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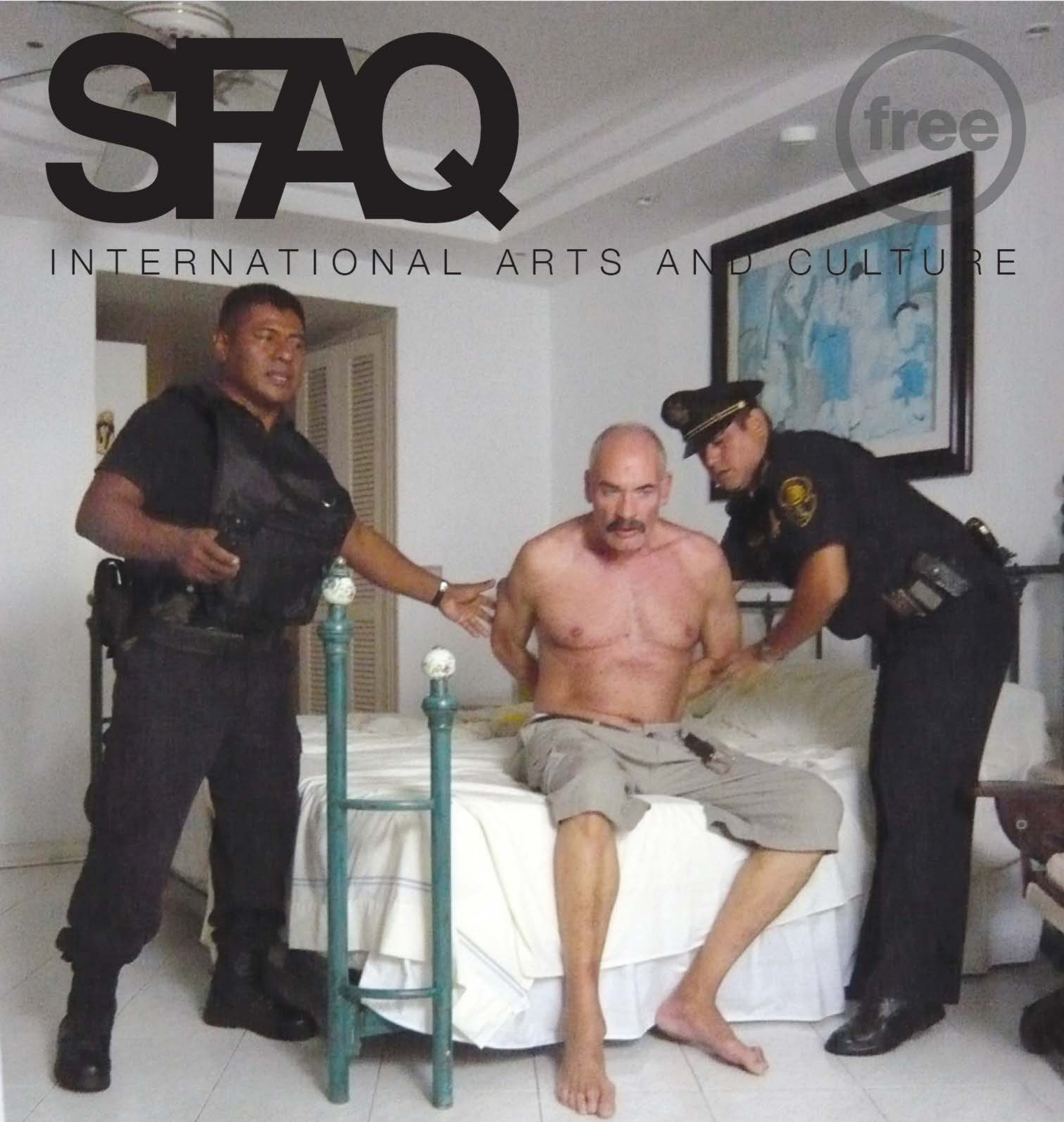

SAN FRANCISCO ARTS QUARTERLY ISSUE.9

PHOTOGRAPHY THIS SUMMER AT THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

REAL TO REAL

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE TRAINA COLLECTION

Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Elizabeth II* (detail), 1999 © Hiroshi Sugimoto, courtesy of Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Pace Gallery, New York

Martin Parr, *Fashion Street Air Africa, New York* (detail), 1999 © Martin Parr / Stephen Daiter Gallery

OPENING JULY 14
Only West Coast Venue

Man Ray | Lee Miller: Partners in Surrealism

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

Legion of Honor legionofhonor.org

Organized by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

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

JUNE 9 – SEPTEMBER 16

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deyoungmuseum.org

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ASIAN ART MUSEUM

PHANTOMS OF ASIA

MAY 18–SEPT 2

PREVIEW PARTY ON MAY 17
7:30 pm–Midnight, $12 in advance | $15 at the door | asianart.org/party
Be the first to party with *Phantoms*. Vin Sol will spin his trademark hedonistic dance beats, and there'll be drinks, yummy bites, and incredible art. All we need is you to make this a special night.

Life. Death. The cosmos. What's it all about? Bold new artworks—some created on site for this exhibition—explore spirits and spirituality in Asia. Pause and reflect on your own existence in the universe, all while taking in some amazing art.

This exhibition was organized by the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco in collaboration with the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Presentation at the Asian Art Museum is made possible by support from The Bernard Osher Foundation, the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation, Koret Foundation, Columbia Foundation, The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Credit Suisse, United, Union Bank, Christie's, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and an anonymous foundation, with additional support from The Dedalus Foundation, Inc. Media sponsors: SF Bay Guardian, East Bay Express, The Bold Italic, SF Arts Quarterly, Art Practical.

Anonymity (detail), 2008-2011 (ongoing project), by Poklong Anading (Philippines). © *Poklong Anading, 2011; Courtesy Galerie Zimmermann Kratochwill, Graz, Austria.*

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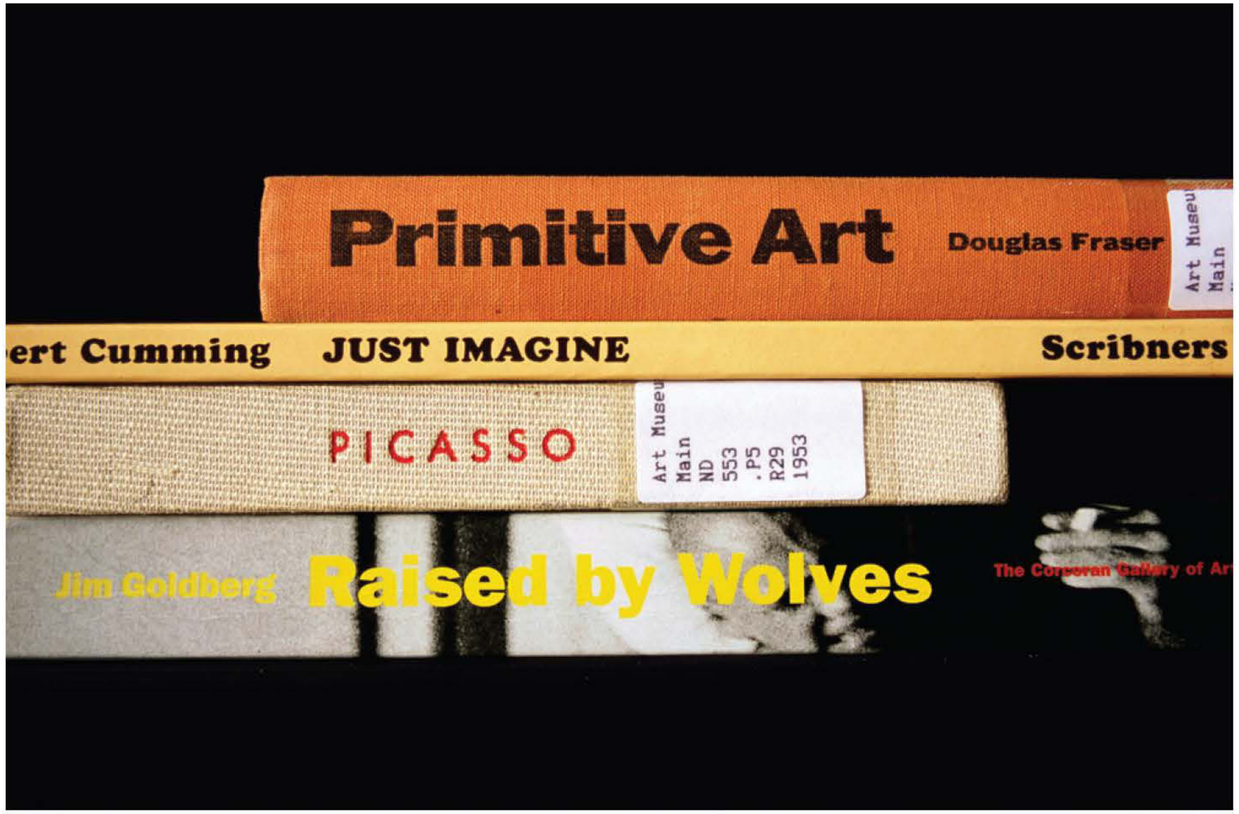

Nina Katchadourian, *Primitive Art (from the Akron Stacks)*, 2001, digital c-print, edition of 5, 13 ½ x 20 inches framed

Solo Exhibition

NINA KATCHADOURIAN
SEAT ASSIGNMENT
April 14 - May 26, 2012
Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Art Fair

artMRKT SAN FRANCISCO
May 17 - 20, 2012
Concourse Exhibition Center
620 7th Street at Brannan

Forthcoming Publication

NINA KATCHADOURIAN
SORTED BOOKS
Published by Chronicle Books, 2013

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Charles Gute
Julie Heffernan
Packard Jennings
Nina Katchadourian
Ellen Kooi
leonardogillesfleur
Ligorano/Reese
Kara Maria
Kambui Olujimi
Ed Osborn
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Carlos & Jason Sanchez
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SFAI takes over the iconic Phoenix Hotel for the 2012 MFA Graduate Exhibition, with innovative work by nearly 100 graduating artists.

Opening Reception
Friday, May 11, 6–8 pm

Exhibition Dates
May 11–13, noon–10 pm daily
601 Eddy Street, San Francisco

Lin Yilin

Performance artist Lin Yilin, a leader of the Chinese avant-garde art world, explores urban histories of migration and immigration.

Walter and McBean Galleries Opening Reception
Thursday, May 3, 5:30–7:30 pm

Exhibition Dates
May 4–July 28

Asian Contemporary Arts Consortium | KADIST

Diego Rivera and the Mexican Mural Movement: A Contemporary Perspective on Art and Activism

Organized with the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco, this symposium considers the legacy of the Mexican mural movement.
July 11–12

SRE | AeroMexico

Bier Sommer

German conceptual artist Hans Winkler transforms SFAI's quad into the "View Point Movie Theater and Beer Garden," screening work selected by international artists and filmmakers.
July 27–29

LIN YILIN
GOLDEN TOWN, 2011
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

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

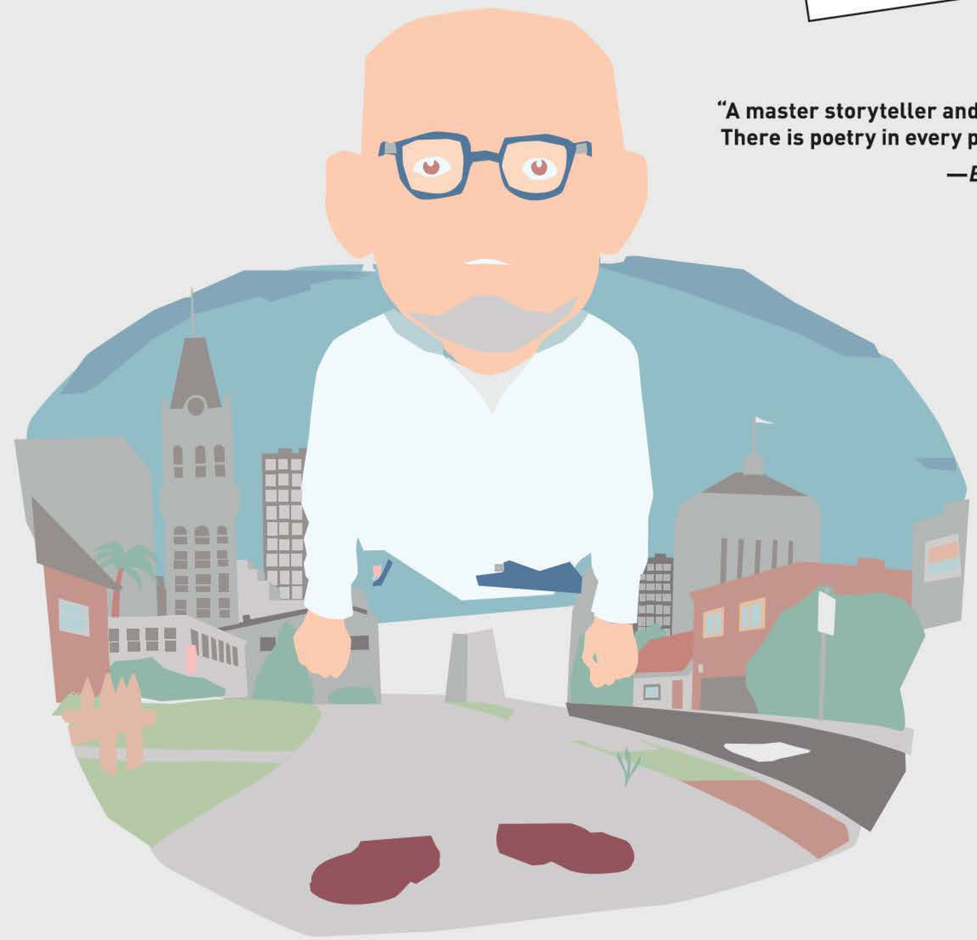
Oakland Museum of California

MODERN CARTOONIST

the ART OF DANIEL CLOWES

April 14–August 12, 2012

"A master storyteller and artist. There is poetry in every panel."
—Esquire



Modern Cartoonist: The Art of Daniel Clowes is made possible in part through the generous support of the Oakland Museum Women's Board, the OMCA Art Guild, Sheila Duignan and Mike Wilkins, Meridee Moore and Kevin King, and Brooke Devine.

museumca.org

IMAGE: *Wilson*, 2010. © Daniel Clowes

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Background image from the screen still of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, 2011. © Ho Tzu Nyen.

