



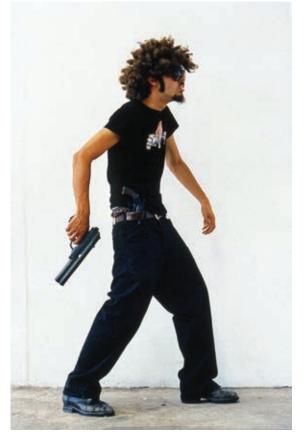
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ISSUE.12 FEB-APR 2013



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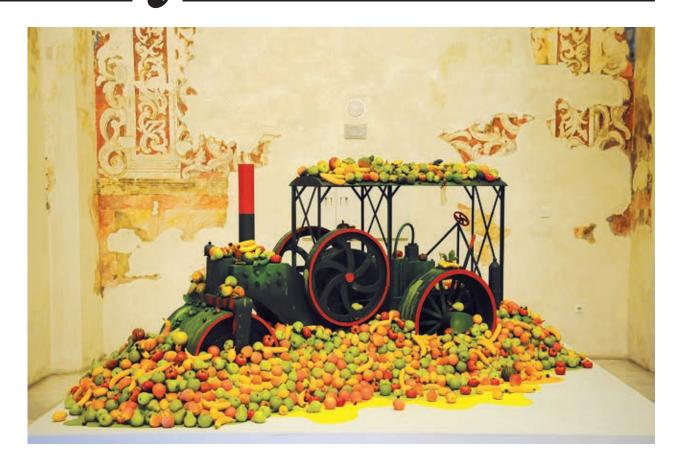
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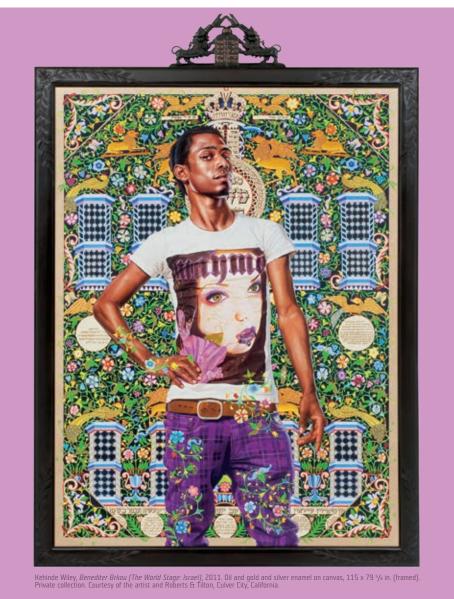
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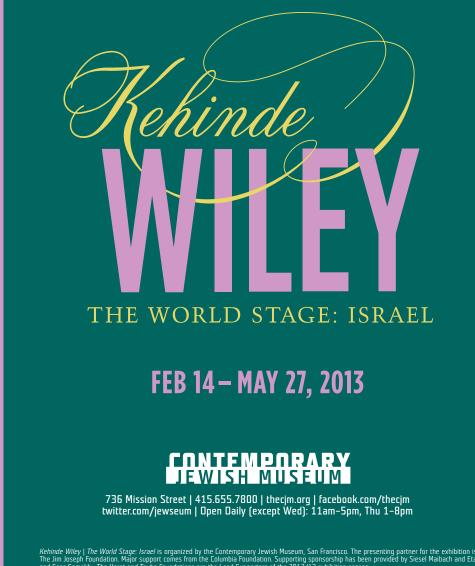
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Laura Owens, *Untitled (LO 273)*, 2004. Spit bite aquatint with soft ground etching and drypoint printed in blue. 22½ x 17½", edition 40.

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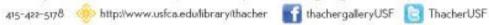
Active Synchrony: New Work by Tahiti Pehrson Jan. 13-Mar. 3 Thacher Gallery

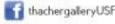
Taller Tupac Amaru: A Decade of Radical Printmaking Mar. 17-Apr. 16 Thacher Gallery

Strange Attractors: New Work by Mark Baugh-Sasaki Jan. 18-Aug. 4 Kalmanovitz Hall Rooftop Sculpture Terrace



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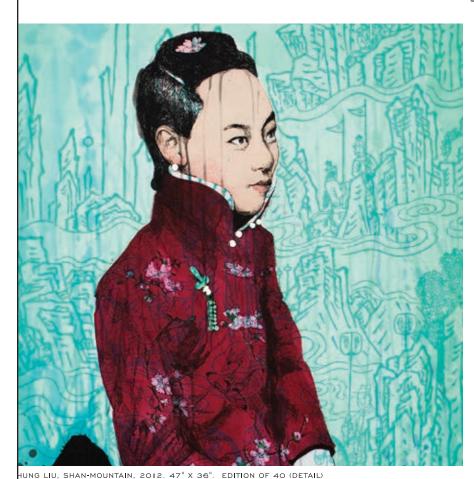






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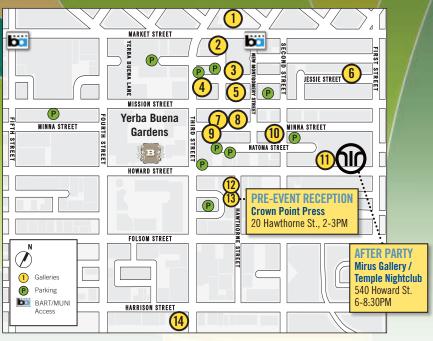
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Brooklyn-based artist Josette Urso's collages are investigations into the complex nature of existence and the tension that exists between chaos and order chandlersf.com

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Mirus Gallery's program highlights contemporary art based on complex systems, skill and process encompassing various mediums.

SFMOMA Artist Gallery Window Exhibition 147 Minna, 415.441.4777

SFMOMA Artists Gallery presents new work by John Felix Arnold III. As part of the artist's on-going series, *In Memory Of*, the exhibition includes art installations highlighting his largely formatted, mixed media paintings. sfmoma.org/artistsgallery

**RayKo Photo Center** 428 3rd Sreet, 415.495.3773

"Center Forward", an exhibition juried by Hamidah Glasgow from the Center for Fine Art Photography and Ann Jastrab, Gallery Director at RayKo Photo Center raykophoto.com

**UC Berkeley Extension** 95 3rd Street, 415.284.1041

UC Berkeley Extension's Art and Design Center Gallery presents solo shows by instructors and post-baccalaureate certificate students as well as special exhibits on topics in art and design.

extension.berkeley.edu/visualarts

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varnishfineart.com

**Visual Aid** 57 Post Street, Suite 905, 415.777.8242

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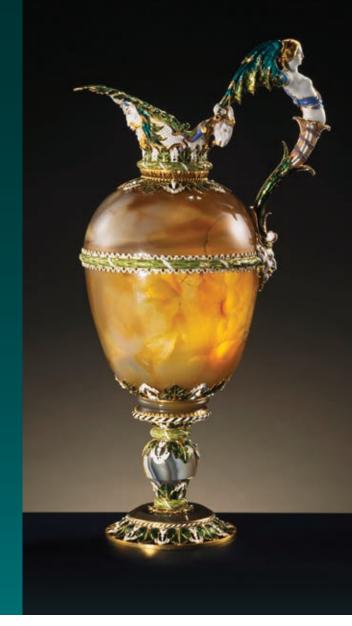
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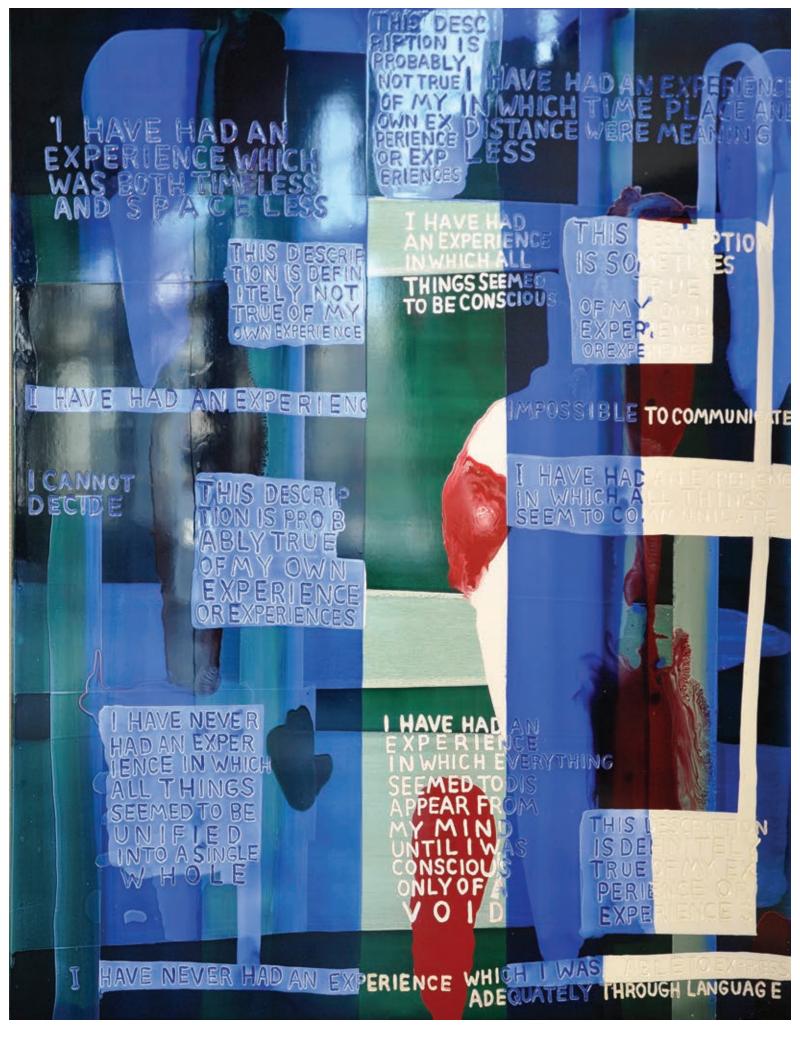
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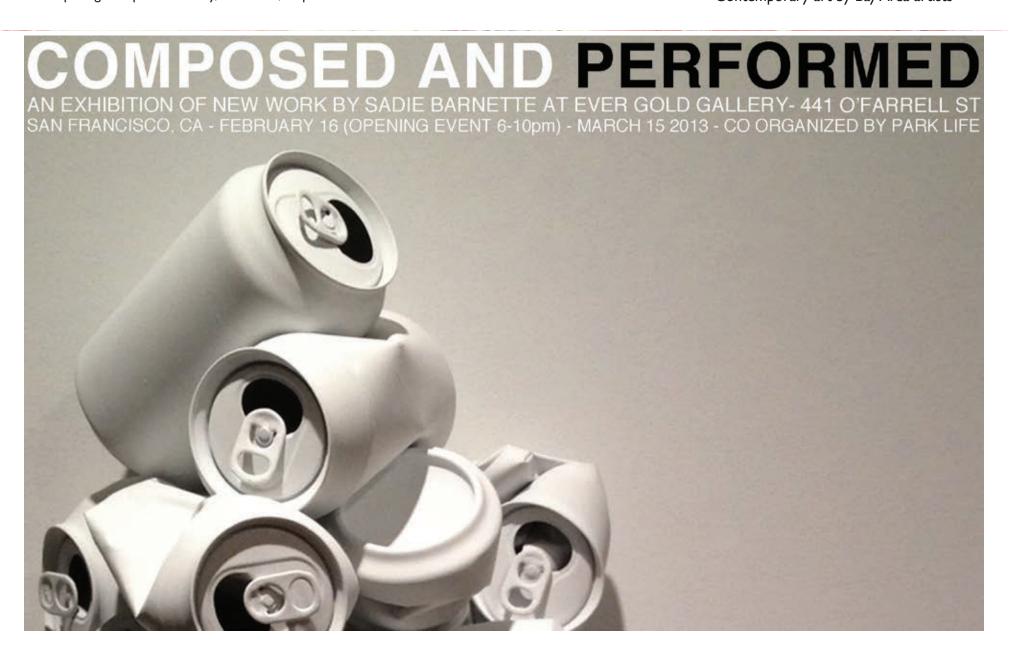


#### San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery Rentals and Sales: Building A, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA 94123

(415) 441-4777 www.sfmoma.org/artistsgallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:30am to 5pm

Silvia Poloto, Gustavo Rivera March 9 – April 18, 2013 Opening Reception: Saturday, March 9th, 1-3pm





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# SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE





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Curated by John Held, Jr. and Andrew McClintock

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Murakami, *Passing through*, 1956 y: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History o Murakami and the former members Kazuo Shiraga, *Chisonsei Isshika*, 1960 Courtesy Private Collection Discover the first West Coast survey of Gutai (1954–1972), an avant-garde artist collective in postwar Japan that was founded under a primary directive: "Do something no one's ever done before." This exhibition creates a dialogue with classic Gutai works while demonstrating the lasting significance and radical energy of the movement.

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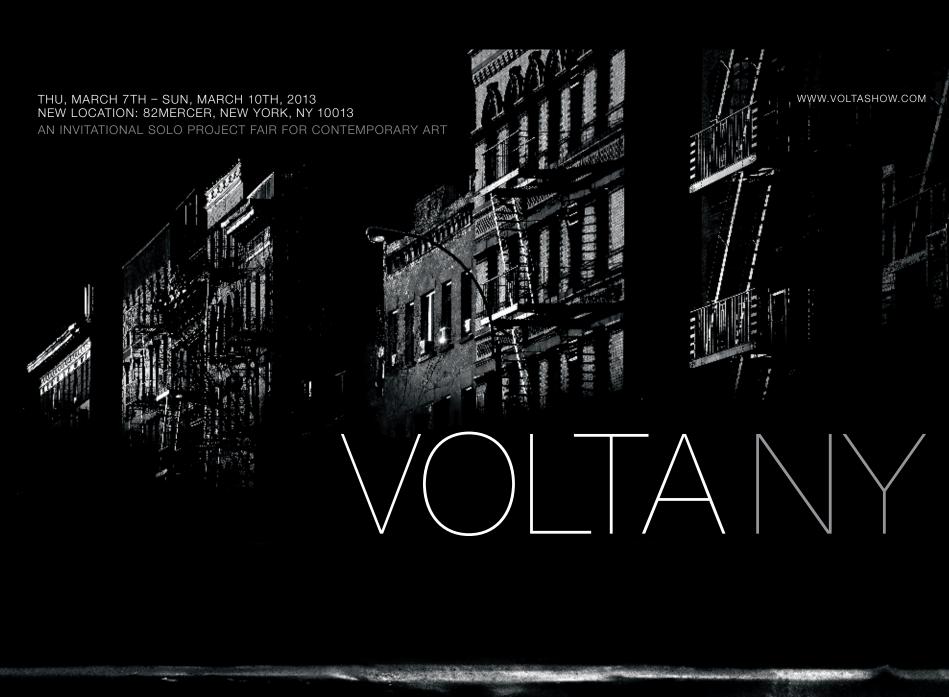
**Gala Auction: Saturday, April 27, 6:30 - 10 pm** 

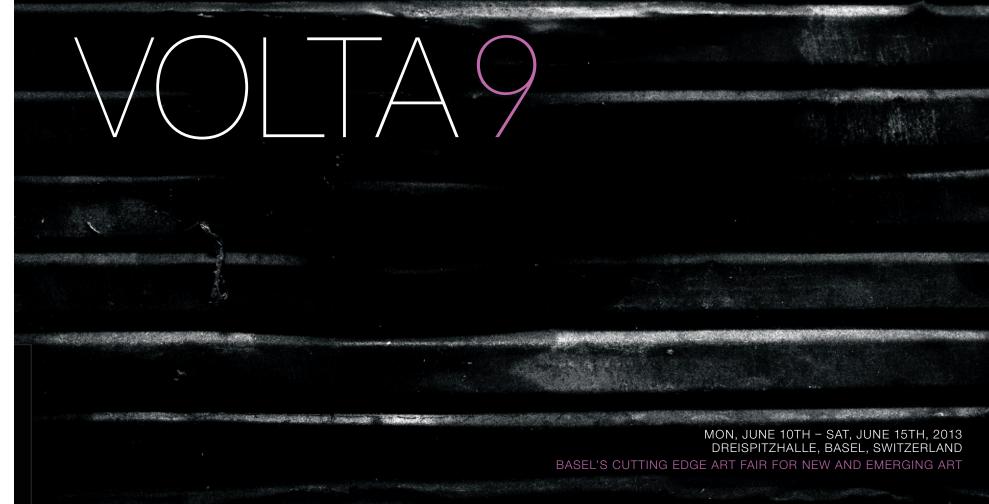
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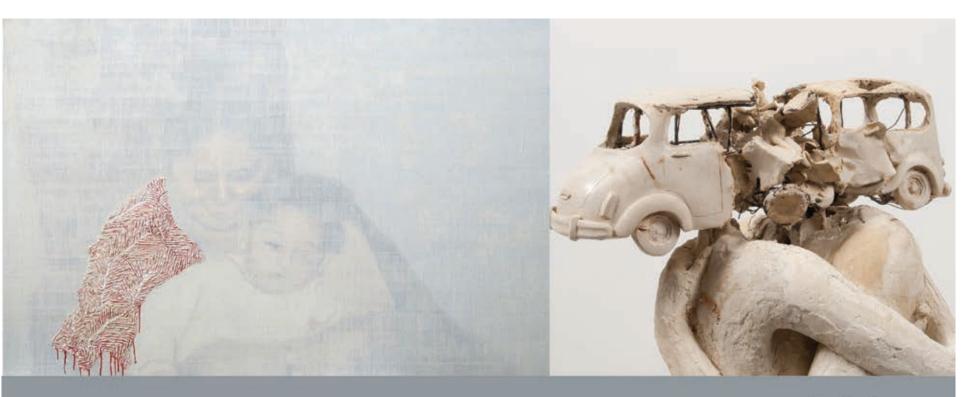
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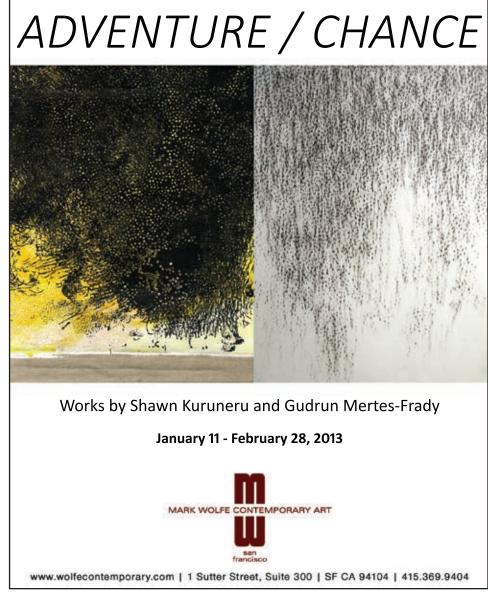
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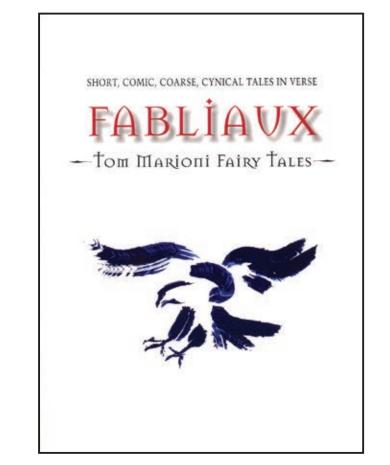
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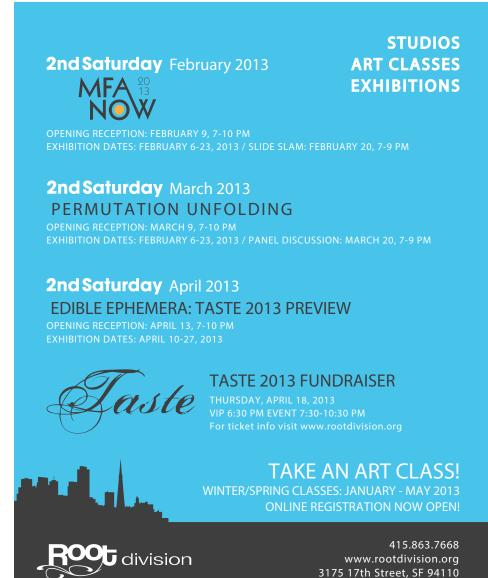
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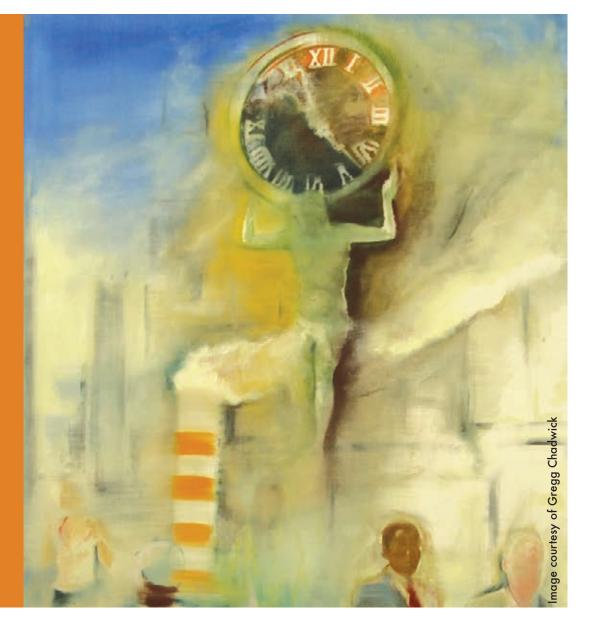
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# NLINE LOM

#### San Francisco Arts Quarterly

Issue 12. FEB.MAR.APR 2013

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#### Copy Editor

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#### Staff Writers

ory Ito, Dean Dempsey

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#### **Contributing Writers**

Antonio Roman-Alcalá, Austin McManus, Colin L. Fernandes, Gianni Simone, Louis M Schmidt, • Editor in Chief // Co-Founder // Publisher Mark Van Proyen, Cecilia Adwell

#### **Contributing Photographers**

Amy Franceschini, Antonio Maniscalco, Ashley Helvey, Bruce Conner, Colin Fernandes, Jay Jones, CONTRIBUTORS leff Warrin, lin Zhu, ludy Steccone, Kamera Z., Keizo Kobashi, Marucs, Richard Peterson, Sue Brisk, Tomo Saito, Veronica Ibarra, Jay Jones, Cecilia Adwell,

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• Jamie Alexander everyone who supports us through advertising, subscriptions, and donations. We support unions and good • times...this is for all artists, curators, art handlers, galleriests, museum workers, collectors, writers, dancers,

• art history, has been a patron of Bay Area arts for over 15 years and is a board member of The Headlands performers, any creative person(s)...in the past, present, and future.

#### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

• The world did not end on 12/21/12, but it does feel like things are changing. The US might be • pulling out of Afghanistan but starting an even longer war all over Africa, and as I write this the • 49ers just won the NFC championship and are on their way to the Super Bowl. I don't really care these days, but I do remember the late-eighties 49ers and that seemed fun then, before I understood why professional sports are so big in this country. I suppose things like war and • football serve as tactful smoke-screens, their haze blocking out subjects closer to home such as, • well, let's call it the full fledged orgy between corporations and our government (but what else • is new). For me there is a sense of social urgency in the diverse content of this issue. Social is-• sues such as immigration, urban farming, independent media, artists who have been sent to jail, equality for all sexual orientations, and my favorite: San Francisco punk culture. All are connected John Held, Jr., Jamie Alexander, TOM MARIONI, Julio Cesar Morales, Andrew McClintock, Greg- by the amazing artists and individuals who grace these pages. So although you might pass by and • see me at the bar - screaming into the television screen, my hometown 49ers riding to victory, • don't be fooled, I'm thinking about Aaron Swartz (R.I.P) and how I can do my part. So what are you looking at? In the words of V. Vale, "I just feel like working all the time, mother fucker, and then you can die." Let's put in work.

-Andrew McClintock

#### Antonio Roman-Alcalá

Antonio Roman-Alcalá, having been irrationally dedicated to urban sustainability since he decided that there wasn't enough "land" for all the dropouts to go "back to", spends his time realizing his personal vision of • sustainable hedonism. This includes teaching organic food-growing techniques to urban dwellers, organizing communities into more cohesive and politically active wholes, and bridging art and music with everyday life and participatory politics. Antonio plays drums in the band Future Twin, is editor of the San Francisco Art and Politics magazine, director of the In Search of Good Food movie project, and shares skills around town at Alemany Farm, Hayes Valley Farm, the Free Farm Stand, and with the SF Permaculture Guild. He is also co-founded and co-facilitates the San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance.

#### Austin McManus

• Austin McManus is a photographer, writer, curator, and publisher. He founded the web-based zine publishing and distribution collective TheFlopBox.com in 2003. Austin is involved in a wide range of creative projects • and currently works as an editor for Juxtapoz magazine.

#### **Colin L. Fernandes**

Colin L. Fernandes is a Bay Area physician, writer, and collector. His writing has appeared in The Indian Ex-, press,The New York Times, Contra Costa Times, a Penguin anthology, and online on ArtPractical.com.

#### Cecilia Adwell

Cecilia Adwell is a MA candidate at CCA in the Curatorial Practice Program and a curatorial intern at Ken-tucky Museum of Art and Craft

#### Dean Dempsey

• Dean Dempsey is based in New York City and is currently a resident artist at Villa Waldberta in Munich, Ger- many where he is also in the survey exhibition "Next Generation - Contemporary American Photography" • at Pasinger Fabrik and Amerikahaus. He is in the permanent collections of the Kinsey Institute, En Foco and Crocker Art Museum. He's appeared in Art in America. Wall Street lournal International and Süddeutsche • Zeitung in Germany.

#### Gianni Simone

Escaped from his home country in 1992 and found refuge in Japan, where he promptly found a job teaching people how to shout HELP! and avoid being robbed on foreign buses. Since 1997 he has been unhealthily active in the mail art network, unleashing on the unsuspecting public, among other things, the "Treatise of Morales, Maurice Kanbar, Charles Linder, Carlo McCormick, Jocko Weyland, Griff Williams, Paul • Pataphysical Anatomy" and the international fake political campaign poster project. He has recently opened the Stickerman Museum - Tokyo Annex. When not running after his two kids and from his wife, he is usually • busy making zines, writing for high- and lowbrow magazines, and exploring Tokyo.

Leigh Cooper, Tyson Vogel, Kent Baer, Eli Ridgway, SIA Club, Jeff Gunderson, Jamie Alexander, Peter Kirkeby, 🙎 deavors: Ever Gold Gallery & this magazine you're reading - SFAQ. visit: www.gregoryito.com for more

Jamie Alexander is owner of Park Life Store + Gallery and Paper Museum Press. He studied design and • Center for the Arts.

• John Held, Jr. is a staff writer for San Francisco Arts Quarterly. He is co-curator of the current San Francisco • Art Institute exhibition, "Experimental Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Mid-Winter Burning Sun:

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Gutai Historical Survey and Contemporary Response." Held's two-volume work, "Where the Secret is Hidden," containing over one hundred essays on the alternative arts composed over a thirty year period, is • 32-37

#### **Julio Cesar Morales**

Julio Cesar Morales is an artist, educator and curator currently working both individually and collaboratively. • 38-43 His work has been shown at SFMOMA, (San Francisco); 2009 Lyon Biennale; (Lyon, France), 2008 and 2004 San Juan Triennial (San Juan, Puerto Rico); 2007 Istanbul Biennale; Los Angeles County Art Museum (Los Angeles); 2006 Singapore Biennale; Frankfurter Kunstverein (Frankfurt, Germany); The Rooseum Museum of Angeles); 2006 Singapore Biennale; Frankfurter Kuristverein (Hankfurt, German, J., The Nebbeath Art (Malmo, Sweden); Peres Projects (Los Angeles); Fototeca de Havana (Cuba); Harris Lieberman Gallery (New York City); Museo Tamayo (Mexico City) and UCLA Hammer Museum (Los Angeles). He is represented by Wendi Norris Gallery In San Francisco. Morales is currently the curator at Arizona State University • Art Museum, Recent independent curatorial projects include the retrospective exhibition Living in Studio • Kuchar of influencial underground film-maker George Kuchar at The San Francisco Art Institute, Politica y • 52-63 Poecia, at The National Watercolor Museum in Sweden. From 2008-2012 Morales was adjunct curator at • Yerba Buena Center for The Arts in San Francisco and continues to work with Bob Linder as co-director and • curator for the artist-run experimental space Queen's Nails located in the Mission district of San Francisco.

#### Louis M Schmidt

Louis M Schmidt is an artist, curator and occasional writer born and raised in rural, central Illinois. This is 64-69 more a point of curiosity than one of pride, as one doesn't typically meet too many small town Midwesterners in the "fine" art world. He is currently in the process of moving from San Diego, CA (he earned an MFA in Visual Arts from UCSD in 2010) to Brooklyn, NY, whence he will continue to produce a plethora • of variously executed drawings, drawing-based installations and publications. He recently went to Japan to • 70-75 participate in the Tokyo Art Book Fair, then to New York for the 2012 NY Art Book Fair at MoMA P.S.I. • Schmidt has exhibited work in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco; his zines have been featured in zinerelated exhibitions in Madrid, Budapest and Leipzig, and were included in Behind the Zines: Self-Publishing • Culture, published by Gestalten in the Spring of 2011. In addition to the LA Art Book Fair at MOCA Geffen, he has upcoming solo shows at Palomar College in San Marcos, CA; TFR in Leucadia, CA; and Park Life • in San Francisco. For more info on his work and upcoming exhibitions, visit: ridgethevoid.blogspot.com or • 76-79 cargocollective.com/bridgethevoid.

Mark Van Proyen is an artist and art critic based in northern California. His writings have appeared in Art • 80-83 in America, Art Issues, CAA Reviews, New Art Examiner, Bad Subjects, Art Practical and Square Cylinder.

#### 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 Conceptual Art, curate Sound Sculpture As, 1770 The Act of Difficing Decl. Will Theorems 5 to 2007. Sound of Art, 1972 Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach. Drum Brush Drawings, 1975 Thinking Out Loud, Warsaw, 

86-91 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.

#### **CONTACT**

**General Info** 

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

**Founders** Andrew McClintock: andrewm@sfaqonline.com

Gregory Ito: greg.i@sfaqonline.com Advertising advertise@sfaqonline.com listings@sfaqonline.com

info@sfagonline.com

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#### **COVER IMAGE:**

Miguel Calderón "Evolution of Man" Courtesy of La Colección Jumex

#### **VIVA RUIZ**

Interviewed by Dean Dempsey

#### **CLEMENTE PADIN:**

On art, life and international solidarity in Latin America Interviewed by Gianni Simone

#### **MICHEL BLANCSUBE: La Colección Jumex**

Interviewed by Julio Cesar Morales

#### V. VALE

Interviewed by Andrew McClintock

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#### **CHERRY & MARTIN: With Philip Martin**

Interviewed by Gregory Ito

#### **ART & LIFE IN THE MAXIMUM CITY**

Written by Colin L. Fernandes, MD

#### **Dr.SHOICHI HIRAI**

Curator, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. Interviewed by John Held, Jr.

#### **Art Etiquette & Funny Stuff**

Written by TOM MARIONI

#### KATHAN BROWN: "Know that you are lucky"

Written by John Held, Jr.

#### Theda's Island // Chapter One: In the Mail Room

Written by Mark Van Proyen

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Written by Dean Dempsey

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By Jamie Alexander

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#### **ARTIST PROJECTS**

Sponsored by Peter Kirkeby (Bottom of page 13) Debra Greene, "Thread # 6", 12" x 24", 2012 Photo Credit: Wilfred I. Jones contact: degreene l@yahoo.com

#### Interviewed by Dean Dempsey



Video still from "ESCANDALO NOCTURNING". Courtesy of the artist.

Viva Ruiz is a dancer, videographer, performer, director and most importantly a hellraiser. Using nightlife as a platform for her video works, Viva confronts complex issues of sex, race and cultural identity with an aesthetic and direction uniquely, and perversely, her own. Always in collaboration, she unleashes a plethora of creative vigor in her two music projects: Latin arthouse "ESCANDALO" and the techno-pop group "The Crystal Ark", which just recently released a self-entitled LP on DFA Records. Her music and film merge alter-universes, fantasies and dreamlike narratives in colorful and imaginative adventures, queering the banality of mainstream gay club scenes with depravity and glorious style.

