dealers and collectors alike. When it was forced to move after the 1989 fair due to the pier’s planned renovation, CIAE lost its cachet.

By the time Navy Pier reopened in 1992, it was a sprawling network of malls and convention spaces, and the fair found itself attracting more tourists than collectors. Facing pressure from two rival upstarts—the International Gallery Invitational and Art Chicago—the Exposition folded.

One of those upstarts—Art Chicago—did not stay in Chicago for long. The organizers moved their fair to Miami, where they renamed it Art Miami and grew it into what is now the most attended art fair in the US, predating Art Basel Miami Beach by a decade.

After Art Chicago left Chicago, the organizers of The International Gallery Invitational, headed by Tom Blackman, confusingly appropriated its name. The “new” Art Chicago reclaimed Navy Pier as its home and, for a while in the mid-1990s, returned Chicago to a place of prominence on the international art fair scene. By then, major art fairs were popping up everywhere, and competition to attract top dealers was becoming stiff.

Rather than opting for exclusivity, Art Chicago opened up participation to essentially any dealer who could afford the booth fee. By the year 2000, more than 200 dealers participated. The quality of the art was not competitive, and again the reputation of the city as a serious art fair destination declined.

The end for Art Chicago came in 2005, when organizers advertised that instead of being held indoors at Navy Pier, the fair would be held outdoors in Grant Park. They stiffed the contractors, who thus refused to set up the tents. Dealers arrived with crates of art to an empty park. At the last minute, the owners of the Merchandise Mart, which was already hosting the Chicago Antiques Fair that same

week, made room for Art Chicago to share the space. The following year, Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc., bought Art Chicago and rebranded it as Artropolis: a multi-faceted modern, contemporary, folk, outsider, and emerging art fair extravaganza.

Some people welcomed Artropolis, while others despised it. All that mattered, however, was the bottom line. In 2012, the organizers abruptly canceled the fair, stating in their press release, "It is our conclusion that the great majority of the art fair market in the United States has gravitated toward the coasts."

Chicago's current fair, EXPO Chicago, emerged from the ashes of the ruined Artropolis. EXPO's founder and director, Tony Karman, returned the fair to Navy Pier. He recognized the location's iconic status and also returned to the idea of a smaller, curated fair. A select group of Chicago and international galleries cajoled other galleries and were instrumental in pulling the new fair away from the brink. The seventh edition of EXPO Chicago, which wrapped up in late September, demonstrated, undeniably, that wealthy collectors, blue chip dealers, and interesting and important contemporary artists once again regard Chicago as a serious competitor on the international art fair circuit. Over 38,000 people attended the 4-day event.

How long can it last?

Perhaps the right question to pose now is not whether EXPO Chicago will survive when the bubble bursts, or even necessarily how to protect it, but rather what can we learn from history to build off of EXPO's current status to create something bigger and more relevant to the entire city.

Stephen Eisenman, Professor of Art History and Past President at Northwestern University, says, "Let's have a 'People's Art Expo', supported by the city, the museums and the commercial galleries. It could have juried and unjuried exhibits in various media, booths for social practice, political and performance art, lessons in various media by volunteers, areas of expressive, political protest, and information about how to obtain free/reduced price admission to museums and galleries all over town."

Eisenman suggests expanding to sites like Millennium Park or "a closed-off Michigan Avenue in front of the Art Institute," to reach beyond commercial interests and appeal to a wider demographic representative of this city's actual population and culture.

Michelle Grabner, esteemed artist, writer, curator and Crown Family Professor in Painting and Drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, agrees. She notes that it would speak much more to the health of the local

community if the city and people of Chicago supported an "Art Week" instead of a single commercial fair. Says Grabner, "Not everyone needs to be involved in the commercial gallery system. EXPO offers something to push against. It's not about that one thing being everything to everybody. It's about that one thing establishing a hierarchy for other types of artists to resist and overthrow."

The "Art Week" concept already exists in several other cities. One of the most successful models is "Miami Art Week," which involves multiple consecutive large fairs (Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Miami, Pulse, the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) fair, etc.), as well as dozens of peripheral events, from scrappy beachfront motel pop-up galleries to immersive exhibitions funded by private businesses. In addition, every Miami art museum and big private collection opens a major exhibition during Art Week, and all over town there are artist talks, mural tours, experimental installations, spontaneous happenings, cool parties, and innumerable sanctioned and unsanctioned collateral events.

Obviously, Chicago is not Miami—Miami has palm trees. And Dubai has glitz. Hong Kong has deep pockets. Basel has prestige. New York has attitude. The secret to "Art Week Chicago" is not to copy what other cities do. It's to make it representative of who and what Chicago is.

Embrace local history. Chicago is the Second City—home of the New Bauhaus, the Monster Roster, AfriCOBRA, Joan Mitchell, Henry Darger, Elizabeth Murray, Kerry James Marshall, Richard Hunt, Jessica Stockholder, and hundreds of other pioneers. It is where the Wall of Respect was painted. Half a dozen of the most expensive, most famous paintings ever made live in Chicago, as do a half million or so of the poorest citizens of this country, many of whom have virtually no access at all to the arts.

The volatile history of Chicago art fairs is part of the idiosyncratic heritage of the city, but it can only be relevant to a common future if the young (in body or in heart) can transform that history into the embryonic stage of a broader, more experimental, more inclusive Art Week ecosystem—something worthy of Chicago's status as a unique cultural leader, with the potential to survive and prosper.

Phil Barcio

Phillip Barcio is a freelance art journalist and fiction author whose work has appeared in Hyperallergic, Momus, IdeelArt, La Gazette Drouot, AMA Art Basel Magazine, Western Humanities Review, Michigan Quarterly Review, New Art Examiner, and several other publications, and is included in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. You can find him at www.philbarcio.com.

Artist MFU



(Miklos Legrady, 31" x 37" - 78.74cm x 93.98cm, acrylic on cardboard, October 4, 2015 Copied from FaceBook.)

"They are like high priests murmuring to each other".
-Camille Paglia

Dr. Jaclyn Meloche just published her book through YYZArtistBooks (Toronto). Titled "What is our Role?: Artists in Academia and the Post-Knowledge Economy". It follows the theme of her symposium some years back at the Lillian Smith Library, also sponsored by YYZ. Meloche, reflecting on what she learned on her own journey through academia, said that artists today need a Ph.D. to attain the high level of accomplishment that only advanced academic studies deliver. The symposium illustrated this with work by four post-graduate students, all showing strong, interesting, even fascinating art when they started their doctorate. The work got weaker as they progressed through the program; by graduation day their art looked like postmodern clones, the ones that make us roll our eyes in despair.

It looked as if these students had been homogenized, the originality squeezed out of them; they learned to get with the program. Postmodernity is anti-aesthetic, difficult, shocking; ideally it consists of work that no one would know was art unless they were told. During the 1960s, according to MOMA/Yale's Robb Storr, art moved from the Cedar Tavern to the seminar room; artists and curators went academic. They immersed themselves in art concepts since then shown error-prone, including rejecting non-verbal languages in favor of an intellectual premise. On graduating they put their scholarship into practice, leading to the deplorable state of contemporary art.

I raised a question on aesthetics; the work seen denied thoughts on beauty. Jaclyn showed severe disapproval at hearing the word beauty used in an art conversation. Did I know nothing of postmodernism? I replied, spooked by so stringent a voice: she was likely defending curatorial territory... and yet a dialogue should be an exchange of opinions and not the imposition of one. I nervously brought up Denis Dutton's YouTube video "The Art Instinct, a Darwinian Theory of Beauty".

Aesthetic taste, argues Denis Dutton, is an evolutionary

trait, and is shaped by natural selection. It's not, as most contemporary art criticism and academic theory would have it, 'socially constructed.' The human appreciation for art is innate, and certain artistic values carry across cultures. It seems an aesthetic perception ensured the survival of the perceiver's genes. What does that mean for the entire discipline of art history? Dutton argues, with forceful logic and hard evidence, that art criticism needs to be premised on an understanding of evolution, not on abstract 'theory'.

Today science reveals the vitality and importance of visual language and other non-verbal communication, along with body language and other subliminal forms of deep brain functions. It follows then that making art into a solely intellectual process is harmful and severs art from its supportive functions. We restrict art to superficial levels when we discard its sensory and aesthetic foundation, we deprive art of the vocabulary and grammar that are integral to our intellectual being and its intellectual meaning. I presented a condensed version of the above to keep it short, including other scientists who established beauty as an algorithm. Some in the audience murmured agreement but curator Meloche was not pleased.

A while after Jaclyn's symposium I got in touch with YYZ Artists' Outlet director Ana Barajas, as I wanted to work with YYZ to publish a book. She asked me to wait, being overworked; a few more emails through the year met with a silence much like the flat-earth society's answer to astronomer Carl Sagan.

YYZBOOKS attest they are an alternative Canadian press dedicated to critical writing on art and culture. Their mandate is to encourage ideas and critical thinking and to foster appreciation of contemporary Canadian art and culture by producing challenging yet accessible publications that reach diverse audiences. Their objective is to provide a discursive forum for artists and writers and to facilitate new avenues of discourse within Canadian publishing. YYZBOOKS is the publishing arm of YYZ Artists Outlet, a non-profit artist-run centre in Toronto, Canada.

Eight months later YYZ announced the publication of

Jaclyn Meloche's book, but my emails went unanswered. I then sent Ana and Jaclyn a first draft of this article suggesting a discussion, expecting they'd invite me over to chat over Glenlivet and Dufflet's pastries, but no such luck. A deathly silence gave the impression they had pulled up the medieval drawbridge and barred the gate. Perhaps they were not fully committed to encouraging scholarly critical writing? They really don't seem eager to produce challenging yet accessible publications that reach diverse audiences.

The response came a year later, once this article was published. The board of YYZ found time to reply immediately, unlike Barajas, and they said that YYZ was grateful to director Ana Barajas for all the work she was doing, and the reason Ana had ignored my emails over 12 months was simply because she was very busy.

"On behalf of the board of directors of YYZ Artists Outlet, we were disappointed to see your text single out our Director Ana Barajas, who has been employed with us for many years and has done an excellent job in all facets of her work.

We take this kind of mistreatment and misrepresentation of our staff very seriously. We also take input from all community seriously and have attempted to remedy any misunderstandings by adding more information regarding our publication process to our website. I will repeat this information below:

Our publishing process takes time as we convene in separate review stages that involve staff, a series of specialized committees, and later as a Board of Directors".

It should be noted however that we do not work with artists or writers who attempt to bully us or our staff through public defamation. At this time, we are not interested in publishing your work with the exception of the open call entry you submitted to our Decentre Redux questionnaire, the publication of which will hopefully occur in 2019.

