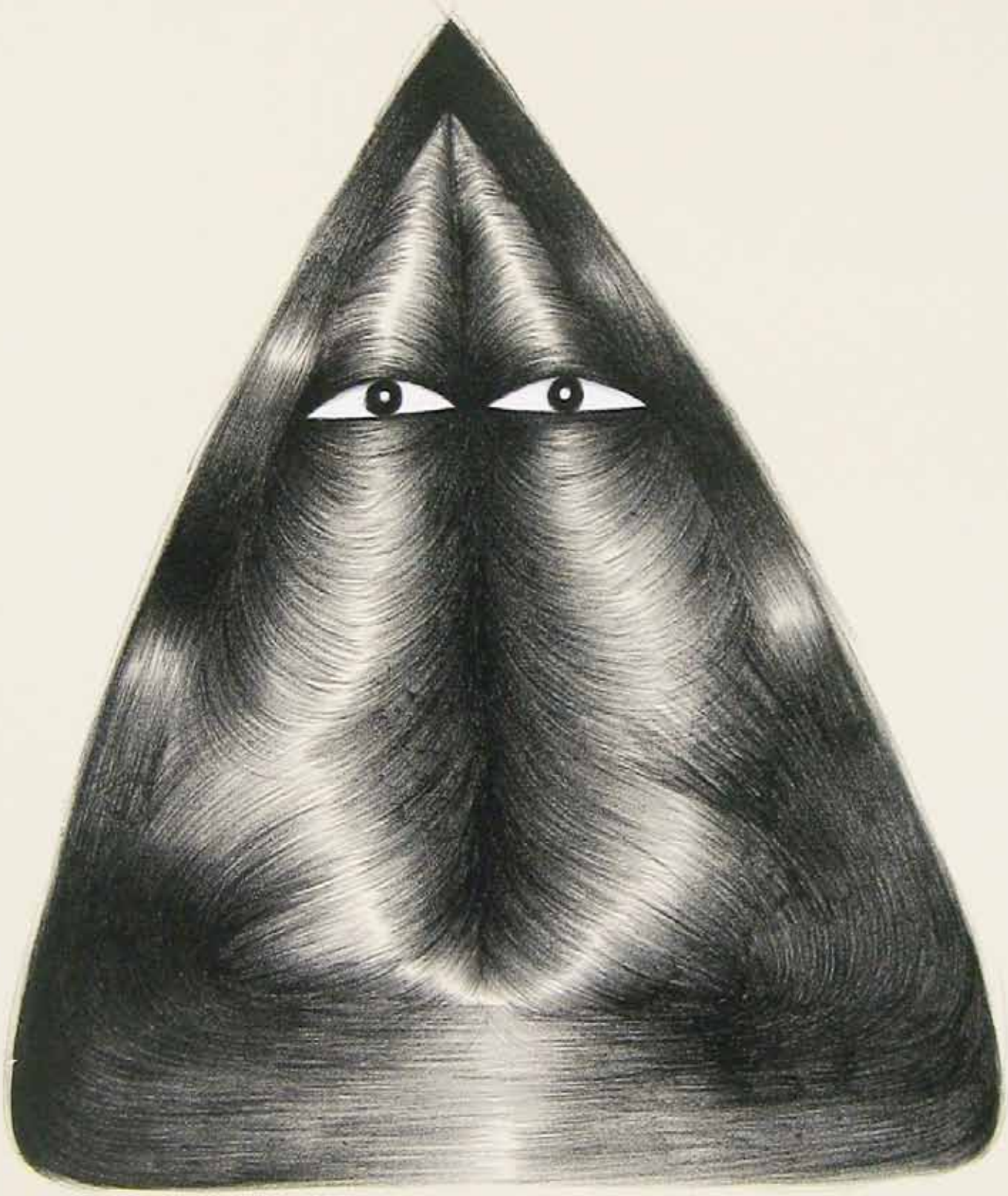
SFAQ

free

INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE



ISSUE.10

ONLY WEST COAST VENUE

JUL 14 — OCT 14

Man Ray and Lee Miller's brief, mercurial love affair resulted in some of the most powerful works of each artist's career, helping shape the course of modern art. See the first exhibition to focus on the pair's artistic relationship, with approximately 115 photographs, paintings, drawings, and writings exploring the creative interaction between these two giants of European Surrealism.

Organized by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

Media Sponsors

SanFrancisco magazine · GUARDIAN · flavorpill

Man Ray (1890–1976), *Larmes (Glass Tears)*, 1933. Gelatin silver print. Private collection. © 2012 Man Ray Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

MAN RAY
PARTNERS IN SURREALISM
LEE MILLER

Legion of Honor
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO
LEGIONOFHONOR.ORG

REAL TO REAL

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE TRAINA COLLECTION

FINAL WEEKS **THROUGH SEP 16**

Rare canonical black-and-white vintage prints meet luscious, eye-popping color work by a range of exciting artists, emerging to iconic, as the Traina collection embraces the documentary impulse in photography and the medium's full-blooded absorption into the world of contemporary art.

SPONSOR
Sotheby's

Martin Parr, *Fashion Shoot for Amica, New York* (detail), 1999. © Martin Parr / Stephen Daiter Gallery.

de Young
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEYOUNGMUSEUM.ORG

ASIAN ART MUSEUM

PHANTOMS OF ASIA

ENDS SEPT 2

www.asianart.org/phantoms

See *Phantoms* at our MATCHA events on 7/26 and 8/23, 5–9 pm. Enjoy cash bars, docent tours, music by DJ-in-residence Vin Sol, performances, creative experiments, and more. Just $10. Can't make it? Check out *Phantoms* any Thursday night after 5:00 pm for just $5.

This exhibition was organized by the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco in collaboration with the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Presentation at the Asian Art Museum is made possible by support from The Bernard Osher Foundation, the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation, Koret Foundation, Columbia Foundation, The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Credit Suisse, United, Union Bank, Christie's, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and an anonymous foundation, with additional support from The Japan Foundation and The Dedalus Foundation, Inc. Sun K. Kwak, *Untying Space,Asian Art Museum, SF,* 2012. © Asian Art Museum, San Francisco. Installation view of *Phantom of Asia* exhibition at Asian Art Museum. Photo by Kaz Tsuruta.

THE BERNARD OSHER FOUNDATION · KORET FOUNDATION · COLUMBIA FOUNDATION · ART WORKS. · CREDIT SUISSE · UNITED · UnionBank

Media Sponsors
SF2Q · GUARDIAN SFBG.COM · EAST BAY EXPRESS · the Bold Italic · KQED

Life. Death. The cosmos. What's it all about? Provocative new art—along with objects from the museum's own collection—explores spirits and spirituality in Asia.

Asian

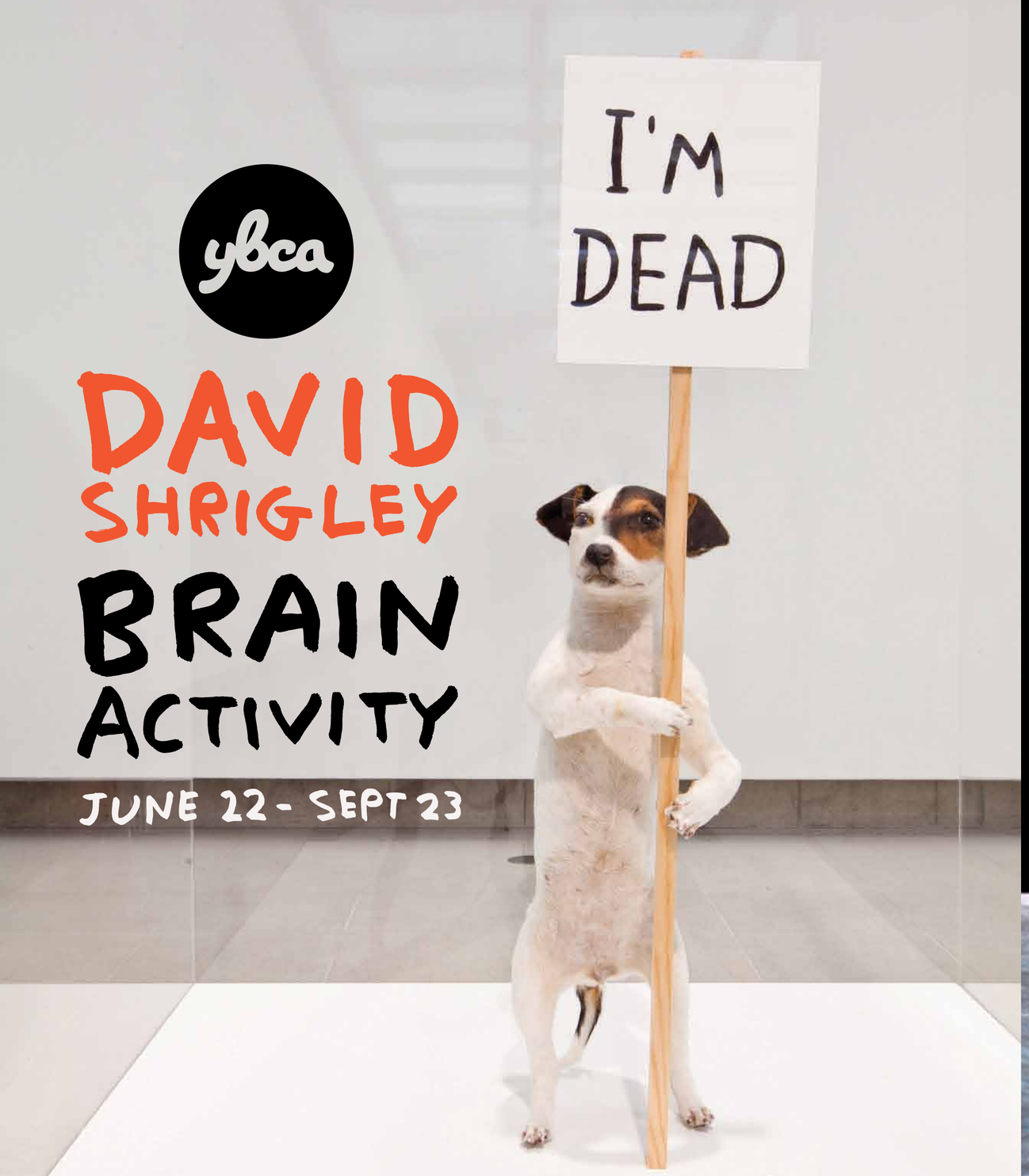
Asian Art Museum
Chong-Moon Lee Center
for Asian Art & Culture

200 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.581.3500

ybca

DAVID SHRIGLEY BRAIN ACTIVITY

JUNE 22 - SEPT 23



MEDIA SPONSOR:
the Bold Italic SAN FRANCISCO

YBCA.ORG

David Shrigley, *I'm Dead*, 2010, Collection Hamilton Corporate Finance Limited

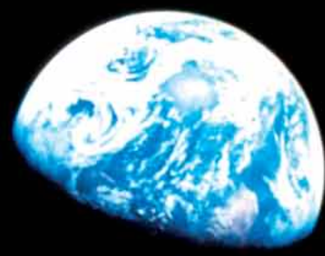
Oakland Museum of California

THE 1968 EXHIBIT

It's Then. It's Now. Dig It.

EXTENDED RUN!

Now on view through Sunday, November 25



The 1968 Exhibit was developed by the Minnesota History Center in partnership with the Atlanta History Center, the Chicago History Museum, and the Oakland Museum of California. *The 1968 Exhibit* is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Oakland Museum of California presentation is made possible in part by generous support from the Oakland Museum Women's Board and the OMCA History Guild.

Minnesota History Center · Chicago History Museum · Humanities

Media Sponsors: San Francisco Chronicle | SFGate.com · KQED

The Story of California. The Story of You.
Oakland Museum of California

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CA

BACKGROUND: *Earthrise*. Photo courtesy of NASA.

museumca.org/1968

connect with us on facebook
facebook.com/museumca

follow us on twitter
@oaklandmuseumca

subscribe to our blog
museumca.org/blog

SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE

FALL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walter and McBean Galleries
TEMPORARY STRUCTURES

Curated by Glen Helfand and Cydney Payton
September 5–December 15, 2012

Inspired by San Francisco's colorful history of World's Fairs and expositions, this interdisciplinary group exhibition explores the allure of temporary architecture as a site of human interaction, spectacle, and fun.

ARTIST LECTURE SERIES

Brent Green, visual artist, filmmaker, and storyteller

Hennesy Youngman of "Art Thoughtz"

Painter **Judie Bamber**

Winifred Johnson Clive Foundation Distinguished Visiting Fellows for Interdisciplinary Painting Practices:
Mickalene Thomas
Paul Sietsema
Sue Williams

PLUS FILM SCREENINGS, PERFORMANCES, MUSICAL EVENTS & MORE

Sign up for the latest news: **www.sfai.edu/events**

PHOTO: BRENT IN GRAVITY, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

sfai
san francisco. art. institute. since 1871.

SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE @SFAIEVENTS

800 CHESTNUT STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133 | WWW.SFAI.EDU/EVENTS

Kumie Tsuda, Do You Know Who I Am? • 2011 • ceramic, paper bag • 17 x 5 x 5 inches

ADAA member

KUMIE TSUDA
SKETCH FOR GETTING USED TO NEW THINGS

ANNIE HAN + DANIEL MIHALYO: LEAD PENCIL STUDIO
CITY SURFACE

August 2 – September 15, 2012
Reception: Thursday, August 2, 5:30 – 7:30

VIK MUNIZ

September 20 – November 10, 2012
Reception: Tuesday, October 9, 5:30 – 7:30

RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

77 Geary Street • San Francisco, CA 94108 • 415.982.3292 • www.renabranstengallery.com

NEW YORK

PULSE MIAMI

CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR

Design: aboystudios.com

PULSE MIAMI
CONTEMPORARY ART FAIR
DECEMBER 6 – 9, 2012
THE ICE PALACE STUDIOS
1400 NORTH MIAMI AVE
AT NW 14TH STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA

WWW.PULSE-ART.COM

Art Platform— Los Angeles

AT THE BARKER HANGAR
SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA
SEPT 28 - 30, 2012
SEPT 27 PREVIEW

ArtPlatform-LosAngeles.com

CONCEPTS
DIALOGUE
ART

TEXAS
CONTEMPORARY
ART FAIR

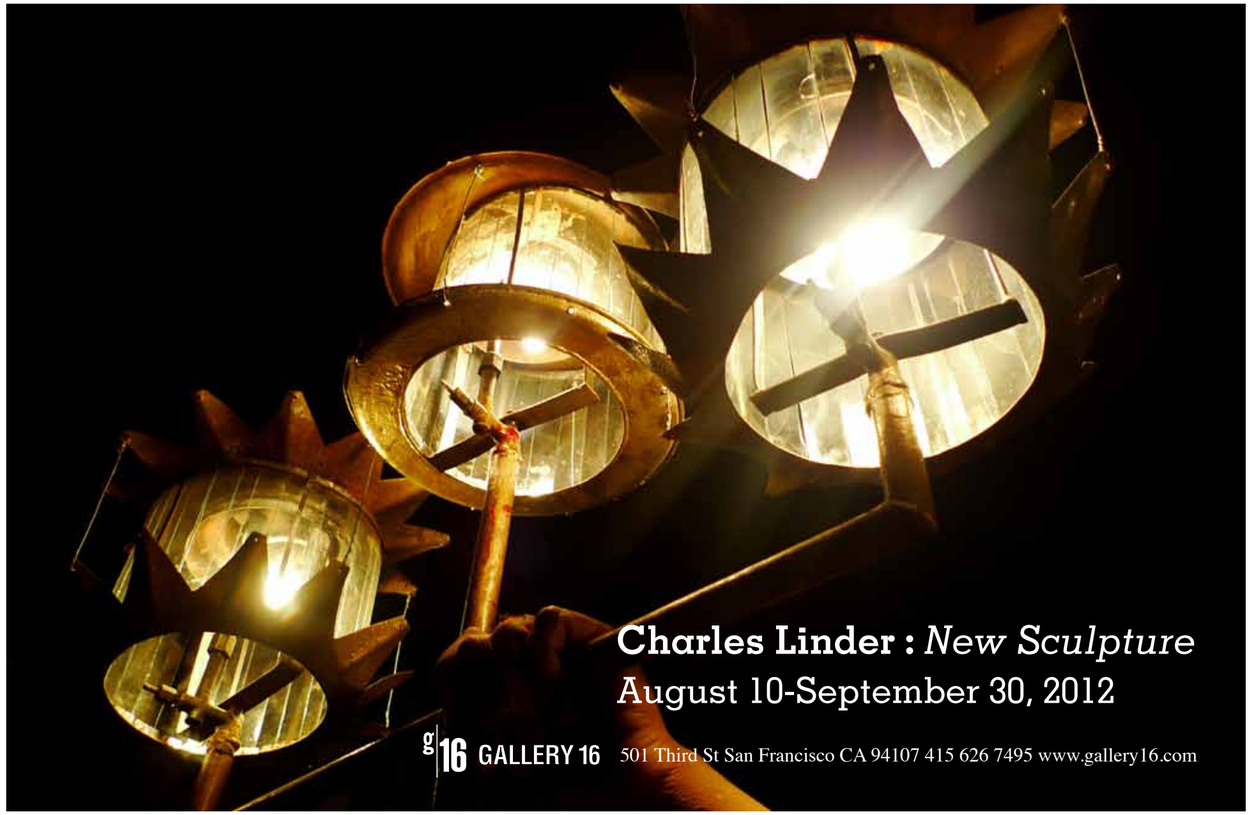
OCTOBER 18-21 2012

George R. Brown
Convention Center

Houston, TX

opening night **BENEFICIARY** CAMH

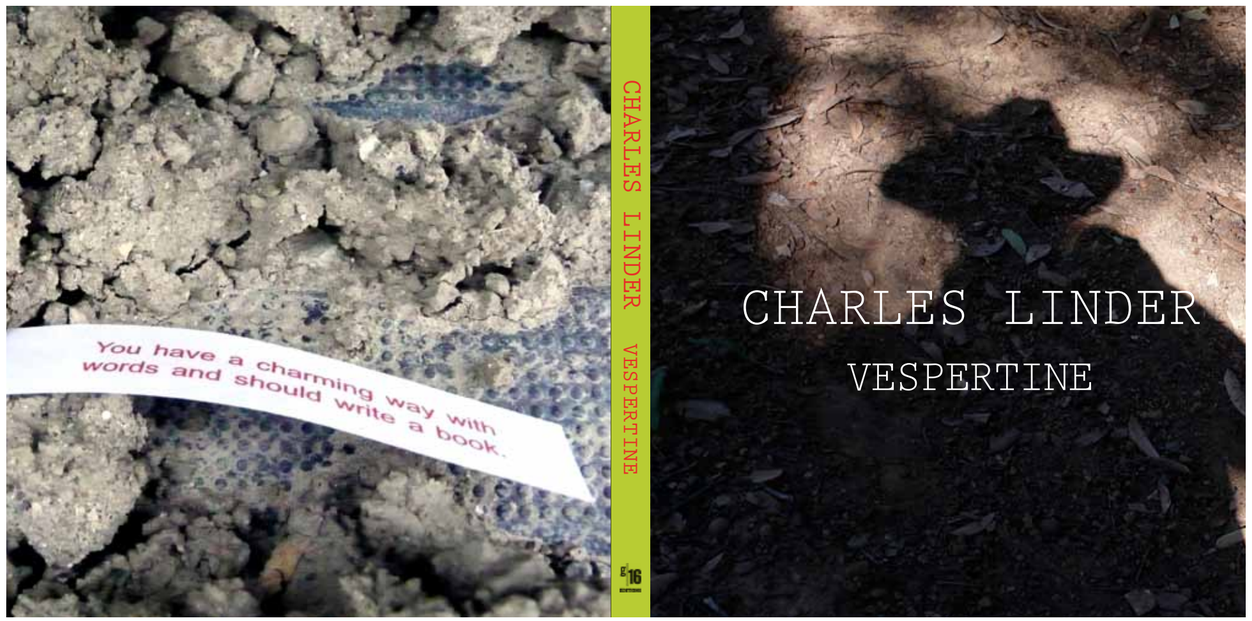
www.txcontemporary.com



Charles Linder : Vespertine

A new hardcover monograph by sculptor Charles Linder

Published by Gallery 16 Editions. Available August 2012



vessel gallery

471 25th Street • Oakland, California 94612 • T 510 893 8800

vessel-gallery.com

Creatures
Sculpture Installation by Alex Abajian and J. Lin-Hsien Kung
Process Drawings by Beili Liu
August 1 - September 1

Hidden Agenda
Paintings by Rose Anne Critchfield
September 4 - 29

Post Bevel and Weave
Sculpture and Installation by John Ruszel
October 2 - 27

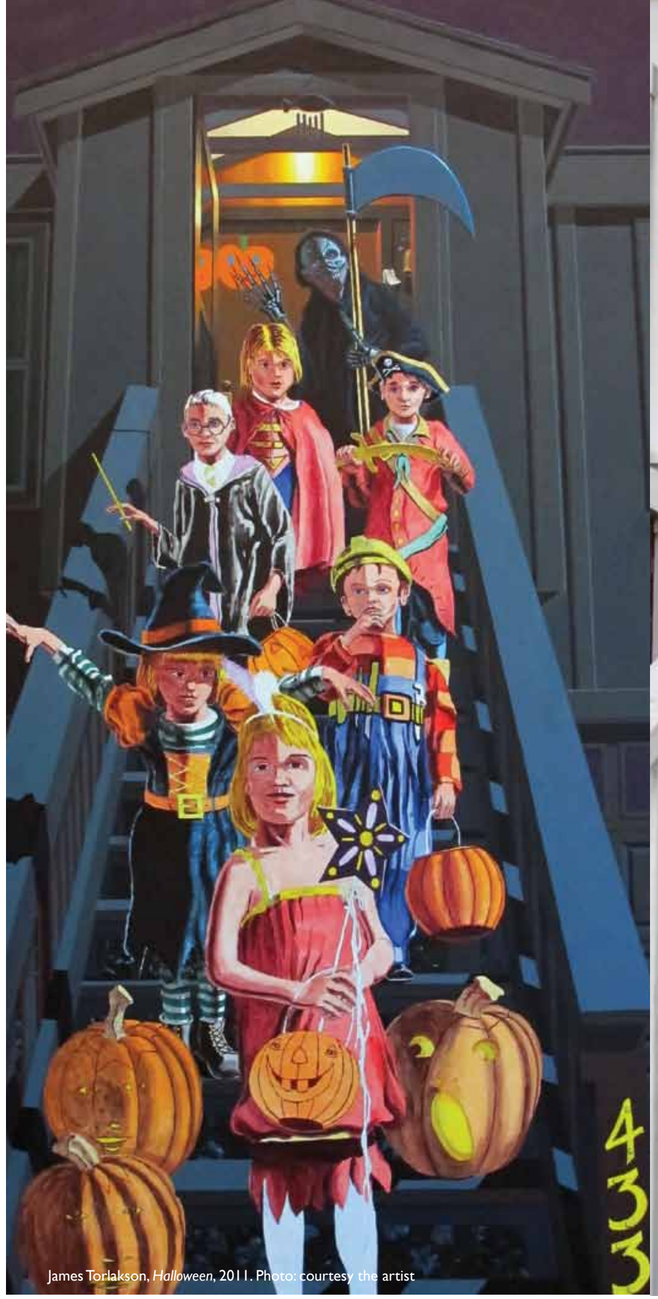
Temple 18" x 72" oil on canvas 2012

Patrick Dintino - **Euphoria**

September 12th - October 5th, 2012

Andrea Schwartz Gallery

545 - 4th Street, San Francisco CA, 94107 - www.asgallery.com



James Torlakson, *Halloween*, 2011. Photo: courtesy the artist

Kendall Waldman, *Untitled*, 2012. Photo: courtesy the artist

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery

Rentals and Sales: Building A, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123
415-441-4777 www.sfmoma.org/artistsgallery

Real and True: James Torlakson, Janet Delaney, Rachel Kline, and Kendall Waldman
September 6th – October 25th, 2012
Opening Reception: Saturday, September 8th, 1-3pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:30am to 5pm

SFMOMA
ARTISTS GALLERY
Contemporary art by Bay Area artists

aqua12
at the AQUA HOTEL

1530 Collins Avenue Miami Beach FL 33139 > www.**aquaartmiami.com**

VIP Preview Opening
Wednesday, December 5, 2012

Museum Day
Thursday, December 6, 2012
free entry to the fair to all art museum members worldwide

Public Hours
December 6 – 9, 2012

HAPPY SUMMER
+
PARK LIFE SF

parklifestore.com

DRAWING/PAINTING/PHOTOGRAPHY/MIXED MEDIA

San Francisco Studio School

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM/WORKSHOPS/CLASSES/SEMINARS

Painting studio program begins September 13th
Photography seminar begins September 18th

415 398 4300
INFO@SFSTUDIOSCHOOL.ORG
WWW.SFSTUDIOSCHOOL.ORG
Fall schedules are available on our website. Email or call for information.

LIGHT WAVES
photo imaging
www.lightwavesimaging.com

Traditional Type-C Prints up to 48 x 70 inches - Lightjet Prints up to 48 x 120 inches
Professional C-41, E-6 and B&W Processing - 4 hours - Optical & Digital Contact Sheets
Professional Custom & Economic film scanning - Mounting and display services
retouching & image manipulation

San Francisco - 130 Russ St. CA 94103 415. 431. 9651 **Oakland** - 4810 Telegraph Ave. CA 94609 510. 922. 8487

Peter Wegner *Buildings Made of Sky III*, 2009 KAYNE GRIFFIN CORCORAN

Watch Films About Artists and Experts

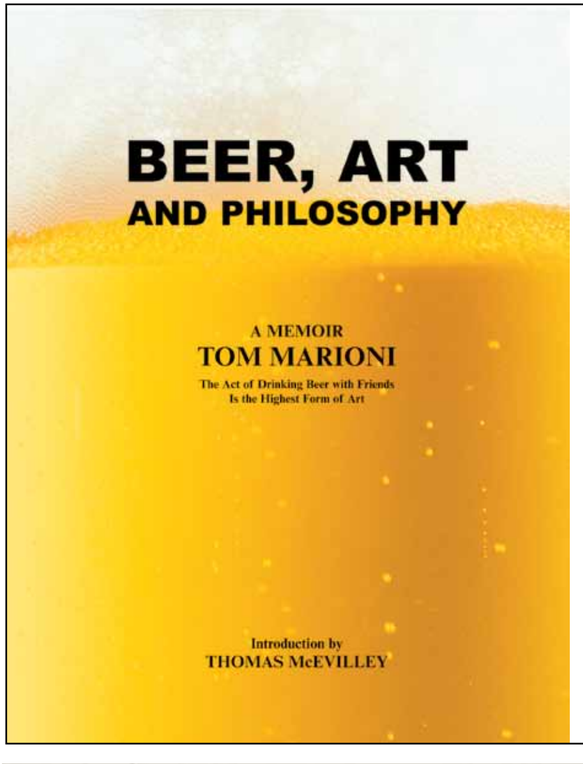
Connect with Galleries Instantly

Collect Fresh Artworks Year-Round

VIPART

WILL YOU MARRY ME?

ADAM PARKER SMITH EVER GOLD GALLERY NOVEMBER 2012



BEER, ART AND PHILOSOPHY
Available at Crown Point Press
SFMOMA, Amazon and on Kindle

:)

September TOM MARIONI
Gallery Paule Anglim
percussion works in dry plaster

LAURINA PAPERINA
BAD SMELL

September 11
October 27, 2012
Opening reception for the artist
September 14, 6 - 8 pm

Fouladi Projects
1803 Market Street @ Guerrero
San Francisco Ca 94103
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday noon till 6 pm
fouladiprojects.com | ph 415 621 2535

MIAMI PROJECT

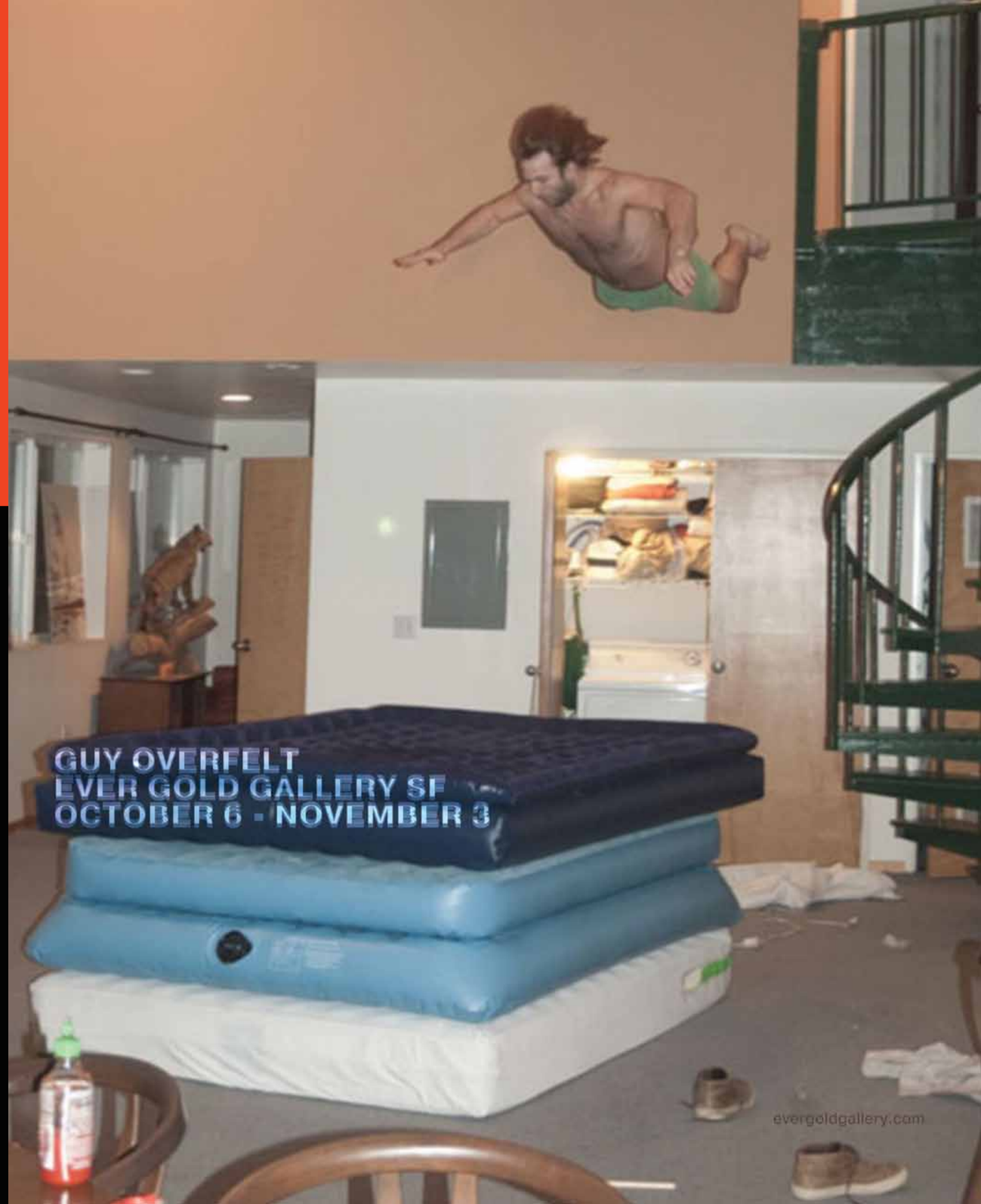
DECEMBER 4-9 2012

MIDTOWN MIAMI WYNWOOD DISTRICT

DEALER COMMITTEE:
RANDY SOMMER / ACME
TRISH BRANSTEN / **RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY**
CATHARINE CLARK / **CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY**
ANDREW FREISER / **FREDERICKS & FREISER**
KERRY INMAN / **INMAN GALLERY**
SALLY MORGAN & JAY LEHMAN / **MORGAN LEHMAN GALLERY**

SUPPORT PARTNER: **MOCA NORTH MIAMII**

www.**MIAMI-PROJECT**.com



RED DOT ART FAIR
Miami

Returning to the same prime location in Miami's Wynwood Art District
December 5 - 9, 2012 / During Art Basel Miami Beach

Introducing **Solo Projects** - for artists and galleries featuring solo exhibits

917.273.8621
info@reddotfair.com
www.reddotfair.com

g	e	t
t	h	e
f	l	u

Mark Benson

September 1-27, 2012
Opening reception:
Saturday, September 1, 6-10pm

Ever Gold Gallery
441 O'Farrell St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.796.3676
evergoldgallery.com

THE URALS ALSO EXIST OUTSIDE VIRTUAL REALITY

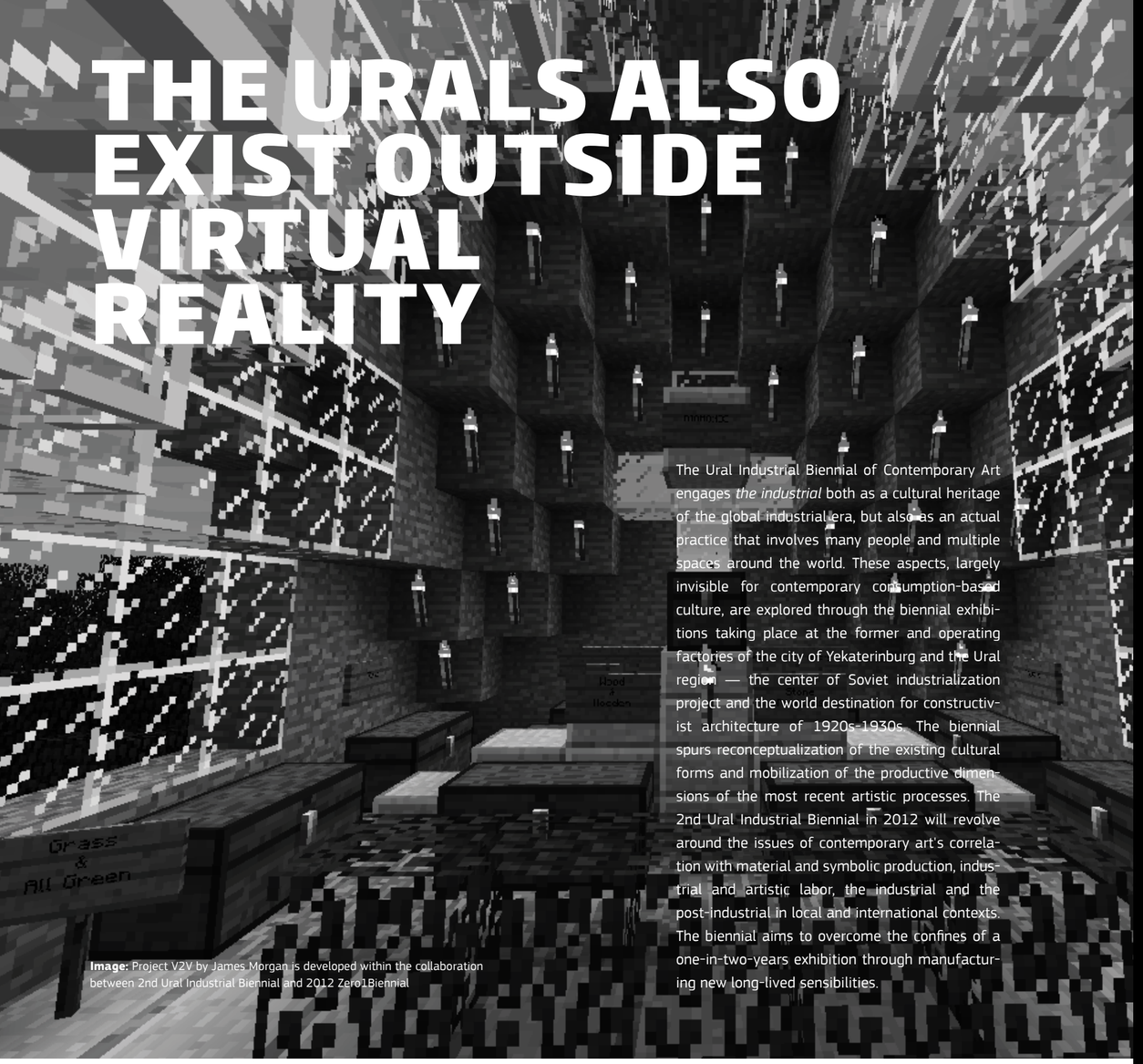


Image: Project V2V by James Morgan is developed within the collaboration between 2nd Ural Industrial Biennial and 2012 Zero1Biennial

The Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art engages *the industrial* both as a cultural heritage of the global industrial era, but also as an actual practice that involves many people and multiple spaces around the world. These aspects, largely invisible for contemporary consumption-based culture, are explored through the biennial exhibitions taking place at the former and operating factories of the city of Yekaterinburg and the Ural region — the center of Soviet industrialization project and the world destination for constructivist architecture of 1920s-1930s. The biennial spurs reconceptualization of the existing cultural forms and mobilization of the productive dimensions of the most recent artistic processes. The 2nd Ural Industrial Biennial in 2012 will revolve around the issues of contemporary art's correlation with material and symbolic production, industrial and artistic labor, the industrial and the post-industrial in local and international contexts. The biennial aims to overcome the confines of a one-in-two-years exhibition through manufacturing new long-lived sensibilities.

2 URAL INDUSTRIAL BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

WWW.URALBIENNALE.RU

13.09–22.10.2012

Announcing a Signed and Limited Edition

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S PARIS WALKS

With 46 original duotone photographs by

MICHAEL KENNA

Text by

DIANA KETCHAM

THE ARION PRESS

1802 Hays Street, The Presidio, San Francisco, CA 94129

PHONE: 415-668-2542 · EMAIL: arionpress@arionpress.com

SUBSCRIBE

YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE

$30 SFAQ

Year Subscription: 4 Issues

- Cut and fill out this form and send to address below.
- Please make check out to *San Francisco Arts Quarterly LLC*.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City:_____ State: _____ Zip:_____

Email: _____

Begin with Issue #: _____

Please mail payment and subscription form to:

SFAQ: Subscription
441 O'Farrell St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

INTERNATIONAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

$50

Super Fancy Arts Quarterly

Issue 10. AUG. SEP. OCT. 2012

MASTHEAD

Publishers
Top Tier International Publishers

Founders // Designers
Gregory Ito and Andrew McClintock

Managing Editor
Andrew McClintock

Copy Editors
Whit Brayton, Gabrielle Toft

Editorial Assistants
Emily Chaves, Lucy Kasofsky, Dennis Wornick, Hannah Mullen, Hannah Jewett

Staff Writers
John Held, Jr., Jamie Alexander, TOM MARIONI, Julio Cesar Morales, Andrew McClintock, Gregory Ito

Staff Photographer
Andrew McClintock

Contributing Editors
Heather Sparks, Ilene Segalove

Online Contributors
John Held, Jr., Emily Chaves, Hannah Mullen, Hannah Jewett, Dean Dempsey, Hailey Loman, Kelly Inouye, Nikki Greene, Leigh Cooper

Web Masters
Joe Lumbroso, Elliot Shields

Contributing Writers
Janet Bishop, Jana Blankenship, Howard Fried, Claire Fitzsimmons, Alex Frankel, Liz Glass, Jackie Perez Gratz, Stephen Hendee, Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, Oleana Jacobson, Paul J. Karlstrom, Paul Kos, Frank Kozik, Nadia Khismatulina, Tony Labat, Constance Lewallen, TOM MARIONI, Carlo McCormick, Maria Nicolacopoulou, Joseph Del Pesco, Larry Rinder, Kenny Schachter, Tony Serra, Heather Sparks, Griff Williams.

Contributing Photographers
Craig Costello, Dave Schubert, Gerry Sommerfeld, National Gallery of Victoria, Sean Garrison, John Vaughan, Guy Overfelt, Mike Cuff, John Held, Jr., Lee Miller, William Heick, Peter Mallet, Christopher Kilkus, Stefanie Keenan, Robert Wedemeyer, Jay Jones, Bronwyn Keenan, Stephen Lowenstein, Sue Tallon, Gui de Angulo.