Viva's music videos, or films, have an otherworldly nature to them; they are open with possibility, mystery and hypnotic pulsations. The piercing lasers, dancing encounters and nightmarish costumes feel like Berghain on ecstasy all over again. Viva isn't only a musician but a visual artist, and her camerawork transforms the energy of nightlife from impermanent happenings to masterful films.

I confess I am partial to glitter, sequins and people getting dirty and free, doing whatever the fuck is fabulous, so I am biased in choosing Viva to interview. But her experience is distinctly a New York one. First generation from Ecuador, Viva draws from her history as a New Yorker and as a queer Latina in both her music and film work, bringing a bilingual and ritualistic approach to performance and art directing.

This is what she had to say.

#### Introduce us to how you started working in film, and how you use it to channel nightlife and dance. What was your first project?

The very first thing I made was this Lesbian porn karate movie a long time ago. It was called "From Beijing to Brooklyn", super queer baby punk film about the struggle between sexual freedom and repression. I was in this Industrial all girl stripper band called Thrust, and we ended up making that movie in the 90's that went all over the world. I was a sex worker and stripper for a long time, and back then, a lot of what I learned about performance I learned at the Baby Doll Lounge. But I'm not sure how much of that I should get into...

#### SFAQ readers can take a punch, don't worry.

I have this whole music life again, but that was my art school. These strip joints that I worked in, I saw so much about human nature, beauty and improvisation. I'm not a trust-fund kid who did that work as an art project; this is what I was doing to support myself. But the experience was so valuable, to be in a sisterhood, it felt temple-like, to me. And of course there are all these dark things about it, too.

For me the videos I make are films, they are extensions of everything else I've ever made. They all have narrative, I'm very story based.

Film is a big part of my work. And dance, I've been a dancer for a long time. That started with strip joints, then Dazzle Dancing, I did a belly dance for a minute called Undulation Sensation that was like a disco belly dance trio. I was a gogo dancer in every club in New York for a long time, and that is how I met a lot of the people I ended up putting in my films. Nightlife people have really shiny, big personalities. It's cool to write stories and have friends flush them out.

#### What have you kept yourself busy with lately?

The last thing I made was a video for my music project Crystal Ark, called "We Came To". I'm both director and singer, and Gavin Russom, an artist and electronic music genius, is my partner in this project.

For me, "We Came To" wasn't only a music video but a film. It was really well received and had a premier in the New York Times, which is fucking nice. I worked so hard on it. It was a collaboration with a lot of different artists – I don't make anything alone. I think a big part of why I ended up making films was because I am really inspired by the people around me who I work with.

A lot of my work is bilingual and this one in particular is my pro-immigration piece. I don't know if people get that right off the bat, but the subtext of this is no alien is illegal. I like to sublimate a lot of my work with my experience as a Latina growing up in New York. I'm first generation here; my family is all from Ecuador so I'm very Spanglish based. Much of what I do is about crossroads. I like to work in Spanish and English, because that is how I learned how to speak as a kid. With politics going how they were and the blaming of immigrants, a lot of the stuff I did for the last couple of years had to do with pro-immigration.

"Much of what I do is about crossroads....with politics going how they were and the blaming of immigrants, a lot of the stuff I did for the last couple of years had to do with pro-immigration."



Still from "ESCANDALO NOCTURNING" . Courtesy of the artist.

It's crazy the state of the world we're in. That the U.S. creates situations that make people desperate yet won't let those people escape, and then they are punished and blamed for taking shitty underpaid jobs. So I'm pretty passionate about that, and this film is a celebration of immigrants, workers and how we are strengthened by diversity. These two nations meet in space and get stronger and make beautiful music together.

"We Came To" has four parts to it with distinct looks, and I knew I wanted it to be a metropolis transformation. One of the artists involved, Todd Ruff, was like, 'let's use jellyfish,' which it turns out live forever! Did you read that article in the Times? They said there is one organism to have eternal life and it's jellyfish.

I've always wanted to be a jellyfish, to float around all day half transparent. They are cool, so electric.

In total, five people took pieces to fill out the story that I had for "We Came To", and that's fun for me to collaborate with friends and let people have fun, let people get nuts, and do what they want to do. I'm the only director, but I feel like I curated within the film the interpretation of the story.

A lot of my work is I want to be a voice for the extreme opposite of "They've come to take our jobs" argument, to antagonize those people. Because it's such a nonsensical perspective, these people have no protections here, they have to live undercover, and they're working around the clock to feed themselves and their families. They're not imperialists, they're surviving. And that perspective to come from people who historically are conquers, are from imperialists and have no acknowledgment of the real history of the United States and how it was built from slavery, and the genocide of Native Americans. So they don't remember that and refuse to acknowledge it, but then to demonize the immigrants of today who are not like that? These are people being squeezed out of desperate situations and are trying to survive. I feel passionate about this because I come from immigrants and I know about that struggle. So I feel like if I have a microphone, if I can make something for people to watch, I want to be a voice uncovering that lie of blame. Anywhere I can.

How did you begin working with Jeffrey Deitch, and later the Museum of Modern Art and PSI?

I didn't really interact with the art world, I was more on the nightclub scene, in dance

performances that only last a night. I'm in this dance group, Dazzle Dancers, which are a bunch of mostly hot gay guys and myself. The group gets naked at the end every time, I think it was early 2000-2005 we did that a bunch, and through that I met Jeffrey Deitch and I started helping him put together events for his openings. From that relationship I ended up showing my films through Deitch Projects, and later a big Dazzle retrospective shebang in the main gallery.

In 2005, Desi Santiago and I performed as part of the assume vivid astro focus (or AVAF) opening of Deitch LIC [Long Island City] space, as our group ESCANDALO. In 2009 Jaiko Suzuki and I were the dance component of a collaboration between AVAF and Gavin Russom's Black Meteoric Star at the MoMA - it was basically a rave - and Jaiko and I danced nonstop for three hours completely surrendering to the ramping. It was a freak out; people called us "erotic dancers on 10 hits of acid".

For the MoMA PSI thing we did in 2011, ESCANDALO performed a ritual where I lifted the borders and evoked the energy of the room to welcome the people on their journeys into this country, or any country people are trying to make new roads into for better lives. So basically I did this prayer as a part of the performance, and then Desi and I did a song for that. I had this couple that sell mangos cut into flowers on 14<sup>th</sup> street come and fill the place with mango flowers. That is a perfect New York artwork. These people are there everyday in the summer cutting mangos into these gorgeous flowers, and that to me is very poetic and beautiful. And I like to honor those people, and to bring them into places like MoMA, or Deitch. When I make these music films and performances, I get to talk about immigrants, about what's behind that, and that's important to me. I really want to be on the other side of that argument of blame and degradation.

You do vocals in The Carry Nation song, "This Bitch is Alive", which you also directed. It looks like a lot of fun, and it's quite possibly the gayest thing I've seen all week. What are some of your objectives with this video?

I wanted to make this video on the fly, and I know New York has this magic that you can make something happen without a lot of money or resources. I went to Vandam, a party my friend throws at Greenhouse and wanted to capture what was happening in New York right now. My intention with this piece is that everything felt so conservative and restrictive politically in the last couple years, or really since 9/11, and that gearing up for the last election things were getting so dark. So this is my flare for gay kids, trans kids, living in small towns to show



Still from The Carry Nation "This Bitch is Alive". Courtesy of the artist.

this is what is happening in New York right now, that was my intention for this, I want people to know you can come here and relax a little bit. If you feel like an outsider somewhere else, New York is still to me a sanctuary. I wanted this to be a magnet for people who don't fit in, and to show something that lasts just for a night is as valid as something that lives at the MET [The Metropolitan Museum]

#### What do you think is special to queer nightlife/dance in NYC in compared to other major U.S. cities? How about Latin America?

New York is just so wild and wooly, there are so many different functions every day and night, you really have so much choice in what you feel drawn to the most. I think that is a big plus - languages, styles, the range of options. Also being able to generally walk around here looking and living the way you want to without getting bashed, although of course tragically that does sometimes still happen. And yet even here, with so many different people and like-minded folks around, that can still happen, so how could you not feel hopeless in a place where you're the only one of you for miles? I say come and join us here, in cities that never sleep, that's why I made the "This Bitch is Alive" video as a reminder that we are here and waiting for you if you need us. Berlin nightlife was very inspiring and futuristic feeling, the wide mix of age and gender at any one club. I'm seeing that more lately in NYC, too.

I haven't been to queer clubs in Latin America damnit but this year we'll be touring so you know I'll be hitting them. Would be cool to see how those scenes can live in the middle of so much overt misogyny and homophobia, these are some very brave people. Seems terrifying to me knowing too well that particular aspect of the culture I come from.

#### Do you consider being queer and Latina pivotal to you work?

Yes, absolutely. It's where I'm speaking from. And I'm excited to be making work at this time in history in New York. I am definitely of the queer nation, but I have sex with men too and that's where we are right now. These distinctions are breaking down in the same way diversity is good as far as race goes. All these classifications are changing. It's important to have roots, and I love my ancestry and that's where my voice is coming from too, from my experience. This crossroads in New York we're at, none of us are going to have the same perspective and that's good, it's really great.

I love getting to talk about this. Me and Desi Santiago in our music project ESCANDALO filmed "Nocturning" which is about a struggle in gender identity. The central character questions (who I feel I'm connected to in the story) "Am I a woman who likes women and men? Am I bisexual? That never felt right... Am I straight, trans, or am I...?" So there are these nightmares of binary, of male and female. "Nocturning" was my gender statement.

#### Talk more about the collaborative process in your costuming. They are so diverse in range, seeming at once camp and apocalyptic.

A big reason I am moved to create anything is the promise of collaboration and how ignited I am by that. These collaborations reinforce the element of play, and lots and lots of laughter, 34

which is a huge part of my process. People I am fascinated by, am a fan of, I ask them to play with me and if they agree then we make a kind of baby, and there is an ecstatic and arduous process to that end. The time for the supremacy of people making other people is over. What is missing is a strong reinforcement for women, and men, and everyone, to claim their fertility and miraculous creative powers without having to make new human children.

Being friends with Machine Dazzle, who's one of my main collaborators, is like what I imagine being friends with Jean Cocteau was like. I bring what my imagination is cooking up, and then multiplied with his, we skyrocket. It's the same with Desi Santiago who is also completely off the wall in his visions, and crossed with him we make haunted shadowy children. Gavin I believe is guided by aliens from the future, so you can see for yourself the children we are making reflect that. Todd Ruff's references are so vast he can make anything (he's a digital artist who has been an Egyptologist and soap opera star) but knowing my connection to nature, he brought my metropolis sequence to life in the "We Came To" video brilliantly seeing the electricity generated by jellyfish. Jason Cacioppo a longtime collaborator brings a razor precision to everything he touches, that pushes my more organic edges to a place further than I would go on my own. He's been director of photography in much of my work, and when I said "dragonfly spaceship" well he went whole hog with it. Projects with many collaborators are cross-fertilized, so you can imagine that would be a fun process.

Specifically for costuming, I sit with Machine and tell him the story. For the first Crystal Ark track "The City Never Sleeps" I knew these characters were re-wilding and finding the animal within their urban selves. My references were Native American ceremonial wear, shamanism, people who in ritual have a visible connection to animal energy. We had coffee, he drew the story on the tablecloth and that was it. For "We Came To" I knew I wanted to communicate an alien character that was some kind of keyboard puma mutant immigrant. He came to set with the perfect solution for that. My mind is always blown by what he brings to the table.

## Your work feels very fantastical, and I know you draw inspiration from friends/ collaborators, political climate and gender identity, anywhere else? Dope, dreams, cinema?

From when I was a child I practiced to write my dreams down and techniques to remain lucid throughout them, which I became able to do.

These days I've lost some of that ability but dreams are most definitely where lyrics, dialogue, storylines, images, melodies pour from. I have a love of cinema and horror/fantasy instilled in me from my father who showed me the first films I ever saw: "Hunchback of Notre Dame", "Metropolis", "Nosferatu" all silent films on PBS which we both - him not speaking any English, and I not being able to read yet - could enjoy. I think he first imprinted in me a love of the bizarre and fantastical. I could also credit the Latin American Catholic culture I come from which encouraged me from birth to be romantically involved with unseen worlds through ritual, with the goal to develop and maintain conscious contact with spirit realms.



Still from The Crystal Ark "We Came To". Courtesy of the artis

Drugs I've taken my share of but was never able to see the things I wanted to so I stopped trying to get there that way, externalizing these images for me has been much more satisfying in that regard. Melodrama is also a favorite language in my work and lyrics and that may come from years of telenovela ingestion.

What do you see in the future of queer nightlife, art and performance? Is the creative bar always being raised or do you see repetition beginning to surface? There was a trend everywhere that prevailed for some time to cater to the elite, but I'm feeling a renewed strength of community in nightlife and art that is open to all and under/over the radar of status quo and the police. Things feel a little dangerous again in NYC in both literal and metaphoric terms and that's very very good - in nightlife by creatively somehow escaping surveillance, and in art the most refreshing turn has been towards a feeling of generosity.

There is always repetition or referencing, over time in any kind of work, but within that repetition there can be wild innovation and freshness: a peaceful paradox. This I believe is true in any medium, but I do marvel at new technologies and how they are going to be integrated globally. In nightlife, I can't say the parties that are inspiring to me now are any more or less important than the legendary scenes like Paradise Garage, CBGB's, Mudd Club, ball culture, time will tell. However we have this history now where we can see with certainty that a party at any point in time can be so influential that it directly alters culture, art, politics, fashion of that time. An idea as uncomplicated as a party, a gathering of people in celebration, can have this power.

Who are some visual artists, filmographers and art projects that you fancy as of late? As far as artists I admire, outside of the ones I've mentioned being in collaboration with already, I love Genesis P-Orridge, who has such an extensive and broad body of work throughout his/her life, solo and as Breyer P-Orridge with Lady Jaye who was also a great artist and friend of mine. Kembra Pfahler, Vaginal Creme Davis, Labanna Babalon, Grimes, Big Art Group, Arielle Falk, the person drawing chalk outlines of shadowed streetlights on the sidewalk, the person knitting around bicycles chained on the street, many many more.

Viva Ruiz is writing the script for her feature film that she describes simply "a horror movie with a lot of dancing in it, and that's all I know right now." The Crystal Ark will tour this year to a dungeon or discotech near you for their new LP, out now. ESCANDALO is planning new tracks and a release of a three record vinyl art piece in the coming months. My only complaint - Why aren't I dancing right now?



Portrait of Viva Ruiz by Veronica Ibarra. Courtesy of the artist.

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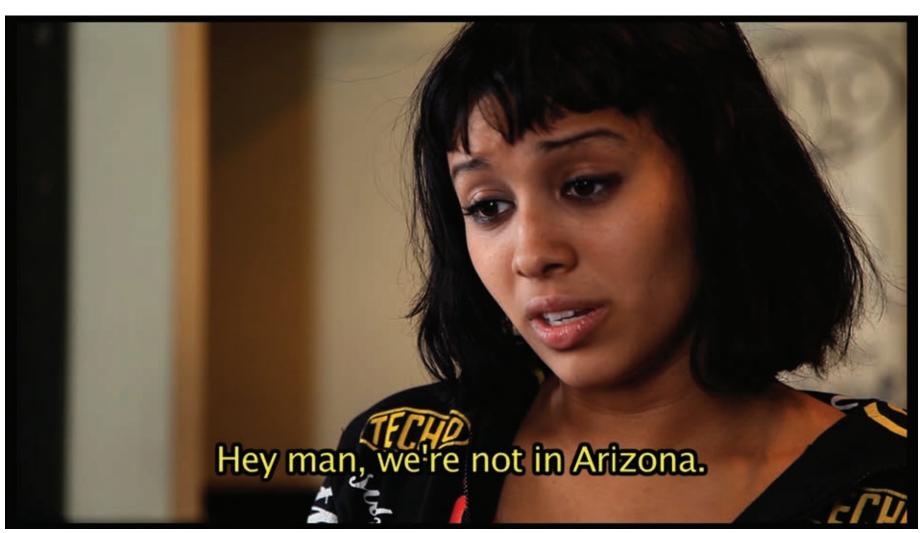
Still from The Crystal Ark "We Came To". Courtesy of the artist.



Still from Ruiz's original telenovela "IMMIGRANTULA". Courtesy of the artist.



Still from The Crystal Ark "The City Never Sleeps". Courtesy of the artist.



Venus X in still from Ruiz's original telenovela "IMMIGRANTULA". Courtesy of the artist.

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# **CLEMENTE PADIN**

#### On art, life and international solidarity in Latin America

Interviewed by Gianni Simone



"Art Zone" Performed in the "Weekend of the Action", organized by the French Alliance and the Art Contemporary Foundation, Montevideo, Uruguay, July 23, 1999. Courtesy of the artist.

Clemente Padin is a visual poet, performance artist, magazine editor, critic and curator from Uruguay. During his 45-year career, Padin has constantly mixed art and activism, using his work – particularly through mail art and networking – to denounce his country's military dictatorship and its connection with capitalistic interests, trying at the same time to rally Latin American artists around a new cultural approach that refuses traditional forms of artistic creation and circulation.

#### Tell me about your beginnings.

My first love is visual poetry. I started experimenting in the mid-1960s. In 1965 I launched my first magazine called *Los Huevos del Plata*, and around 1967 I began to trade it for publications by other Latin American poets: Guillermo Deisler (*Ediciones Mimbre*), Edgardo Antonio Vigo (*Diagonal Cero* and *Hexagon*), and Damaso Ogaz (*La Pata de Palo*). From that I moved on to making postcards, artistamps and collage. In 1969 Uruguayan artist Luis Camnitzer exhibited works he had collected by inviting his friends to add-and-return a work he had sent them. He did the same things American artist Ray Johnson was doing at the time, but without establishing a network for further exchanges. So I produced an edition of postcards through my other magazine, "OVUM 10". Then in 1970 I did my first performance in the Hall of the Uruguayan University, called "Poetry should be done by everyone," and in 1971 I took part in my first documented exhibition, organized by Image Bank in Vancouver, Canada.

#### Image Bank was among the first to realize the potential of networking, communication at a distance, and the creative use of the bostal service.

Yes, it's true. Even Fluxus was very active in this field. Take postcards, for example. Today they are considered a relic of the past, but at the time they were often used in a creative way to express original artistic values and much more, as testified by Deisler with his *Space of Liberty, 10" X 15"* project. Thanks to the small space offered by the postcard – and the artistamps he attached to it – he was able to spread his ideas around the world, and people

could take conscience of the personal and political situation he lived in. For Latin American artists the post was a particularly important means of expression and communication, even though the governments were constantly watching us. When I was in jail I met the President of the Postal Union. He told me that in every post office in Uruguay there were always police investigators checking the mail. He was imprisoned for ten years because he was the employees' representative. Now I don't know if there are still investigators, but we know that the repressive apparatus didn't disappear with the return of democracy.

#### Most people know you as a visual poet, but you have actually been active in many different creative fields, right?

Yes, as I said my first performance action was in 1970. I've also worked with typewriters, copy-art, digital and video art, installations, etc. I apply strategies of reproduction and dissemination of information according to technological, social and subjective changes. I will use any form I deem useful to present my ideas, because in my work the form is always subordinated to the content.

#### ${\bf Most, if \ not \ all, your \ artistic \ production \ is \ openly \ political \ in \ content.}$

It couldn't be otherwise. The explosive political and social situation in Latin America has always been such that it would be difficult to avoid commenting on dictatorship, economic inequalities, etc. Networked art is a product of human work and relations. The final product of this exchange may just be seen as art, with a market value, but you can't forget the process through which you have arrived at such a result. In this sense the things I do, and many of my friends and collaborators do, symbolically express the reality in which we live. You could consider it a subliminal form of social conscience and an instrument of knowledge. The images and works which artists produce are sometimes created to please critics. The cultural regime is satisfied when artists create images and works which build an ideal world without contradictions in which art has no real purpose or function. Ideological hegemony in society defines priorities of what is beautiful or artistic. But for me, the viewer should have a direct, unfiltered interaction with the artwork. This is the only ethically viable way to experience art.

"We should put art back to where it belongs. In other words, we should remove it from the glass cases and give it back to the public, making its communicative functionality prevail and turning it into a tool for dialogue."



"Art Zone" Performed in the "Weekend of the Action", organized by the French Alliance and the Art Contemporary Foundation, Montevideo, Uruguay, July 23, 1999. Courtesy of the artis

# You mentioned you'd been in prison. I know you personally paid for your involvement in the anti-government movement. Can you tell me what happened exactly?

I was imprisoned on August 25th, 1977, together with fellow artist Jorge Caraballo, for my opposition to the military government. I had made an edition of rubberstamps and artistamps (what the bureaucratically-inclined could call fake postage stamps) denouncing the suppression of human rights and the death, torture and disappearance of many people. Also, I organized the Counter-Biennale in front of the official Latin-American section of the X Paris Biennale. All this led to my incarceration. I was sentenced to four years for "transgressions that hurt the morale and reputation of the army." Luckily hundreds and hundreds of international artists mobilized on my behalf, and I was freed after only two years and three months.

# Deisler, Ogaz and Vigo, whom you mentioned earlier, seem to have played an important part in both your artistic activity and Latin American art in general. Could you please tell us something about them?

Ogaz and Vigo were 10-15 years older than Deisler and me, but we all came from the same background. The Cuban revolution, in particular, was the major event that influenced our thoughts and actions, our search for international solidarity.

I knew Willy [Guillermo Deisler] since 1967, when we began to exchange our publications and art works, but we didn't actually meet until 1971, when we participated in the "International Expo of Propositions to Realize" in Buenos Aires. From that moment we were friends forever. Willy was a teacher of graphic art at the University of Chile in Antofagasta, but he was arrested and had to go into exile after Pinochet's coup in 1973. He mostly lived in Bulgaria and East Germany, where he worked as a stage designer and died in 1995. Through the years I've organized a number of projects, events and tributes to his memory

Through the years I've organized a number of projects, events and tributes to his memory because to this day his huge body of art and visual poetry is little known. Which is a pity, as Willy was a great artist and an indefatigable advocate of international artistic collaboration.

Indeed, he always said that art shouldn't be confined to a museum, but was the result of an endless project in which each work passed through many hands, being constantly altered in the process.

Damaso Ogaz was a multi-talented artist whose career encompassed painting, literature and theater. He was often called a Venezuelan artist, even though he was actually born in Santiago de Chile (a fact that Damaso himself considered a "geographical error"). He left his country in 1961 for Venezuela, where he helped found the Latin American Contemporary Art Museum (LACAM). Unfortunately as soon as he stopped being actively involved in the LACAM, the institution faded into indifference. He was a strong promoter of experimentation – often influenced by Surrealism and Dada – and, like us, he believed that art, literature and life were fully integrated.

Vigo was from Argentina. He came in contact with the international scene in 1953 while studying in France, and in 1961 founded *Diagonal Cero* (Diagonal Zero), a magazine through which he documented his growing involvement in visual poetry (what we then called New Poetry) and art exchange. In 1969 he even organized the International Exhibition of New Poetry. In 1976 the military made another *golpe*, but Vigo decided to stay in Argentina to fight the dictatorship through art and poetry. His son Palomo was one of the thousands of people who disappeared without a trace. Between 1977 and 1983 he closely collaborated with fellow Argentinean Graciela Gutierrez Marx, with whom he formed G. E. Marx-Vigo.

#### You often seem to use irony and sarcasm in your work.

With my art I hope to express my being, my concerns and my hopes. As a member of the artistic community, Latin American society, and a human being, I feel I just can't quit expressing my thoughts and ideas. In my works I pretend to glorify our world and achievements, but in doing so I highlight the fact that this aspiration is ultimately impossible to achieve. That is to say, by putting these things under the spotlight, one ends up showing them as they truly are: not only their good side but also the injustice, iniquities and abuse that go hand in hand with

the achievements, and that ideologically we can just call "immorality." That's why all my work, not only the mail art, takes on a character of political contestation. At the same time, though, I try not to be too much in your face. My goal is to subtly influence public opinion so that in the long run justice and human dignity will be given back to people.

# It seems that the political establishment has recently come to accept your artistic shenanigans. I remember that in 2005 the Ministry of Education and Culture went so far to award you the Pedro Figari Prize.

That was really something! Years and years of fighting against the multinationals, working underground and trying to present an alternative to official culture, only to be compensated by my enemies... What a farce! Actually I was kind of supporting that government because it was the first time the leftists had won the elections, so I accepted the prize. Once in a while even underground artists have to surface "overground."

#### How do you judge more recent developments in the art world, and networking in particular?

I have closely observed the changes undergone by the art system, and I must say I don't really like the way the network's internal dynamics have been affected. In particular, I can't accept the way in which commercialism and the art institutions are trying to corrupt the original values from the '60s and '70s. The worst thing is, this process is accelerating and nowadays we can say that mail art is in the hands of museums, dealers and curators. If you look at the people who recently organize mail art projects and exhibitions, you realize that many of them are gallery owners and directors of official cultural institutions. Many artistic expressions have gone completely mainstream. Art is supposed to be an instrument of expression and communication, but a lot of people now only care about the commercial side.

#### What do you propose in order to turn things around?

We should put art back to where it belongs. In other words, we should remove it from the glass cases and give it back to the public, making its communicative functionality prevail and turning it into a tool for dialogue. Such was the revolution brought about by Ray Johnson – even though he later regretted it: a cultural and artistic construction, aimed at the system's heart, which rejects the desire of money for money's sake and fights the worst aspects of the art market and consumer culture. The '60s' quest for universal brotherhood may be an impossible dream to achieve but still, it is a dream worth fighting for.

#### Don't you find these ideas a little anachronistic?

On the contrary, the networking spirit is more alive than ever. The classic approach, with its focus on letter writing and the use of the postal system, may be not as popular as before, but the e-mail has brought new energy and new approaches to community building, and even artistic production. Indeed, interactivity and communication are the foundations that sustain the Internet. Finally we have the technological means to achieve the greatest of utopias - the eternal communication with no frontiers. The real danger, in my opinion, is that the values and ideas expressed by the old avant-garde get diluted by the incessant chattering online and end up losing their original strength. But I still have faith in what Deisler called UNIver(s) and Robert Fillou popularized as the Eternal Network. Why doubt its eternity? Isn't communication eternal after all? In my opinion networked art will only disappear when the roads of communication themselves (mail, the Internet, fax, etc.) disappear.

#### You may not like the situation, but you seem to be more active than ever.

Of course! The main reason is that I have thousands of friends worldwide who are still in touch with me and send me their kind words and artworks, and I owe a reply to each and every one. This endless energy is what keeps me going. Also, I want to keep alive the fighting tradition of my old friends, Deisler, Ogaz and Vigo. Networking was perfect for us. Its novelty stems from the person-to-person, dialogic relationship established through the communication at a distance. It reveals itself as revolutionary when confronted with the false communication of the official art system. I believe it's still worth fighting for the preservation of a universal language.

# Speaking of your fellow artists in Central and South America, how do you judge the Latin American network now? Have things changed since you started in the '60s? And do you find the younger generations are interested in what someone calls an obsolete art form?

Around the mid-80s, with the restoration of democracy in many Latin American countries, our artistic activity earned new strength and a number of exhibitions followed one another. In this new political climate it has been possible to consolidate public feelings around shared ideals by calling attention to social solidarity and cohesion, especially in the face of rampant international neo-liberalism. In this sense I believe that the richness and variety of creative offerings coming from Latin America was also due to its less cosmopolitan nature. In other words, we have been blessed by the emergence of new artists – many of whom are extremely young – whose minds haven't been completely poisoned by the hegemonic nature of cultural globalism. The Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Spain, has recently organized an excellent excursus on Latin American art called "Losing the Human Form: A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America." It clearly shows the relationship between the effects of violence on bodies and the contemporary radical experiments in artistic freedom and transformation conducted by the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualism Network).

Preserving cultural heritage is of the utmost importance. Yet you have lost your archive more than once due to your personal problems with the political regime.

Yes, I have lost my files twice. The first time was in 1973. One year before I had exhibited in Montevideo works by more than 400 experimental poets (visual poems, audio poems, process poems, etc.) in the Exhaustive International New Poetry Exhibition. In 1973 I packed the entire collection for an exhibition at the Fine Arts Museum of Santiago de Chile and delivered it to the Chilean Consul in Uruguay. The following week, Augusto Pinochet murdered the democratically elected Chilean president Salvador Allende and overthrew the government. I couldn't go to the Embassy to get back the ten boxes containing all the works, so I ended up losing all my visual poetry archive. In 1974 I began to organize the Festival de la Postal Creativa (Creative Postcard Festival) and rebuild my archive. But when I was imprisoned by the Uruguayan dictatorship in 1977 I lost 20 suitcases with all the works and correspondence I had received from Josef Beuys, Timm Ulrichs, Dick Higgins, Ken Friedman, Ulyses Carrión, Sarenco, Robert Filliou, and hundreds of other artists. Now I am overseeing the creation of a foundation whose goal is to preserves my works and archive, and will be eventually given to the Archives of the Uruguayan Public University. I'm cataloging everything that I receive. My archive is available for viewing and studying to all people. Also, I'm preparing slides and documentation for my speeches and conferences.

#### Why do you find visual poetry so relevant?

At the end of the '60s, our artistic activity focused on the controversial question of the language that at the time were seen as a tool in the hands of the political regimes. Governments used it to cover with a veil all the social and economic scars in our countries. In other words, language no longer was an instrument of truth, but was used to give a distorted representation of reality and legitimize the system. It was precisely in order to denounce and destroy the kind of "elegant lies" that we took up with experimental poetry. Visual poetry is perfect in this regard because in its desire to distance itself as much as possible from verbal language, it brings into effect an economy of linguistic expressions. This frequently results in the use of a limited number of words and as a consequence the possibility of employing complex rhetorical figures is greatly reduced, the oxymoron being the one that emerges most often. Many visual poets love to use it because it generates not only ambiguity – that is the cornerstone of poetic creation – but it also calls attention to its own dual and contradictory structure. In a famous work by Jorge Caraballo, for example, the word PATRIA (fatherland) loses the letter 'T' and changes into PARIA (pariah). This letter, which can be also considered the visual rendition of a person, is caught between being and non-being, between belonging and not belonging to the PATRIA and becomes the narrative focus of the poem. We start with PATRIA as a community of citizens. This is followed by the crisis of the concept of PATRIA and its organic nature due to a breaking away from democratic consensus, and finally we arrive to the assumption of exile, the status of the pariah expelled from his country. Caraballo created this poem while in prison, when he was in a state of physical and mental duress, forced perhaps to choose between his PATRIA and exile, on the verge of becoming a PARIA. In my opinion visual poetry is arguably the only art that is able to express complex ideas with such an economy of means.

# In recent years you seem to have especially been active as a performer, travelling to many festivals around the world. Can you tell me about your activity? How is it connected to your other artistic activity?

I have been active in the international circuit of performance and urban interventions since the early '70s, but my commitment has gotten stronger in the last 20-30 years, and every year I participate in many international festivals. In my performances I hope to express my being, my concerns and my hopes as a member of the community. My goal remains to resolve social antagonisms and reaffirm the importance of tolerance and mutual respect as basic elements of the human relationships in a frame of peace and justice. Performance, because of its alternative and marginal characteristics, has become my privileged way to express my constant dissatisfaction with social injustice and the inherent inhumanity of the system. From the beginning of civilization, people have not ceased to express themselves and communicate. In many cases we do this with our body, using our voice, hands, gestures, etc. If we consider that in performance the body is the determining means of expression (and in Body Art the artist himself becomes both object and subject), then we can say that it has always existed either as a language of action whose signs must be interpreted by its recipients, or as a ritual instrument employed in the pursuit of 'something' of value to the community, albeit in a symbolic manner. I also like the spatial and temporal elements that make performance such a direct and urgent means of expression. And then of course there is always a potential for audience participation in which case the event becomes a ritual with a whole range of exciting options. There was a time when performance became almost fashionable, but I find that with the new millennium it has recovered its original characteristics, becoming once again a marginal art form, rebellious.

#### Can we talk about a Latin American way to performance?

Definitely. Since the '50s Latin America has generated its own brand of performance, from Chilean Alejandro Jodorowsky to the extraordinary fantasies of Flavio de Carvalho from Brazil, passing through Argentinean Alberto Greco who enclosed people in chalk circles and proclaimed them living statues. They are all examples of what has been called "Non-Objectivism" which mainly differs from European and North-American performance for its strong political connotations. We aim to desacralize established conventions regarding the relationship between the artist and society. Performance, in this sense, it's a privileged medium because of its nature as an expression of social conscience which is sublimated in a particular time and place. Since the start of the new millennium, performance has made a comeback in Latin America and has blossomed again in numerous encounters and festivals throughout the continent.