Hum... ignoring short polite emails over a year is not your typical attempt to remedy misunderstandings. Then I looked up what I'd written for Decentre Redux three years ago and started laughing: "repeated complaints from peers

on Facebook tell us that over the last decades, academics at artist-run centers have censored the art shown, restricting it to intellectual values, and in doing so they may have throttled the muse, poor thing. Most fine arts producers graduate from similar schools and share the same values, which are reflected in their association, their production, and the systems created thereby... surely a cultural blindness results from such group judgments. This homogeneity includes limiting participation to those sharing the same outlook and language, narrowing the game to believers in a common ideology, in effect creating

a tautology."

These problems that I'd mentioned three years earlier reappear once again writ large. Because of budget and years of effort invested in Dr. Jaclyn Meloche's work, Ana Barajas and YYZ were in effect 'married' to her. They were certainly not going to support and publish a contrary view even if based on solid evidence, not for all the diversity and inclusion in their mandate. This strategy to dismiss my voice was in fact their problem, a failing of their mandate and mission statement.

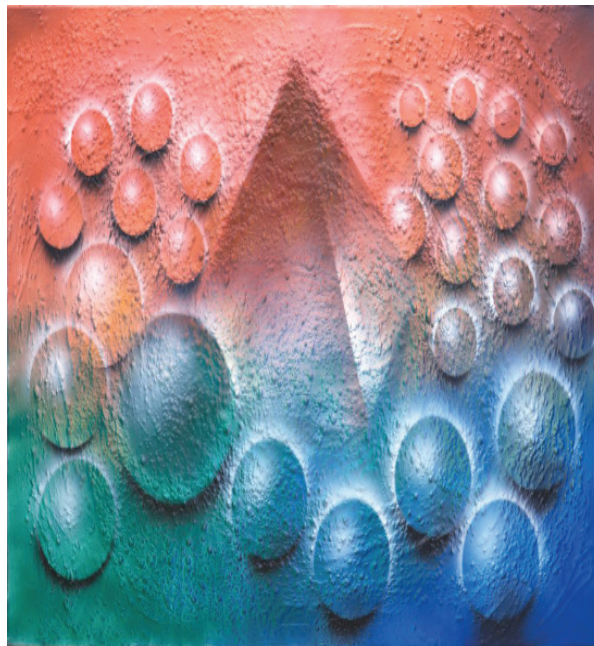
Miklos Legrady, The curator, 26" x 36" - 66.04cm x 91.44cm, acrylic on cardboard. October 18, 2015

It brought to mind H.G. Wells' A

Short History of the World, on the papacy of Innocent III (1160-1216): "And it was just because many of them secretly doubted the entire soundness of their vast and elaborate doctrinal fabric that they would brook no discussion of it. They were intolerant of questions or dissent, not because they were sure of their faith, but because they were not."

It's interesting to find this pattern prevalent in today's art - here's a Gabriel Scorgie post shared by St. Catharine's Bart Gazzola: "There is a concerted effort among many progressives to pre-empt artistic risk-taking. They want the artist to work on pre-approved themes and express pre-approved truths, even if the artist herself suspects those truths may not actually be truths at all." The context here was that when you placate ideological critics it pushes art into the realm of propaganda.

Helen Pluckrose also writes in *Areo* that "Something has gone wrong in the university... their scholars increasingly bully students, administrators, and other departments into



Blog from Legrady - Baudrillard

adhering to their worldview." Possibly YYZArtistBooks encourages 'critical thinking' only by their friends, and friends don't critique each other. Danielle S. McLaughlin of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says that when we can no longer explore and discuss ideas that are troubling and even transgressive, we are limited to approved doses of information in community-sanctioned packets.

Worrisome at best, our Canadian failure of logic and scholarship, this refusal to engage for fear that it might shake the tree.

In an Apollonian culture increasingly indifferent to memory and allergic to tradition, (artists) struggle to find an official justification for their arts. And both radical politics and high theory are attempts by the academy to supply that justification — to rebrand the (arts) as the seat of social justice and a font of political reform, or to assume a pseudoscientific mantle that lets academics claim to be interrogating (art) with the rigor and precision of a lab tech doing dissection.

Ross Dothan, Oh! the humanities! The New York Times, August 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/08/opinion/oh-the-humanities.html>

Basically I disagree with Meloche's faith in Academia as a site to shape artists. I think some serious reforms are needed, if not an entire revolution. One jumps through hoops and gets with the program, learns to be an artist like all the other artists... what's not to love in the homogeneity? Unavoidably, when a bad idea enters the system it spreads like a virus, and when bad ideas take root they are tenaciously hard to uproot.

No school wants to stand up and rock the boat - there's no place for opinions when a curator hath spoken, yet immutable laws say the good must make way for the better. As Oliver Cromwell might say to them too: "begone, you have sat too long".

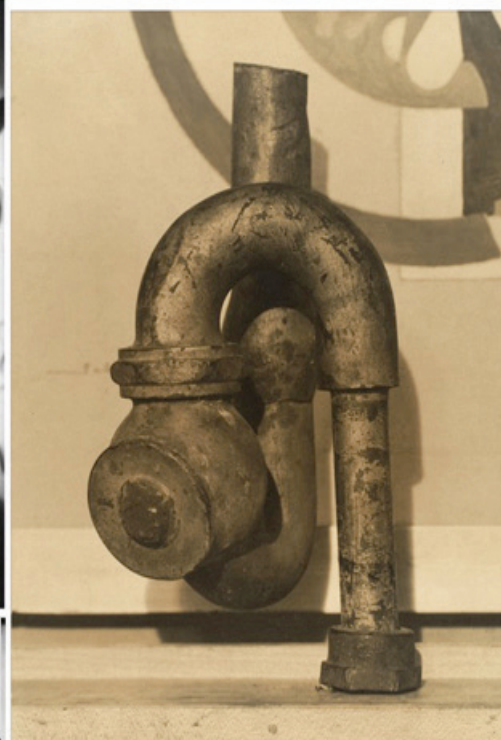
Many of those who grew up with the idea that art means placing your shoes on a table will not change their mind, in fact will actively resist change. But the times they are

a-changing, some of us want something better from art than stinky shoes on the table.

Take that to a more sophisticated level; asking for quality in art threatens the Canadian art community. Until now, quality in visual artwork was supposed to reside in academic skills like verbal expression, coupled with insight on the complexities of art history, and some way to illustrate these bedrock academic beliefs by making works of art to illustrate the more important ideas. It did not matter if the illustration was wan, insipid, or boring as long as it spoke an insider language that made it a work of academic art. You can see how that misses the mark.

We praise whatever we're offered even when illegitimate. It could be we're so used to bad art, so starved of good work that we look for whatever solace we can glean from the bland offerings of our time. Or perversely, we praise art for belonging to the postmodern negation of aesthetic. Counter-aesthetic means unattractive and uninteresting, which we're told is now an important concept in art. No Art, denying art, bad art, the opposite of art; it's a big thing. But with No Art you have no art.

Miklos Legrady



"God" by Baroness Elsa von Freytag Laringhaven and Morton Schamberg

Blog from Legrady - Dada

Belated Tribute to a Gifted Painter

SUMMARY: Long neglected, French Impressionist Berthe Morisot finally is getting recognition in a touring retrospective, now in Washington. The exhibition traces the painter's development as an Impressionist and includes less successful experiments with the dissolution of form. An innate sadness permeates much of her work, which is outstanding for its exploration of light, color and movement.

Your life must be charming at this moment," wrote Edna Morisot to her sister Berthe in 1869, "to talk with M. Degas while watching him draw, to laugh with Manet, to philosophize with Puvis."

Neglected by most 20th century Impressionist historians, Berthe Morisot was a founding member of the movement. Critics of her time called her the most dedicated of them all. The first major American retrospective of her work, "Berthe Morisot, Impressionist," on view at Washington's National Gallery of Art, gives this artist long overdue recognition. She emerges as a quintessential painter's painter, an unexpected genius with the brush.

Beautiful as well as talented, Morisot attracted Manet's attention first as a fascinating woman and a model. Some of his most ravishing portraits dwell lovingly on her piquant features, sultry expression and dusky curls. (One of the best of these, "Repose," hangs near the show's entrance.)

Within a few years, however, she won the respect of Manet and other artists for her ability to capture an animated scene in quicksilver brushwork. Her paintings aroused such admiration that more famous male colleagues — Monet and Renoir as well as Manet — began copying her motifs and her subtle color harmonies.

Her subjects are seldom ambitious. She painted her two sisters and their children, outings in the park, vacation land and seascapes, innumerable studies of her daughter, Julie, born when the artist was 37. Her compositions tend to be simple and straightforward, with little of Manet's trickiness or Degas's startling cropping.

What makes her work outstanding is its brilliant painterly exploration of the relationships between color, light and movement. By deftly interweaving complementary hues and accenting them with white and black, Morisot endows her oils and watercolors with vibrant life. In her 1875 studies of the Isle of Wight harbor, for example, one can almost feel the breeze that ripples the sun-dappled water and flaps the ships' red flags.

Her delicacy of touch is particularly evident in her use of

white. (According to Julie, her mother always wore either white or black.) In paintings such as "The Bath (Girl Arranging Her Hair)" and "Getting Out of Bed," Morisot's whites are so full of color — violets and creams, pale greens, blues and pinks — that they suffuse both figure and background with scintillating light.

"She grinds flower petals onto her palette, in order to spread them later on her canvas with airy, witty touches," wrote one enthusiastic critic.

Always a genius with watercolor—and there are many charming examples in the show — Berthe Morisot adapted her watercolor technique to oils as she grew older. She barely sketched her figures with loose hatchings of the brush, leaving large areas of canvas bare, as in the large work "Julie with a Doll," a wonderfully airy painting long regarded as unfinished.

"Only Manet and the Japanese can indicate a mouth, eyes, a nose, with a single stroke of the brush so accurate that the rest of the face models itself," she enviously noted. Startled by her daringly abstract canvases in the 1881 Impressionist exhibit, critic Charles Ephrussi complained, "One step further and it will be impossible to distinguish or understand anything at all."

The show is not all masterpieces, certainly. Many of her experiments with the dissolution of form through ambient light go too far for coherent structure. And clearly Morisot's uphill struggle to achieve a professional career took its toll of her energies and confidence.

Both before and after her marriage to Eugene Manet (Edouard's brother), she lived in a protective family circle that provided her with subjects and support. But her life as an artist was circumscribed by restrictive conventions of French middle-class life and by family responsibilities. As a whole, the exhibition moves from the crisp, easy brilliance of the artist's 20s and 30s toward melancholy, languid compositions at the end of her life.

The dreamy young women she so often painted seem caged by their comfortable surroundings, lethargic victims of their own propriety. And many pictures of her beloved Julie suggest a conflict between maternal care and Morisot's longing to escape stifling domesticity. The carefree child merges with vibrant nature; the mother remains immobile, adventuring only with her eyes.