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Tran Truong, Untitled, 2010; photo: courtesy the artist

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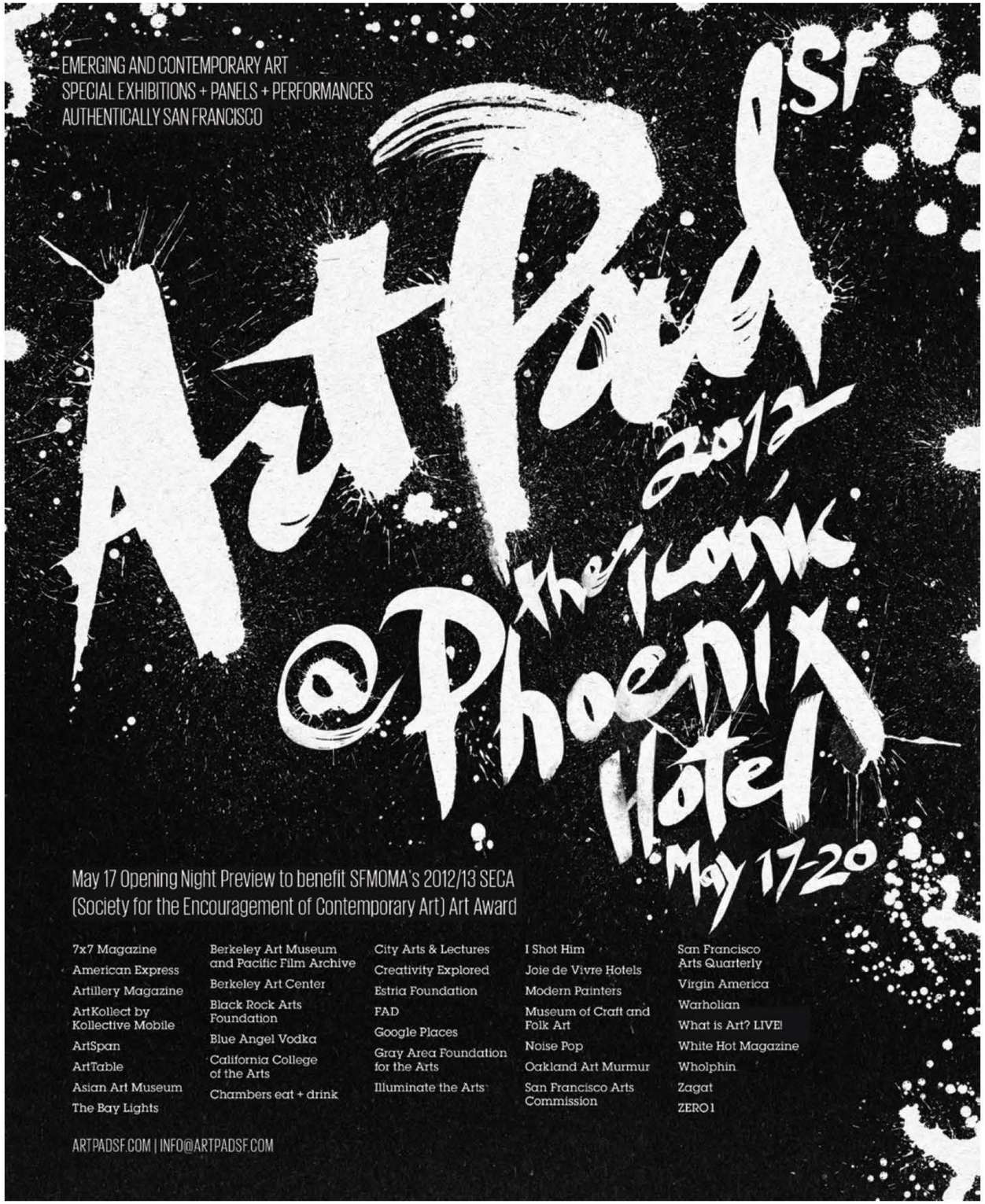

THE PAINTED WORD

April 28 - June 9, 2012

Ferlinghetti. Photograph by Christopher Felver

Co-Curated by Peter Selz and Sue Kubly

Reception: Wednesday May 16, 6-8 pm
Gallery Hours: 11-5pm Tuesday-Saturday

William Saroyan
Lawrence Ferlinghetti
Kenneth Rexroth
Jack Hirschman
Jess
Robert Duncan
Michael McClure
Jack Michelin
Henry Miller
Kenneth Patchen
Christopher Felver
John Keating
William S. Burroughs
David Meltzer

Public Programs:

Poetry read by ruth weiss with jazz percussion*
Sunday, April 29, 2012 at 5:30pm

Ferlinghetti / Ferlinghetti*
Peter Coyote reads poetry by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and a screening of *Ferlinghetti*, by Christopher Felver
Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 7-9pm

Jonathan Clark Reading Poetry by Kenneth Patchen*
Sunday, May 13, 2012 at 5:30pm

The Red Poet*
A documentary film on Bay Area poet Jack Hirschman.
Matthew Furey (Director) and Francis Furey (Producer)
Sunday, May 20, 2012 at 5:30pm

Poets Read Poets
Bay Area poets reading paired with an evening of live jazz to celebrate the close of ***The Painted Word***
Sunday, June 3, 2012 at 5:30pm
$50 (Fundraiser for Meridian Gallery/SAPA)

*$10-20 Suggested Donation

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David Maxim, *Power of Music #2,* Mixed Media on Canvas, 2006, 11"x14"x4"

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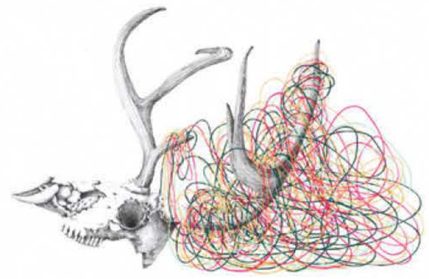

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Image: Masako Miki, "Caught By a Rainbow" (2012), Gouache and ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches

San Francisco Arts Quarterly
Issue 9. MAY. JUNE. JULY 2012

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Images Courtesy of
George Kuchar, Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Cassandra Foundation, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Steven Leiber, Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern, Sherin Guirguis, Josh Hagler, Julio Cesar Morales, Genesis BREYER P-ORRIDGE, INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, Eli Ridgway Gallery, Jeremiah Jenkins, Ever Gold Gallery, Artadia Jounior Council WEST, Austin McManus, Michael Joo, Anna Halprin, Public Art Magazine (Seoul, Korea), Sonje Museum (Kyungju, Korea)

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Special Thanks
Tina Conway, Bette Okeya, Royce Ito, Leigh Cooper, Susan Wu. Tyson Vogel, Kent Baer, Eli Ridgway, SIA Club, Henry Gunderson, Jamie Alexander, Peter Kirkeby, Paule Anglim, Alan Bamberger, Evening Labor, everyone who supports us through advertising, subscriptions, and donations. We support unions and good times…

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Printed on 60% post-consumer papers
SFAQ used environmentally friendly soy based inks
Made in San Francisco, California

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Julio César Morales
Julio César Morales is an artist, educator and curator. He teaches at The San Francisco Art Institute and is also the founder of Queens Nails Annex/Projects in San Francisco and is currently an adjunct curator at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. He is represented by Frey Norris Gallery in San Francisco.

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

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

Miguel Calderón
Miguel Calderón is a Mexican artist and writer. He has worked in various media: paint, photography, video and installation–often engaged with low-brow aesthetics and concerns. An example of the artist's sly engagement with the media are the paintings from his 1998 multimedia exhibition Aggressively Mediocre/Mentally Challenged/Fantasy Island (circle one) that appeared in Wes Anderson's film The Royal Tenenbaums. He has had solo exhibitions at the Tamayo Contemporary Art Museum in Mexico City, the Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York City, Queens Nails Projects, San Francisco, the Museum of Natural History in Mexico City and the São Paulo Biennale, PS. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York City, the Sharjah Biennale, Yokohama Triennale among others.

Korakrit Arunanondchai
Korakrit Arunanondchai b.1986, is an artist based in Bangkok, Thailand and New York. He is currently finishing his MFA at Columbia University. His work draws largely on his personal experience growing up in Bangkok and its binary relationship to his art practice in New York City. For more information visit www.korakrit.com

Dean Dempsey
Dean Dempsey earned his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009. His photoworks have been exhibited in national and international venues in North America, Europe and Asia, including the Crocker Museum of Art, Aperture Gallery, Light Work and ArtPadSF. Dean was nominated for the SFMoMA's SECA award and was featured for a cover story in the San Francisco Bay Guardian in 2010, and was more recently included in Art in America's 2011 "Annual Guide to Galleries, Museums and Artists". He is currently in a traveling group exhibition now at Museum of the Americas in D.C. as part of the permanent collection of Bronx-based photo organization, En Foco.

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.

Gabe Scott
Gabe Scott was born and raised in the Bay Area, and after graduating from San Francisco State, has curated for numerous galleries on the West Coast over the last 9 years. His writing has been featured in Juxtapoz, Art Ltd and the SFAQ and his photography has appeared in Juxtapoz, Alarm Magazine and Hi-Fructose. After living most of his adult life in Oakland and San Francisco, he has relocated to Denver, Colorado, where he works with the Robin Rule Gallery. Despite now spending most of his time in Colorado, he maintains close ties with the San Francisco art community.

Andrew McClintock
Andrew McClintock was born in Irkutsk Oblast, Russia with the family name of Pokhabov, one of the founders of the city c. 1650's. Pokhabov had to leave Irkutsk Oblast when he was two years old with his mother a famous ballerina in the local ballet because she was run out of town by the governors wife who had taken his mother as a mistress. With baby in arms they hitchhiked along the Trans-Siberian Highway until they got to Moscow. When his mother couldn't get a visa to go to Europe she convinced a travelling woman named Jessica McClintock to have pitty and take Pokhabov and give him a chance to have better luck than what was in his current deck of cards. Upon realizing that infact it was not the designer Jessica McClintock but a circus performer with the same name she tried to get Pokhabov back but the circus caravan had already left town. When the circus returned to England Pokhabov was now ten and only knew him self by the name Andrew McClintock.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER IMAGE: ***George Kuchar***, ***"Tropical Vulture"***, Miguel Caldéron in collaboration with George Kuchar, 2009, video still, commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for The Arts for Pause// practice and exchange program curated by Julio Cesar Morales. Courtesy of the artist. Photography by Eamon Ore Giron

George Kuchar (1942 - 2011)

Interview by Miguel Calderon and Julio Cesar Morales

George Kuchar, *"Pagan Rhapsody"*, film still, 1970, 16mm. Courtesy of the Artist.

With George Kuchar on November 18, 2009 in San Francisco. Excerpts of the interview from the forthcoming book, "Made by Kuchar," by Calderon and Morales, edited by Jackie Im.

Julio: Can you tell us why you stopped collaborating with your brother, Mike?

George: Well, we have completely different aesthetics. He was more interested in sword and sorcery pictures and I was more into melodrama. We started to work together on "Corruption of the Damned," Mike acted in it and shot a few scenes, some of them were romantic scenes and they had a nice slow pace; my stuff was always frenetic. He decided to abandon that movie to work on "Sins of the Fleshapoids," which is much more of his style, slower, and he could concentrate more on things he was interested in. So, I took over the reins of "Corruption of the Damned." Some of his scenes are still in there. I worked on one scene in his picture with Donna Kerness in "Sins of the Fleshapoids."

Miguel: When you shot these films, and you acted for each other, did you see one another as each other's alter ego? Or did you see him as a mirror of yourself?

George: Mike was just around. He could always be depended on because we lived together. He was always there and I could use him for the picture. There was one case where he had a beard in one scene we shot, and then I realized when I did another scene later that he had shaved his beard off. It was a little goatee, kind of a Greek looking thing. So, I had to draw the beard on. He was also wearing different ties all the time, but since the film was in black and white, the different ties didn't seem that obvious. But Mike was just around, and I used him. He wasn't an alter ego. I don't think.

Julio: How do you choose the soundtracks for your films?

George: I have a bunch of records. In the old days, I used to wash dishes and listen to music and I would say, "oh this would probably be good in that scene." Sometimes while editing, I would be playing music, and then when it came time to record the music, I would just use what I was listening to. We've been collecting records for years, and we have a huge record collection. Now we have a big CD collection.