#### Regarding the spatial element, I know you sometimes take your action into the streets. How do people react?

I mostly do these actions in my country. I love them because these are the very situations in which art recovers its power as a means of communication, and its political meaning becomes clear as a vision of social conscience. On February 15th, 1991, for example, a group of Uruguayan artists and intellectuals realized "Artists for Peace" to protest the Gulf War. We gathered in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Montevideo, lied down in the street, blocking traffic, and covered ourselves with newspaper. Passersby first didn't understand what we were up to, but then started clapping and shouting words of encouragement. Another time, in 2004, I collaborated with you for "The True Face of Politics" international project. As you remember, you sent me all those fake electoral posters and I paraded them through the streets of Montevideo by mixing with a real political campaign. It was interesting to see the confused expressions of the people who couldn't decide what was real and what was false.

#### Anything else you would like to add?

Art is first and foremost a symbolic expression of reality. The market and all the other things related to it only came later, with capitalism. But we can't forget that art is communication, and there is communication every time there are at least two people who listen to what each one has to say, in a state of mutual respect and friendship. In other words, when there is communication there is peace.

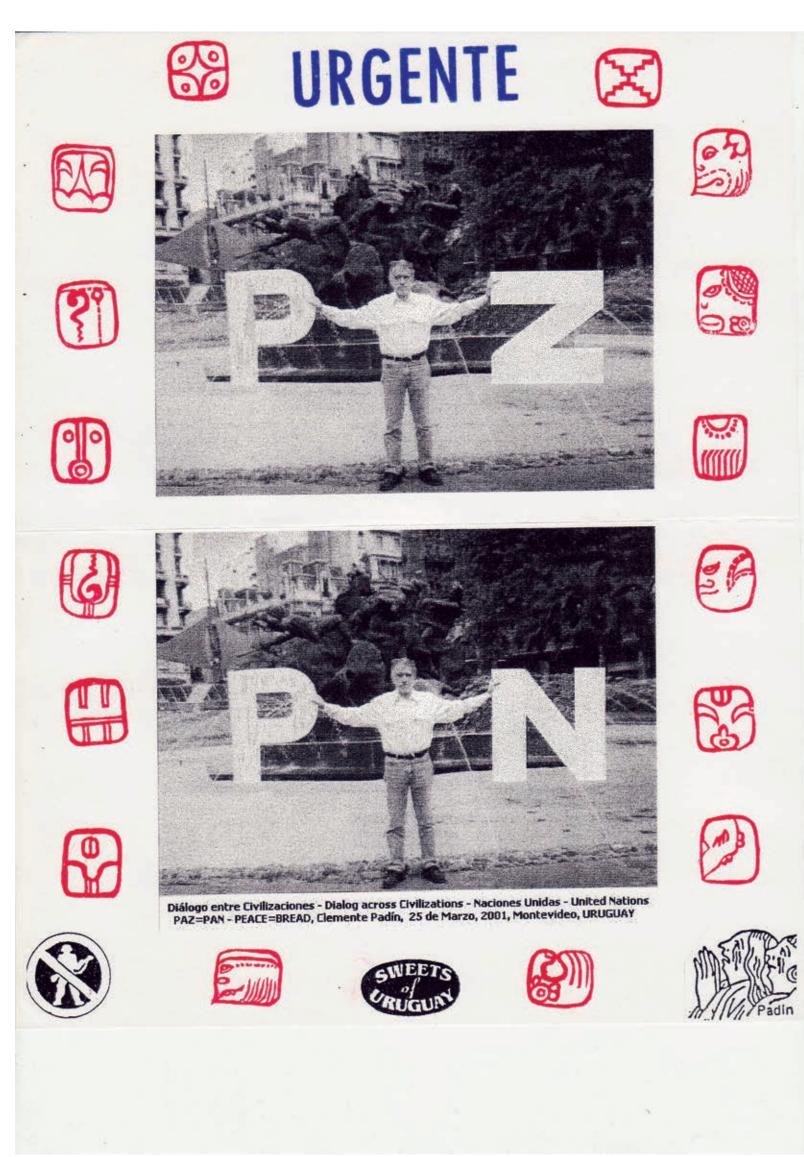
Art is the product of human work, and as such it reflects social relations. That is why I find it an inseparable part of society. The political meaning of art is inseparable from its artistic value. The network of artists who participate in this exchange of ideas provides the blood, brain and soul of this living organism. Of course antagonisms and contradictions are part of the game, but that's okay because art is, after all, a subliminal form of social conscience.

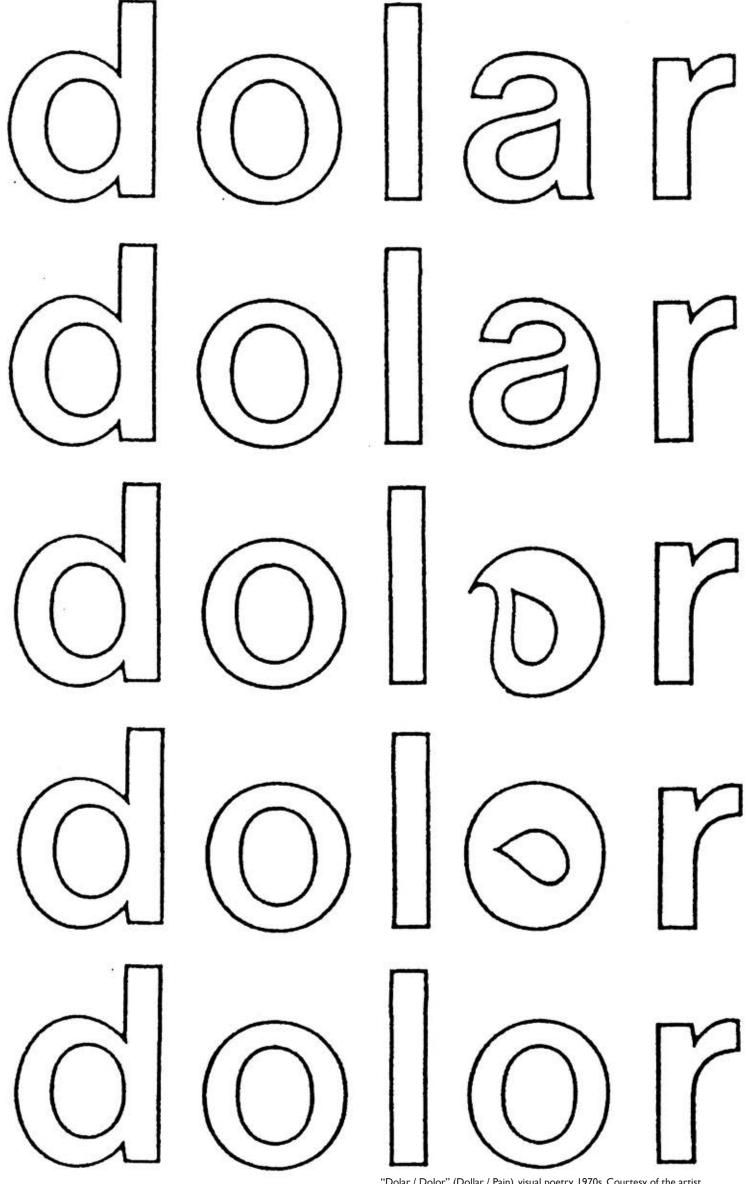


"Help Me To Stick" Performance carried out on April 7 of 1995 in the Gallery Posada del Corregidor of the city of Santiago from Chile. Courtesy of the artist.



"Mail Art Hit Parade" 2000. opening the 7th. Biennial of Havanna. Courtesy of the artist.





# MICHEL BLANCSUBÉ

#### La Colección Jumex, Mexico City Interviewed by Julio César Morales







Miguel Calderón, "Evolution of Man", 1995. Courtesy of La Colección Jumex

An Interview between Julio César Morales (ASU Museum Curator, Arizona) and Michel Blancsubé (La Colección Jumex, Mexico City)

Fundación Jumex is a spectacular and renowned collection of more than 2,600 works by emerging and established contemporary artists from Mexico, Latin America, the United States and Europe. Based in Mexico City, Fundación Jumex has a 10-year history of supporting contemporary art through collecting, exhibitions and educational programs. The forthcoming exhibition, "Turn off the Sun" at the ASU Art Museum will present major pieces and installations by artists never, or rarely, seen in Arizona exploring diverse media and practice. The work has been selected around the complex relationship between Arizona and Mexico with broad references to borders, labor, movement and site. Artists include Doug Aitken, Jeff Wall, Francis Alÿs, Miguel Calderón, Mónica Espinosa, Superflex amongst others and a site specific installation by Alejandro Almanza Pereda.

Michel Blancsubé was born in Vanves, France in 1958. He was assistant curator at the Contemborary Art Museum in Marseilles from 1996 to 2001, the same year he took over the Department of Registrar of the Fundación/Colección Jumex. He has curated the following exhibits: Esquiador en el fondo de un pozo (2006), Entre patio y jardín (2007), Yäq (2007), Schweiz über alles (2008), El norte del sur (2008), In memoriam Albert Hofmann (2008), Les enfants terribles (2009) Mónica Espinosa. El peso del mundo (2010), Carlos Amorales. Vivir por fuera de la casa de uno (2010), ¡Sin techo está pelón! (2010), antes/ después (2011), Historias de A (2011), Juan Pablo Macias. Tiempo muerto. Economías del deseo (2012) and Poule! (2012).

#### You have been involved with La Colección Jumex since the beginning in 2002; what are the origins of the collection?

Just to be precise: La Colección Jumex opened its gallery in Ecatepec on March 3rd, 2001. I came in February 2001 to install the second edition of Carambole with Pendulum by Gabriel Orozco, and it's at that time that La Colección Jumex offered me a job. I accepted and started as the registrar on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001, exactly six months after it opened. The inaugural exhibition was still on view, which means that I have worked on all the exhibitions that Fundación/Colección Jumex has produced since the beginning, in Mexico and abroad.

Eugenio López Alonso started to collect in the early nineties following a private passion. Mister López decided to make this passion public in the fall of 1993 and opened the space he created inside the juice factory. The gallery has existed for more than eleven years now. The collection is international and counts more than 2,600 artworks that represent the production of a bit more than 700 different artists. If we ignore about ten pre Colombian sculptures, the oldest piece of the collection is a painting by Alfred Leslie dated 1953. Most of the artworks of the collection were produced between 1995 and now.

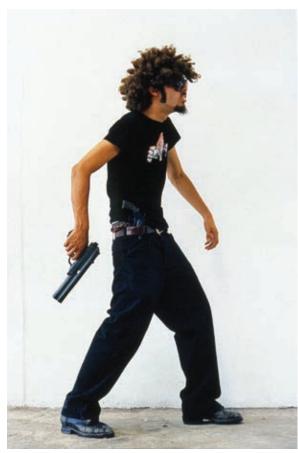
#### Some of the most experimental and interesting Mexico-based exhibitions over the last ten years have happened at Jumex, can you talk about one of vour curatorial broiects?

I cannot imagine an exhibition out of context. An exhibition space in a certain environment at a certain time is taking place in a context. I generally don't choose a theme and then look for artworks to sustain or feed it. In fact, the starting point for 'Les enfants terribles', which was on view at Jumex from November 2009 until March 2010, was a kind of comment about this. By looking at the collection all year, I am seduced by artworks and imagine funny games between them. The theme or the discourse comes after or during the construction, and in a way it is suggested by the artworks themselves.

The starting point of Poule!, the last reading of La Colección I imagined, came after visiting some exhibitions around with strong statements clearly defined by their curators: in many cases I had some difficulties relating some of the artworks to the themes. I had to recognize that the curators displayed what they wanted to show without caring about the connection between their thinking and what was on stage. Then I decided to exhibit in Poule! what I was seduced by and said that the exhibition hadn't any theme or at least any main one.

Let's say that each exhibition I curate is an autonomous episode of a single narration. Even if I avoid falling into references, I agree that certain themes recur in the exhibitions I curate. After the opening of 'Vivir por fuera de la casa de uno' at the Museo Amparo in Puebla (2010) - the exhibition by Carlos Amorales, which he invited me to curate - someone pointed out







that I had done what I did three years ago in the same city, and had opened the windows in order to allow the artworks to receive natural light. It is true that I reuse techniques that I like, but it's not the same to work with 200 artworks. As was the case for 'Esquiador en el fondo de un pozo' at lumex in Ecatepec in 2006. Then there was the opening of El Laberinto de las Ciencias y de las Artes in San Luis Potosí (2008), built to the monumental design of Ricardo and Victor Legorreta. Aimed at the young, the museum offers a playfully thematic approach to our planet and its universe. Invited to make use of the temporary exhibitions space, La Colección Jumex contributed to the establishing of this new venue in the provinces. The exhibition I devised for these 700 square meters was comprised of only three works: Pulse Room (2006) by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Your Intuitive Surrounding Versus Your Surrounded Intuition (2000) by Olafur Eliasson, and a small 2006 painting/collage by Mathieu Briand. As a way of stressing that only three artists are involved, I suggest the title The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but as anticipated, I was vigorously advised to find an alternative. Mathieu Briand's small work uses a photocopy of a detail from La Nuit by Claude Joseph Vernet: the figures grouped around a fire situated in the lower right corner. This reproduction is mounted on a piece of black-painted plywood measuring 13 by 23.5 centimeters., the black being a mix of acrylic paint and LSD. This last detail inspired my second suggestion for a title, which was accepted, although not without certain new reservations. At the entrance of the exhibition one can read the following:

In memoriam Albert Hofmann

(Basel, Switzerland, 11 January 1906 – Basel, Switzerland, 29 April 2008)

Last Friday Albert Hofmann came from Switzerland to see me and correct my judgment of his exposition. Exposition: that is doubtless the best description of an operation that cannot exactly be classified as either a discovery or an invention. Everything is discovery: we lift the veil hiding Nature and those virtues to whose intimate being we shall never gain access.

(Heidelberg, Germany, 29 March 1895—Wilflingen, Germany, 17 February 1998)

"An art scene needs several factors to exist: first of all artists, then and without any hierarchic order, collectors, galleries, critics, curators, museums, etc. Nowadays there are maybe only two countries in Latin America where all those factors are powerful and really active: Brazil and Mexico."

During the opening I found myself explaining to the governor of the State of San Luis Potosí that Albert Hofmann and Ernst Jünger had taken LSD together in the 1950s and that by checking their birth and death dates one could realize that both had died at age 102.

#### From your perspective, can you describe the current arts environment in **Mexico and South America?**

An art scene needs several factors to exist; first of all artists, then and without any hierarchic order, collectors, galleries, critics, curators, museums, etc. Nowadays there are maybe only two countries in Latin America where all those factors are powerful and really active: Brazil and Mexico. One particularity of Mexico is that this country has also an impressive cultural background which includes a lot of architectural monuments. Brazil doesn't have this kind of historical patrimony. In terms of public institutions let's point the strong implication in contemporary art of the UNAM. La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México is the biggest University in Latin America and it is managing many contemporary art spaces in Mexico City including the MUAC that was inaugurated in November 2008. The Museo Tamayo just reopened with more spaces. There are more Mexican artists now than ever. The success of certain key figures, and their local and international prominence, has certainly stimulated a lot of vocations. Art scenes of Latin America are now directly connected and this is quite new. Before artists from those countries met in New York, London or Paris.



Francis Alÿs, "Cuando La Fe Mueve Montañas "(When Faith Moves Mountains), Lima, Peru, April 11 th, 2002. Multi- media installation. Courtesy of the artist and La Colección Jumex, México.

Now they are in touch without passing exclusively through the supposed main stream. Many Latin American countries have their own art fairs and even if I'm not crazy about judging the health of an art scene through the market we have to recognize that the Rio de Janeiro artfair for example or the one happening in Bogotá in October every year since 2005 are more and more successful.

# Jumex will soon open another space in Mexico City; can you talk about how that specific venue will function differently than the current space or what new programs will launch?

The big changes will come from the increased size of the exhibition space we will have to manage and the location of the new venue. The new museum located in Polanco, a wealthier and central area of the city, will offer about 2.000 square meters of exhibition. More space to feed means more exhibitions to produce. This new configuration will also affect the function of the original venue located inside the main production unit of the Jumex Company in the suburb. This "historical" exhibition space is about 1.300 square meters. Most of the exhibitions we organized there since 2001 were readings of the collection curated by curators invited or curators from the collection team. The curators we invited in the past to purpose interpretations of the collection for this space or in museums from abroad were Dan Cameron, Philippe Vergne and Douglas Fogle, Patrick Charpenel in 2003 before he became director of the foundation, Guillermo Santamarina, Carlos Basualdo, Francis McKee, Alma Ruíz, Jessica Morgan, Frédéric Bonnet, Shamim M. Momim, Edelbert Köb, Silvia Cubina and Raphaela Platow, Adriano Pedrosa and Osvaldo Sanchez; and now Heather Sealy Lineberry and you. Since 2004 with the monographic exhibition dedicated to the Canadian artist Rodney Graham, we also started to produce and receive exhibitions not exclusively showing works from the collection. This was for example the case in 2005 when we hosted On Kawara Consciousness. Meditation. Watcher on the Hills, an exhibition organized by the Ikon Gallery of Birmingham and Le Consortium from Dijon that Jonathan Watkins and Franck Gautherot or in 2008 with Brave New Worlds curated by Yasmil Raymond and Doryun Chong that were working at the Walker Art Centre from Minneapolis at that time. Don't think that I'm excessively nostalgic but this quick overview of the past gives an idea of the type of program we activated and demonstrates that there is not huge differences between what we did and what a classical public museum does. Now with the entrance of Patrick Charpenel as director and Magali Arriola as another curator, the curatorial department is stronger than ever. More monographic exhibitions will be produced and the program of the gallery in Ecatepec will be more oriented on specific and experimental collaborations with artists from Mexico and abroad. We're also thinking about working on artistic historical movements.

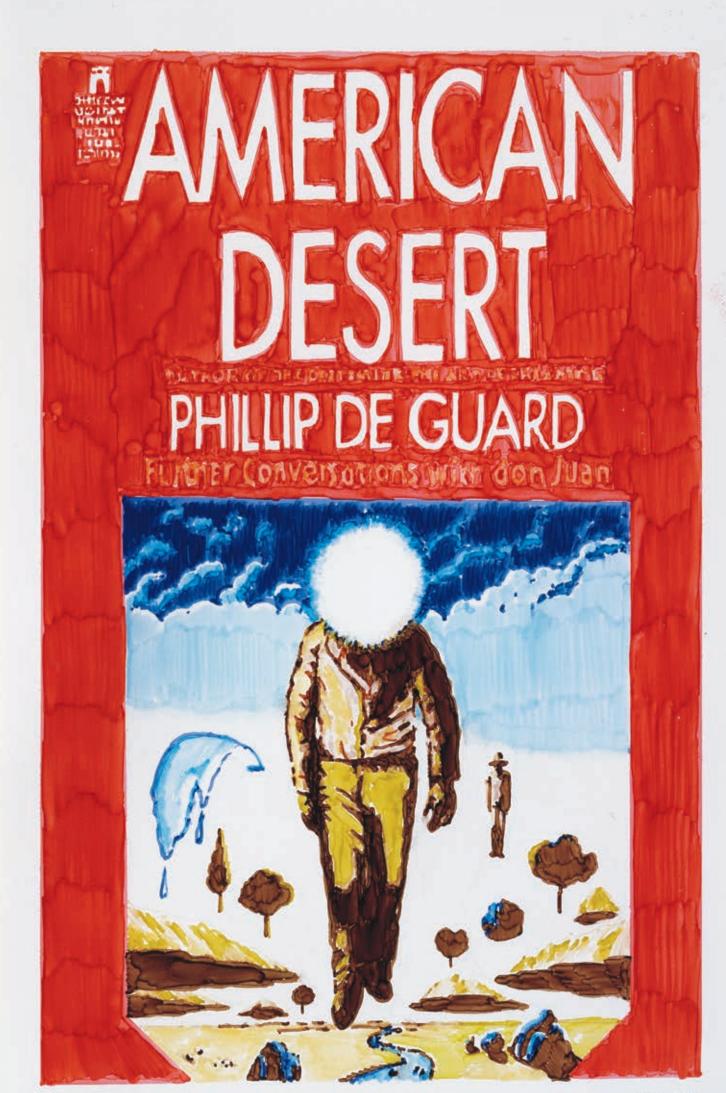
Throughout its history Jumex has produced some of the most innovative publications, such as An Unruly History of the Readymade, which featured artworks as individual trading cards, caution tape, interpretive text as field guide book, all housed in a bright yellow Plastic first-aid kit box. It seems as if the exhibition's premises continue with the design within the publications. Can you articulate the process of creating the publications and considerations that take place for the overall concepts?

The institutions have two types of editorial policies. Some of them used to adopt the same format and look for all the catalogues they publish in order to have an easy and strong recognizable identity. The problem with this policy is that the publication cannot always represent the specificity of the exhibition. In the Museums of Marseilles the editorial department decided to create such a collection with the same dimensions and graphic design for all their publications. The Contemporary Art Museum was the first to break this by publishing specific catalogues linked with their exhibitions. I personally imagine the catalogue of an exhibition as a bi-dimensional translation of a tri-dimensional display. In fact, I like that the publication related to an exhibition not only translates in graphical terms what the exhibition moves but also develops or explores some aspects that the exhibition only suggests or even not. There are also two ways to plan an exhibition's catalogue: to have it ready the day of the opening or later on. I like to cook it at the same time. I feel quite a gamble to produce a book that describes in advance something that doesn't still exist and that will provide an account of the exhibition later. The classical justification of having a catalogue appearing later than its opening is to have installation views of the exhibition published. Both solutions have their own advantages.

#### What other independent curatorial projects are you working on currently or in the near future?

No independent curatorial projects, in fact: I'm now working on one of the opening exhibitions for the new museum in Polanco that should talk about mapping. I decided to focus like a monomaniac on this issue as soon as we turn off the sun in Phoenix.

# Turn off the Sun Selections from La Colección Jumex Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, Arizona. March 9 – September 7, 2013 Curated by Michel Blanscube, Heather Sealy Lineberry, Julio César Morales



MTOZ



Architectural rendering of the new La Colección Jumex building, opening in the fall of 2013 in Mexico City. Courtesy La Colección Jumex, México.



Sam Durant, "Male Colonist (headless)", 2006. C-print. Courtesy of the artist and La Colección Jumex, México.

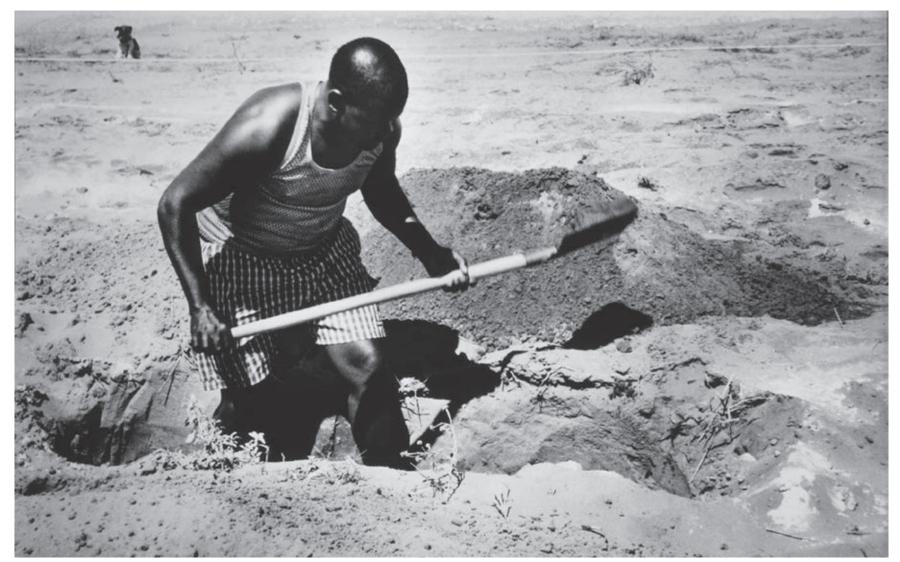
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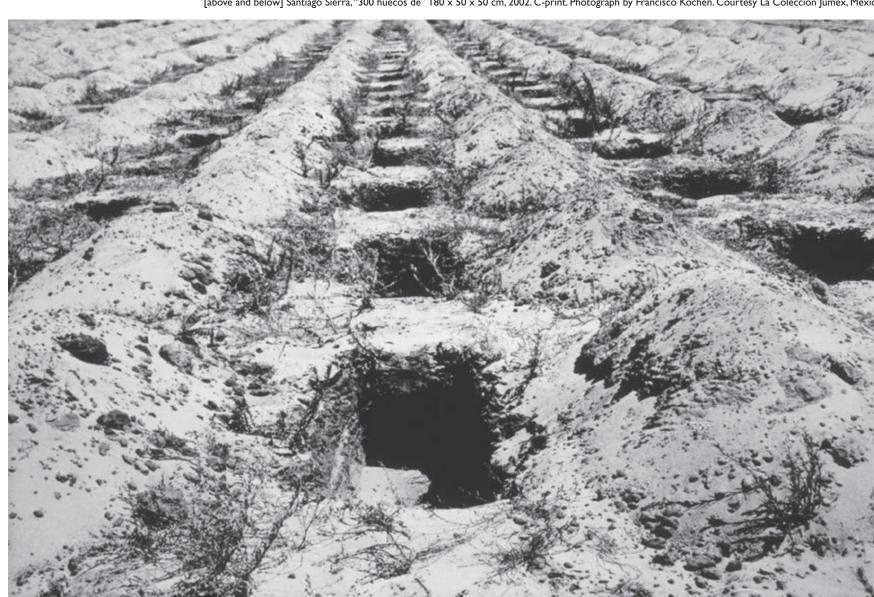
[above and below] Installation view, "In memoriam. Albert Hofmann", curated by Michel Blancsubé, 2008. Courtesy La Colección Jumex, México.



Mathieu Briand, acrylic paint and LSD. 13 by 23.5 centimeters. Courtesy La Colección Jumex, México.



 $[above\ and\ below]\ Santiago\ Sierra, "300\ huecos\ de"\ 180\times50\times50\ cm, 2002.\ C-print.\ Photograph\ by\ Francisco\ Kochen.\ Courtesy\ La\ Colección\ Jumex,\ México.$ 



#### Interviewed by Andrew McClintock



Growing up in San Francisco, specifically in North Beach, I was exposed to the underbelly of crass culture, beatnik folklore, and dark offerings that the beach willfully provides at an early age. I haven't figured out if it's been detrimental or not yet. After I graduated from the seemingly cool act of reading a Kerouac book while sipping espresso at the Trieste, I was exposed to the darker side of the Beats and what came in their wake. My first experience with punk was hearing my older brother Jesse (who is now a Monk) blast Bad Brains, Minor Threat, and Dead Kennedys'. I loved it.

I got kicked out of grade school and turned even more punk, as punk as a kid can be at eleven in the mid-90's. It was about as punk as the last time I saw DEVO a few years ago while working backstage; they bitched to each other about their rider, how there weren't enough green m&m's, and other such certifiably lame subjects. Every generation has their own punk culture and that's rad, it's punk... and I think it's necessary for every generation, especially when it figures out that mass culture is a cruel joke.

I first met V.Vale a few years ago through LSD legend Mark McCloud. But it's not until recently that I really began to understand his deep roots in alternative culture, not just in San Francisco but really world wide. "Search and Destroy" was the first punk magazine/ zine/ megazine around. Ever. Vale also contributed to the coining of other movements that came out of punk: industrial music [Industrial Culture Handbook], the modern day tattooing frenzy [Modern Primitive], zine culture [Zines Vol, I-2], "Pranks!". I met Vale at the North Beach office he's occupied for longer than I've been alive, a fact he was quick to point out. After many cups of tea and an interesting interview format, during which he pulled out his own tape recorder and started asking me questions, about three hours had passed. What follows is a partially edited version of that conversation, while keeping in the free-flow interview style that he and I both embrace as publishers and editors. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did...but then again, I don't give a fuck cause I'm still a punk.

V.Vale photographed by Andrew McClintock in Vale's office.

**V.Vale:** I am very impressed by what you've done, and I've read all the issues or all the key articles. My favorite things to read are Q&A interviews, art history type articles [whether it's the history of a gallerist, gallery, an artist, or whatever], and anything to do with the art world in general. But what impressed me the most is: I'm glad there's a new generation coming up, because they can do things that I certainly could never do, and in theory your children, the next generation, are supposed to be more intelligent, more competent, blah, blah. What you've done, trying to be more universal, egomaniacal, you've just done things on a scale I can't even comprehend in terms of both the scope of the entire history and provenance, and contemporary state of the art world as we know it. It used to be mostly the western art world, but now I see it's branching into Asian and Middle Eastern and all that. But you have such a massive amount of what appear to be ads. I could never do that. When I started out publishing my tabloid format Search and Destroy, I could never get any ads.

Andrew McClintock: It's been really interesting because until the first issue, I didn't have experience with advertising. The first issue was paid for by the old president of the San Francisco Art Institute, Chris Bratton. He gave me a check through the school and that's how it was started. The way you started, that's pretty amazing with Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti giving you a hundred dollars each, and then a doctor friend of yours gave you the other two hundred dollars. So I don't know, I've never gone to business school or anything, I kind of think my brain has done some weird stuff in the last two or three years. I just wake up with crazy ideas. But it's all by the tail of—or the skin of my teeth, I just kind of embrace the idea of learning from my mistakes, or learning from the mistakes other people have made.

That's very hard. It's easy to say that, it's another thing to do it. Like almost all the mistakes I made, I knew better but I did them anyway, and I paid the consequences.

When you were publishing though, even when you had the typesetting company, that's the part that's so different now. I lay everything out on my computer and I just send it right to the printer. They send me a digital proof. I don't see it until the thing comes out. I'll do one quick look-through. It will take me a few weeks to actually read it in print because I've read it so much on my computer already, and I don't want to see the inevitable spelling or layout mistakes.

"...and these people, they might not have an education or a degree from Harvard, but they're so streetwise they can con you out of anything."



Cover of issue one of "Search and Destroy", 1977. Courtesy of V.Vale

That sounds right. I used to joke that once I publish any damn thing I never look at it again because within five minutes I will find a typo or a way I could have stated something a little better. Because my hands-on editorial policy is: every word must earn its keep, but if you cut too much you start damaging the style of the speaker.

#### Yes, so you took format cues from, say, Interview Magazine?

Well, yeah, I totally ripped it off format-wise, and I knew it was cheap. There used to be a local store two hundred feet away, a kind of small super market called Rossi Market where I would shop. It seemed like every Friday I'd get junk mail advertising their specials, and if they could afford to do that, it must be cheap. So I went and said who's your printer?

#### The first printer was super local, huh?

Yeah, Howard Quinn, and he might still be there, he might not, but he had this massive building set up with these ginormous presses. That's what it took to put out a flyer, black and white. I don't know if he did color or not. If he did I never went there because of budget. I was minimalist, I guess.

#### What was the turnaround time typically?

It was overnight. You brought them and then you picked them up the next morning. This was all probably scheduled. But let's talk about you for a minute. I look at SFAQ, and think, gee, I'd like to do that myself! It's a local publication, it's called San Francisco Arts Quarterly, you're trying to give support to the local arts community. And what can you pass on? I want to know how people work, how they get ideas, where they buy or steal their materials, things like that. But I have always stayed away from sensationalism. I don't want to know certain things about an artist's personal relationships. It's not even what I want to cover.

#### Drama? But the readers love it!

I don't care. It's trash! And you can find that shit in mainstream media by the manure tonful. I don't want to be there. I always felt that, gee, I'd like to be read thirty years from now, maybe a hundred years. Who's going to read me? I'm never going to get a mass audience, I'm only going to get artists, creative rebels. And so that's what I'm going to aim at, just things to try to inspire, I guess. I'm not sure I had that word way back then. Other artists work to be more creative, more rebellious, more disciplined, they work harder. That's why I've always been so anti-drug and alcohol because I just feel like working all the time, mother fucker, and then you can die.