One feels Morisot's innate sadness most in a remarkable pastel self-portrait. One of the most compellingly honest self-portraits to come out of the Impressionist era, it shows the artist in her mid-40s, already gray, gazing wide-eyed at

her own aging face. “I am approaching the end of my life,” she lamented to her sister Edna several years later, “and yet I am still a mere beginner.”

It was the discovery of this self-portrait in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago that triggered exhibition curator Charles Stuckey’s interest in the artist. Jointly sponsored by the National Gallery and Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, the exhibition owes much to his and co-curator William Scott’s keen appreciation of the very qualities of Morisot’s work that have caused less sensitive critics to overlook it. Many of the late paintings Stuckey prizes most in the show — “Forest of Compiègne,” for example — have languished in storerooms or attics because people thought them too sketchy.

Stuckey has even come to love the moody late portraits, done in 1894, shortly before Morisot died March 2, 1895, of pulmonary congestion. These strange paintings, with their simple harsh colors, exaggerated arabesques and intense emotional expression, presage the expressionist works of Edvard Munch.

Following Renoir’s lead, Morisot, a few years earlier, had been studying the works of French Rococo masters and doing preparatory drawings in red chalk. There is something a little saccharine about her first efforts in this more considered style, however. Her series of young girls picking cherries is unpleasantly artificial.

The expressive later portraits are still carefully drawn, but Morisot has returned to the source of her genius, her ability to recapture the initial feeling aroused by a subject. The adolescent longings of her daughter are painfully and powerfully evoked in “Julie Daydreaming” for example.

The galleries one wants to go back to, though, are those that hold the brilliant canvases of Berthe Morisot’s early maturity. “Hide and Seek,” from the collection of Mrs. John Hay Whitney, for example, is one of the great early Impressionist pictures. Painted in 1873 when she was still under the influence of Manet (she gave him the painting), it combines decisive drawing with an uncanny evocation of an evanescent moment through brushwork and color.

She avoids any trace of sentimentality in this seemingly casual little painting of a mother and child at play. Both stand still. Their game around the little cherry tree that splits the composition is suggested only by the slight forward bend of the mother. The whites of her dress echo the whites of the cloudy sky; the undulations of her umbrella find counterparts in the undulations of the fields beyond.

The softness of the landscape recalls the pastoral scenes of Corot, one of Morisot’s early private tutors, but it is far less



Berthe Morisot The Bath (Girl Arranging Her Hair)

mannered. Clearly the houses and fields in the distance were directly observed.

The marvel here is that Morisot has knit figures and landscape into an indissoluble, irresistible harmony. She has achieved the ultimate Impressionist aim, to draw the viewer into an ambience of light and color so compelling that one shares the sensual delights of the day with the subjects of the painting, rather than observing them from the outside.

“Berthe Morisot, Impressionist,” closes at the National Gallery on Nov. 29. The show will then travel to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and in the spring to the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in South Hadley, Mass.

Jane Addams Allen 1986

(1935-2004, Co-founder of New Art Examiner, the visual-arts critic for the Washington Times from its inception in 1982 through 1989. She received such accolades as the 1980 National Endowment for the Arts Critics Award and the Manufacturers Hanover/Art World Award for Excellence in Art Criticism.)

Ontario

Joseph Beuys, April 7, 2018 – July 2020, Art Gallery of Ontario

"Such retroactive and remote anointing is far more difficult in the context of contemporary art, which for the past century has often been the product of speech acts. I am an artist because I say I am an artist. This is art because I say it is."

"It's no small thing to be a lifestyle artist. It is a complex and difficult con."

"I hate seeing the bad work. I hate seeing the ephemera. It always strikes me as something that the artist wouldn't have consented to if they were alive."

The objects and images that you encounter in the small room (relative to space allotted to other concurrent installations at the Art Gallery of Ontario) are barely art. The almost dismissive, apathetic nature of the works is mirrored – or further degraded – by the almost casual, uncaring installation of the pieces that seem even more like detritus of Beuys' practice than usual (or intended, by the late artist).

Red Rabbit (which is directly to your left and slightly behind you as you enter the space, and is as striking in the rare vibrancy of colour and movement as the thick – reminiscent of congealed blood – marks and forms that seem to roll from left to right) is perhaps the first work you'll encounter, and easily the best. Directly in front as you enter but strangely less 'physical', despite being sculptural, is Untitled (Vitrine with Horns). The axe-like implements look worn, stained and marred in points with paint and indexical marks of usage. Their vitrine is funereal, and extending out on each side of this 'casket' are two dark, metallic looking rectangles that are void-like, and yet mirroring (imperfectly) your gaze back at you. Untitled 'appears' behind you, and the 'twin' to the black 'windows' can be seen further behind/further in front in reflection. It's almost as though Untitled (Vitrine with Horns) extends the width of the room, and you have to break the connection to walk further in, to offer more attention to the glut of smaller scratchy and stained drawings – especially on the wall far from you as you enter

the gallery space – rise above the swamp of what is offered to us in this somewhat cramped room.

The physical arrangement of the space, however, gives a certain reverence to Hasenrab, 1964/1979, and the confused nature of this mixed media work functions as a microcosm of the problems of this show: flotsam and jetsam of Beuys' practice, and we're given little to decode the debris offered.

In Robert Rodriguez's essay *The God of the Desert* wherein he visits Jerusalem, he's nonplussed by how often 'historic' sites and objects are 'recreations' or fabrications or simply

implied – an absence rather than evidence – or referential to something else ('Later the [church] cave was destroyed. What remains is the interior of the cave, which is nothing.')

Beuys here is a teaser if you're familiar with his charismatic role in the Western canon of art. If you don't know this, it's a bit like seeing people kneel and pray before ANOTHER piece of the 'one true

cross'. That might have occurred to me (Rodriguez aside) because the gallery Beuys occupies requires you to traverse the numerous religious works of the Thompson collection. Beuys – the man, the art – requires an act of faith in the face of the detritus on display, and I'm too much of a skeptic for that leap. So many works here are unimpressive aesthetically, and their titles offer no assistance: the odd drawing that hints at the silhouette of a woman, or another that has some of the same flow and form of Rabbit, tantalize you, but then the pressed leaves and pencil doodles (where his signature is the most prominent aspect, which one might acidly suggest is all the matters...) deflate your expectations again. *Sans titre* (Fille de profil) (1948), *Memorieren von Wachsplastiken* (1957) and *Émanation du précipice* (1974) span nearly three decades and yet are interchangeable in their shoddy irrelevance. But it's all "a romantic myth, like Joseph Beuys and his fat and felt and mountain people."

"It's no small thing to be a lifestyle artist. It is a complex and difficult con..."

"Performance art had established that an artist could be the medium for his or her art: Beuys moved this idea on and became the artwork. His persona when performing and his "offstage" self were one and the same. [...] Beuys as a character became the unifying factor."

"I didn't want to say she wasn't an artist. But she was a performance artist."

The sparse wall didactic is unizluminating rote: Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) was among the most significant artists to emerge in Germany after the Second World War....best known for his sculpture and performance art, and often used found objects and everyday materials in his work. Beuys also drew constantly: drawing allowed him to experiment with different concepts and create a reservoir of ideas for other projects.

Nothing new or enlightening, but this latter part is what spurred me to make the trip to Toronto to attempt to engage with the sundry pieces: This selection of works...revolves around the theme of death. The notion of this exhibition functioning as a kind of memento mori sparked my interest (2019 has required negotiating three deaths, and what's left

behind, both emotionally and physically). In conversation with an artist whose own work explores memory and place, in talking of our parents, he remembered 'emptying' his mother's house and how 'any given handful or box of possessions could have been used to tell or invent any number of stories about her.'

But:"Isn't that true of all retrospectives? Isn't it rifling through a dead woman's purse, every time?"

On that same visit, I also experienced Betty Goodwin: Moving Towards Fire, several floors above Beuys. This also had a memento mori quality, as her notebooks were part of the display, and the late artist's aesthetic was also immediate and symbolic, as is sometimes seen in the best of Beuys' practice. But her works entranced, while Beuys' perplexed, and Goodwin offered a personal narrative that could echo with many visitors, whereas Beuys seemed more an obscurantist (one who deliberately prevents the facts or full details of something from becoming known) than 'social prophet'.

Bart Gazzola



Joseph Beuys. Hasengrab, 1964/1979. Mixed media, Overall: 140 × 190 × 280 cm. Private Collection © Estate of Joseph Beuys