Images Courtesy of
Barry McGee, Bolinas Museum, Mariano Costa Peuser, Kaldor Public Art Projects, The Museum of Contemporary Art, San Jose Mercury&News, Rene Bransten, Guy Overfelt, Warholian.com, Jeff Berner, Ratio 3, Gallery 16, Altman Siegel Gallery, Will Rogan, Amalia Pica, Marc Foxx Gallery, Zarouhie Abdalian, Amalia Pica, Lee Miller Archives, England, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Man Ray Trust/Artists Rights Society, New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Photo, The Israel Museum by Avshalom Avital, The Artist Estate, The Penrose Collection, The Roland Penrose Collection, England, SFAI, Nancy Holt, Haunch of Venison, Giuseppe Penone, Pizer Management, International Art Objects, Park Life, The Thing Quarterly, www.nieves.ch, Headlands Center of the Arts, Printed Matter, YBCA, Voina, REUTERS/Maxim Shemetov, EPA/MAXIM SHIPENKOV, Phocasso/J.W. White, DENIS SINYAKOV/REUTERS.

Advisors
John Sanger, Eric Rodenbeck, Paul J. Karlstom, John Held Jr., Tom Marioni, Paule Anglim, Julio Cesar Morales, Maurice Kanbar, Charles Linder, Carlo McCormick, Jocko Weyland, Griff Williams, Paul Kos.

Special Thanks
Tina Conway, Jesse McClintock, Bette Okeya, Royce Ito, Alex Ito, Leigh Cooper, Tyson Vogel, Kent Baer, Eli Ridgway, SIA Club, Jeff Gunderson, Jamie Alexander, Peter Kirkeby, Paule Anglim, Alan Bamberger, Charles Desmarais, Rena Bransten, Austin McManus, Jens Hoffman and the Wattis team, SECA committee, Griff Williams, Charles Linder, Larry Rinder, Chris Perez, Julian Cox, Hu Hanru, Sandy Kim, Guy Overfelt, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Chris Ritson, Adam Parker Smith, Evan Nesbit, Jeremiah Jenkins, Michelle Blade, but not Mark Benson, SFAQ contributors, and everyone who supports us through advertising, subscriptions, and donations. We support unions and good times…

CONTRIBUTORS

Jamie Alexander
Jamie Alexander is owner of Park Life Store + Gallery and Paper Museum Press. He studied design and art history, has been a patron of Bay Area arts for over 15 years and is a board member of The Headlands Center for the Arts.

Janet Bishop
Janet Bishop is the curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, California.

Jana Blankenship
Jana Blankenship is a contemporary independent curator based in New York City.

Howard Fried
Howard Fried is an American conceptual artist who became known in the 1970s for his pioneering work in video, performance and installation art.

Alex Frankel
Alex Frankel is not the lead singer of Holy Ghost!, the indie hunk behind NYC DFA buzzband, but actually a San Francisco based writer, most notably the author of Punching In: The Unauthorized Adventures of a Front Line Employee, which presents some of the lessons he learned from his time working at several top brands including Starbucks, Apple, and Enterprise Rent-a-car.

Liz Glass
Liz Glass is a curator and writer based in San Francisco, where she is currently helping to organize When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts. In addition to SFAQ, her writing has also appeared in the Bay area's Art Practical. Liz holds an MA in Curatorial Practice and a BA in American Studies.

Jackie Perez Gratz
Jackie Perez Gratz is an electric cellist and vocalist for San Francisco metal trio Grayceon currently based in San Francisco.

Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson
Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson is the CEO and Director, Chief Curator at Aspen Art Museum in Colorado.

John Held, Jr.
John Held, Jr. presented a paper on John Cage at a conference sponsored by the Black Mountain College Museum, North Carolina, this past Fall. Held's newest book, Where the Secret is Hidden, a collection of 106 essays written between 1979 and 2011, is available from lulu.com in two volumes. His reviews of San Francisco cultural events appear at sfaqonline.com.

Stephen Hendee
Stephen Hendee is a visual artist and a professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland.

Gregory Ito
Gregory Ito was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. Currently lives and works in San Francisco, CA. Ito is the Co-Owner/Director of the Ever Gold Gallery, SF, Co-Founder/Editor of SFAQ, and Co-Founder of RIPE LIFE LA/SF. Ito continues his art practice and shows his work internationally. Ito will exhibit at the YBCA, SF Sep-Jan 2013, and a solo exhibition at Eleanor Harwood Gallery, SF Dec-Jan 2013. Ito recieved his BFA at the SFAI, 2008.

Oleana Jacobson
Oleana Jacobson, is the daughter of Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson.

Paul J. Karlstrom
Paul J. Karlstrom is former west coast regional director of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art. He has written about art schools for SFAI ("Illustrious History: 1871–Present," 1996) and L.A. County Museum of Art ("Art School Sketches" in Reading California: Art Image, and Identity, 1900–2000, California, 2000). The latter was reproduced in SFAQ, Issue 5, 2011.

Nadia Khismatulina
Nadia Khismatulina has recently graduated from San Francisco Art Institute with her MA thesis "Crude Politics: Post-Soviet Sites of Aesthetic Radicalism". She writes on public sphere, politically conscious art, street art, etc. Currently works as a content curator of the 2nd Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art in Yekaterinburg, Russia. She is a Fulbright and Soros fellow.

Paul Kos
Paul Kos is a conceptual artist and one of the founders of the Bay Area Conceptual Art movement in California. [SFAQ cover story issue 8]

Frank Kozik
Frank Kozik is an American graphic artist who has worked with Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Stone Temple Pilots, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Melvins, The Offspring and Butthole Surfers. He also runs Man's Ruin Records, a media outlet and record label.

Tony Labat
Tony Labat is a conceptual artist and a pioneer in the San Francisco performance and video scene.

Constance Lewallen
Constance Lewallen is an adjunct curator at the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

TOM MARIONI
1969 One Second Sculpture, curate Invisible Painting and Sculpture, 1970 founder (MOCA) Museum of Conceptual Art, curate Sound Sculpture As, 1970 The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 1972 Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach. Drum Brush Drawings, 1975 Thinking Out Loud, Warsaw, Poland, 1975-1981 editor/designer VISION magazine, 1981 Guggenheim Fellowship, 1991 The Yellow Sound for Kandinsky, radio play, Cologne, Germany, 1996 founded The Art Orchestra, Beer Drinking Sonata, 2003 A Memoir, Beer, Art and Philosophy, 2012 Beer with Friends… Vienna, Paris, Bristol.

Andrew McClintock
Andrew McClintock was born in a cave in Cappadocia, Turkey in 1969. He is 5th generation Uchisar, and the first of his family to get a high school diploma. During his formative years, McClintock was granted the Richard J. Belzer scholarship to Yale's SOM school, where he received an MBA in International Finance with a concurrent PHD in Forensic Accounting.

In 2008, McClintock was the chief whistle blower against Morgan Stanley's sub-prime swap epidemic. He was later held by the Obama administration under the Carlson Act of 1917 for inciting the American mortgage crisis. After being acquitted, McClintock had a brief stint as a massage therapist, prison guard, limo driver, and a merchant marine. He was recently tapped by Simon & Schuster to pen an auto-biography entitled: Meet the Meat: 28 Years of Walking the Wire. He currently resides in Panama City with his wife and eight prized stallions.

Carlo McCormick
Carlo McCormick is a culture critic, writer, curator, and Senior Editor for Paper Magazine living in New York City.

Maria Nicolacopoulou
Maria Nicolacopoulou is a London-based independent curator and freelance lecturer for Tate Modern. She holds a BA in Philosophy from CUNY, a Master of Research in Humanities & Cultural Studies from the London Consortium and, following a year with YBCA's curatorial, is now working towards a further MA in Museum Studies from New York University.

Joseph Del Pesco
is a contemporary independent curator, art journalist and director at Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, California.

Larry Rinder
Larry Rinder is the Director of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

Kenny Schachter
Kenny Schachter is a professor, curator, writer, artist, collector, dealer and irritant to the art establishment on both sides of the Atlantic; he currently lives in London, England.

Tony Serra
Tony Serra is an American civil rights lawyer, activist and tax resister from San Francisco.

Heather Sparks
Contributing Editor Heather Sparks is a writer and conceptual artist whose work has been exhibited internationally. She has contributed to a number of publications including the Huffington Post. Her book: It Colors Your Life, A Coloring Book of Drinking and Smoking is in the pipeline.

Griff Williams
Griff Williams is an artist, gallerist and publisher. His work has been exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide internationally. He is the owner of Gallery 16, San Francisco. Since 1993, Gallery 16 has exhibited and published the work of scores of influential contemporary artists including William Kentridge, Deborah Oropallo, Jim Isermann, Lynn Hershman, Amy Franceschini, Rex Ray, Margaret Kilgallen, Mark Grotjahn, Tucker Nichols and Ari Marcopoulos.

CONTACT

Founders	Andrew McClintock: andrewm@sfaqonline.com
	Gregory Ito: greg.i@sfaqonline.com
Advertising	advertising@sfaqonline.com
Listings	listings@sfaqonline.com
General Info	info@sfaqonline.com

San Francisco Arts Quarterly LLC
441 O'Farrell St.
SF, CA, 94102

Printed on 60% post-consumer paper.
SFAQ uses environmentally friendly soy based inks
Made in the Tenderloin, San Francisco, California

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER IMAGE: ***Barry McGee.*** Untitled, 2010.
Lithograph, 30 x 22 inches.
Image courtesy of the artist and Ratio 3.

Larry Rinder & Chris Perez on:

Director BAM/PFA & Owner of Ratio 3

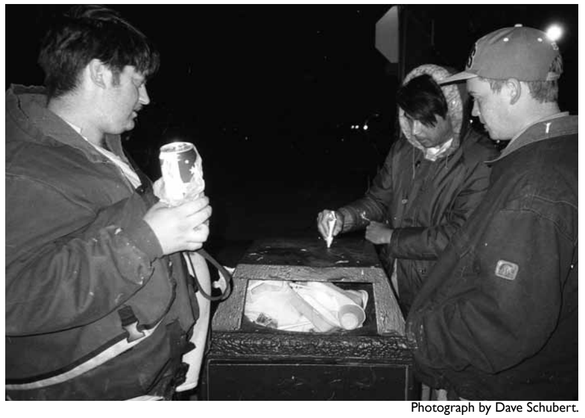
Barry McGee

Interviewed by Andrew McClintock

Including Photographs from Craig Costello and Dave Schubert

Special Barry McGee Pull Out Poster included in this issue!

Twist, 1993, digital scan from silver gelatin negative; courtesy the artist. Photograph by Craig Costello.



Photograph by Dave Schubert.

So Larry, you were the founder of the Wattis Institute at CCA, which is where you two also met. You both then went to the Whitney, Larry served as the Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator of Contemporary Art and Chris you worked under Larry. How has the relationship changed from teacher to student, boss to employee, to peers working on this Barry McGee midcareer retrospective?

Chris Perez: He didn't teach.

Larry Rinder: And he didn't learn. So - When I got there Chris was, I don't know what year Chris was, but he started as a work study student at what was then called the Institute for Exhibitions and Public Programs, which then became named the Wattis.

So do you feel this circular journey has informed aspects of the show at the Berkeley Art Museum?

LR: I don't personally. I think there are many artists that we both think are great and there are probably many artists who we disagree on and we just both happen to be in the art world. This is a place where we coincide and it's great to be working together. Is that right?

CP: It's *great*.

So Chris, you opened Ratio 3 in 2002?

CP: Officially 2004, in San Francisco.

In your house in the Mission District. And how were you first exposed to Barry's work?

CP: I was living in San Francisco in the—I first saw Barry's work when I visited San Francisco in 1990 and then again when he did the fence for Yerba Buena in 1992, that's when I first saw it, and I have a photograph of myself posing in front of it.

LR: Who took the picture?

CP: My friend did, and that's when I first saw the work. Of course, just being in the art world, I knew the work and saw it evolve over the years, but I really became friends with Barry when he came to the Whitney to install Margaret Kilgallen's installation in the 2002 biennial.

And he didn't have work in that show, just Margaret?

CP: Correct.

And Larry how were you first introduced to Barry's work?

LR: Well, in the early 90's, maybe in the late 80's I would have seen his graffiti all over San Francisco. You couldn't miss it, it was everywhere; screws, faces, twist, whatever, it was everywhere, just part of the environment. Then I'm sure I saw the Yerba Buena wall and he was just part of the cultural reality here in the Bay Area.

Okay, how would you characterize Barry's career, from a view point of a commercial gallery, compared with the model of more traditional "fine artist"? By more traditional I mean one who doesn't also speak to the the outsiders of society or doesn't have such an impact on underground culture while simultaneously reaching mass culture and being recognized as a very established fine artist?

CP: I think he's found a way to navigate and operate both ways. I mean, essentially he's a gallery artist; that's what he does. He makes work that gets exhibited in galleries and museums, and he's been very successful at that. But he's also one of those artists that crosses over into pop culture, like Warhol did. Barry has a huge influence and a large audience outside of the general art world. People see the work not only in galleries and museums, but also through books, magazines, websites and blogs, and things like that.

Are there problems that arise with labeling his work as specifically fine art versus the opposite. Does that cross over sometimes interfere with the idea of him being a fine artist?

CP: I think the question of whether or not he's a fine artist has already been answered, so it doesn't affect it negatively. I think it's the opposite, it makes it even more popular.

LR: It's like Warhol, like you said. Warhol just ignored these different categories. Sometimes he was the most experimental avante garde artist, sometimes he was designing window displays,

CP: And painting portraits of people.

LR: Just whatever he wanted to do. Barry's like that. He does whatever the hell he wants to do. Is that right?

"...Barry's like that. He does whatever the hell he wants to do."

-Larry Rinder

Twist, Muni graveyard San Francisco, 1995. Photograph by Dave Schubert

CP: He does.

And does that pose problems for you?

LR: I knew what the deal was with Barry when we invited him to do the show. It is a little bit different from most artists. I think he does push the envelope a little more than most artists do. We're in the middle of it now, ask me in a couple months.

How long have you been working towards this show?

LR: We started talking about the show about two years ago.

Chris when did you officially become his dealer?

CP: We started being the primary representative for Barry with the closing of Deitch Projects.

How would you compare Barry to other graffiti based artists like Basquiat or Keith Haring who started on the streets and transcended into much more—given that he's a fine artist with a wider audience than most.

LR: There are some similarities I think. They are obviously different people with different careers and different strengths and interests and strategies, but it is true that Basquiat and Haring started out on the street and were very effective in terms of deploying imagery and text in a street context, and also in a fine art context. So on the most basic level there are some similarities.

CP: Some, but very different in feel. Basquiat was a careerist. He knew exactly where he wanted to be and what he wanted to be doing. He didn't want to be on the street forever. Haring, I think, was happy working at galleries, but also took lots and lots of commercial projects and public art projects and murals and sculptures, and that work is still around.

After "Beautiful Losers", and more recently, "Art in the Streets", the Mission School graffiti art scene has really taken off in the mainstream. Again, I feel like there have been a couple waves of graffiti infiltrating the fine art scene since the 70's in New York, but how would you separate Barry's work from this trend? Because I feel his work is much more "timeless" than a "one-hit-wonder"; something that defines other artists involved in the whole street-art trend that's going on. So I mean, how would you—

LR: You answer that.

CP: I don't even talk about the Mission School when we talk about Barry's work because I feel like that's so far in the past now. It doesn't even need to be said, and of course, that whole term has been debated and redefined several times. If there is a Mission School esthetic that still exists, I don't know. Maybe there is. It's something that I'm not really interested in, and I don't think Barry is interested in either. He's very interested in doing his own thing; moving forward and not looking back. We're more interested in discussing his work in a larger context of contemporary art movements like abstract painting or more installation based work. I feel like the only people talking about the Mission School are people in the Mission.

LR: That's not true.

"I think he's found a way to navigate and operate both ways. I mean, essentially he's a gallery artist; that's what he does. He makes work that gets exhibited in galleries and museums, and he's been very successful at that. But he's also one of those artists that crosses over into pop culture, like Warhol did. Barry has a huge influence and a large audience outside of the general art world."

-Chris Perez

Chris Perez, Owner of Ratio 3, standing in front of a Ryan McGinley photograph. Photograph by Andrew McClintock

Larry Rinder, director of BAM/PFA, standing in front of part of Barry McGee's installation at BAM. Photograph by Andrew McClintock

CP: And Berkeley. And Oakland.

LR: I think the Mission School is significant, and I think it probably is still going on, but I know not everybody likes the term. Still, I think that there are certain characteristics that are shared by a lot of art in San Francisco, and I think some of it is really good art. People like Margaret Kilgallen, Clare Rojas, Sara Thustra, Chris Johanson, and Barry of course, not just stylistically, but in terms of an attitude towards community, and the importance of speaking within that community and finding value within a community, I think is distinctive. So to me, the Mission School is not just a style, it's an ethos. It's not unique to San Francisco. There have been other artist communities in Philadelphia and Providence for example, where you had parallel things going on, and a lot of this does emerge in the 90s. But it still continues in some ways, especially here. I think that Barry- whether he wants to be part of it or not- he certainly was a strong inspiration for this community.

I think it's safe to say that he's probably one of the most influential artists to come out of San Francisco Bay Area since the 90's.

LR: There are a lot of great artists, but in terms of global influence, yes.

On levels both for younger teenage kids to more national/international top shelf art patrons. And what you were talking about, putting Barry's work in other contexts outside the Mission School, obviously there's a lot—I mean to me, when I look at his work you can see psychedelic art of the 60's here to kind of "funk abstract" influence, as well as Assemblage and so just maybe if we could talk a little bit more about the specifics of looking at his work in the broader context—or just other definitions.

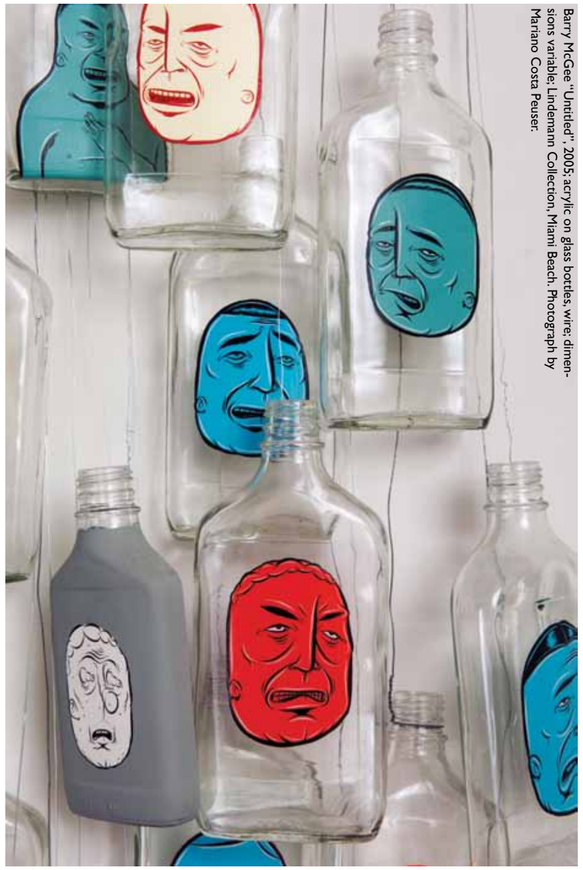
LR: My thing, which I've been thinking lately, which I've said to some other people too, is I see Barry in the context of Walt Whitman. I think he is in a Whitman esque sense, a quintessential American artist who, in a very democratic fashion, looks at everything in front of him with equal eyes. The good, the bad, the high, the low, and shows all of it, and ends up not being depressed by what he sees. That's like this very, I think, American, democratic, Whitman-y voice, that's the context I put him in.

CP: You just busted out a writer and poet.

LR: A poet. And activist.

CP: I see him more as sort of a descendant of Hubert Selby, Jr., one of the definitive Postwar American writers of the 50s. Selby was self-taught, and really brought out the ugliness and the underside and the dirtiness of postwar America, especially people left behind, ignorant people, people trapped in their own minds and by their own limitations, either economic or educational. He exposed these people, and I think Barry does that too. Barry's work is funny and playful, yet slightly biting at the same time. I mean, those photographs of people sleeping on the streets—those are hilarious, but they're also really sad, and they're kind of fucked up. And it's interesting how he is attracted to that,. When you look at that work and you see it for your self on the street, people just sleeping on the sidewalk, you think, how did this happen? How did you arrive at this point where you

Barry McGee and Clare Rojas, "Leave It Alone/Together at Last", 2010 (installation view); Bolinas Museum, Bolinas, California; courtesy Bolinas Museum, Bolinas, California.



Barry McGee "Untitled", 2005; acrylic on glass bottles, wire; dimensions variable; Lindemann Collection, Miami Beach. Photograph by Mariano Costa Peuser.

are now sleeping on the street? And sometimes I wish I could just fall asleep on the street.

LR: You could.

CP: I could, right? I think Barry is really seeing a lot that other people are not seeing or are ignoring, and bringing it to our consciousness. We spend a lot of time together and the more time that I spend with him, the more I begin to see things that I normally wouldn't see. I see patterns, I see shapes, I see things on the street that just make me laugh and I'm just amazed. I think he's also amazed by what does actually happen on the street and how fucked up it is, and how weird it is, and when does that happen? When does someone pile five mattresses in the middle of Mission Street? Barry sort of sees that and I think captures that weird energy, that weird mystery surrounding something like that.

Obviously too, these aspects make it into his installations, these kind of absurd physical objects, overturned cars— I know it's a little far out and you both don't want to give anything away, but what kind of large installation aspects are going to be in the exhibition?

LR: Well, we're doing a new version of one of the red mural walls. It's a composite and it is being refashioned to fit in our space, but it will capture what those spaces were like. It's a very big space and it's a very big project. Those big red walls, both the interior ones, weren't installations exactly, they were interior murals, but they did begin to suggest the direction of the installation because they were so all encompassing. Floor to ceiling. Then we also have a reconstruction of the street market project, though I'm sure, as with all of his art, every time he does it it's new and different, so it's not going to be exactly like it was in the MOCA show or wherever, but it's a new version of that. And we are also doing a very large new *Boil* or *Bump* piece, you know, one of these clusters that kind of pops out. The main part of the show is being done in our 7,000 square foot atrium, so it will be quite dramatic.

CP: There will be some surprises.

LR: Oh, surprises, okay.

CP: When does this come out?

The magazine comes out August 3.

CP: I think we shouldn't really describe everything that's going to be there.

LR: That's true.

Well we can censor the text with a black line. When does the show open up again?

LR: August 24th.

What did you both think of the "Art in the Streets" show?

LR: I didn't see it.

CP: I saw it. There were some interesting things in there. Not all of it is what I would consider to be art. Some of it was more like historical artifacts, photos. It was really big. I think it was very successful for what it was. It brought a lot of people to the museum, which I think is what they wanted to do, so I guess it was successful on that level.

I have the feeling that this show at the Berkeley Art Museum will bring a huge group of people that aren't normally exposed to the museum or go to museums in general.

LR: Yeah, I hope that's true.

Is there any kind of public education programming that's going on with the show?

LR: The thing that I'm most excited about, and I think it's really unbelievably great is that we are doing a program for second and third grade public school kids in Oakland and Berkeley. We have not traditionally done large programs for school kids. We've been an adult-focused education institution, but we very much want to begin to serve young people, and thanks to funding from Citizens of Humanity we are able to do this fantastic project. We have 500 school kids lined up to come and take guided tours through the show then making art themselves. One of the great things about this is that the themes in Barry's show align with state-mandated curriculum with second and third graders, issues having to do with the city and community and things of that kind. So it's perfectly aligned, and I'm very excited about that. We're also doing some other terrific things. Jim Prigoff is doing a slide talk about San Francisco graffiti. Jeffrey Deitch and I are doing a conversation about Barry's work. Devendra Banhart and Clare Rojas are going to perform. Lots of other great programming that Steve Seid is curating for our *L@TE* Friday evening series.

Okay, so I want to talk a bit about, not the struggle, but how in the past - I've been watching a lot of interviews with Barry recently, and he always talks about how- well - in "Art 21" he was saying for every bit of work that he does indoors he has to do 110% outside on the streets, and then more recently, there was a short piece that SFMOMA did when he was in that show that happened in 2010, sort of like a—

LR: The SECA show? The anniversary show.

Yeah, the anniversary show, and then he was saying that he's trying to pass the torch on and step away a little bit from that necessity of being on the streets with his work. I'm interested in this transition from really carrying through that attitude that's shown in his work, but embodying that "raw" attitude in the beginning versus now, where he's kind of accepting the fact that his work is maturing and becoming this other thing that is the next step.

LR: My primary interest and knowledge, such as it is, is with the work that is more conventional, if you will, gallery, museum type work. And I don't know what he's doing outside the studio or outside the museum, if he's still doing things on the street or not, I have no idea.

Okay…So another way to talk about Barry's work is that he is kind of a quintessential Bay Area artist. He definitely has California surf style behind his work, and dealing with homelessness, it's very much a San Francisco experience. So if you could give us your thoughts on how he is this quintessential California artist and how he embodies that?

LR: Well he is a surfer, obviously, but there are surfers elsewhere in the world. In his work there is a combination of the references, to surfing sure, but also to signage and lettering and to living on the street, and also an attitude about community that I mentioned before. It's sort of all these things in general, nothing specifically, but you add it all up and it does kind of have a San Francisco feeling to it. But I think that, obviously, as his success and influence globally testifies, it's not a provincial San Francisco thing, but it does grow out of this community and I think it reflects those origins, not just here in San Francisco, but I think, the Mission specifically. It does draw on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the Mission, the design history of the advertisements and other things there.

In an interview between Aaron Rose and Barry for Vice magazine's "Art Talk", Barry mentions that the trend of graffiti in galleries will pass and that something truly more horrific will replace it. And again, Barry is a fine artist, but there is graffiti, obviously, in his work. So how, as a gallery owner, if somebody was to approach you and ask you about that: "Oh, is this graffiti, is this going to retain value?Barry said that…" What would be your argument against that? Does that make sense?

LR: Graffiti is just one of the things that is making up his work.

CP: I was just thinking that it's just another way of mark making. It's just another way of applying paint to a surface simply. That's it.

LR: And there are other artists—Cy Twombley's work is all about graffiti, and looks like graffiti, and that hasn't stopped it from being great.

CP: And Christopher Wool too.

I agree. But it's interesting that Barry continually in the past, and I know he's just being completely honest, it's just interesting that he makes these remarks that—I think that does go to—

CP: I think you're taking those remarks with a lot of weight. He could just say them. It's just an interview between him and Aaron Rose. It's a conversation, it's not like a—

Totally. I'm not like trying to say it is this thing, because I do understand the humor in it.

LR: I want to know what his vision of something more horrific than graffiti is, like cat paintings or what?

CP: I don't know. Maybe just—I think there are a lot of horrific things in galleries.

Wheatpasting? Okay, not to keep quoting the person who isn't in the room, but I felt like it was an appropriate way to talk about specific points. In a recent interview he did with ArtInfo(dot)com, he was asked about the show at Berkeley Art Museum, and he said "…It's one of the most challenging spaces I've encountered. In the brutalist sense. It's a poured concrete spectacle. Every notion I've had for the show has been challenged by how to install in the concrete walls. Factor in some of my terrible pieces that I conceived decades ago, you have the making for a disaster. Larry Rinder, who I absolutely adore, came up with the idea"

LR: So I'm to blame for the disaster? *(laughter)* Well, first of all, we covered a lot of the concrete with wood. So it's really just a technical problem, which we solved because we covered the concrete with wood so we could attach the things to it. But there is one gallery that is partially installed. The gallery with the red wall, and it looks fantastic with the concrete, and when you see it and see the show kind of evolving, you realize it's the perfect museum for the show because it does allude to the kind of urban situation, under the freeway kind of thing going on, and it looks fantastic. It looks much better than I think many of his shows have in white box spaces.

CP: The architecture of the space also creates a very immersive experience instead of wandering from room to room to room you'll be completely in it. You'll be able to see different things from different perspectives.

LR: As far as the older art that he wishes would go away is concerned, you know, it's a survey, and part of the story we're telling is how did the work get from here to there. And I totally understand that, not just Barry, but many artists, kind of get the heebee-jeebees looking at older work. So the show is not heavy on the older stuff, it is really 80% newish work, probably about a third completely new, but there are a few things that we dug up that I think people will really enjoy seeing. That have never been seen before; I think it's fantastic. Etchings from the late 80s that I think are just really masterful, and I think people will be really interested to see—when he was at SFAI, that are really fantastic—his draftsmanship is terrific, but it's also interesting to see some of the ongoing motifs. Like the screw which appears in those early works in a very different style, but there it is.

So obviously there are a lot of found objects in Barry's work as well. He has said that he really enjoys picking up objects, working with them, they'll be in a studio for a couple of years, he'll rework them and then all of a sudden he'll put them in a frame and they'll be cherished again and somebody will buy it – it becomes about the process. Is there a way to maybe classify, obviously that's related to Assemblage/found object work, but do you think that's an emotional tool that he uses to bring more meaning to the work? Or is that a tool for him to bring it back to this element of the street, that he is always kind of goes back to.

LR: If it's emotional, you'd have to ask him, I have no idea. I think it accomplishes lots of different things. It is a way of taking a piece off the street into the show and making that boundary a little blurry. I think there's an element, he probably doesn't think of it this way, but there's an element of ethnography to it, and even the way he displays the work in those clusters, it's like, a collection of evidence or something like that, that is both things he made, but things that other people made, and it's another way of situating himself within this broader, what I earlier called democratic, context. A social dimension. I also think that he just likes a lot of these things. He likes the way they look. He likes the style, he likes the design, and so he wants to capture that, and in some cases, like why make it again when you just take the thing, you know? It's the 21st century, you don't have to necessarily make something again.

Then the last question is, a phrase that appears throughout art history is "enfant terrible" and how would that attitude relate so Barry in his work and his career and the way that he's kind of always been a bit reluctant to be classified as this thing other than keeping it real in the streets in a sense, or at least in the past. You know, obviously, he's making this transition into a—I don't want to say more mature artist, but just for conversation's sake—that attitude of, "the terrible child"…Rauschenberg was called that for most of his career even after he won the Grand Prize at the 1964 Vennice Biennale.

CP: I think there will always be aspects of his work that will surprise and excite and annoy people, and I think you'll definitely find that in this show.

LR: I think that he sees his importance of being not just in the art but in the way he acts, and I think he thinks that people are inspired by the way he behaves and his out-of-the-box way of interacting with institutions, and I think he thinks that people will be inspired by that.

Twist, Rooftop fill in, 1996, San Francisco. Photograph collage by Dave Schubert.

Barry McGee, "Drypoint on Acid", 2006; drypoint, aquatint, and acid etching from suite of ten; collection of the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; bequest of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, by exchange. Photograph by Silvia Savage.

Barry McGee installing at Deitch Projects, 1999. Photograph by Dave Schubert.

Barry McGee: "The stars were aligned…", October 28–December 5, 2004 (installation view); John Kaldor Projects at Metropolitan Meat Market, Melbourne; courtesy Kaldor Public Art Projects. Photograph by Gerry Sommerfeld, National Gallery of Victoria.

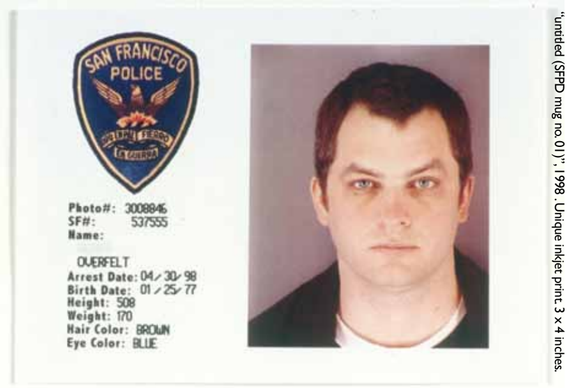
Barry McGee "Street Market", 2011; mixed media; dimensions variable; site-specific installation with Todd James and Steven Powers included in Art in the Streets, 201. The Geffen Contemporary at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; courtesy The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Photograph by Sean Garrison.

[Top] Twist, Muni graveyard 1995. Photograph by Dave Schubert.
[Bottom] Twist Tagging, Craig Costello: Roseville Trainyards, 1995; digital scan from silver gelatin negative; courtesy of the artist.
[Opposite Page] Barry McGee, Todd James, Brisk, & Amaze. "Untitled", 2010. Lithograph and spray paint. 39 x 28 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Ratio 3, San Francisco.

17 questions

Guy Overfelt

With questions from: Jana Blankenship, Constance Lewallen, Stephen Hendee, Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, Joseph Del Pesco, Carlo McCormick, Tony Labat, Oleana Jacobson, Larry Rinder, Janet Bishop, Paul Kos, Kenny Schachter, Jackie Perez Gratz, Howard Fried, Alex Frankel, Tony Serra & Frank Kozik



"untitled (SFPD mug no. 01)", 1998. Unique inkjet print. 3 x 4 inches.

For this addition of SFAQ, we invited notable artists, critics, curators, the children of curators, musicians, art dealers, and civil rights attorney Tony Serra, to ask artist Guy Overfelt a series of questions about his life and work.

Guy Overfelt is a conceptual artist who is perhaps best known for his burnout performances which utilize a 1977 Trans Am as both a performance object and a printing press for projects that reference emotional and economic burnout, class division, power dynamics, and the post-modern industrial complex. His other projects include a life size inflatable Trans Am, 30' x 25' inflatable smoke, and event based social sculptural projects that range from giving free beer to the public, allowing himself to be shot with a taser gun, producing and promoting heavy metal cover band concerts, and taking on the identity of a stock broker for over a year, requiring a change in his hairstyle and address.

His work has been exhibited internationally in galleries and museums, including the Oakland Museum of California; Guangzhou Triennial, China; St. Mary's University, Halifax, Canada; The Havana Biennial, Cuba; Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York; Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, and White Columns, New York City. His work has been acquired by the Berkeley Art Museum Collection and the JP Morgan Chase Art Collection, as well as private collections. Reviews and features of Guy's work have appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times, Art Net, Art Papers, Index Magazine, Paper Magazine, Time Out, Kobe Japan, Time Out, New York, Boing Boing, SF Guardian, Surface Magazine, the San Francisco Chronicle and many other publications. Guy's work has also been featured in the documentary film 'Burning Rubber' on the Bravo Channel.

Guy's work can currently be seen in San Francisco at Ever Gold Gallery, and Eric Firestone Gallery, East Hampton, NY. His upcoming solo show #blacklight at Ever Gold Gallery opens in October 2012.

<u>Paul Kos:</u> Artists do what they do for a myriad of reasons. I would like to ask a basic question. Your work has many sources, some environmentally determined, some perhaps genetically, and some perhaps personal responses to your family history.

After you were conceived and born, you were named Guy Overfelt. What are the roots of the name, "Overfelt"? Why "Guy" ? After whom?

Guy, please tell us about your past in detail and where you are going so quickly.

(A side note: when I was a kid, the only person named Guy I had ever heard of was Guy Lombardo, famous for slow, slow, waltzes and Auld Lang Syne. He was the onomatopoeia of New Year's Eve. And once as a 1955 Chevy moved slowly down the street, someone in the car yelled, "Hey guy!" "Yeah you!" "Guy, where is the closest Ethel?")

"untitled (Tony Labat shot me in the face with a taser)", 1998. Video, color, sound, 7 seconds, dvd edition of 3.

My first name is actually Terry. My parents were both named Terry, and they named me after themselves, so naturally, I adopted my middle name Guy. My name confuses some people, and it's confusing for me sometimes when people lean out of car windows and say things like "hey guy, do you know how to get to Starbucks?" Sometimes I think they actually know me. When I order a non-fat vanilla soy latte with shaved chocolate, I usually tell the person behind the counter that my name is Bob.

I haven't geeked out on my genealogy much or wanted to pay for a membership to ancestry.com to find out, but this is what I learned from google: Of English origins, the family name includes Over, Overs and others. First found in Cheshire where they held a family seat as the Lords of the Manor. A family seat was the principle manor of a medieval lord, which was normally an elegant country mansion and usually denoted that the family held political and economic influences in the area. The Overfelt surname is generally thought to be a habitational name, taken on from one of several places named Over, or Ower in Britian, such as Over in Cambridgeshire in Cheshire and in Derbyshire. These place names are derived from the Old English "ofer" meaning "seashore" or "riverbank". This would now explain how my Aquarian astrological mythology and genealogy have created this unconscious desire to live in close proximity to the ocean. Guy is of French origin and is also slang for man, dude, bloke, mate, lad, chap, fella, etc. It would seem that I have been named after Guy Fawkes (explaining why I find myself expressing 'FAWK' much of the time) and would generally explain my life as man/guy/dude living near the ocean saying 'what the fawk' about current socio-economic & political conditions. Thanks Paul! I didn't realize any of this, until now. It makes complete - onomatopoeia name-life forming - sense, but I'm sure that my "every man" name, the casual slang for manhood in someway shaped the way I think about masculinity which has had a great impact on my work.

<u>Jana Blankenship:</u> When did your obsession with cars begin? In light of your work that addresses car culture and the American Dream, what kind of wheels do you have? What does that car symbolize to you?

I use cars as a conceptual tool for exploring undercurrents that shape the slick packaging of the American Dream, despite its often painful and messy human reality. Burnout, for example, has been a long running theme in my work. I have a 1977 Trans Am that I've used as a kind of talisman to explore a continually changing sense of the American Dream.

I wasn't interested in car culture until graduate school, although I grew up around car and motorcycle subculture. My mother raced her 1970 Nova SS when I was a toddler, and my father was a member of the Hells Angels. My lack of interest in car culture as a child may have been my silent rebellion and a way of unconsciously creating observational distance within my parents' involvement with car and motorcycle culture.

"I'm a card-carrying member of the In Too Deep Club. I'm in it for life and there is no escaping."

"untitled (cruzen USA / shotgun)", 2000, unique color photo. 30 x 40 inches.

"Assed Out and the Mini Dramas", with Andrew McClintock. 2012, Social installation at Queen's Nails Projects, SF. Photograph by Mike Cuff from Warholian.com.

I began working with a 1977 Trans Am as a way of addressing an aesthetic class divide that I view as heavily mediated by marketing. The 1977 Trans Am achieved record sales levels for General Motors after it was featured in the 1977 Hollywood film Smokey and The Bandit. Working with the Trans Am enabled me to reach into something that had emotional resonance for me that married something poetic with theory. It allowed me to acknowledge and explore the class dynamics I was born into as they related to marketed messages of power and masculinity. In my work, cars represent a common connection between male class struggle at its most basic level; a desire for power symbols, and the aesthetic markers of status defined by education level, region and situational influences.

<u>Constance Lewallen:</u> What is the thread that connects your works?

I'm interested in our collective human condition and the poetic dynamics that shape personal and collective politics.

<u>Stephen Hendee:</u> You've told me that early on you enlisted in the military and were assigned intelligence work. A number of notable visual artists have done military service. How has this influenced the production of your art and the field of advertising that you've also found success within?

If I told you, then I'd have to… The intelligence work I did for the US military wasn't entirely by choice, and I was still a teenager, so I went in with my eyes partially open, with a rebellious spirit, and an awareness of military manipulation. My work within advertising and the military has made me hyper aware of the ways in which human behavior is monitored, mediated and controlled.

<u>Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson:</u> Surveillance has long been a strategy in, and subject of your work, pre-dating the wide spread use of such technologies today. How has mainstream adoption of surveillance affected your approach?

I cope with feeling powerless in the face of invasive and seemingly inescapable surveillance through toying with the absurdity of a culture that often prefers not to challenge breaches of civil liberties.

The integration of various levels of surveillance in everything from tracking web activity monitoring of the programming individuals watch on cable and the commercials they skip; email keyword tracking used to direct advertising, and free reign wiretapping, all seamlessly bleed across our civil liberties and threaten rights to privacy.

When working on a project, I create meaning through context, employing humor and allowing for chance operations to reveal my thinking as it relates to forms of social control; hopefully challenging and shifting perception to create a dialog with the viewer.

<u>Joseph Del Pesco:</u> Can you tell us (in as much detail as possible) what it was like to work with Tony Serra and what he thought about your act of involving him in your project?