Julio: So now in 2009, do you still use records?

George: I do. I made "Corruption of the Damned," and I thought, "maybe I should make the music myself." I went to Woolworth's and bought these little organs, harmonicas, and a little tiny drum, like a little bongo drum. It sounded awful for such a big movie. We needed a big orchestra but how was I to afford an orchestra? I couldn't, so I had to go with that route.

Julio: How does radio influence your films?

George: I used to listen to the radio when I was younger. I used to like to listen to the crime shows. You could hear big people fighting and hitting one another, and the sound of bodies hitting the ground; the thud of fist on flesh. That was kind of exciting.

Julio: So, the whole thing about radio dramas, and how you would actually create sounds that simulate specific actions?

George: Yeah, and the mental pictures you got. It was very stimulating for the imagination. You pictured how the people looked and that was kind of exciting.

Julio: What about some of the influences for yourself, and for Mike? What were some of the influences that got you into filmmaking, besides someone giving you a film camera? What are some of your cinematic influences?

George: My mom used to take us to the movies. We would see the big movies, and it was kind of traumatic in a way. Traumatic, because you see these big people acting and they were in shipwrecks, and there were airplanes crashing; life and death situations. That was a big influence on me, this world of the big people. Much more dangerous as a kid, I thought. I used to mimic those movies. We used to go to vacant lots and play spaces, and pretend we were in outer space or something like that. My Mom was a big influence, because she would take us to the movies. I don't think my Dad ever took us to the movies, because he was gone most of the day. He was a truck driver and he would sleep during the day and work at night. Then television came in, and television had the puppets. I liked that.

Julio: Puppets?

George: Yeah, they used to have a lot of puppet shows in those days. Because they sometimes had television shows that didn't quite fit the entire slot and they had to fill it up with little things. Puppets and old time cartoons, and things like that were a big influence on me. Also, television in those days was slower.

Julio: What do you mean slower?

George: They only had maybe two cameras. They didn't cut away as much - switch. Nowadays they are switching all over the place. Television was another world of big people. I also very much enjoyed the idea that the women on T.V. didn't have to go to work. I said, "gee I should have been a woman. Then you could stay home and watch television all day." I thought that was kind of an ideal life. All the men looked like they had to go out and work. I used to stay home and watch television. We used to want to watch television too much and my brother and I would stay home. We played hooky from school. I used to watch "I Remember Momma." It was about Norwegians settling in San Francisco.

Julio: I didn't see that one.

George: Television was an early influence. I used to go see movies on my own or with my brother. We used to go after school, because we'd get out at 3:00, and then we would catch a show, and get home in time for supper. There wouldn't be many people in the movie theater, because it was like 3:30 in the afternoon. We used to see all the Douglas Sirk movies, the melodramas that were made for the ladies, "the weakies".

Julio: So, were these first run, second run movies, or how was it marketed?

George: They were playing in the local theater, so they must have already had a big show downtown. But those were double feature days. I love double features and sometimes the second runs were better than the main, major "A" feature.

Miguel: Is there a movie you have made that has revealed something about yourself that you didn't know?

George: Yeah, there have been. Probably "Eclipse of the Sun Virgin" was one. There are things that you notice later on that you had no idea that it was being foreshadowed. Mainly those things that were really vague, like, you wonder what the hell is going on in this movie. Not so much heavy plots, but different images that would come, and they were loosely put together. So, that one was maybe kind of interesting, because years later, decades later somebody looked at that movie, and they labeled it as a certain type of picture, and I had no idea at the time.

Miguel: How so?

George: They saw or read something in it. After the fact, I could see in the images how it did foreshadow a certain idea. I keep it all a mystery. I once said this to the Examiner: "You know, in burlesque, you never take everything off all at once." The audience doesn't appreciate that, you got to have mystery, and therefore, you leave all these things up in the air. It goes with nudity sometimes, and sometimes not. Sometimes you feel you better get nude quick, because everything is going to fall apart soon, and you do it. But then you have to make sure that the lighting and everything is correct. [Laughter]

"Yeah, well you know, sex is one of the main reasons you get the energy to make the damn thing, because it's the only reason sometimes to pick up a camera. [Laughs] First of all, the people that you are photographing are kind of sexy, some of them. Other ones you want to make sexy, because you want to create a sex symbol, like a love god or goddess. I think the main energy that fuels you is a sexual energy. That's why I tell people never discount that."

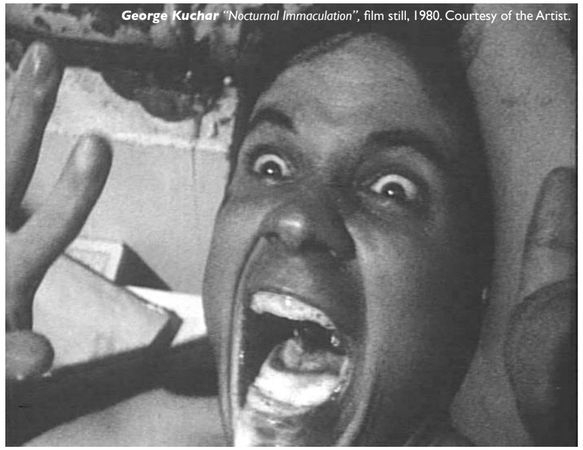
Miguel: When you hold a camera, do you feel like you are working? Does your mood change drastically from when you're not holding a camera?

George: Yeah, there is a certain persona that goes on, you know that you're being photographed, and the camera should be your friend. You know that you are working with your friend and therefore, you've got an attitude. It's not fake, well, you're not timid. You're performing for your friend, and sometimes if the camera doesn't like you, then forget it.

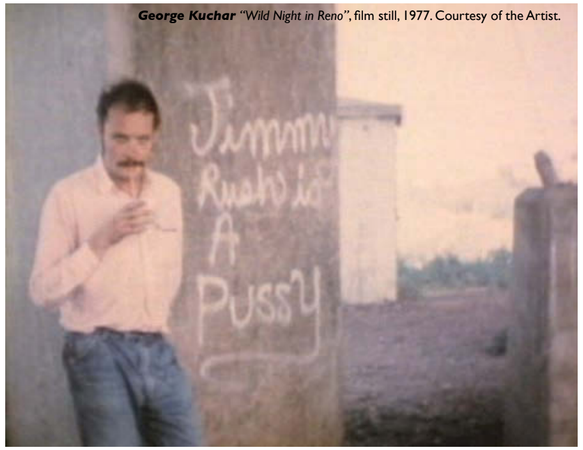
Miguel: Even though you are shooting yourself?

George: Yeah, you know you're shooting yourself, but if the camera doesn't like you, forget about it. Whatever you are going to do will be bad, you know what I mean? But sometimes, you may be shooting yourself and saying, "oh this is going to stink, I better do another take." But for some reason, the worst take looks the best. Maybe it's because it's the most spontaneous? So, it depends, the camera reads things differently, but there is a different persona, and depending on the project and depending on what stage you are at in your development, you know, what's going on in your mind, a different persona comes out, a character.

George Kuchar On the set of *"Tropical Vulture"*, directed by Miguel Caldéron, 2009. Courtesy of the Artist.



George Kuchar *"Nocturnal Immaculation"*, film still, 1980. Courtesy of the Artist.



George Kuchar *"Wild Night in Reno"*, film still, 1977. Courtesy of the Artist.

Miguel: Just to get our conversation heated, do you believe in psychology?

George: I'm interested in it. Because, you know, somebody gave it some thought. But I know that all the psychologists were… Every time I went to the barber, he was bald. When I went to they eye doctor, he wore glasses. So, I would just think that the psychologist is crazy.

Julio and Miguel: [Laughter]

George: So you got to have that kind of knowledge, but don't take it too seriously. Of course you have the Freudian and you have the Jungian things. I'm interested in reading them, because Jung was interested in flying saucers, and wondered what the hell they were. Freud was interested in sex, and everybody is interested in that. So, to read about hidden feelings, you know you would like to understand yourself somewhat. Maybe not know too much, but you eventually do wind up finding out about yourself, much to your horror. But, it's nice to know that other people go through hell also.

Julio: Can you tell us when you started to get interested in paranormal experiences and culture?

George: I was always interested and fascinated. I would have liked to believe that ghosts were real. I used to go to bookstores when I was feeling kind of lonely and I would pick up a book about ghosts, and I'd say, "What the hell am I reading this for? Shouldn't I grow up or something?" You want to believe in witches and all the rest of that stuff. But then as I got older, one of the things that happened was when I went to the haunted automat, I ordered food, and had it on the tray, and I had a big glass of milk on the tray. As I pulled away from the cash register, I looked at the milk, and thought, "oh no I'm going to spill this on somebody," and I just kept walking, I couldn't stop myself, I kept walking. Then I passed this table, and this business man pulled out from the table with his chair, banged into me, and the milk went all over him. I realized that I couldn't stop it. I knew it was going to happen, and I wasn't the one that dumped milk on him. He pulled out, and banged into me, and the milk went all over, and I said: "Gee, something weird about the world." It must have some different rules than normal. So, I got interested in that. Then I saw that UFOs were all over the place; around the world, and then they were here in California.

Julio: What year was that?

George: In the 70's. It was a big worldwide flap, and I would read about it in the newspaper, and hear about it on the radio station, and think, "Gee what the hell is that all about? It sounds interesting." Then I saw one in the Mission, I saw a UFO one night, taking the dog out for a walk. I couldn't believe it. I tried to get information on it. I called up the newspaper, and they switched me to the subscription department. So, I got the ridicule factor, but then, I couldn't sleep, I got all excited. So, that sort of turned me on to that kind of world.

I used to go to the movies and meet a lot of different people. I met one man, John Peel. He was going to underground movies a lot and he would dress up in suits; he seemed more like a business man. Then, years later when I started reading about flying saucers - when I didn't really believe in them, didn't know that they were real - his name would pop up. So when I saw that UFO in the Mission, I got back in touch with him. Somehow, he read a review of one of my movies that was playing in New York - he lived in New York at the time - and he called me up. We talked about the paranormal and I ended up making two documentaries. He would appear in different pictures for me.

Miguel: You just mentioned loneliness. When you go hunting for storms in Oklahoma, do you do this to escape being with other people? Do need to be alone, or is it just the phenomenon itself that you are interested in?

George: It's both. During the year I'm working with the students, and we're making a big picture, its very social. Then to get away where the phone doesn't ring, because nobody calls you up, nobody knows you're even there, they don't have your number, and you also don't want to be with anybody. Because you know, storm watching… I don't chase storms, it could be frustrating for other people. They wonder, where the hell is the storm, and why are you here? This way, you don't have to answer to anybody. You get a chance to watch cable television, because the motels have cable TV, and you can be completely anonymous. Nobody in the town knows you. Some may be curious why the hell you're there, especially the hotel-keepers, but then you become friends with them. You develop like another family, because if you keep going back, you develop a friendship with the same people, and even when they close the motel, they open it up just for you, give you a room, and they want to take care of you somehow. So, it's strange, and you wonder, you know… I don't freak out anymore, because there is no reason to. You're going to get out of there. You may freak out if you realize you are stuck there for life. But you can always get out, because you have a home to go to or some other place. But it's mainly my interest in weather, and if I can record it to take it back with me: the clouds and any storms. I feel good.

Miguel: Do you see a difference between the people you meet there and the people that are involved in the arts, and the art world, and wanting to make films?

George: Yeah, they could be a little more sour out there. They could be facing reality more or "the real America." But you go there now and there are all kinds of people of different nationalities. There's Pakistanis that pick you up at the airport or like in the motel I went to and there were all these Mexican migrant workers staying in the next rooms. So, in a way, it's like a question of 'am I in Middle America,' or is this a big international kind of thing? For example, now they have a big Vietnamese community in Oklahoma. They have these big giant plastic palm trees that are all lit up at night, neon, and a big shopping market. So, I guess it becomes the real melting pot, it' s not just like Mid-America. But then you got Mid-America like the old ladies with blue hair and only the elderly would stay in that town. The young people, I guess they felt that there was no future there. Well, except for people that wanted to be cowboys, and you meet some young people like that. But there is a difference.

I used to do artwork there. I used to paint, sometimes much to their horror. The owner of the motel, the lady, would come into the room and see what I was painting, and be mortified. It would be something like a strange jungle scene with a naked lady, you know, nothing lewd. I wondered what the hell is going on in her mind. It's very religious out there, because people there - you are alone on the prairie. There's a lot of sky and a lot of space between people. There is much more of a feeling of trying to be closer to God. There's revivalists religious people and sometimes they try to get you over there and talk with you, to convert you over to their religion. I always tell them, 'yeah I'm Catholic, I don't go to church much', so I had sort of a buffer. But that kind of thing, the yearning for religion, it's all based on the vastness. You have all this vastness and big sky. In a sense, it's not that jaded. It's jaded in a different sense. Like I once saw a truck, it was moving slow, but it hit a little kid on a bicycle, and the kid fell off the bike, but the old guy, he looked like a farmer, got out and he looked at his car, like is the car damaged? So, sometimes that kind of callousness is there.

Miguel: I'm curious. Do you get a sense of a certain spirituality seeing these amazing, humongous landscapes? Because, you just said these people go there to get close to God. Is there a sense of that for you?

George: Those people were raised there.

Miguel: Do you get a sense of something spiritual when you see these phenomena?

George: I feel more terror, because the sky is so big and the clouds look so heavy sometimes,

George Kuchar *"Eclipse of the Sun Virgin"*, film still, 1967. Courtesy of the Artist.