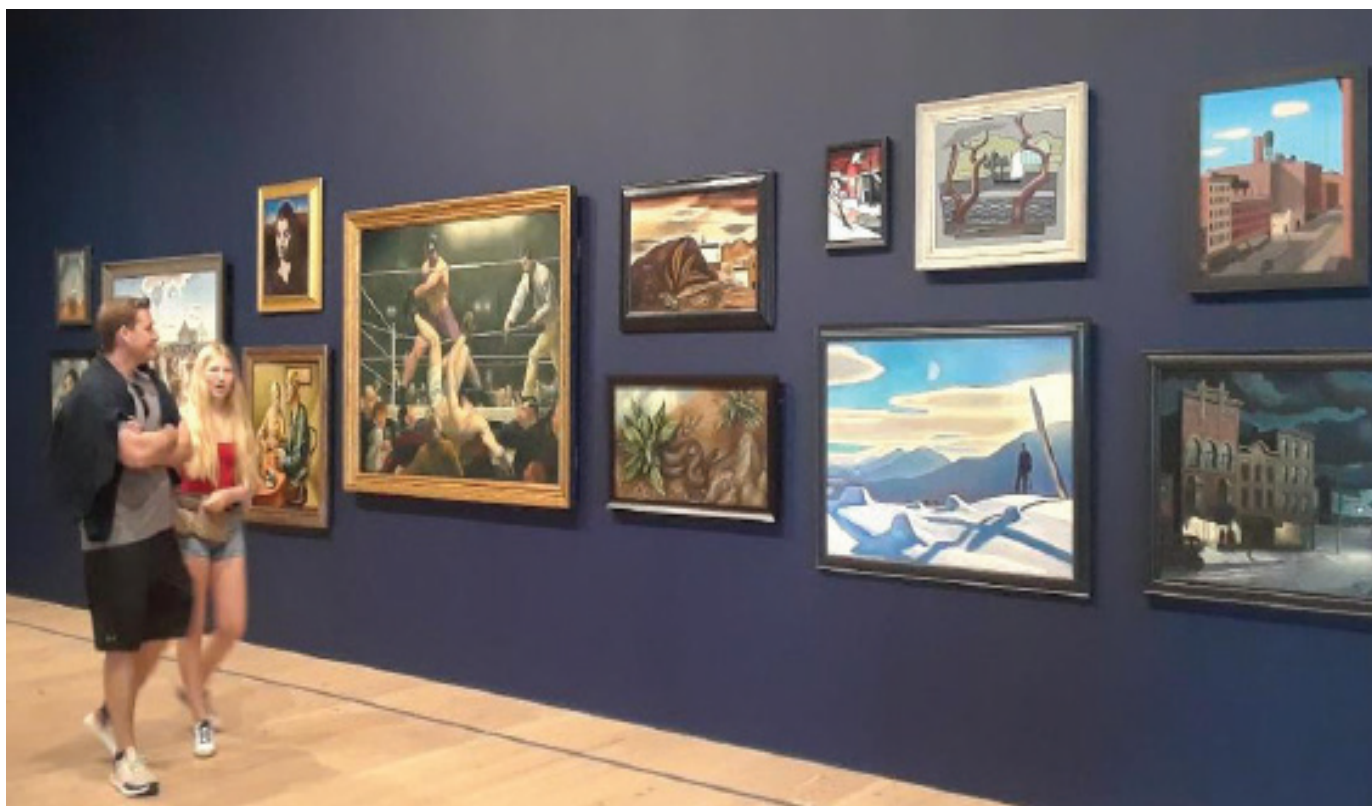
New York

The Whitney's Collection: Selections from 1900 – 1965

Five years in, The Whitney has become thoroughly at home in its spacious new digs and primo downtown locale. This is the second substantial collection re-installation since the new building's inaugural extravaganza. This rotation and attention to expanded contexts for a few renowned works that have remained on view in shifted juxtapositions is notable. The salon-style hanging in a dark blue gallery at the start (facing the seventh floor elevators) is effective in setting a range of mood, scale, and subjects popular in painting in Depression Era America. Ironically, an elite few were concurrently establishing galleries and museums, like the Guggenheims, the Rockefellers, and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, whose Whitney Museum of American Art opened in 1931 (in Greenwich Village). GVW was a committed supporter and promoter of living artists, not to mention, an artist herself aware that her career in that regard was inhibited by conflicts of interest with her broader mission. (None of several of her several sculptures in the collection appear in this show; photographic images of her in the early building do). Her interest in contemporary American artists contrasted, for the most part, with her

patron-of-the-arts peers and a left a strong artistic record of the years between the wars on the American scene. Nicely foregoing disruptive wall labels, placards are available for reference. Renowned Regionalists like George Bellows and Thomas Hart Benton are immediately recognizable, partly due to their early and close identification with the Whitney. There were several women artists in this arrangement and elsewhere throughout that I was unfamiliar with previously, including Madeline Shiff (aka Wiltz), whose lively portrait of her artist-husband painting a landscape in a windowless studio (Wiltz at Work, 1932) perhaps both reinforces and goes towards filling the lacunae regarding her own art practice.

Overall, real estate was rightly apportioned according to the museum's holdings, starring Edward Hopper. One of the great "poignant clown" depictions of many in modernist painting appears in his early *Soir Bleu* (1914), a post-Impressionist-like Parisian pub scene and last European nod for the artist. Across the room and several decades the sublimely distilled New York air of Early Sunday Morning (1930) beckons. Nearby are works by





Norman Lewis, American Totem, 1960. Oil on canvas, 73 1/2 x 44 7/8 in. (186.7 x 114 cm).

Georgia O'Keeffe, whose approach to the visual world, via the results, are diametrically opposed. Sharing some stylistic aspects which each and much more, a number of panels from Jacob Lawrence's War Series (c. 1946-47) shows off his truly experimental, washy palette and repetitious, rhythmic form, yet forcefully conveying its humanistic, topical content. Alexander Calder's low-tech kinetic Circus (1926-1931) is featured in a documentary film (1961; transferred to bright video) in which the artist activates his ensemble. That is, he cranks, blows, twists, and otherwise manipulates his miniaturist mixed media props, characters and animals into action ingeniously. If art is play for adults (as some psychoanalytical theories suggest) Calder was deep in and highly convincing. Postscript: great art can be fashioned from the sparest scraps of detritus.

Other pre-WWII works are grouped in relatively familiar ways, for example "Machine Age" aesthetics, exemplified by the cubistic architectural paintings of Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth and Art Deco sculpture by John Storrs; and Surrealist-tinged work, which, in the United States,

elided with stylistic and thematic elements of Social Realism and Regionalism, whether or not with conscious intent. A remarkable contribution here in view of later video art, is an animated film of whimsy ghost-like shapes by Mary Ellen Bute (Spook Sport, 1939). Stand outs on their own include a quirky ode to the end of WWI that adds fabric folds to Lady Liberty by painter Florine Stettin, later affiliated with Surrealism, and the quietly uplifting terracotta-as-bronze Head (1947) by Elizabeth Catlett, whose oeuvre bridged the late Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts Movement.

The Abstract Expressionist section is energized by a boldly splotted Ed Clark canvas and a crusty, monumental relief painting by Jay DeFeo. Dominating the postwar spread overall is Tom Wesselmann's ginormous Still Life Number 36 (1964), from his loose kitchen-counter collage-paintings series, which could not better anticipate the Photoshop-based paintings of Jeff Koons and other "commodities" artists of the digital age. Warhol's silver-screened Elvis Two Times (1963), however, still packs the strongest Pop punch despite, or because of the artist's continuing resonance in in so many spheres of the art world.

A more modest exhibition on another floor on color in painting of the 1960s works as a kind of addendum, first and foremost suggesting how dominant abstraction had become by then. Kenneth Noland's dizzying and sprawling "post-painterly" (à la Clement Greenberg) striped abstraction at the entrance (New Day, 1967) looks thoroughly triumphant. A now classic stained canvas "bunting" piece by Sam Gilliam stands out against the majority geometrically-defined color-blocked experiments that describes most works included, some differentiated just slightly from others among several different artists. And some representational artists, it is proposed, nonetheless focused primarily on color in at least some work of this period, as in examples by Alex Katz, Bob Thompson, Kay Walkingstick, and Emma Amos. A thoughtful but not too didactic display that gives good ground for a venture, or return to, the 2019 Biennial also on view through September 22.

Jody B. Cutler-Bittner

"Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s,
March 29 – August 28, 2019
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York"

Venice

A Ferro e Fuoco

Retrospective dedicated to Jannis Kounellis, Ca 'Corner della Regina, Venice, 11 May / 24 November 2019, curated by Germano Celant

As soon as I entered the vast hall on the first noble floor of Ca 'Corner della Regina (headquarters of the Fondazione Prada Venezia), I was struck by an array of hats, shoes, dark coats: I thought of people moving around the world, of migrations, of the Holocaust. In "Untitled" (2011), created by Kounellis a few years before his death in Rome in 2017, is an emotionally charged installation, an almost physical punch where the overwhelming presence/absence of the artist immediately catches the attention. It's a feeling that accompanied me throughout the other salons of the splendid Venetian palace. Kounellis plays with all the materials of Arte Povera: wool, coal, fabric, iron, steel ... every space surprised me in a different way: the "Fire Daisy" is an iron flower from whose center springs a flame, triggered by a gas cylinder. Fire is seen as a regenerative element and bearer of revolutionary energy, while the smoke and soot that cover stones, canvases and walls, represent the impossibility of affecting the social order through art.

Fundamentally, Kounellis is a political artist, in the deepest meaning of the word; his works want to stir up society, revolutionize it.

The installation "Tragedia civile" (1975) is a testimony of a historical and personal crisis. A wall covered with thin gold leaf, the element that according to alchemical tradition is the ultimate result of combustion, contrasts with the black color of the garments (a coat and hat) hung on a coat rack. The presence/absence of the artist is felt very strongly also here.

Other works are based on the contrast of lightness, instability, cyclicity connected to nature and heaviness, artificiality and rigidity of man-made artefacts: they are symbols of the condition of living beings, caught between the desire for freedom and the cage of social constraints. Many works testify to this feeling which are the iron plates, inside which the artist has inserted hair, or where he has placed a fragile egg, or some wool ...

The exhibition is also an olfactory experience: on a long wall, many small scales containing ground coffee are hung, while hundreds of grappa glasses support a heavy lead shape depicting Munch's scream.



Fondazione Prada – Kounellis

A dazzling green oil painting contains the notes of a pentagram from a sacred composition by Bach, which is performed live by a violoncellist. Here, too, Kounellis overcomes the traditional distinction between artistic language: image and sound merge; author and spectator share the same experience.

The artist proves he is an innovator and an experimenter also in his reuse of Greek-Roman art. A Greek by birth, he soon moved to Rome; his work is imbued with classicism, however he does not simply repeat traditional models, but transforms them, while keeping essential elements. On a marble table plaster fragments that are copies of ancient statues reproduce the ancient statuary: a hero's profile, a hand, a raised foot (the Achilles heel?) and the drapery of a robe are the parts that our imaginary recognizes completing them into a whole.

Kounellis also focuses on different ways to hang an object. In one of his installations, wardrobes of different colors and shapes are hung horizontally from the ceiling with steel cables, almost a challenge to the law of gravity that gives us a reversed view of reality. In the courtyard of the building, seven metal plates hold bags of coffee beans in a verticality that seems endless.

The exhibition presents 60 works from Italian and international museums (1950 – 2015) and is a tribute to the master of Arte Povera. It reconstructs a path that, as the curator says, looks "like a maze, dear to Jannis, in which to get lost, finding the vitality of fragmented entities but capable of reflecting a continuum".

Liviana Martin

Milan

Magnum's First – Diocesan Museum, Milan, May 9 - October 6, 2019

It's truly inexplicable how the first exhibition of the Magnum photo agency, which was presented in five German cities between 1956 and 1957, has been forgotten for fifty years. The artwork was found by sheer chance only in 2006 inside two boxes which contained, in addition to the photographs, coloured panels and some documents presenting the instructions on how to arrange the materials. This is absolutely amazing.

The Diocesan Museum decided to celebrate this first and important review entitled "Gesicht der Zeit" (meaning "Face of Time") by exhibiting the 83 black and white vintage prints. These play an important historic role, as well as documenting Magnum's importance. The agency, famous on an international level, was created in 1947 by four different individuals, who shared the same political faith and the same drive to create something new and revolutionary, even if they had different talents, technical approaches and creative processes. They defended the value of photojournalism as a historic and artistic document and by doing so they challenged the editorial giants. These founders were: Endre Friedmann, alias Robert Capa, David Seymour, Henri Cartier-Bresson and George Rodger. Three of them, together with other photographers, organized Magnum's First, which the Diocesan Museum revisits following the original set up. The path of this show starts with the exhibition of the different documents and continues with a series of boxes, each containing reportage from the eight authors.