I was watching a past interview, you were being interviewed at ATA. I found it online, and I couldn't tell if you were joking about being anti-drug, but you

It doesn't matter—I do censor it out of my publications. If people tell me about their wonderful heroin use and how much it inspired their art, that doesn't go in on print. Not that anyone ever has or does, because they don't. Maybe people know that, but having said that I'm anti-drug, I don't give a damn who out there in the world does what. I'm not their policeman. I'm not their parents.

#### I dig what you said about just working all the time, because I do, I'm a bit of a workaholic.

Good. You have to be as a publisher. Because no one's paying you; you're not there for the money. I've said that Duchamp is my main influence for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Warhol is my main influence for the second half. The sad thing is that I could never learn from Warhol's incredible, magisterial, magic ability to monetize what he did.

# He [Warhol] made me start thinking about the business of publishing, the business of running a gallery, the business of curating, or just the business of it as a conceptual art extension of myself, where it's like performance art. Raising money, it can be an art action.

Turning raising money into an art! Now that's something I never thought of! But why not? Actually, I mean, it just all depends on how universal your definition of art is. You try to make everything you do, even conversation, the art and every tiny little interaction, even at Costco or Trader Joe's or whatever. Bringing in humor is art, at the very least. Yeah, so no separation between art and life is the Duchampian concept.

To bring up William Burroughs, what does "wise up the marks" mean to you? Yeah, our mission is to "wise up the marks." What I like about Burroughs is, he wasn't the only one, but he's part of that tradition, and he freely admitted how much he learned from "You Can't Win" by Jack Black. He learned from a bunch of lesser knowns in American literary history. Then he became a heroin addict, and was forced to deal with what we would call "low-lives." And he was acute enough in his perceptiveness and lack of judgment to realize that these people are kind of artists, creating their own Argot.

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and then you can die.

"That's why I've always been so anti-drug and alcohol because I just feel like working all the time, mother fucker, and then you can die."

#### You mean their cons or their grifts.

Yeah, they speak in metaphor. They speak in this underworld lingo language, and he adopted it, he learned from it, memorized it, re-produced it in his writing, and these people, they might not have an education or a degree from Harvard, but they're so streetwise they can con you out of anything. You know? And so to be wise of the marks just means: to see the marks, to be a con man and identify people to rip off. The good con man will meet you and within just a couple minutes figure out what he can get from you, what you could part with and give him. That's all they're about. Figuring out how to get power over you, how to con you.

#### Because they're so in it and they're just immersed in that way of life.

That's their game. Well, being a junkie makes you so honed on the edge of survival. Where are you going to get money for your next fix from? The next person you talk to—even if they're not willing. I mean, Burroughs knew about corporations, he knew all about advertising principles and conning, and all that on a bigger scale, the way companies con us into thinking we need a new Mercedes. We live in a world of totally immersive marketing now. And as we know, if there were ever any borders between the art world and the marketing world they're gone now. That's why your generation grew up somehow learning this, that we live in a totally immersive world where marketing has kind of infiltrated all of our language, all of our interactions, all of our concepts, all of our thinking. And marketing is as easy as breathing to your generation. So I'm not surprised there are so many young artists. Oh yeah! I got a deal with Diesel, you know, and I'm a great photographer, and I'm going to photograph their ads and jetset around the world and photograph super models and make all this money! And some of them, of course, fall prey to cocaine and other drugs that are easily offered them.

It's interesting because I grew up reading Thrasher magazine, and I used to hang out with skaters in North Beach, and it was so weird, they would never sell out. Even Thrasher told them: don't sell out! And then all of a sudden, I put it down for a couple years and I picked it back up and everybody's fucking selling out! "Well, can I make some money too, now?" You know? And it's one of the reasons why I wanted to get into publishing and have events at a gallery and make an alternative scene in a sense.

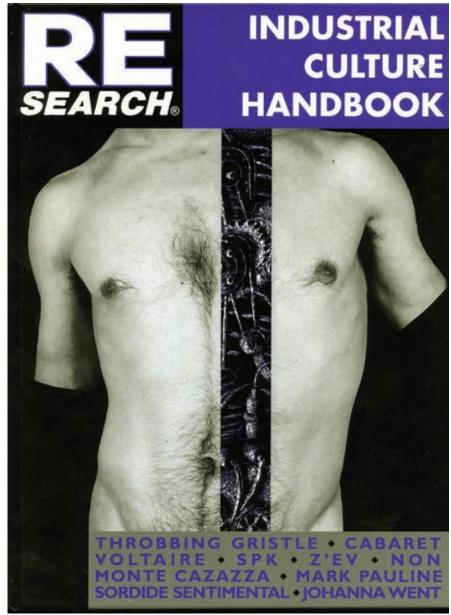
Bruce Conner gave me the thought that all underground countercultures are the same, and that made me consciously look backward in time. I should have gone lateral and gone to all the countries too and studied the history of their countercultures, if indeed, they had any. That's why I've been so obsessed with trying to find the DNA principles of the punk scene, for example. Because I was angry that people thought it was so simple to become a punk rocker. You just cut your hair yourself in some random haircut and wear a black leather jacket. That is too superficial.

# Whenever I go to a museum and see a Jackson Pollock, I always hear somebody behind me saying, "my kid could fucking paint that!" That's how some people feel about punk rock.

Speaking of Pollock, you just gave me a thought. There were Pollocks being made before Pollock was ever born. But they were known as painter's drop cloths. Because you look down and a real painter would have a million colors on a drop cloth. Now what Pollock did is he must have realized—and I bet he got it from Duchamp—and then what he did was take that artist drop cloth and cut it out in a square and frame it and hang it on a wall. That's the breakthrough. And this follows what Duchamp said. One of his quotes, which I memorized so many millions of years ago before punk rock, was: "anything is art if an artist says it is." Now that's a thought. Not anything is art period. Anything is art if an artist says it is. Well, then you ask: What's an artist? And then you realize maybe what the artist provides, what Duchamp did, is giving new thoughts to a lot of banal, everyday objects that others may not notice or find interesting.

#### Let's actually go back to Bruce Conner, the transition from-

I'll tell you what I did. I worked at City Lights from the end of 1968 until 1984 and people like Bruce Conner, practically anybody who was anybody in the Bay Area would come in there and I would often, but not always, meet them. And they'd chat with me, after they'd met me a hundred times they'd start talking. And Bruce Conner was one of them. And what I did for them, the world doesn't know, I got him into punk rock. Bruce was cheap, or let's use the word thrifty, and I said: You know, Bruce, don't you think it's time for another underground after the hippies? It's been ten years, well, it's happening right now, it's called Punk Rock. And I said, I'll get you a press pass and you can go free and take photos. You know, for my Search and



Cover of "Industrial Culture Handbook", published 1983. Courtesy of V.Vale.

#### Destroy magazine, and it appealed to him because he didn't have to pay. **So his first punk rock photos were?**

For me. Of course, they were done just for me. He wouldn't even necessarily ever have gone to punk rock shows because he had no clue where they were happening. He didn't know a damn thing about the underground. And so he liked the idea of getting in free, believe me. And he would instantly be a part of the in group because he would be taking pictures for 'Search and Destroy''. So it was win-win for everybody.

#### At this point the whole idea of "hippy" had been re-appropriated?

Well, let's put it this way. In around 1968, after the hippies were dead in my opinion, to 1969, that's when Levis started bringing out bell bottom jeans for the hippies. The corporates were very slow to re-appropriate the hippy movement for profit, but by the time the punks happened, it happened a little faster, and by the time of grunge, which was just punk in a new disguise ten years later—

#### More plaid.

Yeah, the stupid plaid and long hair business. But by the time that happened, they had invented the cool hunter, which I consider evil. Cool hunter is just a young kid pretending to be into punk rock, just like you, but continuously feeding a stream of photos and data to some huge corporate engine so they can immediately start making the hippest clothes next week. Sort of like a speeded-up—just like H&M does or—I'm not sure who else is really good at doing that—But I mean, they can see a fashion on the street and in about one week have it in the store.

#### Terrible.

I don't know. I'm not putting value judgments on it like terrible, I'm just saying that's what

#### What does that do to one's self expression though? It's like you have to keep it indoors almost. Or disguise it.

Well, that's what I mean, we live in a very difficult time. And one way I preserve my sanity is to never go out, and every time I do I'm always assaulted by the world's more powerful immersive advertising environment. Talk about performance art. Everything has been commodified by some cool hunter somewhere and we're just so in it we can't even recognize it, I don't know. I mean, if we had an original idea as far as our identity goes, believe me, it's already out there. You're already out there. The exact way you're dressed, the exact



Cover of issue five of "Search and Destroy", 1978. Photographs by Bruce Conner [left] and Ruby Ray. Courtesy of V.Vale.

brand of your shoes, your pants, the coat, the plaid.

I'm wearing Levis and plaid right now, you know.

It's all been tabulated and exploited probably.

## You know, it's interesting though, so many people just embrace that as who you are now. "I dress this way so I am this person", and, I disagree. I think it's what you do, and how you do it.

Well, yeah, I've always said that. Who you are is what you have done that you're proud of or that you really did yourself. That's who you—who are you—well, let me see every damn thing you've done. I agree. It's not what you look like. But having said that, of course, the way every tiniest thing about you is a signifier about yourself. I know a lot of people who change the way they look all the time. And so someone like me might, you might judge by the first words that come out of their mouth—you're hoping they're also kind of deep and committed and in it for the long term, but you're usually disappointed. Who knows. People are very into surface now. They aren't into depth, you know?

Depth bothers them in a sense? "Don't get deep on me now, man..."

I like that, "don't get deep on me now, man". Let's focus on what you want...

I wanted to talk about the transition between Search and Destroy and ReSearch Publishing, and also how your typesetting business played into it. You created an almost horizontal business model of typeset publishing, because a lot of the books were distributed through City Lights, which you basically had access to or were involved with. So you were able to set up this system, but also just the transition between doing the zine, magazine, megazine, and then getting into books.

Well, the way I cope with information overload, a term I didn't know until maybe Graeme Revell spoke it in the late '70s—I've never been a person who likes to like everybody. I prefer to like very few people in my life. It's the way I can cope with information overload. And when I say people, I mean writers, thinkers, artists, the whole gamut of creativity, architects even. And one of the people that I focused on a lot, in terms of trying to, in the old days, before the Internet, trying to find every word he'd ever written and every word he'd ever spoken in an interview, was J.G. Ballard of England. Not a hell of a lot of people knew who he was in this country, because he wasn't really Mr. Self Promoter. But one thing he said was: sex x technology = the future. And I would agree with that, but I would say

technology itself changes, brings about social change. Technology results in social change, and from a technological standpoint, I'm a self-publisher, I mean, that's my identity, but how is this possible? Well, I'd say that you did not have cheap Xerox machines until just before punk rock. They simply didn't exist. If you wanted to do a small zine you'd have to be in a high school that had a mimeograph machine that you could crank. They simply did not exist. Monks had to hand copy manuscripts in monasteries to preserve them, and so the technology of the Xerox machine made a lot of punk zines possible. It made my zine production possible, but I didn't have a typesetter.

I used City Lights' very expensive IBM Selectric typewriter. That was a great invention because you could do little corrections, it had a little correction tape in there. So I wouldn't have been able to do what I did. In "Interview Magazine" Warhol did the same thing. He used an IBM Correcting Selectric Two typewriter to do the text, and then you'd have to use the letrajet or chartpak press type to do the headlines and all that. And then, what happened was, it took me three years because I'm a slow learner. Three years to realize that, hey, I work at City Lights bookstore and they were a book distributor. So if I could get a little more money and put it in a book format with a spine, then I could have them distribute it and collect. Because I couldn't collect money. I sent copies out all over the world and never got paid.

#### That's why SFAQ is free because I tried to deal with consignments and - screw that! Make something free.

They'll never pay you. See, you learned.

#### Did you ever hang out at the Art Institute [SFAI]?

In the old days, yeah, I lived right across from the Art Institute. I'd get my coffee every morning there. I wouldn't have been able to publish without associates who had gone to art school or had some real life background doing layout. And kids like that were in the punk scene and they joined Search and Destroy. So after I started my own typesetting then I could do books that were kind of slick. My favorite period of my life, was the '80s when I ran the typesetting business and published what some people say are my best books.

#### "Industrial Cultural" —

Well, I know, that's very influential, but it didn't sell that well. "Modern Primitives" was by far my best seller. "Angry Women" was way up there, and "Pranks"





Full page from issue nine of "Search and Destroy", 1978. Photographs by Bruce Conner, Richard Peterson, Ruby Ray and Judy Steccone. Courtesy of V.Vale.

Full page of issue ten of "Search and Destroy", 1978. Photographs by Sue Brisk. Courtesy of V.Vale.

#### Do you think "Modern Primitives" is why every hipster, jock and square now have tattoos?

People have attributed that. People who were there, alive at the time, all say that. I say it myself. But yeah, that single book was the ship that launched a thousand tattoos or something, or a million, or a billion. One wonders, would that have happened anyway? If I hadn't put out that book? I really don't know. But it was very—it seemed at the time—very influential and viral before we had that word.

And so, my favorite time, from the standpoint of an independent artist, was when I had the typesetting business.

#### It was a format that began in the I440's with Gutenberg, right?

Yes, and people don't even know it happened.

#### It's crazy, like a six hundred year industry just crashed with the advent of modern technology.

Instantly died.

#### But you did sell it at the right time then. Did you see it coming?

Oh yeah, 1991. Of course! But that doesn't mean I liked it. Because I thought, now I have to pay the damn rent by book publishing? I never liked that because I always liked the idea that I would never have to ask that question, and then suddenly I was forced to ask that question. I did start censoring what I did in subtle ways. And another thing that changed—there became less—there seemed to become less and less of an underground in our city that was tied to punk rock. People died, they moved away, fewer and fewer people in my social sphere. And then you have the young people coming up and they're not in my social sphere, they're starting their own thing. And you can't expect to be tied to every underground intimately that pops up. There have been entire undergrounds I missed. Like the rave underground.

#### Let's talk about the impact of the "Industrial Culture Handbook."

Oh good, well, at least you know it had an impact.

#### Just in the sense that there were all these separate kind of groups or maybe smaller scenes and you were able to tie them together in a sense?

You know what, I don't like the way it used to be, in that, I'm aware that there were people putting out books three years ago on No Wave. We were never punk rock, we were No Wave. No Wave was before punk rock in New York City. But for those of us who experienced punk rock in San Francisco, it got a heck of a lot more press there, and in London thanks really to Malcolm McLaren and his ilk. He wasn't the only one, but he was more important than his detractors might think, and because the London press machine is voracious for content, and yes, the more sensational the better, the more lurid and sensational the better.

And they gave me more of a sense of a zeitgeist that was developing, which people later called punk rock. But all in all, it was just a cultural rebellion. That's the way I looked at it, but it was done from a naïve art standpoint. But it wasn't just a teenage movement, you know, of people without education.

#### I'm interested inherently in what punk rock is, or how it's represented. There was a sense of activism or a social responsibility.

Definitely political in San Francisco. I can only speak for San Francisco. And I think our movement, just because we had more gays, more older people, more weirder people, more loners, more outsiders, and fewer genuine teenagers, very few teenagers. Teenagers are simply not educated, and because of this, I think we had probably the best punk rock scene of all in my opinion. But a lot of the songs, they're still hard to find.

#### What was the big club?

There was only one club, the Mabuhay. That was another advantage. You didn't have to compete between going to four or five clubs; there's only one.

#### And if you could name two or three of the big San Francisco based punk groups?

Originality. Merit. Merit of intelligence production, quality of song writing, some of the first ones, the best ones I guess, the first ones were the ones you've heard of. Nuns, Crime, Avengers, UXA had the genius of Michael Kowalski behind them in the songwriting department.

# Did you keep following the punk culture? I have a bunch of friends that grew up in the Mission records punk scene where that's like kind of mid-90s punk. You know what I'm talking about?

Well, no because I wasn't part of it. It was too far away from North Beach. I went to the Mission starting in 1979 to 1980, to go to the Deaf Club, which was on Valencia right near 16<sup>th</sup>, but that club was so tiny, it wasn't nearly as good as the Mabuhay. We had a great incubation, like I said, of maximum two to three hundred really hardcore, committed people into punk rock, and not just occasional tourists that would drop in once a month or less.

But industrial, to get back to that, that is punk rock. I made the book, the book is a theoretical construct, the "Industrial Culture Handbook", but to me it was just punk rock, but kind of the most, the edgiest, smartest, most uncompromising people involved in punk.

#### People from London—

It was global, and what made Industrial different is nobody had that formula of guitar, bass, drums, and a male lead singer and an all boy band, which is the formula for hardcore. Which came later. Hardcore is just also part of punk, but it was kind of, to me—

#### Isn't that an offshoot of what you were talking about?

Yeah, but punk made it possible because punk started a network of stores because again, you couldn't find those records until later. Tower did start getting small indie punk 45s in edditions of 1,000 or 500 copies out there, but not right away. And so you had the network of stores and the network of tiny, fragile clubs that wouldn't last long, and that made punk grow, and Industrial, like I said, was kind of started by smarter people who were too dissatisfied to fall for the cliché of a Ramones type band.

#### You continued to work with Genesis Breyer P-Orridge afterwards too?

Yeah, everyone I put in the Industrial Culture Handbook. They were smart, and they were also using synths and electronic music and tape recorders more, and electronics. And I have to remind you, synths used to be very expensive and not everyone could afford to use it. But I guess if you're smart you figure out a way to buy one and use it. The important thing that industrial bands did more was sampling. You can snatch the stuff off your TV set or radio and sometimes some pretty incendiary stuff and sometimes you sample it and cut it into your recordings, and that I guess laid the groundwork for hip-hop. Industrial people did it first that I know of.

#### What are your views on the Occupy Movement

I love Occupy. I like all the things that rebels are supposed to like. The contemporary rebellion. But I don't know where Occupy is going. I think they demonstrated that you couldn't just be virtual in everything. You had to put your body on the line sometimes and show up, and then you'd get press. But I'm not sure if—I thought one of the goals was kind of to bring down Wall Street, and I don't see that happening yet. And bring down the investment banks in particular, and the entire industry known as investment banking, and that entire ecosystem fraught with the criminality of just making money with money.

# I think there should be some sort of specific direction or set of goals. I don't think it would be a bad idea to not be as openly passive, per se, in a sense, you know? Maybe take cues from what you did witness or what others witnessed in the Bay Area with other political and social movements stemming from getting out of Vietnam. I don't know, how the Panthers have played a huge part in the Bay Area open history.

It's the only way you can get publicity that becomes historified and therefore more accessible, by putting your body on the line in small or larger groups. You can do all the tweets you want and all the facebook posts you want, but I don't think, somehow, we're in such an age of instant distractibility that there isn't any sustained momentum of social change built up, what could be called a "movement" today. Because all the movements are kind of driven by and connected by social media like facebook and twitter.

But all these mediums, including facebook, are kind of art canvases too you could say. And people make art with them. And how do you commodify it, I don't even want to go there in this particular discussion. But it is a question to be asked, and someone will do it. A gallery show of twitter paintings or something. Twitter art works made and posted first on twitter.

#### It probably has already happened. What's up with Jello Biafra these days? You had a long working relationship with him.

Him and Henry Rollins and Lydia Lunch, and probably a few others, they have careers going around the world giving spoken word improv. People call them rants, but I just call them spoken word performances. They're speaking, and they do them in different ways. Like Biafra comes out and has a table filled with notes all lined out that you can't see in the audience. Rollins, on the other hand, he just delivers it straight without even a glass of water. From the gut. He gives a rant, which is a combination of his travelogues, his views on the world, his critique of the world. Well, I guess they all do that.

#### So they're still being activists in a sense?

Up to anywhere from a few hundred in the case of Lydia Lunch to a few thousand in the case of Rollins. And Biafra usually gets a thousand. For some reason, Rollins seems to command the most numbers, but they're both—they haven't [given up].

#### What is Biafra's new band?

The Guantanamo School of Medicine, Biafra, but Rollins has his own, The Henry Rollins Band. And then Lydia Lunch has so many groups it's hard to keep track of them all. Three years ago she reactivated Teenage Jesus and the Jerks here, but then, I don't know, there are a whole bunch of names I can't think of. But yeah, they're first generation punks that are still carrying the torch, getting out there. And they're all I think pretty much anti-drug, and so now do you wonder why I am? Because I've seen so many people die. That's why. And I don't like it when rebels die, because we're already the I% or less to begin with. Less than I out of 100 people are rebels. If you think there were 200-300 punk rockers, after two years in late 1978, which there were, well, you figure the population of San Francisco at the time was something like 750,000, so if 300 out of 750,000, what kind of percentage is that? It's very small. And then supposedly, the entire Bay Area, from the South Bay to the East Bay to the North Bay is 20 million all told. So you only have what, 200-300 people into punk rock after two years here?

Now as for personally, you know, I'm one of these people who parrots that line, which is now in a watch advertisement. Before you can break the rules you must first master them. And I'm kind of a person who is interested in everything. High culture, low culture, everything in between, and culture that's not even on the grid. I'm kind of interested in everything, and I think that's where aesthetics are too. I'm interested in all the aesthetics. Because they're a filtering mechanism, but they're a filtering prison, as well. And so I just love input from where I never would have anticipated before. Of course, in an industrial culture we're collecting books on forensic pathology, skin diseases, all the really gross and dark aspects of advancements and medical research in science, as well as all the most extreme true crime books we can find. Trying to figure out what are the worst things humans have done since the beginning of time.

Punk rock to me was a massive research project. I probably would have done it anyway if punk had never happened, but the nice thing about a movement is that very quickly you can meet a lot of very smart people from other countries. And other orientations and other education levels. I mean Graeme Revell, I guess he went to the Sorbonne and studied with Baudrillard or someone. In other words, I like to know people like that, and I also like to know people who are experts at gun repair. I mean, there's nothing I'm not interested in.

#### Definitely. I think you have to be. In order to experience life the more you know the more you can kind of figure it out.

The more you know the more you see. That's one of those statements. And our knowledge influences our vision, and only the lover can see the beautiful. There are all these statements having to do with knowledge and vision.

#### Back to Occupy. We're just here.

We have a massive problem of distraction. Immersive distraction culture, and there's so much that's actually really valuable out there to distract us with. Sort of lastingly valuable, one might argue, and I'm not sure how to cope. I know my way of dealing with things is to assign limits. No, I'm not always available on a cell phone. No, I do not, I'm not in front of a computer until night time or morning and night, you have to impose limits. I read an interview with a guy who has 300 million books in print. A fiction writer named John Grisham I've never read, he writes legal thrillers, and you know, they asked him how do you work? How do you keep producing these massively popular books? And well, he said, "five days a week, I work for four hours. It's from 7 to 11, I go to a special room, it's all set up exactly the way I like it with the same coffee mug, the same cup of coffee, and there's no internet access, there's no phone access, I do not hear a phone ring. I just write for four hours straight." I think you have to do that. And I'm so easily distracted that if I write on my computer I'm like, Oh what's this word mean? Oh, I'll go to google... and then suddenly, twenty minutes later—Oh I forgot, I went to look up this word! And it's a battle, you know, and so we live on Distraction Planet.

#### Do you think globalization is hurting independent culture?

Oh yeah, definitely. I don't think you can be global, it's just a myth. I think you have to be local. You have to support local. There's no such things as—I think morally, even though I do it, it's not, I mean, my books have been printed in China using probably what you'd call slave labor. I don't like that. It makes me feel guilty, but at the same time I've used the same print broker since 1984, and, as you know, it's so easy for something to go wrong in the printing process and it looks shittier than you wanted it to. And if you find something you trust it almost never happens, like almost never, then you want to work with that person. You have a certain loyalty that way.

Okay, I wanted to ask you about your counter culture show on public access? Oh, it's just a TV show no one watches.

#### How is it doing on public access?

We don't know. It's not doing, it just is. We have no idea though.

#### Do you do a weekly?

No, it's only monthly. It's a one hour TV show, it's an interview. It's just a TV version of what I do in print form. But then we started doing the reversal. We started putting out a line—they're not out yet—of what we call RE/Search pocket books. Four by six inches. They're going to start with the transcript of the TV show and then get augmented, maybe with another interview. Because I'm really a print person. I'll be a print person until I die. I don't want to read on a screen, I don't want to read on a battery-powered device that can die on me in the middle of the Sahara Desert. I like a book that's cheap, portable, and I can read with reflected light from the sun. I'm not convinced that it's all that good for all your reading to be done on a battery-powered device of pixels. I'm not sure it's that good for your eyes, I'm just not totally convinced. So oddly enough, the TV show that probably very few people watch, will have a second life as a book, or many of them. And that's the "Counter Culture Hour" that nobody watches. It's on the second Saturday of every month --

[Tape recorder runs out of batteries]

#### Ok I have power again...where were we?

I met a young man a couple years ago and I said, What's it like being young now? Like early 20s? He says, I'm just trying to survive in a sceneless scene.

"One of his [Duchamp] quotes, which I memorized so many millions of years ago before punk rock, was: "anything is art if an artist says it is." Now that's a thought. Not anything is art period. Anything is art if an artist says it is. Well, then you ask: What's an artist? And then you realize maybe what the artist provides, what Duchamp did, is giving new thoughts to a lot of banal, everyday objects that others may not notice or find interesting.

#### There you go, yeah.

And despite all the social media which ostensibly brings us all together and makes it easy for us to find people who—in the old days you developed friendships on the basis of shared passions, shared rebellion, shared goals, kind of. Let's say punk rock, you're in the punk rock scene, when it started out you knew these other people, these strangers in the room were rebels. You knew this was a new aesthetic because all the girls had suddenly cut off all their hair and had real short weird looking haircuts and no one was wearing hippy clothes anymore. You knew this was how you were meeting people that you shared some kind of passion to create and be part of whatever punk rock was that you'd read about in a few papers here and there. And you knew you had permission to do anything and to do it on stage, and you'd have a real audience. People were already your friends supporting you. It was just a very neat scene to be in, but I guarantee you, after two years, it wasn't bigger than two or three hundred people.

There are so many people that claim they're a part of it that weren't. I mean, I wish now—we had photographers, every Mabuhay show totally photographing every person in the audience, every time, not just the band and the show, so we could sort of trace growth, and just see, trace the growth of the scene and the people coming in. Because not everybody was cookie-cutter punk. There wasn't any cookie-cutter punk. There were a lot more women and gays in our San Francisco punk scene, and a lot of older people like me; I was older, and there were people who refused to ever be punk in the outward look. They kept their long hair.

There was one weird guy I talked to, he always had a huge beard the whole time he went, but there he is in the background in a few photos. I remember that guy, he was really weird. His name was Tom. It was very diverse, and yet all, somehow a unified zeitgeist, as unified as punk could ever be. And it was such a great scene, there must be a way to replicate it, surely, again. Maybe that's your job: to figure out a theory and practice on how to start a small art movement.

#### Yeah, because I don't fucking know what it is.

And if you don't know, no one does.

No, if anyone says they know, they're lying. They're just—I think a lot of it is everybody's really concerned about—maybe it's always been this way, but everyone wants to be the coolest person that they can be—

That's not a goal to me.

#### I think people need to let that go.

You have to be a man of knowledge or a woman of knowledge. I mean, if you're not—I think everyone is trying to be on the Internet, but I don't know if there's any magic way to just be Marcel Duchamp of 2012. I mean, I'd like to be, you probably would too. You'd like to somehow have all these insights. Because he was so ahead of his time.

#### That's why he quit art, the practice.

Well, see, that was a prank too. He didn't really quit art.

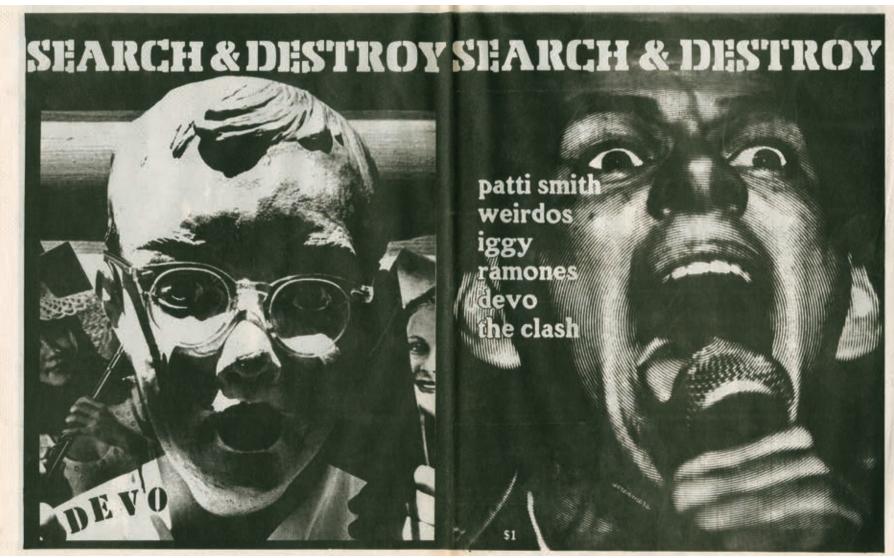
#### He changed the medium and the vehicle perhaps.

He was always doing art, but he was the guy who said no separation between art and life. And everything is art if an artist says it is. And all kinds of other statements that I still find fertile or illuminating or something.

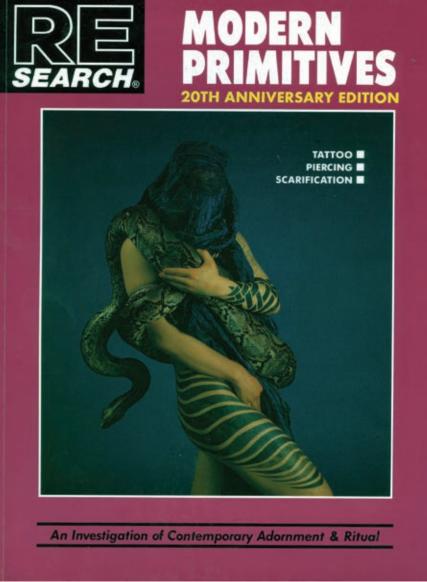
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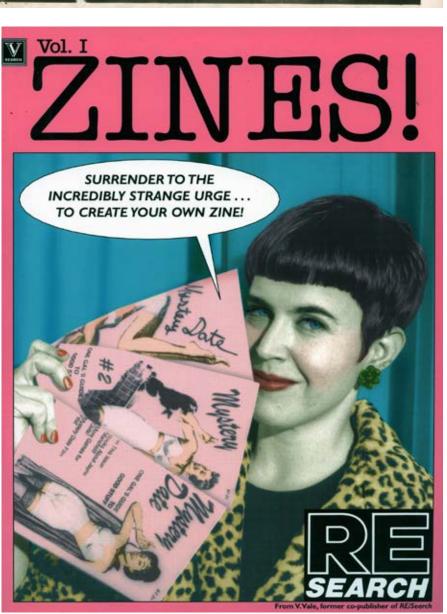
#### Cool, maybe that's a good place to end it!

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Cover of issue two of "Search and Destroy", 1977. Courtesy of V.Vale.









# San Francisco Chronicle

HOME EDITION ..

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER

# DEAD KENNEDYS!



The fastest-rising new band in the bay area is DEAD KENNEDYS -- the name alone attracted a large audience the first time they played the Mabuhay. They've only played 7 times but all events have been Disruptions -- after their third, Dirk Dirksen gave them his stern lecture on "violating the theater of illusion" when furniture was broken and a door kicked in.

Interview took place in a Bernal Beights house (primarily Chicano neighborhood) covered with doctored punk posters, photos of unusual newsmakers & events and pieces of torn clothing .... Intv. by Vale with Dead Kennedy .001 - Raymond Glasser,

Dead Kennedy ,002 - Klaus Flouride,

Jazz bass 1966 Dead Kennedy .003 - 6025, Other Guitar Dead Kennedy .004 - Ted, Rogers drums Dead Kennedy .005 - Jello Biafra, vocals

SAD: What are some of your song titles? BLAFRA: KEPONE KIDS.... SAD: -- What Is kepone, anyway? BLAFRA: It's a chemical poison that was manufactured in this plant in Virginia manufactured in this plant in Virginia that took No safety precautions, so it got dumped all over Chesapeake Bay so they can't fish there now, and the people that worked there breathed it into their lungs and it spread over their bodies and they all have double vision & gnarled arms...kinda like the Minimata disease on a smaller scale. And to help case the pain, the company case them ease the pain, the company gave them hotrod cars and things to get them to stop suing, but they couldn't DRIVE them, of course! (cynical laughter)
S&D: They gave them cars, huh? Instead of giving them money, they gave them tangible presents

BIAFRA: Yeah, they SUED anyway. S&D: Good. Did they have mutated kids? BIAFRA: A couple of the kids have been infected supposedly because of contact with their fathers cause they came home with kepone dust all over them. PLUORIDE: They won't have to worry ab-

out a 2nd generation -- they're sterile! (going over list of song titles) BIAFRA: Oh, we can't forget our cover songs either: RAWHIDE, VIVA LAS VEGAS-S&D: From the movie with Elvis and Ann-

BIAFRA: Yeah, we're celebrating the 1st anniversary of his death SaD: Oh, right, timely revival. I heard that he's had 8 gold albums since he died & 3 of them went platinum. BIAFRA: Of course, it's always easier to sell a dead horse than a living one. Slowly becoming Leninized, like in Russia, they have the government's favorite hero preserved so you can go look at the corpse -- the face stands for different ideals every few years... Now, we have things in the National Enquirer like, Win Elvis' Ring, Enter Now, No Obliga-tion::: Supposedly, they sell little rubber dolls and ceramic Elvises in Memphis that you can take home with you as souvenirs. And somebody, seriously, high up in the treasury proposed putting him on the new silver dollar. S&D: Really?