George Kuchar, *"Hold Me While I am Naked"*, film still, 1966. Courtesy of the Artist.

and then sometimes the serious storms will come that set off sirens, and you wonder: what the hell should I do? This place doesn't have a basement. There are moments of extreme nothing going on; maybe boredom. I start thinking, why the hell am I here to experience these moments of extreme terror? What am I doing here, and why did I wind up in this place? Sometimes the less you know the better. Like, if you have the TV on, there's always some warnings coming up, and you anticipate the worst. If you are ignorant, you don't know what the hell is going on, you just step into it. You are able to suddenly accept it better. There have been times where I have been on the roof when I didn't understand cloud formations, and a twister whirled overhead. I looked up at it and I had no idea what it was. You know, it could have come down, it was practically overhead, but in that case, ignorance helped you to stay up on the roof. You can watch things without chickening out.

Miguel: I notice since your early films, there's all this drama and all these very staged situations. In "Yolanda" for example, there's this exaggerated drama that reminds me a little bit of Mexican soap operas. It's just so exaggerated, human nature is so dramatic, and you juxtapose it with flowers and nature. Do you consciously draw a line between nature and human drama?

George: No, in "Yolanda," I happened to go to the country house of a friend, and I brought my camera Since she was supposed to be studying something that lives in the woods nearby, whatever footage I shot there in the country, I incorporated in the film. It had flowers. It had a stream. Usually I go someplace, and then I shoot the scenery, whether it's of nature or city scenes, and then I incorporate it in the drama, like the character is supposed to be living in that environment.

I was always interested in movies that are souped up… in other words, you go the movie and it's a souped-up drama. I was never that careful about where are the people actually acting in. Or that they come to a door, but what house are they in? I wasn't interested in that. I was more interested in the drama that was happening in the moment. So a lot people wondered, like where are we? Where is this taking place, but, it never concerned me. I was more interested in having the audience get swept away by their emotions. That's why, once in a while, there are stationary scenes in my films. Because, if you watch a picture, like on television, like "Dallas" they would specifically show the ranch, that this was taking place at the ranch. But, sometimes I did away with that. You get dead into the hot action, the drama, and it just takes over. In a picture like "Yolanda," if I happened to go someplace, and photograph the scenery, I tried to incorporate it in there, so I don't throw footage away that's real pretty.

Miguel: Do you compare human emotions with climate changes? Do you see them as similar in some way?

George: If you go to the movies when the characters are in a haunted house, there's horror. There is always lightning and thunder; they incorporate the weather in there. Or if it's a sexy scene, it's a hot humid day, and they're sweating and they're wearing less clothes, so it becomes part of the whole setting. It's those moments when I'm interested in the weather, because - I love cloud formations, and I learned a lot from the artwork of Eric Sloane. He was an American artist, lived in Connecticut, and he drew cloud formations, and he wrote weather books, but they weren't meteorological with mathematics. It was all about cloud formations, and he drew them in diagrams, and they were beautiful renderings of clouds that he studied. That kind of thing interested me, the drama, visually of the sky, instead of the actual mathematics of the damned thing.

Miguel: I was going to ask you if you would have liked to have been a meteorologist, but you answered that already.

George: No, when I was working - I was working with the weather bureau, because I had to appear there in New York to accept the maps that were drawn by a guy who was on the weather show, who was just an announcer. There was man who was a scientist and he was very good, but it was very regimented, it was very military. They couldn't talk when they were doing shifts. They had a shift personnel, and it was run by military people. You could tell they must have been generals or something, majors - they were in suits. They were constantly having breakdowns in the office, horrible big scenes where finally, they would crack under the pressure. Then they get pressure from the outside world, because Guy Lombardo used to have an outdoor thing at the beach… Jones Beach. Guy Lombardo would call up cursing them if they said "twenty percent chance of showers", because it would ruin his audience, and people wouldn't show up, because they said it may rain. Lombardo would call them up and curse them out. So, the weathermen were under that kind of pressure, but that kind of thing seemed more like a nightmare world. I preferred Eric Sloane, the way he went out and he took a sheet of glass painted one side black, and it reflected the clouds, so he was able to look at the clouds without being blinded by the whiteness, and then draw how their anatomy was. I was more interested in that, and learning science via that method.

Julio: In regards to nature and science, an ongoing subject in a lot of your films has been Bigfoot. Why are you so interested in Bigfoot, and is Bigfoot a metaphor in your films?

George: I was interested in him, because he's a strange half man half animal half giant. I mean, it's like a crazy thing, part of that world of the - mystery world. I would love to see a Bigfoot. What the hell is it? It seems very human, because nobody really wants to shoot it, because they feel they would murder a person but it's not really like a person - a gigantic hairy man. I don't know. It's a mystery. I don't go in the woods often. When I do I don't think about Bigfoot unless I go maybe to the north woods here. But evidently they can appear everywhere, so it's just one of these mystery things like a flying saucer and that's the thing. I hear they smell very bad. [Laughs] It may not be a very pleasant experience if you get too close to one. We had a student that was interested in Bigfoot who was at the Art Institute, and he made a fake documentary to ridicule the subject to keep people away from Bigfoot, so that they wouldn't shoot it. I keep telling this story: he had gone to the north county looking for Bigfoot, he brought his dog, and he sat by a tree, and then he looked, and there was a gigantic turd right next to the tree. It was the biggest he ever saw in his life. He said no human being could have made a turd like that, and it was no bear turd. I'm interested in these kind of strange juxtapositions…

Julio: So did that influence the opening of your 1980 film "Yolanda?"

George: Yeah, yeah, because there are people that have collected turds. They think it's a Bigfoot turd, to try to find out what it eats and stuff. But evidently, it's quite enormous. And… you know, big feet. I have size 14 shoes. [Laughs]

Julio: Is that it? Just big feet? Is there anything else?

George: [Laughter]

Miguel: There's so much sexuality in your films, the women act so sexy, could you talk about that?

George: Yeah, well you know, sex is one of the main reasons you get the energy to make the damn thing, because it's the only reason sometimes to pick up a camera. [Laughs] First of all, the people that you are photographing are kind of sexy, some of them. Other ones you want to make sexy, because you want to create a sex symbol, like a love god or goddess. I think the main energy that fuels you is a sexual energy. That's why I tell people never discount that. You should never try to go against it, because that's an amazing force. If it can somehow be channeled - you can get a lot of hot action on the side but, if you channel some of it into

Portrait of Mike *(left)* and George Kuchar, 2010. Photograph by Tomo Saito, Courtesy of the Artist.

making a picture, it's a well - sometimes it's much more healthy. [Laughs]

Miguel: Has sexual energy drawn energy from being creative somehow?

George: It's a terrible dilemma, especially when you're younger. Even when you're older, because you don't want to stay home editing, you want to get out there and have a wild time. You have to almost sit on yourself to stay in the house to edit a picture. The danger of that is, when the picture is over, you go haywire and you go on these big massive binges.

Julio: What kind of binges?

George: Sex binges, and any kind of vice you can get your hands on. It comes as a giant vice package. You can be as pure as you want making these kind of sexy pictures, try to channel the energy, holding off, and then suddenly the picture's over, and this is this time to celebrate, and the dam is broken, it's terrible. I mean you go on crazy things, and then you try to recover, because to make a picture you have to remain kind of pure. You have to either go to a gymnasium, or a hot sauna to sweat it all out, and then you're ready for your next picture. You're pure and you can now make a picture. But then that kind of seesaw makes you nuts, it's really draining. You can only do it for a certain amount of time, as you get older it's devastating. You have to learn to calm down.

Miguel: Do you really make that division?

George: It's almost like the movies themselves are kind of, you know, you get kind of sexy - the libido takes over the sequences. Many times, the plots sort of delve into the crazy sex, because the characters are all kind of spurred on by sex, and all their actions are too.

Miguel: Like the "Pagan Rhapsody."

George: "The Pagan Rhapsody" is out of control. The sex has gotten out of control, and it's the motivating force of the characters in the picture, and the energy supplying that picture is done, but sex energy is also put into it…your own.

Miguel: Does anyone at the end feel fulfilled? Satisfied?

George: They get a lot of hot action, but some of them with disgust, disgusted at what had gone out of control. I've made pictures where there's a nice gentleness, a nice gentile feeling to the damn things. Usually, I was interested in sex as an uncontrollable force; something you try to get going in a certain direction, but then suddenly it goes haywire, and you try to figure out why the hell did it go this way? That was kind of an interest for me, the variations. I found most interesting, like movie actors, if they have strange kink. Like you hear about their relationships, I get more interested in them. I feel that they are more like real people, going through strange kinks. Like they got to tie the wife up to a chair - you always hear that - you know smack her around. They got weird things, and then if you go to big sex clubs, which there used to be a lot of them here, there were massive hotels that were nothing but sex places. A whole apartment building that was devoted to that. You paid an admission price, you go in, and it was all on admission price, and you get all you want, you know if it didn't look that bad. That kind of variety is what was going on.

Miguel: Both sexes?

George: Yeah, both sexes. There was one here on Valencia street, and that was interesting, because the gay ones were already amazingly corrupt, because they had been going on for a long time, and they got more and more bizarre, and you got more and more bizarre by going into them. But if you go into the ones that were straight, it was new to them and there was a freshness, and almost a sweetness, vitality to it, you know what I mean? The other place, drug addiction took over, because once you paid an admission price and you did once, you say well, you've paid your money, maybe keep going, so it's a vice package.

Here's the thing: in other words, the variety of life and the strange ways that your childhood and everything else - I found the richness so fascinating, and I think Dr. Ruth found it too, because there was one writer who was writing a book about sex, but he went to these sex clubs, and he was on Dr. Ruth's show. She said, "I admire you. You went out in the field." She said, "I can't do that." You know she couldn't go out, she's a lady, German lady. But she so much admired someone that went out. The great richness of the sex lives of people and the varieties and the fact that you could be overweight, or you could be bald or something like that, there's somebody out there that likes it. But the trouble is you got to get in the gutter to find them. You got to go to these places, and then who knows what the hell you're going to wind up with. But that kind of thing, this energy to constantly go out, the urge, and it's the same energy that makes movies, or spurs them on where you can see it from beginning to end. Then you kind of create your gods and goddesses, and get other people interested in the people you were interested in.

Julio: Do you miss film? Or do you think you will return to making film in regards to the medium itself?

George: NO.

Julio: No? So, you don't miss film?

George: No. I love film, I had a good time in film for all these years, these past years. I made tons of films, I love working in film, I loved the look of the way the film was. But then I worried, it had certain things like the thing getting scratched, or when you edit the splices were too thick. Things like that, but I love the fact that now I can stay home, and you can create things on this little, little cassette, 6.5 millimeter, and then it gets blown up in these theaters and it looks like a big thing. So, I really don't. I had fun with film, and I had a whole bunch of film. I couldn't store them anywhere. They were all in the house. If the house ever catches fire, that's the end of the movies.

Julio: Yeah, where is your archive?

George: Now, the Harvard archive, and the Pacific Film Archive, and Anthology Film Archives took a lot of the films and are storing them. So, I got them out of the house, because if the house ever burns down, I just grab the cats and get out, then there goes all the work. So, I was worried about that. No, I had a good time making films, but it's over for me. You know, I got onto this other thing, and I'm enjoying it. I enjoy staying home. You don't have to go out from the editing place and look for a place to eat, and you don't have to worry if I got to go home and take care of the cat or the dog. You stay home. The only problem is you don't know when to stop. You go on until 8:30 in the morning, you start maybe one at night, the sun is coming up and you are still working. You say, "I'm going to drop dead. I'm going to get sick of a heart attack. The blood vessel clots are going to form." It's addictive, it's obsessive, but that's movie making. You never think of what you have got to do to get it to the end, otherwise you'll never begin. There are so many stages in making a picture, especially in making a film. But you just handle it one at a time, and you never knew exactly how to edit it until it came time to edit. You just knew it was time to stop shooting then you could put it together.

Miguel: What's the first memory you can recall?

George: The first memory I can recall? I can't remember! I remember that we had a relative that used to go on a rampage. He was an alcoholic, and he would become a violent drunk. I remember he would beat the other members of the family, and I remember my relatives hiding me in the closet when he would be going on a rampage coming up the stairs. He pushed my uncle down a flight of stairs and crippled him. Crippled his hand forever. So, I remember the terror of family life. I just remember the terror of family members. Like, Dad going to work, and I remember some strife with that. I remember the animals I had, the pets I had.

Julio: Was your mom supportive of you guys being filmmakers? Besides you stealing her clothes?

George: Yeah, my mom, later on she was - she didn't mind too much. Mainly it was like a shame, because we used to push dummies off of the roof, and then we used to dress it up in her clothes, since we had no female actresses, we had no women in our pictures. We had to play the women parts until later we got some friends that were girls.

Julio: Its like Chinese opera.

George: Chinese opera, I know! Mom didn't go to Chinese opera. She was a book-binder, from the old country.

Miguel: Your philosophy has been the most influential for me. It's a little bit cliché to talk about Hollywood, but did you ever see Hollywood as an enemy of what you do, or were you ever somehow manifesting against it?

Julio: Can I add to that question? Because, I mean in fact you are one of the most famous underground filmmakers alive, and people think that you reject Hollywood, but in fact you love certain Hollywood films.