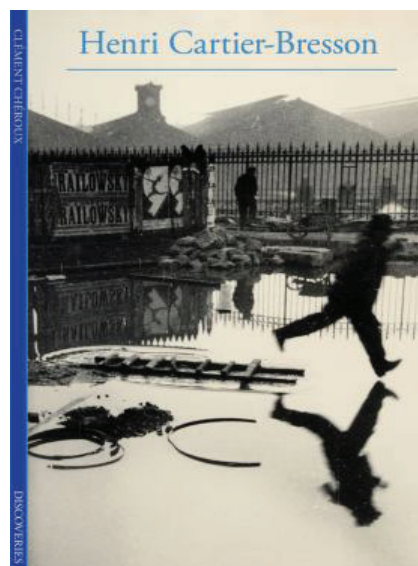
At the heart of the exhibition are the 18 photographs of Henri Cartier-Bresson. These are a testimony to the dramatic events following Indian Independence which occurred in Delhi between 1947 and 1948. The reportage was published in Life in 1948, and it immortalized the hope and desperation of millions of Indians who experienced and took part in the "quiet revolution", the historic mission led by Mahatma Gandhi. The photographs which picture Gandhi's last days and his cremation are dramatic and moving. Hundreds of thousands of Indians took part in the ceremony. They became a never-ending human tide, an uninterrupted sequence of crying men and women. These shots blatantly represent Cartier-Bresson's creed, that taking pictures meant aligning head, eye and

heart.

Another master of photojournalism was Robert Capa, who became famous thanks to a shot portraying a Spanish militiaman as he was surrendering to death during the civil war. Capa was essentially a war photographer and followed conflicts on various fronts from a close distance. His mantra was "If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough". Sadly for him, this conviction caused his death. At only forty years old he stepped on an unexploded mine. In this exhibition, however, he did not present a war shot, but instead, three pictures depicting a Basque festival, which took place in Biarritz in 1951. The pictures, entitled "Village Festival", show popular dances and their goal is to highlight how the region, devastated by the civil war, went back to peace and normality.

The exhibition follows with the shots of Ernst Haas, Erich Lessing, Werner Bischof, Jean Marquis, Inge Morath (who was the only woman working in the agency) and Marc Riboud. The review is the second most important photographic exhibition held by the Diocesan Museum.

Loretta Pettinato



Book of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Photo in public domain

Genderless Faces

'Themself', new portrait paintings by Sarah Ball, at Anima Mundi, St Ives, 26 July – 6 Sept 2019

Entering the gallery and confronted immediately by the arresting portrait of 'Izzy', I was half-prepared for a dazzling exhibition of beautifully-painted portraits, accompanied by intriguing back stories. Sarah Ball's practice relies on gathering found images from the media and from historical archives, and in this new series of works she has roamed through social media, sourcing her muses to explore alternative identities and generate fictional narratives.

Her small portraits are exquisite icons; the detailed attention to hair and clothing allows her to play with ideas around gender and sexuality, at the same time encouraging a reading of the 'sitter' as vulnerable. A reading that seems to be confirmed by the large portraits. Take 'Marie', for example, a luminous blue-eyed face looking out from a Rembrandtian field of brown – or 'Marie', resilient, almost confrontational - brown-eyed in two portraits, blue-eyed in another. Perhaps not so vulnerable then: the empathy that I had prepared to feel on first entering the gallery was beginning to fade. And I was beginning to be bothered by the mask-like quality of the faces: the absence of lines, pores, spots, wrinkles, pointed to an abstraction not only aesthetic but pragmatic.

Perhaps the most instantly-accessible portrait is that of Elliot (top floor) with his/her eyes concealed by large blue-lensed sunglasses, and a blue jacket painted with a flatness reminiscent of Alex Katz's portraits of white upper-middleclass Americans. Opposite are three small portraits of Elliot in headscarf and oversize spectacles. Between them, the large portrait of 'Tex' stares uncompromisingly, blankly, from a field of warm browns, reds and golds.

Far from evincing a feeling of empathy with the imagined lives of these imagined sitters, these images are haunted by the digital media from which they originated. They are full of contradictions and ambiguities, but this is their attraction: underlying this are the cold algorithms of social media that generate images without content, images with fictional narratives, self-promotional images, images of a generation of digital natives seemingly entirely self-absorbed and uncritical of the media that circulate and proliferate their likenesses endlessly.

'Themself' is a virtuoso performance of painting that opens up not only questions of image, identity, and gender, but also points to a post-human aesthetic, reflecting us back to ourselves through a miasma of social media practices.

Patricia Wilson Smith

Unusual Forms

Leach Pottery and Anima Mundi in St Ives, 29 June - 11 August 2019

Andile Dyalvane has been in residence at the Leach Pottery in St.Ives,, Cornwall, UK and his work is seen there before he returns to South Africa. He was at the private view, resplendent and expansive, shaking hands with everyone and wearing African looking face paint. His pots resemble him in being robust and dark with surprising vibrant touches of blue or red. The forms included folded vessels, layers of clay, lumpy additions, an applied little house, a drawn water bird. There are frills, cuts, textures, all heavy looking.

Also a surprise were the prices from £350 to over £10,000.

Down in the town from 15th June to 19th July there is a Trevor Bell solo show at Anima Mundi, the artist having sadly died in 2017 aged 87. Here the paintings are surprising in not being rectangular. These abstract compositions could be inspired by places or weather or simply from intuitive painting with titles added later.

The artist liked purples, greys and sandy yellows with matt surfaces. The gallery assistant tells me Trevor Bell experimented with paper shapes to determine the forms and arrangements. Then canvas is stretched on a wooden framework.

Here also the prices are substantial, from £5,400 to £64,800. The works are large, impressive in the bare gallery spaces. There is also music by Jamie Mills and dance by Sarah

Fairhall and Lois Taylor related to the paintings and shown on video. Trevor Bell is one of the few painters who rejects the rectangle. I met an ex-student of his who claimed to have given his tutor the idea from their own experiments. However, if so, once voiced or shown in art ideas are

everyone's and Trevor Bell certainly used this in lively ways right until the end of his career.

Mary Fletcher

www.axisweb.org/p/maryfletcher

Drawn to Life

An Exhibition of a Life Drawing Class - Redwing Gallery, Penzance 29 May - 12 June, 2019

It's no secret that behind every successful artist there are hours of hidden practice and bins full of frustrations that never see the light of day. I reluctantly climbed the stairs to the Drawn to Life Exhibition at the Redwing Gallery in Penzance thinking I would see what should have been thrown-away. But I was greeted by an unexpectedly professional exhibition of work completed by members of

the Penzance Life Drawing Class. Some of the sketches were hopefully priced and many of the titles of the pieces lacked belief and vitality. However, the main value of the exhibition was contained within works where the artist had taken the basic theme of life drawing and moved with it into a more complex narrative.

Lee Stevenson combined his print-making skills with warm shades of ochre to compose 'Life Studies'. This is an evocative panorama of kneeling naked figures which conjured thoughts of naked worshippers or meditating monks.

Huw Marshall's acrylic interpretations of the basic theme were original and eye-catching. His longitudinal work, 'Closer' (£150) demonstrated maturity and a resolve to develop an exclusive style. Small male and a female, naked figures face each other, forced into close proximity by numerous longitudinal lines which sweep down the canvas. His ability to resolve a theme into a more complex work shone through in the apocalyptic landscape of 'Still Human' (£600) where naked humans struggle to resist annihilation.

As a digital artist, Diana Forest's (aka Gazelle) work sits in a

worthy category of its own. Her unique style of combining artistic skill with a mastery of digital media presents us with work where normal boundaries are manipulated to create vibrant, contemporary pieces. The surreal world of 'Ladies Sleeping Through Tea' (£169: one of a limited edition of 10 on archive paper) can only make us smile at the idea of naked ladies languishing luxuriously over an innocent cup of tea.



Life Drawing Class - Ladies Sleeping Through Tea by Diana Forest

Diana's ability to massage reality transports us into a world where conventional rules no longer apply and where we are forced to consider the exciting potential of this emerging art form.

Sheelagh Barton



Left: Life Drawing Class - Life Studies by Lee Stevenson



Above: Life Drawing Class - Closer by Huw Marshall



Life Drawing Class - Still Human by Huw Marshall

Domestic Bliss

Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, 8 March - 31 December 2020

When did the curator's imperatives gain supremacy over the artist's agenda? In the case of Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art, the current exhibition 'Domestic Bliss' is the brainchild of a creative in-house curator with no budget. Katie Bruce raids the gallery's collection to produce an attractive and quirky show, albeit around fairly hackneyed themes of domesticity, feminism, colonialism, relationships and consumerism

Bruce says the catalyst for her thinking was Nicola L's female Yellow Foot sofa, displayed here as a piece of domestic sculpture. The gallery space is well segmented by sideboards, bookcases, and a fireplace and wash-basin drawn onto the wall, giving the impression of a domestic space and providing foils for the artworks a.k.a. ornaments - Daphne Wright's Home Ornaments and Grayson Perry's Growing Up as a Boy vase, among others.

I liked the juxtaposition between Alasdair Gray's social realism painted portraits and Nick Waplington's photograph of a family in a council house, displayed above the fireplace. The photograph captures the moment when a baby on its mother's lap drools milk onto the carpet. It would be voyeuristic but for the humour. Moreover the spare furnishings of the photographed home confound expectations of the type of opulent portrait usually found above a classical fireplace.

The surreal recordings created by Sian Robinson Davies of improbable conversations between inanimate objects - a pound coin and ice cream, a kettle and a dictionary - humorously illustrate our faltering attempts to understand and communicate

If your aim in seeing an exhibition is to be amused, gently challenged, and have your perceptions sharpened, then this exhibition is for you. I enjoyed it.

Victoria Howard

London

Unpeopled Paintings

In most of Harald Sohlberg's paintings there are no people. It took me a while to realise this, because signs of recent human domestic activity are everywhere – modest white houses glimpsed through encroaching forest, telegraph poles on empty roads, tables set for summer drinks on lakeside balconies, wintry streets of rough wooden buildings, defiant churches foregrounded by graves or mocked by pulsing stormclouds above the spires. The effect is of intense and mysterious natural beauty undercut by a disquiet that you can't quite identify, at least not at first.

This haunted absence is particularly apparent in the summer paintings. In all of these, Sohlberg captures discrete moments in the slow dusk familiar to those who live in the north, the half light that lingers long after people have finally gone to bed. Here, the landscape stays awake, slowly changing colour as the light drains, by imperceptible increments, from sky, lake and forest.