RAYMOND: Yeah, and Mickey Mouse, too. Really, Mickey Mouse Money -- that's just about what it is now, anyway. BIAFRA (naming other songs) SYLVESTRE MATUSCHKA, of course. That's not finished quite yet. S&D: Who's that?

BIAPRA: Sylvestre Matuschka was an Austrian; in the Roaring Twenties, he was a Baron or something (lots & lots of mo-

ney), then he lost all his money in the Depression; so what does he do? He roams the countryside of Austria sabotaging the railroads so he can stand nearby and masturbate while watching the trains wreck:... (Biafra recounts the tale of ALBERT

S&D: It seems like your most instantly memorable song is CALIFORNIA UBER ALLES
-- how did that come about?
BIAFRA: It starts with the post WWII baby boom bringing a huge bubble in the population; a very large group of people of a certain age group moving up the scale who reached their teens & early twenties in the 60's when the Vietnam War was going on.... SaD: Right, the first post-atom bomb generation ---

BIAFRA: And the first vid-kid generation. OK, the 60's were very intense: we had Kennedy assassinations, the Vietnam war, Civil Rights, people were wak-ing up to their poisoned ecosystem. ing up to their poisoned ecosystem.
There were a lot of people just Rebelling, a lot more than what is going on
now, and saying, "I want to make my own
rules. I want to run my own life," etc.
And gradually, about '72 or '73 (different time for different people), the bubble seems to have burst, both for the
hippies and others from that era, who
had just gotten to the point of "Where had just gotten to the point of "Where do I go from here?"
S&D: -- Inward "self-realization" and all that bullshit --

all that bullshit -BIAPRA: But part of the self-realization is that there was Nothing There; it
was kind of hollow, and so a lot of people seemed to be wanting to be told what to do -- that's one of the reasons why you see more and more people turning to totalitarian mindfuck organizations --

## AMY FRANCESCHINI

#### Interview by Antonio Roman-Alcala



Portrait of Amy Franceschini by Ashley Helve

#### What was your entry into farming as a form or theme for your art?

Growing up in one of the "Breadbasket's of America", I was surrounded by fields and orchards, the California Aqueduct and the looming Sierra Nevada. In this grand setting, I witnessed the orchestration of modern agriculture. My father farmed over 4,000 acres of almonds, walnuts, wheat, barley, tomatoes, large lima, baby lima, corn, sugar beets and owned a pesticide company. In 1975 my mother became a small-scale organic farmer following the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and the permaculture movement. These contradictory truths provided insight into the various ways we shape our landscape to support human life.

My relation to farming stems from my parents opposed farming practices. My father was an industrial farmer in the San Joaquin Valley and my mother was a small-scale organic farmer and activist near San Luis Obispo. Although their ideologies were seriously opposed, my parents involvement in growing food was politicized in their own way; my father heavily involved in water politics and labor issues and my mother was educating the public about organic food and lobbying to stop the use of Malathion on local strawberry fields. Through canvassing and attending public hearings I was introduced to food politics in action.

My interest in urban agriculture evolved through my interest in the growing population of people moving to cities and the idea of a city as a stage to demonstrate the ecology of a farming practice.

In terms of an ethos of practice, the moment of harvest has had a large impact on the participatory aspect of my work. During grain harvest with my father, many farmers would share tractors and harvest together for 3-4 days from sunrise until midnight. We would pause for sunset to eat a big meal cooked by several of the wives of the farmers and then go back to the small tasks we all had to do to get the harvest in. Within the toxic dust was an unspoken work ethic, rhythm and satisfaction of doing something together. A very small, local history was being made.

A lot of your projects have had an educational focus: do you think it's an important role for artists, to be an educator?

I do not think artists need to be "educators". The word is very charged. It implies a shrouded notion of the knower and the one who needs to know or learn. I think what your question brings up is more about what is art? And what is education? I think they constantly need to be redefined and pushed. If we drop these terms and think about the conditions in which we want to live and exist, art and education can be tools for navigating the logic of the current conditions. What I am looking for in both are moments of unknowing or not knowing. A situation or engagement that destabilizes logics of certainty. At that moment, a window opens where one or many must shuffle the pieces and reconfigure where a new logic may emerge. To me these are great art and great learning moments.

Alfred North Whitehead [1861-1947], the English mathematician and philosopher who wrote about many things including a philosophical foundation for social liberalism, said: "The future is associated neither with the growth of knowledge nor with progress, but with Radical Uncertainty." Within the current political/economic/social climate of our world, I think we need to take on many roles. We need to be active and present in our communities. In the words of Isabelle Stengers, we need "imaginative engagement, improvisation instead of submission to the given definition of a state of affairs."

Okay, so assuming that it isn't a didactic, kind of unequal exchange between artist and art viewer, isn't there still an "educational" component to art? I hear a lot about how art can illuminate new ways of seeing or experiencing the world, or how art can introduce—like poetry—a new language for describing that reality. Isn't this educational, even if unintentional or without artist control over the exact outcome of the art's effect? We worked together a little on the CaliCAL project. Can you talk about how that came about, what was your role and how do you measure success with such a project?

CaliCAL Print Exchange was a proposal to facilitate an action of international solidarity between students and activists in Cali, Colombia and Berkeley, California in a collective struggle against the commodification of what is supposed to be our public education. In May of 2011, I was invited by curator Veronica Weiman to exhibit at the Museo La Tertulia in Cali, Colombia. During that time I was a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley and participating in the Open University on campus spurred-on by Occupy. I sat in on several classes, (Teachin's hosted on the lawns and staircases around campus-including one you facilitated on Food Systems and Activism), one of which triggered the idea to pursue an exchange. It was a class called What we can learn from student movements in South America led by the sociology department. During this time I also met Charlie Dubbe, a young Geography major who had been very involved in the Open University and printmaking for Occupy. Fueled by a common interest in the defense of public education and education for liberation rather than oppression, I asked Charlie, Ignacio Chapela and you, Antonio, to form a small working group in order to represent the action happening on campus to a working group in Cali, Colombia.

I had a connection with students in Cali through a previous project of mine, *The Free Soil Reader*, a collection of writings and ephemera on alternative education. In this reader a letter was contributed by Veronica Weiman of an anonymous student from Cali who discussed the actions in 2006 at University de Valle. Through Veronica, I re-kindled the connections to the students working at Uni de Valle and invited them to do an exchange. The two groups that collaborated with us were D.I.E.S. and Group Incinerante. The process of organizing student activist groups in Cali with groups at Berkeley as an artist not officially engaged in either movement and not speaking Spanish, proved difficult. But the energy from the Cali students was so fierce and hopeful that it gave us energy to persist. There was an honest desire to share circumstances, strategies and tools for resistance.

While our local group was very, very small, we managed to organized an action at the Gill Tract to print posters to send to Cali. This action was a very momentous step in the continued energy of the exchange. The moment from which this action emerged was magical and perfectly aligned with the messages and intentions the two student groups had been discussing in emails and various skype exchanges; spontaneous production, ecstatic wonder plus a truly public education. The faculty and student body of the Ecole des Beaux Arts were on strike, and a number of the students met spontaneously in the lithographic department to produce the first poster of the revolt, "Usines, Universites, Union."

On May 16th, art students, painters from outside the university and striking workers decided to permanently occupy the art school to produce posters that would, "give concrete support to the great movement of the workers on strike who are occupying their factories in defiance of the Gaullist government." The posters of the ATELIER POPULAIRE were designed and printed anonymously and were distributed for free.

"The posters produced by the ATELIER POPULAIRE are weapons in the service of the struggle and are an inseparable part of it. Their rightful place is in the centers of conflict; in the streets and on the walls of the factories. To use them for decorative purposes, to display them in bourgeois places of culture or to consider them as objects of aesthetic interest is to impair both their function and their

"...what is art? And what is education? I think they constantly need to be redefined and pushed. If we drop these terms and think about the conditions in which we want to live and exist, art and education can be tools for navigating the logic of the current conditions."

auestions?

effect. This is why the ATELIER POPULAIRE has always refused to put them on sale. Even to keep them as historical evidence of a certain stage in the struggle is a betrayal, for the struggle itself is of such primary importance that the position of an "outside" observer is a fiction which inevitably plays into the hands of the ruling class. That is why these works should not be taken as the final outcome of an experience, but as an inducement for finding, through contact with the masses, new levels of action, both on the cultural and the political plane."

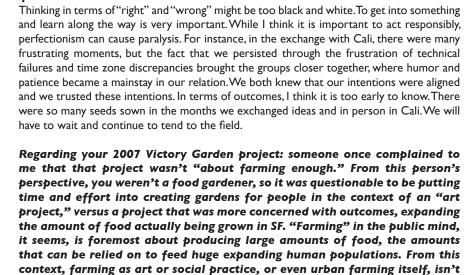
-Statement by the ATELIER POPULAIRE

The poster we made came out of the Gill Tract occupation. On April 22, 2012, students, activists and neighbors came together to reclaim the last untouched tract of soil in the East Bay. This piece of public land had been mismanaged by the University of California Regents for private interest for generations. On Earth Day, the land was liberated; transformed into a living, breathing space for the community grow its own food and tell its own stories. This farm embodies what we envision as an alternative to the profit-driven educational system. With bolt-cutters, shovels, roto-tillers, and thousands of plants; we reclaim our right to shape our communities, our universities, and our minds. This is what the ecstatic wonder of a truly public education looks and feels like.

In terms of "outcomes" or "measures of success" …I am hesitant to speak about those conditions. I think measuring builds false expectations. Maybe I will sit in this hesitation for a moment by looking at what happened. After we printed the posters, they were sent to Cali to the Museo de Tortulia where they were to be given away. Through a grant from the Nevada Museum of Art, Charlie and I were able to fly to Cali to take part in a seminar that the student groups organized to expand upon the conversation that began over skype and through emails and a blog (www.publicu.wordpress.com)

During our visit we met informally with D.I.E.S. and Group Incinerante, toured a campus farm and prepared for the symposium at the museum. The one-day seminar at the museum began with an exchange between myself and anthropologist Michael Taussig. We discussed the shifting soils of Industrial Ag, public education and how art can be a catalyst for reflection and action. This discussion triggered a heated and engaged three hour question and answer that continued informally into the night.

I agree that measurement is a problem in society: "economism" as an ideology promoted by the state and capitalist interests, to pursue economic value above all other potential (ecological, social, spiritual) values. It is steeped in the idea that the world can be measured and numbered, in order to technocratically control and direct society. So I understand the hesitation. However, I'm still curious, with something so amorphous as social change, and in sometimes very particular political environments (like the student movements and demands of Cal and Cali), how do we as artist/activists gauge



our success? How do we know when we're doing something right, or could be

doing something better? Or maybe, the answer is that we need not ask these

Again, it is interesting to think about this question in terms of framing. The question immediately creates a situation of an "inside" and an "outside". Victory Gardens 2007 for me was about becoming a more active and engaged citizen. The project of victory gardens was to promote urban food production, but within this there were other tendrils of practice at work: connecting current urban agriculture practitioners, linking current city policies to align with supporting urban agriculture and demonstrating small-scale, urban food production. If we think in terms of "that person isn't a food gardener" therefore they should not be busy with food politics, we are in very big trouble. I hope doctors, lawyers, soccer players, artists... whoever... start participating in the heavy struggle to make a more just food system.

"legitimate." Do you care to refute (or demolish!) this perspective?

In terms of "outcomes" and expanding the amount of food being produced in San Francisco, Victory Gardens 2007 was a catalyst for many projects and city support for urban agriculture and the transition of underutilized spaces into food production zones. In 2009, Gavin Newsom put forth an Executive Directive on Sustainable Food which enabled funding for urban ag projects and access to land. This directive was woven into the city's peak oil plan and Healthy San Francisco. By engaging the supervisors and several city agencies, we were able to connect various projects. It is important to note, that there were several facets to the project. One part was connected to the SFMOMA as a display of propaganda and



"Victory Garden 2007+ 1", Victory Garden Trike, 2008. Photograph by Amy Franceschini



Civic Center Garden, 2008. Photograph by Amy Franceschini



small actions that instigated the program. Another segment was done with Garden for the Environment and yet another with Slow Food Nation and many other farmers and activists and collaborators.

For me, it was very important to partner with GFE at an early stage when doors were starting to open at city hall and agencies were inviting me to participate in their programs. At this point, I felt it was very important for organizations like GFE to take the stage and for my role to be more about navigating the relational /organizational connections and developing a visual language to provoke imagination about a contemporary Victory Garden program. One could see this as purely symbolic or a crucial step forward in terms of support of local food production. I see it as both. One thing this project did is open my eyes to the use of symbolism and the intense production of the image via media to propagate support and interest in a movement. For instance... the garden in front of city hall vs. to the side. At one point, the city offered us a more permanent spot to the left of the center location we ended up using. I was very much for the idea of a more permanent garden, but my collaborators agreed that the symbolic weight of the garden in front of city hall would be tantamount and gain the eye of the public. In many ways, they were right. It appeared in newspapers across the world and instigated Victory Garden programs in five cities within the first two weeks. It instigated support for urban ag programs in major cities all over the world. I was invited by the cities of Vancouver, Madrid, Spain and Madison, Wisconsin to start a programs there, but I instead offered consultation to help them find and identify local orgs and practitioners in order to organize themselves within their own cities. For me, urban agriculture is an essential practice in terms of visualizing the problems we face when growing small-scale, locally supported, healthy food. It brings people immediately in contact with, not only food politics, but a plethora of other issues related to food, most prominently, our incredible dependence on corporate control of our health, food and political systems.

Similarly, what do you make of the difference and relationship between the effects of art and activism: to me, there seems to always be a normative component, changing/shifting cultures into new ways of seeing, thinking, believing and acting, and an "actual" component, where something out there in reality does indeed change. What, to you, is a focus? Do you seek a particular balance of the two? Is this what distinguishes an artist (culture-maker) from an activist (change-maker)?

Well to use the words of post-Marxist philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri,

"In the realm of political theory, a kind of realism reigns supreme in which the range of possibilities open to us is remarkably narrow... What is most necessary in politics today are precisely those powers of creation and imagination that can break through the barriers of this purported realism and discover real alternatives to the present order of things. Even artistic experimentation and creation that is not explicitly political can do important political work, sometimes revealing the limits of our imagination and at other times fueling it. Not only can art expose the norms and hierarchies of the existing social order, but it can give us the conceptual means to invent another, making what had once seemed utterly impossible entirely realistic."

This is what I'm talking about: there is the "real," the possible, the now, and the "unreal," the imagined, the future-possible. In activism, say, with the Take Back the Gill Tract/Occupy the Farm action, I think we are proposing a real change in the here-and-now—protecting this farmland from development—

while we are also creating and cultivating an imagination about what could be. Could we create an urban commons? Can we rely on local agricultural systems, and each other, for sustenance, outside a monetized system of exchange? The imaginations can run wild from any act, but I want to know: can art ACTUALLY feed the world? Or is it, as I would guess, pretty solidly on the imaginative side?

Maybe this is a question of value? What you describe above in the Gill Tract example is a feeding of mind, body and spirit/character. I do not think we can live a life off food alone. Art and expression are integral to survival. I guess Victory Gardens 2007 began as a reaction to making art. At that time, I was very disillusioned by the artworld, and felt that I wanted to spend my energy on "something that mattered"- where I could see tangible outcomes of my energy. Victory Gardens proved to be just that, but the curator at the SFMOMA really challenged me to use the gallery to fuel the conversation. While, I was initially resistant, this challenge made me consider the role of visual propaganda (propaganda originates from the word propagate) and a language to express the various components of the continuum of thought and action embedded in Victory Gardens 2007.

#### Where is the line that divides what is art from what is politics?

By now, you must know I am not a big fan of lines. If we look at the definition of politics, the lines become very blurry.

"Politics (from Greek politikos "of, for, or relating to citizens") is the art or science of running governmental or state affairs, including actions within civil governments, but also institutions, fields, and special interest groups such as the corporate, academic, and religious segments of society."

If we focus on the "of or relating to citizens", then I am reminded of two letters that were sent to Andrei Tarkovsky about a film he made called *Mirror*. One was from a worker in a Leningrad factory. He said, "It is a great virtue to be able to listen and understand... That is a first principle of human relationships: the capacity to understand and forgive people their unintentional faults, their natural failures. If two people have been able to experience the same thing even once, they will be able to understand each other. Even if one lived through the era of the mammoth and the other in the age of electricity." Maybe this is what art can do, help us, even for a moment, understand each other.

Another letter he received was from a woman whose daughter had written her a letter about Mirror: "How many words does a person know? How many do we use in our everyday vocabulary? One hundred, two, three? We wrap our feelings up in words, try to express joy and sorrow and any sort of emotion, the very things that can't in fact be expressed. But, there is another kind of language, another form of communication, by means of feeling and images. That is the contact that stops people being separated from each other, that brings down barriers. Will, feeling, emotion - these remove obstacles from between people who otherwise stand on opposite sides of a mirror. The frame of the screen moves out, and the world which used to be partitioned off comes into us, becomes something real...And this does not happen through little Andrei, it's Tarkovsky himself addressing the audience directly, as they sit on the other side of the screen." I found these words incredibly moving. I would expand on them a bit to extend the "screen" into the streets, inside public institutions and to possibly work without a screen or gallery wall- to be in the situation, not only representing it. I say this not to discount the power of film, but to illicit a way of working that includes the viewer in the production of the work. Tarkovsky does this using film, while, I wish to find a mode where an audience does not receive the work in a dark room, but in the light of day.

I have noticed a very anti-political tendency in art world; it seems like people are wont to consciously, vocally distance themselves from doing art as a political act. Have you noticed this as well? And, what gives? I understand that not all art needs to be hit-over-your-head-with-a-hammer-and-sickle political, but isn't "not being political" the same thing as accepting the state of politics as is?

That is an interesting observation. I think it really depends on how you define political. Yoko Ono says you are being political if you get up in the morning. I think art functions on many levels. Francis Alys speaks to this most eloquently:

"Poetic license functions like a hiatus in the atrophy of a social, political, military or economic crisis. Through the gratuity or the absurdity of a poetic act, art provokes a moment of suspension of meaning, a brief sensation of senselessness that reveals the absurd of the situation and, through this act of transgression, makes you step back or step out and revise your prior assumptions about this reality. And when the poetic operation manages to provoke the sudden loss of self that itself allows a distancing from the immediate situation, then poetics might have the potential to open up a political thought."

-From the monograph "Francis Alÿs", Phaidon Press, 2007



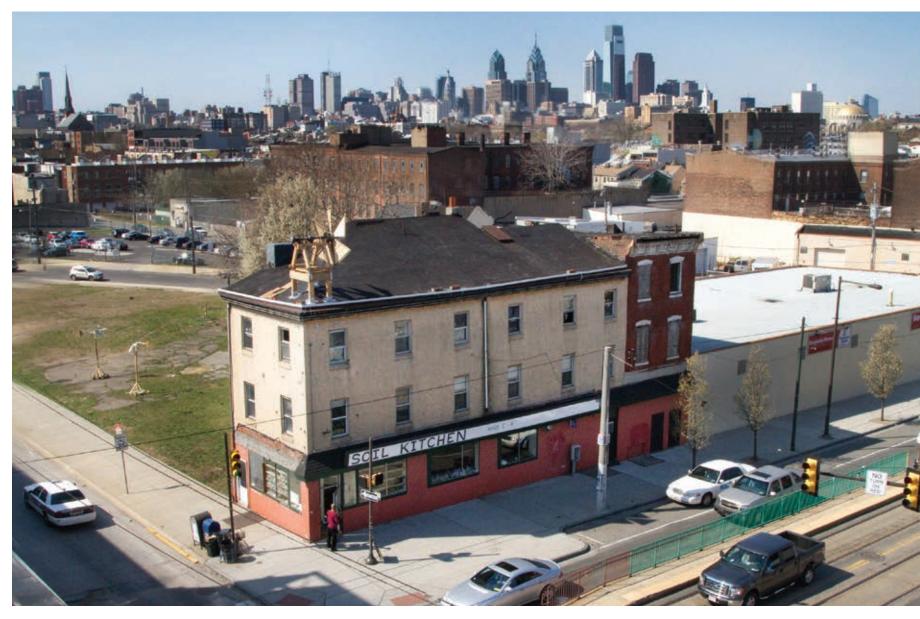
Cal/Cali Printing Workshop at the Gill Tract Occupation. Antonio Roman-Alcala printing with Charlie Dubbe (collaborator) in back. Workshop facilitated and taught by Aaron Terry.

Photograph by Amy Franceschini, Futurefarmers. Courtesy of the artist.

"If we focus on the 'of or relating to citizens," then I am reminded of two letters that were sent to Andrei Tarkovsky about a film he made called Mirror. One was from a worker in a Leningrad factory. He said, 'It is a great virtue to be able to listen and understand... That is a first principle of human relationships: the capacity to understand and forgive people their unintentional faults, their natural failures. If two people have been able to experience the same thing even once, they will be able to understand each other. Even if one lived through the era of the mammoth and the other in the age of electricity.' Maybe this is what art can do, help us, even for a moment, understand each other."



Cal/Cali Printing Workshop at the Gill Tract Occupation..
Photograph by Amy Franceschini, Futurefarmers. Courtesy of the artist.







[Clockwise from top left] "Soil Kitchen", 2010. Philadelphia, Temporary Public Art Commission. Free Soil Testing, Free Soup and Workshops. Photograph by Amy Franceschini.

"A variation on Powers of Ten" Installation Overview, SFMOMa Six Lines of Flight 2012. Photograph by Jin Zhu.

"A variation on Powers of Ten", Ignacio Chapela with Artists at 10 to the negative 5, 201. Photograph by Jeff Warrin.

"Soil Kitchen", 2010. Philadelphia, Temporary Public Art Commission Urban Farmer Gathering. Photograph by Amy Franceschini.



## MUSEUM OF CRAFT AND FOLK ART (1982 - 2012)

With Jennifer McCabe (Executive Director) and Natasha Boas (Curator)
Interviewed by Cecilia Adwell



"Fiat Lux: Randy Colosky New Works", 2011. Photograph by Jay Jones. Courtesy of MOCFA.

### CELEBRATING THE MUSEUM OF CRAFT AND FOLK ART Thinking by Hand

Will you tell us how you both landed at MOCFA and talk about what lead you towards wanting to work within the context of contemporary folk and craft?

JENNIFER MCCABE: I first became interested in the Museum of Craft and Folk Art through the former Director Kate Eilertsen and the exceptional work she did at MOCFA. The idea of curating for the space was exciting—many artists were engaging with folk and craft but not identifying with the genre, and so the challenge (and interest) lies in connecting an institution with 25 years of history to a contemporary pulse. Yet when I took the job in 2007, MOCFA had recently completed a move to the Yerba Buena Lane -- an area that was as yet underdeveloped and the board was very tentative about the museum's survival. With an organization at a crossroads, shifting energies to more contemporary practices was possible. Building on the museum's history, I was interested in expanding the audience to include a broader cross-section of the art community and general public. I met Natasha Boas from my time at New Langton Arts, and bringing her onto the MOCFA team was instrumental in our success. I proposed to Natasha that our first show be called, "Folk as F%\$#"! I really wanted to energize the space and determine if there was still relevance within the community for craft and folk art. I didn't consider it at the time, but quickly realized that my training in feminist art history, and multiculturalism\_prepared me for the challenges of craft and folk's position outside center. And my time at Langton certainly helped form my dedication to seeing new art forms and privileging the artist voice.

**NATASHA BOAS:** Jennifer and I met at New Langton Arts while I was teaching in the CCA curatorial practice MA program and was on the board of NLA. My students were using Langton as the venue for their final thesis exhibition "Downtime: Constructing 70.

Leisure" in 2005. Jennifer and I quickly bonded on a shared contemporary curatorial intellectual currency. Although I have a rigorous '80s post-modern training in aesthetics and art history and had worked as a curator and educator for over twenty years in major art exhibiting institutions internationally and locally, I had become increasingly more interested in the direct artist-curator exchange and notions of the "outside" as a critical space where "contemporaneity" exists in art production. Jennifer and I were also drawn to small-scale spaces and the curatorial pace of artist-space output finding generativity in working directly with artists and not through layers of bureaucracy, language and architecture. The art world may perceive craft and folk art as "peripheral" and outside art world commercial fashion, but Jennifer and I had been observing that so much of the new emerging art we were looking at in the Bay Area as well as in NY, LA, Europe and Asia had craft and folk art influence at its center of concern. To give a highly visible and global example, just look at Ai Weiwei's work-- his political messages are carried out through a direct confrontation with the history of Chinese craft

MOCFA has always sought to place craft and folk in conversation within the larger fine arts context. Can you speak to the urgency felt by MOCFA to achieve such a goal?

**MCCABE:** That was certainly a goal when the institution opened and throughout much of its history, but during my time that was not a focus. Many pioneering individuals had already solidified craft's place in larger institutions, like the Saxe collection at the de Young. In a way, the reverse was more interesting, to bring artists from the fine arts context into the craft and folk institution. And let's not forget that many institutions abandoned the reference to craft, such as the Museum of Art and Design in New York and the California College of Art while MOCFA chose to embrace craft. Accompanying the debate over the word craft was this resurgence in traditions and the SLOW movement, which seemed a perfect fit for an

"San Francisco is losing an institution that has fit outside the mainstream and commercial art worlds" -Jennifer McCabe



"Clare Rojas: We They, We They", 2010. Photograph by Jay Jones. Courtesy of MOCFA.

institution seeking to connect more strongly with the community, DIY and making. Our monthly public program, Craft Bar, with activities from screen printing and crocheting to pickling definitely connected with a young generation interested in traditions and making.

BOAS: I really was interested in expanding on the idea of Folk Art—I had always felt that Folk Art was on the pulse beat of the contemporary. In other words -"Folk is Now", just look at the content of folk music—it politicizes the present. Folk Art is in the streets with graffiti art and performance art, in communities whose culture is unmediated by received discourses and with individual artist practice, which may reside inside or outside of art school training. San Francisco's very own '90s Mission School group with Barry McGee, Margaret Kilgallen and Chris Johanson always had an abiding allegiance to hobo, folk, outsider and punk, and I wanted to explore the resonances of this with more rigor and historicity. Our own Bay Area art history and community have been (with our Beat, Fluxus and Funk) and continue to be --as Jennifer and I like to say-- "Folk as F%\$#". Our Clare Rojas show "We They, We They" was a collaboration with Ikon Gallery in England and allowed the artist a full-range floor to ceiling multi-paneled immersive environment in which her direct folk art, Native-American craft and West Coast modernism references, print-making and painting training enabled her to manifest new ideas around abstraction and folk in its most optimal form. It was a hugely successful show both critically and culturally.

Our exhibition program also looked to social practice as a form of new folk. The radical and very popular Sister Corita show "E is for Everyone" posited Sister Mary Corita as the "godmother" of "Social Practice" and looked to her work as social process, political and temporary democratic forms. A collaboration with Creative Growth and the Eames family rounded out our breaking down of the barriers around outsider art, design and craft and folk.

Our work with Harrell Fletcher "Only Birds Sing the Music of Heaven in this World" engaged over five collectives and mixed high-art with activist documentation around the theme of agriculture, activism and representation. Many of our shows travelled internationally and our public programs were presented as models in the museum world. Our curation of Folk Art speaks to what is being represented in our world today in its immediacy and activism and formal inquiry. Cecilia—your awesome full body tattoos are a form of Folk Art for example.

I moved to San Francisco from Kentucky to continue my post graduate education at the California College of the Arts. I grew up being drawn to the arts traditions of the Appalachian South East and was interested in exploring contemporary folk art and its relationship to the larger arts context. I think MOCFA tapped that vein of inquiry and created what I see were some of the more--dare I say: "form-breaking" museum exhibitions in SF. For me MOCFA was one of the only institutions focused on exploring the future of craft and folk rather than simply preserving the past. As part of the next generation of curators interested in less-recognized levels of art production, this was very exciting to me. Natasha, working as your curatorial assistant on Harrell Fletcher's show "Only Birds Sing the Music of Heaven in this World", really showed me that institutions like MOCFA inhabit a space that is perfect for exploring and pushing the boundaries to educate a public through innovative inspiring exhibition making. Can you tell me in what ways was MOCFA different from other institutions focused on folk art and craft?

**MCCABE:** Historically craft has categorized itself neatly into distinct but related categories: wood, fiber, glass, ceramics, metal/jewelry, etc. It seemed imperative to disregard the categories, really the mediums themselves, in order to focus more on concept. Our work



Eduardo Sarabia, "History of the World", 2008. Photograph by Tomo Saito. Courtesy of MOCFA.

was to shift a craft museum into a contemporary realm by moving the focus from medium to concept. With conceptual art, there was a misconception that the work would be void from craft, but that is so far from the case. We had to operate across generations and we took that education very seriously, and did our best to illustrate ideas through exhibitions. I remember an intern during the first exhibition who exclaimed, how can you show a painting in the craft museum?' Definitely felt that we were on the right track....we intended to challenge perceptions.

The first exhibition I curated for the space "The Shape of Things" explored the many innovations of paper, and included traditional Chinese papercuts alongside Michael Arcega's knight made of manila folders: an example of the wonderful blending of medium, concept, and craft. In "Volver: Mexican Folk Art into Play", artists chose unexpected materials to discuss history and politics as in Adrian Esparza's unraveled Mexican blanket which created a gigantic wall sculpture, and Maximo Gonzalez used devalued currency to weave, while Eduardo Sarabia combined Mexican folk pottery Talevera with drug world images.

**BOAS:** I think our message is that what is truly contemporary has many historical references—innovation has to derive from something-it does not exist in a vacuum. Art history and cultural production has always been filled with moments of formal disruption in traditions and our exhibition program sought to expose that. "Contemporary" never applies exclusively to the present, and Jennifer and I tried to activate that idea in our Craft and Folk exhibitions: we really tried to explore how craft and folk art contain multiple histories and traditions that artists practicing today are investigating and pulling apart. Randy Colosky's commissioned works in the exhibition "Fiat Lux" are such a great example of conceptual art as material driven—breaking down studio practice and art historical temporalities and forms. That show really exemplified what we succeeded at best at MOCFA: close collaboration with an artist whose practice conflated the present and the past, craft and conceptual art making it one of the most contemporary shows around. I had started work on another show about Sun Ra and his music and artwork with a Rashid Johnson "Message to our Folks" element as well as a Forrest Bess show—both shows were expanding ideas around outsider art—that's how far we planned to go with our exploration.

MOCFA was Northern California's only museum focused on folk art, what does our community lose when the museum closes its doors permanently?