George: I used to go to the Hollywood pictures. It was an inspiration for me: color coordination, when the music came in. It was also a big schooling: far shot, medium shot, etc. You go see a Hitchcock movie, you learn all about editing: when it cuts to a person, so you get their reaction, you know what they are thinking. So, then the whole star system, the glamour, the make-up - looking at how they put the eyebrows on. It's a wonderful field to get inspiration from. I was never an enemy of Hollywood. I loved going to Hollywood pictures. Nowadays, going to a movie is like a vacation. It's a cheap one, especially with senior rates. You go in there and you can escape for two hours.

Miguel: But your films ridicule the whole Hollywood system, you know?

George: Well there are certain clichés that are interesting, and then you play them up, like the glass of water in the face. Or a smack across the face, the ripping of the bodice of the leading lady when you're mad at her, certain clichés, when the music comes in, the theme of the main star. If you can play with it, you can have some fun with it. You take it and you just push it over the edge a little bit, because it's more comical to do it, because you have a mold, and then on top of that you can put a whole bunch of other things. But, the actual construction of all these crafts people, and the whole thing working - the craft and the way it's thought out is fun to watch, but especially when I went to the movies in the 50s, and not so much the 40s, but the 50s, the 60s, and that was really, Technicolor and garish colors, and pompous Biblical pictures, and then there were all those dramas. You had Elizabeth Taylor, you had Doris Day, and you had the big stars and that was fun to go to. It was like a real treat. It was a real escape, a lot of it. But it was also a whole learning thing, looking at the movies.

Miguel: I noticed with the diaries, that you are living a very mundane situation, and the music is so epic that the image itself becomes grandiose… there's a certain strangeness to it. Do you actually plan a lot, or lately with the videos, you just go out and make them instinctively?

George: You have to think about the whole damn thing. You have to know how long a scene should be, and when the editing comes out. When you are shooting you have to realize, "Well, I have to do this again, because somehow the person will not come across well. The acting was either faulty, or it's not going to read very real." So, you know to go back and re-photograph, you say, "Let's do another take." So, you have got to constantly make the decisions there. Then when you're putting the movie together, you have to think of the pacing, and what's wrong with this, and like how about if I cut this a little shorter? So, it's always that kind of thing you think about, so in every stage, you have to exercise your aesthetic feeling for the picture.

Living in Studio Kuchar exhibition at SFAI, curated by Julio Cesar Morales, Hou Hanru and Mary Ellyn Johnson, 2012. Courtesy of the Artist.

Living in Studio Kuchar exhibition at SFAI, curated by Julio Cesar Morales, Hou Hanru and Mary Ellyn Johnson, 2012. Courtesy of the Artist.

Anna Halprin

Interviewed by John Held, Jr.

Anna Halprin, *"Ceremony of Us."* 1969. Photograph by Sue Landon. Courtesy Anna Halprin.

I wanted to meet Anna Halprin due to my interest in Fluxus. George Maciunas, the driving force behind the movement, had just opened the AG Gallery (1961) and was seeking information on the avant-garde. In stumbled a recent transplant from the Bay Area, experimental musician and composer LaMonte Young, seeking to publish a sheaf of "performance scores" gathered while associated with dancer/choreographer Anna Halprin, who had been experimenting with "task" oriented works; shifting the focus of radical art in the Fifties from "expressive" works, to "concrete" actions found in everyday life. This resulted in the first Fluxus project, the publishing of, ***An Anthology***, edited by Young and designed by Maciunas.

Like her innovative counterparts at Black Mountain College, Anna and her husband Lawrence, were schooled by Bauhaus émigré masters. While BMC had Albers, Harvard, where Lawrence obtained his Ph.D. in Landscape Architecture, was graced by the presence of Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, teaching at the Graduate School of Design. Referring to the artists arising from BMC, Halprin relates, "They went in one direction, and Larry and I went in another. Where their art became conceptual, our art became organic and nature oriented." This telling comment reveals all.

Anna was building a career in dance, having graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and was invited by noted choreographer Doris Humphrey to join her on Broadway in a revue featuring Burl Ives. Humphrey was a Denishawn student (founded by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in 1915), as was Martha Graham and Charles Weidman. Other Denishawn dancers boarded in Halprin's childhood home, giving Anna direct access to the flowering of Modern Dance in America.

Back from his WW II service, Lawrence had an opportunity to practice in the Bay Area, luring Anna to Kentfield with the promise of constructing a "dance deck" connected to the Halprin residence at the Northern base of Mt. Tamalpais.

There was a dearth of Bay Area dance opportunities in the late 1940s when Anna arrived, but her direction in movement attracted young dancers and choreographers from the East Coast. Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Robert Morris and Simone Forti (as well as Merce Cunningham, a former Martha Graham dancer, who had been forging his own style), found their way to the dance deck. Their experimentation in the Fifties led to the creation of the Judson Dance Theater in the Sixties, owing much to Anna's workshops, which catapulted dance beyond Modernism.

This new Post-Modern style, forged in the forests of Marin, encouraged not only dancers, but composers of new music, and ultimately George Maciunas (1962), who took the event

"I knew all the people from Black Mountain. They went in one direction, and Larry [Halprin] and I went in another. Where their art became conceptual, our art became organic and nature oriented. We were very good friends. John Cage and Merce used to come here and live with us, while he was doing his concerts."

scores gathered on the West Coast by Halprin and Young, performing them in Germany with experimental visual artists Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, Nam June Paik, and Joseph Beuys.

In the Sixties, Anna extended the confines of the dance venue from the stage to the streets. Treating theaters as environments, she explored nooks and crannies neglected by others. Invading the spectator's space, inflicting discomfort on some of her audience, Anna began to examine the role of the spectator and commenced incorporating the audience into the work.

Audience involvement was further enhanced when Anna was confronted with her own mortality after being diagnosed with cancer in 1972. "Who are you doing this for? Why are you doing it? And what difference will it make in anybody's life? You start asking those questions, it leads you to a different process."

This "different process" has yet to be fully explored or understood. It can take an experimental artist like Anna Halprin decades to be fully appreciated, if at all. But, hers is a remarkable accomplishment.

Most artists seek to transform themselves through their art – either spiritually or financially. Choose your motivation. Halprin goes beyond that. Transform herself, yes. If nothing else, her remarkable recovery from several bouts of cancer has reshaped her appreciation of the human body's durability.

However, it is in the transformation of others that Halprin distinguishes herself. For Anna, the audience is an integral part the work. Their presence and role is always taken into account. In Anna's hands, artistic creation becomes ritual capable of changing those engaged in the process. Art is not an activity separate from life but central to its completion.

(Anna contributed the interview's subtitles and additional poignant information to our original conversation.)

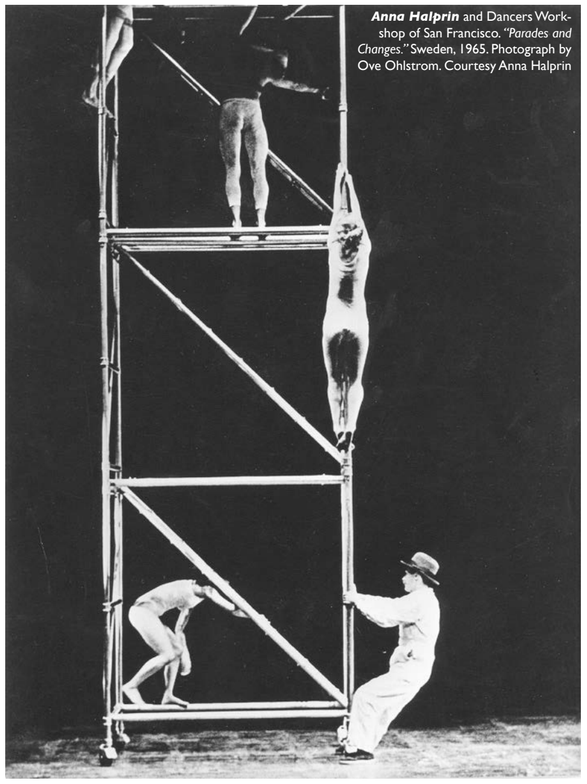
Early Life and Training

Held: What interests me about your childhood is how supportive your mother was, in that you were starting to take dance lessons, and your mother invited dancers to stay in the family home.

Halprin: I grew up in that era where mothers mostly stayed at home and tended to their families, and I really benefited from the care and attention she gave me. My mother was a very sweet, benevolent person. She never objected to my dancing; because I was interested in it, she encouraged it.

When my brothers left the house, I was an only child. She wanted me to have a sister-like relationship with other people interested in dance, so she invited some dance teachers, who were hired by a woman by the name of Alicia Pratt, who would bring dancers into our little community. Alicia had this school – the Pratt School – and she hired teachers, who were "starving," because there was no work, there was no money in it, and they would come and live in Winnetka, Illinois.

Some of these women had been dancers with the Denishawn Company. I was intrigued by all these exotic dances, so that was where I got my training when my mother saw I didn't take to



Anna Halprin and Dancers Workshop of San Francisco. *"Parades and Changes."* Sweden, 1965. Photograph by Ove Ohlstrom. Courtesy Anna Halprin

ballet very well. We did interpretations of American Indian dances. It was interpretive dance. We would interpret American Indians, nautch girls, all kinds of fantasies. That appealed to me.

These teachers lived with us in our home so I could have companions and other humans who were interested in what I was interested in, because obviously, my brothers were on an entirely different wavelength than I was. My mother was a very simple person. She had no higher education, and no introduction to specific arts, but she took me to art museums, because she had the feeling I was interested in art. I had a very nice, encouraging childhood.

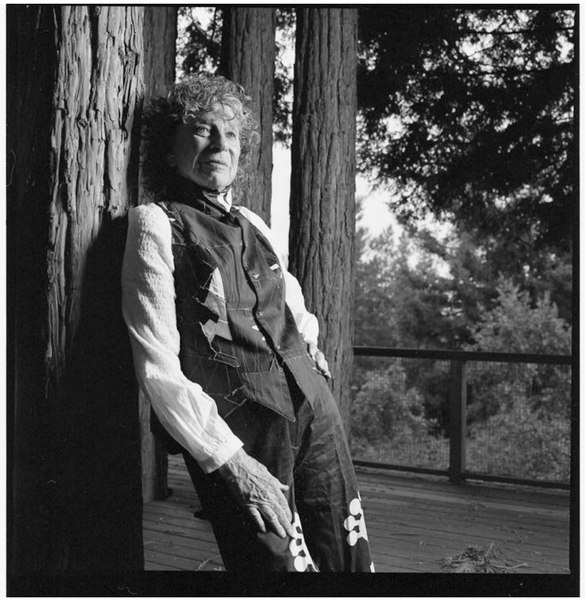
Held: Aside from the companionship afforded by the dancers coming into your home, you were able to observe firsthand what it was like to be a dancer.

Halprin: Which honestly wasn't very attractive at the time. This was the one thing that kind of frightened my mother a little bit, because none of these women were married. In those days, you couldn't be married and have a career. My mother couldn't imagine me not being married and having a family. So, that worried her. My father wanted me to play the harp.

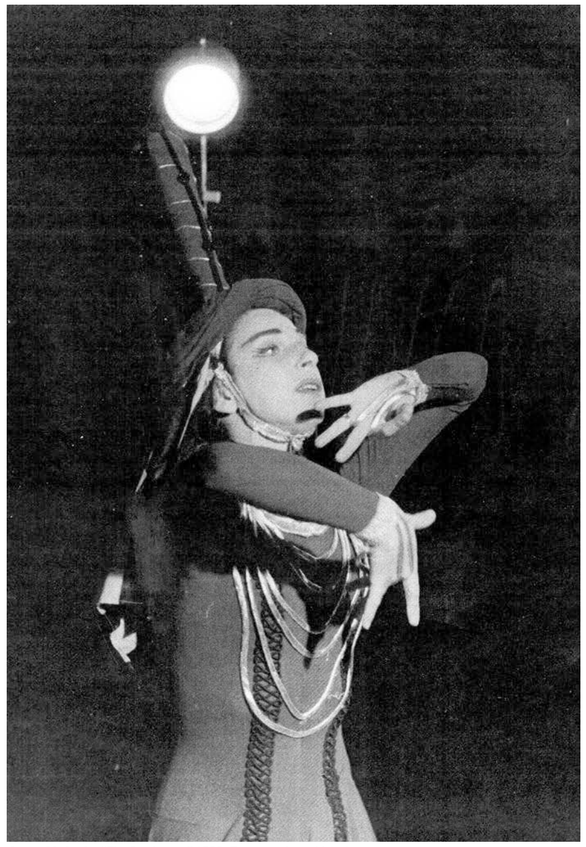
Held: But they did allow you to go away to university – the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Halprin: Here's an interesting thing, which is kind of strange for people now to understand. I tried to get into Bennington, because that was the only school I knew about where I could get into somebody's company. Anna Sokolow and Doris Humphrey were at Bennington at the time.

So, you had to fill out applications, and you had to fill in your religion. Every time I said I was Jewish, I noticed I didn't get in, even though I had already been dancing semi-professionally at the World's Fair in Chicago, and I'd won all kinds of awards as a teenager. I thought it was kind of strange that I was having trouble getting into Bennington. Then I found out that they had a Jewish quota and this was why I wasn't getting in. Obviously, a lot of Jewish kids wanted



Anna Halprin, 2012. Photographed at her home by Andrew McClintock



Anna Halprin*. "The Prophetess."* 1955. Courtesy Anna Halprin

to go to Bennington, because it was such a liberal school, and it attracted the liberal minded Jewish community.