The Country Road (1905) is an intimate portrait of northern summer twilight. An empty lane winds toward a distant line of hills, violet against a luminous yellow-greenish sky. The surrounding woods have begun to lose definition; telegraph poles, which don't appear to have wires, only emphasise the sense of timeless isolation. The light in Fisherman's Cottage, painted a year later, has retreated further – this is a nocturne in shades of midnight blue. The lonely white cottage is chastened by the vast watery expanses beyond it, and almost hidden by a screen of towering black trees. The painstaking brushwork in these pines, almost Japanese in style, gives the image a dreamlike clarity. A window in the house is lit, or is it just a reflection? The same house - or one very like it - appears in Sun Gleam (1894), this time in broad daylight. What is interesting here is the realisation that the house, despite the benign sunshine, is not the focus of the picture. An earthy path tries to lead the eye toward it, but it is the trees' shadows that dance on the ground, and the trees themselves whose restless shapes claim your attention.

Sohlberg himself admitted to being inspired, romantically, by the awareness of his own insignificance in nature. During a visit to the Rondane mountains in 1899 he experienced an epiphany, "a rush of emotion greater than I had ever experienced before...The longer I stood gazing at the scene the more I seemed to feel what a solitary and

pitiful atom I was in an endless universe." He became obsessed by one of these mountains and painted several versions as he strove to show his own terror and delight in isolation through the shifting blues on snow. In these, as in The Country Road and Fisherman's Cottage, light seems to glow through layers of paint from some unknown space below or behind it, resulting in colour which could be described as hypernatural.

His paintings of small copper-mining town of Roros, 400 km north of Oslo, while equally deserted, are markedly different in tone: the red wooden houses and rough empty streets, man made, have a scrappy, temporary look against wintry hills, and those hills, in turn, seem diminished, de-romanticised, marginalised, a human resource rather than an inspiration. And Night, Roros Church (1903), is truly unnerving: a pallid triangular troll-like building, hemmed in by a cramped graveyard, scattered with black crosses and disordered coffinlike gravestones. The houses of the living lie just beyond, but there are no mourners here. Similarly, Street in Roros, painted the previous year, shows wooden clapboard buildings with torn posters, while a dominating churchtower points to an ominous sky, heaving with with stormcloud and black birds.

Absence of people, freedom from people – for Sohlberg's contemporaries these works would have suggested memories of summers past, childhood images almost forgotten, while others might have identified a tension between rural Norway and the encroachment of industrial development. But in 2019 the impression is different – it is hard to avoid the idea of recent abandonment, of something leaking away with the light, the suspicion that you are looking at a post-human landscape. And in this sense the paintings have a highly modern resonance at a time when humanity is confronted daily by a brutal awareness of what is being lost in nature, haunted by memories of what we once had.

Josephine Gardiner

Harald Sohlberg (1869-1935). First exhibition outside Norway, Dulwich Picture Gallery London, February to June 2019.

Pittsburgh

Lo Fi Glamour

My wife and I are driving down Yonge Street on a midsummer's trip to Toronto in our almond colored, Honda Civic hatchback (our first vehicle) with the windows rolled down blasting out Kool Thing on our cassette deck as we meander to our campsite on the edge of town. The blood surging through my veins, super hyped, I am on top of the world, no cares, just this overwhelming feeling of euphoria, power, and strength. Music has the uncanny ability to instantly teleport a person back to a particular moment to relive that experience as if re-watching a favorite film. When I think of Kim Gordon my mind goes straight to Sonic Youth.

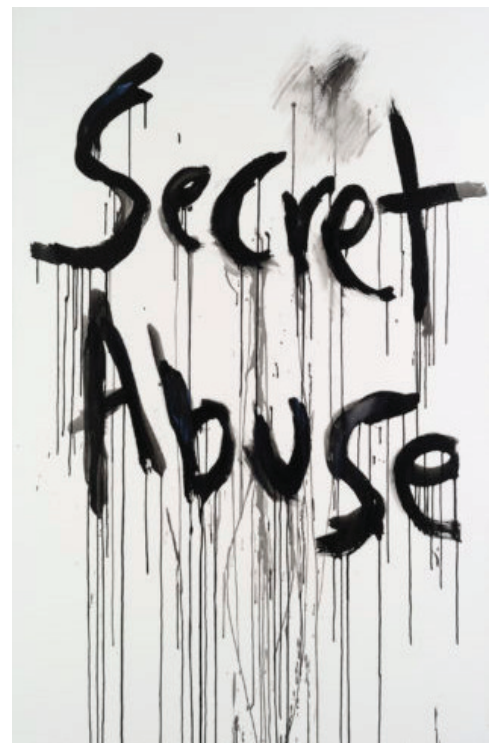
It is unfair to expect this type of nirvana with Kim Gordon's new project but to make comparisons is unavoidable. Having seen "Exposed: Songs for Unseen Warhol Films" at the Carnegie Music Hall coming in, I knew the drill. Unlike traditional music videos, where the music comes first, then the visual is made to fit the music; in this case the visual comes first. The band is essentially being asked to write a score for the film *Kiss*, selected from the Warhol archives. As one would expect from a Warhol film, it features long static shots, in this case, yep, you guessed it 14 couples (female, female; male, male; female, male) making out, clocking in at just under an hour. The film is about desire but without the ultimate payoff in the end. Instead, we just get an extended foreplay. It is not erotic; it is so obviously acted that it lacks sensuality. It is the epitome of camp. Gordon and her pals, collaborators: Bill Nace, Steve Gunn, and John Truscinski create a long slow dirge which provides a parallel counterpart to the lack of fulfillment that comes with the visual. It's as if you are standing still on a moving walkway at an airport being whisked along to the proper gate but when you finally arrive ultimately your plane is grounded. No highs, no lows, it just chugs along.

Obviously there was a palpable buzz about seeing Kim Gordon perform live on the opening night of the exhibition, which by the way takes place at the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, PA and is entitled Lo-Fi Glamour. Ultimately, this initial excitement waned and could not be sustained for an entire hour. The piece functions much more successfully in the confines of the gallery setting on the 2nd floor. Within this enclosed space two synchronized projections of the film face each other and the live recording that the band made in May in the Warhol Theater accompanies the films. You would be hard pressed to find

someone to willingly endure the 54-minute film in its entirety. In this setting the viewer has options. Since there really isn't any true beginning or end, the audience gets to choose how to engage with the piece and for how long. In smaller doses it is much more palatable. Also, the volume is set at a much more humane level, which leads me to the most disheartening aspects of the live performance - THE VOLUME. I wore earplugs and I was still getting bombarded, my head hurt because it was so freaking loud. It was torturous.

As to the rest of the exhibition, it is arranged somewhat chronologically and has small groupings of work from various time periods. They are like mini-shows within the larger show. Featured prominently are text paintings. These gestural acrylic

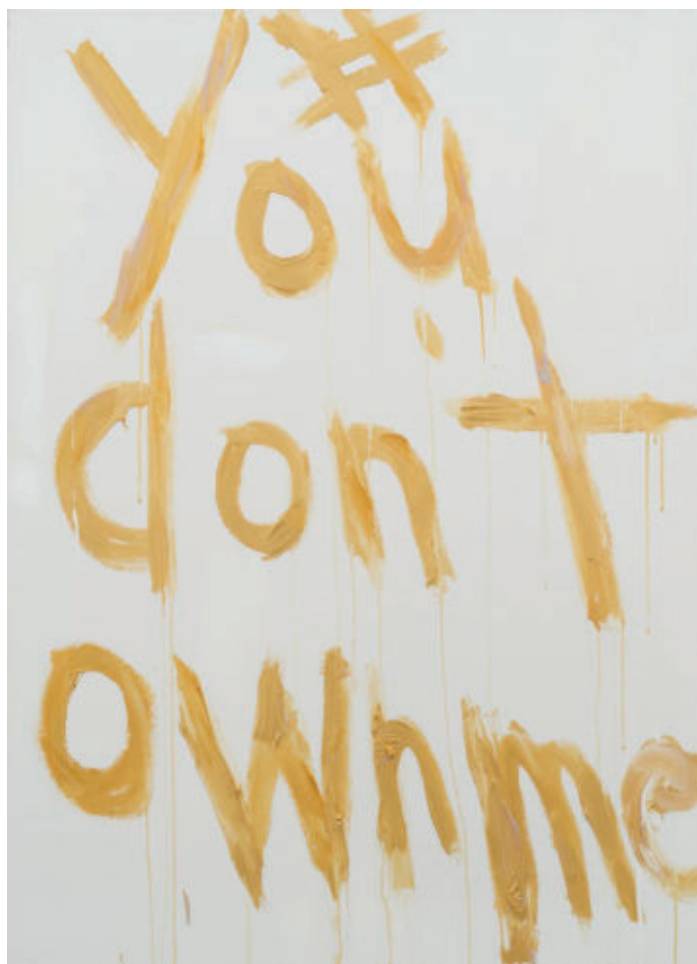
paintings with drips feature either black painted text on white or gold painted text on white. Band names make up the text for the black on white paintings: Pussy Galore, Dude Wars, Hair Police, to name a few. For the gold on white hash tag paintings, Gordon appropriated phrases from Twitter during



Kim Gordon, *Secret Abuse*, 2009
Acrylic on Canvas, 72 1/4 x 48 1/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and 303 Gallery, New York

the 2016 presidential election and the Women's March: #This is Illegal, #Pussy Grabs Back, and also #Male White Corporate Oppression, a line from the Sonic Youth song mentioned earlier, Kool Thing. It's intriguing to see these slogans in analog format. It's as if she is asking rhetorically, what really is the impact of these social protests and the frenzy of social media itself? It speaks to the commodification of protest. It also creates an ironic bridge to Warhol and his

encapsulation of commercialism, consumerism and commodity because these handmade slogans are now showing up in a high art venue. Again, blurring the distinction between hi and lo art and perhaps providing evidence of Gordon waxing nostalgic about her pre-digital past and calling up references to the handmade, DIY aesthetic and also a nod to the title of the exhibition. The most engaging works of the exhibition were the figure drawings/paintings. Of course, Gordon could frame them within a feminist lens and they were part of her Airbnb series, so she was obviously making some commentary about packaging and commodification here as well. But they were so loose and self-assured and less self-conscious than most of the other work and were not solely dependent on the underlying concept. There was an immediacy to them, much like her work with Sonic Youth, where you just had this powerful, visceral experience. This happened to some extent within the text paintings as well but once you read the text, it literally turned into a one-liner. Kim Gordon first and foremost is a musician. That is where she cemented her legacy. In its heyday Sonic Youth was every bit as influential as the Velvet Underground. The mantra of rock: buy a guitar, learn three chords, and start a band. This egalitarian ethos is at its core. Gordon invested most of her adult life into developing her music. In this her first solo museum exhibition she attempts to bring this punk mentality into her visual art. For the record, music wins.