MCCABE: For starters, San Francisco is losing an institution that has fit outside the mainstream and commercial art worlds—and there is an important place in the city for this kind of work: a place to see the unexpected and a place that adds character to the corporate culture surrounding us. Most recently with support from The Warhol Foundation, MOCFA was able to commission artists to make new works—in my mind one of the most critical aspects to an art organization. Artists need time, space, and resources to create, to innovate, to inspire. I do believe in the importance of the non-profit art space—existing outside the constraints of commercialism—but how do they survive? This I know: they require unrestricted funding and they require individual's support—give to your favorite art

BOAS: San Francisco loses a lot in my opinion. First it loses one of the only not for profit venues that commissions artists to do large scale work in a small-scale space. We lose our only museum with a 30-year history dedicated to critical conversations and education around craft and folk art. With our forum "Thinking by Hand" and our publications and public programs, we were really engaging current issues of social and formal urgency. We had become a spontaneous, welcoming hub for conversations, discussion and creation. San Francisco loses a small but impactful cultural gem—a museum that celebrated and represented what is specifically Bay Region local --but was also engaged in a much wider and more significant conversation. It loses its "museum for the people"—Where will you go now for a beer on Thursday night @ Craft Bar while making letter press and screenprinted t-shirts or recycled material jewelry-- in a museum gallery setting which showcases contemporary Japanese Fiber Art or Margarita Cabrera? It would be great to see MOCFA re-emerge in a form dedicated to makers and contemporary culture accompanied by a strong critical discourse. Some serious conceptual damage and real damage has been done with regards to how we as a community care for our smaller museums.



"Open Source Embroidery", 2009. Photograph by Tomo Saito. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Adrian Esparza, "Now and Then", 2009 from "Volver: Mexican Folk Art into Play". Photograph by Tomo Saito. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Travis Meinolf demonstrating weaving for "Open Source Embroidery", 2009. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Sadie Harmon's Farm Cart for "Only Birds Sing the Music of Heaven in this World", 2012. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Helena Keefe at Craft Bar, 2011. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Peggy Honeywell (Clare Rojas) performing, 2010. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Mike Shine's Surf Shack for "Inside/Outside: Artist Environments", 2008. Photograph by Tomo Saito. Courtesy of MOCFA.



Jennifer McCabe (left) and Natasha Boas in front of Sister Corita's "Power Up", 2011. Photograph by Tomo Saito. Courtesy of MOCFA.

# With Wendy Yao, owner Interview by Louis Schmidt



"Wendy and Snoopy", photograph by Asha Schechter

I was very excited to interview Wendy Yao, owner of one of my favorite shops in Los Angeles: Ooga Booga, located in Chinatown. It specializes in limited-edition books, clothing and objects, all made by artists, leaning strongly towards the handmade. Ooga Booga hosts regular exhibitions, performances and readings; it has "popped up" in a number of prestigious arts institutions, like the ICA in Philadelphia and the Swiss Institute in New York. It's also a staple of the Art Los Angeles Contemporary Art Fair and Printed Matter's New York Art Book Fair. I've long thought of Ooga Booga as much more than just a shop. It's a center of gravity amongst the de-centered hotspots of the LA art scene, setting a high standard for content and pulling like-minded people in. It is one of my most recommended "must do" stops for visitors to LA - so if you have the chance, check it out!

## Where did you grow up/where are you from? How old are you?

I'm thirty four now! I grew up in Southern California, moving around the suburban outskirts of Los Angeles...I've lived in California for almost my whole life, in the LA area for about thirty of those years.

## You went to Stanford for undergrad - what years were you there? Can you tell me about that experience? What degree did you earn?

I was there 1996-2000 and studied Modern Thought and Literature, which was an interdisciplinary program in Humanities...it was a mixed experience for me, I was still figuring a lot out at the time.

# How much did you know about the San Francisco art scene when you got to Stanford? You once told me that your band played at Margaret Kilgallen's MFA thesis reception?

I probably didn't know that much going into it. I was really into art but still young and learning all the time. I first heard of Barry McGee because I was in a band throughout high school [Emily's Sassy Lime] and we played at Epicenter, and the backdrop for the stage was a Twist mural, which was cool...but my knowledge about that world wasn't very deep. I didn't meet him and Margaret until I was in college, when I was sitting outside the library and they walked up and asked if it was really true that we told our parents we were going to math study sessions when we were really sneaking out to play shows. From then on we became friends and eventually she asked us to play her thesis show in the school gallery. That might have been the last, or one of the last, shows we ever played.

## You opened Ooga Booga in 2004? How were you involved with the LA art scene before that?

I grew up loving art, but in my teen years I got increasingly interested/immersed in contemporary art. My sister Amy, who was my band-mate and a year older, went to art 74



View of Ooga Booga's Chinatown building, as seen from across North Broadway. The shop is in the back, on the second floor. Photograph by Louis Schmidt.

school and that was a big influence in terms of becoming more participatory and getting to know a lot of LA art school students in the mid'90s. I sat in on some of her classes when I was still in high school, which was pretty amazing. She invited me to Ron Tavel's class on the films of Jack Smith and Andy Warhol, and Mayo Thompson's class on Rock, Pop and Sock. Mayo ended up recording our band, around that scene there was a crossover of art and music that seemed natural. My sister's co-worker at the Art Center Library, Steve Hanson, was in a band too, and Mayo ended up producing one of our records at Steve's apartment. Eventually my sister, Steve, and two other friends of theirs started China Art Objects Gallery in 1999, the first gallery in Chinatown. I watched them come up with the idea while they were candy-flipping at a desert rave on New Year's morning 1998, then scout out the space on then-desolate Chung King Road. Quickly, several other galleries joined them there and it seemed really exciting at the time. About a year later my sister left the gallery and eventually moved to the East Coast, but I felt connected to the neighborhood, not only from the gallery experience but also because I'm Chinese and my mom used to take us shopping there while we were growing up. In high school me and Amy would sneak out to see punk bands play at the Hong Kong Cafe, across the plaza from where my store is now.

After I finished college and moved back to LA, I did a bunch of odd freelance jobs to pay rent, including a little gallery sitting and artist assisting. It was fun but it also opened my eyes to how the commercial gallery system works, and I felt a bit conflicted by it. I still wanted to do something involving the artists, musicians, and designers I was friends with, but on a much more casual scale, and in a context that didn't cater so intensely to the hierarchies of money and power.

This is just... a gigantic subject, but you mention the "hierarchies of money and power" - can you elaborate a bit more? I ask simply because, any contribution we make to culture/society is loaded with positive and negative potential. Different people can perceive both simultaneously. Simply having "influence" can be very powerful. It is fair to say that many (including myself) consider Ooga Booga both respectable and influential, so it just begs the question: what do you think about "having influence"?

Hmm, thanks, it's hard to know what kind of influence I have, and hard to comment on it, but having influence is not a bad thing, nor is money or power, in the right context. I guess what I mean by "hierarchies" relates to the art system in which there's so much strategy to selling art and building careers that gallerists have to pay a lot of attention to who's who and how each person fits into that equation of money and influence, privileging the "important" ones pretty heavily. Even nice people end up having to play the game, so we can't necessarily hate the players...but one thing I like about having a store is that we don't have to get as involved in those politics, and every visitor is equally valued. Anyhow I have appreciation for a wide spectrum of practices, including the professional and the amateur, institutional and underground, the fancy and the shipwrecked, the makeshift and the considered, the casual

# "...what matters to me is people's relationships to the objects and people they are working with, and how they are going about it."

and the formal. I favor the casual end of the spectrum in my store mostly because I feel like there's less of a voice for that, and casual styles make me happy.

# Your background in underground/punk music runs pretty deep. Maybe you can reflect on your impressions of the SF and LA punk scenes when you were growing up?

I didn't live in the Bay Area for very long, it was only really during college so my knowledge of the SF scene is probably fragmented and incomplete. But I do have fond memories of being involved in music in the '90's. I mostly experienced it in LA, going to all-ages venues in high school, especially the now-defunct Jabberjaw, where I spent most nights of the week while I was supposedly "studying". Also going on tour and meeting people from all over the place. The network of underground musicians was very strong, so in most cities we'd meet a pen-pal, or have a friend-of-a-friend who'd let us stay with them and vice versa...a lot of people involved in similar music or the same record label would contact us when they came to LA, even if we'd never met before. There's a sense of trust and mutual support towards people who are like-minded in interests and values that I appreciate in underground culture.

Being involved with the riot grrrl scene in the early '90's was intense, empowering, and very exciting. I felt this way with punk in general too, but especially with discovering riot grrrl music and zines – finally there was a voice for all these abstract feelings I had as a teen... things I felt deeply in a completely inarticulate way were being expressed to me in a way that made total sense and made me realize I wasn't crazy. I love it when you realize there's a whole body of thought for things you were feeling but never had a language for... I felt that way in college too, reading stuff by people like Deleuze & Guattari – of course these people are way smarter and more articulate than me, but it's really inspiring.

In a recent interview with Rookie Mag, you said that you don't really consider yourself a curator, instead calling yourself a "shopkeeper." Is this a reaction to the "hierarchies of money and power" you mentioned? Also, the term "curator" is rather inflated today - a lot of people I know seem to be reacting against it. However, as an artist, gallerist, etc., it is difficult to escape. How do you define what a curator does, versus what you do? Do you consider Ooga Booga's "pop-up shops," participation in fairs, or your staging of events, exhibitions, artist collaborations, etc. curatorial projects?

I just feel that what I am doing quite literally is shop-keeping, and that's the best way to describe it. I am in no way against the curatorial profession, part of my feeling toward my own job description is informed by my friendships with various curators. My job description may overlap with theirs a little bit (in our selection of creative products), but overall, our jobs are pretty different. Maybe it's conservative of me to keep those titles separate, but there's no shame in being a shopkeeper, and maybe calling myself a curator adds a pretentious element to it, as if being a shopkeeper isn't good enough. When I am putting together an art show, then sure I'm curating. But when I'm ordering stuff for my shop, I think I'm still just "ordering." A few of the projects you mentioned involve light curatorial work, but for the most part, I am just not really convinced that what I'm doing is "curating" most of the time. I guess it's all just an arbitrary decision on packaging... a different person could call the same activity "curating" or "administrating" or "art-making" even, who knows...l don't care too much what it's called, what matters to me is people's relationships to the objects and people they are working with, and how they are going about it. I don't want to get to the point where I sound too negative toward other people's use of the word "curator"... but I prefer to use it sparingly.

I often try to understand the art attitudes of cities in terms of "art scenes," though this doesn't always work. LA is difficult because, like many major arts cities, it has an incredibly diverse art economy and many levels of divergence and convergence. That being said, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the LA art scene? What do you think of "art scenes"?

Hmm...well like you're saying, within each city there are yet more micro-scenes that may fall into aesthetic, social, or political clusters, so it's hard for me to generalize too much. In a broad sense, I have no problem with creative scenes because artistic communities help nurture new ideas and self-reliance. Something I've always appreciated about LA is how de-centered it is...It allows people to germinate projects and ideas a bit more under the radar before they start to garner momentum in the larger public sphere. There's something important about being able to mess around and experiment without feeling like everyone's watching. You know, keep it casual!

Inspired by Ooga Booga, Family Bookstore, Park Life and Needles & Pens (to name a few), I opened a shop/gallery in San Diego that closed its doors after just 1.5 years. Could you discuss the business side of Ooga Booga? Eight years (and counting) is an impressive run - how have you managed it?

Mostly through persistence, being willing to work really, really hard past the point of exhaustion at times, and following my gut in pursuing the projects that interest me most



Ooga Booga Tote, photograph by Louis Schmidt

without being overly strategic about what it will yield in terms of material gain. Maybe that sounds idealistic and naïve...and probably it's contributed to my constant exhaustion and fiscal instability, but it's also given me more satisfaction at the end of the day.

## Any last words?

I should mention that I'm opening a second location on January 20, in Boyle Heights at 356 S Mission Road., in collaboration with Laura Owens and Gavin Brown. We will have more space to do events, workshops, screenings, music, food events, and more!



My picks of the day included Cali Thornhill Dewitt's awesome "White Man" zine, by Fuckers Books. Photograph by Louis Schmidt.



Great shoes, clothes, jewelry, housewares, original artwork... and Ooga Booga baby jumpers! Photograph by Louis Schmidt.





I spy... some prominently displayed Semiotext(e) books on the left. You can also glimpse a bit of the window display painting by Beautification Solutions! Photograph by Louis Schmidt.



# **CHERRY & MARTIN**

# With Philip Martin Interviewed by Gregory Ito



Robert Heinecken, "Surrealism on TV", 1986. 216 35mm color slides, silent. Time variable. Courtesy of Cherry and Martin.

**Philip, tell me about yourself before opening Cherry & Martin in Los Angeles?** I'm originally from Indiana. I went to undergrad at Macalester College, which is in St. Paul, Minnesota. I did my undergrad in religious studies, with a focus on East Asian religions. I got my MFA from the University of Texas in painting, and I moved to LA in 2000.

#### So you're originally an artist?

I envisioned that I was going to be an artist and I moved to LA with that in mind. I had worked for galleries before moving to LA, so I kind of knew that it was something I could do, and enjoy doing. I think for a couple years I thought of myself primarily as an artist, but I realized pretty quickly that while I enjoy making work, I just don't have the temperament to be a professional artist in the way that I knew a professional artist needed to be, but I could do the things that a professional artist needed to do. So I moved quickly over to doing gallery work. I worked for Gemini GEL, which is a print-publishing house, I worked for Rosamund Felsen and I worked for Mark Moore. Then I established Cherry and Martin with my business partner, Mary Leigh Cherry, in January of 2006.

How did you meet Mary Leigh and how did you two begin Cherry and Martin? Mary Leigh and I met through mutual curatorial interests. She had an artist-driven project space [Cherrydelosreyes] that was becoming a full-fledged gallery by the end of 2005. Her background is on the museum side and she also worked for foundations. I really enjoyed working for Mark Moore, but I knew I wanted to open my own space. He was amenable to that, knew that it was something I wanted to do, and was positive about it. Mary Leigh and I have now been partners for seven years. We make all of our decisions together, and it's a very good, natural working relationship. We went through the boom of 2006, 2007, and 2008. We went through the recession. We moved to a brand new space on La Cienega Boulevard. We moved to our space on La Cienega from a space in Mar Vista that was less than a thousand square feet. Logistically our business has changed a lot but our gallery roster has stayed pretty consistent.

# I feel your programming is very progressive in a way that pushes the bar within art history. The work is more daring when compared to other galleries in Los Angeles.

It seems like people do say this to me. When I was at the University of Texas, I worked with an art historian named Richard Shiff who was really influential on me, and I think that the studio art program there really accentuated what the art object was and what its terms were, especially coming out of painting and other sorts of work from the '60s and '70s. I think that was something that stuck with me. We show a lot of conceptually-driven work, but I think a lot of the work very much does have an object quality to it. Ironically we don't show as much painting as we did, but I do think some sort of notion of what the art object is - is something that I think about a lot, whether that's something that's happening in painting or in another medium. Recently I've been thinking a lot about photographic objects and the evolution of the photographic object. We work with the estate of Robert Heinecken (1931-2006). We worked on putting together material for a show called "Photography into Sculpture" that Peter Bunnell curated in 1970. We just did a show with the estate of Robert Overby (1935-1993) in co-operation with Marc Selwyn Gallery The driver for working with these estates has come out of working with younger people like Brian Bress and Matt Connors, Amanda Ross-Ho and Erik Frydenborg.

#### How do you confront new work you encounter?

When I look for a new artist, I look for an artist who is establishing a language that really is their own. Often they then encounter something irrational in the studio, or in their practice. So they have this kind of crisis in that they have to figure out how to deal with this unexpected moment or this happy accident or whatever, but in the context of this language they built for themselves. Are they able to respond to that in an honest and straightforward way -- as opposed to a strategic way -- and are they able to build a new language out of that? That's how I think about artistic practice and that's how I judge things, I think, once I get to know what people are doing. Because I think academic art is really the danger we have right

# "You have to believe in these people that you're working with, and I think the big learning part for me is learning how to be a facilitator."



Amanda Ross Ho, installation view of A STACK OF BLACK PAINTS, 2010. Courtesy of Cherry and Martin

now. I think that it's really easy to be smart and you should be smart. But we're not looking for just smart objects: we're also looking for the organic and irrational things that art does. So it's that combination in terms of really wanting to believe in an art object and come back to it time after time.

It's great to hear how you confront work knowing you come from an artist background. You're familiar with the experience of being in the studio and encountering those crisis moments you spoke about and having to redefine your practice and language of your work. I definitely see remnants of an artist's eye, how you seek out—or just how you address the work. It's really refreshing because in many cases galleries commodify artwork, which in my mind flattens an artist's intentions and concepts. Some may say that successful galleries are made due to sales, but I don't fully agree with that. A successful gallery can make no money as long as they follow their duty to exhibit genuine work that they believe in. What do you feel are the successful qualities of a gallery in what they're providing to culture?

I've never thought about selling, to be perfectly honest. I feel like money is something you make while you're on your way to establishing art history. What I found is that the audience in the art world is smarter than you are. If you take any shortcuts, or try to pull a fast one on them, then they're just going to notice. Maybe they won't notice short-term, but it's just not going to work out. So I find that the more work I show that's weird, challenging, and honestly trying to do something that's hard, the better things are for us. We gain in our reputation, we grow financially, and our artists are more successful. Everyone is happier.

When you're an artist you know what's an interesting studio decision and what is not an interesting studio decision. You just kind of know. That's how you make decisions in the studio. An academic artist knows what's going to happen before they do it. That's what academic art is. And I think that you establish a system where you don't know what's going

to happen and you respond organically to it, and when it does, honesty and irrationally come up with something, there's a trace of yourself within the system, you're able to be an individual as a stand-in for society. I think we've got a lot of critics who don't necessarily have that experience, or curators who don't have that experience. You also have a lot of artists who don't have studio experience in quite the same kind of way. I'm not in any way invalidating how those people are because everyone has their issues they have to negotiate, but I think trying to be honest about what is an interesting object and what is an interesting studio decision is something that is a tough.

You have to believe in these people that you're working with, and I think the big learning part for me is learning how to be a facilitator. Choosing to be a facilitator when you were the artist and you were the star is really tough. That's been, for me, probably the most humbling and ego-whipping part of this business. Learning how to be a facilitator and how to work with people and how to be helpful - what is helpful, what's not helpful - that's something I think about every day. I still really have a lot to learn in that regard. I think the gallerist has to show the work that they believe in, and they have to be committed to those people that they can believe in. They have to do whatever they can to try and get that work out there and to work with the artists, create opportunities, and be a good partner for them.

## I would like to back track a bit when you spoke about the temperament of an artist. Can you elaborate on that?

I like making work, but I didn't like talking about it. I like talking about other people's work, but I don't like talking about my own work. That was just always something really unpleasant that really tore me up. And it just wasn't fun. So I think that's the temperament I didn't have. In terms of the kind of temperament that a successful artist has to have, I think a range of temperaments are possible, but I think what artists really need to do is understand their own practices. I don't have a successful career as an artist, so obviously I don't know about doing that. I think I can judge what is a successful practice after the fact, but how a

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successful practice develops internally, is -- unfortunately for me -- going to be one of those great mysteries.

I'm very much into the 99% perspiration, 1% inspiration thing. I see a lot of artists that are not successful, too, because they just can't get along with people for whatever reason. There's lots of different reasons why, but they just can't seem to get along with people or to work with people in a reasonable way. I'm not suggesting that artists have to sell out, of course not, but if you're going to be in a situation where you're going to choose to have a partner that's a gallerist, that's a relationship. And I think it's hard for a lot of artists because they are internal, which is why they're successful artists, but you have to figure out how to have a relationship with gallerists, figure out how to negotiate the art world. How to really make it work for you and how to be able to create a situation where your work can develop and be seen. There's a lot of things in there that you need to figure out how to do.

# Lets talk about the Los Angeles art scene as a whole. You're originally from Indiana, but you've been here for the past twelve years. What is your take on the art community and kind of the changes that you've seen?

It's changed a lot. I heard census data not that long after I moved here that for every artist that leaves LA, two artists move to LA. And so that's just a cumulative thing. Obviously I value New York, and New York is a center of distribution, there are great artists that live and work there, but LA is the center of artistic production in the United States. I think that's really fascinating because it now has opened up the opportunity to look historically at a lot of artists in LA that have been overlooked. I think LA is really embracing very open-ended practices. People are very, very critical, but also free and open-ended at the same time. When people underestimate LA, they probably underestimate how critical LA is. It's tough, it's really critical and it's a good environment. I like that it's really artist driven. As a gallerist that's kind of nice because in a lot of ways it doesn't feel hierarchical per se, it feels more like a community of professional peers.

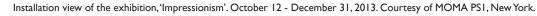
#### Would you like to talk about the future endeavors that Cherry & Martin?

We actually have a lot of exciting stuff happening. We have a bunch of new artists we're doing first gallery shows with. We're showing a major French artist named Bernard Piffaretti. We're doing our first show of T. Kelly Mason, who we showed at Art Basel Miami Beach at Nova. That's the first time we showed his work in the gallery. It's very exciting. We're doing our first solo show with Florian Morlat, which is very exciting, too. We're going back to Art Basel for the second time, where we're going to show a major Robert Heinecken piece. Artists from the gallery are having solo shows in museums: Amanda Ross-Ho had solo show at MOCA, Matt Connors has a solo show at MOMA PSI, Brian Bress just had a solo show at the New Museum. Nathan Mabry has a solo show at the Nasher Museum in Dallas. So these are all major institutions and it's really exciting.



Matt Connors. Black Frame. 2009. Oil and acrylic on muslin and painted frame.  $37 \times 36 \times 5$  inches,  $93.98 \times 91.44 \times 12.7$  centimeters. Courtesy of Cherry and Martin.







Brian Bress. Creative Ideas for Every Season. 2010. High definition video, color, sound.TRT 19 minutes, 58 seconds. Courtesy of Cherry and Martin.



Installation view of Photography into Sculpture. 2011. Courtesy of Cherry and Martin.

## ART & LIFE IN THE MAXIMUM CITY

## Written by Colin L. Fernandes, MD



## "We lived in Bombay and we lived in Mumbai and sometimes we lived in both of them at the same time".

-Suketu Mehta, "Maximum city: Bombay lost and found"

The journey from a sedate northern California suburb to the polyphonic mayhem of Mumbai had involved two airplanes and two taxicabs. I was standing on a dusty street in SoBo (South Bombay) intently searching for Art Musings Gallery while avoiding oncoming bipeds, all manner of vehicular traffic, and the occasional gnarly quadruped. "Do you know the Admiralty Building on Colaba Cross Lane?" I asked the watchman standing guard outside one of the area's many naval residences. He looked at the address, pondered a while, then pointed me in the wrong direction.

Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, can confound both visitor and native. India's most populous city, and the country's financial and entertainment capital, is an assault on sentience and conscience alike: eyesore by day, sparkling jewel by night; equal parts decadence and squalor; by turns benevolent and inclusive, cruel and opaque. I was in Mumbai this past Christmas ostensibly visiting my parents, and seized the opportunity to indulge in some gallery-hopping.

Mumbai has always been an integral player in the Indian art scene: it is home to the Sir J.J. School of Arts, and Jehangir Art Gallery (which celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 2012). Bombay was also the birthplace of the Progressive Artists Group, founded in 1947 "to look at the world from an Indian way, not a British way." (I)

The last remaining member of the original six, Sayed Haider Raza, aged 91, recently returned to India after nearly six decades in France. His first solo exhibition in Mumbai in six years - Vistaar "Expansion" - was ongoing at Art Musings Gallery when I visited.

After fifteen minutes of perambulating around Sassoon Dock, the smell of freshly caught fish still lingering in the back of my nose, I found myself standing on the upper level of the gallery, entranced by a large canvas (Atmaras, 2012). A black bindu (a Raza staple) anchored its center, surrounded by concentric vertiginous circles of gray and brown. Atmaras appeared alive and pulsatile. An informational panel in the gallery explicated Raza's

use of the bindu as "a point of origin and a point of end: a spiritual concept and an aesthetic construct; a still centre and a source of energy; a point of silence and a beginning of dynamic movement; a centre of integration and concentration; a point of radiation." (2)

During the week I was in Mumbai, the daily news was dominated by the gruesome story of a twenty-three year old female student who had been lured onto a moving bus in Delhi, beaten with a metal rod, and gang-raped. Down the road from Art Musings, at Gallery Maskara, Sofie Muller's video-sound installation, Barbara, seemed

The four-person group exhibition was an exchange project between Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, and the Antwerpbased, Geukens & De Vil Gallery. Barbara linked the burning of a nineteenth-century wooden sculpture of Christian martyr, St. Barbara, to issues of international women's rights. Abhay Maskara, gallerist and curator, was away in Kochi attending India's first Biennale, but we communicated by email. "It is uncanny how life imitates art imitates life. Sofie speaks from another context but her work is still so relevant across cultures and certainly calls to attention the plight of women in India," he wrote. (3)

I had previously asked him, via email: As someone immersed in the Mumbai art scene, in your multiple roles as gallerist/ curator/ collector, what are some of the important/ exciting shifts occurring right now? He responded, "We are at an exciting time in so far as the conversation has shifted from art prices to the art itself... The decade of the 80's and 90's witnessed a concentrated art market with much of the activity centered around the developed nations, specifically the triad of America, Western Europe and Japan. The last decade has seen newer centers emerge. China and India, amongst other Asian countries, have taken a prominent position. The recently opened Kochi-Muziris Biennale is an example of a home grown, artist led effort to democratize art while at the same time elevating the level at which contemporary art was operating in an Indian context ...

Another shift that is happening slowly but surely is the change in taste from Modern Art to Contemporary Art. More and more people want to buy art that defines the times they live in." (4)

Next stop: Iram Ghufran's award- winning video at The Guild Art Gallery, in Kamal Mansion. Ghufran is a Delhibased filmmaker and artist. The video, There is Something In The Air, 2011, wove documentary footage from the shrine of a Sufi saint in northern India along with narratives of "spirit possession". The rhythm of the editing and dark lyricism of the images lent the film a dreamy, shadowy quality. "Possessed" women hurled themselves repetitively against a wall at the shrine, in the manner of Marina Abramovic's 1977 performance piece, "Interruption In Space". Like the work of Abramovic, it was hard to view There is Something In The Air, but harder still to look away. Images of shackled wrists and ankles (a lock for every "affliction") were particularly poignant. As a physician, it was easy to recognize that in a different cultural setting, many of these individuals would have been diagnosed with mental health disorders. Here was life and psychosis as performance.

Representations of women continued at Diva, a group show, at Sakshi Gallery. Corpulent, waif-like, coy and defiant, the women in this show were a diverse lot. It was a thrill to recognize a piece of the Bay Area in the form of Shahzia Sikander's etchings printed at Crown Point Press.

Bay Area residents may remember Karnataka- based sculptor Ranjani Shettar from her show at SFMOMA (New Works, 2009). Shettar is currently enjoying her first exhibition in Mumbai as part of the "Engaging Traditions" series at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum. (The "Engaging Traditions" series, curated by Tasneem Zakaria Mehta, invites contemporary artists into the Museum - Mumbai's oldest - to share space with its historical artifacts, much like Phantoms of Asia did at the Asian Art Museum, San

On the entry level, in the Industrial Arts Gallery, I was confronted by a 19 x 10 foot sculpture fashioned from wood obtained from a coffee plant, coated with automotive paint. High tide for a blue moon, 2012 appeared like a giant mold, a tangle of blue hyphae that might easily invade the surrounding display cases. The biconcave shape echoed Anish Kapoor's Marsyas, 2002.

Shettar's hybrid organic forms, Avatar-esque winged pods and giant sporidia, magical and wondrous, had also taken flight - and root - in the Kamalnayan Bajaj special exhibition gallery upstairs. Her use of latex (Heliotropes, 2005- 2011) and the cascading tear drop forms (Lagoon, 2010) recalled for me the work of Eva Hesse.

On the ride home from South Bombay, I looked back at Mumbai's skyline. The nation was grieving; the rape victim had succumbed to her physical injuries. Gray high-rise buildings pierced the orange smog. Like Shettar's Heliotropes, they were reaching for the sun; searching for air fit to breathe, and a little personal space in which to flourish.

(1) Gayatri Rangachari Shah. Not Just Modern Art, but Indian: www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/arts/04iht-rartindia04.

(2) Ashok Vajpeyi. Celebration and Prayer. Informational wall panel, Art Musings Gallery, Mumbai, India.

(3)Personal communication. December 29, 2012.

(4)Personal communication. December 20, 2012.



Installation View, "Diva" Group Show. Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai. Photograph by Colin Fernandes



Exhibition View of Ranjani Shettar "High Tide for a Blue Moon" wood from coffee plant and automobile paint. 128" x 228" x 91". 2012 Courtesy the artist and Talwar Gallery, New York. Photograph by Colin Fernandes





Tip Top Gents Hair Cutting Saloon, Mumbai. Photograph by Colin Fernandes.



[above]Cross, Chimbai Fishing Village, Mumbai. Photograph by Colin Fernandes. [left]Street Food, Ranwar, Mumbai. Photograph by Colin Fernandes.

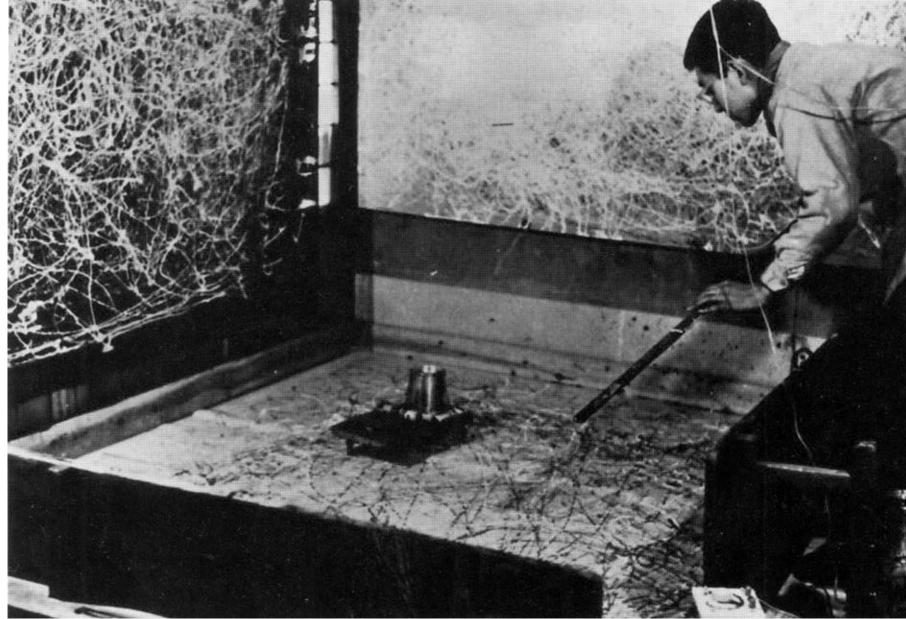
Arm yourself with a Mumbai Art Map (www.mumbaiartmap.com)! Time Out Mumbai (print, readily available on newsstands) and Mumbai Boss mumbaiboss.com) are great resources to check listings. Information on Art Night Thursday can be found at:

https://www.facebook.com/mumbaiartdistrict.

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# Dr.SHOICHI HIRAI

Curator, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto. Interviewed by John Held, Jr.



Akira Kanayama employs a remote controlled toy car to create drip works, circa 1957.Courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association

Dr. Hirai Shoichi is a leading Gutai expert, currently a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, a position he assumed in October 2012. He was formerly with the National Art Center, Tokyo, where he organized the exhibition, "Gutai: Spirit of an Era," which closed the day we conversed on September 10, 2012. Born in 1962, he earned his doctorate in modern and contemporary art from Kansai University Graduate School. Formerly a curator at the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Dr. Shoichi, curated the exhibitions, "Art in Kansai, 1950s-1970s" (1994), "Art After the Earthquake Disaster" (2001), and "Gutai, 1954-1972" (2004)." His publications include, "What's Gutai?" (2004) and "Modernism in the Area Between Osaka and Kobe, 1900-1940." He is a contributor to the catalog for the 2012 Los Angeles MOCA exhibition, "Destroy the Picture: Painting the Void, 1949-1962", and the Guggenheim Museum, New York, exhibition, "Gutai: Splendid Playground", to open in February 2013. Dr. Hirai will present a lecture open to the public at the San Francisco Art Institute on Thursday, February 21st, at 7:30 pm in conjunction with the Walter and McBean Galleries' Gutai Exhibition, also opening early

When did you begin as curator at the National Art Center? Two thousand and six.

And before that you were at the Hyogo Prefecture Museum? I was working for eighteen years in Kobe.

#### Is that when you developed your interest in Gutai?

When I was a university student I met a former member of the Gutai group, Mr. Yasuo Sumi. He's a friend of Shozo Shimamoto.

I met Mr. Sumi.

He was introduced to me when I visited Japan in 1988. He became a member of AU –Artists Union, or Art Unidentified- I met him there... So, that was the beginning of your interest?

He told me the activity of the Gutai group. He introduced me to many persons.