I was pretty devastated, because I had been invited to join Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman's Dance Company, but I couldn't do that, because I had promised my parents I would go to college. It was something they never had an opportunity to do. My father never went to school, period. I'm first generation. So, you know, when one's parents said, "This is what we want you to do," you did it.

Then a friend of the family, who was an educator, had heard that there was a dance major at the University of Wisconsin, which was right next door to where we lived. I was reluctant, but it turned out to be an incredible blessing, because I had the most intelligent brilliant woman for a dance teacher – Margaret H'Doubler. She didn't dance at all. She was a philosopher and really knew about art. She was influenced by people like John Dewey, [Alfred North] Whitehead…so, the whole idea of learning through experience…

Held: She was a biologist, too.

Halprin: Yes, she was originally a biologist. Because of her interest in dance as a human experience that was vital to all humanity, she had us do dissection for a year, which at the time was a little overwhelming. I didn't realize at the time how vital that would be to my growth, and in my quest for independence from the contemporary dance styles. It gave me a foundation to start from scratch.

The Fifties

Halprin: Ok, now, this may be a little different, but you said you were interested in the Fifties, so let me tell you the story about the Fifties. When I came here I left New York. I was in, "Sing Out Sweet Land," with Burl Ives…

Held: …on Broadway.

Halprin: Yeah. I was in that for almost a year. When I came to California, Martha Graham and Bethesbee de Rothchild came to visit my husband Larry. Martha Graham was being supported by Bethesbee de Rothchild. She gave a performance here, and Bethesbee came with her. And Bethesbee said, "While I'm here, I want to visit Lawrence Halprin." He had done so many sites in Jerusalem and was well-known. She came over and saw I was a dancer, and she said, "Dance for me."

I did a piece called, "The Prophetess," and she was sufficiently impressed that she invited me to the ANTA [American National Theatre and Academy], a three-week presentation of Modern Dance [1955]. All the people in the festival except me were from New York City. I was the only so-called "outsider," even though I was doing modern dance and had been very influenced by Doris Humphrey…Martha Graham I was never influenced by, but I was by Doris.

Watching that festival for three weeks, I not only got bored, but I got angry. I got angry and suddenly realized that this is not what I wanted to be doing, because everybody in Martha Graham's group – they all looked just like Martha Graham. And everybody in Hanya Holm's group – they all looked like Hanya Holm. The same thing with Doris Humphrey. Even though we were really good friends, I thought, "Oh my God, something's wrong here. This is just like ballet. It's very hierarchical. It's not my philosophy of how people should relate to each other. I don't like this."

So, when I came back, I felt totally alone. There was nothing going on here in dance. Maybe there was a Mills College Dance Department, but it wasn't anything that would stimulate my interest. So I was absolutely alone. It took me a few years to find my own way.

Held: Did the Living Theater or the Open Theater have an influence on you?

Halprin: I loved Joseph and the Open Theater, but they didn't influence me. We were doing a similar thing. I worked with Joseph, but he didn't influence me. The only person who influenced me was Larry…and my teacher Margaret H'Doubler.

But Larry – he influenced me. And I influenced him… You have to be careful about who influences you, because you get into fashions again. You're taking something outward and sticking it on. You really have to be original.

So, in the Fifties, when I felt unclear about my directions in dance, I began plugging into other people living in California, people like James Broughton, the [San Francisco] Tape Music Center, Morton Subotnic, Charles Ross, Michael McClure. None of these people were famous at the time. I shouldn't say famous, that's the wrong word. None of these people were acknowledged. Michael McClure…all of them.

Gradually, we began to form a collective, because the Tape Music Center was in the same building that I discovered and rented - 321 Divisadero Street. The Tape Music Center and my activities became the cultural center of San Francisco at that time. That was the only place –if people like the Living Theater would come through or the Involve Group from Israel - they would all meet and rehearse at 321 Divisadero Street.

Is the Tape Music Center familiar to you? That's where Terry Riley, LaMonte Young, Pauline Oliveros all worked. All the musicians would be drawn to the Tape Music Center, and we had two huge studios, one was like an auditorium where we could do presentations.

The Fifties were a period where we were finding ourselves… beginning to team up with other artists. It was an opportunity to start exploring. But the actual work for the public wasn't coming out until the end of the Fifties and all throughout the Sixties. So when you said you wanted to talk to me about the Fifties - that was just a period of groping and discovering and trying to find our directions. The results of all that was in the Sixties.

Life with Lawrence Halprin

Held: In the Fifties, you were still developing a philosophy, and it seemed to center on "tasks" and "scores." I think this was very important. But, I'd like to backtrack a bit and talk about your meeting with Lawrence at school, him going on to Harvard, and your joining him there and meeting the Bauhaus artists.

Halprin: Well, Larry has a long history. When he was just sixteen [1932], he graduated high school and moved to Israel. While he was there, he helped found a kibbutz. Like all Jewish families, [his] said, "That's fine, but you have to go to college." So, he had to come back. It was Palestine. It wasn't Israel then, and they had no universities. So he came back. He imagined he wanted to become a farmer and study farming, so he went to Cornell and got his Bachelors degree, and then went to Wisconsin to get his Ph.D.

While he was there, we met and we fell in love. Instantly…like instant coffee. At that time, I noticed he did a lot of drawing. If he went anywhere, he drew. If he talked to somebody, he drew their picture. He had a sketchbook with him all the time. I thought, "That's funny. That's a funny kind of farmer who likes art." I took him to visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin. As soon as he walked into that drafting room he said, "This is what I want to do." So instead of getting his PH. D., he immediately relocated to Harvard.

I had to finish my degree, so we were separated for almost a year while I finished up at Wisconsin. That was after the Nazi regime, so all the avant-garde artists had to escape, which they did. Walter Gropius, who was Director of the Bauhaus, became the Director of the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

What luck! Can you imagine the luck Larry and I have had? First in meeting each other, because we influenced each other. And secondly, going to Bauhaus, where he met a group of people, who helped him find a direction where he could go with his ideas. He graduated Harvard, and his colleagues were people like Phillip Johnson and I. M. Pei, all the people who have become very famous, and who have become acknowledged for their original thinking.

Held: It's interesting that you had this experience with your husband, and at the same time Josef Albers [from the Bauhaus] went to Black Mountain College and started influencing people in the Bauhaus philosophy, which melded art and life to an extent that hadn't been seen before. Did you know Albers?

Halprin: I knew all the people from Black Mountain. They went in one direction, and Larry and I went in another. Where their art became conceptual, our art became organic and nature oriented. We were very good friends. John Cage and Merce used to come here and live with us, while he was doing his concerts.

We were very good friends, and because we were such good friends, I understood our differences. If I had lived in New York, perhaps I would have become a conceptual artist, but I have an outdoor studio that is anything but a box. I am surrounded by trees and birds and the wind and the sun and the rain. I danced in the rain. It obviously has to influence you. It gives you a different point of view about reality.

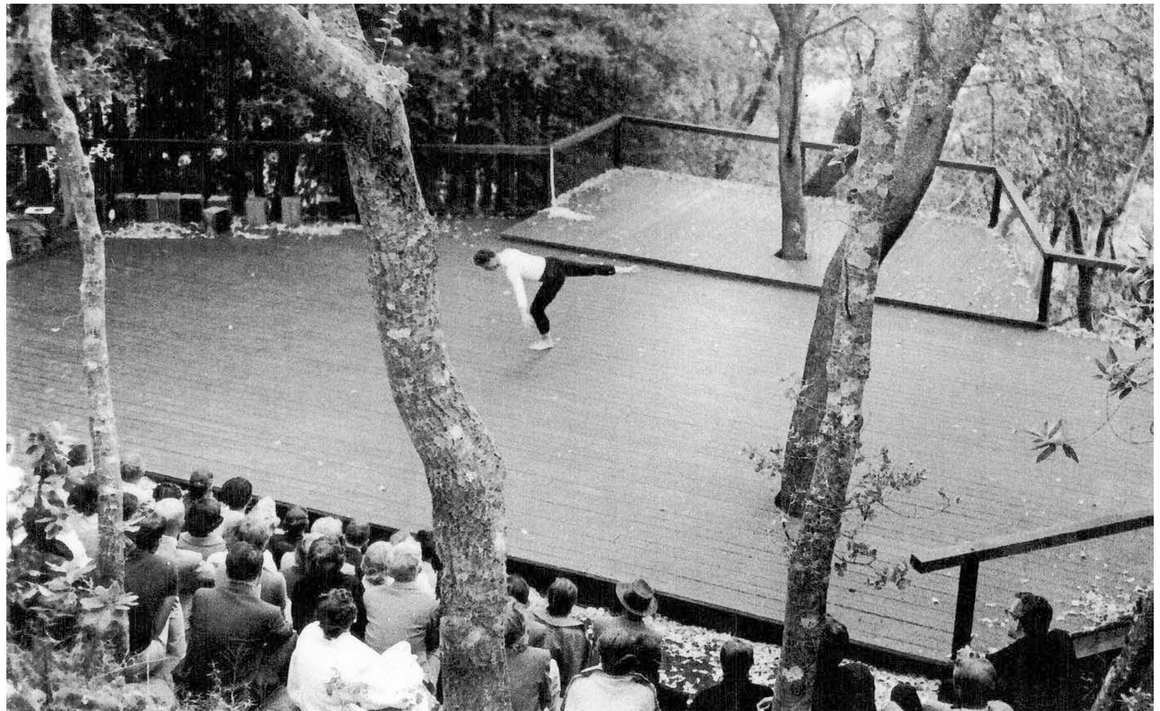
Let me read to you something Larry wrote about dancing outside in all the different spaces he created: "My intention in designing this space is to create a magical space, where each person can find their spiritual connection to nature and all its being." I've been so lucky to dance all these years on the dance deck he designed for me – it's given me so much access to so much of the natural world and has influenced me so profoundly.

I did a piece that I dedicated to Larry shortly before he died, at Stern's Grove in San Francisco. As we worked on the piece, Larry would say, "I want to go down and see what you're doing." I said, "Larry, we're not ready." He said, "but I want to come anyway." So he came and we weren't ready. We were still in an exploratory mode, but the dancers were so excited that he was there.

They gathered all around him to hear his feedback. And so he said, "That was horrible." I kept poking him to be quiet, not to say that. But he looked at me and said, "Well, but it is. They don't understand anything about architecture!"

So, we went back to work, and I realized that we had done enough exploration, and I needed a template – a boney architecture. All we had was responses, but it wasn't connected to any structural element. I suddenly got this image of Leonardo de Vinci's Vitruvian Man. I said, "Why can't I use that?"

I took the Vitruvian Man and organized it spatially. It has two diagonals – the legs open – and another diagonal that way [arms open]. Where the two diagonals cross is the center, and then he had a shadow figure vertically up and down, and a circle saying it's all connected. So, I used that as a template. The composition of the dance was especially for Larry. I told him that this



Merce Cunningham on the Dance Deck. 1960. (Photographer Unknown). Courtesy Anna Halprin

"The Fifties were a period where we were finding ourselves... beginning to team up with other artists. It was an opportunity to start exploring. But the actual work for the public wasn't coming out until the end of the Fifties and all throughout the Sixties."

was the architecture that the work was based on. When we finished, and he saw it, he was so pleased. He sat in the rain with an umbrella, and it was the last thing he saw that I did that was dedicated to him.

Task Orientation – The Evolution of Dance to Include Every Movement.

Held: I'm interested in your task-orientated process, which merged art with everyday actions.

Halprin: I was looking for a way to approach movement, which was free of the stylistic approach of Modern Dance. This was what I objected to that summer when I witnessed people dancing like Martha Graham or Doris Humphrey. I was more interested in how people moved individually, rather than stylistically. But then, I went further than that. It wasn't enough to just take a log, carry it, and put it over here. It had to be a sensorial experience and that had to be communicated by the dancer.

These tasks were a physical experience, and there were different ways that you could explore an experience using time, force and space. You could carry it [the log], but you could carry it fast. You could carry it slow. You could carry it with two people. You could carry it on your head. In other words, I had a very disciplined way of working with tasks that gave the dancer an opportunity to explore a lot of movement options.

It wasn't enough just to take your clothes off. So what? It was *how* you took your clothes off. We did it very slow motion. We did it with an awareness of the sculptural effect of the movement. I was very careful to bring art processes to all the movement tasks we did.

Task oriented movement became very misunderstood on the East Coast. Even Yvonne (Rainer), and Simone (Forti) and Trish Brown, and the other dancers who started the Judson Theatre, they just got involved in the task *as a task* rather than as a movement experiment or exploration. But Simone was with me for seven years, so she got a little bit more into it. I just used it as a jumping-off point. They used it as a concept. To this day, there's this difference between us.

Held: A jumping off point to where?

Halprin: For an art experience. For how you could turn, what I called ordinary movement into dance by using the principles of art. All movement takes place in time through space with force. I would use those elements to shape the movement. The task of removing your clothes becomes a beautiful art experience, with meaning. It goes beyond the action itself into a different realm altogether.

When I am using nudity, I want you to see my body as part of nature. My body is nature. You don't see trees with clothes on. This is nature. This is part of nature. So I don't wear clothes. If I'm going to work without clothes, I'm going to incorporate the environment in what I'm doing. The immediate environment is the clothes themselves, and how the clothes themselves change the way you see the form of the body.