Kim Gordon, *#Youdon'townme*, 2017, Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 36 inches, Courtesy of the artist and 303 Gallery, New York

Scott Turri

Lily Kostrzewa & Akira Takei
JOINT EXHIBITION


Lily Kostrzewa 李立峰
竹井章 Akira Takei

空港で出会った


2人展

■2019年9月19日(木)~10月8日(火)
8:00~22:00 最終日~15:00

■NAA ART GALLERY
成田国際空港 第1ターミナル中央ビル5階
JR・京成線 成田空港駅下車



Shaccato Beans
Lily Lihting Li Kostrzewa
李立峰 Chinese American artist



Akira Takei
Japanese artist 竹井章
Satomihakkenden inumura Daikaku

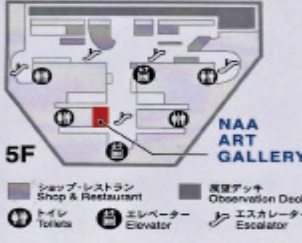
Lily Kostrzewa & Akira Takei
JOINT EXHIBITION

空港で出会った

2人展

■9/19/2019~10/8/2019 AM6:00~PM22:00

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5F

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トイレ Toilet
エレベーター Elevator
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エスカレーター Escalator

Narita International Airport Art Gallery, Japan, Terminal 1 5F, Sept. 19 - Oct. 8, 2019

Paris

How to Leave Your Art Bubble with 'City Prince/sses', Palais de Tokyo, Paris

21 June- 8 September, 2019

The majority of artists in the exhibition 'City Prince/sses' work out of Tehran, Mexico City, Manila, Lagos or Dhaka. Aside from a few exceptions, Western cultural capitals like Berlin, Paris, London or New York are only mentioned in passing. This is refreshing, since the geographic diversity of artists exhibiting in major contemporary institutions in Europe and across the Atlantic in the US is usually shockingly small. By shifting the art world boundaries further east and south, the curators Hugo Vitrani and Fabien Danesi significantly extend the scope and meaning of art today. The places of their choice are all megacities; they are too large to be ignored or cast aside as irrelevant to contemporary artistic production. Vitrani and Danesi illustrate how contemporary art is not just tied to technique, style, a school or ideological affiliation, but to the place it is made in. And within the Western art world context (with the exception of the Venice Biennale), these places are commonly overlooked and underrepresented. Vitrani and Danesi recognise this omission and respond to it by paving the way to an exhibition format that should be repeated again and again in the hopes of destabilizing our assumptions about what contemporary art looks like and most importantly, where it comes from.

The Palais de Tokyo is an enormous space, by typical art city standards and in Paris specifically, where real estate prices are among the highest in the world. With each new exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo, there is an immense potential in terms of what can be done with and to the

space. It is also a daunting task that, in past exhibitions, has frequently turned into a labored effort to control the vast museum. City Prince/sses includes work by some 50+ artists. The curators in collaboration with scenographer Olivier Goethals position each artist and artist collective in a way that allows for a steady flow of the viewing experience: one installation transitions to the next and these spatial shifts feel seamless, as if we were moving through a utopian megacity that sprawls into all corners of the Palais de Tokyo..

With so many artists and this much real estate, not all curatorial choices are equally successful. One such example is the installation with father-son team Reza Shafahi+Mamali Shafahi. I am purposely using 'installations with' instead of 'installations by', because the artists' work appears in competition with the curatorial vision (unless the artists explicitly asked for this type of overwrought hang). In this section of the exhibition, works on paper are arranged salon-style and mounted on a wall that looks like perforated drywall. The effect is a staggering amount of work in a relatively small space. In addition, each painting is framed by several Matisse-inspired cutouts that are made of the same perforated material as the wall they are arranged on. The result is a razzle-dazzle of textures and shapes that threaten to swallow Reza Shafahi's exquisite paintings. Behind the wall of paintings we find an array of multi-media work by Mamali Shafahi in a dimly lit environment that blends sculptures, installations and screens into an anonymous, indistinguishable accumulation of 'stuff'. It is a shame, because father and son offer a beautifully radical mix of wicked humor and civil disobedience by artistic means (both live and work in Tehran). They address questions of gender, sexuality, queer identity and patriarchy while also taking on and appropriating US popular culture in some of the video work by Mamali Shafahi.

But these occasional shortcomings of the exhibition are outweighed by work that deserves to be brought to the forefront. One such example and one of the show's most powerful moments is Chelsea Culprit's Transfigurations in Ritual Time from 2019. She is one of very few artists in the exhibition who is given an entire undivided room that delivers a streamlined viewing experience resembling a solo-show within the larger group show. Culprit works

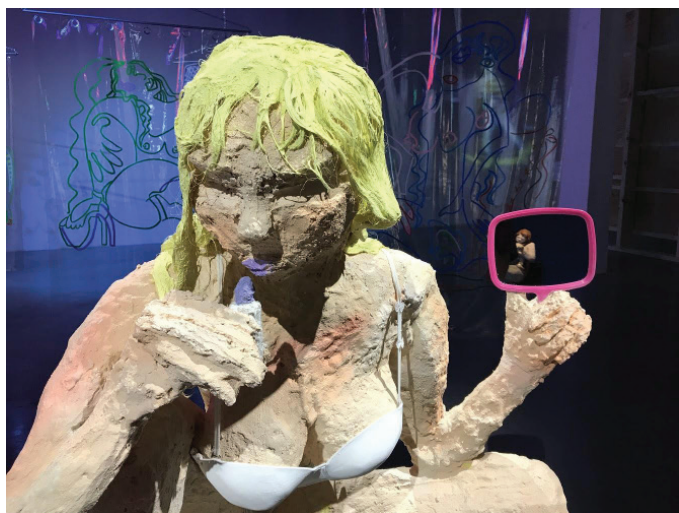


Installation shot with Reza Shafahi's paintings (taken by the author).

across various media that include one large mural, several neon-light installations, Picassoesque paintings of female nudes on shower curtains and four slightly larger-than-life sculptures of female strippers.

Her sculptures are engrossing and the materials she uses lend them a mildly repugnant appearance. We see humanoid creatures with melting skin who underwent a make-up tutorial gone wrong (the list of ingredients for these sculptures explains some of their effect: wood, cement, fiberglass resin, foam, steel, ceramic tile, paint and fabric). Much has been written about Nicole Eisenmann's superb sculptures currently on display as part of the Whitney Biennale in New York City until September 22nd. Chelsea Culprit's stripper twins are similarly textured, but infinitely more sinister. Culprit's sculptures lack Eisenmann's fantastical features which makes them particularly devastating and memorable objects.

A similarly unsettling work is Newsha Tavakolian's six-channel video *Listen* from 2011. Tavakolian is a photographer who lives and works in Tehran and has been a Magnum Photo nominee since 2015. Her work is not defined by a single genre, even though she has been working as a photojournalist since 1999. Over the years, Tavakolian has covered a wide range of social and political issues, ranging from the 1999 protest movement of students in Iran, the US war on Iraq, to natural disasters and photo stories with a focus on women's lives across the Middle East. For her video "Listen" she chose 6 professional Iranian female singers. Each is presented on her own screen in the process of singing while their voices cannot be heard. This is a political act of defiance, since the 1979 revolution instituted laws that forbid Iranian women from performing solo or recording their music. But Newsha Tavakolian's



Detail of "Fake Twins with Fake Tans Making Each Other Up (espejo morado)" (2016).



Installation Shot of Chelsea Culprit's "Transfigurations in Ritual Time" (2019))

work goes beyond a commentary on a ban. Each woman is filmed from her chest up and the camera's proximity to their faces records their soundless performances as a mixture of protest and drowning. The video's reference to Shirin Neshat's 1998 *Turbulent* - a split-screen video installation about the audible performance of a male singer and the voiceless song of his female counterpart - cannot be overlooked. Neshat's use of the internationally acclaimed Iranian-American singer Sussan Deyhim, and Tavakolian's inclusion of contemporary Iranian singers who are forbidden from performing, points to a complicated relationship between (self-)exiled artists and artists who stay behind. Who is offering a more believable and relevant account? And is this even the right question to ask? It cannot be denied that there is much more at stake for Tavakolian's subjects who reportedly had to be convinced over an extended period of time to participate in her video. This circumstantial distinction is what makes Neshat's contribution a commentary, while Tavakolian risks an anti-authoritarian stance in the face of possible repercussions. There are more remarkable works in City Prince/sses that I can possibly write about here, so I am just going to name a few: Ashfika Rahman's photographic series *The Last Audience* about a now defunct movie theater from her childhood neighborhood in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Falz' video *This is Nigeria* which delivers a message on violence, abuse, and corruption among Nigeria's political class while playfully referencing Childish Gambino's 2018 song and video "This is America"; Ndidi Dike's installation *Untitled II* is made up entirely of spent kerosene stoves; painter Manuel Solano who lost his sight due to an HIV-related infection and now paints portraits from memory; and lastly the many striking paintings presented by Lulu, an independent exhibition space in Mexico City that was

founded by artist Martin Soto Climent and curator Chris Sharp.

City Prince/sses is imperfect. It's both extroverted and introverted. It can be annoying, loud, quiet and even silent, but it does not disappoint and as a viewer you will come out more enlightened. First, you will realize that there is much more art out there than we as a Western audience are