The project you're referring to is the Burnout Project, and my subsequent arrest and trial at San Francisco Hall of Justice which became a performance piece. My performance involved hiring the renown courtroom sketch artists Walt Stewart and Vicky Behringer to document the trial. Walt and Vicky illustrated the trials of OJ Simpson, the Enron Scandal, the Michael Jackson Arraignment, the Scott Peterson trial, Anderson Trial, Unabomber Theodore J. Kaczynski, Corcoran Prison Guard Trial, serial killer Juan Corona, Patricia Hearst, Bill and Emily Harris, Angela Davis, Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, Howard Hughes' will, the Charles Manson trial, and a deposition in the Iran-Contra scandal. I also turned my citation into a printed invite, inviting guests to witness the court proceedings as a performance.

I was incredibly lucky to have had Tony Serra defend my case. For those who don't know who Tony Serra is, he is a civil rights attorney who is probably most famous for defending rights of the Black Panthers, the Hells Angels, Earth First, and the New World Liberation Front. He has a personal relationship to the art world through his brother, the artist Richard Serra. Tony felt that through my case, he could address what he thought were violations of freedom of speech and expression. Serra and his team of attorneys Shari Greenberger, Omar Figueroa, and Shannan Dugan worked on the case together.

Although Tony was arguing for my freedom of expression, he planned to use a defense tactic he had used when he defended a fire-breathing circus performer for DUI. In the fire-breather's case, the arresting officer hadn't believed that he actually was a fire-breather, or that alcohol was an essential part of his act. Tony asked the fire-breather to perform his act and then took a breathalyzer test for the jury who came back with a unanimous not guilty verdict. Tony had planned for me to perform a burnout in the parking lot in front of the court house so that my jurors could see that I posed no threat to public safety, but my case was ultimately dismissed before it came to trial.

After many months of meetings with the District Attorney and the Judge, Omar Figueroa uncovered that the illegality of burning out was found to be an opinion of a California judge in 1961. That judge thought that burning out/loosing traction ought to be against the law, but his opinion was never actually made into law.

<u>Carlo McCormick:</u> I think your primary debt to the lineage of San Francisco conceptualism is that you appreciate how funny they all allowed their work to be, how they did not take themselves as deadly serious as other conceptual

"untitled (My 1977 Trans Am crushed into a cube)", 1998-2010. Crushed automotive steel. 24 x 24 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Ever Gold Gallery. Photograph by Stephen Lowenstein.

art scenes. Would you agree with this assessment, and what would you say you have learned from that bay area tradition?

Yes, my work is highly influenced by San Francisco conceptual artists who I imagine were influenced by politically motivated/protest based pranksterism. The ability of those artists to transcend a staid, accepted framework through irreverent and seemingly absurd action is what compelled me to become an artist. I fear I may sound too Northern California, post-new age, crunchy in writing this, but that approach to transforming perspective is a hopeful act. It's an approach to life and work that enables me to continue to make art and it's something that I continue to strive for and learn from.

Tony Labat: What is the difference between a reference and a rip-off?

This is a loaded question for me, and I think that the idea of a creative commons has confused some people who don't believe that they need to credit their influences. A rip-off is stealing without crediting the original source. (I don't think this is what Picasso meant when he said "great artists steal.") If you rip-off the work of your contemporaries (or other generations of artists) and present work that is a one to one copy or close proxy, aesthetically or conceptually, without crediting the person who originated the work, it's a rip-off. Unfortunately, artists rarely have the resources or connections to successfully challenge this kind of plagiarism that is currently rampant within the contemporary art world among socially connected and often financially comfortable artists.

Oleana Jacobson: How did you come up with making a tar ball?

When I made burnouts on paper, the tires acted like duel snow maker machines, but instead of snow, tiny pieces of rubber from the spinning tires accumulated on the street. When I saw the piles of rubber that looked like black snow, I started making black rubber snowballs.

*I credit David Ireland's hand made concrete Dumb Balls, as work that may have enabled me to think of those burnout balls as a valid conceptual art object.

Larry Rinder: You have used Joseph Beuys' term "social sculpture" to describe your work. If you had a chance to meet Beuys, what are three questions you'd like to ask him?

I would only ask Joseph Beuys two questions.

Social Sculpture was a term created to illustrate Beuys' idea of art's potential to transform society. It includes human activity that strives to structure and shape society or the environment. Bueys' idea of a social sculptor is an artist who creates structures in society using language, thought, action, and object. Beuys said that "Everyone is an artist," so I would ask him why he felt it was necessary to make art for galleries and museums.

I would also ask him to recommend a good felt distributor.

Janet Bishop: I was lucky enough to participate in the delicious and really interesting dinner piece you did at Four Walls, back in 1997. How did you come up with the idea for that and were there any big surprises as the evening unfolded?

Thank you again for coming to that dinner. I greatly appreciate the bravery of everyone who agreed to participate in that project, which was a behavioral experiment within the art world microcosm of San Francisco. The piece was modeled upon the rules within Emily Post's Book of Etiquette and came from a desire to play with perceptions of gallery space, its function, and art world role-play between dealers, curators, critics, collectors, and artists.

In many ways it was a collaborative project that organically evolved with the amazing gallery partners at Four Walls, who contributed their personal experience, thoughtfulness, and labor to the project. There was a sweet youthful energy that everyone involved with designing the dinner literally brought to the table. The dinner menu was developed and planned by myself, Julie Deamer, her gallery partner Suzanne Stein, and chef David Becker's professional guidance. All the food was prepped in Julie's kitchen at her home and then brought to the gallery where, four massive leaning walls created an arena-like environment for a long, elegant dining table with seating for thirty.

"burnout ball 001 (pier 70 series)", 1998-2009
BFGoodrich Comp T/A Drag Radial rubber, on painted wood shelf. 4.5 x 5 x 4.5d inches.

"Ever Wash", 2011. Social installation of a fully functional free laundromat, at
Ever Gold Gallery, SF. Courtesy of Ever Gold Gallery.

While serving there were several mishaps. I accidentally spilled hot soup in Paula Anglim's lap and overfilled Howard Fried's wine glass so that Hess wine spilled over his hands and the white table linen. Everything else I've either forgotten or blocked out, so I hope nothing more than that happened.

Kenny Schachter: Are cars art? Why cars and what's your favorite, do you identify with a particular marquee and model? When was such an impression formed?

Cars are art although the cars I use in my art are not meant to be "car art." In my work, the car is a conceptual device. I have used a Trans Am in my work over the past 16 years, but I can't commit to a favorite car make or model. There are so many amazing cars to choose from that span epic periods and countries.

I didn't get into car culture until I was in my twenties, but I'm sure I was influenced by my parent's taste, so many of my favorite cars are American muscle cars: The first muscle car, a 1949 Oldsmobile Rocket 88; a 1955 Chrysler C-300 (I just saw one a few months ago, completely restored and being driven on the street); a 1953 Corvette with classic red leather interior; The Dukes of Hazzard's 1969 Dodge Charger R/T; Steve McQueen's 1968 Ford Mustang 390 GT. A 2005-6 Ford GT. The AMC Pacer featured in the movie Wayne's World; the 1955 Chevy which appeared in Two-Lane Blacktop and American Graffiti, and lives in San Francisco; the Tesla Roadster; a 1968 Dodger Super Bee; the 1966 Ford Holman & Moody 427; and of course, the 1977 Trans Am (with it's symbolic phoenix hood decal) that became a cultural icon after it appeared in Smokey and The Bandit.

Jackie Perez Gratz: Why do you like fast cars?

Performance. Freedom. Speed. I'm a fan of stories about cars, movie car chases, and music about cars. The existential message within the films Two Lane Blacktop, Vanishing Point, and Mad Max woke up my teenage mind. I have memories of watching Tracy Chapman performing 'Fast Car' on television in 80's for Nelson Mandela. My mom was once pulled over by the police for speeding in her hot rod, a 1970 Nova SS while I was a passenger, and that made me think my mom was a badass. I have tender memories of my dad, who died when I was in my early twenties, letting me steer his 1964 drag-race prepared Ford Falcon down the freeway at a 120 while sitting on his lap, and of hanging on to him for dear life as we tore through the desert doing 100+ mph on his Harley Panhead. A need for speed is probably in my DNA. Fast cars are symbols of freedom and revolution even though it's all a smoke screen. They represent a double edge of interpretation governed by perspective.

Howard Fried: Favorite building material age 4; favorite food age 9; favorite building material age 14; favorite food age 19; favorite building material age 24; favorite food age 29; favorite building material age 34; favorite food age 39; favorite building material age 44; favorite food age 49; favorite building material age 54; favorite food age 59; favorite building material age 64; favorite food age 69; favorite building material age 74; favorite food age 79; favorite building material age 84; favorite food age 89; favorite building material age 94; favorite food age 99?

Favorite building material age 4; PINE WOOD. favorite food age 9; PINE WOOD. favorite building material age 14; CHROMOLY. favorite food age 19; PIZZA. favorite building material age 24; BRONZE. favorite food age 29; SUSHI. favorite building material age 34; RUBBER. favorite food age 39; STEAK. favorite building material age 44; CARBON FIBER. favorite food age 49; LAMB. favorite building material age 54; TITANIUM favorite food age 59; MUSHROOMS. favorite building material age 64; PLASTIC. favorite food age 69; COCONUT MILK. favorite building material age 74; RARE EARTH MAGNETS. favorite food age 79; KIMCHI. favorite building material age 84; BRAZIL NUTS. favorite food age 89; GINGER. favorite building material age 94; BRAZIL WOOD. favorite food age 99; BRAZIL WOOD.

Tony Serra: Why must art at one level at least subserve political reform?

I don't think art necessarily has to work in the service of political change. There is a lot of good art that isn't made with the intention of supporting political change, and a lot of art that is made with an intention to promote political change that is heavy handed and overly intellectualized to the point where it reads as a dry academic exercise that doesn't surprise or challenge.

It is wonderful to see work that challenges expectations, jars the senses, is irreverently funny, or feels poetic because it resonates on an esoteric and human level.

I believe that individual creative acts that remind human beings of our humanity are politically subversive acts in themselves, whether or not they carry an intentional political message.

Alex Frankel: ***You are outside of your studio or home when a fire threatens to engulf the building. You have one minute to run back into the burning building and grab something. What do you grab and why?***
I live in a wooded area and this is a very real possibility so I'm glad you asked this question Alex.

Without a doubt I would grab my prized Hummel collection. I have collected Hummel figurines since boyhood. They are my passion.

I have hundreds of them, so I've made small harnesses for each of my ten cats that hook onto special rolling shelves in my display case.

Sometimes when I'm feeling bored with making art or scanning for new figurines on ebay, the cats and I run fire drills. Sometimes they fall out of line and things get a little chaotic, but really, don't believe what they say about herding cats because I feel confident that when the time comes, my collection will remain intact so that my future son can enjoy them as much as I do.

"untitled (rebirth)", 2010-2012. Unique inkjet print. 20 x 30 inches.

"untitled 01 (crespi parking lot series)", 1996. 1977 Trans Am burnout using Mickey Thompson ET Street tires on Belgian linen. 10 x 8 inches . Courtesy of Ever Gold Gallery.

Frank Kozik: ***Is it one obsession at a time, or is it a life-long arc? If the latter, is there an end or will you still create on life-support?***

I'm a card-carrying member of the In Too Deep Club. I'm in it for life and there is no escaping.

"17 Questions" is an new SFAQ interview series that was created by Contributing Editor Heather Sparks.

Jana Blankenship is a contemporary independent curator based in New York City.

Constance Lewallen is an adjunct curator at the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

Stephen Hendee is a visual artist and a professor at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland.

Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson is the CEO and Director, Chief Curator at Aspen Art Museum in Colorado.

Joseph Del Pesco is a contemporary independent curator, art journalist and director at Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, California.

Carlo McCormick is a culture critic, writer, curator, and Senior Editor for Paper Magazine living in New York City

Tony Labat is a conceptual artist and a pioneer in the San Francisco performance and video scene.

Oleana Jacobson, is the daughter of Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson.

Larry Rinder is the Director of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California.

Janet Bishop is the curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, California.

Paul Kos is a conceptual artist and one of the founders of the Bay Area Conceptual Art movement in California.

Kenny Schachter is a professor, curator, writer, artist, collector, dealer and irritant to the art establishment on both sides of the Atlantic; he currently lives in London, England.

Jackie Perez Gratz is an electric cellist and vocalist for San Francisco metal trio Grayceon currently based in San Francisco.

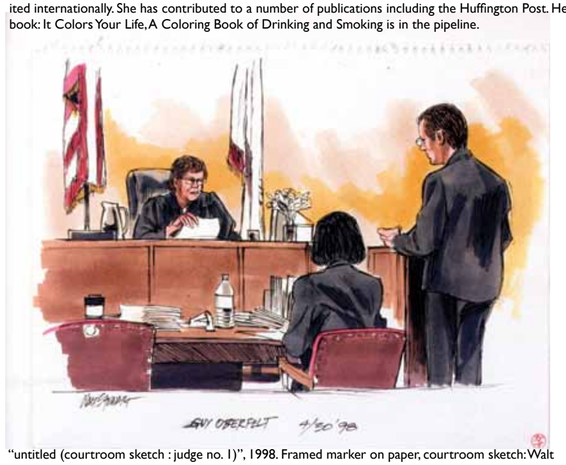
Howard Fried is an American conceptual artist who became known in the 1970s for his pioneering work in video, performance and installation art.

Alex Frankel is not the lead singer of Holy Ghost!, the indie hunk behind NYC DFA buzzband, but actually a San Francisco based writer, most notably the author of Punching In: The Unauthorized Adventures of a Front Line Employee, which presents some of the lessons he learned from his time working at several top brands including Starbucks, Apple, and Enterprise Rent-a-car.

Tony Serra is an American civil rights lawyer, activist and tax resister from San Francisco.

Frank Kozik is an American graphic artist who has worked with Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Stone Temple Pilots, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Melvins, The Offspring and Butthole Surfers. He also runs Man's Ruin Records, a media outlet and record label.

Contributing Editor ***Heather Sparks*** is a writer and conceptual artist whose work has been exhibited internationally. She has contributed to a number of publications including the Huffington Post. Her book: It Colors Your Life, A Coloring Book of Drinking and Smoking is in the pipeline.

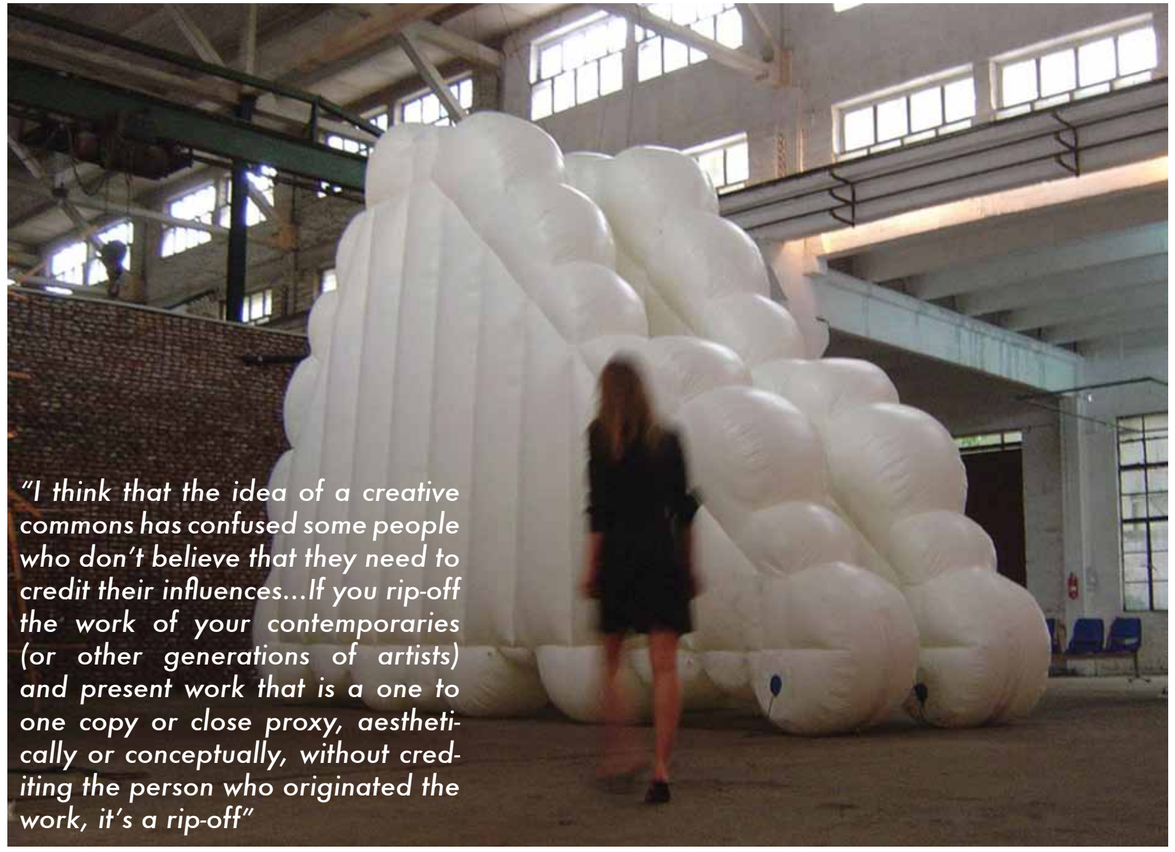


"untitled (courtroom sketch : judge no. 1)", 1998. Framed marker on paper, courtroom sketch: Walt Stewart. 20 X 24 inches .

[Above] documentation from the social installation "Game Over" 1999. At Bronwyn Keenan Gallery, NYC.

[Right] "untitled (endless bud)", 2000. Custom 4.4 ci refrigerator, unlimited supply of 12 oz. budweiser cans, parody stickers, and bud poster. owner is responsible for re-stocking refrigerator with 12 oz. bud, dims variable on amount of beer. Collection of Themistocles and Dare Michos.

[Bottom] "untitled (up in smoke)", 2008. Inflatable nylon and electric blower, each 216H X 336L X 36W inches.



"I think that the idea of a creative commons has confused some people who don't believe that they need to credit their influences...If you rip-off the work of your contemporaries (or other generations of artists) and present work that is a one to one copy or close proxy, aesthetically or conceptually, without crediting the person who originated the work, it's a rip-off"

Guy Overfelt, "untitled (study for burnout lenticular)", 2012. Unique C-prints. 8" x 10" each. Courtesy of Ever Gold Gallery.

Art and Politics Meet Again

Voina, Pussy Riot and the Russian Winter

Written by Nadia Khismatulina

Voina, "Dick Captured by the FSB". Saint-Petersburg. Courtesy of Voina.

The political fever running across the world has occupied the headlines of all possible periodicals since the advent of the "Arab Spring" in the Middle East. But perhaps less recognized in the United States, was the net of massive protests "For Fair Elections" that spread across Russia during the parliamentary elections of December 4th, 2011, and presidential elections of March 4th, 2012 - a period of time that quickly became referred to as the "Russian Winter." Perhaps unexpectedly, SFAQ's recent attention to the clash of art and politics has made it a relevant publication to explore these international issues.

What is urgent for Russia today – is not necessarily the reorganization of our political system. Not much can be done in that direction - as these last elections confirmed. Numerous demonstrations against their abuse of power only provoked a new amendment, appointing proportionately enormous fines for unsanctioned public gatherings and rallies. The waves of civic violation reports from the parliamentary and presidential elections continue to stand unattended. But surprisingly, what is really in the air after the Russian fall and winter of 2011, is the emergence of a "creative class" and its positioning upon the political and cultural stage. Quite suitably this subject has developed in response to the creative public practices of several radical art groups.

Extensively covered by the international media was an early call from the summer of 2010 by the Saint-Petersburg based art group Voina. Known for their brave and extravagant performances, Voina spurred the tension with a series of brassy political actions. "The War" (as their name indeed means) started long ago with "Fuck For The Bear" – a public orgy performance in the Moscow Biology Museum. Devoted to the 2008 presidential elections and predicting the appointment of Vladimir Medvedev—whose name in Russian loosely translates to "Mr. Bears" – "Fuck For The Bear" is among Voina's most recognized performances.

But in June of 2010, they made an even bigger splash in the public sphere with the enormous penis painted onto one of Saint-Petersburg's signature draw-bridges. During the rise and fall of its crossing, the 210-foot phallus became erect, rising to attention while facing the headquarters of the FSB (formerly KGB); the legendary building at the 4 Litejny Prospect that is unofficially nicknamed "The Big House." Here, starting as early as the 1930's, the national security services have resided, evolving from NKVD to KGB to FSB today. The long-feared institution was undoubtedly an inspiration for "Dick Captured By The FSB", as Voina entitled the action. After a month's worth of preparation, the scandalous drawing was implemented within twenty-three seconds and lasted for only one night before being removed by authorities. Although short-lived, under such charged conditions it was obviously a fantastic success.

Encouraged by the public resonance they managed to evoke with Dick Captured By The FSB, Voina moved on to one of their most "violent" performances: "Palace Coup", held in November 2010. During the performance, Voina members and their associates protesting against the Russian police state overturned police cars, sometimes with the officers still inside. Apparently this was the "last straw" for the Russian authorities and members of the group, while previously clashing with the police on a number of occasions, were finally arrested. Two members were jailed for three months and threatened with long-term sentences of up to seven years. Charged with the damage of state property, Voina's actions were denied the

"During the performance, Voina members and their associates protesting against the Russian police state overturned police cars, sometimes with the officers still inside."

Pussy Riot, "Punk-Prayer" spontaneously and illegally performed by the group at the ambo of the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow on February 21, 2012. Photograhy courtesy of REUTERS/Maxim Shemetov.

status of art practice and were framed in terms of vandalism, which raises many thought-provoking questions.

Voina aficionado and prominent Russian art historian Andrey Yerofeyev noted that there are a number of professions that assume a certain vandalism and trespassing of private property in the execution of their work—such as fire-fighters, security guards, forest guards, surgeons, etc. But the actions of these professionals aren't questioned, as they are directed towards the general public good. Similarly, according to Yerofeyev, artists and Voina specifically "commit blameworthy acts not for fun and not out of naughtiness, but out of a desire to normalize the relationship between an individual and authority." [1]

Compared to the generosity of this noble service, what are a couple of broken police flashers and a stained bridge? Referencing Voina's Dick, Yerofeyev proclaimed that "society has the right for the asymmetrical response in a form of graffiti, when all the legitimate methods of contestation are exhausted… Art-group Voina reacts on the rejection of the verbal dialog: on the impudent gesture of the authorities, they respond with the obscene gesture." [2]

The Voina heroes were eventually released, unlike members of another radical art-group, the punk and feminist Pussy Riot. Three activists of Pussy Riot were jailed after the audacious action: "Punk-Prayer", spontaneously and illegally performed by the group at the ambo of the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow on February 21, 2012.

Wearing saturated dresses, tights and masks, ladies sang an alternative prayer in the spirit of "the patriarch, Gounday, believes in Putin, he'd better believe in God, bitch," accompanied by electric guitar.

This extreme expression of dissent was directed against the amalgamation of Russian Orthodox Church and governmental power institutions; which come with inevitable consequences for contemporary Russian secular and political life, as well as against the otherwise unexplainable superior position of "Pravoslavie." Two of them young mothers, the activists have been imprisoned ever since, facing seven-year sentences for their art action.

Both of these instances of artists jailed for their extreme, though justified, actions have been exceptionally resonant in local and international media accounts. Cases of outstanding civic courage or artistic audacity, and their rampageous reaction and severe censorship by authorities, have caught the world's attention. But rare attention has been paid to an audience's response – the field where the real politics happen.

The artworks marked the pre-election agony of a Russian society panicking to receive Putin yet again as the newly-minted president of the Federation; while still no solid alternative had risen to prominence. Both Voina's attacks on the police and Pussy Riot's appeal to congregation captured the sensibility of distrust in regard to the power structures stemming from Putin's administration.

Demonstrations on February 4, 2012 "For Fair Elections" in Moscow.

At the same time, the public reception of these provocations held a similar dichotomy that revealed itself during the winter protests: between those who associated the Putin government with reactionary regime and those for whom it provided a period of relatively calm economic and political climate.

Due to this grievous rift in the societal fabric, many were shocked when Voina's "Dick Captured By The FSB" was named "the best work of art in 2010" and awarded the National Innovation Award: Russia's only contemporary visual arts honor. Since the award has an independent status, but was established and supported by the National Center for Contemporary Arts, its ceremony turned into a revolution of sorts. While officially, Innovation has no direct relation to Russian cultural politics, the decisions and precedents produced by its jury are interpreted by professional communities and general audiences as a measure of the state's loyalty to contemporary culture. Therefore, the fact that Voina's art intervention was acknowledged as the most significant work of the year, was a gesture of cultural legitimization and recognition of the artwork's aesthetic and relevance, if not political validity.

Still, this has in no way resolved its controversy; on the contrary, this created an absurdly schizophrenic situation. While one administrative resource is censoring Voina's activity, another celebrates it as a prominent work of art. The event caused resentment not limited to the enfranchised, but across broad segments of Russia's general public. One of the few protests was organized by the Young Russia movement in front of the Ministry of Culture building in Moscow, proclaiming it "the most fucked ministry" for rewarding the vandals with a prize. The discussions around "how to live in the country where 'Dick Captured By The FSB' is called art" also spread across the nation.

Even today, cultural and intellectual elites have no consensus on the role and significance of Voina in the general development of oppositional consciousness that was demonstrated by Russian society throughout the fall and winter. Just as they also maintain dissonant perspectives on Pussy Riot's imprisonment or release.

The "Punk-Prayer" spurred a far more negative and cohesive reaction. Religious matters in the post-Soviet Russia appeared to be a sensitive, truly sacred ground, something Pussy Riot definitely counted on.

"Antipussings" – the protests against the group encouraging a preservation of moral purity occurred in several cities across the country. The Church itself forwarded requests to the government to punish offenders of the faithful. Professionals went on critical discussions, questioning how punk and feminist the group really is, then dissecting their inspirations and vocal merits. But when it became a public realization that the seven-year sentence, only a threat for Voina, was a reality for the three young women that illegally performed a scandalous song – even arrant Christians felt the disproportion.

Harsher in this case, justice would not be satisfied by administrative charge. On June 12, 2012 the indictment was published, where in addition to accusations of "blasphemous humiliation of age-old foundations of the Russian Orthodox Church", the prosecution called the group's "colorful" outfits "defiantly bright", and bombastically accused them of "jumping, lifting up legs, imitating dance and punching" which contributed to the severe public disorder they caused. The indictment was confirmed and accepted by the court. As quickly as the following day, this announcement was skewered by an anonymous performance, with a female figure in the Pussy Riot outfit crucified in front of the ill-fated cathedral. The inscription on the cross read: "here might be your democracy".

It is necessary now to remind that the public debates, addresses and petitions enflamed by these radical art-groups were not only concurrent with the general atmosphere of political unrest and unusual public socio-political activity in Russia. They were also organically if not causally related one to another. The extreme character of Voina and Pussy Riot practices and their pretense to frame those practices in terms of art in a rather conservative (aesthetically too) Russian society was appreciated only by few and appeared unclaimed by

> "The artworks marked the pre-election agony of a Russian society panicking to receive Putin yet again as the newly-minted president of the Federation; while still no solid alternative had risen to prominence. Both Voina's attacks on the police and Pussy Riot's appeal to congregation captured the sensibility of distrust in regard to the power structures stemming from Putin's administration."

the general public. Needless to say, these groups were not recognized as flagships of the Protest. Nevertheless, while winter "For-Fair-Elections" demonstrators were exploring the limits of their personal aesthetic tolerance towards the performances, the authorities made quite a direct connection between the two.

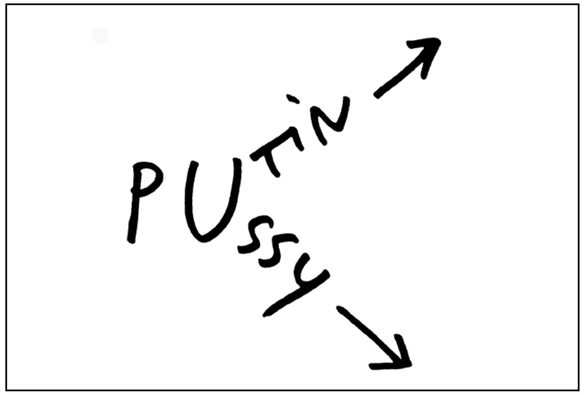
To the official media, the masses protesting on the streets and on the Internet were frequently identified as the "creative class". Rightful in a sense, since among the protesters were indeed many now known as creative professionals, who used to be known in Russia as the "intelligencia" – writers, actors, artists, publishers, photographers, reporters, etc. – this denomination seems to me far more strategic. Making an effective relation between the concurrent questionable art activities and unpredictable political and economic results of the opposition movement, the "creative class" became a sort of rhetoric weapon leveling both. This latent "Dick is your new face" message happened to be challenging and even polarizing; not necessarily for the demonstrators themselves, although there is a range of attitudes towards Voina and Pussy Riot, but for the majority of those who are now making their political choices far away from the epicenters of protest and aesthetic avant-gardes. For them "creative class" is now perhaps associated with the "elitist" and often difficult to accept extravagancy of these art actions. Something which is not always forgivable in matters of art, and much less so in lifelong decisions – what "election" in Russia has come to mean.

At the same time, for progressive minded public personas, that are aware of the neoliberal contexts and political limitation related to "creative class" as it is understood globally, association with one means the abortion of the forwardist opposition project. For instance, Ekaterina Degot, an internationally recognized art historian, curator and critic, who was among the Innovation jury members that bestowed the prize to Voina, openly expresses her idiosyncrasies regarding the Russian creative class. "Degot recently wrote a column for the website she edits, OpenSpace.ru, that was filled with disgust at the 'creative class' – designers, copywriters, managers and PR people who consume contemporary art as a form of high-class, fashionable entertainment." [3] This way, the identification of the protesters with radical contemporary art practices through the instrumentalized concept of "creative class" rather than being a sociological finding, becomes that ideological divide that leaves nascent opposition without electorate.

However, this situation when creative class becomes a mediator, and sometimes a false one, between the politically uncertain yet formally expressive public resistance and its contemporary art representations, is not uncommon. A much different, but curious case is unwinding right now in dear to me San Francisco with the current "Occupy" exhibition at Yerba Buena [YBCA]. As one might guess, this show is based on the paraphernalia and spirit of the famed Occupy movement. Yet the process turned out to be far less representational: according to some Occupy activists, they have not been invited for any kind of collaboration at any stage of the show's development, neither did they get any financial support that the show might have generated. This detail once again provokes a reflection on the fair line between contemporary politically conscious art and real political work, the line that nevertheless is sometimes so hard to cross.

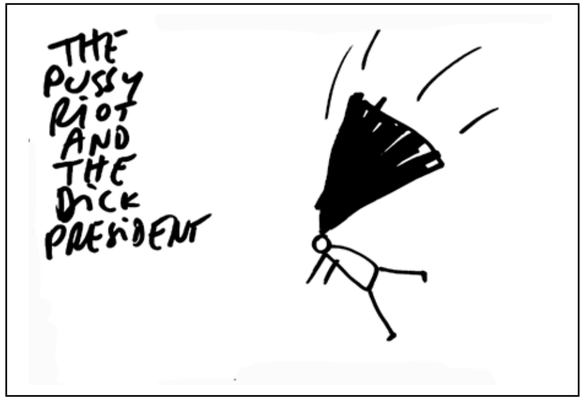
[1] The full text of his article "How to Judge Voina?" in Russian can be found at http://artchronika.ru/gorod/как-судить-«войну». Translation Nadia Khismatulina
[2] Ibid.
[3] From a review on her recent exhibition devoted to contemporary art production by Valentin Diaconov: http://blog.frieze.com/1st-ural-industrial-biennal/

"Occupy", 2012, Installation view, YBCA. Courtesy Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Phocasso/J.W.White.



Dan Perjovichi, "Pussy and Dick" [Below] & "Putin-Pussy", [Above] 2012. Ink on paper. Made for the 2nd Ural Industrial Biennial curated by Iara Boubnova. Courtesy of the artist.

Members of Pussy Riot. Photograph courtesy of DENIS SINYAKOV/REUTERS.



February 29th, 2008, Voina staged a live public orgy at the State Museum of Biology in the hall "Metabolism, energy, nutrition, digestion". While five couples were copulating, the Voina chief media artist Alexei Plutser-Sarno, wearing a tuxedo and a top-hat, was holding a black pre-electoral banner reading "Fuck for the heir-bear".

Jeff Berner

On Fluxfest, 1967

Interviewed by John Held, Jr.

Special Fluxfest Pull Out Poster included in this issue!

Jeff Berner photographed by John Held, Jr., 2012.

Jeff Berner was mentioned briefly in the last issue of SFAQ, in an article on the late collector/dealer/scholar Steven Leiber, who began his interest in artistic ephemera through acquisition of several boxes of art Berner had accumulated, which Leiber later termed, "a bunch of crap." He was being facetious. Most of the materials had been exhibited (162 items) at the Stanford University Art Gallery. Leiber spent the rest of his life untangling the threads he found within the unfamiliar material.

Under examination, the derided detritus began to reveal itself. Leiber dealt the majority of the Berner collection to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, where it formed the foundation of the exhibition, "In the Spirit of Fluxus." This was the first major exhibition of Fluxus in an American museum and opened the movement to widespread critical inspection.

Berner was extremely active in the late sixties, teaching at UC Berkeley Extension and elsewhere, curating the 1967 Stanford Art Gallery exhibition on the contemporary avant-garde, "Aktual Art International: Posters, Manifestoes, Objects," and writing a bylined column for the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday Datebook, which bore the same name as the classes he was teaching, "Astronauts of Inner Space."

He had become a full-fledged member of Fluxus in 1965 through contact with Fluxus impresario George Maciunas, who embraced Berner's enthusiasm and included him in Fluxus activities and multiples. Berner performed at the "Prague Fluxfest" in Czechoslovakia in October 1966 with Milan Knizak (now director of the Czech National Museum of Art), Ben Vautier, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles and Serge Oldenbourg.

Berner wrote in a circa 1967 "Astronauts of Inner Space" column, "The Fluxus membership is made of sculptors, actors, painters, commercial artists, poets…They want to bring back the beauty of so-called 'insignificant' actions and observations."

Berner had a deep friendship with Anna Halprin, which remains to the present day. He wrote of her in 1967, "She seeks a partnership of the audience and performer. She incorporates basic human rituals into her happenings …Going to a Halprin event isn't just going to be amusing: it's going to be transforming"

On March 31, 1967, Berner hosted a seminal event in San Francisco art history. Fluxfest merged the regional "be-in" with happenings, Halprin and Fluxus, mixed in the San Francisco Mime Troupe, added the Quicksilver Messenger Service and came up with something very unique in its combination of East and West Coast avant-gardes.

This was powerfully expressed in the offset poster produced for the event by master poster artist Rick Griffin and his wife, which fused Fluxus with psychedelic design. I wanted to know more, and questioned the Dillon Beach and Paris resident for additional information.

Today we're going to discuss Fluxfest, held in San Francisco on March 31, 1967, with one of the organizers for the event, Jeff Berner. Jeff, how did you first become involved in Fluxus?

Just before I got involved with Fluxus, I was teaching avant-garde art history at UC Berkeley and San Francisco Extension, and San Francisco State Downtown Center - all around the place - when I was twenty-four years old in 1965. It was called *Astronauts of Inner Space*. It was about the European avant-garde from 1880 onwards. In other words, when Modern Art was being born in Montmartre, where I live today. I've lived there for the past ten years.

When I launched the classes, I had absolutely standing room only. Ken Kesey was my first guest lecturer. I had so much fun going on. I heard about Fluxus, so I contacted them – I didn't know who "they" were – but I called New York and ended up talking to George Maciunas.

He said, "Wow, wow, wow," and sent me mountains of stuff – all kinds of boxes and kits, and this and that. Not only for my courses for my classes to see. I had forty, fifty students, sitting there just having a ball, but I said, "I can sell these for you, I can sell them in places like the Psychedelic Shop. I'll give you all the money. I'm not trying to make money off of it, let's just get that stuff out there."

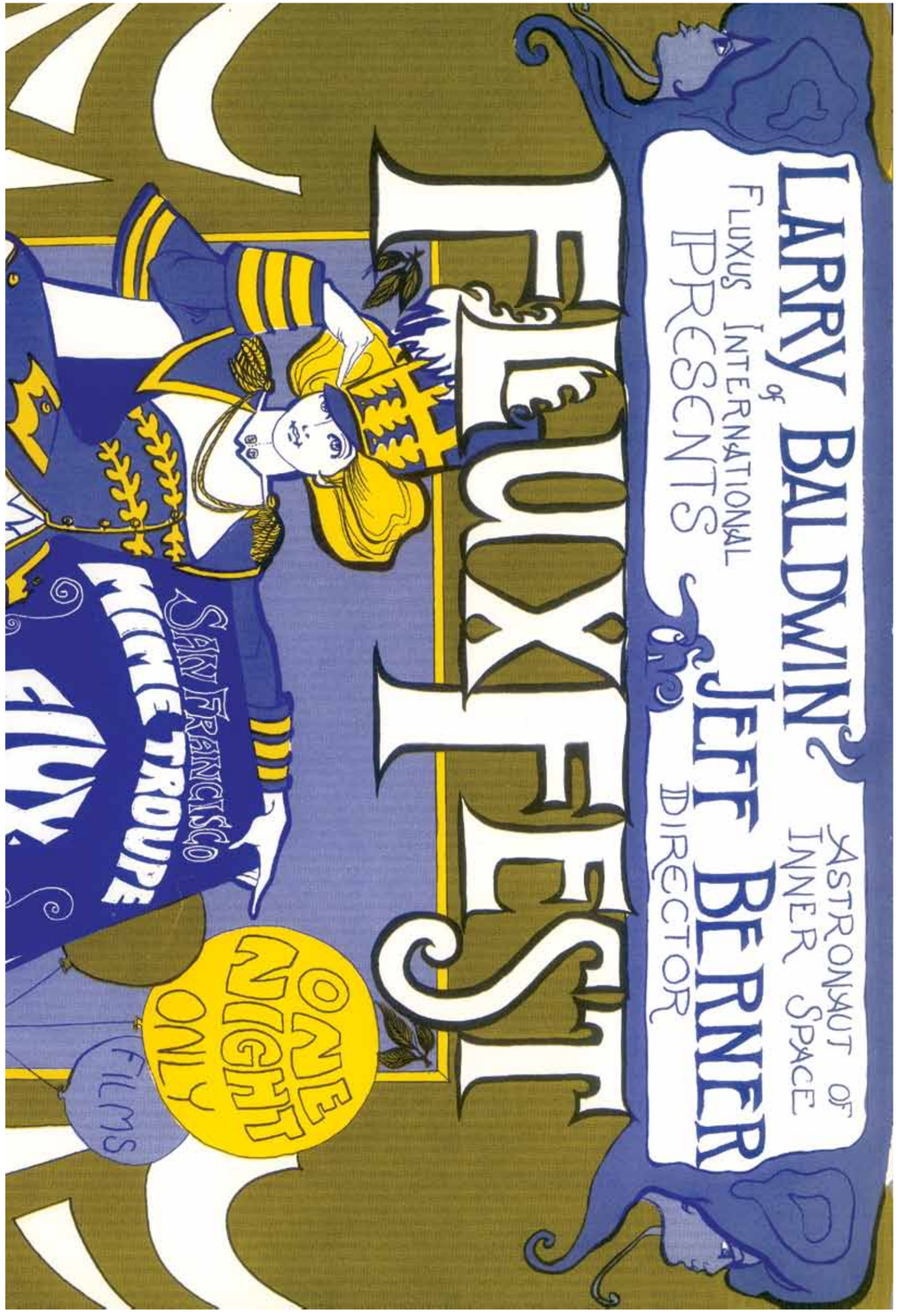
I sold them at various places, but mostly at the Psychedelic Shop in the Haight-Ashbury. They sold like mad. They were like two or three dollars apiece. When I told him [Maciunas] about my passion for all this stuff, going back to the 1880s, he said, "You're a Fluxoid - join." And he designed a logo for me, and all that good stuff.