#### Like who

Mr. Shiraga. Of course, Mr. Shimamoto. Mr. Montonaga, and many of the members.

The old masters. (shared laughter) Did you write your thesis on Gutai while at University?

Yes, I wrote on Gutai and the Informel movement.

From University you went to the Museum? As a curator in 1988.

#### There was a Gutai collection there?

Yes. I organized the exhibition of the Yamamura Collection in 1989, which included many Gutai objects. He was a collector of Gutai.

#### There weren't many people interested in Gutai back then.

The Hyogo Museum bought his collection. I selected works and exhibited them.

Were they just the paintings, or also 'Gutai' magazine the postcards, the photographs?

Not that material. Just the paintings and many reproduced works. **The sculptures?** 

Yes. Next, I organized a big Gutai exhibition in 2004.

That was the same time as your book, "What's Gutai" appeared. Was it associated with the show?

Yes, that's right.

#### Very good book.

Thank you. It's the first book on Gutai in Japan.

Really? Fifty years after Gutai first appears. Unbelievable, the first book. Why?

I don't know. Of course, there were many catalogs on Gutai, but not a book. So, no one could buy a book on Gutai in a bookstore.

Why the sudden interest in Gutai? Your show here in Tokyo, the upcoming Guggenheim exhibition, Ming Tiampo's book, "Gutai: Decentralizing Modernism" appearing last year...why? Why Gutai?

It's a difficult question. Because, I myself – I don't know. (laughs).

Maybe its time has just come? Gutai was obviously an avant-garde movement ahead of its time. So, perhaps the general public is just catching up to it? Beginning to understand what they were doing in the 1950s.

When I was a university student, there was some kind of movement thinking of the Japanese avant-garde. There was a show of avant-garde art in Japan at the Pompidou Center [Paris, 1985]. But maybe – here comes another movement – thinking of Gutai's activity.

Gutai seemed to be more accepted overseas than in Japan, and the exhibitions overseas made exhibitions in Japan possible. Do you think this is true? Yes.

You had a panel discussion ["Reappraising Gutai Past and Present"] here at the museum in connection with your Gutai exhibition. Ming Tiampo was here. Who else?

Mr. Kawasaki [Koichi]. He was the curator of the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History. And Mr. Yurugi [Yasuhiro], he was curator of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum. He was the first curator who discovered Gutai – in the early 1980s. And Mr. Mattijs Visser. He organized exhibitions on Gutai and the Zero Group in the last years.

## The Japanese Zero group?

No. The Dutch group.

Nul. Because there was a Zero group before that in Japan. (laughs) Zero-kai.

Shiraga, Murakami, Kanayama, Tanaka [of Zero-kai] later became Gutai members...In your book, "What's Gutai," you make mention of the Sanka group, who were doing performance and installation works in the 1920s. I've heard nothing of them.

The Sanka group was influenced by Dada and Futurism. They began performance – like futurist...

#### ...theater.

They performed at theaters in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kobe. So, there is no evidence that Mr. Yoshihara saw the performance, but maybe he heard of it, because there are many friends of his influenced by Dadaism and Futurism.

What about Mr. Tapié, who had such a big influence on Gutai's acceptance abroad?

It's very important. Mr. Tapié introduced their activity to Europe and America. But in exchange for it, they became a painting group.

And complicated. Many people, like Ben Vautier, say that Tapié was a negative influence. But many people came to the Pinatheca and were positively influenced – Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns. When was Johns there?

In 1964.

## And Clement Greenberg was there?

He came in 1966.

Paul Jenkins the abstract expressionist painter stayed for a whole month. He was with the Martha Jackson Gallery [where Gutai exhibited in 1958].
Yes. On the second floor. (laughs).

## One other thing about early Gutai I wondered about was the influence of Ray Johnson and Mail Art on Gutai.

Maybe he saw the magazine [Gutai]. I think that the members knew expression method called Mail Art from him.

#### How difficult was [Jiro] Yoshihara with the members?

In the early years, they had a strong relationship, but as members increased and the group grew bigger, it weakened.

## In 1971, after "Expo 1970," early members like Shimamoto and Shiraga debarted? Why?

Shiraga stayed, but Mr. Murakami, Shimamoto and Motonaga left. I heard there was a complicated problem at *Expo 1970* about financial problems.

## When Yoshihara died, the group broke up. Shozo Shimamoto began the AU group. Do you see that as related to Gutai in any way?

No. Gutai was a very special group with a big leader – Mr. Yoshihara. It was an extraordinary group in Japan.

I had a question about the Life magazine, "One Day Outdoor Art Exhibition." In 1956.

# Such a beautiful photograph of Yoshihara in the boat in the water tank. But those 'Life' photographs were never published and presumed lost. Have they ever been seen?

No. I've tried to see them. I wrote to the photographer's wife – Mr. [John] Launois wife. She's Japanese.



Saburo Murakami performing "At One Moment Opening Six Holes," 1955.

Courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

## Did you try 'Life' magazine?

Yes, of course.

It's a tragedy, but fortunately Gutai members documented the event... Is your exhibition here going to travel?

No. Only Tokyo.

Are there any other Gutai events planned in Japan.

No. I don't think so.

Are you looking forward to the Guggenheim show next February?

Will you go to New York?

Yes. I wrote a text for the catalog.

What is it on?

Gutai and Pre-War Modernism in the Kansai area.

There are so many great Gutai images. It's fortunate that Yoshihara could afford cameras.

And also Mr. Yoshida, Mr. Shiraga and Mr. Montonaga had cameras. They took many photos.

## Do you have a favorite Gutai image?

(laughs) It's very difficult. Gutai has many aspects. Action. Environment. Installation and technology. So it's hard to choose just one image.

Right. There are so many good ones. Does anyone have a full set of 'Gutai' magazines? They are very rare.

Even in Japan.

In Japan. Really? Is there a full set somewhere?

Hyogo [Prefectural Museum] has them.

What about the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum?

Yes. They are some of the few museums to have them.

It was very important that they were reprinted. Whose idea was that? (laughs). Me.

Thank you! (shared laughter) But it must have been very expensive to do? Yes.

But it was very expensive to buy, too. (shared laughter) It is so important to have that. It is really well done. A book I haven't seen is "Document Gutai: 1954-1972." Maybe you can show it to me?

It's a very good book. It was also done by the Ashiya City Museum of Art and History.

Are there many collectors of Gutai in Japan? There must be collectors of Post-War Japanese Modern Art, and this is an important aspect of that.

No, there are few collectors of Gutai like the late Mr. Yamamura in Japan. And we have no

archives about Gutai in Japan.

It's a very serious problem for Gutai researchers.

So, there's still a lot of work to be done.

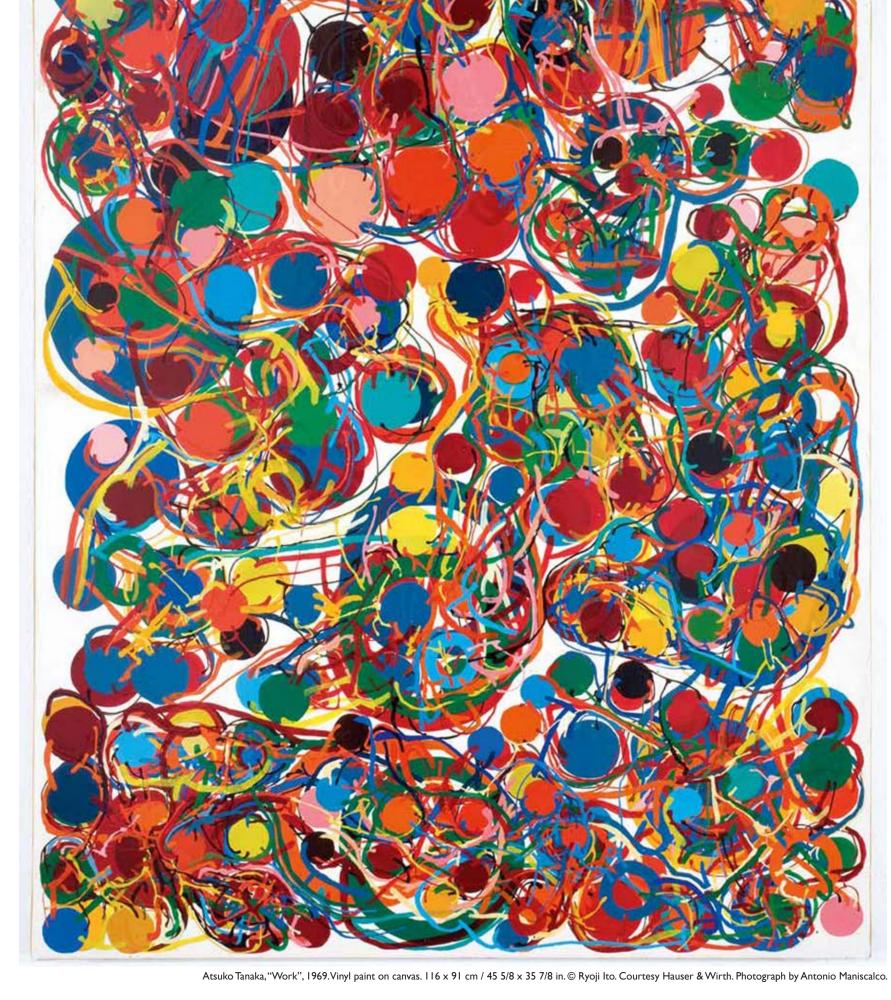
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Well, thank you for making such a good start. (shared laughter) Arigatou gozaimasu.



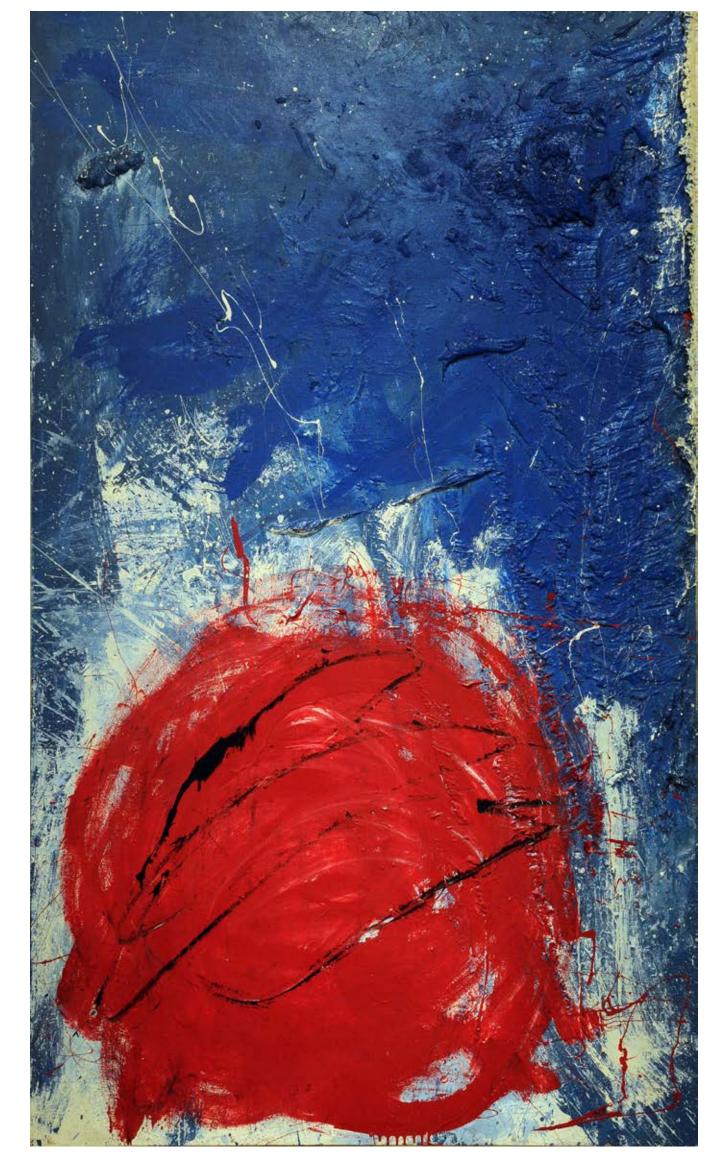
Atsuko Tanaka wearing her, "Electric Dress," 1956. Courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.



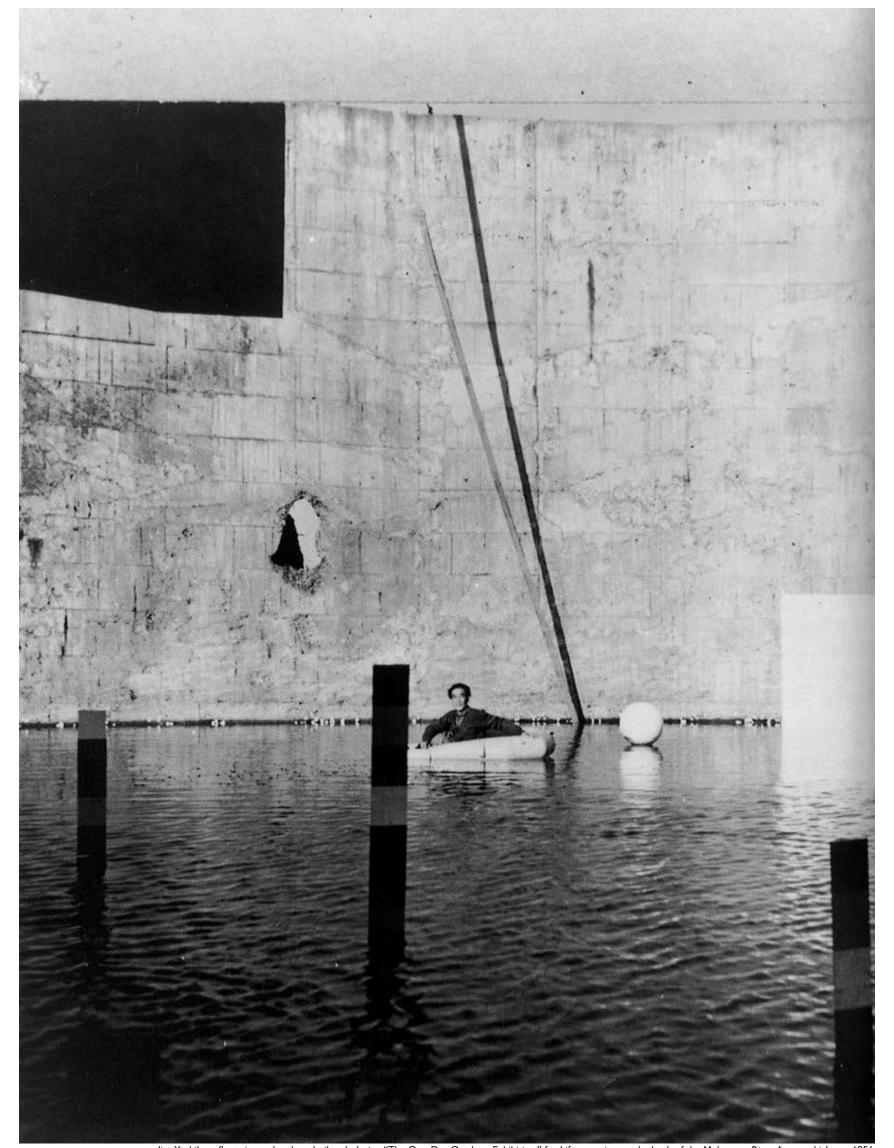


Dr. Shoichi Hirai will give a lecture about Gutai at the San Francisco Art Institute on February 21st in conjuncture with the Walter and McBean Galleries Gutai exhibition, February 8th-March 30th.

Dr.Shoichi Hirai.



Saburo Murakami, "Work", 1963. Paint, polyvinyl acetate adhesive, plaster on board. 182.5 x 107 x 10 cm / 71 7/8 x 42 1/8 x 3 7/8 in. © Makiko Murakami. Courtesy Saburo Murakami. Photograph by Keizo Kobashi



Jiro Yoshihara floats in an abandoned oil tank during, "The One-Day Outdoor Exhibition," for Life magazine on the bank of the Mukogawa River, Amagasaki, Japan, 1956.

Courtesy the former members of the Gutai Art Association.

# TOM MARIONI

## ART ETIQUETTE & FUNNY STUFF



Bruce Nauman, "Bound to Fail", 1967-70

## Why is Bruce Nauman so influential in the art world?

Nauman was maybe the first sculptor to be influenced by Duchamp. He took the idea of "With My Tongue in My Cheek," Duchamp's plaster cast of the side of his cheek, and made early work in the Bay Area using the same kind of titles based on common expressions. Nauman made works like "Bound to Fail," "Feet of Clay," etc. John Cage was the first American artist to be influenced by Duchamp; he was a composer and used some of Duchamp's ideas to create music compositions in the early 1950s. The New York conceptual artists were more influenced by language, philosophy, and the Russian constructivists than by Duchamp. California, where Nauman started out, is a body culture, and using body parts fit in with the figurative tradition of San Francisco in the '50s. Nauman has been called the most influential living artist in the world. As far as painting goes, Gerhard Richter is considered the most influential.

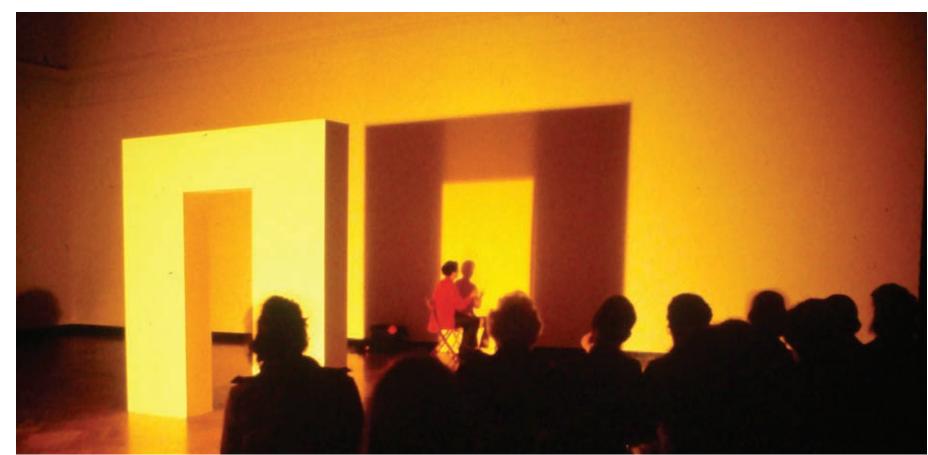


In Conceptual art is there a primacy of thought over matter? If so, does that mean that conceptualism is directly opposite from surrealism?
-Edward Stanton

A conceptual artist starts with an idea and realizes that idea in whatever medium is appropriate for the idea, so thought is over matter. But that does not mean that there can be no object. The object could be a lot of empty beer bottles that are exhibited as a record of a social act. Conceptual art can use ideas from surrealism. For example, a drumming action that produces a residue drawing can also create a psychic space to transmit images telepathically. That could be an example of conceptual surrealism.

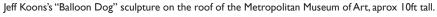
## How thin is the line between performance art and theater? -Andrew McClintock

Generally theater is about story telling, about the past, and not in real time. People play parts and are not being themselves. They are dressed in costumes and speaking the words of an author. Theater is closer to painting than sculpture because painting generally refers to the past and creates an illusion of space. Performance art in its purest form from the late 1960s and 1970s was sculpture-based. It was a concrete demonstration made by a visual artist in



Tom Marioni, Santa Barbara Museum, 1979. "A Theatrical Action to Define Non-Theatrical Principles"







Marcel Duchamp "With my Tongue in My Cheek", 1959

real time. It was about the present moment, not the past. During the 1980's performance art moved into cabaret-like skits and plays, and in recent times it has evolved into multimedia happenings with no rules or manifestoes. In theater the action is a manipulation of the audience's emotions. My idea of actions/performance art is that the audience is witness to the artist's manipulation of his/her physical material.

# Does Picasso or Duchamp have a bigger influence on contemporary art? Both for artists and the art world/ art market? -Andrew McClintock

Picasso is considered to be the most influential artist of the first half of the  $20^{\text{th}}$  century. Duchamp is most influential in the second half for artists, but not for the art market. An interesting fact: You can buy ten or fifteen Duchamps for the price of one Jeff Koons.

## Four questions from Frank Born:

#### I)Why is famous art so expensive?

The more an artwork is reproduced in books and magazines the more its image becomes familiar to a large number of people. Familiarity creates demand.

#### 2) What is the least gesture I can do and still call it art?

Say or write publically that you take credit for the life's work of another artist.

## 3)Does everyone have artistic talent or only a few?

You know the old saying: "99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." Everyone has talent in something but not necessarily in art. There are a few artists in every field, and what they do is like corn on the cob cooked to the moment of perfection.

## 4)If you see a work of art, can you tell what country or culture it comes from?

I usually can because I have traveled a lot and studied other cultures. The English have language and landscape; the French have philosophy and wine. Germans have optics and science, Italians have food and drama, Japanese have elegance and Zen, Chinese have history and medicine. Scandinavia has Ingmar Bergman, Russia has political repression, Spain and Mexico have color, New York has fashion, the grid, money, etc. California has the body and light.

As a wannabe curator living on the other side of the world (from SF, living in Rome) I don't even know where to begin! I love SF but felt it was too small and just dealing with Lowbrow Kitsch artists. Now I am in Rome and it is overwhelming! I've always had the idea that I want to put my roots into my new endeavors and curate a show with my city's influences on me. But even though SF and Rome are so far from each other, we are still dealing with the same politics, living with the same problems in the art world. I want younger people who don't make that much money to find a way to start investing in art by buying a younger generation's productions for a lesser price because they are undiscovered while also helping young artists find a way to show their art without being in the too-snotty galleries. Why are gallerists so intimidating? Even in SF, the friendliest place on earth, I still find gallerists to be so unapproachable! How can I get my foot in the door again? Blogging is great but how can I get people to read it? How can I make my blog more appealing to both Italian and American readers? How do I approach a gallery if I want to propose a show? And then there is the whole international issue! How can we send art abroad? What's the best way to promote my would-be show?

Sincerely,
Very Confused Wannabe Curator,
Ianel Morales

First of all, you should consider that commercial art galleries are not cultural institutions. They are businesses often run by people who are not professional art people. They might possibly be lay people who are trying to be accepted in society by selling art. In recent years some galleries have been inviting guest curators to organize shows in order to get prestige. For example, the Gagosian Gallery in New York has been doing museum-like shows with famous guest curators in the last few years.

If you want to help young artists you could try to be an agent for a few artists and find spaces to show their work. This would not be the Gagosian Gallery, but could be cheap rented storefront spaces or pop-up galleries. You could rent by the day the Live Worms gallery in San Francisco in North Beach, for example. You have taken on a noble cause and I wish you good luck, but I am afraid there are too many artists and too many freelance curators in the world today.

Have a question for TOM MARIONI? Send it to info@sfaqonline.com before March 23rd to make it into ART ETIQUETTE & FUNNY STUFF in issue 13.

# KATHAN BROWN "Know that you are lucky"

## Written by John Held, Jr.

There are many aspects accounting for the successful career and life of Kathan Brown. I don't think luck is one of them. Her title sells herself short, which becomes the modest person she is. She has been blessed, as many have, with a good life, one free of poverty, extreme ill health, family turmoil...but she has constructed a life of her own making upon this foundation. It has nothing to do with luck. It has to do with appreciation of her family's background, an excellent education (including a stint with Expressionist painter Oskar Kokoschka in Salzburg, Austria), a passion for what she does, and a hard earned craft honed over years of diligent practice. With a personality and a skill set attracting the finest artists of her generation, Kathan Brown, the force behind Crown Point Press, needn't rely on luck. She has herself to draw from

Kathan Brown is now seventy-six, which surprises me, having known her, but not her age. Likewise her husband, Conceptual artist Tom Marioni, They both seem ageless. operating outside of a timeframe. They just go on with what they are doing, as Kathan advises, "put one foot in front of the other", and time rolls off them. Beginning in 1962, Kathan has now run Crown Point Press as a small business for fifty years. As a master printer, she has worked with Richard Diebenkorn, Wayne Thiebaud, Sol Lewitt, Chuck Close, Ed Ruscha...and perhaps notably, if only because she recruited him as a visual artist...John Cage. Crown Point Press has published periodicals (Vision, View), books (some eight by Kathan alone), and of course, fine art prints (intaglio), which are on standing order and archived by both the National Gallery of Art and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco's Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts. Kathan's is a life well spent, but knowing her, I don't believe it's anywhere near completion. These memoirs, while well earned and timely, still seem premature.

But she does have a story to tell, and it's told very well. Kathan frames it as a business success story. I don't think businessperson defines her - she is after all, a master printer, who has worked in common with renowned artists, but the business seems to be the hinge upon which she lays the tale. It starts with her grandmother, who was a successful businessperson despite the rigors of the Depression, who married one of the great political minds of the era, Owen D. Young, Chairman of General Electric, who became Time's Man of the Year in 1929 (he helped negotiate German reparations). Spending time at her grandfather's knee (the image of her selling oranges with her grandfather at a roadside stand in Florida is indelible) was a lucky upbringing, but it was her acceptance of an elder's wisdom, not his lucky presence, that shaped

She was fortunate to be offered a printing press for free while she was a student in England travelling to Scotland before her departure for the United States, but it was determination to change her travel plans and accompany the press on a two-month cruise through the Panama Canal on a freighter, which enabled her to get it back to Oakland, and begin the print business. Crown Point Press grew to twenty-two persons at its height in 1988, with various ebbs and flows over the years, which Kathan ascribes to political and economic climates of the various decades. She names Peter Drucker her business management guru, and does a fairly good job explaining Keynesian economic theory. The memoir could be useful as a guide to successful business practices, especially to younger women, many correctly viewing Kathan as a role model for aspiring female entrepreneurs.

The book works on many levels, but the business practices of the Press, is not the one that captivated me. It's the



Robert Bechtle in the Crown Point studio, 1983

creative relationship she had with her artists, and the intimate stories of working in tandem with such giants as John Cage, Richard Diebenkorn, Sol Lewitt. Each of these artists have chapters devoted to them, along with Wayne Thiebaud, Pat Steir, Agnes Martin, Tom Marioni, Robert Bechtle and Ed Ruscha. The twenty chapters are ascribed zen koans as subtitles - wisdoms learned along the path. "Know That You Are Lucky," is one of them. Others include "Hold on Lightly," "Go as Far as You Can See," "Construct a Life," "Attempt What is Not Certain," "No Pretentions," "Escape Now and Again," "Search for Something Else," and "Keep Searching for What You Need to Know." The book concludes with the chapter on Sol Lewitt, who she began working with in 1971 (before meeting her Conceptual Art husband), "Leap to Conclusions that Logic Cannot Reach."

I was especially interested in the details of her life with Tom Marioni, who Kathan married in 1977 and has creatively partnered with since. Before meeting Kathan, Tom had a successful art career as curator of the Richmond Art Center, and Director of his own Museum of Conceptual Art. As such, he presented some of the earliest performance art on the West Coast. Kathan was a master printer and businessperson with a keen eye before meeting Marioni, working with Sol Lewitt, but Marioni fleshed out her acceptance of various challenging artists, imparting his thinking that Conceptual artists could apply themselves in many directions, always bringing their individual style to the project. This thinking resulted in the recruitment of such artists as John Cage, Brice Marden, Daniel Buren, Vito Acconci, John Baldessari and Ed Ruscha.

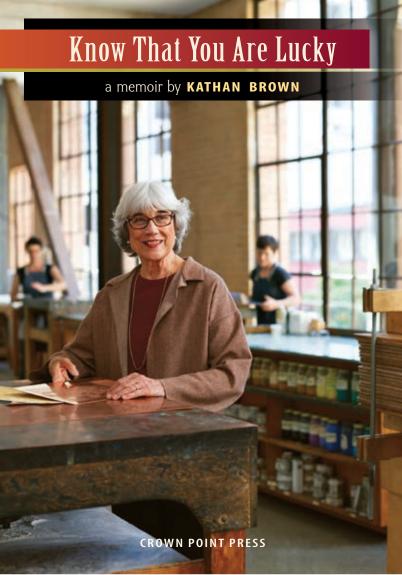
The layout of the work must be mentioned, for it reflects the design skill of the Press itself and the book's designer, Laura Lovett. Photographs are scattered throughout the text documenting the many facets of the author's life from family, printmaking equipment and facilities, the prints themselves, the artists who produce them, the staff that helps form and distribute them, and travelogues of adventures at home and abroad, but mostly abroad, as Kathan is an inveterate traveller. Forty-eight prints mentioned in the text, are reproduced in color, adding to the documentary allure of

Special mention should be made of the 1980 joint Crown Point Press and Museum of Conceptual Art sponsored trip to the South Sea Island of Ponape, with thirty-five artists including Marina Abramovic, Laurie Anderson, Chris Burden, Daniel Buren, John Cage, Joan Jones, Marioni, Brice Marden, Robert Kushner, Pat Steir and William Wiley, to discuss art and enjoy each others company. It was the first year Crown Point Press made a profit, and this was the way Kathan wished to celebrate. It alone highlights that the company of artists is one of Kathan's primary reasons for continuing the press over so many years. It's a lifestyle, not

Kathan's instinctual taste runs more conservatively than her husband's, drawn to artists with a strong bent for craftsmanship, Diebenkorn, Thiebaud, Bechtle, William Bailey and Chuck Close fit this mold. Each would return again and again to Crown Point to work with Master Printers, who helped shape their vision. Diebenkorn (1922-1993) is especially dear to Kathan. He was the first artist subject to a Crown Point published book, "41 Etchings Drypoints," printed in 1966. The back of the current book's dust jacket has a photograph of a chair Diebenkorn left in a previous studio, which, unbeknown years later, Crown Point moved into, the artist claiming provenience years later. Coincidence? Sign? Luck?

In 2012, Crown Point Press celebrated fifty years of artistic and business practice with a series of historic shows. Diebenkorn was one of the artists featured, other subjects explored being "John Cage" (February 3-March 31), "Tom Marioni and Pat Steir (April 5-May 19) "Crossing into the Eighties" (May 31-lune 30), "The New Century," including works by twenty-two artists (September 5-October 20). The concluding historical show, "Richard Diebenkorn: Prints and Proofs, opened November 7 and closed January

The Diebenkorn exhibition provided a unique opportunity to view rarely-if-ever-exhibited working proofs as they related to several completed works, including the artist's most celebrated print, "Green," (1986). Crown Point's press



Cover of "Know that you are Lucky", a memoir by Kathan Brown, published by Crown Point Press.

"I hope the future holds for all of us what Sol's [LeWitt] art demonstrates: beauty, simplicity, optimism, and a surprising range of ideas."

-Kathan Brown



47 x 54", edition 25. Published by Crown Point Press

release of the exhibition describes the artist's working method, innovative in approach (collage) and sensibility (the fragility and imperfections of the self).

"Diebenkorn's rigorous involvement with process is evident in the rarely seen working proofs that are on view. He developed his print images mainly by using collage. He pasted and pinned shapes onto proofs or drew and painted on them to help him decide how to move forward. Diebenkorn also liked to keep traces of decisions in the completed prints and his residual marks of changes and corrections posses a vulnerability and lyrical beauty."

In her memoir, Brown delves further into the process of collaboration with the artist providing valuable insights into Diebenkorn's personal working method.

"We made steady progress on 'Green' in the last part of the second week. We were always working with Dick's collage elements. Sometimes we would painstakingly measure and trace the exact location of a new line or color area, then mark the location of the plate for him to work over with acid or a drawing tool. At the other times he would look at the proof and say something like, "I'll just wing it here," and begin drawing on the plate without any guidelines. Once we etched a triangle shape that came out three inches from where it was intended. Dick liked it, so it stayed."

Diebenkorn's flexible yet diligent creative process is a personal hallmark about to be celebrated in a retrospective examination of his formative years at the De Young Museum in the exhibition, "Richard Diebenkorn: The Berkeley Years, 1953-1966," running from June 22, 2013-September 29, 2013. A leader of the Bay Area Figurative Movement, over one hundred paintings and drawings will reveal the artist's shift from abstraction to figuration marking the artist's and the region's turn from increasingly formalized East Coast Centric Greenbergian Abstract Expressionism. The De Young's publicity for the upcoming exhibition notes, "The character of this transformation-and the artist's oscillations between the two styles-has long been seen as one of the most interesting chapter in post-war American art."