I was working with nudity, not from the point of view of, "Oh, this is shocking," but because I came from this more organic, art-related vantage point. I was shocked when we were arrested for nudity in New York in the Sixties. "Why are you arresting us? You see nudity in galleries all the time. Why are you arresting me? I'm not doing anything wrong."

Held: This is "Parades and Changes?"

Halprin: Yeah. I was arrested in New York for doing "Parades and Changes" for the nudity. And now a French group has taken "Parades and Changes" and revived it. They got a Bessie [New York Dance and Performance Award] for it! But when I did it in 1967, I was blacklisted for fifteen years. I couldn't get engagements anywhere. Isn't that interesting? And now, forty years later, awards…

Held: Isn't this the way of all avant-garde artists? It takes thirty, forty, fifty years…

Halprin: …to catch up.

Held: Do you think there is a relationship between your task orientated dance, art as life, with Duchamp's Readymades?

Halprin: The urinal in a museum. We called it Found Art.

Held: Like a telephone book made into poetry.

Halprin: It was happening in all the arts. For John Cage, every sound you hear is valid as music. For dancers, every movement you do is valid as dance. It was a way of unmaking so many assumptions about what art is.

Do you remember the famous art scene between modern dancer Jean Erdman, Joseph Campbell's wife, and Morton Feldman? I love this story.

He brought her into court, because she commissioned him to do a piece. She didn't want to pay him for all the silences! There were a lot of silences. You remember – silence is sound. And he said, no, she has to pay for that, because it's part of the music. It was brought into a court. Can you imagine the judge trying to figure this one out? How is he going to figure this one out?

Held: Jean Erdman and Joseph Campbell were very involved in the arts and had a relationship with John Cage.

Halprin: The difference is that Jean Erdman was always a modern dancer. She used music like Feldman and people like that, but she was still a Martha Graham dancer and a Conceptual Artist. She was looking for new ways, but it was still based on modern dance. She didn't use task-orientated movement.

I've never been interviewed in the kitchen before. Everybody's wanting to interview me these days. I don't like the interviews, because … they're not interesting.

Held: I've read several interviews you've given over the years, and they've always been interesting…and informative.

Halprin: You're the first one to interview me in this particular way.

Held: I consider that a triumph. (laughs)

Halprin: It is a triumph (laughs), from my point of view as well.

Audience Participation – Widening the Field of the Dance

Held: Can we talk a bit about your relationship to the audience? I think that's important.

Halprin: It is. Let me go back a little bit and tell you another story. I didn't want to be away from my two children while they were growing up. I gave up my studio in San Francisco, and Larry designed a place for me here.

It was a dance deck. I didn't have an indoor studio, just this outdoor deck. It wasn't a rectangle, like an ordinary studio. Suddenly, I didn't know where center was. I didn't know front or back, or side-to-side. It was just like nature.

It took me into nature. It took me into relating to the trees the same way I might relate to a person. When we started doing experimental presentations, I realized that the audience was part of the dance. They're right there. They're in my face. I'm in their face. So, audience inclusion was really an extension of the environment for me.

And then, because people weren't trees, because they were humans, and they had thoughts and feeling and capacities to respond, I began to use that. That became very important, especially at the point that people began throwing things at us. People began walking out. People became enraged, and I thought, "I don't know what I'm doing to make people so upset." I'm just minding my own business, and innocently doing what seemed perfectly natural to me.

Then, I began to develop scores or tasks for the audiences. And I watched them do these tasks. What did they do when they were given a score to work with? The inclusion of the audience into my work was another dimension. The audience members weren't just mute spectators. Not mute like a tree or a rock. I began to recognize, "They have feelings. They have ideas. I already knew they had responses, but I wondered how I could include that in my work? It's not that they are just objects in space, they're real people with real human responses. So, I began to do things like giving them a mask, or having a role to play.

Held: Duchamp said that the spectator completes the artwork.

Halprin: How did that change his process of creation? See, that became another element to deal with. If in fact that's true, which I believe it is, how do you incorporate their response, and how does it form and reform your individual expression? I was searching for an answer to that question, which is why I did the audience participation scores.

I wanted to know more about how audiences work. How they came together, or how they separated. I did female and male scores – what's going on there? I began to use this in my development, when I did a piece like, *Ceremony of Us*, which was a struggle. The intention of the dance was reconciliation between white people and black people. It was right after the Watts Riots. That was very real. How could we engage ourselves in an art process and create something that would also address our, in this case, political intention?

Held: What is so beautiful about the *Ceremony of Us*, is that originally the sponsors just wanted you to do a performance, and you said, "No, I want to engage these people and give them the full experience." I think this is your contribution – dealing with the audience.

I believe art is an alchemical relationship between the artist and the object, and that the true purpose of the artist is to transform him or herself. It seems that you've gone beyond that. Not only have you transformed the artist, but the audience as well, and that is a major contribution.

Halprin: Thank you. But also, if I have the sensitivity and intelligence to incorporate audiences from a lot of experience in working with them, it's a process that affects the dance as the dance is being created. For example, for the Watts project, when the audience arrived at the Mark Taper Theater [Los Angeles]…

[A timer goes off indicating that something needs tending in the kitchen. Halprin addresses her assistant.]

Do you mind going up, looking in the oven and making sure my granola is not burning, stir it up a little? Put this in the interview, this facet of the artist being a homemaker, the grandmother, all that multi-faceted…

So, when the audience arrived at Mark Taper, we had been working together separately. The black dancers were working in Watts, separately from the white dancers who were people I invited to be in the dance.

I would go down to Watts every week. I developed a score based on what happened the week before. I gave the same score to the black dancers that I gave to the white dancers. I wanted to exaggerate the differences. And then, we put the two groups of dancers together for ten days. We lived together communally. And we developed the score – communally. We hadn't developed the RSVP Cycle process yet, but simply using whatever responses they had to the scores was a resource for developing this art piece.

Now, how did we extend that into the audience? There were two entrances into the auditorium at the Mark Taper. All the black dancers were in a processional lineup on one entrance, and all the white dancers were in a processional lineup creating a passageway for the audience on the other side.

When the audience arrives, they have to make a choice. "Am I going to go with the black group, or am I going to go with the white group?" And the dancers were greeting them with, "When I look at you, this is what I see. This is what I imagine. This is what I'd like to see."

Well, there was a totally different response from the different groups. The black audience members really got into it. "Oh honey, you see this, and you see that, and this is what I want. I want some money." And the white people would come in and just stiffen up and were totally embarrassed by the whole thing. The audience now has all black people on one side of the auditorium, and all the white people on the other. They immediately felt what we were going through.

When we came in, we came in on conga lines - the black group separate from the white group. They started responding to each other, and they saw the dance evolve. At the end of the dance, everybody went out into the plaza, and all the musicians started playing and they formed processional lines picking up the black and white dancers and intermingling them.

So, they ended up in the plaza dancing together. Isn't that interesting? What I want to get across was not that I am *using* the audience, but that they are incorporated as part of the experience. It's a different attitude, a different way of working. It changed me forever.

Current Work

This year I've been working on a Trilogy in memory of Lawrence. *Stern Grove* was one of them. He was alive for that. He died before he got a chance to see the second one, which was called, *In the Fever of Love*. The subtitle was from the *Song of Songs*. Here is an example again – it's a love story – how do I deal with that?

I found a group of erotic drawings I had never seen that he did while he was on the destroyer [USS Morris VII] during World War II. I had never seen them, because he was on his way to Okinawa, and he had been drawing. He drew all the time. He decided he would roll up all the drawing he had done, and he communicated with a sister ship that was going back to San Francisco, and he pitched the drawings over to that ship. He said, "When you go by, I'm gonna try to pitch this package, and send them to my wife."

He pitched it over. He had no idea if they made it or not. I never knew anything about it. Actually, the ship was hit by a kamikaze. He was obviously fortunate enough not to be killed. Those were a whole series of erotic drawings, which I didn't see until after he died.

They were sent to New York, but I wasn't there. I had gone back to Chicago to be with my family. The drawings stayed in New York until his parents died, and then they were sent to his office. When I found them after he died, I thought this is what I'll do to bring Larry into this dance. I'll base the dance on those drawings. I'll base the dance on those drawings. And we started the dance from the postures in those drawings.

I got two of the best dancers who could do this, and that was Shinichi [Momo Iova-Koga] and Dana [Iova-Kova]. And then I got a narrator, a good friend of ours, who worked with Larry a lot, and he became a narrator. Then I got my grandson, who's a poet. I used family members, and the audience all brought lilies. So, when they were seated, it was just a bank of lilies. I did this because in his memorial I said, "Where have you gone my beloved, where are you?" and he said, "I've gone to my garden to collect lilies." And I said, "I'll come and I'll join you."

And so, that image that came from Larry, not from me, was what I used. I did a sensory walk with the audience as they came down the stairs. They placed the lilies. I did a walk with them through the woods, and then we came up and had a reception and all kinds of foods from the *Song of Songs*.

I tried to bring Larry to life with his own material, and tried to find a way to meld it all together. It was a very personal intimate experience. I wouldn't even say it was a performance. Maybe it was a ritual. Maybe it was a poem. So, that's another thing. Breaking down the barriers between art and ritual - what is a dance performance?

Who are you doing this for? Why are you doing it? And what difference will it make in anybody's life? When you start asking those questions, it leads you to a different process.

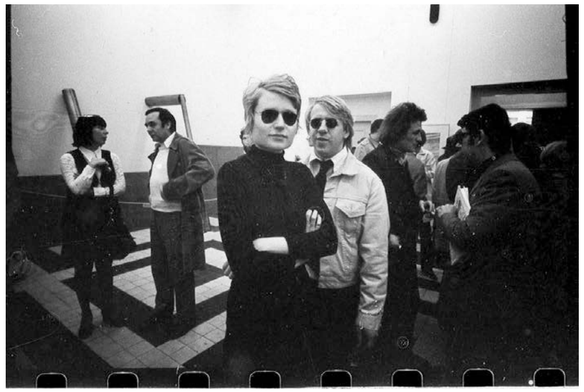
I was devoting my life to this work. Why was I doing it? Can I do something more useful in the world? That really put a twist on the emphasis of why am I dancing, who am I dancing with, and what difference is it going to make?

I'm ninety-one now. The older I get, the more questions I have. The more I demand of myself. How lucky I've been to have the space and time and wonderful comrades throughout my life with whom to ask these kinds of questions.

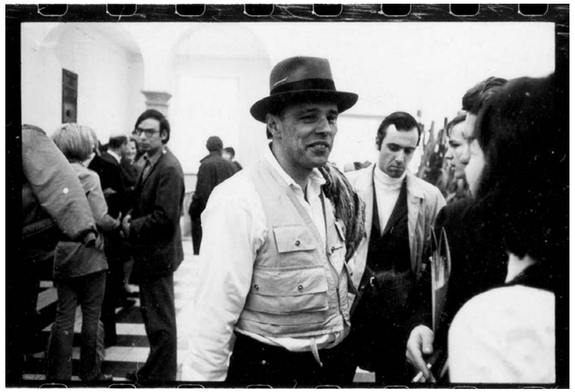
Anna Halprin. *"Still Dance."* Photo by Eeo Stubblefield. Courtesy Anna Halprin.

When Attitudes Become Form

By: Claire Fitzsimmons, Liz Glass, Heidi Rabben, Jesi Khadivi, Daniella Fernandez Murphy and Peta Rake



When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Richard Serra,*** "*Lead Pieces*", 1969 (left); ***Richard Artschwager***, one of "*40 Blips*", 1968 (upper right). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.



When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Richard Serra***, "*Belt Piece*", 1967 (background); artist ***Joseph Beuys*** (center). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Walter De Maria***, "*Art by Telephone*", 1967/1969. Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Richard Serra***, "*Splash Piece*", 1968. Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

When Attitudes Become Form

By Claire Fitzsimmons and Liz Glass

Harald Szeemann's *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form (Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information)* has become one of the most legendary exhibitions of the recent past. Curated when Szeemann was director of the Kunsthalle Bern, where it was presented in 1969, *When Attitudes Become Form* is now considered a landmark exhibition in the overlapping histories of conceptual art and curatorial practice. The roster of artists included in the show went on to become some of the most well-recognized figures of twentieth-century art, and the curator himself has since taken on an almost mythic status. While the initial reception of the exhibition was a mix of enthusiasm, bafflement, and disdain, *When Attitudes Become Form* has since been analyzed, dissected, and inevitably historicized, spawning books and countless scholarly re-examinations. However, this investigation has yet to be realized in an exhibition format.

Taking up the legacy of *When Attitudes Become Form*, the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is organizing a reevaluation of and sequel to Szeemann's seminal exhibition. Curated by the Wattis' director Jens Hoffmann, *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes* again takes up Szeemann's original ambition: to showcase a diverse group of contemporary artists whose work speaks to the centrality of site, process, and concept. Over 70 artists will be included in the Wattis' show, opening in September 2012, by way of newly commissioned works, interventions into the exhibition catalogue, and installations across a variety of media. Approaching *When Attitudes Become Form* as a living past, the exhibition will also include material remnants of the original show, bringing Szeemann's exhibition into direct dialogue with contemporary works.