So, this was 1967. First, there was the Trips Festival [January 21-23, 1966], which I attended. I had a ball. It was quite magical. Down at Longshoreman's Hall, if I recall. So, I thought why don't we do the first European avant-garde performance art festival at Longshoreman's Hall and blow people's minds.

For me, it wasn't a psychedelic experience. What I was trying to do – it might sound gratuitous – I was trying to show people how to get high without drugs. Although I've had my taste of sacraments through the years, I know for sure that you give a beer to one person, he may start dancing to reggae. You give a beer to someone else, they jump off a bridge. I felt, let's show people what other people have accomplished without drugs, although...

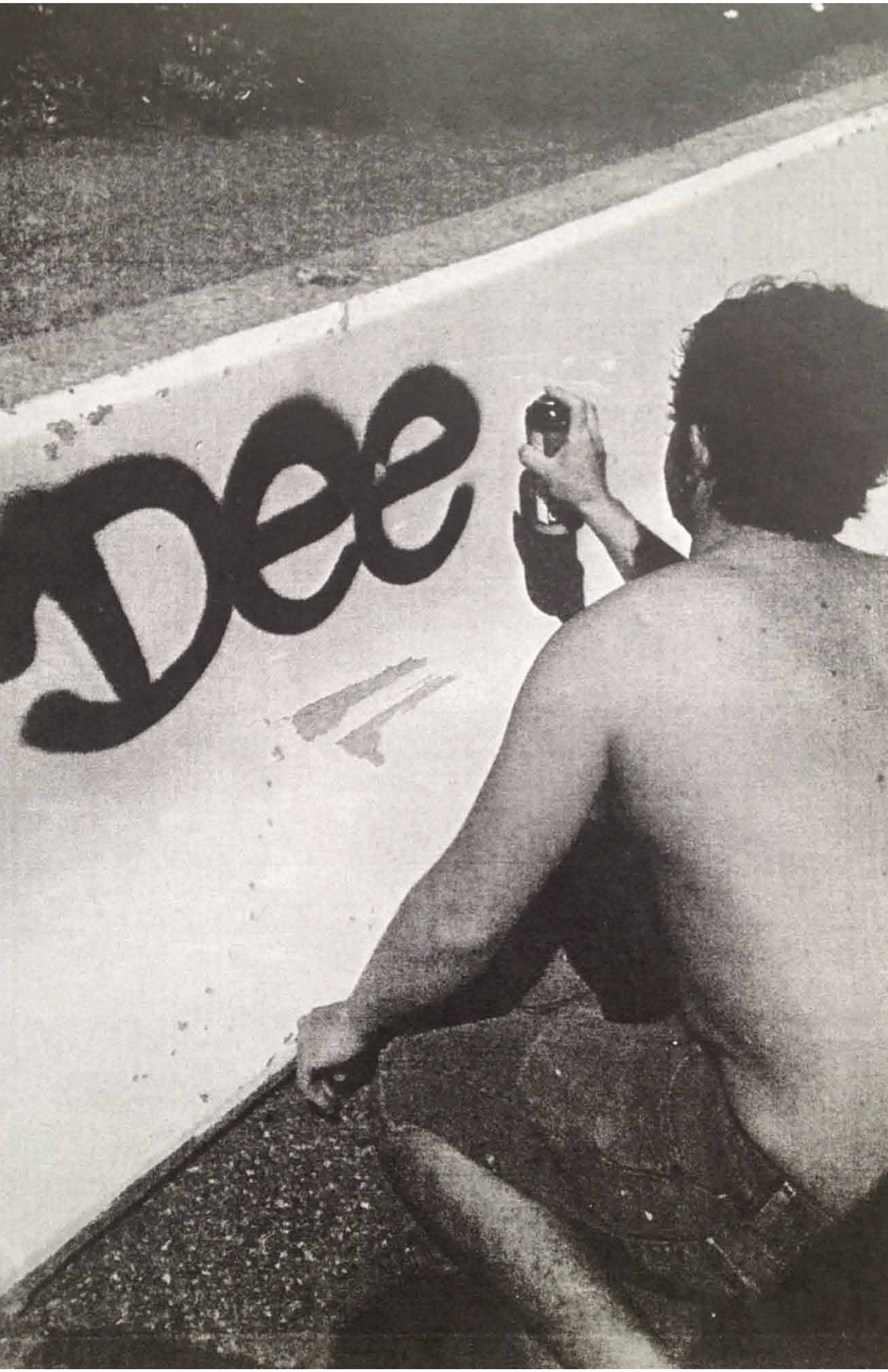
I wanted to show all kinds of young people, who were pretty much my age - I had some older students, too - look at what Surrealism shows us - blending dreams and reality. Look what Dada does – it collages the world. Wait a minute. The world is already a collage? It's already an assemblage? Whoa!

Well, I was demonstrating this, and not just talking about it. Having guest lectures. We had projects in the class, and then I thought, why not just do a festival? So, a friend of mine, Larry Baldwin, said, "Well, I'll put up the money," and I [supplied] the connections.



SFAQ PULL OUT POSTER Issue 11! Reproduction of "Flux Fest", 1967. Poster designed by Rick Griffin. Courtesy of Jeff Berner.

SFAQ PULL OUT POSTER Issue 11! Image courtesy of Barry McGee and Ratio 3, San Francisco.



Anna Halprin was accidentally left off the poster. She's been a dear friend since 1963. I saw her the other day. She's an angel. One of the guardian angels of the arts, in my opinion, and, as I learned only a couple of years ago, an early influence on Fluxus, which is [indicated] on the chart we just saw. [Maciunas "Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus"]. Just a remarkable spirit.

She was involved. I think she was the hit of the festival. I did some Fluxus performances. And by the way, there were some two thousand people there. People paid two or three bucks apiece. We never dreamed it would be a financial success. Are you joking? Art paying for itself?

Where did Baldwin get the money for this?
He was just a super smart guy. Today he is a Sufi leader – a wise, kind soul. In the sixties, people had their resources from one place or another. It wasn't family money. We both loved weird performance and strange objects, pushing the edge of convention. I'm in touch with him by e-mail. He may be in the Midwest. He has his own Sufi community. He leads a group of Christian Sufis.

Anna Halprin and her dancers…we got what was called a Glas. It was a Czechoslovakian sports car made of fiberglass. It was loaned to us by the dealer in San Francisco. Her dancers came in with skin colored tights – all women -- looking nude at a distance.

I think there were twelve of them, with huge gallon cans of strawberry jam - also red, the color of the car. They opened them, and poured jam all over the sports car. And when it was completely covered, they crawled all over it, and licked it off. How I wished it would have been videotaped, but in those days it would have taken a $12,000 camera and a professional team to do it well.

What happened when it was returned to the dealer?
Oh, we washed it off. There was no problem at all (laughs).

Quicksilver Messenger Service was there?
They played music. The San Francisco Mime Troupe was there.

The poster also mentions The Wild Flower.
They were a small musical group as well.

A psychedelic group?
I think so, if I recall.

The poster mentions films as well.
Maciunas sent me a whole big roll of Fluxfilms, which included Yoko's "Bottoms." It was fabulous. So, I showed that. In fact, I didn't just show it, like here it is and look at a movie, it was going on all the time while all this other stuff was going on.

Was it in it's own room?
No. It was on the wall in the Longshoreman's Hall, which held two thousand people without any trouble at all.

Where is Longshoreman's Hall?
Fisherman's Wharf.

Did you get tourists attending?
No. Not that I'm aware of. One of the reasons it drew such a crowd, is that I was writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I had my own byline column, also called "Astronauts of Inner Space." That's why on the poster it says, "Astronauts of Inner Space, Jeff Berner, Director." Another journalist wrote a whole story about what was coming up next week at Longshoreman's Hall. That was also in the Pink Section along with my column. So, he interviewed me, "What are you doing, what's this all about."

Let's talk about who did the poster.
He was a super famous poster artist. Rick Griffin. But he never signed it. I think his wife worked on it as well. It's a poster that people have consistently loved. [Looking at the poster]. "Three Dimensional Cosmic-Concrete Rock-Fugue Retinal Circus." I think Larry Baldwin and I wrote those words to put in there.

The poster also promises, "A Strange Evening of Experimental Events." What did the Mime Troupe do?
I don't remember in detail. I'll tell you what I did. I did an Allan Kaprow piece. I'm in a tuxedo. I have a bucket of water. And I'm holding it, and I very, very slowly lift it over my head, and turn it over and splash it all over my head, and take a bow.

Another one was the violin piece that he created. I have a violin. I hold the violin over my head. There's a piece of marble sitting there on a stool. With the slowest possible movement like a Zen priest, I bring it down and down and right about here, I (smash it). People really loved it. Applause, applause. What can be more poetic than an avant-garde piece smashing a classical musical instrument? That was in my collection, which was [exhibited] at the Stanford Art Museum and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Was there a stage for the musical acts?
And for these performances as well. But needless to say, the sports car was in the middle of the floor. So, when Anna [Halprin] and her Dancer's Workshop people crawled all over it, it was not on stage. It was on the floor.

What else was happening on the floor?
Nothing. It was one thing at a time.

I admire the poster because it links Fluxus with West Coast Psychedelia, which as far as I know, hasn't been replicated before or since. It is really striking. You mentioned that the Flux kits you received from Maciunas sold well?
Very well.

And they sold for very little.
Don't forget in those days, five dollars was not *no* money, but they weren't expensive. Maciunas and I agreed that we wanted –this wasn't the expression at the time – an installed base for Fluxus. We didn't want any resistance to buying them. So, we sold them essentially at his cost. I sent him all the money right away, and I paid for the postage, because I wanted it to happen. There wasn't tons of money in his life, as I understand it, although I really didn't know. If he wanted three dollars for it, I'd tell the Psychedelic Shop, "OK, its three bucks." And they didn't take any money either. They knew it was a fun thing.

Was there any feedback from Maciunas after you told him how the festival went?
No. I never met him, but I talked with him probably six or eight times over two or three or so years by phone, twenty minutes, half an hour at a time. So, I reported it to him, but I don't remember him saying, "Oh, gee, what an interesting cultural mix we have here between New York and European avant-garde and California." There was nothing like that, or I would have written about it in my column in the *Chronicle*.

The tickets to Fluxfest were $2.50 in advance?
Yes, but its $3.50 at the door, so you better hurry.

"Flux Fest" 1967. Poster designed by Rick Griffin. Courtesy of Jeff Berner.

TOM MARIONI

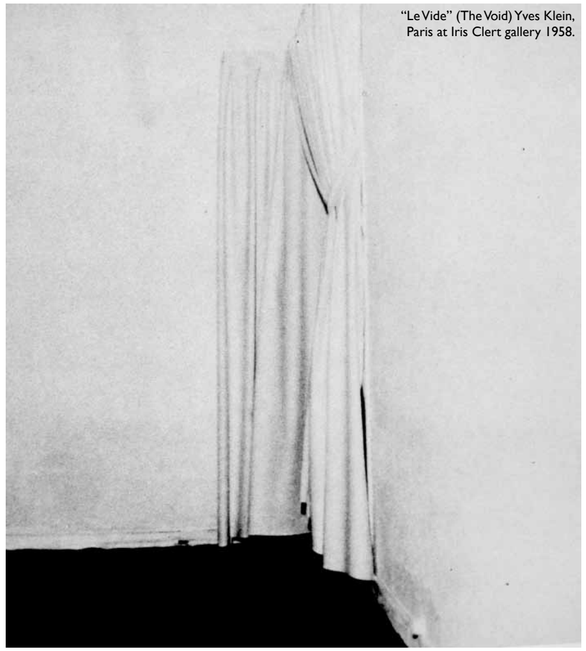
Art Etiquette & Funny Stuff

Why do some artists receive global acclaim, while other artists, often with significant national reputations, languish internationally?
-Yoko Goldberg

Most great artists were rich and famous in their lifetimes, maybe not Van Gogh who died young by his own hand. Some of California's great painters of the recent past are unknown in the rest of the word. Sometimes artists are regional or provincial in their style and do not relate to people in other cultures or are seen as copies of French or Italian artists. Artists who invent a style, or way of making art, become influential to other artists who spread a look to the world. The really great artists establish a new way of seeing by inventing something. Duchamp invented conceptual art, John Cage invented the Happening, Brancusi invented abstract sculpture, Kandinsky abstract painting, Picasso collage, Yves Klein invisible art, Joseph Beuys the sculpture action, etc. Sometimes a local artist is unknown or not respected in his or her own region but is well known in Europe and Japan. Jesus said, "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country," in other words, everywhere but in his own country, and look how famous Jesus is in the US of A.

Why are there so many women in the arts and what is going to happen to all the men?
-Anonymous

First of all, be a man. I didn't write this question, but if I did I might sign it Anonymous. We had our day and now it's time to turn it over to others. Women are just as good as men, only slightly different. With a remote control, a woman wants to know what's on and a man wants to know what else is on. Men know stuff about tanks. Women can spell well and smell good. A man understands the principle of the internal combustion engine. Women are not colorblind which is why more women are painters than men. More men are sculptors because they can lift more weight. There are more woman in art schools, medical and law schools now so get used to it. Everything changes places, men with women, and socialism with capitalism, and good neighborhoods with bad. Women live eight years longer than men so when you are 80, have a sex change operation.



"Le Vide" (The Void) Yves Klein, Paris at Iris Clert gallery 1958.

In hard times, where and how can we find humor in art?
-Frances Valesco

Hard edges for hard times, that's my motto. Richard Prince started writing jokes on his paintings in the '90s I think; this was literally humor in art or in painting anyway. There is humor in the work of Jeff Koons and Damian Hirst but they don't mean it to be funny, nor do they have my kind of sense of humor; like are #2 pencils still #2 if they are the most popular pencils? Sometimes after you tell a joke there is the kind of silence that one associates with outer space.

What are artists trying to figure out? And in making art what is the importance of ignorance?
-Edward Stanton

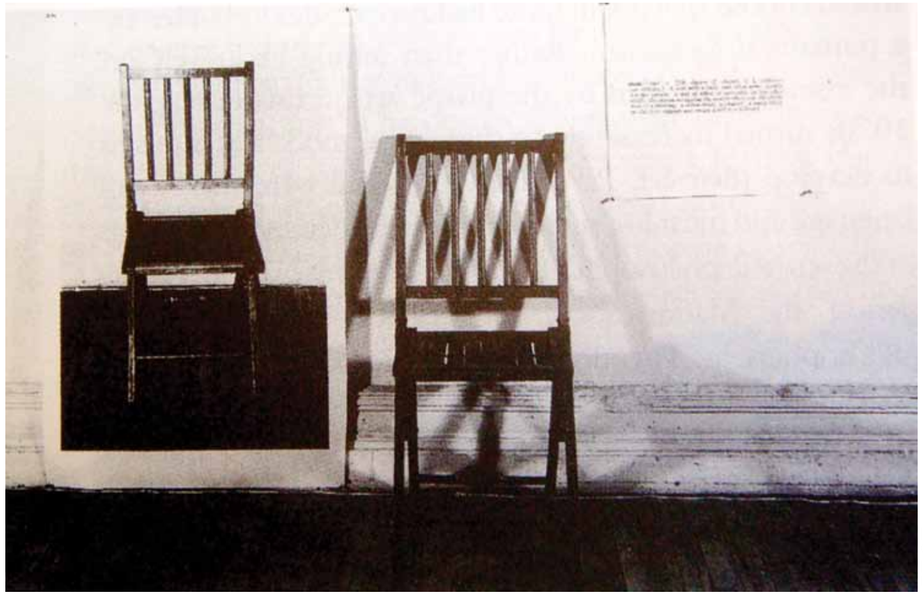
Artists are always trying to figure out what you get when you mix blue and yellow, and artists are trying to figure out why they need to know about art history so they won't be doomed to re-live it. The answer to your second question: that everything will be new for you. The great thing about youth is that everything is new.

Out of all the questions there are to ask, how do you cull the best questions, what makes the cut?
-Jack Fisher

It's not a problem. I answer almost all the questions. There are not so many. One question that I didn't answer was a description of an artist's work told in a way that I could not understand. There was no question. The best questions are short and not profound. I can answer them in a funny way.

Two dealers want to represent me exclusively. One is a well known LA dealer who shows famous artists, has a beautiful space, and places to work with great collectors and museums. A lot of her artists say they never get paid, even when they have contracts. The other dealer is a hot Miami dealer and she does many art fairs per year. Her space is small so my installations will need to fit into two suitcases if she is to show it around the world. She is honest and her artists get paid eventually but her collectors are not famous. Who would you choose?
-David J. San Francisco

"The art writers that are assholes (not that there's anything wrong with that) get drunk with power because they can help or hurt an artist's career by writing about it. Most critics of all stripes never practice what they preach. Those that can, do, and those that can't, write about it."



[Left] Joseph Kosuth , "One and Three Chairs", 1965.
[Below] Joseph Beuys, action, "How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare", 1965.

I think this is a hypothetical question but I will try to answer it. It is very common that artists don't get paid for their work, especially if you live in America and have a show in Europe 10,000 miles away, or the work doesn't sell and is not returned to you. Artists are the last to get paid because they are such soft touches and don't have lawyers to intercede for them. I would go with the LA dealer because you can get there easier. You could do both because many galleries only want to be exclusive in the same city. Some artists have galleries in many cities in America and in other countries. It's uncommon for a successful artist to have only one gallery in the world.

What is Language art?
-Mary Corita

The official language art of the late '60s was an arm of conceptual art, and some think that language art is conceptual art. Robert Barry's invisible FM radio waves in a gallery description on the wall, a Lawrence Weiner statement that the art need not be made, and a Joseph Kosuth chair, with a picture of a chair and a printed dictionary description of a chair are all good examples of language art. These works show the power of words and are sculpture based. My example might be more theatrical but paints an imaginary picture. A man on stage holds up a sign that reads, "AN ALLIGATOR EATING A DEAD MAN ON THE STREET IN NEW ORLEANS."

Why do art writers that have degrees in art history but never practice art get to be such pretentious assholes? And if we stop listening to them will they go away?
-Michael Nissim

A guy walks into a bar and says, "All art critics are assholes." And a guy at the end of the bar says, "I resent that." And the guy says, "Why? Are you an art critic?" And he says, "No, I'm an asshole." The art writers that are assholes (not that there's anything wrong with that) get drunk with power because they can help or hurt an artist's career by writing about it. Most critics of all stripes never practice what they preach. Those that can, do, and those that can't, write about it.

Want to submit a question about the art world, a complaint, general concerns, funny stuff, grievances or problems for Mr. Marioni's column in issue 11?

Send to info@sfaqonline.com by September 29th.

Lowell Darling

"This interview is my last work, or at least it is the beginning of the last work..."

Interviewed by Griff Williams

With help from Ilene Segalove

Lowell the good folks at SFAQ have given us 2600 words to summarize your colorful life in the art world. Can we do it?
You know, Griff, I just got back from the clinic and the diagnosis doesn't make me feel much like talking about the art world. But it does drive me to have this conversation. My work, the ART I made in caps, has always been my way of coping with the world. And so… My life has been one long art performance. I don't remember ever being anything but an artist. My grades were bad as a kid, but I could always draw, so ART got me by. I realized since ART gave me a leg up before, I may as well make a name for myself and create a career. So, I worked hard to make Lowell Darling=ART and wanted it to be a familiar name to as many people as possible. Of course I chose to show up more outside the normal art venues rather than inside.

I built an art career by coming up with projects that involved lots of other artists, and sometimes the public at large. Primarily I used the mail and public media, although I did have one of the first alternative spaces in California in 1971, the Art Center of the World in Davis. But now, let's face it. I'm officially old. Why deny it or even honor it? It ain't no big deal or mystery. There is nothing special about mortality.

I don't know what to say. I have some questions here about….
Well, today I have some questions for myself. I know myself a little better, and in a whole new way. I mean, sure, we all know we're going to die. I've almost died several times. I was a wild and sometimes dangerous guy. But today, at the VA Hospital, no less, I was introduced to my real body.

Don't tell me you're going back to body art? Like when you fell off the museum roof in Greece…..
Ha, ha. Very funny, Griff. No. But I haven't treated my body so well. Been ruthless to it. I've always been a prop, you know. I use myself to make my art. I guess I am the art, though I hate the corniness of that idea and have always sort of fought against the little movements art critics give us. I've been called a conceptual artist, a video artist, a performance artist, a media artist, a correspondence artist you name it, even a ceramist for Christ's sake. I think I may have even started a few. But I've always been only Lowell Darling. I'm not a member of anything. I'm simply just another lousy human body with a lot of ideas trying to escape. Frankly, I'm at a loss as to what to say, but if everything in my life has been raw material for my work, why not the end?

What are you saying, Lowell? I've got some questions that don't seem to mean much now.
Exactly. I have this fucking heart, you know. It has these blood vessels that go in and out of it, just like in the science books. It's so new to me, this reality that I don't even know what it is. But I don't have to think about suicide anymore, that's for sure.

Have you thought about suicide before?
Always. The first time I came pretty close to success. I was twenty-one, going on three thousand. The last time was after my campaign for Governor in 1980. Nasty car wreck. I drove my famous pink and black '57 Plymouth Plaza into a cement wall. My book "One Hand Shaking" had just come out, and I didn't want to promote it. The campaign was over, and I thought it was going to be my swan song, a retirement from pro bono public performance. I was finished. I wanted to move on and felt trapped. I couldn't get over myself. This is the drag with success for artists. The blessing is also a curse. I hate to admit this, but I'm not bored with Lowell Darling, that's not what I'm saying. He was fun to be for the most part. He was great, but he's got too much baggage. I'm tired of going through the bags with him.

This is getting a little personal, are you sure you want to do this?
Fuck it, Griff. I'm an aging successful failure. Failure has been my forte. I created a way of working that left little debris to sell to the so-called collectors, and I'm broke. I succeeded. I didn't want to produce or end up with any ART products. I did too well with what began as this theoretical challenge and ended up becoming harsh reality. Nothing much left, a kind of delightful dead end I would say.

Meaning that you don't have anything to sell, or that you are hesitant to sell what you have because you placed so much emphasis on being a pro bono conceptual artist most of your career?
I've reduced my life, the debris left in the passing, to a pile of paper that I'm copying to make a visual autobiography. An artobiography it might now be called. The denouement of my novel practice. In art I sought to practice socially moral work, work that expressed my personal beliefs. These pieces commented on our social world and our effects on the natural world, the planet we show so little kindness and respect.

I'm not sure how to respond to this. What are we really talking about?
I think my last piece of art is my artobiography. Right now it is sitting in my studio, just piles and piles. It covers years and years. A lot of artists you know are in it. Maybe it is going to be called, "You won't have Lowell Darling to kick around anymore."

Is this a joke?
No. I am the Dick Nixon of art now.

But are you bitter, or pissed off or something?
I'm something, but I don't know what. This is new for me. New turf. A new medium. I've always wondered what the fallout, the result of my actions would be. I've made art out of almost everything about my life. And knowing that I can kill myself by running down the block, yes that's what the doctors told me, it gives me a whole new way of thinking. A new way of thinking. I like this. It's exciting. I've never done anything that I wasn't excited to see how it would end. I love doing things just to see what will happen if I do it. I'm like a scientist in this way.

Explain yourself a little clearer on this. The cause, the action, the result.
Like when I'm pissed off with politics or the stupidity of what we do to the planet, the power of money and museums on the making of art: I spout off publicly about what I think. So now I'm in this secret zone, the dirty sacred old guy shit. We all tend to keep this internalized. Well, fuck that.

"Like when I'm pissed off with politics or the stupidity of what we do to the planet, the power of money and museums on the making of art: I spout off publicly about what I think. So now I'm in this secret zone, the dirty sacred old guy shit. We all tend to keep this internalized. Well, fuck that."

I'm suddenly feeling mortal, tired, my feet puff up and hurt, and I don't like leaving the studio, so I've become anti-social. And I loved to party, ya know. Art was always a good reason to party. But this is the way it is: I look at the my ephemera, photos of past work, and mostly I see pictures of a sort of ok looking guy who is doing really crazy things, making a lot of jokes about serious issues, fame, name, blame, game, even the survival of life on Earth. I never made art for future historians because I didn't think they would be around to pass it on. What a laugh….

My motto has always been, when you have a problem, use it before it uses you. Turn the problem into art. So, right now, I'm thinking, why not do this one last piece? My only worry is that once you go public about dying as a work of art, you're sort of committed to finishing, and if I live too long, well, I hate to be boring more than anything.

Campaign Button, 1978. Courtesy of Gallery 16.


Lowell Darling, "Candidate", Los Angeles, 1978. Courtesy of Gallery 16.

How to you compare yourself then with artists who've died making art, like, let's say Bas Jan Ader.
I've never compared myself to other artists. This is *my* life, you know. And I keep expecting Bas to show up anytime...

Tell the reader something about the This Is Your Life sign, for those who are new to your work.
Everyone is new to my work, including me. But to answer the question, the This Is Your Life sign hung over the stage door of the TV show with the same name, on an abandoned studio near my flat on Seward Street in Hollywood. I've used the TIYL sign almost like a logo for decades, more than any visual image, and it was especially poignant while still hanging. Vandals had spray painted "fuck you" on the doors, so it read, "This is your life, fuck you." This was during a time when the government was saying I wasn't an artist because I didn't sell art, and it expressed my sentiments exactly: I was fucked…

Anyway, this masterpiece of irony was broken by vandals one day, and I took the pieces home and reassembled it like a frieze of the Parthenon after the Germans had blasted it to pieces. It has been a metaphor for my life since I found it in 1972.

On a historical note, the actual sign was sold to pay for my 1978 campaign, by the way, and the guy who bought it vanished, a Hollywood entertainment manager. Poof! Easy come, easy go. That's how it's been with me. And now the end of my life is real to me. It's on my mind. I have to use it, or it will use me.

So you want to treat dying like another performance?
Without being maudlin, yes. Except it won't be so public, the process I mean. I've become a bit of a hermit. If I can make something public without appearing in public, I will do it that way. My last campaign for governor of California (2010) was like this. I felt like spouting off about the state budget and revenues rules, so I ran to say this. Once the New York Times had covered the campaign on the front page of the Sunday Nation section (thanks to Nate Ballard), I didn't have to campaign anymore. Everyone reads the Sunday Times, and all I wanted was that forum.

Elaborate, please, on your loose usage of the word lie. You say you lie a lot, but I don't think you are a liar.
Well, sometimes I lied in the public media, nothing personal, but most often I could create a lie that would become as real as if I had done it. For example, do you *really* think I laced up the San Andreas Fault? Or would it be enough to say I had done it? Is not an idea as real as an action?

Don't you think that copping to a lie could destroy your reputation, your credibility?
Not at all. I use the same methods that governments use to create political reality. After World War II for example, our government began talking up Germany's recovery. Germany is bouncing back… The rumor spread, investments were made, Germany recovered. It's the same thing with my work. Rumors and lies, but good ones….

But you did do some of the things you said you did, yes? Or was it all just lies?
Of course.

But seriously, Griff, the Hollywood Archaeology prints I did with you and Gallery 16, competes with anything any artist is putting on the walls, you know what I mean? Just look at them. Fucking masterpieces! They have all the cultural hints and obscure meaning of Baldessari's better pieces. And I knew this when I found them.

(Lowell spent years walking the streets of the film industry's processing district in Hollywood, and there he found small fragments of feature films that had been edited out of movies. These fragments were collaged together in a film)

The Hollywood Archaeology prints that Gallery 16 published are the best and about the only tangible art I've made. And the work, the concept, it filled my need to travel light, meaning that while the source material fits into a carrying case for a flute, we could fill any art museum with the images. To tell the truth I think it competes against any art being shown. Period.

So that's it? Period?
Yep, that's it. And why not brag a little now? To me this work is a logical conclusion to the Found Art/Readymade begun by Duchamp and Man Ray. I was finding other artist's art, if we consider Hollywood filmmaking Art.

When I'm gone I think Hollywood Archeology will be what I'm remembered for – unless I'm lucky enough to have a longer run than my prognosis predicts, these HA prints are about all that's tangible, all that remains of Lowell Darling, whoever he is.

Any thoughts for the future?
I am no more optimistic about human life on Earth than I am in my ability to run the 440 today like I did in high school. This is modern art: Finders Keepers, Losers Weepers.

OK, Lowell, here's my last question: Where do you place yourself among your peers?
I have no peers.

Anything else to add?
Yes. I am opening my studio to the public, and if anyone wants to pop by and have a look around, hang out and talk, they are more than welcome. Groups or individuals. At sunset San Pablo Bay is beautiful, and at night the refineries glow like Disneyland on acid from my deck.


Closing Dow Jones: 880.72, up 0.52; stocks on Page D2

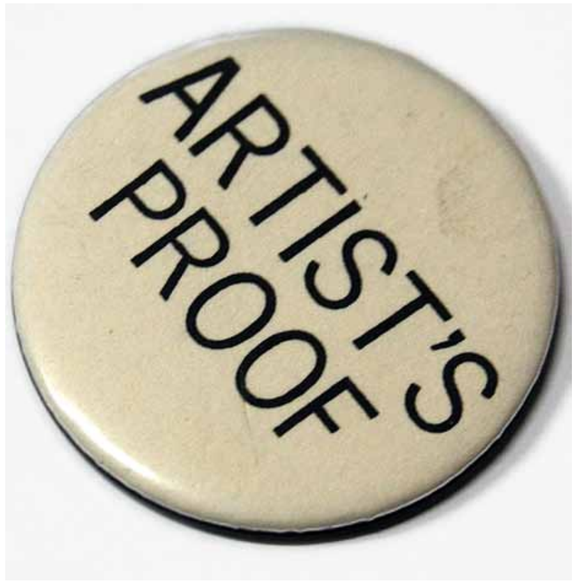
The Ore

VOL. 128 — NO. 36,880 SUNRISE EDITION THURSDAY, AU

Staff photo by RANDY WOOD

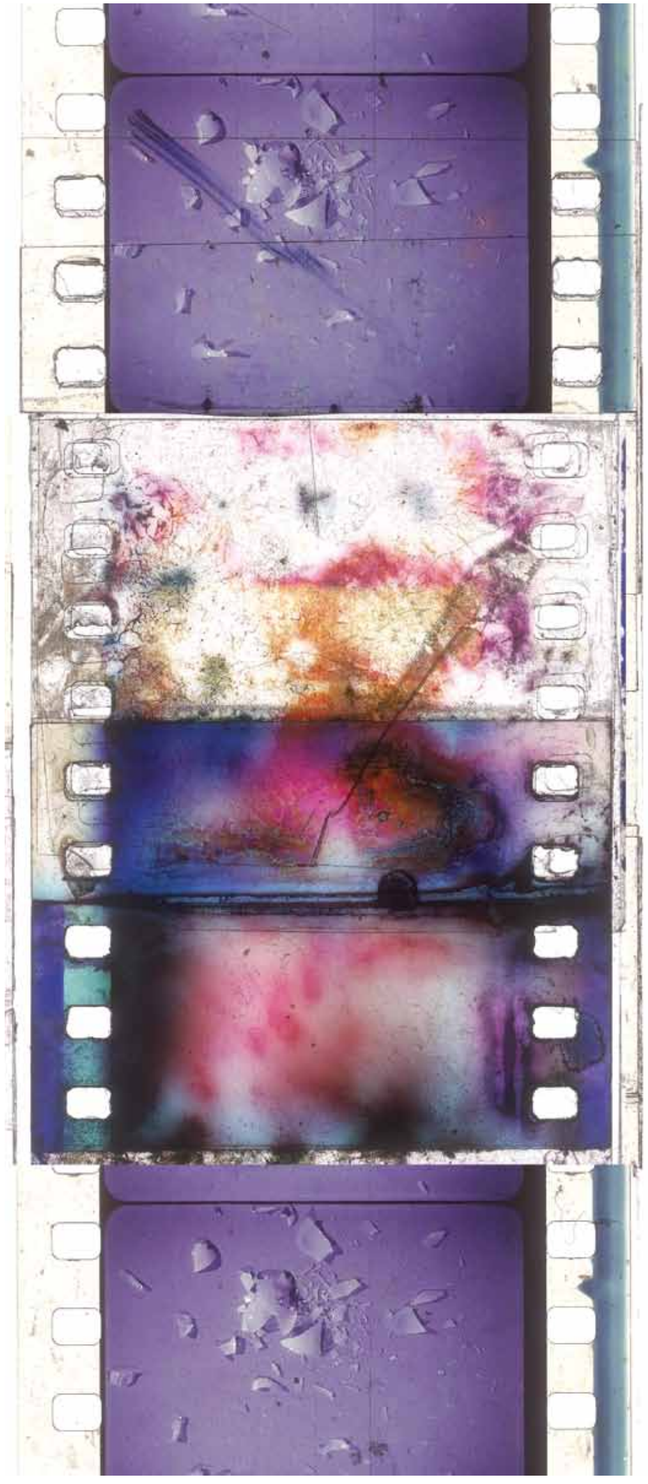
HANDSHAKE OFFERED — Although he claims to dislike meeting people, California gubernatorial candidate Lowell Darling offers a substitute hand (to save his own) to a stranger at a downtown Portland bus stop.

The Oregonian Thursday August 31, 1978. Courtesy of Gallery 16.

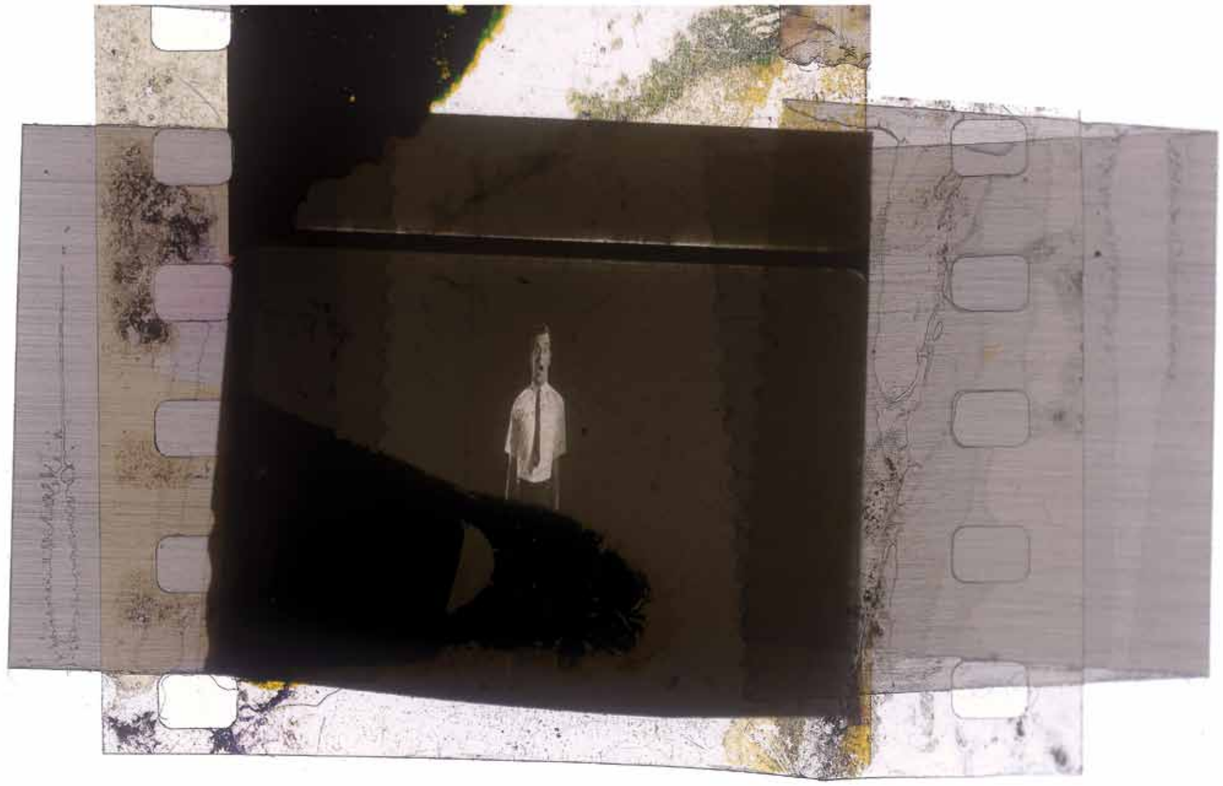


"Artist Proof," button from gubenatorial campaign 1978. Courtesy of Gallery 16.

"Full Disclosure", Gallery 16, San Francisco, 2010. Courtesy of Gallery 16.



"Hollywood Archeology, Specimen #12", 34x56, 2001.
Courtesy of Gallery 16.



"Hollywood Archeology, Specimen #14," 34x46, 2001.
Courtesy of Gallery 16.

When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes

Will Rogan, Amalia Pica & Zarouhie Abdalian

Interviews by Liz Glass with Claire Fitzsimmons

When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes, the upcoming exhibition at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, takes cues from Harald Szeemann's *Live In Your Head; When Attitudes Become Form* from at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969. Curated by Jens Hoffmann, the Wattis' exhibition will mirror Szeemann's in many ways: through the phrasing of the title, the number of artists, the graphic identity, the look and feel of the catalogue, and the installation design. Similarly both exhibitions aimed to encapsulate a certain moment and generation of artists who are working in distinctive ways with concept, space, and materials, while allowing for and recognizing the broad range of approaches taken up by artists in the present, without attempting to box them into one *–ism* or another.

But if the primary imperative for the artists of Szeemann's exhibition was to *Live In Your Head*, the impulse for contemporary artists working now seems to be *Live In The Past*. In *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, both the curatorial drive and the artistic practices are oriented towards the past—as a conceptual site of exploration, a source of images and inspiration, and an inextricable part of our present.

In preparation for *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes* at the Wattis, Assistant Curator Liz Glass spoke with several of the artists in the exhibition about their works and particularly this relationship to a sense of history.

Interview with Will Rogan on June 14th in the artist's studio in Albany, California

Will Rogan is an artist based in Albany, California. His works with sculpture, photography, and found images earned him the 2003 SECA Award and a Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowship. He currently teaches at the San Francisco Art Institute and shows at San Francisco's Altman Siegel Gallery. For When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes, Rogan will show three of his works from the ongoing series Mediums.

Let's start by talking about the works Mediums that are going to be included in When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes at the Wattis?
Okay, there's a long backstory for them. Essentially I started collecting these photographs when I worked at the San Francisco Art Institute library. Every time we would weed the library to make more room for more books, we would pull catalogues out and decide if they were of value anymore to the library, whether we needed them.

And so every time one of those books would go through this process, I would look through it to see if it had a picture of the artist. I have a collection compulsion maybe--I think it was just that, it wasn't with the intention of making art. But after a while, I had all of these photographs, and this box with all the books that the pictures have been cut out of. And over about ten years, I would just sit in the studio, and pull the books out sometimes, and put the photographs in different orders.

The photographs are mounted on this hard wood, the backs of which are polished and waxed, so that it has this reflective quality. The blackness of this highly reflected surface kind of fluctuates between black and white. But it also has the ability to reflect the pictures that are laminated on the other side of the artists into this blackness when they are grouped together as sculptures.

In some ways, these pieces are about bringing these artists who kind of disappeared back to light?
These are artists pulled from the system that I'm a part of—and I think that the system is kind of bullshit for artists a lot of the time. In times when I really think about the successes that I've had I wonder why other people haven't had them as well? There are so many artists that feel that way. Then there are so many artists that feel underrepresented, that I wanted to make this small gesture towards that—that's a part of it.

What else does it have to say about you? Do you think of yourself as these people?
I think that I think about mortality a lot. I think about dying a lot. I think about the historical perspective that we lack, and about those things in conjunction with one another. So yes, I am a part of this same story, the story of people who make things and then disappear.

I got really excited when they reproduced images of this work in an essay that was in a book. Because now that thing, that page, exists in the world that could be cut and used for something else. That potential storyline is intact.

I like that these (the images and the people) end up back in the library. I also wanted to ask you about your connection—not only with this project, but also with the rest of your work—to history, the past. In some projects you reference art history, in others just history in general.
I must say that I'm mostly not thinking about art history when I'm making art. I like a lot of art, but I mostly don't fixate on it. I don't get really excited about art history. But it's not on my mind. It's not the go-to story that I start telling myself when I walk in the studio.