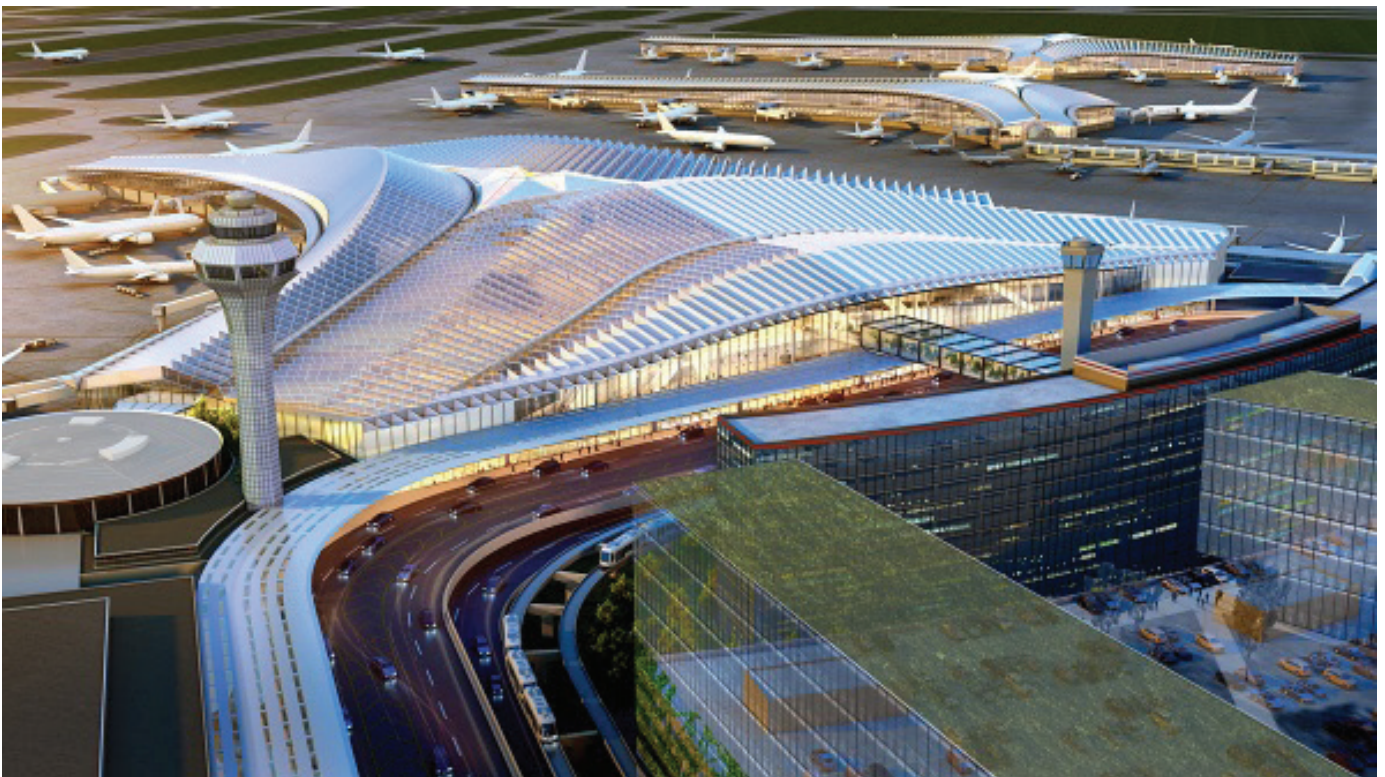
generally aware of and secondly, a great artist - as daring as this judgement might be - has interests and a stake outside of art. The exhibition encourages its audience to step out of a small art bubble and join the extended urban cosmos of City Prince/sses.

Viktor Witkowski

Joining Nature's GANG

Studio Gang is a Chicago architecture firm notable for their practice of drawing inspiration from a site's natural context, which departed from a previous trend to drop a building into a site unaware of that context. The firm's founder and principal architect, Jeanne Gang, appeared on Time magazine's list of 100 most influential people for 2019 and previously won the MacArthur genius grant in 2011. Studio Gang's designs are varied and original, breaking from the architecture tradition of the 20th century in which architects often relied on repeating a signature style independent of context. Gang approaches each new design with a fresh interest in its unique circumstances. As such, she embodies a 21st century movement oriented to sustainability.

Studio Gang was commissioned to design two of four new boathouses for the Chicago River: the WMS boathouse at Clark Park and the Eleanor boathouse at Park 571. Gang's approach differs drastically from how architects and planners have historically approached building on the river. In the past, the river was seen as a liability. Its legacy of pollution stretched back to the days of the infamous Chicago stock yards when slaughterhouses disposed of offal and carcasses in the river. Subsequently the industrial wastes of the 20th century and today have added to this history. Even with great strides being made in river restoration, architecture and planning has reflected this negative attitude. Buildings turn their backs to the river to hide its presence from people who work and shop there.



O'Hare Global Terminal and Global Concourse Chicago



Beloit College Powerhouse Beloit, WI, 2020

Roads often dead-end at the river without ever providing the public with physical or even visual access to the water. Far from the utilitarian structure you might expect under such circumstances, the boathouse's striking saw tooth roofline stands out from a distance, calling attention to its location and purpose at the edge of the river. The roofline shape is inspired by the motion of oars dipping in and out of the water and the kinetic energy of this motion translates into a dynamic form capable of enticing curiosity and enthusiasm for exploration and recreation on the river. It serves as a landmark for a space and amenity that was previously obscured from public access.

The serrated roof line and zinc and slate-clad façade of the boathouses attract attention and evoke the shimmer of the water, but the true reward is the way the building's volume is divided into two forms to frame the visitor's first view of the river. Upon approaching, the river is initially hidden from sight, a visitor enters into a courtyard-like threshold between the two buildings and the view is revealed. In this way the buildings serve as a gateway to the river, presenting a view that dramatizes the experience. This is a design

gesture which elevates the river's status from something to be dismissed or disdained, to something to be celebrated. From the entry courtyard a wide, gently descending staircase made of permeable concrete guides you down to the river's edge.

The river's edge is important to the design strategy. Although not part of the building, the space right next to the water is, according to Jeanne Gang, the most interesting place. It is where a visitor can observe change, hear the sound of flowing water and watch animals and fish. This space responds to the changes inevitable with a river. Rather than try to prevent change with a conventional hard wall, the gentle slope of the bank accepts variation in river height. The docks rise and fall with the changing water levels and the permeable concrete is flood-tolerant, allowing rain water to flow back into the river in an uninterrupted natural cycle. Maintaining this hydrologic cycle as close to natural conditions as possible is another way to strengthen the ecological response to the river. Ideally, all development along the river would follow a similar model to support this effort.

On their website Studio Gang asserts: “Ecologically, the overall goal of a healthy river led the design team to focus on diverting stormwater from the city’s combined sewer system, one of the largest impediments to improved water quality. The boathouse’s roof drainage elements and site design together function as its stormwater management system, diverting 100 percent of runoff from the sewer. Green infrastructure—porous concrete and asphalt, native plantings, gravel beds, and bioswales (rain gardens)—is used to store and filter runoff before slowly releasing this filtered water back into the river. Existing habitats were maintained and strengthened with a mix of native grass, plants, and trees, and silt fabric prevented compaction and erosion during construction. These efforts serve as a model for softening the river’s edge, supporting its ongoing revitalization.”

The interiors of the boathouses also maintain a visual connection with the river, providing ample views of the water. The interior finishes and colors play on the riparian location. Plywood-clad walls evoke ship building and elongated light fixtures reference long oars. These aesthetic cues coupled with direct visual lineage ensure that visitors feel embedded in their location and connected to the river. The buildings face the river; one houses the boats and the other offers a field house and exercise rooms. Within the storage building, south-facing windows in the roof provide passive solar heating and natural ventilation and lighting. In fact, the biggest sustainable building strategy of the boathouses is to separate year-round from seasonal uses, thereby reducing the need for mechanical heating and cooling. In this way the spilt volume of the buildings provides a dual function, framing the approach to the

water and reducing energy demands.

“It’s impossible to replicate nature—it’s too good,” Jeanne Gang says in a *New Yorker* profile. “It’s about trying to find that space where it’s art.”


There are few places along the Chicago River where residents can get close enough to touch the water. At the boathouse, the design not only allows direct contact, but encourages this interaction through the choice of a grand staircase and choreographed entry sequence. The design therefore fosters a relationship between the community and the river. This relationship provides the community with a close access to urban nature, while instilling appreciation for the aesthetic and ecological qualities of the river.

As Jeanne Gang summarizes “The Chicago River boathouses are part of a new environmentally friendly vision for the city’s river. By making the riverfront a destination for recreation, anchored by dynamic sustainable architecture, we hope to catalyze long-term stewardship and support for the river’s remediation as well as improve the health of the communities that surround it.”

Although the boathouse does nothing to change the river itself, it does change how the river is understood. A framed river - curated through the lens of cultural importance - allows the Chicago River to take on new value in the lives of visitors and the people who live alongside it.

Monica Richart

Monica Richart is a landscape restoration architect who teaches environmental design at Depaul University.



Paintings by Sarah Bell
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NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW ART EXAMINER NUMBERS

The New Art Examiner passed 429,000 unique visitors running at over 40,000 a month. It seems there is a hunger for unfettered comment on the art world.

PRIVATE ART COLLECTIONS ARE NOTORIOUSLY SECRET

The private art collection of Roberto Toscano and his wife, Nadia Toscano-Palon, features works by artists including Daniel Turner, Anish Kapoor, James Turrell and Oscar Tuazon. Since 2012, the collection has grown to more than 100 works, which are partly in storage because of renovations — and, like most private collections, are rarely seen by anyone outside of the couple's immediate circle.

This is a problem for many collectors, Mr. Toscano included, who want to show their work to broader audiences or believe that there's a public good to sharing the work they own. [New York Times August 2019.](#)

ROBERT INDIANA'S CARE-TAKER ALLOWED HIM 'TO LIVE IN SQUALOR AND FILTH'

Jamie Thomas is accused of stealing more than \$1m and 100 works of art from the late artist in new court filing. [The Art Newspaper August 2019.](#) (a salutary reminder, if one were ever needed that vultures are everywhere in an artist's life.)

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ukeditor@newartexaminer.net

Too Powerful

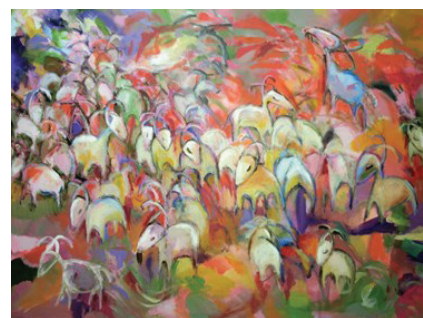
None of you should believe this story. In point of fact, knowing it to be true, you should be outraged with the Newlyn Society of Artists' hanging committee. It proves the depths to which the sensibility of artists has fallen from any

relevance to the lives of the people, hamstrung by its own form of consumerism. Ken Turner, a long time Member and respected artist, had his painting 'Doomed Youth', rejected for hanging in their exhibition because it was 'too powerful.' Be horrified. Then be terrified that this is the level of thinking in a respected arts community whose traditions go back 100 and more years. Hanging committees have the right to choose what is hung in an exhibition, that is what

Lily Kostrzewa, our Managing Editor in the US, is to have her artwork "99-Sheep - magic (8), 36 x 48 inches " published in the Perch Magazine of Yale University. She tells us "It is really nice to know that Yale appreciates my artwork." We agree.

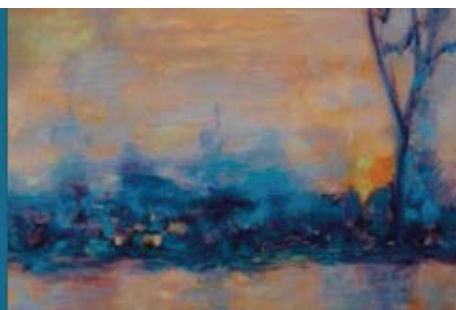


they are for. Any of a dozen reasons for not hanging are respected. 'Too Powerful' is a reason for hanging. We live in a world where artists are striving to be relevant, find a voice for the plethora of political and environmental problems facing us as a species. In such a world it is impossible to be 'too powerful.' No wonder they lost their gallery in Newlyn to Arts Council politics.



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Art Taipei is the landmark of Asian Art. It connects the forefront of art from around the world to explore the topic of global art trends while focusing on diverged art forms.



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