The "Crown Point Press at 50," exhibition in the De Young's Anderson Gallery of Graphic Art is a surprisingly modest affair given its grandiose title. Acquiring the Press's archives in 1991, the De Young has over 1,500 published prints and proofs to draw from, but for the current show selected just fifteen artists, none producing work before 1998. Still, the works by Wayne Thiebaud, Kiki Smith, Richard Tuttle, Sol Lewitt, Tom Marioni, Ed Ruscha, Robert Bechtle, Julie Mehretn, Chris Ofili, John Chiara, Mama Anderson, Jockum Nortström, Katsura Funakosh, Tomma Alt and Darren Almond do not disappoint. One only wishes for a more penetrating retrospective. Earlier Crown Point Press produced works by Dorothea Rockburne (1972-1975),

Anish Kapoor (1991) and Brice Marden (1973) are on display in the De Young's Morgan and Betty Flagg Gallery, given over to Minimalism, hinting at the true depth, breath and complexity of the entire Crown Point Press oeuvre.

Depth, breath and complexity also describe the rich life lead by Kathan Brown. Her many achievements (she holds honorary doctorates from both the San Francisco Art Institute and the California College of the Arts) have little to do with luck. Skilled persistence is its own reward.

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#### Know That You Are Lucky: A Memoir

Kathan Brown Crown Point Press San Francisco, CA

#### **Richard Diebenkorn: Prints and Proofs**

Crown Point Press 20 Hawthorne Street San Francisco, CA November 7, 2012-January 16, 2013

## Crown Point Press at 50

Anderson Gallery of Graphic Art DeYoung Museum Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco San Francisco, CA October 20, 2012-February 17, 2013



Kiki Smith, "Still", 2006, Color spit bite aquatint with flat bite and hard ground and soft ground etching printed on gampi paper chine collé. 26-1/2 x 31", edition 20. Published by Crown Point Press



Sol LeWitt in the Crown Point studio, 1997.

# MARK VAN PROYEN

## "Theda's Island" // Chapter One: In the Mail Room

For the past several years, I have been working in fits and starts on a novel titled "Theda's Island", which is about the trials and tribulations of a fictional art school in Northern California. The second chapter of the story was published in the Fall 2010 issue of ZYZZYVA, and then was banished from that publication's archive when a new editor mandated a new web-site design. No matter, because the chapter needed some reworking anyway, as the narrative that was and is still developing in subsequent chapters mutated in unpredictable directions. What follows here is the novel's first chapter, essentially an establishing shot of sorts. And let us be crystal clear: this is a work of fiction, meaning that any resemblance contained within it to actual persons, events and places is only one of the most bizarre coincidence. That's my story and I am sticking to it until someone pries it from my cold dead hands. Oh, and one other thing. Every word of the novel titled "Theda's Island" is copyrighted, and my team of legal goons will ass rape anyone who infringes on that copyright without my express written permission. Enjoy.

#### **Chapter One: In the Mail Room**

"How was your sabbatical?"

I was not surprised by the question, but it did take me by surprise. It came from Vic Thorsness, who was down on his hands and knees tinkering with the inner workings of the gargantuan photocopier that was a recent addition to our school's bleak mailroom. Because his huge, hulking frame was almost completely concealed by the machine's open hatch cover, I didn't see him. Also, my attention was absorbed by the task of sorting a thick pile of mail that had accumulated during my three-month escape from academic duty. Most of it was quickly dispatched to the recycling bin but I did stash a few items in a tattered file folder. marked SPRING SEMESTER 2001, including the roll sheet for the class that would commence later that afternoon. I also saved a few handwritten notes from various students pleading for special dispensations. Some of these were addressed to "Professor Jason Fowler," no doubt having been penned by new enrollees who had not been informed that I much preferred to be called Jay. Similar missives from returning students were clear on that particular point, and they usually contained the polite bribes of music CDs specially mixed to help garner the petty academic privileges that they hoped that I might provide.

When Vic stood up, he had lurch to one side so that his bald head would clear the fluorescent lamp dangling from the room's low ceiling. While he righted himself, I adopted a diffident tone of voice to respond to his query. With slow and deliberate pronunciation, I said "It was good" in the manner of a press flack making sure that his story was straight, which meant that I was lying. I think that Vic knew it, because he also knew that the sabbatical that was supposed to be good, that was supposed to be a time for serious scholarly work, psychological refreshment and deep introspective reflection, that very sabbatical was almost completely wasted in the paralysis of a depression that ensued after my mid-summer break-up with Jensene Reynolds.

For over six months, I had been disinclined to talk about this particular setback in my personal life, in large part because I didn't want to hear the chorus of richly deserved *I-told-you-sos* about the inadvisability of getting involved with

former students who were two full decades my junior. Just because I knew what I was getting myself into when I got into it didn't mean that the getting out of it was any less painful, or any less awkward. Because he was the veteran of no less than three painfully expensive divorce proceedings, Vic would have definitely told me so, he himself having been told as much many times before. But on this occasion, he refrained from doing so, no doubt because he had no real interest in my personal affairs beyond whatever was minimally required to stay abreast of late breaking institutional gossip.

Desirous to change the subject, I asked Vic about the photocopier. "When did that thing get here?"

"Right after the holidays. I guess someone wanted to wait until the panic of the new millennium was over for a full calendar year before they invested in any new technology. Watch this." Vic turned to the machine and jabbed his massive forefinger at a chirping video screen. Suddenly, the sleek behemoth sprang into readiness, and a second later, began its churning of paper and black toner. Making a sound that resembled playing cards being struck by a rotating bicycle wheel, it spit out neat little document piles into a tray, all sorted and stapled with a perfect regularity. "No more ordering out at Copyworld, that's for sure!"

Vic seemed sincerely thrilled with his access to such a machine. This was understandable, because his role as coordinator of the Undergraduate Foundation Program (UFP for short) required him to distribute lots of photocopied reading material to the freshman population, culled from a great many books. Since many of those same freshman were also enrolled in my Art History Survey class, he and I would occasionally conspire about those reading lists. At first, we did so to eliminate redundancy, Latter, we discovered that we could get better results by strategically orchestrating an optimal level of redundancy --not too much and not too little-- but just enough to give students the encouraging illusion that they might actually be able to wrap their undernourished minds around the unlearnable subjects that we were pretending to teach. The batch that had just been printed were collections of black-and-white student illustrations of scenes from Dante's Divine Comedy, which was one of the final projects that Vic had assigned at the end of the fall term.

At that moment, the small room was filled by another familiar voice. It was that of Danika Norris, my senior colleague in our school's tiny art history department. She was standing behind me at the door, arms akimbo, playing the impatient schoolmarm that her tweedy visage was cynically cultivated to resemble. "Well, if it isn't Jason Fowler back from holiday! Tell me Jason, are you ready to jump back in to the fray?" Danika grew up in Rhode Island, but she enjoyed peppering her talk with phraseology that sounded like the heavily accented English spoken in her favorite BBC television comedies.

"Ready enough!" I said, but my attempt at enthusiasm stumbled and sounded flat. In keeping with a habit of mind that has always served me well, I tried to recover from this failure with another abrupt change of subject. "Any bell ringers from last semester!"

Danika's posture relaxed as she delivered the unfortunate report of no noteworthy bell ringers emanating from her Art of Ancient Cultures survey conducted during the previous fall. I was disappointed to hear the news.

Vic couldn't stand being left out of the conversation. "Bell ringers?" he asked, even though he was a bit intimidated

by Danika, who always looked smart and dapper. Royalties from a book about ancient deities that she wrote several years earlier had continued to roll in, this owing to its having become the basis for a semi-popular documentary film. But the real truth to her high level of financial comfort (as she herself would admit with matter-of-fact pride) was that she had "married well, and divorced even better" no less than three times during the past twenty-five years. Her fashionably coifed grey hair, dark blazer and crisply pressed slacks accented with a jaunty scarf provided the starkest contrast to the trademark Thorsness wardrobe of battered denim jacket sported as outerwear over a hooded sweatshirt. The contrast was further exaggerated by the fact that Danika was small and slender, while Vic was tall and heavy-set, looking very much like a retired defensive linemen on his way to seed.

This was my moment to shine. "Bell ringers are those rare and wonderful feats of missing-the-point that can only be accomplished by undergraduate essay writers at this very institution."

While Danika was flashing an approving smile, Vic asked for further clarification: "Your mean like the nave running down the center of a Gothic cathedral being a kind of fast-moving medieval clown?"

At that moment, Danika could no longer contain herself, so she quickly chimed in: "Oh, we've got way better than that! Two years ago, one young genius proclaimed that the Erechtheion was an ancient Greek temple consecrated to Priapus!" For Danika, this particular incident was the pinnacle of bell ringer heaven. I had to admit that it was pretty good, but there was another worthy contender that I was trying to recover from a sabbatical-fogged memory, without success.

Vic responded with his own entry into the bell ringer contest by saying "I must have had the same student. About the same time, I asked my class to write short essays about Michelangelo's *David*, and one responded that he thought that it was 'a bad statue because he didn't like dicks in art." Pointing his forefinger skyward in John-the-Baptist fashion, he added "In red ink, I wrote 'the fact that you don't like dicks in art cannot be held against you! C-minus!"

The thirty seconds of uncomfortable silence that filled the room was broken when Danika took her turn to change the subject. "Coming to the big meeting later this after?" The question was directed to both of us, but Danika knew that Vic had no choice about attending the meeting. As one of the elected faculty representatives to our school's Board of Trustees, he was obligated to be on the search committee that had hired Theda Vohn der Pahder as our school's new President. She was having her first meeting with the Academic Senate latter that afternoon, and the entire faculty had been invited to attend. Vic needed to be there, even if he wasn't sure whether he would be taking credit, avoiding blame or just trying to save face.

Suppressing a sardonic chuckle, I said, "wouldn't miss it." I was curious about the new president, having read the recent announcement of her being hired in the San Francisco Hort-Dispatch. Accompanying that article was a short interview with her conducted by Kenworth Bascomb, the paper's highly respected art critic. It seemed that the new president had big plans to connect the school to what she called "the Silicon Valley money tree," as if she was unaware that the overbought stock market was already starting to tank. Even though Bascomb clearly wanted to direct the conversation in other directions, I remembered being taken aback by the

frequency of her stringing the words "art" and "technology" together in the same sentence. But that misgiving aside, I also thought that we must have been doing something right, because we were able to lure her from what appeared to be a prestigious job as the Executive Director of the Varney Tepes Family Fund in Baltimore so that she might try her hand at running an art school that pretended to want to regain a long lost glory. It was widely agreed that the most important qualification for being president of NCSAD was something called "fundraising ability," and her background certainly suggested that she either had it, or could call in enough markers to get it.

Danika reckoned that the short pause in conversation was her moment to make a quick exist. "Well, off to class I go." Since it was over an hour before the start of the afternoon round of classes on the second day of the semester, I suspected that the "class" that she was off to was an early two-martini lunch down at Fisherman's Wharf. I also knew that I could set my watch to her walking into her History of Women's Art class exactly five minutes late, completely

After Danika stepped out, Vic said "La Presidente wants to get things moving fast, so you can bet that this afternoon will be more than a perfunctory meet n' greet. Did you see the new lobby!"

unperturbed by her noontime beverage

intake

I confessed to having entered the building through the roll-up service door in back of the sculpture area, thereby missing the lobby adjacent to the front entrance opening out onto the Embarcadero. I wondered how it might have changed, but I knew that any change would have to have

that any change would have to have been an improvement. Responding to Vic's projection, I asked, "In what direction do you think that she wants to move?"

"During the final interview, she came right and said that all of the school's problem boiled down to its historical refusal to think big, to see itself as part of a 'larger picture inhabited by larger players with larger horizons of ambition'...those were her very words. She was already acting like she knew that she would be offered the job, and that her salary demands would pose no problem. If you could stand watching the inauguration festivities on television yesterday, you might have caught a glimpse of her milling about in the Clinton entourage, so her connections must run pretty deep."

"In other words, you think that she wants to improve the profile of the school in relation to folks with money? Are we going to end up as a clubhouse for cyber-yuppies?" I was wrestling with the question of how such an improvement could be construed as 'direction' in any academic sense of the word, but my thinking was clouded by another disturbing image that Vic planted in my head, one that required immediate verbal exorcism. "Watching Bush Jr. put his hand on the national bible was something like waking up and discovering that the student who you gave a C-minus to had just become our boss."

Vic winced at this particular reminder of his young Michelangelo scholar, but added his own political view: "yeah, I guess the banjo-pickers in the flyover states have finally found their man." But Vic also wanted to refocus the conversation back on the subject of Theda, and did so by saying "she was pretty evasive when she was asked about

her view of the role of the faculty. At some points, she was acting like she would just go out and hire anybody she wanted without any consideration of expense. All of this was brought out when we asked her to explain what she meant when she described her primary skill set in terms of being a 'facilitator of synergy.' She characterized herself as being the 'driver of a speedboat towing a bunch of people on water skis—some would hang on and others would fall by the wayside.' My assumption was and still is that the faculty are the skiers in this little piece of fantasy, but from her point of view, it might be that everybody else is too."

I considered this report the worst kind of omen, but at that moment, I decided to avoid making any editorial to that effect. "What did Photobitch think?" I was referring to our most recently hired member of the tenured faculty, Russet Vodavitch, recently anointed as Assistant Professor of Intermedia studies and Vic's fellow faculty representative on the presidential search committee. The semisecret nickname was given to her by Ben Simonian, he being the most senior member of our Painting Department, and as such, the one most indifferent to any real or

clannish colleagues who were all too eager to let any one else to do their academic dirty work. Resentment was sure to follow, sooner or later, until the point when the next youthful overachiever would be hired into the faculty that would then mercilessly exploit his or her desire to do well.

remember her name now...Sally something...anyway—she was also swept off of her feet, following and supporting whatever Photobitch was saying."

I was not surprised to hear Vic's report about Photobitch's enthusiasm. After working among us for two years, it was fair to assume that she was getting exasperated at being typecast as our school's token art-and-technology person in a city where high technology had recently been celebrated as king, queen and bitch-goddess all in one. Because of this, she had become rather shrill in her promotion of "technological art for technological times." But this was to be expected. In general, recent hires in podunk academic settings work extra hard to impress their

resentment-addled fellows, and Photobitch worked harder

than most. She was a tireless volunteer for committee

tasks, and this helped her ally the suspicions of older, more

presidential search process "Photobitch was beside herself

with enthusiasm for Theda from the very beginning, claiming

on more than one occasion that Vohn der Pahder was the

only serious candidate, and that we should do what ever it

takes to get her to take the job. The student rep—I can't

Because forewarning is always a kind of forearming, I decided to press Vic for more information. "How about the rest of the Board?"

"The all are on board, so to speak. Agnes Braithwaite is letting Theda stay in an apartment in her house, and Dick Cutler is filling her dance card up with his investment banker buddies. From what I can tell, it seems that the board wants to back a play that will draw a lot of attention to the place."

"It figures that Agnes would want to keep La Presidente to herself." I had been tracking the Agnes Braithwaite story for years. She seemed to do nothing else beside get herself on the governing boards of cultural institutions, and the range and subtlety of her influence-peddling was remarkable, even as its purposes were always mysterious. Dick Cutler was the Chairman and CEO of Bank of the Pacific as well as the Chairman of our own Board, even though he never attended board meetings. The actual conduct of those meetings was relegated to Theresa Reingold, who was the board's Vice-Chair as well as a junior VP at BOP. Clearly, having Cutler's name at the top of the school's official stationary was an asset that was worthy of special accommodation.

Vic looked up at the clock and calculated how much time he had before the start of his Introduction to Sculpture class. "First day of class, new boss—sounds like the perfect time to surprise everybody and show up early!" He then picked up his pile of documents and moved toward the door. I would soon follow, right after I produced slide lists on the new photocopier. Since my slides were already set in their carousels, I was confident that I could walk right in to Lecture Room B and start talking about the foreshadowing of the Reformation in Giorgione's *Tempest* as if I had never stopped. Soon thereafter, the adventure known as Art History Survey II would be well underway, with excellent prospects for some worthy bell ringers on the horizon. All I needed was strong coffee and a sandwich.

all pious seriousness, Photobitch said that she thought that the real history of art began with the invention of photography. Despite the patent offensiveness of that particular proposition, I was able to feel some sympathy for Photobitch, who I always addressed as "professor," simply because being called so always brought such a broad and radiant smile to her otherwise dour, colorless face. Calling any other member of our faculty by that title would represent an open invitation for disdainful smirking or worse, because long experience in the deepest of academic trenches had taught us hard lessons about where we truly stood in relation to real professors teaching real subjects at real schools.

But Photobitch still believed in it all. Indeed, she *needed* to believe in it all, and for that reason that I was able to recognize in her something of my younger, less cynical self. Just a few years earlier, it was I who was the young-professor-who-wanted-to-make-a-difference, and after a multi-year taste of the frustrations that always accompany such hopes, I was happy to pass the baton of pedagogical idealism on to anyone, even someone with Photobitch's perverted sense of the history of art.

This was one of the rare moments when Vic broke from his normal taciturnity in the direction of offering a detailed explanation, which meant that he had spent some time pondering some of the tangential issues raised by the

©Mark Van Proyen, All Rights Reserved. Image Credit: Mary P. Kraven "Young Scholar," 2013, Digital Collage, 4" x 7". Courtesy Mark Van Proyen. Portrait of Javier Peres courtesy of Peres Projects.



On the way to meet Javier Peres I stop into a Turkish deli to buy a juice, the first ounce of nourishment I'd had in four days since arriving in Berlin. The epic comedown on speed, ecstasy and ketamine left me buckled over with nausea and a feeling of despair, like the first time I saw a dead body, or maybe how it feels after giving birth. I fought as long as I could, and three stations into my train ride I jumped off at Hermanplatz to redecorate the platform floor with the putrid texture and color of my puke. Here in New York, I would have been pushed onto the tracks for it, shot, or taken to jail, but in Berlin the curious but reserved Germans watched quietly, or didn't look at all.

I would describe the German personality as walking into a room knowing you were just being talked about, but nobody is saying anything. The best part about this, was that the fare inspectors were checking train tickets and handing out citations to nearly everybody they could grab, because like in San Francisco, who the fuck ever pays for public transit? The cops looked embarrassed for me, and somehow passed me by as I wiped my face with the inside of my jacket. It's 10 am.

Javier Peres closed Peres Projects Los Angeles three years ago and moved all operations to Berlin. He arrived to the interview slightly late as well, drinking the very Berliner Club-Mate, a sugary tea drink packed with caffeine. I joked later that he should add some vodka, as I had done the night before, and he responded he was now sober. This came as a surprise because that morning I had read an interview Butt Magazine did with him in 2007, the whole thing was about doing blow, getting blown and drinking liters of Jack Daniels every day. What a doll, I thought.

If blacking out on the train were a sport, I would make the all-star championships. I did this epic interview with Javier, talking about sex parties, drugs and, umm, oh yeah art, but due to my booze enthusiasm and refusing to go home before sunrise I was mugged in my sleep riding back to my residency in Munich, the fifth richest city in Europe. Here is the real tragedy: my fancy phone, which contained the recorded interview with Javier, was also stolen. The entire event was embarrassing, especially when I was woken up at the airport by police and realized my earphones dangled from my head unplugged. A month later it showed up on Find My iPhone map in BULGARIA. Anyway the point is: I'm a mess, and the irony of it all is that a lot of our conversation was about his new life not drinking, or doing dope, because it was fucking up his life. "Sucks for you" I thought to myself, but maybe I should straighten up too... nah.

Javier started his gallery in San Francisco before moving to LA (the Mexican food really is better in LA, people), saying "The U.S. is a two art city town, and that's LA and New York" (which doesn't have good Mexican food). And having lived and studied in San Francisco, he's kinda right. Why? Look around genius. But cheer up San Fag, you do have the whole public sex and burritos thing going on.

Peres Projects has managed to gather an extremely impressive roaster of artists with successes that far eclipse this Greyhound I'm drinking in a shithole Chinatown apartment. These include assume vivid astro focus Viva Ruiz, the late Dash Snow, the all-white wielding Terrance Koh, the fabulously perverted Bruce LaBruce and my all-time 'fave Mark Flood. I feel like there are three kinds of gallerists: the whores, the pimps and the hustlers, and lavier Peres is the latter. He quit practicing law after seeing an Eva Hesse show at SFMoMA and realizing he needed more beauty in his life. He quickly became a catalyst for contemporary art. He opened a gallery and moved it and moved it and moved it again, and has one motive with his artists: fostering the longevity of their careers. And he delivers.

Keep an eye on the exhibition program this year – I have two words for you: James Franco.

And what else? He likes to party. Javier host's orgies in this Kreutzberg showroom and other deviant happenings that give his galleries the uncanny chlorine smell of semen (shut up, you know the smell). At one such rendezvous he told me a guy shot a load so long and far it hit a piece of artwork, and the next day the maid had to clean off the encrusted goo. "I think she's used to it by now" he said. We also talked about the strange, kinky nature of Germans, the fisting, piss and weird bondage, shit that I confess, gives me a chubby.

Okay, whatever, my point is it was an amazing interview and you'll just have to put your mind back in the gutter and fill in the blanks. Meanwhile I need to stop losing shit – just this past Saturday I got in a bar-room scuffle, lost yet another fancy phone, woke up with a massive lump on the backside of my head and broken glass in my collar. The last thing I remember saying was, "Girls, girls, you're both pretty."

Anyway, this bump is for you, Javy.

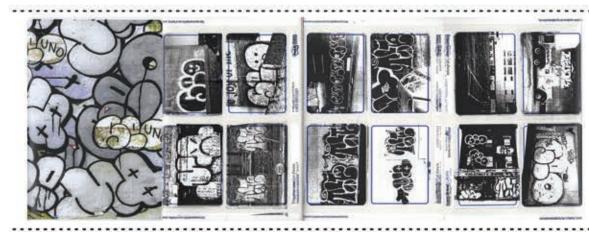
## **Zine Reviews**



Untitled Elmo Tide



Soweto/Soweto Martha Cooper



#### 1998 MQ x TIE

MQ

Zine Reviews by Austin McManus. To submit a zine for review please email: info@theflopbox.com or visit www.theflopbox.com.

I encountered the photographic work of Elmo Tide through this here zine. I gazed repeatedly at the pages over the course of several months before being triggered by a particular photograph to dig deeper. In my attempt to find additional work via the Internet I came up with nothing. Well, a Flickr page exists containing the same images as in the zine and there is an obscure interview revealing absolutely nothing personal. Who is Elmo Tide? Likely a pseudonym for an exceptionally talented photographer who prefers to keep his identity hidden. And hey, who can't respect that in these overexposed times? Many of us are lacking a little mystique and it often favors artists anyway, right? What you get from Mr. Tide is an eclectic. cinematic-looking mix of naturally lit, but often low, black and white photographs, documenting a variety of subcultures. Subjects like wrestlers, cowboys, and strippers are documented, along with those unusual moments that often pass by without notice in the street. www.hamburgereyes.com

When I suggested making a zine instead of a book, Martha Cooper agreed without hesitation. Martha was in South Africa taking photographs and spent some time in the culturally rich neighborhood of Soweto, a township outside of Johannesburg. She recognized the correlations between Soweto and a neighborhood in her hometown of Baltimore named Sowebo. The similarity in names is no coincidence. Sowebo was nicknamed after Soweto over 30 years ago due to its desolate appearance and the name has stuck ever since. The photographs in "Soweto/Sowebo" present documentation of how opposite sides of the planet can have notably comparable landscapes, recreational activities, and obstacles, among other resemblances.

www.12ozprophet.com/martha\_cooper

I'm unsure if a zine entirely compiled of photocopied stickers has ever been made. However, if anyone was going to be the first the appropriate person would certainly be MQ aka MKUE, MQUE, or MQIZM. The prolific vandal has made his adhesive obsession apparent in recent years, blanketing a number of major cities around the planet with his name badge-sized labels. When his photocopied stickers began popping up they spawned a resurgence of interest in stickers among graffiti writers and beyond, most notably in San Francisco. A new formula had been developed, and MQ willingly and generously divulged his methods for all to replicate. By folding sheets of stickers and binding them by a single rubber band and some glue, MQ created, simply, a 'sticker zine." This particular edition contains photocopied photographs from 1998 of his work with TIE. Other editions focus on the cities of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. www.mqism.com

101



100



## CONGRATULATIONS! by TAUBA AUERBACH

A Limited Edition Will Brown Fun(d)raiserTo celebrate the dawn of an exciting new year, multi-talented artist Tauba Auerbach has created a very special limited edition set of CONGRATULATIONS! buttons available exclusively through Will Brown in San Francisco. All proceeds will go toward continued programming at Will Brown's Mission District storefront gallery. Pinback button with five handcut grosgrain ribbons attached 4" x 9"

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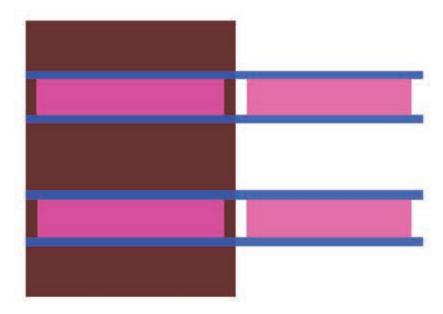
www.wearewillbrown.com/project/congratulations-w-tauba-auerbach



## Tucker Nichols, Put it in the Mail, 2012

How We Saved the Post Office is an art project designed to rescue the postal system from bankruptcy by selling a limited edition screenprint. All proceeds go directly to buying postage for this and other mail art projects. Excess proceeds are donated in the form of stamps to other small non-profits. Signed, 4-color screenprint on heavy cardstock, 11.5" x 8.5"

www.howwesavedthepostoffice.com



## Christopher Baird, Untitled, 2013

Screenprint on Paper. 18" x 24" Edition of 10 Produced by Park Life



## Green Soccer Journal

The Green Soccer Journal is a biannual magazine that takes an innovative approach to the worlds most popular sport. The magazine includes an eclectic mix of football culture and is built on a passion for the game, something which is shared by all of our contributors. Displayed in a visually stimulating format, we have worked with some of our favourite photographers, and writers to create a publication that offers an alternative view on all things football.

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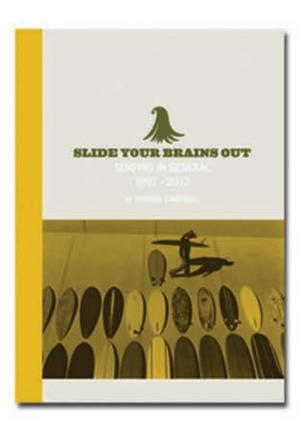
www.thegreensoccerjournal.com



### Ian Johnson "The Evening Suite I" 2012

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## Thomas Campbell: Slide Your Brains Out

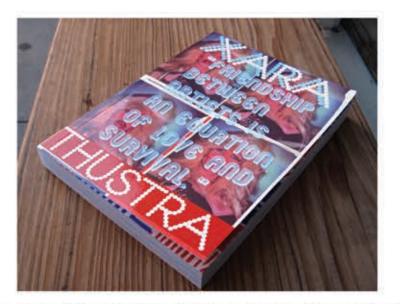
Surfing in General 1997-2012

Foreword by Scott Hulet. Afterword by Ed Templeton.

Growing up in southern California, artist, photographer and filmmaker Thomas Campbell was raised on the DIY aesthetic of the early 1980s skateboarding culture. Campbell began documenting surfing culture in the late 1990s through both photography and film. Often lo-fi and gritty, other times lush and saturated, Campbell's compositions--which include portraits and action shots of some of the best surfers in the world--are always surprising and full of emotion, from melancholy to exultation.

Published by Um Yeah Press.

www.artbook.com



Zara Thustra "Friendship Between Artists is an Equation of Love and Survival."

This beautiful 500 page book captures 15 plus years of Thustra's work in one package through photos and imagery. The story of the "Mission School" is definitely not complete without XARA THUSTRA. Both an activist and artist, Thustra has been pushing the envelope socially and artistically for 15 plus years in San Francisco. Available at Needles and Pens, San Francisco.

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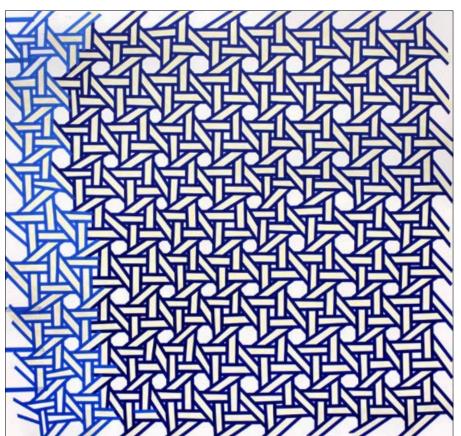


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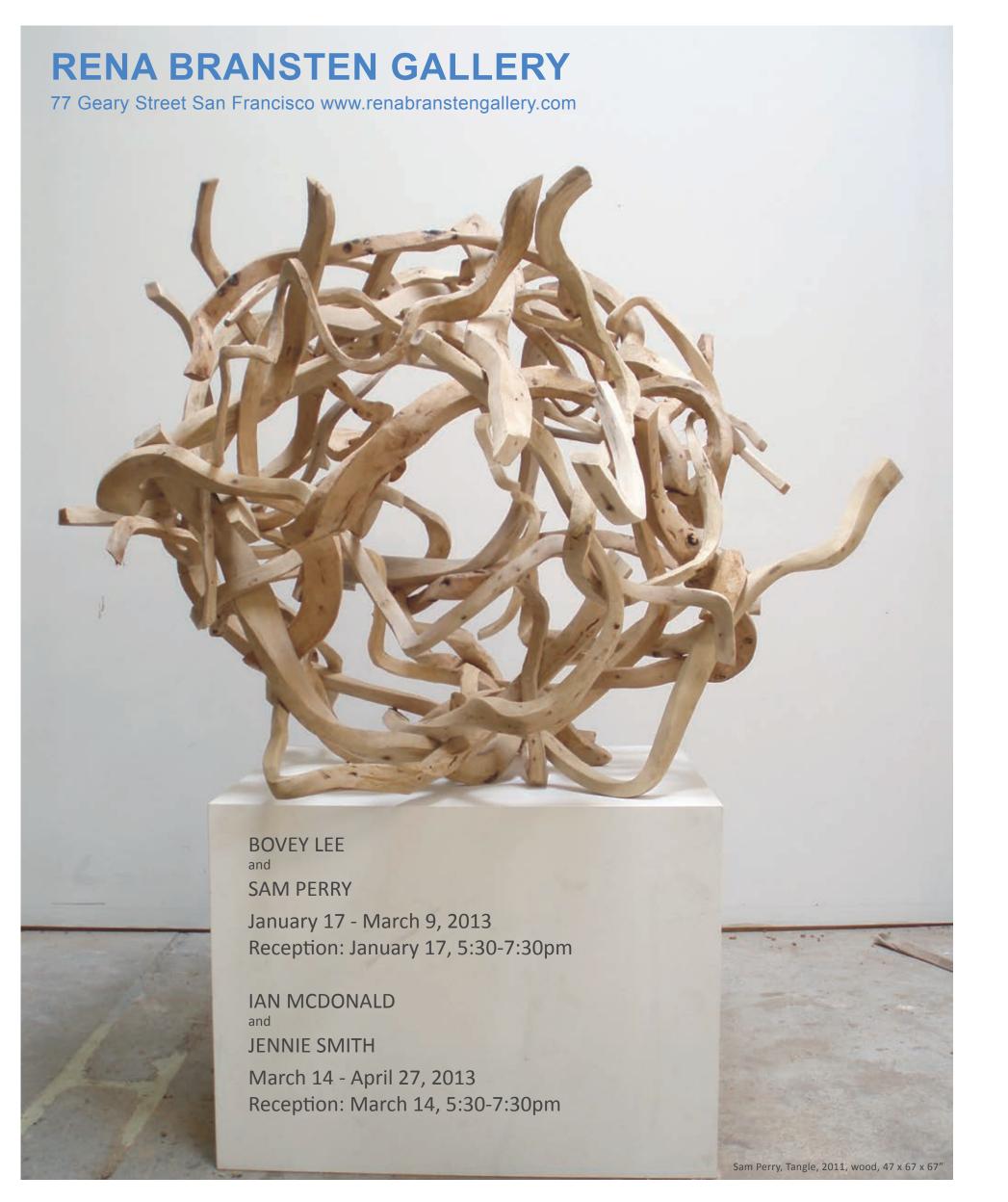
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