But history totally is, particularly in the way objects can carry a sort of invisible history. I'm usually interested in histories that we can't see on the surface of things but that are told through the backs of the objects, or the dents and the dings in an object.

I think that objects that have a tarnish to them are more realistic and remind me more of people. They are easier metaphorical objects for me to deal with. Things that try to look like they don't have a history make me uncomfortable. Like the dead fly on top of the Donald Judd sculpture is amazing to me. But the Donald Judd sculpture on it's own is harder to deal with.

Can you tell me about some of your other projects? Some seem pretty humorous (like other worlds) and some are more …
somber.

Yes.
I kind of feel like it's all on the same level. I don't really think the work is funny, usually. But that's just because I already laughed about it. I already had that moment with the work, and then I moved on to something else. And it's usually the something else that is more interesting to me in the end. So I get that it's funny, but for some reason, I forget that too.

There's another project that I'm working on that came out of mining these magician's magazines, mostly from the 70s. Trade magazines. One of those projects is a failed attempt (but an attempt) to create plans for a transcendental mediation theme park.

Transcendental mediation theme park…?
Yes…oftentimes it's the story that hooks me. So this guy, Doug Henning, was a magician who brought magic back into the mainstream. Do you know who he is? He's Canadian. And he was really kind of silly, but he made magic popular again through a Broadway musical and a TV show.

Will Rogan, "Mediums 2", 2010. Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel Gallery.

But then he quit magic in 1989 or 1990. He sold all of his tricks—people actually really do this—to David Copperfield, and started studying what he called "the true magic," transcendental mediation. I've read a claim that he said that he could fly using it. And he tried to start this theme park called "Veda Land" in upstate New York, close to Niagara Falls, but it never happened. But that kind of hooked me into collecting these magazines to find articles about Doug Henning. I just became fascinated with his life and the story of this guy that went from being all about distracting others in order to make something magical happen, to this guy who's all about evacuating distraction from himself to make something magical happen.

And so that sent me into collecting these magazines, but they are more than just meditations on these pages where I erase parts of them. Oftentimes I try to reveal something magical through concealing something, or reveal something through removing something. To use the language that he laid out in his life with these contradictory things happening at the same time. And also just to let go a little bit, to just work with the material. But that's how the material comes into the studio.

So when you're developing a work, it seems like you start with images taken from elsewhere, and you start with a narrative, but you don't start with form or a certain intention about what it's going to look like?
I can't tell you that I do those things separately. I think everyone does those things together. It's dishonest to say that you make decisions purely based on an idea. Or purely based on form. You'd be denying a big part of what your brain does. So I would say that I do both of those things at the same time.

I feel like I've realized recently that often the formal decisions come from places outside of the narrative. A lot of them come from just my own physical experience in the world, like doing sports. I've skateboarded for years, so the way that you negotiate the world on a skateboard, the physical surroundings, and the improvisation of it, that tool—it feels the same when I'm doing well in the studio. When I'm making formal decisions well in the studio, it feels like I'm accessing the same thing. All these formal decisions I'm making now are based in this physical thing, not in the story that's in them.

Interview with Amalia Pica on June 23rd via Skype (San Francisco – London).

Amalia Pica currently lives and works in London, but was raised in Patagonia, Argentina. Pica's work has been shown internationally, including the 54th Venice Biennale. In 2013, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago will present a solo exhibition of Pica's work. When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes will include two of her pieces: a sculpture from 2009, Reconstruction of an antenna (as seen on TV), which set the ground for the later series Unintentional Monuments, and a durational work on paper Post-It Note (2009-10).

I wanted to start by talking about your interest in time and the passing of time, and the general idea in your work that something has been missed.
Much of my work has an ephemeral quality to it. I think there is an understanding of art as something that happens at a certain point. The world is pretty meaningless and cruel and it doesn't make sense most of the time, but then there are these moments where things do make sense. And they seem to fall into place, and there's this sort of magical thing that happens. A magical feeling of serendipity, or understanding the meaning of something, or connecting to the intentions behind a piece or why the artist might have made a piece. And I think that basically art is an exercise in that, in creating meaning together. Out of something that generally doesn't have a lot of meaning. I think that that happens momentarily and so there's an understanding in the work that things take place at a certain time, and you might be too early or you might be too late. And all you might be left with is a trace of something.

Which relates to "The Post-it Note", one of the two works that will be included in When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes.
Yes, *The Post-it Note* relates to this place where you might write something to remember, and then just leave it there for so long that it will just leave it's own trace on the paper. So, it's basically that idea of having overlooked something for way too long.

Which relates to "Reconstruction of an antenna (as seen on TV)", which will also be in the exhibition?
The antenna is basically an antenna that I saw someone making in a documentary on TV. It was a documentary about a place where the TV reception wasn't so great and it reminded me of when I was a child. I grew up in Patagonia, and we used to make antennas out of coat hangers or potatoes, and there was always this problem with the reception.

I like this idea of staying in tune with the world, but having to make a manual effort, or the possibility of owning your own technology, making it happen. I think through digital technology this becomes a lot harder. I don't think it is that simple to build your own computer. But it's very simple to make a TV antenna. But now that's changing because television is going digital.

In a way, these antennas become just aesthetic objects once they're no longer useful.

"It's an honor to think as an artist that you hope you're part of something bigger. Like art, at the end, is this accumulation of all the artworks that have been made, or imagined, and that people thought were valid, along history. To be part of a show that somehow establishes that continuity, it's quite an honor. To feel that you're part of that community."

-Amalia Pica

These things become objects that we look at rather than using them. We can now look at them only for their aesthetic value, because their functional value is falling away. So that's when it became this "unintentional monument."

Then there's that effort to receive a signal that I find quite compelling. I like the idea that when you're making art in the studio you're very often thinking—well, will someone even take the time to look at this? Why would anyone look at this? So, these homemade antennas for me are an effort for people to receive something that has been shaped by contemporary culture, which is television.

For me, both pieces also bring up the question of nostalgia, and your works have been described as relating to that sentiment.
I think that my work—rather than being nostalgic—is more like an exploration of nostalgia. What is the visual rhetoric behind feeling nostalgic? Nostalgia is a tricky thing. It's like a double-sided weapon—it has two sides to it. One of them is because you feel nostalgic; it makes you remember sometime that might otherwise be forgotten. So somehow it rescues something from the past. But at the same time, it stands in between you and a proper understanding of that past because it makes it seem sweeter. It allows for these confusions or these sort of romanticized versions of the past, which is not always necessarily useful for re-evaluating something.

Very often the works will just deal with that sort of nostalgic impulse and then question why we feel nostalgic, or why certain looks make us feel nostalgic, why we're attached to them. But there's a visual rhetoric behind it and I very often quietly manipulate that.

To Everyone That Waves is very much about that. It's an event that I organized in Amsterdam when there was this old tall ship on the harbor. There were people leaving, and I gave people white handkerchiefs, without giving them any instructions, to see whether their goodbye gestures were universal gestures of departure. I filmed the happening with this very old format, black-and-white 16mm. The film is very different from the actual happening—it wasn't actually recording the happening but deforming it. What it does is sort of create this nostalgic looking image, but it's a complete construction because the film format is from a certain period in time, and the boat comes from another period of time, and it was filmed in 2005, so there's all these different elements that come together. I would hope that there's this double impulse that you could see in the work as well.

I've been thinking a lot about nostalgia, relating of course to When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes. We are, in some ways, performing a nostalgic gesture in re-articulating this exhibition from 1969, and I think that one of the most interesting things about the process is trying to actually understand the original exhibition. Because there's so much literature and discussion about it, it's really hard to actually get at it.
It's also funny because even the pictures are these grainy, black-and-white, really sort of sexy images.

It's very mythologized, and I am very much interested in that translation.
I was looking at the exhibition catalogue that I have the other day and became really interested in this artist that I'd never heard of—this artist that did the thing with the cable, Alain Jacquet. He just ran this electrical wire from the top floor of the Kunsthalle Bern to the bottom.

Right, Alain Jacquet's piece is like your antenna: they're both sort of useless technological gestures.
When I was thinking about things that I could contribute to the show, he was one of the artists that I was looking at. I thought that there was a similar spirit. His gesture feels more contemporary than mine because it's so understated. Mine is still quite sculptural. I don't feel compelled to abandon the object. I think that we're at a different point than they were,

Amalia Pica, "Reconstruction of an antenna (As seen on TV)", 2010. Courtesy the artist and Marc Foxx Gallery.

questioning the object as a useful artistic tool, whereas I think I'm at a point where I think objects are useful tools to communicate. I don't feel there's any priority to distrust the object anymore. But it would be very different if this generation of artists had not gone through that experience of deconstructing what it means to make stuff.

There's such a mystique that has so much to do with nostalgia around the original show, that it's almost like an honor and at the same time a curse.

Honor and curse?
It's an honor to think as an artist that you hope you're part of something bigger. Like art, at the end, is this accumulation of all the artworks that have been made, or imagined, and that people thought were valid, along history. To be part of a show that somehow establishes that continuity, it's quite an honor. To feel that you're part of that community.

And I'm saying a curse because you look at the work that is there, and you think, a lot of those artists are great artists. Very often you feel there's so many things in the world, there's so many art pieces in the world, and you think, really? —Do I need to make another one? *When Attitudes* is a perfect example of great things that were made at a certain period in time. It is great to feel part of that history and it's also a bit of a curse because it's quite intimidating.

Interview with Zarouhie Abdalian on June 28th in the artist's studio in Oakland, California

---

Zarouhie Abdalian works with the specifics of a site to create subtle interventions into everyday perceptions. Since receiving her MFA from the California College of the Arts in 2010, Abdalian has been included in the 3rd Moscow International Biennale for Young Art in Russia (2012), and the Istanbul Biennial (2011) as well as numerous other group exhibitions. For When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes, Abdalian is working on a newly commissioned sculpture, tentatively titled The fall without the fruit.

What appeals to you about working site-specifically? When did you begin working this way?
I would love to work exclusively site-specifically. I think it's one of the most interesting and challenging ways for me to work, because the research is so broad. Before I began working this way, I was doing printmaking and painting, using these material-based processes. There was a show I did in 2004 that I was really happy with. It was a printmaking show, but it became as important to me how the works were seen and how the viewer moved within that space—it was not a traditional art space—but these things became as important as the images. So even when I was working two-dimensionally, it was really important to me how the works fit within a specific environment, and the interplay between the work and the space.

How has that interplay between the space and the audience manifest in some of your other works? Maybe "Flutter" would be a good piece to talk about?
Flutter was installed in downtown Oakland, at Pro Arts Gallery, right across from City Hall. I hadn't moved to Oakland yet, so I just wandered downtown on a weekend—and of course downtown Oakland on a weekend is pretty dead, pretty much everything's closed. I was wandering around looking at windows, and seeing all these things that you expect to see in windows—privacy films and curtains, etc. But there was also a little bit of activity at this time because everyone was waiting for the verdict in the Meserly trial, and there were some demonstrations happening at the plaza. People were also posting Oscar Grant's face in their windows to show solidarity. Either that, or boarding up their windows in case of rioting.

The windows in the neighborhood were kind of these charged spaces at that time. I wanted to respond to that condition. It really made sense to use the window for that piece. The installation was this vibrating film that moved twenty four hours a day for two months, along with a text that accompanied it.

Everyone asked if it was responding to his or her presence in the space, but it was not. It was just continuous, and kind of out of the control of the viewer. The text also tried to get at this sort of idea: the illusion of the integrity of the structure is undermined by these chaotic outbursts that are outside the control of the viewer. That piece made a lot of sense that summer, in that space, right across from City Hall, and facing the pedestrian walkway.

Do you have a sense of what the reaction was for the general public who might have experienced the piece—or people who weren't expecting to experience the piece? How they interpreted it?
It was interesting—I watched people. Once it was installed, I could see behind it, and people would come up to it and put their hands on the window, wanting to feel it with their bodies, feel whatever was causing the movement. Every now and then I looked at the windows, and there were always a lot of handprints. So I know that it was interacted with in that way—but I don't know what that means, exactly. But I like that. A lot of the works have a meaning that I conceive for them, but they are also meant to address the body and the viewer.

You are currently in the process of making a new work for When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes. Can you tell me about how you approached this commission?
Usually, my work as well as my research takes place at the site; and not just the physical site, but also the site as a symbolic space. I couldn't really work that way here, so I just thought of the original show, *When Attitudes Become Form*, and what I imagined it to be. I like making works that are context-specific, but this exhibition provided a different situation. I began thinking about it without a real sense of the physical space, so the context of the two exhibitions is where I started.

The concept of the show and the history behind it became the site of exploration instead?
Right. I started by looking at the exhibition history, at Szeemann's exhibition and many of the images from the original show. And what kept coming out for me—the overarching thing that I responded to—was the force of gravity. Gravity was what determined the forms of many pieces in the show, rather than the hand of these artists. Which would make sense, given the art of that time.

Many of the works in that show were also substantiated in the social space of the gallery—rather than being made in the artist's studio and placed into the gallery. So these kind of naively utopian ideas of a lot of post-minimal art are visible: the hand is out, and works happen in the social space.

These forms, piles, and draped works from the original show seem to be icons now, rather than demonstrations of gravity. They have all this baggage of defining that moment in art; a lot of their meaning has become tied to that history. Going back to this simple idea of gravity, I was interested in trying to resuscitate some meaning of the original gesture. To try to think how can gravity be viewed now?

How does this new work manifest or demonstrate gravity?
The piece is a series of scales. Each one is a measure of gravity, or is used to measure the gravitational force on an object. But in this case, the objects are the tools that measure this force on an object, so it's kind of been made absurd through stringing them together. The sculpture is a chain of spring scales, each linked to another. The top measures the most gravitational pull, the bottom the least. And so you can read the measure of gravity over this piece, but only in this very absurd way.

Did you have some particular objects from the original show in your mind when you were conceiving this work? Or was it just the overall accumulation of piles of things that were present in the Kunsthalle Bern?
A lot of pieces operated in that way. Richard Serra's lead piece. And then Michael Heizer's *Bern Depression*. Very emphatic. But even the Hesse pieces. It wasn't just necessarily specific pieces, either. It was just that when I tried to imagine myself in the space of the galleries, this overwhelming sense of gravity came up.

Another element of When Attitudes Become Form was that many of the artists worked site-specifically for the exhibition, which was seen as something new. I know that you work very site-specifically a lot of the time but can you talk more generally about your process?
I really like to be at the site and have the works come out of my experience there. And while this piece happened very differently, its materials aren't so different. It still relates to some of my previous work. The piece I made for the Istanbul Biennial, for example, very much came from my research about and at the site, being there, how it happened within that space, etc. That piece is this little hanging plumb-bob that's supposed to measure vertical true, of course. And, much like the scales, this tool has a very specific measure. But within the context of that installation, its use was undermined by everything else that was happening. So it's reduced to just the form that it is. Maybe not reduced—*elevated to art*, or something.

For *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes*, I'm using a very specific tool that has a very specific function. The spring scales are used to measure the effect of gravitational force, but in the work they're reduced to their absolute use and so become ridiculous. Each scale is only measuring the gravitational force of itself. So, like the plumb bob, the scale is undermined within the structure of the artwork, it's also made ridiculous. There's some overlap there.

When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes will be presented at the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts from September 13 to December 15, 2012. Following its presentation at the Wattis, the exhibition will be shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit from February 1 - March 31, 2013.

Zarouhie Abdalian, "Having Been Held Under the Sway," 2011. Courtesy the artist.

Zarouhie Abdalian, "Having Been Held Under the Sway," 2011. Courtesy the artist.

Amalia Pica, "Post-it Note", 2009-2010. Courtesy the artist.

Will Rogan, "Mediums 4", 2012. Courtesy the artist and Altman Siegel Gallery.

Julian Cox

Founding Curator of Photography and Chief Curator for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

On Lee Miller and Man Ray

Interviewed by John Held, Jr.

Julian Cox is the Founding Curator of Photography and Chief Curator for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. I met with him in his offices at the De Young Museum late May 2012, to discuss "Man Ray/Lee Miller: Partners in Surrealism," organized by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem Massachusetts, and scheduled for exhibition at the Legion of Honor from July 14 – October 14. Cox and his staff have added numerous and significant Bay Area and international complementary artworks to the already impressive Peabody assembling, which includes Man Ray's iconic painting of Miller's floating lips, "Observatory Time-The Lover's," and their dual exploration of solarization. In addition to the work of the two photographers, paintings by mutual friends Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Dora Maar, and a small sculpture by Alexander Calder, also accompany the exhibition, in this first in-depth exploration of the complicated three-year (1929-1932) collaboration between these two leading Surrealist figures.

I wanted to begin by complimenting you on the Arthur Tress photography exhibition, which is currently on display at the De Young. It's notable for several reasons. It's a newly discovered body of work by an exceptional photographer having local implications.

Yes, it's a good example of the kind of project we like to do here. It's a good model, especially because we've not only presented the work, extricating it from the artist's archive, but also we've added more than seventy-five prints to our permanent collection, so we have turned it into a collection building exercise. And, that's important to us, because our holdings in photography are surprisingly modest. Even though we have a tremendous collection of works on paper in its entirety, housed at the Legion of Honor in the Achenbach Center for Graphic Arts, photography is a modest part of it.

With the Arthur Tress acquisition, we have created a kind of mini collection overnight. We have a body of work that really says something about the vision of this artist, and is representative of his formative style. It's certainly beyond juvenilia, and it's full of energy and creativity, bursting with ideas – the ideas that became stitched into the other bodies of work he was to make later. So, we are very pleased to have it.

Your tenure began in 2010 as the Founding Curator of Photography, as well as the Chief Curator of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Correct. San Francisco and the Bay Area is an extraordinary community for photography. There are splendid collections here, and excellent scholars, historians and curators of photography, who are engaged with the great collections, public and private. So, the goal was to try to bring the Fine Arts Museums more into that conversation. We know we are not going to change the landscape overnight, but we want to add a complimentary voice and contribute positively to the discussion and presentation of photography. We want to be useful and relevant to the larger community.

The Man Ray/Lee Miller show should encourage that. It was organized by a rather small but distinguished museum, the Peabody Essex in Salem, Massachusetts. How did you come to take on this project?

Well, twofold reasons. As often happens in our field, personal connections with my curatorial colleague at the Peabody, Phillip Prodger, who is a well-regarded curator, called and told me about the project as it was in its formative stages. Interesting enough, even though everybody knows Lee Miller, and everybody knows Man Ray, and most people know of their passionate love affair and interaction in Paris in the late twenties and early thirties, there has never been an exhibition bringing the work of these two figures into direct dialogue with each another.

I liked that idea. It also seemed to fit the larger objectives of our exhibition programs here, and it provided an opportunity immediately for me, as a newcomer to this community, to engage some top flight private collectors in the Bay Area who had some of that work, who had some rare and important works of art that are germane to the subject of this exhibition.

We are presenting an expanded version of the exhibition that was shown at the Peabody earlier this year. We have more space dedicated to the exhibition, and in addition to introducing some very special local loans, we are also bringing in some additional institutional loans from the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, where I worked for a number of years. I know that collection well, so it was easy for me to select from.

We have also borrowed from the Art Institute of Chicago, which includes the Julien Levy Collection of Surrealist works. Levy operated one of the great galleries in New York during the thirties. In 1933, Levy gave Miller the first, and only solo exhibition during her lifetime, and in the same year included work by Miller and Man Ray in his landmark exhibition, "Modern European Photography." Levy is so important because he was the gallerist most responsible for introducing European Surrealism to an American audience. The Miller prints that we are showing from the Levy collection therefore have immaculate provenance. They are all signed by Miller and beautifully printed and mounted. I wanted our public to see these prints here.

"She quickly outgrew New York, and understood even then, as a young woman, that Paris was the epicenter of cultural life in Europe. She knew Man Ray was there. She knew Duchamp was there. She wanted to have that experience."

Miller and Man Ray had a passionate breakup, yet they were still able to function professionally.

Yes, that's one of the threads of the story that we are presenting in this exhibition. Namely that after this tumultuous bust-up around the end of 1932, there was a four or five year cooling off period when there was very limited contact between them, because Man Ray was distraught about their failed relationship, perhaps even broken hearted, as well as embittered and terribly jealous.

Lee Miller had moved on to other things, but they reconnected in the South of France in the summer of 1937, and that's when their relationship remade itself on a more platonic level. They had a wonderful sustained affection for each other that lasted another forty years. In the end, they died within a year of each other. He died in 1976. She died in 1977.

You mentioned that Julien Levy showed both their work, and the person she ended up marrying, her second husband, was Roland Penrose, who exhibited Man Ray as well. He founded the ICA in London and had a substantial Man Ray show.

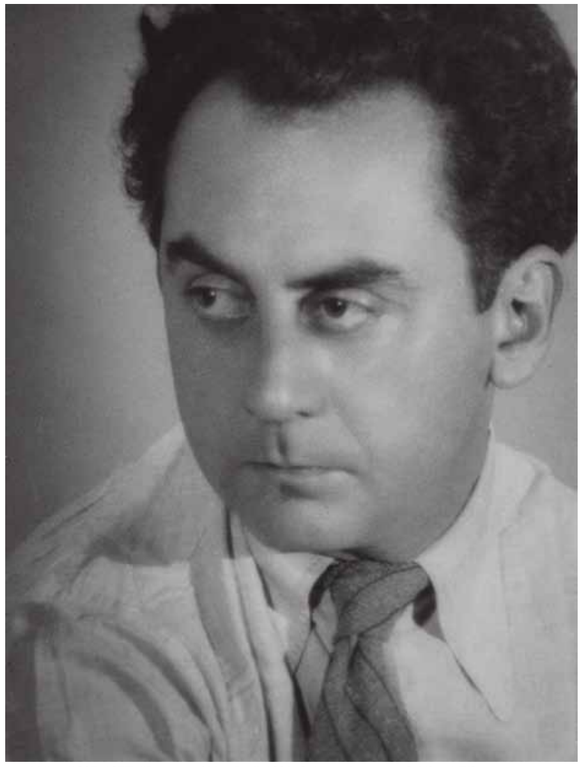
Exactly. The final retrospective during Man Ray's lifetime was held at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London, in 1975, just a year before he died. One of the last pictures that you see in the exhibition is a snapshot of Man Ray and Lee Miller sitting shoulder-to-shoulder, cheek to cheek, at Man Ray's exhibition opening. It's the last recorded image of them together, and it's very tender and joyful.

You mentioned them meeting again in the South of France, and they [Man Ray, Miller…and Penrose] were visiting Picasso. You know what I always found interesting? Man Ray was, of course, very close to Duchamp. Duchamp never met Picasso, yet Man Ray was able to have a relationship with both of them.

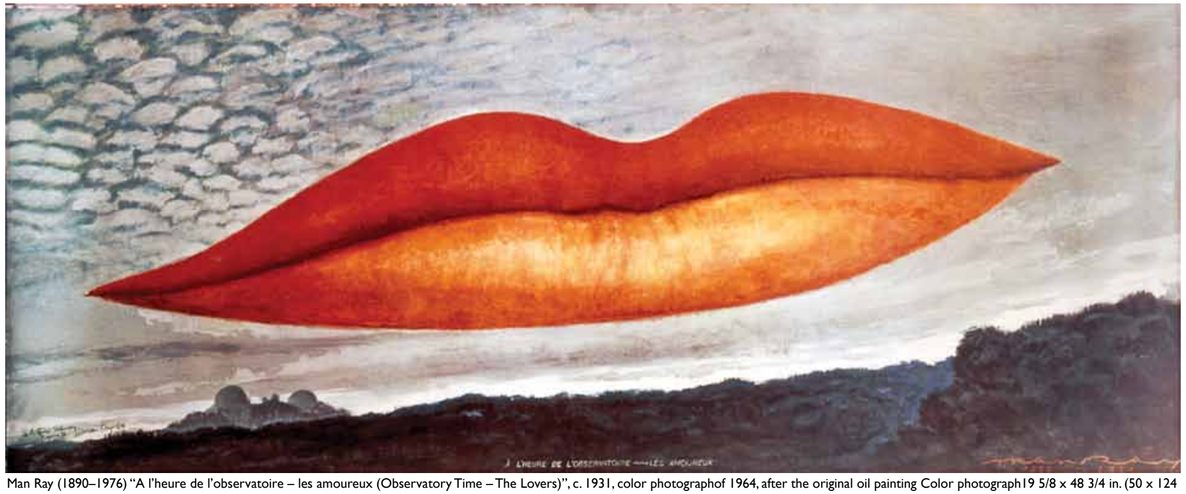
Just as his artwork is so fluid and versatile, Man Ray seems to have been the same way in his relationships. He was a tremendous networker. When he arrived in Paris in the late summer of 1921, he was ushered in by Duchamp because they had known each other in New York. It was Duchamp who opened all the doors for Man Ray in Paris, and he wasted little time before making friends with an extended circle of Surrealist and Dadaist artists and writers.

Man Ray was also earning a living - this is important – through his fashion photography and photographic portraiture. It became a way for him to connect with people, and a way to earn money. He was able to network briskly, and establish a pretty good livelihood for himself.

Lee Miller (1907–1977) "Self Portrait, variant on Lee Miller par Lee Miller", c.1930. Gelatin silver print 9 1/8 x 6 7/8 in. (23.3 x 17.4 cm) Lee Miller. Archives, Sussex, England. Photograph by Lee Miller © Lee Miller Archives, England 2011. All rights reserved.



Lee Miller (1907–1977). "Portrait of Man Ray", 1931. Gelatin silver print. 9 1/8 x 6 7/8 in. (23.3 x 17.5 cm) Lee Miller Archives, Sussex, England. Photograph by Lee Miller © Lee Miller Archives, England 2011. All rights reserved.



Man Ray (1890–1976) "A l'heure de l'observatoire – les amoureux (Observatory Time – The Lovers)", c. 1931, color photographof 1964, after the original oil painting Color photograph19 5/8 x 48 3/4 in. (50 x 124 cm)The Israel Museum, Jerusalem © 2011 Man Ray Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/ Photo © The Israel Museum by Avshalom Avital.

Photography provided a steady income, but that came at a certain price, in so far as Man Ray considered himself a painter, first and foremost, and that's what he wanted to be known for. Ultimately, however, he's become best known for his work in photography, which was never his intention.

There is always a need for photographers in artistic circles. Like most artists, Surrealists loved having both their work and portraits taken. I know how important photographers are, in and of themselves, but Man Ray was also an important innovator. You mentioned his fashion photography, and this is how Lee Miller entered the field as well.
Absolutely. This was something that both artists had in common. Miller had a whole life in front of the camera before she had a successful career behind it Serving as a model and muse, started very early in her life. She was one of three children – a middle child with an older and younger brother - from a very middle class family in Poughkeepsie, New York. Her father was an engineer.

She had a rather distant relationship with her mother, but the father was a dedicated amateur photographer, and he photographed her from a very early age. The pictures are highly contentious in some respects. He photographed her nude as a young girl and progressively into her teenage years. They are strikingly intimate pictures. Miller was a difficult student, always unsettled, bouncing in and out of different schools. It was a troubled upbringing. She went to Manhattan and enrolled at the Art Students League to study painting and drawing. A great beauty, she had these dazzling looks, and the story goes that she was discovered one day by Condé Nast when she was crossing the street in Manhattan. She was thrust in front of the camera, became an overnight sensation as a model. She sat for [Edward] Steichen, [George] Hoyningen-Huene, Horst P. Horst, and others.

So, when Miller headed to Paris in 1929, she was already an accomplished model. She knew exactly how to perform in front of the camera. And she took that talent into her new life. When she met Man Ray her modeling skills continued to be well utilized, but it was what she did in her own creative life as a photographer that forms the heart of the exhibition. It is during her relationship with Man Ray that Miller's creative life, that Miller's artistic identity takes its shape. It is this rich terrain that the exhibition explores.

Under her tutelage of Steichen, she becomes the "it girl of the era – the androgynous flapper girl with bobbed hair dyed blond.
She was the epitome of the twenties flapper, but I think she was also a person of unbridled energies and aspirations. She quickly outgrew New York, and understood even then, as a young woman, that Paris was the epicenter of cultural life in Europe. She knew Man Ray was there. She knew Duchamp was there. She wanted to have that experience.

She had been there a few years earlier, it's important to remember. She studied theater and stage design – had some real competency in French, not quite fluent, but very proficient. So, there wasn't that big leap into the unknown. She had already been there as a teenage woman. She was going to a somewhat familiar place, an environment where she already sensed that she could be herself. So, there was more than just a quest to be with Man Ray, or a desire to be around other artists. There was a sense that she might be able to make a life for herself somehow in Paris.

But she did stalk Man Ray, in a sense.
Yes, she did. She was provided with a letter of introduction to him from Steichen. She went there to track him down. She had this in her head. She wanted to study with Man Ray, and get to know him. The closer the better!

She had a history of being protected and mentored by older men, but she was untamed. Her biography by Carolyn Burke (Lee Miller: A Life, University of Chicago Press, 2005) presents a very troubled woman, likely stemming from a rape early in her childhood.
I think it's very appropriate for that to be brought up. There is a complex psychology there that she is constantly navigating, and of course, it does unravel after the war when she's had these extraordinary experiences. She became alcoholic and really struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder. I think Carolyn Burke is tough but fair handed in dealing with those issues, and they are unavoidable. They are part of her consistently unsettled nature. Miller was constantly looking for one thing or another, and flitting from one person to another, both in terms of her love life and other interpersonal relationships. Artistically, she was much the same. She was a restless soul, and it shows in the photographs.

We should mention that when she came to Paris in 1929 to meet Man Ray, she was in her early 20s, and he was 40. She had a pattern of being with older men.
It was 22 to 39, actually – a seventeen year difference. But absolutely, that pattern, to use your term, really begins from her relationship with her own father and then progresses with the mentor figures that she met in New York, like Condé Nast, and then Steichen. This was how she operated, how she functioned, as a young woman.

And again, after her breakup with Man Ray, she married an Egyptian, Aziz Eloui Bey, an older wealthy gentleman.
Yes. That was typical of Miller, to change direction quite radically, from geography and culture, to her personal lifestyle. She was effectively a kept bourgeoisie woman during those years in Egypt, living in a manner contrary to her own instincts.

But she was still taking photographs.
Yes. But the work from those years is not featured in this exhibition, because that's a period when she and Man Ray were cut off from each other. There was no interaction between them. So, Miller's Egypt years are not part of the focus of this exhibition. That said, we will be including one especially fabulous work from her time in Egypt, called "Portrait in Space." It dates from 1937, and shows Miller grafting her Surrealist sensibility onto a desert scene. It's a marvelous picture, and one of only a few good ones that she made during those creatively lean years she spent in Egypt.

It's probably best regarded as a transitional piece before Miller's work from the war years, when she's back in Europe, and has made contact with Man Ray again.

It was after her marriage to the Egyptian [Aziz Eloui Bey], that she met Roland Penrose.
Correct. As typical of her many relationships, there was overlap. But yes, it was during that time. Essentially, when she returned from Egypt to Europe, specifically Paris, in 1937, before going to the south of France, that's when she met up with Penrose and began an affair. Then she detached herself from her Egyptian husband and took up with Penrose, whom she later married.

That was an interesting time – the 1937 adventure in the South of France, because Picasso was painting her portrait.
He did. He made a series of six portraits of her in the manner of what he called, "Les Arlésienne," taking an iconography that Van Gogh had introduced and perfected, during the later part of the nineteenth Century, making these quick, very powerful, portrait studies of Lee Miller. There will be one in the exhibition from that series coming to us from a private collection in Australia. They have some of the dynamic, powerful qualities of his portraits of both Dora Maar, who was a mutual friend of Man Ray and Lee Miller, and Marie-Thérèse Walter, as well. They are very luscious, in a beautiful rich palette, and there's a poignant, quite profound, detail in the picture. The female anatomy is very powerfully rendered (not untypical with Picasso), in this case Miller's genitalia is presented in the shape of an eye, a witty allusion on the camera and photography as Miller's dominant vehicle of expression.

Plus, Man Ray's obsession with her eye.
Absolutely. It being a leitmotif in Surrealistic imagery, in general. There are all these jokes, as there often was with Picasso, and little inside references. It's a wonderful picture that marks that "summer of love," if you like - Surrealist love in the South of France. It's well known that these different artists shared their partners with each other. It was an offering these artists made with each other, as part of the Surrealist way of life that they all participated in.

I don't know where to go with that. I think there was something in the water between the Wars…We should mention that an important collaboration between Man Ray and Lee Miller was their discovery of solarization.
Yes. Solarization is the reversal of photographic tonality that occurs in the darkroom if either the negative or the print is exposed during the processing procedure. The story is that a mouse ran over Lee Miller's foot during the exposure of a negative, and it caused this dramatic aesthetic effect that she found very interesting. Rather than discard the picture, Miller (and Man Ray) savored the result and then went on to make numerous other experiments with this procedure, seeking to harness the beauty in these "magical" but basically uncontrollable effects.

The exhibition will show how Miller and Man Ray explored solarization in their photographic practice, working shoulder to shoulder during that time. Since both these artists had tremendous egos, they didn't really live too well with the notion of sharing the discovery of this. There was an edgy competition between them.

It was a previously known technique.
Yes, it was, but like I said, it became a technique that they sought to harness for their own purposes.

A signature style.
Call it a strategy, or a maneuver, and part of their concerted effort to subvert the given reality – and present the everyday anew – which is of course was one of the Surrealist objectives. So they both employed solarization, but it's probably fair to say that Man Ray did so more aggressively and more inventively. There is a flowering of these pictures in his work (and to be sure, also Miller's) from 1929 through 1932.

I previously mentioned Man Ray's fascination with Lee Miller's eye, but he also had an infatuation with her lips as well.
He did. One of the ways I would characterize that, especially when the relationship is beginning to fragment and break apart, is that Man Ray starts to do the same thing with the imagery of her anatomy and break apart the body, and focus on specific elements of it. You mentioned the eye, the lips. The torso gets truncated. There is a dividing of the anatomy into different segments. The eye and the lips particularly become his obsessive focus for a string of different works in various media that become a way to track the dissolution of their relationship in the later part of 1932.

And then after the fact, they are no longer together, but he is still obsessively reworking those elements into other kinds of objects, such as his metronome, his "Object of Destruction," [1932] the metronome with the eye that's pasted on to it, and his large landscape painting ("A L'Heure de L'Observatoire – Les Amoureux," 1936), where her lips are the central feature, and which he then photographed, documented and reproduced multiple times.

The exhibition tracks Man Ray's obsessive response to the breakdown of his relationship with Miller. Included are letters and documents that show the terrible yearning that he has for her, after she leaves him and departs Paris for New York. Man Ray knows that he can never contain Miller, but he fumbles after her, asking her to come back and mend her ways, which of course never happens!

He was smitten - there's no doubt of that. But she was rather blasé about it. After the breakup, she went to New York and opened the "Man Ray School of Photography," which did not find favor with her former lover.
I'm not aware of that detail, but it doesn't surprise me at all. It's very typical of the fact that both of them – this is what's so interesting to me about both these artists, in slightly different ways, it's subtle – are working in this expressive art-for-art sake idiom, but they are also practicing in a commercial context. They earn a living through their professional abilities in photography. This has always been a part of photography's history. It has that inbuilt capacity to be an income-generating medium. The artist is also a worker for hire.

Not to get off the track, but Man Ray's rayographs, his photograms, were by their very nature one of a kind objects, but Man Ray re-photographed them and produced them in multiples, because he knew he could sell them. There was a great response to them and they became a source of income, and now they've become valuable and highly collectible works of art.

Man Ray had that knack for generating income through photography, as did Miller. She understood her pulling power as a model, but she also went straight to business when she was back in New York with her younger brother Eric, setting up a studio, reengaging with all her contacts in New York, and trying to make a go of it. But in the end, she wasn't a great businessperson, and she sort of threw in the towel, and ran away to Egypt for a few years. That's how she was, impetuous and impulsive. If things didn't really work out with something or someone, she didn't hunker down and mend it. She'd be on to something or someone else.

She did some very important work during World War II. We mentioned earlier that she usually had relationships with older men, but during World War II she was associated with Life photographer David Scherman, who was ten years her junior.
True. He was her photographic partner, as much as anything else, as she was bounding, literally, about Europe. She covered an amazing amount of terrain. She did some very important stories, including a feature for *Vogue* magazine about American women troops in the allied forces. Although Miller had never done anything like this before, she as able to execute – at a high level – the photo essay format that was required by magazines during wartime.

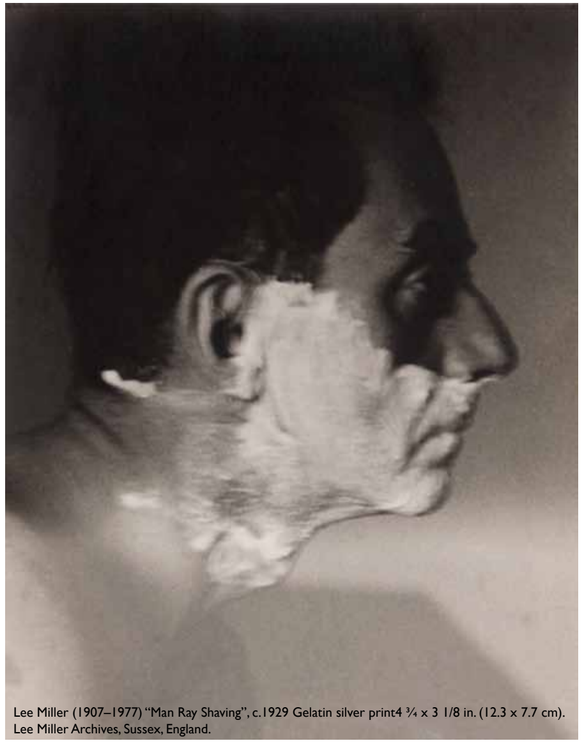
Miller proved adept at adapting herself to the war front and providing what the editors needed. She figured out what was required at that particular moment to function as a photojournalist. She aggressively and intrepidly prospected for stories and brought back fabulous pictures. The exhibition includes some wonderful pictures she made of the Blitz in London in 1940. They aren't just documents, however, because Miller finds a way to infuse her subject with her Surrealist sensibility. It was never far from the surface. It was always part of her vision.

Later, Miller covered the napalm bombings at St. Malo, the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau. She was also in Paris for the liberation, and that's when she reconnects with Picasso. There's a beautiful picture of her standing in Picasso's studio in front of his, "Man with a Sheep," a bronze that he made a year earlier – which in fact was actually on view at the DeYoung last year when we hosted the exhibition from the Musée Picasso. Miller covered an awful lot of new territory during the war. In a way, she reinvented herself as a completely different kind of photographer during those years.

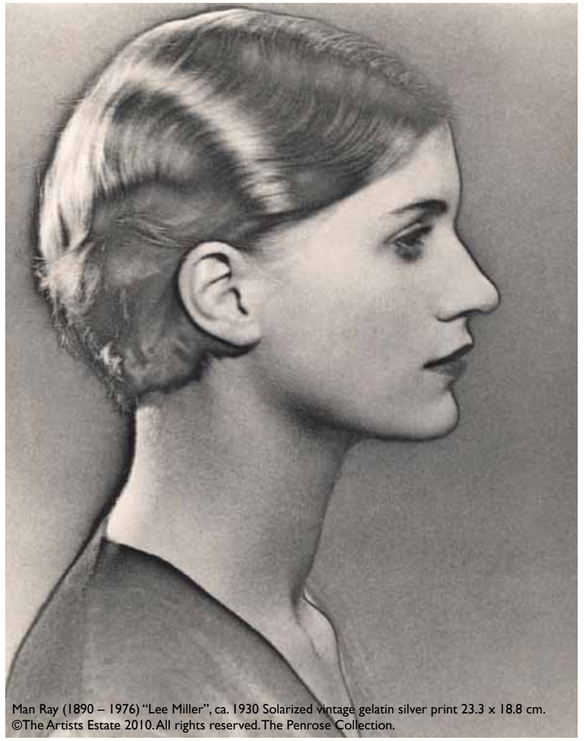
It did some damage. You mentioned St. Malo, and that was the first time napalm was used in warfare. It was an important and horrific event. She was also among the first photographers to enter Dachau. Taking photographs of the prisoners rummaging through garbage – it was really quite disturbing. I think it affected her for the rest of her life.
Absolutely. It did. There's no doubt about that. It cast a shadow over her life. It burnished her in an irrevocable way. I think the biography [Carolyn Burke, **Lee Miller: A Life**] explores the facts fairly well. Miller's son, Antony Penrose, will be in San Francisco for the opening events in conjunction with the exhibition – and may touch on some of these nuances of his mother's biography in his public remarks.

As a child, Antony Penrose was on the receiving end of the flaws in her personality, her bruised emotional makeup. She sustained a lot of emotional and psychological damage when she saw these extraordinary things.

With her fellow photographer, David Scherman, who you mentioned earlier on, Miller made a series of playful but also downright disturbing pictures of him (and her) in Hitler's bathtub. They are extraordinary images. But it's important not to lose sight of her bravery in all of this. She was intent to bear witness to the travesties of World War II, and she put herself in harms way in order to do that.



Lee Miller (1907–1977) "Man Ray Shaving", c.1929 Gelatin silver print4 ¾ x 3 1/8 in. (12.3 x 7.7 cm). Lee Miller Archives, Sussex, England.

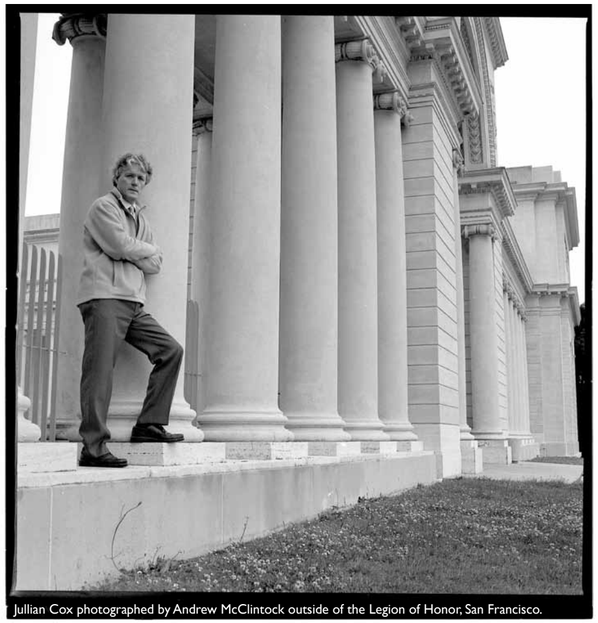


Man Ray (1890 – 1976) "Lee Miller", ca. 1930 Solarized vintage gelatin silver print 23.3 x 18.8 cm. ©The Artists Estate 2010. All rights reserved. The Penrose Collection.

There's a fabulous picture that she made of Scherman wearing a gas mask with his camera next to him. It's a playful picture that shows her surreal side. It's a metaphor for the armature that you have to put on when you go to war. You have to steel yourself against all eventualities. And that is precisely what Miller did. She sacrificed, because she craved excitement and danger, and she thought the payoff was worth it.

I admire and respect her in that regard, because she wasn't just doing it for sheer brazen self-indulgence. She was a working photojournalist, and an active participant in the currency of storytelling and bearing witness that was central to World War II.

I think it's safe to say that both Lee Miller and Man Ray, were very much part of their time and played an important role documenting it, as well as reflecting it in both their work and lifestyle.
Miller and Man Ray are decidedly different kinds of artists, but they came together in a remarkable environment. Paris in the 1920s, the cultural capital of the western world, provided a rich, fertile breeding ground for their creativity. They undoubtedly inspired each other to produce great things. And while their love affair was brief and stormy, their story – like their art – is undoubtedly for the ages.

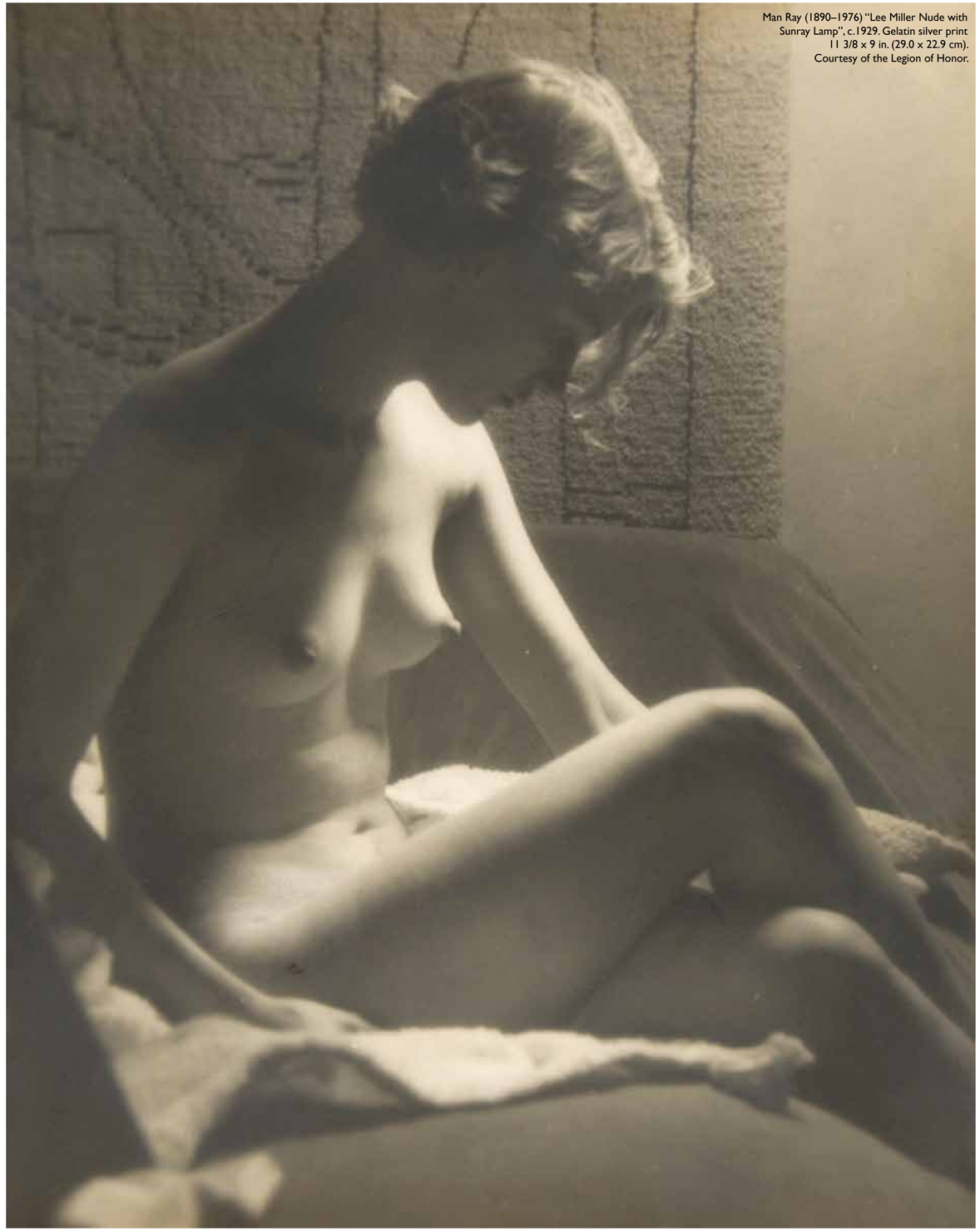


Jullian Cox photographed by Andrew McClintock outside of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.

Eileen Tweedy. Man Ray and Lee Miller at the Opening of "Man Ray, Inventor, Painter, Poet" Exhibition at ICA, London, Curated by Roland Penrose, 1975Gelatin silver print6 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. (15.9 x 20.9 cm). The Roland Penrose Collection, England © Courtesy of The Penrose Collection. All rights reserved.

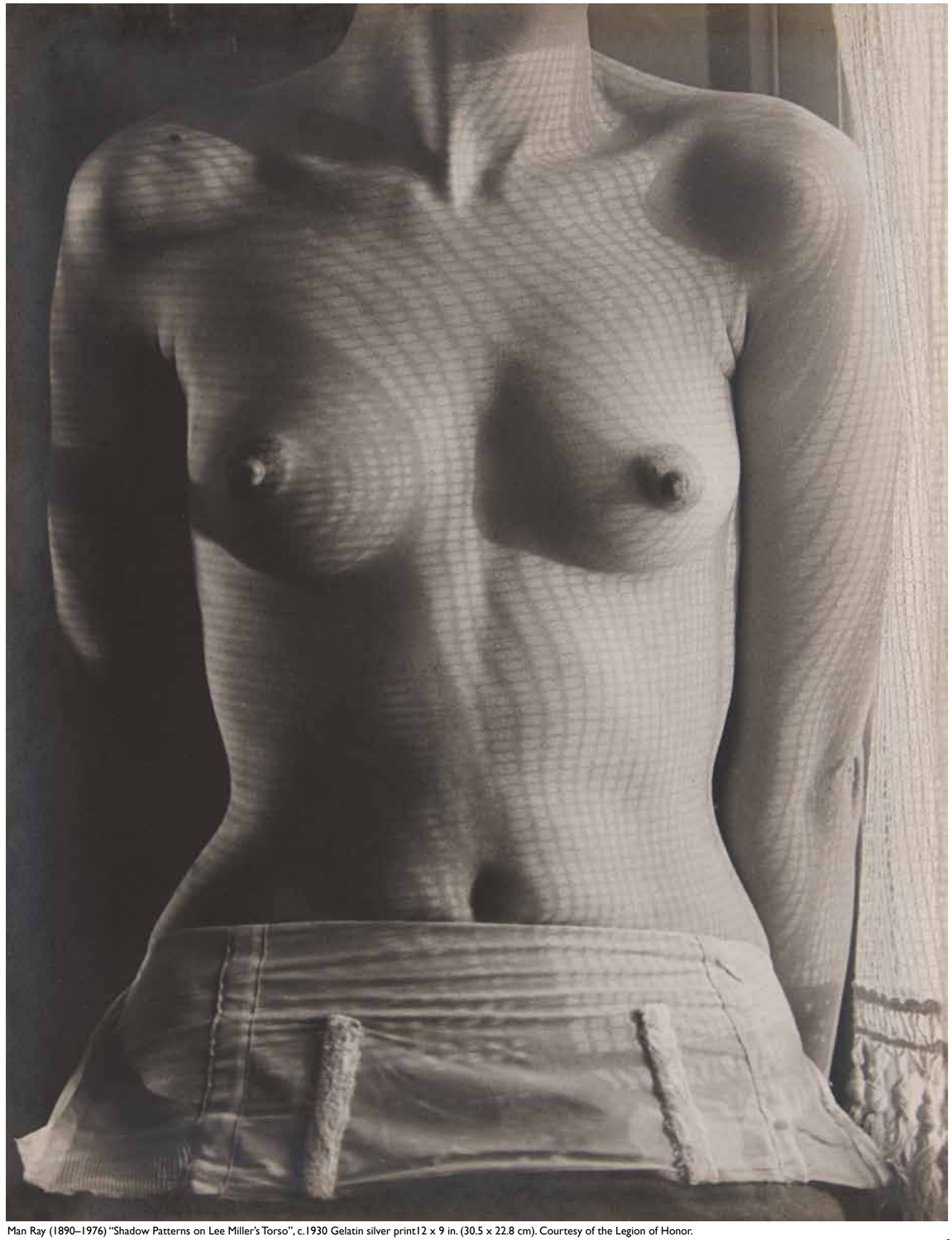
Attributed to Man Ray (1890–1976) Fairground, c. 1930 Vintage postcard.
Print 3 1/2 x 4 5/8 in. (9 x 11.9 cm)The Roland Penrose Collection, England.

Man Ray (1890–1976) "Indestructible Object," originally made 1928, destroyed Paris 1957, this replica 1959 Metronome with gelatin silver print of Lee Miller's eye 9 1/8 x 4 1/4 x 4 1/4 in. (23 x 11 x 11 cm). The Roland Penrose Collection, England © 2010 Man Ray Trust/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris/Courtesy of The Penrose Collection. All rights reserved.



Man Ray (1890–1976) "Lee Miller Nude with Sunray Lamp", c.1929. Gelatin silver print
11 3/8 x 9 in. (29.0 x 22.9 cm).
Courtesy of the Legion of Honor.

Man Ray (1890–1976) "Le Logis de l'artiste (The Artist's Home)", c. 193. Oil on canvas 27 7/8 x 20 1/2 in. (71 x 52 cm).



Man Ray (1890–1976) "Shadow Patterns on Lee Miller's Torso", c.1930 Gelatin silver print12 x 9 in. (30.5 x 22.8 cm). Courtesy of the Legion of Honor.

Rena Bransten & Jim Newman

Rena Bransten Gallery ('74 -) & Dilexi Gallery ('58 - '70)

Interviewed by Andrew McClintock

Rena Bransten and Jim Newman photographed at Rena Bransten Gallery by Andrew McClintock, 2012.

Rena where did you go to college?

Rena Bransten: I went to Smith and I graduated in 1954, which is a long time ago, and I think that Smith always had a very good art department. Not practical art, but art history, and that's what got me really interested. The way I started the gallery was I knew several people who had galleries, including Jim. I was married at the time, and John [Bransten] and I went to Jim's gallery a lot; we liked it very much, liked the artists, and were sort of getting our feet wet in the art world. I also knew Ruth Braunstein, who had a gallery in Belvedere, which she called the Quay Gallery, because it was on the water.

Jim Newman: Tiburon.

RB: So I knew her over the years she moved the gallery to San Francisco, and one time I was in the gallery and she said, "you know, I asked Mary Keesling if she would like to start a ceramic gallery with me, and she said no. Can you think of somebody?" Without thinking, I said "well, what about me?" And that's how I got into the gallery business. The ceramic gallery was separate from Ruth's Quay Gallery.

JN: What year was that?

RB: It must have been '73. I think I opened in '74. We were in the old Elizabeth Arden building, which was on Sutter, between Powell and Mason. And we did show ceramics, but artists came to me and said, "we don't want to be in a ceramic gallery, we don't like the idea of a ceramic gallery."

Because it was too close to craft and not fine art?

RB: Well, it was—they didn't want to be thought of as potters. So I told Ruth I thought it would be nice if I showed some other things besides ceramics. She said, "fine, you do your thing and I'll do my thing." At that point we were moving and we shared a space in another old building which was also on Sutter Street, which worked pretty well. We had an office in the middle, Ruth's gallery was on one side of the space and our gallery on the other, and it worked pretty well.

And Jim you had a similar background of starting a gallery with a couple different people...changing partnerships?

JN: I'd already closed by that time. I closed in 1970 and actually, I knew Rena through my gallery and of course, her husband John at that time, and his mother who was an art collector, Ellen. I knew her first before I knew anyone else [in that family]. And she was also somebody who bought occasionally from me and we became friends. Then I met [her sons] John and Bob, and of course, Rena; those were good days.

RB: They were. I'll interrupt, because I always interrupt, but Jim really had the first, what I would call, professional gallery in San Francisco.

Perhaps the first non-cooperative based gallery?

RB: It was on Union Street.

JN: No cooperation *(laughter)*.

RB: Jim had an office way in the back and a lot of the artists thought he should be on the floor, hustling, they said, "get Jim out of the back!"

This is when it was above the jazz club?

RB: No, it was right on Union Street where all those shops are. But it was really a time that John and I could learn about the art world. Here and outside of San Francisco as well because Jim did bring in other artists, which was sort of not really done at the time here. And it was very exciting. There isn't anything like it anymore. The art business has changed a great deal.

JN: There's more business and less art.

I'm just wondering if there's a way you could define that a little bit more, or maybe cite some specifics?

RB: Well, I think truly the art business wasn't as—well in a very broad global sense - it wasn't global at all, secondly, it wasn't that people who went into the business to make money, they went in because they were addicted to the art world. That's changed. I think a lot of what changed was not only the computer and buying work online, it was the art fairs. The art fairs absolutely revolutionized the business, but that has nothing to do with Jim's involvement in it because he really, to me, brought the whole art awareness in the city up to date.

Jim You opened in—

JN: I opened in '58, and when I was a freshman at Stanford I met Walter Hopps who became a really close friend, and we sort of developed this association where we were going to do things. Initially it involved music, mainly jazz. We promoted jazz concerts. I was transferred to Oberlin College and did a number of things there. We formed an association which we called Concert Hall Workshop and it included four guys from Eagle Rock, California and me. They were all high school friends of Walter's, Craig Kauffman being one of them. There was a musician named Bill Crocken and we had this association that would bring jazz artists into Oberlin. So we started a jazz club there. We brought Brubeck in '53 and made a great album from the concert that he did there. We did some things in LA, and then ultimately out of that, sort of moved towards the visual arts and by the middle '50s Craig and Walter and some other people would make trips up to San Francisco, which was really the hot center of art activity.

You mean the west coast ab-ex movement, and kind of the beginning of the—

Rena Bransten Gallery during build out of 77 Geary location, 1987. Photograph by John Vaughan. Courtesy Rena Bransten Gallery.

JN: Yeah, artists were here. There were some artists in LA, but the best artists were here. They recognized that and ended up coming together, we put together a show called "Action One", which was at the Santa Monica Pier merry-go-round.

It's also known as the Merry-Go-Round Show.

JN: That was sort of the seminal event that led to the establishment of the LA Ferus Gallery and here my gallery, the Dilexi Gallery. So we had a loose association over a number of years, but then we kind of drifted apart.

Was your original intention to have Ferus Gallery be LA based and have a more concrete partnership or it was just an exchange?

JN: Yeah, there was talk along those lines, but that was never going to work. We had to go our separate ways. We did [show] some of the same artists, but not that many. So the story, it fascinates me that when they talk about California art now the focus has been through books and big exhibitions, publicity, I mean. The Ferus Gallery was the hot spot and the artists that were associated with it were the main people, but if you go back to the late '50s, even through a good part of the '60s, it was still—the better artists I think were primarily in the Bay Area.

It seems like LA, like what happened with Pacific Standard Time too. Maybe they have more money, more funding.

JN: They're cultivating collectors there, where there were no collectors for contemporary art until they were pretty much cultivated by Walter [Hobbs] and Irving Blum, and they were very successful at that, much more so than anybody here.

RB: Well Irving was a furniture salesman, and he was a good salesman.

JN: He worked for Knoll Associates.

RB: But Walter is like a legend in the art world, and Walter was not exactly somebody that you'd want to go into business with, but he was brilliant, and he had a filing cabinet mind, I mean, literally he could come into the gallery and know the artist or know who the artist studied with, it was amazing what he remembered. I think he worked at the end at the Menil Foundation in Texas, and he was brilliant

Moving back to San Francisco in the '70s when you broke out and fully moved away from Ruth—

RB: When I finally did break away and move here? I can't—it was quite a while.

JN: The 1990s? No, '80s.

RB: I think I've been here about 20 years in this location [77 Geary], which is the original I. Magnin building, built in 1910, but when we moved in here it had been a GSA building so it was sort of empty. I think ACT had moved in, but nothing else really.

And your experience in that time cultivating different collectors and art buyers, what was the market feeling like in that time?

RB: Well it wasn't as aggressive as it became. It wasn't the thing to do. When Jim said there weren't many people buying art, maybe my parents-in-law were two of five people who collected contemporary or modern art. That was it.

They were one of your bigger clients?

JN: There were just a few people, and some of the collectors were artists. Like Sally Lilienthal and Nell Sinton, and Bob Howard. Some of our main buyers were artists themselves.

RB: And I really knew some of these people because I was on the board of the museum, at that time it was called the San Francisco Museum of Art because the director at the time did not want to say the San Francisco Museum of *Modern* Art. Anyway, so that's how I knew a lot of people, and knew what was happening, but I don't think I ever thought I'd be a raging success.

JN: But your father was a great collector.

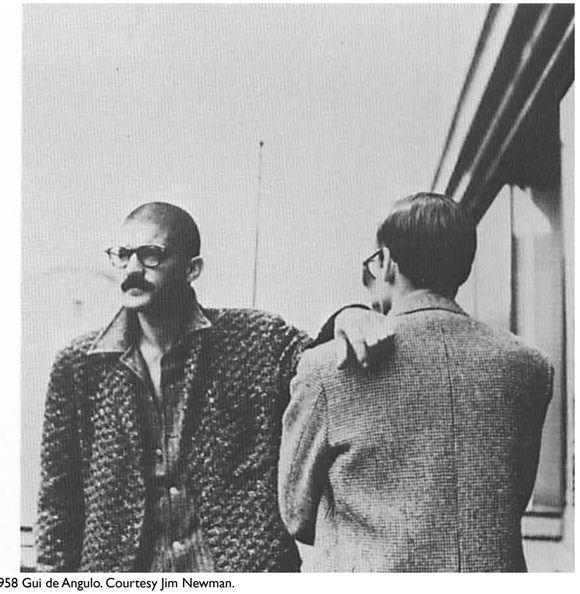
RB: My father was a great collector, but he thought art ended in about the 14th century, and he collected illuminated manuscripts, and he thought that I would, with my interest in art, extend his collection. When I was in college, art history was not taught like it is now, which is much more conceptual, much more theoretical. What we had to do was memorize. We memorized when the thing was made, what the artist had seen on the way to making the painting, very different than it is taught today.

Did you have to know German and French?

RB: I did go to NYU to get an MFA, and then I had to know German, and so I took German lessons because by that time I had graduated and the only German I know is "immer etwas", which means: Always Something. I use that a lot.

We talked a little bit about the cross over of what was going on in LA, but I'd be interested to know the cross over that was happening with New York at the beginning of the abstract expressionist movement. I know there was definitely a crossover there, but it was different from what was going on here.

JN: Well I looked to New York always, in addition to being close to the arts here. At that time, when I got involved, the inspirational artists were in New York, the New York school and beyond that, but in terms of a real dialogue between the two cities, there wasn't that much going on. That's New York. UC art department would bring out guests from New York mainly to teach for a semester or a year and some of them actually stayed here. Like Sidney Gordin, a sculptor, was one who moved here. He came out as a guest and stayed on. I can't think of anybody else that did. But I showed some of these people over the years because they were good artists. I'd be hard pressed now to remember any of their names.



Bob Alexander and Jim Newman outside of the first Dilexi Gallery location at 471 Broadway, SF. Photo © 1958 Gui de Angulo. Courtesy Jim Newman.

RB: One of the most interesting artists that Jim did bring out here, and I don't know if he brought him out here or he came, was H.C. Westermann. And that was a fabulous show.

JN: I met Westermann in Chicago in the '50s because one of the first artists that I showed was Irving Petlin, who was from Chicago. I met him when he was stationed at the Presidio and had a studio in the old Monkey Block building, which is now where the Transamerica pyramid is. Irving was a phenomenal artist, a visionary artist, sort of a neo-surrealist, a beautiful painter. He's still working and is very successful. He lives in Paris right now, but he was a friend that had gone to art school with H.C. Westermann, Cliff Westermann, who showed at the Frumkin Gallery in Chicago. That's where I met Westermann and went to his studio, and I fell in love with his work. So I brought him out for a couple shows. I was also very fascinated by the work of Alfred Jensen who lived and worked in New York. I showed his work as well. Both of these guys died in the '80s.

RB: I still have pieces from Jensen and an H.C. Westermann.

JN: Good for you.

Rena let's talk a little bit about how the programming here has evolved since the 1970s. You started off primarily as a ceramic gallery, but obviously now it's totally mixed different mediums.

RB: That was because the artists said they didn't want to be in a ceramic gallery. So I don't know, I just sort of went around and looked. I see something I like and decide to—well, now my daughter [Trish] is taking over the business, so I don't quite do the same as I once did, and the business has gotten more complicated. There's very little I can do on a computer besides turn it on, so much is done—records and everything are done with a computer, but I think we were one of the first galleries to use a computer. I was very influenced by the professionals, the directors or the curators, and I liked to listen to what they had to say, whether I agreed with them or not. One curator who died, who was a very big force at SFMOMA was John Caldwell. He thought my program was much too eclectic, and he said, "you know, you walk into your gallery and you never know what you're going to see." And I said, "well, you know, we are in California, I don't feel I have to do the same things as New York galleries do." So I always just went with what I liked.

JN: So his complaint was that you never know what you're going to see? That's not a good thing?

RB: That's not a good thing, I should have had like, I should be minimal or—I would say that we showed mostly figurative work, but that's what he felt. You should come in knowing you were going to see X or Y.

To me strong programming seems like it would be something that you want to walk into the space and experience something completely different every time.

RB: Well, I think so.

JN: You would stick with artists and show them repeatedly over the years. You have some artists now that have been with you for what? Twenty years or more?

RB: I've been in business—I've shown Ron Nagle since 1974, and I will say what occurs to me is that the New York galleries and the New York professionals were really not interested in what was happening on the west coast. I mean, nothing. Let alone women artists like Ruth Asawa, who you see hanging here in the gallery and she was a very forceful artist here. She was very much a politician. She wanted to get art into the public schools, but nobody really looked at her work in New York. And there was Joan Brown, of course, who was young and very pretty, and so people thought *oh, I'd like to show her*. But I don't think any of the other galleries, except for Allan Frumkin, who had a gallery in Chicago and NYC liked to show female artists or west coast artists. There was Roy De Forest, Arneson.

JN: What has your experience been with selling work online compared with how we used to do it? Have you sold work through the internet to somebody who hadn't actually seen the work in person before?

RB: Yes. The first thing I ever sold on the internet was something to Seoul, Korea. They knew the work, it was a William [T. Wiley], so I guess they had seen the work at an art fair or knew his name. I think what's also meant a lot to me is the people who I've met through this business. I mean, some you like and some you don't like, but I mean, that is one of the pleasures I have from this business, although I will tell you that one of the biggest collectors in this area used to come into the gallery—this was before we moved here—and he, I think he came in primarily because I was still merged with Ruth in the same space, and he asked me the price of something, and he took out his wallet and threw it at my feet. So you know, I'm not a Jewish princess for nothing, so I just looked at him. And he was sort of older than me, and he finally saw that I wasn't going to pick it up so he leaned down and picked up his wallet. Needless to say, I didn't sell him what he had asked me about. Three years later I told somebody the story to someone and they said, "oh, he always did that, didn't you know that?"

Everybody has their style. So what was the first art fair you participated in?

RB: It was Chicago, and that was a wonderful fair at the time. We didn't sell a thing, it was on Navy Pier, and we stayed with Navy Pier until it closed. It fell apart and many other fairs opened across the country and world.

"So the story, it fascinates me that when they talk about California art now the focus has been through books and big exhibitions, publicity, I mean. The Ferus Gallery was the hot spot and the artists that were associated with it were the main people, but if you go back to the late 50s, even through a good part of the 60s, it was still—the better artists I think were primarily in the Bay Area."

-Jim Newman

JN: So that was pretty much the first American art fair. Was it before Basel?

RB: I think Basel was always there, but it was in Basel. Basel more recently saw that Miami was doing well, and they thought, "well, it's winter here, we can go to Miami…" That's when they set up Basel Miami, and then everything just took off.

That was about eight to ten years ago?

RB: I would say even more.

JN: You were one of the first American galleries that started doing art fairs pretty consistently, regularly, even here.

RB: Yes, I think so. The truth is that a lot of galleries might—let's say middle range galleries—sell mostly at art fairs. Not right at the fair, it also extends, now they have virtual fairs online.

JN: Why do you even have to have delivery of what you buy? Why not just—you know, you can project it on the wall or just print it out.

RB: Don't say that, that'll happen.

Not to be overly philosophical about this, but you've witnessed the change that the gallery business has undergone, everything from the old school way to these digital fairs. How does that make you feel?

RB: I liked the old days when we could go into Jim's gallery and sit and talk. I mean, I like when people come here and sit and talk. That was part of the fun.

Do you feel like there was more discourse then? Actual artistic discourse in the beginning?

RB: There was, there was. I mean, if you go to an art fair, first of all, as the person who has the booth, you're busy looking around to see that you're not missing anybody, so you're not really concentrating on the person talking to you.

So just what is your relationship with other gallerists that have been in San Francisco, in this area a long time? Paule Anglim or John Berggruen, do you feel like there's always been a bit of a community there? Obviously you're not rivals, but it's a business. Also Jim, how about for you during the '50s and '60s here when you opened up, was there kind of a—was there a strong community among the different galleries?

JN: There was a community of artists, definitely, but there were actually several communities of artists and they were somewhat separate. The Berkeley artists and San Francisco artists knew each other, but they kept their distance. There were artists that certainly, in terms of the kind of work they did and the styles, it was very disparate. There was a tendency to think of San Francisco as the home of the Bay Area Figurative movement, which sort of became well known, David Park and Diebenkorn for a while, and then later Joan Brown and other people.

And always being championed by the California School of Fine Arts.

JN: I don't know if they were championed by it, the school had its own faculty and they went

their own way. They had their own kind of rigidity and attitude about what constituted real art. Like when Frank Lobdell was there, but he had his followers. I think there were people that were working figuratively too, but it was mostly kind of a messy paint style. For the most part I didn't think it was all that exciting. What was going on later, into the '60s there at the school, the artists would come from Davis, some from Berkeley, some from SF State, some from the Art Institute, and a few good ones would emerge out of those schools. But when I started there was definitely a community of artists who were older that had gone to school in the early '50s. They were attempting to be established here as artists. They weren't selling particularly, but they knew what they were doing, knew what they wanted to do, and many of them were very strong artists. Jay DeFeo I think was one of the best artists of that time in San Francisco, and she's finally getting her due. There was a small group of people we talked about earlier who are collecting art, many of whom were artists themselves, who had gone to school and studied art, and continued making art. Outside of that, just a handful of people that were buying art, and I don't know if they even felt a part of the community, it was mainly the artists themselves.

RB: Jess.

JN: Jess. He came out of the school, but there were a group of artists who formed a gallery even before the Six Gallery, called the King Ubu Gallery, and he was part of that group, showed there. And I think actually Clyfford Still had a show there.

RB: Bruce Conner.

JN: Yeah, some very interesting people. So there were communities within the larger community.

RB: And the galleries were, I don't know, I'm trying to think when Fuller Goldeen, Hanson Fuller started, it was sort of after you.

JN: '60-61 maybe?

RB: And they were probably strong, and then Paule [Anglim] was quite a bit later.

JN: Paule worked as a consultant and looking for art for architectural projects until she ended up opening a gallery. But all these people became part of what I guess was a kind of community, everybody knew everybody.

Right, I mean the city is small enough that you kind of end up meeting everybody at a certain point.

RB: Now it's different, I think. There are lots of little galleries that I've never even been to on Valencia.

JN: There's so many all the time, I don't know why but—

RB: Your gallery!

JN: You have a gallery?

Ever Gold. We actually met there before, I think, for the Beat by the Bay show.

JN: Oh, right, right. Do you still operate that? See, I don't really stay connected.

Yes. It's hard, there are so many galleries opening up and closing all the time. Even through running the Arts Quarterly and owning a younger contemporary gallery I hear about a different gallery opening up every few months and then they close down a few months or a year later, but I think it's good that there's this explosion of artistic energy.

JN: That was even true in the '60s. There were many, many galleries that opened and closed, you know, would be open for two or three years at the most; they would come and go. Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, New Mission Gallery, there was the Berkeley Gallery that was more of a cooperative.

RB: I think there's no question in my mind that there's much more interest. You even see people pouring into SFMOMA. It was empty most of the time, in earlier times, and that wasn't only because it was down at Civic Center. I think there's much more interest and involvement now, and that to me is very exciting. I saw somebody give a quote in, I've forgotten what newspaper it was, but they said that it was much more exciting in the '60s and '70s, but truthfully it wasn't.

JN: It was pretty dead. I remember long hours wondering if anybody was going to come through that door.

RB: Well now, because of the art fairs, that's what's happened with the galleries because people would rather go to what I would call an art mall, see a hundred galleries than schlep eight blocks to see maybe three.

Rena just to go back to the recent programming here, you represent, you show everybody from Ed Hardy to John Waters to—I mean, it's a pretty interesting range of artists. If you care to talk a little bit about that, specifically citing those two artists as well.

RB: Well, John Waters was suggested to me by a dealer in New York who is not alive anymore. He was a very interesting dealer who's name of course has gone out of my mind. He said he was looking for a place to show John Waters, and when I think about it, it was probably that John said he loved San Francisco, find me a place in San Francisco. Because John, I don't know how many years ago, lived here in his car before he became famous and successful. So he is one of the nicest people I've ever met, great fun, and I have to say that some of the people I've shown, I show because I have faith in them as people as much as what they make. I do like the idea of the hand of the artist, which is a far cry from what John does, but it's also the mind. Don [Ed] Hardy, on the other hand, is a good friend of Ron Nagle's, and that's how I got involved with him. I like him tremendously. I think he is a very intelligent artist.

The Asian influence?

RB: The Asian tattoo influence. He really studied Japanese tattoo. He went to the Art Institute here, this is how he knew Ron, and he got a scholarship at Yale, he could have gone to Yale, but one of the teachers there said, "don't go to Yale; you want to do tattooing, go and study that." And that's what he did. The rest is history. There were two artists I think of as sort of being entrepreneurs. One is Don Hardy, who fell into it because some guy in Los Angeles said he'd like to use the imagery on t-shirts. And the other one is Jun Kaneko, who has this enormous industry of making sculpture, and does, I would say, at least twenty commissions a year.

JN: So Rena are you stepping aside at all? Is Trish taking over?

RB: Well Trish and Jenny make more of the decisions than I do. And they work well together.

Jim tell us what you did after you closed the gallery, because now you're involved in filmmaking and music again?

JN: Right, by the end of the '60s I'd gotten kind of fed up with the art scene here. I thought there were great artists, but it wasn't really reaching where it should. A few people that would circulate among this local art scene weren't enough really to justify the inspiration for what they were doing, and their vision, and so I said—this was at a time when, let's take everything out into the streets - so I said, these people have incredible ideas, let's give them the opportunity to create things that will reach a larger audience, a more general audience. So there were a couple of projects. One was a collaboration with KQED to sponsor a series where artists would be invited to make television, and we would come on at the same time every Wednesday night for a whole length of a series, like twelve programs. So we did that, it was called the Dilexi series, and it went a couple of times on KQED and some of the pieces that were created are still in circulation, and now the whole thing is housed at the Pacific Film Archive. Walter DeMaria made a piece and he did this extraordinary film that was shot in Nevada. It was like a 360 degree, very slow pan, and it was sort of an anti-war statement, and a piece of minimal art that is still out there and gets shown in museums in Europe. Because he considers it one of the important things that he did. We had Terry Riley and Arlo Acton do a piece together called Music with Balls that hopefully will be available on DVD soon. I don't know the details, but a lot of people, Anna Halprin was involved. In New York, Robert Frank made a film, a project that took place over a few months but had a fair amount of mileage over the years; it still is there. The other thing was to develop a score working with Lawrence Halprin, Anna's husband to create events throughout the city of San Francisco by taking a map of the city and superimposing a calendar, September, I think 1969 or '70, I'm not sure what year it was, so that each day of the month, something would be occurring, some unexpected art event would be occurring in that part of the city. We got as far as doing a one-day demo in the Bernal Heights area and we had maybe eight or ten artists involved making things and doing things. Then there were a few other things like Yellow Cab event? The downtown Kiss In?

Was that another mass action performance?

JN: Yeah, a lot of things like that are being done these days. But we were among the first to try stuff like that. So in 1970 I just shut down. I got out of my lease on Clay Street, closed the gallery, took everything out, and got involved in making some films. I made a film with Sun Ra called SPACE IS THE PLACE, which is about to be reissued on DVD. It sold pretty well for a period of time, but we mutually agreed to separate, so I have a new local person who's taking it over, but that was a great project. That took over two years to complete and it's become kind of a cult film.

Would you ever think about getting back into the visual art gallery side or curation?

JN: No, absolutely not. No interest. People ask me that.

Can you talk about your organization: Other Minds?

JN: Well Other Minds is this music sponsoring organization that grew out of something called California School of Performing Arts. It wasn't really a school, but a group of people that involved Terry Riley, and some of the people involved in a local Sufi movement and a doctor friend named Andrew Garling, who put together this organization. There was an Indian classical singer named Pandit Pran Nath that was Terry Riley's guru and teacher. Also, Lamont Young was part of that crowd, and he [Pran Nath] ended up living in Berkeley, but he would come over here and teach people. He would have a group of students and occasionally a group would go to India and do workshops with him there. He was a master. He performed at Hansen Gallery once, I remember that. They did a show on him for KQED. So we decided to make a documentary of his life and career. The life of Pandit Pran Nath, Master Indian Musician. We went to Delhi and filmed him in some caves where he had been an ascetic and a disciple of some local saddhu who lived in the cave. That was fun, and there was performance in it. So that actually is out there and it's sold by Lamont's foundation in New York and by Other Minds.

Then out of that, Charles Amirkhanian and I got together, I think it was at a concert at the Headlands and said we ought to be doing something, so we started Other Minds, and originally we started in 1992. The first festival was in '93, so it's about twenty years old. We started at the Yerba Buena Center, one of the open performances there in the fall of '93, and we've been doing it almost every year since then. We bring composers from all over. They gather at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program for several days, they share ideas and make presentations on what they're doing and what they're working on, and then there are concerts in the city, three evenings of concerts. There is also Other Minds as a radio program on KALW every week, which is curated by one of our board members. We have a vast archive of music, largely from KPFA, on which Charles served as the music director for many years. So thousands of hours of taped interviews and music have been digitized and all available free on a website called Radiom.org. So… that's pretty much what I've been up to lately.

Jeffery Mitchell, installation view 1991. Mixed Media. Courtesy Rena Bransten Gallery.

Rena Bransten, Rena Bransten Gallery 1988 Viola Frey Exhibition installation view.

Charles Desmarais

President of SFAI
Interviewed by Paul Karlstrom

Charles Desmarais photographed by Andrew McClintock at SFAI.

What follows is an edited-for-publication version of the verbatim transcript of an interview with San Francisco Art Institute President Charles Desmarais. Conducted by Paul Karlstrom on May 30, 2012, the interview took place in the subject's office at SFAI.

Charles, we're sitting in your office at SFAI to record an interview for San Francisco Arts Quarterly, which will be another introduction of you to the Bay Area art community. So why don't you introduce yourself to get us started.
Okay. I'm Charles Desmarais. I am the president of the San Francisco Art Institute, as of this past August.

Not quite a year—but plenty of time to find about this place and your new job. The topic is really you and the Art Institute: how you came together, what you found when you arrived, what you could build on, what needed to be changed. In sum, what did you bring to SFAI? I see from your résumé that you've worked at quite a few institutions.
Yes, I've had a number of different positions, virtually all in museums, virtually all as director of museums. So this is certainly a big change for me. It's my first academic administration job. I tend not to like the word "administration," or even the term "arts management." It might sound a little pretentious, but I prefer "leadership."

So this is a kind of leap. But I guess the big question to dispatch here is how your background—especially in museums—prepared you for running an art school?
Well, I think in certain ways I *wasn't* prepared. And that was one of the things that intrigued me when I was asked to apply for the job, because I was looking for a new adventure. But I think managing complex institutions is a skill that is transferrable. And working with eighteen curators, as I did at the Brooklyn Museum, is analogous to working with faculty. But more important is that I think art schools, in general, have lost much of their connection to the community and to the art world. Let's remember that the Art Institute is not unique in this. But SFAI was founded in 1871 as the San Francisco Art Association and it had a broad mandate. It was very much about promoting artists, promoting their work in the community, promoting art in this region.

And to create a market for art.
Well, certainly to create a market was a big part of it, but I think there was a broader intellectual purpose: to engage people in this discussion that the artists were excited by. And how do you broaden that discussion? Certainly they had to support themselves. [But] the institution was founded with this broad community purpose that included education. Over time it lost that larger community focus to some degree. And when I was asked to apply for this job, all of us who were finalists were asked to address the board and the rest of the Art Institute faculty and student body, and I talked about that function of the Institute and how I thought that we should work to recover that original purpose and focus.

So before you even came here, when you were going through this process that eventually led to your selection as president, you were thinking about the identity of the Art Institute within the community—the basis for its unique presence—and that maybe it got off track in terms of what its history represented... and promised.
Yeah, at least that was my perception from a distance. To go back to your questions— why I made the move from museums and what I brought from museums to this job. Having been a museum director for several decades, I think I have a pretty good understanding of how museums connect with their audiences, and I have a pretty good understanding now—or at least some hints—about how we might be able to better connect the Art Institute to the museum world and to the art world.

"...Frankly, my understanding of the institution is that it is much more than a school. The way the school and its artists have engaged with the community—whether in a political or cultural sense—is the soul of this place, and the center of my own interest. You called it a marriage; it's a perfect marriage in that sense. The Art Institute and I are soul mates."

So, that was the case I made, and I think it's part of my mandate. I had no specific interest in working at a college. I was very happy and I had a very good job in one of the major art museums in this country. But this place has played such an important role in art—this is where so many artistic movements were introduced, where so many great artists worked. So, as soon as I learned that it was the San Francisco Art Institute calling, I got really excited. To think that I might be able to have some of that [aura] rub off on me. Or even better, to have the opportunity to create a new history, to continue that history in some way.

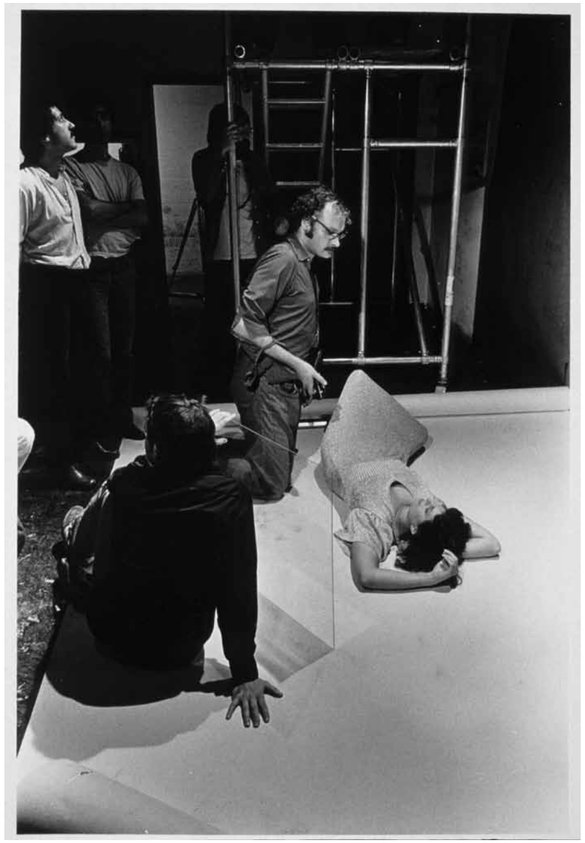
You seem to be professing prenuptial love.
That's right.

And as I hear you, you're thinking of the Art Institute as embodying a role and objectives that go well beyond application of skills on the outside, in the workplace. This has to do with the training of artists, to the extent that you can actually train them—which is another question.
A very good question. … Frankly, my understanding of the institution is that it is much more than a school. The way the school and its artists have engaged with the community—whether in a political or cultural sense—is the soul of this place, and the center of my own interest. You called it a marriage; it's a perfect marriage in that sense. The Art Institute and I are soul mates.

In that case, how are your own ideas about art reflected in or connected to SFAI?
The Art Institute is—for lack of a better description and I haven't come up with one yet— a Fine Art school. We don't teach design, architecture, or fashion. That's where a lot of the gravy is, frankly, in the art school business. But we're far from a business in that sense. So that sort of very deliberate choice of an institution to focus on the core of art appealed to me very much. …

I was born in New York and by first grade we had moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut. I grew up the oldest of seven kids in a blue-collar family where there was no discussion of art. My dad was a sheet-metal worker with a third grade education. In a certain way, I feel as though art saved my life. … When I was exposed to art totally by chance [*Time* magazine led me to MoMA at age fifteen] I realized that my life could be about something beyond just working. And to be able to share that with young people—to get to the educational mission of this place—is an extremely wonderful honor. So you combine that sort of match of backgrounds and focus on the essence of the interpretation or investigation of culture through visual art, that's one strong connection for me to this place.

How and where did higher education become part of your story?
First I went into the Catholic seminary for two years—this was at high school age—and that's where I think I became somewhat politicized because that was an era when progressive



Studio Kuchar, c. 1975. Courtesy of SFAI.

Catholic priests were strong thinkers about the church's role in society. So we did a lot of thinking and talking about that kind of thing. … In fact, I don't think I could take a job that I didn't feel I had some special mission to perform. I have always seen myself as a student of art. Most of my jobs have been as a curator and museum director, but unlike many curators, I've never felt as though my job is to tell people what to like or tell people what's important as much as it is to share with people what I'm learning and share the excitement of that.

But you're openly attached to this school, you had a relationship, some sort of an affair with SFAI before you actually came here. I get the sense that you have a belief in a social imperative—a social commitment, a kind of idealism as opposed to simple pragmatism.
I think you're right that I am an idealist and that I think this institution and art institutions in general have a social responsibility. It's not, by the way, about art that is "socially conscious."

Okay, this is one of the big questions for me, how you feel about that responsibility. You've suggested this concern is something that you communicated to the board when you were speaking with them.
I certainly didn't get much into the detail of my personal life. But this idea that my life was saved— because the only part of my life that really matters is the way that I've learned to look at the world—to look at society through the arts, starting with visual art. I suppose for some people it might be religion, but for me it's a non-sectarian way to interpret the world and make sense of it. I find it endlessly engaging.

So you might think of art as a calling. That's one way to describe an artist engaged in art as idea as opposed to a commercial artist. Something that has a higher meaning—I'm making it sound slightly like religion but …
Yeah, okay. And quite honestly, I see the relationship to religion in my own life. But you could easily see the relationship, say, to science. I mean, the way that the most passionate of scientists have an entire world open to them because they have a lens through which to see the world and to interpret it and to try and puzzle out how it works. And I think that artists do that in their sphere and scientists do it in theirs. The commercial artist rarely crosses the line into what you and I might think of as the real thing—"Fine Art" as some people call it. Trying to define art is extremely difficult, and you do it at great risk. But the artist who is analyzing herself, analyzing her culture, using these tools to first try to understand and then try to share that understanding with an audience, I think that's the part that I'm interested in. The part that is made to entertain us or to decorate our world or decorate ourselves, or whatever, is also of interest, but that's not the part we're talking about and that's not the part that the Art Institute is about. We're creating thinkers.

I see much better now why you're so happy to have arrived here, because it brings together most aspects of most of your career along with your personal values.
No question about it. My entire career has led me here.

That's fair enough. But what have you found that may be different from what you expected and maybe not in a positive way? There must be some disappointments.
I think that's a totally fair question. And particularly because so many people love this institution, people have paid attention to its successes but also some of the difficulties that it's had. And it has certainly had difficulties in recent years. I knew there had been financial difficulties. There had been great stresses between the faculty and the last administration, between the board and the last administration. What I didn't realize was that there would still be open wounds that still needed to be healed. I don't shy away from that responsibility, but the problem is that there are some who still are so pained that it makes them suspicious, untrusting of my motives.

Are you thinking about faculty or board— or both?
I'm thinking particularly about faculty. The board is smaller and I work more closely with them. That's a different relationship. But I'm speaking about long-term faculty, perhaps some long-term donors and past board members. That's something I think is completely addressable because of how much people love this place. But it's a longer-term proposition than I realized.

What are some of the push-backs or objections that you've encountered, criticisms about the way the school was, maybe still is? It would be good to have a more specific idea.
Yeah, I understand. One of the wonderful things about the Art Institute is that it's a place that really encourages independence and autonomy. But it's hard for an institution to operate with any kind of intention and any kind of sense of progress if people aren't working as a team. So how do you take the autonomous artist, or a group of autonomist artists, and ask them to stay autonomous as artists, but as professors and as part of the school to become a team? It would ordinarily be a difficult task. It's even more difficult when some of those people don't trust the way they've been asked to work as a team in the past, or don't feel as though they were treated as team members. And I'm saying this with real respect for the last administration's intentions and what they tried to achieve. But the result is obvious; that it didn't really work. …

Chris Bratton was my predecessor as president. He is now president of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and I think his goals here were admirable. One goal was to bring in very prominent top leadership and greater diversity. For example, Chris brought in Okwui Enwezor who is a fabulous thinker and curator and internationally renowned person of African heritage. And he brought in Hou Hanru who is a Chinese-born, internationally renowned curator; and Renee Green who is now at MIT, an African American woman who greatly respected. … To do this in a short time was extraordinarily bold and courageous. The failure was in planning for it financially [and strategically]. Not bringing faculty and board along with his thinking, what he was trying to achieve—that created tensions. I don't get much of a sense that he worked with those people that he brought in to strategize about how to include the people who had historically run and loved this place in bringing about the kinds of changes they wanted to make.

And so it was this sense on many people's part that it was meant to be a complete cleavage and disjuncture and cutting off of all that is historically important and valuable in order to start something entirely new. That's why it failed. To not take this incredible asset and realize all of its value and then build upon that, and instead to think that you're going to just throw that all away and start over again—at least in some people's minds that's what the approach was—I think that is not likely to succeed.

That nicely sets up my next question. It has to do with the notion of history and the responsibility and the training of an artist where modernism seemed to have taught that you need to clear out the old to bring in the new— pretty much what you described. I think that was happening here well before your arrival. Going back to the time after Douglas MacAgy and under Ernest Mundt when most of the super-star faculty left, like Clyfford Still, or were either fired or quit in protest. Hassel Smith, David Park, Elmer Bischoff.
Post-modernism is taking history as a tool and using the parts of it that are of value. It's also trying to understand from the inside out what the various social structures, art practices, or whatever are really about and reflecting on them and reflecting back upon them. That's where our understanding of art history matters.

But my question is how important is it to make sure knowledge of the past—of art history—is part of the training of artists. It seems to me many students, younger artists, don't have a full sense of where they come from. The larger legacy they've inherited.
Well, I take your point that many people, when they're just graduating, don't know as much as people who have spent an entire career in the field. But I don't agree with you that artists generally don't know their past or don't know art history. Virtually all of the really strong artists know a lot about history. They may pick and choose what they want to know and …

What generation are we talking about? I'm thinking of young artists, your students.
I'm saying that you have to learn over time. The artist who will succeed in reaching an audience, in making a difference, in exciting the art world or critics or museums will learn history because they need that as they develop. They might not feel that they need to become generalists. But I don't know any artists who have real careers and solid exhibition records, critical response, that don't pay attention to history.

Good. I'm just curious to know in what ways the Art Institute introduces to students their Bay Area predecessors, to create a sense of the rich local art history.
Well, actually, if you're talking specifically about California art or San Francisco art, that's actually an area of interest of mine, and of a number of our professors, that I think we'll probably end up doing something. It can encourage the students. That's my view. But you cannot graduate from here without a substantial amount of art history and broad critical understanding of the field.

That's good.
So if you're an undergraduate, you have to take English and writing. But there is Contemporary Practice, which is a foundation program of theory and ideas—what they call forming process and making history. And then you have art history requirements that include Global Art History, Modernity and Modernism, Contemporary Art Now, an art history elective, and a history of the major. There is a very broad liberal arts background here.

You're here running a program devoted to teaching young artists. So you have your constituency. But what about you personally? Your personal relationship to artists.
There's a very big difference between working at a museum and working with artists, and working at the Art Institute and working with artists. For one thing, all of our studio professors are working artists. It's part of their job to continue to be working artists. And that gives me great satisfaction. And then, of course, with the students, even with their art history, still about 80 percent of their time is spent making art.

The biggest difference really is as a curator, as much as I visited studios and art galleries, for the most part I was dealing with fully formed ideas and works of art. You visit artists in whom you're already interested. So you're working with fully developed artists and works of art.

Here, you're working with people through the process, which requires a very different kind of eye. And it's exciting to me that I'm developing that different kind of eye very rapidly. You have to. It's not judgment of this thing as a finished work but rather trying to understand the approach.

So it's a different set of standards. And I don't mean standards in terms of judgment particularly but what matters at this stage and what matters at that one.
Absolutely.

I don't want to put you on the spot. But if you had to make choices in your life about the people you want to hang out with, how would you characterize that?
Hands down, if it was just about social life, it would be 100 percent creative people. No question in my mind. But I guess maybe another way to put it is that it's the creative part of anybody that I'm interested in. And so when you have the time to be with artists, you're being with people whose entire job it is to be creative, and that makes them more interesting than most of us who have only some creative aspect to what we do.

But anyway, for me and I gather for you, we started out not with any obvious direction pointed towards what we ended up doing, but we have somehow along the way found out how to live—or that you can live—the art life.
That's a great, great gift, isn't it? It really is.

A field trip in a photo class c. late 1950s with faculty member Pirkle Jones, visitor, Ansel Adams and students. Courtesy of SFAI.

William Heick CSFA life class, c1947. Photograph by William Heick. Courtesy of SFAI.

CSFA, c1958, William Morehouse class, with William T. Wiley, Wally Hedrick, Morehouse, Charlie Strong, "Draw what you...hear". Courtesy of SFAI.

Ben Tufnell

Director of Exhibitions for Haunch of Venison, London

On Nancy Holt and Land Art

Interviewed by Maria Nicolacopoulou

Nancy Holt, "Sunlight in Sun Tunnels", 1976. Composite of thirty photographs of sunlight and shadow in one tunnel photographed every half hour from 6.30 AM to 9.00 PM in 14 July 1976 Composite inkjet print taken from original 35mm colour transparencies; printed on archival rag paper 2012. 127.3 x 156.2 cm © Nancy Holt. Courtesy of Haunch of Venison.

Ben Tufnell in front of a Daniel Flavin installtion. Photograph by Peter Mallet.

Highly influential and central to site-specific art, Land Art was a vanguard art movement that began in the 1960's as a response to a variety of social and political upheavals. Various initiatives, projects and exhibitions taking place around the world today are reevaluating the movement's relevance on contemporary terms.

On the occasion of Nancy Holt's first UK solo exhibition: Photoworks, presenting a range of work from 1967 to 2007, much of which has never been exhibited before, I sat down with curator and director of exhibitions for Haunch of Venison, Ben Tufnell. My goal: to investigate the relationship between the movement of Land Art, within the context of a gallery as well as to explore the relevance of that movement and Nancy Holt's work, through historical terms and contemporary culture.

Before joining Haunch of Venison in 2006, Tufnell was a curator at Tate where he organized many exhibitions, including: Hamish Fulton: Walking Journey (2002), the Turner Prize (2000, 2003) and the Art Now series (2004-06).

"She was a pioneer artist of the time, but also the only woman within a macho environment. So despite being very well regarded, she has been overlooked...She was one of the first artists engaged in public art, but public art back then was not as 'prestigious' as it is today. Another important reason is that as Robert Smithson's widow, she has worked very hard to protect and promote his legacy..."

His writings have appeared in a number of publications, such as Modern Painters, Art Review and Contemporary, as well as catalogues published by Tate Britain, Tate St Ives, Museo Universitario Arte Contempopranea, Mexico City and the Henry Moore Institute, among others.

His books include Land Art (Tate Publishing, 2006) and Richard Long: Selected Statements and Interviews (Haunch of Venison, 2007). He is currently working on a survey exhibition of Land Art in Britain 1966-79 for the Arts Council, which will tour British museums 2013-14.

Before we start, tell us a little bit about yourself. What made you join a commercial gallery?

I was a curator at Tate Britain for nine years before joining Haunch of Venison. It was in many ways a surprise to find myself in a commercial gallery, but the key thing was that I had the opportunity to work closely with Richard Long. And to be honest, it's been possible use the platform offered by a gallery like HoV to work with some really great artists and make some ambitious exhibitions which I couldn't have done otherwise. I'm a curator, not a dealer, but I understand that if you make great shows with great artists the commercial side of things should take care of itself. It always has to be about quality.

What were the reasons behind your decision to exhibit Nancy Holt?
Her work is a natural fit for our program based on the artists we already represent: Richard Long, Giuseppe Penone, Thomas Joshua Cooper, among others. Alena Williams, the curator of *Sightlines* [Nancy Holt] initially organized for U.S. venues, starting with the Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University in 2010, followed by the Graham Foundation, Chicago, which is currently on display at the Santa Fe Art Institute, made the introduction. I tried to help Alena find a U.K. venue for that show, and when it didn't work out we began a discussion with Nancy about doing something with HoV in London. Nancy's work should be better known and should be in major collections. Hopefully we can do something about that. It's an interesting challenge.

Do you think that being a woman was the reason her work has not been as prevalent as that of her male peers?
Definitely. She was a pioneer artist of the time, but also the only woman within a macho environment. So despite being very well regarded, she has been overlooked – for example, she is currently almost completely unrepresented in museum collections, so she doesn't figure in the stories of late twentieth century art that those museums tell. It could also be because she was more focused on public works than making art for galleries. She was one of the first artists engaged in public art, but public art back then was not as 'prestigious' as it is today. Another important reason is that as Robert Smithson's widow, she has worked very hard to protect and promote his legacy, which, in itself, was a very time-consuming task.

Land Art is said to have been important for taking art out of the gallery or museum and into the natural landscape away from the "corrupted" urbanity of the time. How does the work's media nature and its repositioning back within the context of a gallery affect the work, along with what Land Art represents as a movement?
First of all, it is important to separate the work from the actual landscape. There are issues of accessibility which render documentation necessary. Of course the site is different to the description of the site, yet very few artists make work in the landscape that they don't afterwards bring into the gallery in some way. Documenting the work is, I believe, intrinsic to its dynamic and certainly doesn't compromise it. If anything, it brings a different aspect of the work to how we experience it in the landscape. It is, in a sense, two different sides of the same argument.

How could we then separate documentation of Land Art to plain documentary or landscape photography?
I guess it's hard to be definitive about that and every artist approaches it differently. Nancy's approach, for example, can encompass both approaches. She makes work using multiple components rather than a single view, which testifies to the presence of the artist's experience within the landscape. In that way, she's going against conventional representation of the landscape, and with different framing techniques she represents movement while rejecting the single definitive view with its associations to the venerable tradition of landscape painting - or indeed 'classic' landscape photography. (photo: over the hill) On another note, Richard Long says that his sculptures in galleries are there to stimulate the senses through a raw and visceral experience. His photographic works offer a different kind of engagement: they stimulate the imagination, taking us to remote places.

Public art is usually the product of a commissioned initiative whereas Land Art is the product of an artistic intervention within the natural landscape, yet these two terms seem to often overlap. How do you think it is possible to keep the two separate, if at all?
Coming back to Nancy, we can differentiate between her own initiatives such as the Sun Tunnels (sun tunnels photo) and her public commissions; one is created to a brief, for the public and the community, and the other is her own artistic initiative. Although both use a similar process in being site-specific and responding to a place, the conditions are different. It might be, for example, that work can be created as a personal initiative, but remain hidden and, therefore, private. An example of this might be Richard Long's works depicting sculptures in landscapes, where nobody knows where the location is, only that a stone line or circle is somewhere in Africa or South America. So not all land art is public. Here again we see the alternative aspect that the medium of photography/media brings to the work that would have been otherwise impossible. Another example would be Giuseppe Penone's work from the 1960 -70's, where we are dealing with smaller scale and more intimate works in nature, which brings a completely different approach to the landscape. (photo: penone)

Certain views on public art claim that it is the only true art, due to, among other reasons, its distance from the art market and its inability to be traded. Do you think this element and the association of Land Art to public art prevents Land Art works from becoming commercial? Or does it have the opposite effect by adding value to the work?
Interestingly enough, all of the major earthworks projects in the U.S. were funded by private patrons or the artists' dealers. Robert Smithson made an amazing film documenting the creation of the Spiral Jetty, which was then shown in the Dwan Gallery in New York. Again, we go back to the importance of the works' media aspects here, in that it is not only bringing something relatively inaccessible to a wider audience, but eternalizing an ephemeral process while adding value. Turrell's Roden Crater project [1] is another example of a funded work, and is also, incidentally, connected to Nancy's work in being about ideas of light, relativity and cosmic scale. With regards the commercial aspects of such projects, Nancy Holt owns the land where the Sun Tunnels are located so, theoretically, she could sell the land and therefore we can say that work could be traded, but the work will always belong to the place. Not that would ever happen.

Where do you see Land Art progressing if we compare it to public art's equivalent of "new public" art?
It seems to me that Land Art has great currency and vitality right now. It is being rediscovered by a new generation. As a genre it has reawakened due to current and ongoing environmental issues, so the need and demand to reconnect with nature is a major factor. And there are many young artists working out of the legacy of Nancy's generation and doing just that. Artists such as Andrea Zittel and Katie Paterson, for example, present a contemporary approach to the land and the cosmos, and while their work carries echoes of the past, it engages with current issues and concerns.

Nancy Holt: *Photoworks* is currently on view at Haunch of Venison, London, until 25 August 2012.
[1] http://rodencrater.com/

Giuseppe Penone, "Alpi marittime - Continuerà a crescere tranne che in quel punto", 1968-78. 2 black and white photographs on canvas. 84.5 x 84.5 cm each.
©Giuseppe Penone, Photograph by Peter Mallet, Courtesy Haunch of Venison.

Nancy Holt, "Over the Hill", 1968. Composite inkjet print on archival rag paper, printed from 16 original 126 format transparencies; printed 2012. 101.6 x 101.6 cm.
© Nancy Holt. Courtesy of Haunch of Venison.

Adam Gross

A Look Into the Art Business

Interviewed by Gregory Ito

Adam Gross. Photograph by Christopher Kilkus for Allyssa Pizer Management.

I'm here with Adam Gross at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and we're here to discuss the necessary measures made by institutions like the MOCA to fund their programming, and the future of the Los Angeles art market. Adam, tell us some history about yourself before your previous position at MOCA and your current position with Art Platform.

Well, I was born and raised in Los Angeles and I left here after attending UCLA for an undergraduate degree in art history and finance. I was thinking I wouldn't be coming back to LA because it didn't seem that interesting to me at that point. I lived in Europe, New York, etc., then came back in the mid 90's and was blown away. I was so surprised at what had happened in the few years I had been gone, and it really seemed that LA had found a new sense of cultural identity and cultural vitality. I felt like I wanted to be a part of that. At that point I was working in the world of finance, and the logic was that I would make my money in the financial side and then spend my money on the art side. But I quickly realized that what made me happy was to completely immerse myself in the arts and culture.

So I did finance, and ran a small gallery in Los Angeles for several years. It was called the Kantor Gallery, run by a guy named Niels Kantor. Niels was the son of a large art dealing family in Los Angeles, his parents were a couple by the name of Paul Kantor and Ulrika Kantor, who brought Diebenkorn to Los Angeles for the first time.

It was a great opportunity to learn about showing young emerging artists, and we would show everything from young, unknown artists to Picasso. I really enjoyed that experience. I got my masters in art history from UCLA, which has a great art history program, and after that worked at Butterfields when it was owned by Ebay.

So I was there for several years and left in 2002 to become a consultant. I worked with corporations, with private collectors, and was a private dealer as well. That was a great exercise and great experience; seeing how these corporations worked, seeing how collectors worked and how they collected on a more [concerted] level, as opposed to the gallery or auction side.

One day the opportunity came to run "individual giving" at MOCA, which were major gifts and managing all their major donors. I had long been a fan of MOCA's program, of MOCA's mission, of what they had done, and what they meant to contemporary art both locally and internationally. When this opportunity came up, to be part of this bigger team and to be part of the team at a capacity where I knew I could make a difference, I knew it was what I needed to do. I had founded a nonprofit [PHARMAKA] that was in downtown Los Angeles, and had been on the boards of smaller nonprofits as well as a lot of volunteer work for nonprofits on the board level. Whether I knew it or not, I was giving myself the experience I needed to be able to go into a nonprofit environment and at least be informed about the issues that were at stake. MOCA had its own specific set of issues and its own specific focus, but nonprofit development, nonprofit fundraising, it's really about relationship building. It's about building around the mission, around the program. Being born and raised in Los Angeles, I knew the program. I was familiar with issues surrounding nonprofits and ultimately my business background, I thought, gave me an interesting perspective as well.

What was your title at MOCA?

My official title was Associate Director of Development for Individual Giving, the acronym being ADD, which is what it felt like my life was, Attention Deficit Disorder. I was managing a portfolio of 500 collectors and donors at any given time, not to mention all the people I was cultivating.

So these are relationships that already existed at MOCA as well as new ones you were cultivating?

And MOCA, being an institution that's over thirty years old, had a lot of relationships that had gone to fallow, had sort of drifted apart, so it was really interesting learning about the history of the institution. MOCA does have a very unique history in that it wasn't started by the city. It wasn't started by the government and it wasn't started by a private individual, it was started by the people. The original mandate for MOCA was that the city said, 'we'll give you space, but you just have to raise ten to thirteen million dollars, and you have to do it from a broad base of people,' and that's what they did. They literally raised that money $10,000 at a time, and were able to come back to the city with: 'here's our endowment, now let's build this museum.' So it was interesting because there was such a broad base of what they call "founders" that were part of this. Not, 'we built the building, now we want you to be a founder.' It was, 'we have no building, but we have an idea, now we want you to buy into that idea.' Imagine how difficult it is to raise the money on an idea. It's like a business plan except that it's a nonprofit. So there's no profit. No one is going to make their money back. You're making an angel-investment.

Those people are still, not all of them, but many of them are still involved and are remarkably passionate about it. The great thing is that you start talking to them and they start talking to their kids, and then their grandkids that are involved as well. It's nice seeing that kind of longevity because it's something that we miss in Los Angeles. You have it in San Francisco and in many other large metropolises, but we don't have a sense of civic and cultural philanthropy in Los Angeles. There isn't that tradition of second and third generation families that have been supportive and continue to be supportive.

LA tends to be filled with people who've made their money here or brought their wealth here because they made it somewhere else and are retiring here, or it's one of their homes. So we don't have that same kind of tradition. MOCA was remarkably challenging because it gets very little, if any of its budget subsidized by the city or state or federal government on an annual basis. MOCA would get grants from time to time, but it's not like, LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] which is funded by the county. The Hammer is part of UCLA so it has its own funding. At MOCA every year you would look at your budget and say, 'okay, let's raise twenty million dollars.' And we had to do it every single year, from scratch.

How many people were on your team?

Well, in the development department there were probably, at its height, around ten, give or take. And then we pulled it back because of budgetary reasons.

I find it amazing that you and a team of ten can raise twenty million plus dollars a year.

Well to put it in perspective, LACMA has a sixty million dollar budget and it has maybe sixty people in its development department. A big portion of their funding comes from the county, which MOCA doesn't have, making it a relatively unique environment for fund raising.

So besides the funding going towards the exhibitions and the build out/ maintenance and staff fees, where does it go?

Well, once you start digging into those budgets, it's remarkable what it takes to build a museum, to sustain a museum, to do good and interesting programming. That was one of the things I always appreciated at MOCA, was that it was typically willing to do big, crazy idea shows. Like right now it has a show of [Land] Art. When I was helping to raise money for this show, we found out very quickly during developement that there had never been a survey show or a Land Art retrospective. Why? Because you almost can't do it. Land art exists outside in the world, so if you do something in a museum it's photos, it's ephemera, it's relics, and it's ideas, which do not make the most exciting exhibition. But MOCA was willing to do that.

MOCA also worked on a feminist art exhibition called Wack!, which was frankly an encyclopedic exhibition on feminist art from 1965 to 1980. The book is literally an encyclopedia, the catalog. And it was an amazingly important show, and I think it had a hundred artists, but whatever it was, it was insane how unruly trying to wrap your head around this idea was. It took them eight years of development. Most museums would not fund something that was going to take eight years of development. There's a beautiful piece that's going to be installed, a piece by Michael Heizer, which is literally a hundred feet from where we're sitting right now, at LACMA. That's a piece of Land Art. You can see it, and it's visceral. But at MOCA, you're looking at ideas and sketches for the spiral jetty, and that was one of the things that I really appreciated about MOCA's program.

So the curators would develop an idea and then you and your team would use it as leverage for specific collectors and other individuals involved in that field, particular movement, artists, etc?

Raising money for specific exhibitions was a very sincere way of being able to approach people that were involved with MOCA, had been involved with MOCA or that you knew were involved with an artist, idea, type of art or specific movement. We would help make it possible. It's interesting what we do, but the real heroes in this are the exhibition are the people, it's the curators that are working on ideas and it's the director that's raising the real big money. The thing that made me an effective fundraiser was that I could conceptually talk about the work and get excited about it. It's in that excitement that you're able to raise funds.

And the idea comes first, right?

The idea comes from the curator and the director and then in their intellectual crucible of all these curators sitting together, they refine that idea. They refine that idea until it's decided, 'we have a show here.' When we have identified the pieces that we want, or we've identified a general direction of the show, they will bring in, let's say 75% done basically, because there's always serendipity. They will then bring in the development department and we'll go: 'oh, great, you're doing a Land Art show, okay, let's look at every gallery that showed land art. Now let's look at every collector that owns land art, or that sponsored or published land art.' Then we'll also look at foundations and we'll start narrowing it down to foundations that either have a component of the exhibition that feeds into what they're doing, or maybe there's a relationship that they have with them and we know that they would be interested in supporting that exhibition.

We do the same thing with corporations. So with Land Art we might say, 'hey, Gensler,' which is a company that's installing a Michael Heizer piece here, 'let's go talk to Gensler. Maybe Gensler is interested in supporting the piece.' You're going to go to Bank of America and Wells Fargo. You'll go to Coca-Cola and different companies, but then you might think: 'wow, maybe Caterpillar would be interested in the Land Art, right? Maybe companies that are power companies that own the land around Robert Smithson's spiral jetty, maybe they would be interested in doing this.' And you kind of just keep working through this network of people and in the end you're trying to raise funds to support this program.

But what you're also doing, which is hard to quantify, is spreading the word. Before a press release is written and before it gets up onto your website, you are walking around with a little portfolio of information and images and curatorial statements, etc. You are sharing it with people that are already engaged. You might be talking to people who have no idea about the exhibition that you're about to launch, or you might be talking to people who are already lending work to the exhibition. There's no obligation, one does not beget the other, but I used to have collectors that told me straight up, 'look Adam, if you want to get money from me, ask me for exhibition support when I am lending something to the show. Or if I'm a big holder of that artist's work, even if I'm not lending to the show, that's when I will be interested and be able to lend.'

Have there ever been moments where an exhibition never made it to the public because there weren't enough funds raised?

Well, that's a good question. I'm sure there are examples of that. But typically you wouldn't hear about those examples because maybe your preliminary fund raising got no traction and it didn't work out. Otherwise—the idea is generally that you do your blockbuster show, you do your Warhol show or your Basquiat show and you get a quarter million people in the door and you raise your revenue and you raise everything by X amount, and that helps you pay for the show that is under-funded. Just like a gallery will do your secondary market sales, meaning like your Warhols and your Lichtensteins, and you make a lot of money doing those and that helps pay for your primary market and your emerging artist program. Or you do your Rouchet exhibition, it makes you X amount of dollars, which then subsidizes all your young emerging exhibitions.

Let's talk about what you're doing currently with Art Platform in Los Angeles, relative to the Armory Show in New York.

I was approached, I guess it was in 2010, by the Armory Show. They had been looking for several years at opening a fair in Los Angeles. I had heard about their efforts and I think the timing was just never right, specifically with 2007 and 2008, you know, the slow down in the economy. By 2010 they felt that the timing was starting to go into the right direction. Frankly, I hadn't really given a lot of thought towards working for an art fair, and I was enjoying the work I was doing at MOCA. I was good at the work I was doing there and I was working with a remarkable team of people.

When I really thought about it I realized why I was working with MOCA, and it was a great institution, but it was also what the institution represented, which was a way to bring the arts to a broad audience. I had worked at galleries that had brought it to a specific audience, and I brought it to a museum, that speaks to a different audience. When I started thinking about

what an art fair could do, I realized that an art fair can hold a very unique place in a culture or a civic environment, in that it's an easy way for people to see a lot of art very quickly. It's less intimidating and typically more fun than going to a museum or a gallery, and you can go see fifty to a hundred galleries in one day, and talk to the owner of the gallery, talk to the director of the gallery, the prices are right there—it's a totally different experience, because you get a lot of material under one roof.

I want the viewers and the visitors to have a good experience, but I also want the gallerist to have a good experience and feel like they were able to have meaningful conversations with collectors. What we're talking about, as I mentioned, was really expanding the audience and there's something very easy about going to an art fair. You go, you pay your entrance fee, you can have a drink, you can have lunch, you can walk around, you can sit in the lounge, you can go see a lecture, so it's not like going to a museum or going to try and visit galleries. It's easy, it's fun, it's efficient.

So that was why I really even entertained doing this, because I felt like it really fit into the broader goal that I had, which was ultimately expanding the audience for art and culture in Los Angeles. Because like we started with, LA does not have a tradition of philanthropy. What LA does have is a remarkable concentration of wealth. There are a lot of people here who are leaders of industry, as well as the entertainment industry. There are a lot of people here working in a creative industry, earning wealth in that industry, yet who have not been introduced to the other creative community in LA, which is the art community. And that's important.

The sort of high-net-worth guys and the big, we are helping create that kind of relationship between art and people at that end of the pyramid. For instance MOCA every year raises a million dollars just on its membership. This is $50, $100 members, you know? So it's important that you have those people. And I think that an art fair can have a nice broad appeal where you can go see a lot of art and if you don't have the money to buy any, not feel intimidated. When you buy a book and a postcard and you do your thing and you have lunch and have a great art experience, or you do have the capacity to buy that Anish Kapoor or that Dave Muller or that Jennifer Steinkamp, or whoever, it does become a bigger investment. I want to appeal to all those audiences ultimately.

That's how your background at MOCA fits in, you know? You're doing a service to the public to be able to see all these art works, but you're also cultivating relationships with collectors who buy work from the galleries.
That's a good point, because I didn't think of it that way. I thought of it more as: I was cultivating relationships with these collectors and philanthropists, and you sort of forget at a certain point that you're raising that money so the doors can stay open for the other million people that don't own an Ellsworth Kelly painting.

Can you talk more about the relationship of Art Platform and the Armory Show.
I had the great fortune of working with the Armory show. There was a gentleman named Paul Morris. He was one of the founders of the Armory Show who is still the founding director and works with our parent company, MMPI, to manage the art fairs, but it was he who approached me about partnering with the Armory show, working with MMPI, and tapping into the resources, the expertise, the reputation, the sort of marketing the brand of the Armory show to develop something unique and special to Los Angeles. What ended up becoming a virtue and became really appealing about this as well was that they weren't interested in dropping the Armory show onto Los Angeles. This is not called the Armory Show Los Angeles.

It's a separate identity?
Yes, and what they recognized was that LA does have a unique identity and that it's experiencing a unique moment in its history right now. That the issues and some of the challenges that surround doing an art fair or any large event in Los Angeles are unique to LA. By taking the Armory show and sort of dropping that model on LA, which is a model that was developed in and for New York over nearly twenty years, I mean, like really organically coming together, dropping that on LA would be disingenuous. You would set up a level of expectation that we wouldn't be able to meet because this is a different environment. There are different things happening here, and we have to be sensitive to that.

How did you tune the fair to fit a city like Los Angeles?
Well, what we've realized is that when we stood back and looked at what made LA a great art town, the things that really distinguish us, I mean, we have great museums, we're in one now at LACMA, we have great collectors, we have great gallerists and great galleries, but the thing that really distinguishes LA right now are the artists. There are more great artists doing interesting things in LA than I think anywhere else, and I think we have some of the best art schools in the world that are pumping out new batches of artists every year, and many of them are staying here. So one of the things that we tried to develop was an emphasis on what's going on in the arts community on the artist level.

That goes along with the current exhibition that's up right now, the "Made in L.A." a collection of sixty artists based in Los Angeles.
Yeah. And that's the Hammer and them recognizing that you could do a biennial just of artists from Los Angeles, which is, when you think about it, kind of remarkable. And what's remarkable about it is that it actually gains the attention of the international art community, and that's a testament I think to LA and how important LA is as an art production center right now.

With the recent "Pacific Standard Time" exhibitions and the "Made in L.A." show, Los Angeles is getting a lot of attention right now. You said that the fair is aiming to bring a lot of attention to LA artists, but with your background and your current position, do you see a particular direction that Los Angeles is heading?
The future of LA. It is a big subject. So we talked about LA as an art production capital, it very much is that right now. I think it's one of the world's great art production capitals. More great artists doing more great things here than anywhere else. And that trend is going to continue.

But I'll tell you what I'd like to see as the future of Los Angeles. I'd like to see a future where LA's position as an art production capital is maintained for a long period. And the way that will happen, I think, is for LA to become an art center. Like a real arts capital. One of the ways for that to happen is for there to be a broader audience for the arts and culture in Los Angeles, and when I say that, when I say audience I'm trying to be specific here, meaning that there are more supporters of the arts in Los Angeles. That there are more people that are donating to museums, that are members of museums, that are buying art, that are being supportive of their local galleries and their local nonprofits, that are buying emerging art, that are buying established art, that are creating opportunities for people to make a living doing this.

And one of the things that I've always been fascinated about is New York in the 40's and 50's and how it continues to remain an important art center, if not the most important art center in the 70's and 80's, and even into the early 90's. A big part of that was the fact that yes, you had out-of-towners coming into New York and seeing it as an art center and investing and buying and collecting from there, but you also had the local community being supportive of that city in a very fundamental way. And what I would like to see in LA is that.

Good response.
It's a heartfelt one, that's for sure.

Can you elaborate on what your hopes are for this year's Art Platform LA?
To create opportunities for great connections to be made, and for ultimately—especially for the exhibitors who invest a lot in coming to these art fairs, for business to be done so that they can feel like this is a success, and can spread the word that LA is a place that is supportive of the arts.

Another thing that I'm looking to develop over time is our penetration of the Pacific Rim. I think that's one of our strategic advantages in Los Angeles is our placement vis-a-vis the Pacific Rim. We could never win the battle for Europe. New York is too close, there's too much business that goes back and forth there, and certainly LA does its share of business with Europe, but if you look at who our trading partners are, it's East Asia, it's Australia, it's Latin America, it's Mexico, it's South America. That's where the commerce flows.

I think that LA as a space that is between New York and Europe and Asia can develop into a convenient meeting place and a place of discovery one weekend a year. I mean, look at Miami as an example. Miami has probably the most important and most active weekend for arts in the world. Last year there were 24 different art fairs on that same weekend because Art Basal Miami Beach opened there. And they bring in the culture. And it's nice there, the weather's nice. So imagine what we can do in Los Angeles where we have such a great concentration of museums, galleries, collectors, and artists. I do think that we can develop into something that is I hope an international draw and that brings people to LA to invest in the city as well, to discover the great artists that live here, to go visit some of the great museums that are here and to find connections here, maybe support an exhibition that they love, etc., and maybe to discover some great galleries that are going to be supportive of them.

I do think that there are lessons to be learned from that kind of civic engagement. When Frieze opened up in London, they did a remarkably good job in getting the city involved, and that's ultimately one of the things, and I think one of my challenges, is getting a city as diverse as LA, as geographically spread out as LA, to get behind any one thing in particular is difficult.

The greatness of this city relies on the greatness of its constituent parts. The greatness of an art fair relies on the greatness of its constituent parts. That means bringing everybody together under one roof. I think that this year we'll be able to really prove to people when they see what we've produced. This gets back a little bit to talking about fundraising and the way that one fundraises for an exhibition, or you fundraise for a museum, but it's really distinct for a museum or gallery because it's like this—it's this multi-headed beast. An institution like LACMA or MOCA or Hammer, there's a mission, there's a director, there are curators, and they all follow that mission. For the fair I'm here to curate and get the best galleries I can, and those galleries that are bringing other interesting galleries to the city, but ultimately, I am here to facilitate opportunity. To create opportunity and to facilitate communication and exchange of ideas. So that is what an art fair should be, and at its best is what an art fair is.

Art Platform LA takes place September 28th-30th at the Barker Hangar, Santa Monica.

Art Platform LA, 2011. Photograph by Stefanie Keenan.

Art Platform LA, 2011. Photograph by Stefanie Keenan.

International Art Objects

Los Angeles

Steve Hanson & Tuesday Yates

Interviewed by Gregory Ito

International Art Objects Exterior, Culver City. Photograph by Robert Wedemeyer.


China Art Objects Exterior, Chinatown. Photo Courtesy of International Art Objects.

Please introduce yourselves and talk a little about what you were doing before opening International Art Objects?

Steve Hanson: Before opening the gallery I was an artist that collaborated with a bunch of different artists Then it slowly turned into collaborating with artists on music. I was also in an art-band that played a lot of parties and openings A lot of artists were in bands back then. I also worked in the Art Center Library for years, which was sort of the place that the Fine Art dept people worked.

Tuesday Yates: I went to school at CalArts and was in the theatre department for lighting design but mostly hung out with the fine art people. I worked on movies mostly after that, after school, and then I met Steve four years ago and have been working at the gallery ever since.

Can you tell us the history behind International Art Objects and when it opened its doors in Chinatown, Los Angeles?

SH: Well, it was China Art Objects. There was a sign outside of the building. We liked it because it had the double plural, China Art Objects Galleries. It was a beautiful, red, white, and blue sign, and said "art" and said "galleries", and said "Chinatown" more or less. It was the perfect name because there were five of us, so a big long sign with people's names didn't make any sense, I don't even think we considered our names. It was just this free sign and a free name so we took it. But the name was always confusing to people when we went to art fairs. They didn't recognize the context of us being in Chinatown, so it was this story that you always had to explain to people. When we moved to Culver City the name became twice as confusing to people. People would come in asking to appraise Chinese vases and things like that. It just didn't make any sense. Plus when we opened thirteen years ago, there wasn't that big of a Chinese art market so it wasn't a worry that people would think that these were Chinese artists, and now it's a huge economy. The time had really come to change the name.

So you opened the gallery with five other people and now you have taken over the role?

SH: Yes, the different people are doing different things. They either died or decided to go back to school…

TY: There were two main partners. Steven Hanson and Giovanni Intra, and the others were artists or bookkeepers that sort of played a more peripheral role mostly. And then Giovanni died. And that pretty much left Steve and the bookkeeper.

SH: The bookkeeper was one of the artist's landlords. There was me and Giovanni and we had an idea to open up a gallery but we didn't have any money and couldn't find any either, not that we knew how. Then we heard this other artist that we knew was planning to open a gallery with his landlord, so we said, *well, let's all open up a gallery* . So you know, this guy really knew nothing about art, but he was a good guy and a bookkeeper so, *okay, I guess we'll need that.* We just really wanted to get the doors open. It ended up at five. Then within a few years certain people didn't want to do it anymore. It was all pretty loose

How long were you in Chinatown for?

SH: Ten or eleven years.

Can you talk about the art community in LA's Chinatown?

TY: Then or now?

Then, and then we can talk about your transition.

SH: I mean, there wasn't an art community until we opened up.

TY: We were the first gallery in Chinatown.

SH: It took us nine months to open up because we did all the walls and buildout ourselves. By the time we opened there were already two other galleries starting to open too. So within two months of opening there were suddenly three galleries down there, and a few people had set up art studios. So by the time we opened it was already, I wouldn't say established, but there was already a mass of galleries to draw different people there. We would open on the same night so it would be this big party. It had the nice lanterns and Chung King Road was a private walkway, you could actually just walk around with your beers and it wasn't illegal. It was this perfect, beautiful, romantic area and the spaces had high ceilings and really cheap rent. Most artists lived on the eastside. It was the perfect spot.

It's really interesting to hear how you helped develop the scene there. Have you seen a transition in Chinatown from when you opened to it currently?

SH: That's why we had to move. We wanted a bigger space and there weren't really a lot of bigger spaces down there. Plus, it was always tough to get people down to Chinatown.

TY: It was really a place for young galleries and young artists. There was a huge studio community down there too. It had an incredibly vibrant scene for a decade or more. It really changed the landscape of Los Angeles for a while because that was where you went to look at new art. It was more of an artist's scene. It was more like an insider scene. It was always difficult to get collectors and Westsiders to travel to Downtown LA.

SH: When we started doing art fairs I would meet Los Angeles collectors in London or Miami; they never went to Chinatown. So it was super fun and amazing because the artists really inspired each other and opened up new spaces for a few months. It was just really vibrant and great. But the economy went down and we moved out of there and a couple of other bigger draws moved or went out of business. I mean there are still things in Chinatown, but it's not like it was.

When did you move to Culver City?

SH: Two years ago, kind of right at the worst part of the economy, because no one was going down to Chinatown, so we had to do something. Instead of going smaller we decided to just go bigger. A lot more people see the shows, and yeah, it's worked out so far.

Can you talk about the art community that you see in Culver City?

SH: It's just more collectors, and curators. It doesn't have that sort of fun artist feel. It is more like doing business.

TY: The artists deserved a new larger space too.

SH: Chinatown was like an incubator. Kordansky started there and Peres Projects who's now in Berlin, and Katie Brennan and Joel Messler who now have galleries in New York and a bunch of people, they all had their little spaces. Then after four years most would move to a bigger space over here in Culver City or New York or Berlin. And we didn't do that until a couple years after they did. I guess because we were the first ones there and we had a sentimentality that kept us there a little bit longer than we should have.

I want to talk a about the artists in your programming. What's your approach when looking for work to show at International Art Objects?

SH: I don't know if there is an approach. Because sometimes you'll just see something and you're like: *I love this, I want to meet this person.* And then sometimes when you meet a person, you're certain you'll like their art too and you'll think *we have to do a show.*

TY: I would say we have added quite a few artists to the program over the last couple years, and I think it starts with being visually drawn to the work and then feeling like—

SH: ..and then sometimes it's like, *wow, this is awful.* Sometimes someone shows you something and you think, *what in the world are they thinking?* But it just sticks and you keep thinking about it and going back and looking at what their next show is, so for whatever reason something just sticks with you, and then eventually you pay more attention to it.

TY: You start to understand it. You start to understand what they're after. And sometimes we feel like what they're after has a longevity to it and may participate in history in some way. We would really like to show artists that participate with museums and have ideas that can carry them for many, many, many years. How we go about finding those people comes in many different forms. We'll meet them. Sometimes you can get a lot from meeting the artist. Sometimes I see work that I really gravitate towards, want for myself, and you start to dive into who they are and what their practice is about.

There's a timelessness with the work included in your programming. Like you said, there's a historical quality, where you can see it going beyond just what's the current cultural climate.

SH: A collector came in last month and said that's how he chooses art. He will close his eyes and imagine it on the walls at MOMA, and if the dream seems like a reality, then okay, he'll buy it, and if not, if he can't really see it lasting that long, then he won't buy it. I thought that sort of hit home. I guess that's a bit like what we do.

TY: *Will this be interesting to people in a hundred years?*

SH: *Or are they just doing this one trick and then that's it?*

The work is less about it's value as commodity, and more about what the work presents to people and its longevity of importance in history?

SH: We feel serious about that stuff. It's not just, *oh, this will pay the rent.*

TY: Sometimes you get lucky and it does, and sometimes you're just presenting work you feel should be seen.

That's what I think makes the programming here so special.

TY: Yeah, that's nice. Like that painting there [points] David von Schlegell is an artist that died in the 1990's and had a high point in his career in the 60's and 70's. And that's why we feel so strongly about that work, we feel it should be seen; we could talk for a long time about it, but we really gravitate towards it. We think it's very important.


Mark Hagen, "TBA" installation view, 2011. Photograph by Robert Wedemeyer.

SH: If this painting was from someone who was 28 and just out of school, you'd say, *oh my god, best thing ever!* But the fact that it's 20 years old, and his career goes back to the 50's, somehow it gets looked at differently.

TY: It's not commerce driven -

SH: It's just sort of a historical thing. We started as an artist space and tried to keep that spirit while still growing into a bigger and better place. It feels easy, but it isn't easy. Showing work that people will hopefully look at or remember years from now.

For people who are unfamiliar with your programming, can you name some of the staple artists you're currently working with?

SH: Our next show is JP Munro, then right after that is Kim Fisher, and we work with Morgan Fisher who is a structuralist filmmaker from the 70's and 80's, but started making paintings in the late 90's. Then the newer people we have are Mark Hagen, we've been working with for about three years now, and Sarah Braman, we just finished our first show with her. She's a New York artist who runs the gallery *Canada*, that I think is a lot like ours. It's an artist run space that's been around for a decade or so, and has a certain seriousness to their program. And then Sam Falls is a new guy that we've just started showing, and then we have—

TY: Pae White. Eric Wesley.

SH: Thomas Helbig, who is from Berlin. Jon Pylypchuk and Paul Cherwick

How often do you add artists to your programming?

SH: When the economy went bad we were happy doing these projects with people that also had galleries in LA already. We took a year off from fairs, more or less and it just didn't feel like the right time to pick up new artists

What kind of projects?

SH: We were showing couples for a while; two artists that were couples. We did that for about nine months. It was probably four or five shows of couples.

How was that experience?

SH: Not so great. I mean, it was great, in that they were nice shows, but after the openings no one came down. People weren't traveling to Los Angeles, Chinatown was a dying organism. It just wasn't any fun. That was right when everyone was saying, *all right, do I get a job at Home Depot now?*

The dark days.

TY: We've picked up quite a few artists since then. There's no schedule for our working with someone new. You either get the opportunity to work with someone you're super excited about or it takes longer to find one. It seems like we've added Sarah Braman, Sam Falls, but it tends to be slow, I guess. Most of the artists, 90% of the artists on the roster have been around for—from the beginning or at least seven or eight years.

SH: When we moved here we knew we needed more new artists. The new economy needed new names and with it new energy and new prices.

TY: I think it's good for the older artists too, to have new artists come aboard. I think it inspires them and pushes them to either make better work or stay involved. I think it drives the older artists to have the new ones pick up speed.

You're showing established artists that have been working for many, many years. Then you pick up the emerging artists and help build their career. I enjoy that duality.

SH: That's always been our thing because I worked in the Art Center Library for so long I had met a bunch of artists who already had galleries in Los Angeles and carreers going. But then they wanted to help me out and do a show in our space, which was a small, unknown space at that time. So every few shows would be an established artists, maybe a two-person show or something like that. Then the next show would be someone who was still in school. So we've always been trying to do big shows with big people and then big shows with small people, and sort of make it all the same playing field. Not saying, *oh, you get the project room since you're unknown.*

An even playing field. I feel that many emerging artists don't get the opportunity to work with a large gallery or institution to prove what they can do, and it's great that you offer a space for that. What's your square footage in the space?

TY: Well the whole place is 3600 square feet, but obviously not all of that is gallery space. I think it's almost four times the size of our old Chinatown space.

You're based in Los Angeles and you work with a lot of collectors and artists that are not just based in LA. Can you talk about how you expanded your audience and collector base beyond the states? Do art fairs play a role in your gallery's growth?

SH: We didn't really know anything about running a gallery in the beginning and so when a gallery came in from Germany, and randomly told us to do this art fair we said okay. I don't know if he wrote a letter or if we actually phoned them, but we were told, pretty much instantly, that we were in. I thought art fairs—and maybe they were back then—were not that big of a deal and easy to get in to. It was this fair in Basel; the Liste fair, which now I think, is kind of tough to get into. We were just instantly excited. Strangers, and a lot of European galleries were coming up to us and wanting to know who were Eric Wesley, David Korty or Jon Pylypchuk It was great, so we wanted to do it more. Mainly because we all still had jobs and we got to travel more or less for free—it was more for fun than anything, but it really just instantly put us on the map. People from Europe were calling us in LA, and in the art world, LA is like a teeny little frontier town. It's got great schools and stuff like that, but it's not huge with collectors. It's nowhere near New York or London or Germany or anything like that. We didn't even know what we were doing, but it turned out great.

TY: Fairs were definitely part of our growth. LA has really grown a great deal. Our community in LA has grown a great deal in the last thirteen years he's been doing it. But we do a fair in New York and it's a totally different world. I mean, LA is getting its fair share of publicity and biennials, but the art community in New York is so much larger.

SH: In New York it's a normal thing for people to bring their families to a gallery or to museums. It's not the same in LA. Maybe a little bit in San Francisco. But Los Angeles is just for artists and a few collectors and critics. There are no real general public interest

So that's basically how you'd describe the art community in LA?

SH: It's big, it's a big scene, it can support itself. I think Berlin's a lot like this too. It's sort of cheaper, so there are a lot of artists. In LA, there are good schools so people move here for the schools and stay here because there's a good community and good weather, so there's this really happening scene. That sort of pushes the art into interesting places where international people have been paying attention to it for a long, long time. But it's not New York, so you do have to export.

The cultural landscape here is really spread out. But there are these pockets like Culver City and Chinatown that are familiar with artistic endeavors.

TY: Yeah, they are here, for sure. They're just not in as high number.

SH: Well, Jack Hanley, before he moved to New York, he was running a San Francisco gallery— He had a great system going on, because there was no other real contemporary art gallery that would do all the fairs, so he could have a show with someone like Raymond Pettibon or Jim Lambie . No one else could have a show with Raymond Pettibon, but he was in San Francisco, so he could. Then he would have all this work that he could take it to fairs, then all of a sudden Jack *had some* inventory from really great artists. He did that with all kinds of big artists.

He was also in Chinatown, right?

SH: Yeah. He had a space there for a couple years. That was on the other side of the plaza. That was the real height of Chinatown, where it actually spread out of Chung King Road and onto all these other streets. There were probably 40 galleries down there.

Do you see a shift in the progression of the LA art community? Because I feel that "Pacific Standard Time" was a big push, and the current exhibition "Made In LA" is a big push too, to bring a lot of attention here?

TY: Jeffrey Deitch too. There was a while where we were asked to do a lot of interviews about the art community in Los Angeles, and it seemed like internationally, LA was getting a lot of attention. We were invited to be part of Arco Madrid, a fair in Spain that did an entirely Los Angeles-centric section, where twenty Southern California galleries were all invited.

SH: Rome did that too.

TY: The same thing happened again in Rome where a ton of Los Angeles galleries were invited and LA-based artists. It was like Los Angeles-themed, you know? But it's hard to say whether or not we're just sort of slowly recovering from a recession or whether that attention on Los Angeles is actually affecting us.

SH: I know when we first started there were magazine interviews with all these artists in schools, the schools were the big buzz, like UCLA and CalArts and Art Center. Their whole focus was on all these different artists. There were even articles about the art schools in music magazines.

I just want to clear this up: Are you China Art Objects or are you International Art Objects?

Pae White. "Professional", 2012. Photograph by Robert Wedemeyer.

SH: We're 50/50. We're moving to International.

TY: We're phasing out of China Art.

This is fairly recent, right?

TY: Yeah, we have a new domain, we did the Independent fair in New York City in March and we're like, *let's test the waters with the new name in New York City, see how they like it?* We ideally wanted to do a slash, like a China Art / International, and they said, *it's just ridiculously long, no, you can't do that.* So they just listed us as International Art Objects and people wrote us checks to International Art Objects even though all we had at that point was the idea. So we decided, *okay*. Then Roberta Smith wrote a big article about the fair and we kind of dominated the article. She called us International Art Objects so—

SH: Formerly known as China Art Objects.

TY: So all right, here we go.

SH: So we're in the middle of a transition.

What can we look forward to at International Art Objects?

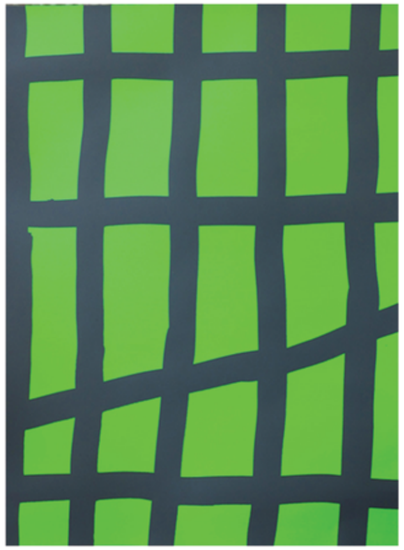
TY: We have a summer group show coming up. It will open June 30th and run through the middle of August. That's Sam Falls, Mark Hagen, James Hayward and Mary Weatherford. We're super excited about that show actually. For a group show it's going to be really, really wonderful. Then in September we open with JP Munro.

SH: Then after that is Kim Fisher. Kim and JP have been around like almost from the beginning. We did a show with Kim in 1999, so we're sort of doing the old school people that we haven't done a show with in a few years. That's feeling good.

TY: Yeah, JP Munro is going to be amazing.

Eric Wesley, "Remix", 2008. Photograph by Robert Wedemeyer.

Sarah Braman, "These Days" installation view, 2012. Photograph by Robert Wedemeyer.



Untitled, mp1202 (Map) by Tucker Nichols

Silk Screen on Heavy paper. 16x22 inches. Edition of 20.
Signed and Numbered. Printed at Bloom Press in Oakland for
Park Life Editions. $350

http://www.parklifestore.com/

Kerim Seller's
Kerim in the Sky with Seiler

In the mid-nineties, Kerim Seiler paints Zurich city furnishings on found pieces of fiberboard.
Chosen workaday design serves as ready-to-paint object and is protocoled in pictograms.
Seiler's paintings dissolve into single elements turning three-dimensional.
3, 96 page Volumes in Hardcover Jacket, 16.8 x 23.7 cm, Color Offset, 1st Edition 2012
$68

http://www.nieves.ch/catalogue/kerimabout.html

BRAD RENFRO FOREVER by James Franco, 2012.
The Thing Quarterly Limited edition switchblade

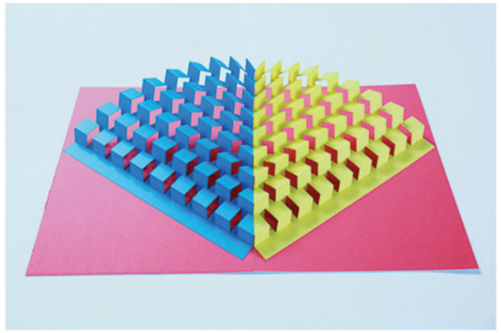
Produced in collaboration with James Franco, features a custom made switchblade by
LATAMA legendary Italian cutlery and Walt Halucha, James' Project is a hand built
custom switchblade. When fully opened, the knife measures 11 inches.
100 signed editions. $850

http://www.thethingquarterly.com/

Carrier "Bucket" Stools

By Adam Reineck and Yvonne Mouser of New Factory.
This limited run of stools is carefully handcrafted in our small
shop in SF for Headlands Center for the Arts. Two straps under
the seat can carry small objects or a blanket.Our vision for how
someone will use/enjoy this: We wanted to create a useful and
enjoyable piece to complement the multiple ways people can
experience the Headlands. By packing the Carrier stool with
tools, supplies, snacks or inspiration you leave prepared to
explore at ease. Edition of 15. $275

http://www.headlands.org/



[2,3] by Tauba Auerbach

For [2,3], Auerbach has created an oversized pop-up book featuring six die-cut
paper sculptures that unfold into wonderful, elaborate forms. The six sculptures
in [2,3] take their cue from a range of geometric forms—the pyramid, sphere,
ziggurat, octagonal bipyramid (gem), arc, and möbius-strip. The use of a bright,
contrasting palette is familiar from Auerbach's previous work across a range of
materials, including acrylics, etchings and C-type prints. This groundbreaking
project stands as an astonishing art-object, part bookwork and part sculpture,
and represents an advance in the field of pop-up technology.

The six volumes are housed in a specially designed slipcase, and each folio
measuring 20" x 32" when open. [2,3] is co-published by Tauba Auerbach and
Printed Matter, Inc. Signed and numbered edition of 1,000 plus 100 proofs.
2011. $550

http://www.printedmatter.org/

"Aim High" Limited Edition Print by David Shrigley.

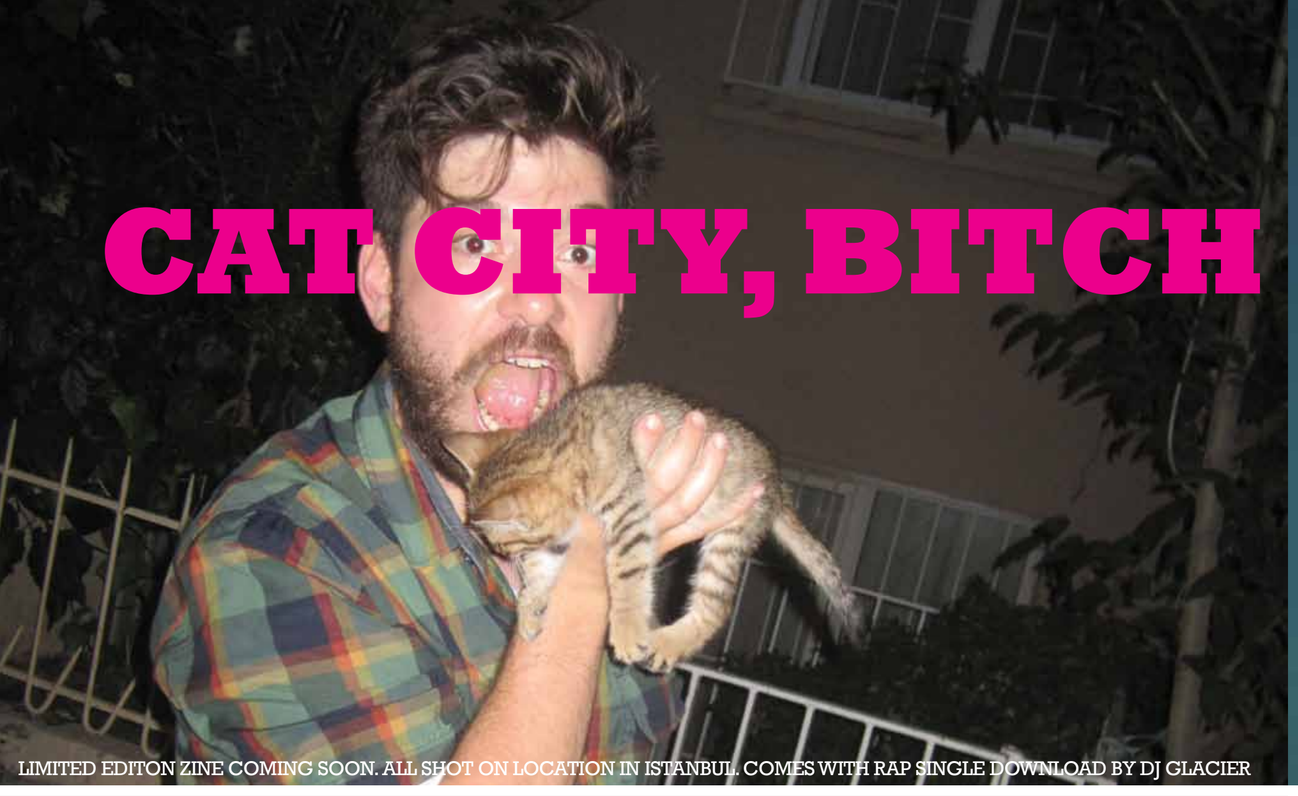
In conjunction with his exhibition; David Shrigley: Brain Activity
Jun 22 – Sep 23 at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2012.
Woodblock Print. 22 x 16 in. Printed at Kala Art Institute.
Edition of 250. Signed and numbered. $250

http://www.ybca.org/

Toilet Paper: Issue 5

Made by Maurizio Cattelan in collaboration with fellow countryman Pierpaolo
Ferrari, Toilet Paper 5 is a brilliant new creation from the aberrant, animated
mind of the Italian-born provocateur, mischief-maker and macabre witness to
our times. Published by Le Dictateur, this part artist's book, part magazine
contains no text; only full spreads of color photographs with imagery that often
appropriates the slick production values of commercial photography to deliver
dreamlike (or nightmarish) images that are as appropriate for the coffee table as
they are for the WC. Pbk, 8.25 x 11.75 in. / 40 pgs / illustrated throughout. $14

http://www.parklifestore.com/



ART ETIQUETTE & FUNNY STUFF

Want to submit a question about the art world, a complaint, general concerns, funny stuff, grievances or problems for Mr. Marioni's column in issue 11?

by Tom Marioni

Deadline: September 29, 2012 - submit to info@sfaqonline.com

visit artspan.org

ARTSPAN
art made here.

SF OPEN STUDIOS 2012

ArtSpan Cover Contest Winner: Paul Madonna - "All Over Coffee 496"

Weekend 1
Oct. 13-14, 11am-6pm
Fort Mason, Marina,
Pacific Heights,
Russian Hill, North Beach,
Ocean Beach, Sunset,
Richmond, Diamond Heights,
Buena Vista, Twin Peaks,
West Portal, Glen Park,
Excelsior, Duboce,
Hayes Valley, Haight,
Upper Market

Weekend 2
Oct. 20-21, 11am-6pm
SOMA, Tenderloin,
Potrero Hill,
Dogpatch, Bayview

Weekend 3
Oct. 27-28, 11am-6pm
Mission, Noe Valley,
Bernal Heights, Castro

Weekend 4
Nov. 3-4, 11am-6pm
Hunters Point Shipyard &
Islais Creek Studios

for more info visit
ARTSPAN.ORG

self-guided
STUDIO TOURS

four weekends
800+
artists

sponsors
ACE MAILING
LENNAR URBAN
50th ANNIVERSARY grants for the Arts San Francisco Arts Commission Foundation
BLICK art materials
Rocket postcards

Generous thanks to: Eventbrite, Marker7, SF Travel, SOMArts Cultural Center, Zellerbach Family Foundation, and hundreds of individual donors.

media sponsors
GUARDIAN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN SFBG.COM
SFAQ
abc7
asterisk sf

ART Ambassador

Dedicated to helping you establish & expand your art career with:

- Gallery Representation
- Audience Development
- Career Strategies
- Public Relations & Marketing
- Art Project Management
- Selling your artwork internationally

www.ArtAmbassador.net
gwenda@artambassador.net - 415.785.8382

KALASSAL
HALF-OFF ART SALE

A colossal Fundraiser/Art Sale to benefit Kala

November 8, 2012 • 6~9pm

Opening Wingding with beer, wine, food trucks, live music & more!

Free admission!

SALE CONTINUES:
Nov. 9 & 10, noon~5:30pm
Nov. 11, noon~4:30pm

kalagallery 2990 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley, CA 94702
(510) 841-7000 **www.kala.org**

Smithsonian Institution Archives Image # MAH 11087A

---

photo: ace imageing / beauty: dyana davis / model: kaila

RGB
SHOP + GALLERY

OPENING 8.18
reception 6-9pm
"ARTSKOOL'D"
stacey goodman, yara herman, pedro mena & noah sakamoto
in collaboration with the rex foundation
running thru 9.30.12

OPENING 10.6
reception 6-9pm
"REFLECTIONS: counterparts of thought"
jeremy kantor, briana kranz & mika navarrete
running thru 11.24.12

3024 fillmore street | san francisco | 415 474 7742 | **rgbsf.com**

Yari Ostovany

September 1st - 15th
Reception September 6th
Catalog available

ArtPeople

50 Post Street · San Francisco, CA 94104 · 415.956.3650 · www.ArtPeople.net

111 MINNA GALLERY

Pen Pal

WITH LENNIE MACE

•FREE•

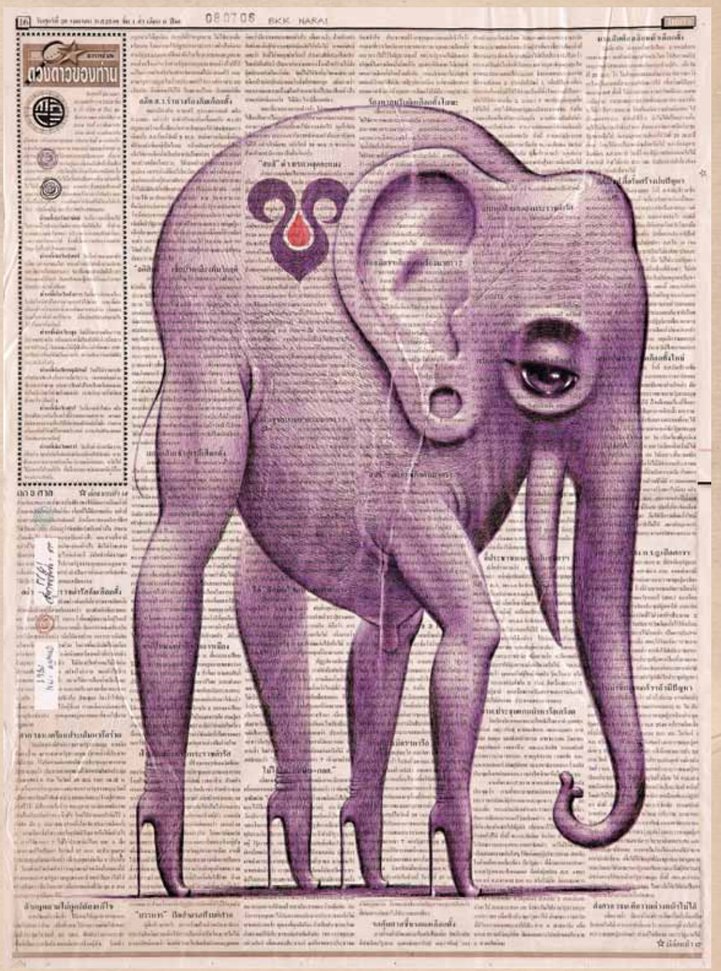
111 MINNA ST. SF, CA 94105
WWW.111MINNAGALLERY.COM
415.974.1719

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5TH, 5PM-LATE • THROUGH SATURDAY, OCT. 27TH 2012

A RARE TREAT FROM TOKYO

LENNIE MACE is predominantly known for his drawings in ballpoint pen, using them to create fine artwork. His imagination has also served commercial purposes, appearing in print as illustrations and comic art. Art reviewers have referred to him as The Da Vinci of doodlers and the Ballpoint Picasso.

111 Minna Gallery presents PEN PAL w/ Lennie Mace opening Friday Oct. 5th, 5pm-Late, through Oct. 27th 2012.



UPCOMING SHOWS

LETHAL INJECTION
An exhibition featuring the severely intricate and edgy paintings of Robert Bowen, Isaac Pierro & Nicolas Giraud w/ special guest, Philip Lawson and his beautifully wicked hand made weapons of light. Opening Reception Friday Aug. 3rd, 5pm-Late, through Sept. 1st.

CORPOREAL CLUSTERS
Although stylistically different, Kelly Allen, Xiau-Fong Wee and Melissa Arendt deliver a cohesive evolution of carefully crafted images which recreate organisms that develop their own design and construct unforeseen graphic atmospheres. Opening Reception Friday Oct. 19th, 5pm-Late, through Saturday, Nov. 10th.

New works by JUSTIN LOVATO & SCOTT GREENWALT *in the Zappa Room Gallery.* An exhibition by two developing surreal artists weaving together symbolism and organic components to create a physiological and lyrical landscape of imaginary environments. Opening Reception Friday, Sept. 21st, 5pm-Late. ■

YERBA BUENA ALLIANCE

GALLERY WALK

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2012, 3-6 PM

FREE receptions, drawings and prizes, for more information:

www.yerbabuena.org/GalleryWalk

PARTICIPATING GALLERIES (*DENOTES 21 AND OLDER)

For each Gallery you visit, you will receive a stamp. Each stamp makes you eligible for a drawing prize. If you receive 3 or more stamps you are eligible for our Grand Prize drawing. Once you have completed your Gallery Walk tour, fill out the information at the bottom of this card and drop the card into the box located at any one of the participating Galleries. For more information please go to www.yerbabuena.org/GalleryWalk.

11 **111 Minna Gallery*** 111 Minna Street
415.974.1719 111minnagallery.com

12 **Crown Point Press** 20 Hawthorne Street
415. 974.6273 www.crownpoint.com

12 **871 Fine Arts** 20 Hawthorne Street, Lower Level
415.543.5155 f871@earthlink.net

6 **California Historical Society** 678 Mission Street
415.357.1848 californiahistoricalsociety.org

9 **Catharine Clark Gallery** 150 Minna Street
415.399.1439 cclarkgallery.com

8 **Chandler Fine Art** 170 Minna Street
415.546.1113 chandlersf.com

7 **Eli Ridgway Gallery** 172 Minna Street
415.777.1366 eliridgway.com

5 **Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern** 161 Jessie Street
415.346.7812 freynorris.com

15 **Gallery & Bar 4N5*** 863 Mission Street
415.522.2440 galiara.com

2 **Modernism** 685 Market Street
415.541.0461 modernismnc.com

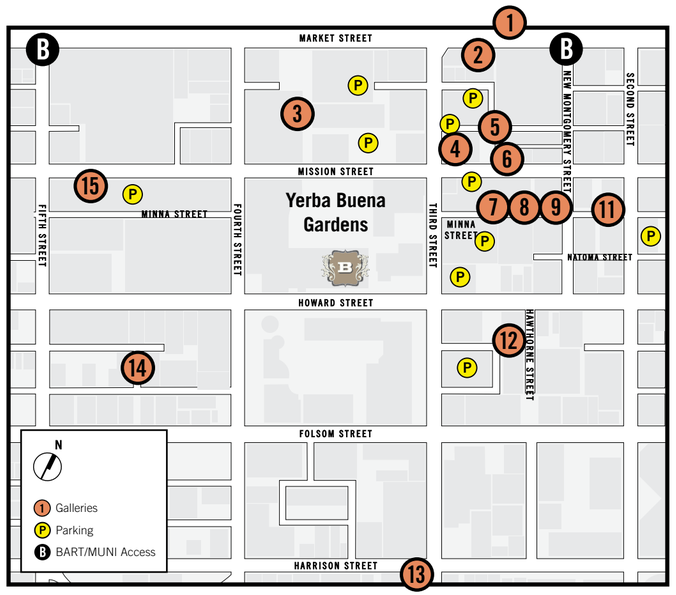
3 **Museum of Craft and Folk Art** 51 Yerba Buena Lane
415.227.4888 mocfa.org

13 **RayKo Photo Center** 428 3rd Sreet
415.495.3773 raykophoto.com

4 **UC Berkeley Extension** 95 3rd Street
415.284.1041 extension.berkeley.edu/visualarts

11 **Varnish Fine Art** 16 Jessie Street, #C120
415.433.4400 varnishfineart.com

1 **Visual Aid** 57 Post Street, Suite 905
415.777.8242 visualaid.org



in conjuction with

YERBA BUENA NIGHT

YerbaBuena ALLIANCE

735 Market Street, 6th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103

MUSICARTDRINKS

Frida and Diego photo credit: *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in the studio of sculptor Ralph Stackpole* (San Francisco, 1931) // Photograph by Peter A. Juley & Son

Madrone Art Bar in collaboration with
City College of San Francisco and The Diego Rivera Mural Project present:

Diego and Frida in San Francisco: The Past is Present & Shared Histories

Curated by Anthony Torres

Diego and Frida in San Francisco: The Past is Present honors the trans-cultural significance of the presence of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in San Francisco in the 1930s and 1940. The exhibition comments on interconnectedness of people and histories by honoring the contribution and legacy of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to the history of art in San Francisco.

Exhibition Dates: September 19, 2012 — November 16, 2012
Artists Reception: Saturday, September 22, 5:00 to 8:00pm
(Complimentary drink for patrons dressed as Frida Kahlo)

Location: Madrone Art Bar

Public front window installation by Victor Cartagena

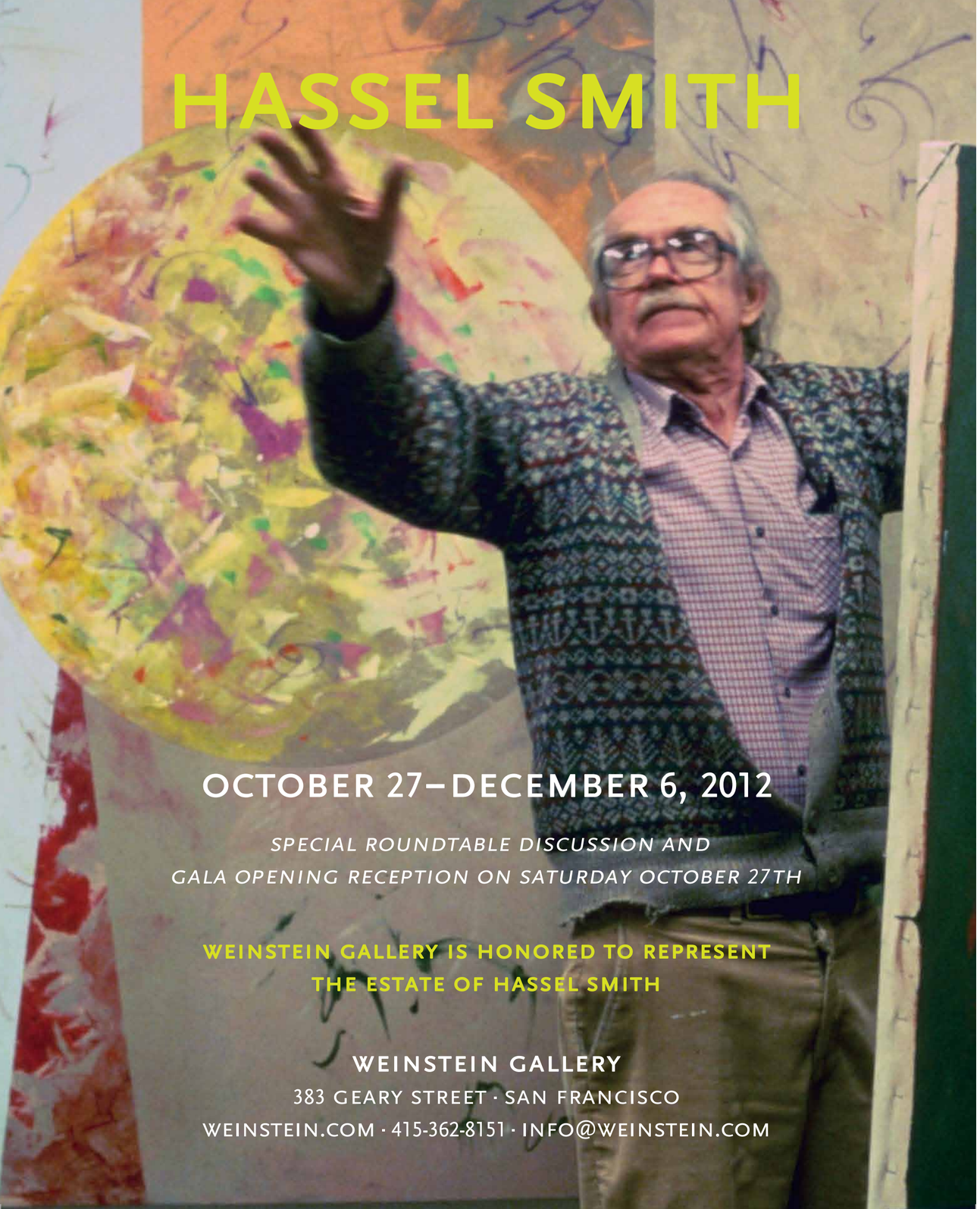
Shared Histories: Diego and Frida in San Francisco is a collaboration between City College of San Francisco Gallery, The Diego Rivera Mural Project and Madrone Art Bar. The exhibition celebrates the return of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo to San Francisco, their remarriage, and Diego's execution of the the Pan American Unity Mural (now at City College) at the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1940.

Exhibition Dates: October 1, 2012 — October 31, 2012
Artists Reception: October 11, 2012, 6:00 to 8:00pm

Location: Visual Arts Building, Room 119, Art Department
City College of San Francisco, 50 Phelan Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94112
For more information, please visit ccsf.edu/gallery

MADRONE Art Bar

500 Divisadero Street (at Fell)
www.madroneartbar.com



August
Creative Growth

September
Milton Resnick
Tom Marioni

Expo Chicago: September 20-23

October
Ala Ebtekar
Nayland Blake

November
Carolee Schneeman
Gay Outlaw

Gallery Paule Anglim

14 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108 Tel: 415.433.2710 Fax: 415.433.1501 www.gallerypauleanglim.com

BAM

Blue Angel Martini

"BAM....This might be the best damn vodka martini I've ever tasted."

– Anthony Dias Blue, Editor-in-Chief, Tasting Panel Magazine

The perfect vodka martini.

Like us.

Blue Angel Spirits LLC. San Francisco, CA USA. 40% alc/vol (80 proof).
Distilled in America from American Grain.