When Attitudes Become Form contributed to a historical understanding of the art of its period and how exhibitions as a whole might influence not just artists and their works, but also art history. The exhibition was particularly influential in creating an understanding of "the new art" of the time, and included many immaterial or process-based works. In developing the project, Szeemann moved away from the traditional museological functions of a curator (which might have included registration, caretaking or even scholarship), and towards what we would now consider that of 'exhibition maker." Inviting artists to make works site-specifically, involving them in conversations, and allowing them to make suggestions for works to be included in the exhibition, all while maintaining his own larger creative vision for the exhibition, Szeemann's approach to *When Attitudes* had a marked impact on the understanding of what it meant to be a curator.

Given its impact on curatorial practice and exhibition-making, the Wattis / SFAQ has invited students from CCA's graduate program in curatorial practice to offer their perspectives on Szeemann's exhibition and its enduring legacy. The four essays that follow take up the subject of *When Attitudes Become Form* from different angles. The authors discuss the radicality of the exhibition's installation; the catalogue as a site of display; the groundbreaking works included in the show; the simultaneous presence and absence of the artists on Szeemann's checklist; and the figure of the curator himself.

When Attitudes Transform Consciousness:
Phenomenology and Institutional Critique in When Attitudes Become Form

by Heidi Rabben

> "In order to entertain certain ideas we may be obliged to abandon others upon which we have come to depend…We should always be in a position to envisage a new context entirely. We have to keep our options open, to pose questions to which the answers are not predictable, to which answers might come in a different language, suggesting a different grammar – a different system, a changed consciousness." (1)

In its most imaginative and generative form, art is one of the few subjects with the potential to create purely phenomenological opportunities, drawing a natural parallel between the freedoms of artistic experimentation and the creation of thought-altering perceptual experiences. Among the first to expound philosophical theories of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl suggested abandoning our common systems of knowledge by retraining our instincts as observers. The predetermined knowledge we have coming into a new situation or context must be suspended in order to open our minds, allowing only the direct experience to guide us, rather than using preconceptions to inform the experience. In the quote above, curator and art historian Charles Harrison argues for the phenomenological abandonment of constructed expectations of art in the context of the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form (Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information),* originally organized at the Künsthalle Bern in 1969 and curated by its then-director, Harald Szeemann (2). *Attitudes* elicited an expanded notion of art by favoring the process of its creation and its conceptual rigor over the presentation of formal art objects or end products. Well remembered today for introducing the conceptual art exhibition to Europe, as well as for indirectly creating the role of the independent curator, *Attitudes* is also noteworthy for being one of the first exhibitions to outright challenge its institutional setting. While the set of conditions allowing *Attitudes* to materialize spoke to a specific time, place, and situation, it marked a shift in what we, as contemporary viewers, now expect from an art exhibition.

Based on Szeemann's exhaustive documentation and the plethora of other subsequent critical analysis surrounding the exhibition, it is possible now to revisit how the artists and the exhibition as a whole challenged the restrictions of the institution, thereby advancing a revision of audience expectations and phenomenological experience at the institutional level. Looking back at numerous installation images, there is a consistent sense of a collective, holistic experience of the works on display within and around the Kunsthalle. In the interior galleries, Szeemann eschewed the conventional elevated placement of works on a wall or pedestal, and instead splays them out onto the floor, haphazardly strewn about as if someone had tossed them up in the air and allowed them to remain where they landed. The industrial materials selected by the artists who created actual forms are almost exclusively clunky, heavy, raw and often dangerous, (3) while the aesthetic of the work's display is congested. There is very little negative space between works to breathe or to consider where one work ends and another begins. Szeemann configured the exhibition spaces to force physical confrontation and interaction between the viewer and the works by offering no alternative other than navigating through, around, over and alongside them, as a single connected experience. It is therefore incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to view any work in the exhibition as independent of its neighbor or the dialogue created by their spatial proximity to one another. The idea of individual artistic autonomy is sacrificed for a disordered unity, thus communicating an opportunity for the kind of immersive phenomenological experience Szeemann hoped to achieve, while still creating space for an extended application of the experience unconfined by walls. Therefore, as much is owed to the placement of these works—the curatorial positioning and extension of them beyond the walls of the institution—as to the artists themselves.

"Curated when Szeemann was director of the Kunsthalle Bern, where it was presented in 1969, When Attitudes Become Form is now considered a landmark exhibition in the overlapping histories of conceptual art and curatorial practice. The roster of artists included in the show went on to become some of the most well-recognized figures of twentieth-century art, and the curator himself has since taken on an almost mythic status."

When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring work by ***Eva Hesse, Bill Bollinger, Markus Raetz, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Gary B. Kuehn, Richard Tuttle, Keith Sonnier, Richard Artschwager*** and ***Walter De Maria.*** Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

The cohesive, expansive quality compounded by the works and arrangement of *Attitudes* was further advanced by the works that occur between and outside the spaces of the Kunsthalle's galleries. Perhaps most powerfully exemplified by Michael Heizer's *Bern Depression*, the addition of the works outside and in between the galleries combined the shock necessary to shed all prior knowledge of the exhibition experience with the transitional fluidity to sustain it throughout the course of the exhibition and potentially beyond. (4) In *Bern Depression*, Heizer slammed a wrecking ball into the pavement outside of the Kunsthalle twenty-five times, creating cracks and caverns in the pavement. Lawrence Weiner's *A 36" x 36" Removal to the Lathing or Support Wall of Plaster or Wallboard from a Wall*—which inverts the process of removing art from the wall, to removing pieces of a wall as art—took place in one of the transitional, secondary interior locations of the stairwell. This strikingly destructive and reductive work both contributed to the overall sense of conceptual and perceptual experience of the exhibition, and communicated a criticism against the wall it responded to. (5) This installation could not take place without the permission to alter/remove/damage the property of the individual or institution showing it, thus disrupting both the function and order of that space. The anarchic spirit of these works enacted both a critique of the structure and infrastructure of the art institution, as well as a potential, albeit dramatic, solution to the restrictions set up by institutional spaces.

When Attitudes Become Form could never have taken place had Szeemann not been at the helm of the institution hosting it, courageously harnessing his "controlled chaos"[1] towards a self-reflexive evaluation of the institution and its programmatic possibilities. The tremendous risk he took by putting himself, his institution, and his selection of artists on the line for an experimental idea is only one element of what makes the exhibition still remarkable and relevant today. The amount of control he relinquished to the artists, the degree to which he centralized the show around them, and the time he dedicated to each individual involved (which is painstakingly documented in his records) created an unprecedented experience that transformed consciousness and expectations of what an exhibition can do within the confines of an institution.

An Accumulation of Objects and Situations: *When Attitudes Become Form*

By Jesi Khadivi

On an overcast day in 1969, the Swiss curator Harald Szeemann and American artist Michael Heizer stood outside the Kunsthalle Bern and dispassionately gazed towards a wrecking ball briefly poised on the sidewalk outside of the museum. The photograph that captures this fleeting interaction freezes a micro-instant in an accumulation of moments: the ground beneath the ball remains mostly intact, though immediately to its left lie a tangle of dented impressions and collapsed concrete. Heizer, Szeemann, and the small band of onlookers depicted in the photograph are watching the creation of Michael Heizer's work *Bern Depression*, commissioned by Szeemann on the occasion of his now-legendary exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*. This photograph, (1) often reproduced in texts devoted to the exhibition and Heizer's work in general, is, to my knowledge, among the only existing documentation of *Bern Depression*, which in itself offers an elliptic insight into the artistic and

When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Richard Artschwager***, one of "*40 Blips*", 1968 (left); ***Richard Tuttle***, "*Pale Purple Canvas*", 1967 (center); ***Eva Hessa***, "*Sans III*", 1969 (right), and "*Augment*", 1968 (corner). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

curatorial approaches manifest in *When Attitudes Become Form*. One of the best-known works to emerge from the exhibition, and certainly the most provocative of the ire of local authority, has been preserved for the record through its process and not its end result.

Inside, the galleries revealed more of what Szeemann famously referred to as "controlled chaos," an approach that he utilized in both the conception and installation of this landmark exhibition. Unlike its contemporary *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials,* which opened in May of 1969 at the Whitney Museum in New York City and featured a number of the same artists, the works at the Kunsthalle Bern dynamically occupy space. While Marcia Tucker and James Monte's spare presentation imbued most works in the exhibition at the Whitney with spatial—and thus formal and conceptual—autonomy, Szeemann's staging was positively boisterous by comparison. In collaboration with the artists, who were given free reign to conceive of works specifically for the site, Szeemann presented artworks in close physical proximity to one another and installed them on every conceivable surface. In the main hall at Bern, Eva Hesse's *Viniculum* plotted a diagonal line from ceiling to floor, coming to rest adjacent to Garry Kuehn's undulating wood and fiberglass sculpture, *Untitled,* which was elevated off the floor by small wooden sawhorses. Throughout the exhibition there was nary a pedestal in sight. Other sculptural works lay directly on the floor, rested against, or protruded from walls. Navigating the stairwell, visitors saw what appeared to be traces of construction in the shape of a perfect square (Lawrence Weiner's *36" x 36" Removal to the Lathing or Support Wall of Plaster or Wallboard from a Wall*), while downstairs clusters of black rubber tubes (*Belts)* hung above thick agglomerations of melted lead spatters, evincing Richard Serra's direct intervention at the site (*Splash Piece*). Still other works took place completely outside of the Kunsthalle and its immediate environs, like Joseph Kosuth's advertisements in local newspapers and Richard Long's three-day walk through the Swiss mountains.

In the diary that he kept to document his preparation for the exhibition, Szeemann writes, "The exhibition really shouldn't simply reinforce the idea of the museum as a temple, but rather bear witness to the fact that, done in the same spirit, different things can develop." (2) How can an exhibition *bear witness? Does* bearing witness differ from *displaying*? While the inclusion of process-based works certainly implies the legal associations of "bearing witness," in that their traces provide evidence of an action that has occurred, other more oblique implications of the term appear in Szeemann's practice—both spiritual and ethical.

Despite an overwhelming interest in exhibition history in recent decades, few exhibitions have been as lauded, theorized, or reprised as *When Attitudes Become Form,* due in

When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Michael Heizer***, "*Bern Depression*", 1969. Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

no small part to this interplay between question of *display* and *bearing witness*. (3) Although critics and local authorities panned the exhibition when it opened, today scholars, curators, and critics credit *Attitudes* with many things. Not only was it among the first to harness diverse threads of conceptual, land art, and process-based practices in the late 60s, but *Attitudes* also marks the transformation of the museum from a site of exhibition to a site of production. The exhibition is also remembered as a moment in which the curator emerged as a figure deeply entrenched in the production of new works and situations. Together, these transformations amounted to a profound revolution in thinking about what curators and, moreover, exhibitions, *do*.

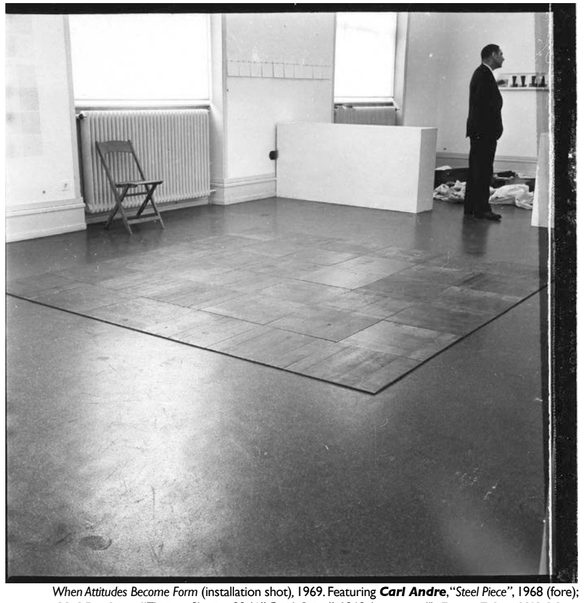
Szeemann's diary shows a curatorial practice that stretches beyond the parameters of the institution, informed as much by conversations that stretched into the wee hours of the dawn over drinks or midnight walks in the woods, (4) as by formal art historical study. Indeed, just as Szeemann sought to display *attitudes* in his now-legendary exhibition in Bern, his contemporaneous writing about the exhibition and its formation reveals the kernel of a discursive attitude now inextricable from contemporary curatorial practice. While the exhibition bears only his name as curator, Szeemann's diaries reveal a vast nexus of influences and inspirations and amount to a self-reflexive exploration of the networks that inform and shape the creative process. In its pages one finds descriptions of other exhibitions that he saw, notes from conversations with friends and meetings with artists, and disagreements or debates with colleagues. While *When Attitudes Become Form* and Szeemann's legacy show the emergence of the curator as an independent creative figure—dare I say an artist in his or her own right—Szeemann actively reshaped the myth of the artist as a isolated genius into a quasi-shamanic figure that seeks to aggregate diverse flows of information through a single fulcrum: the space of the exhibition, which he himself helped to expand.

Vital Signs

By Daniella Fernandez Murphy

Under the tentative guise of "new art," the 1969 exhibition *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* was the first survey of Conceptual Art in Europe. What does it mean to live in your head? The phrase suggests a duplicitous contemplation as well as a frenetic imagination at play. With *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, Harald Szeemann inaugurated the contemporary conception of the auteur-curator, as a key combatant against the putrefaction of old habits and exhibition narratives, enacting a methodological transformation in exhibition practice. Szeemann's ability to dissolve his role and reinvent himself within the fabric of *Attitudes* articulated a daring agility: he partnered with artists to present a space without barriers between art and life.

For the critical diagnosis of the contemporary art system, Szeemann prescribed a sensual, virtual poetics, with artworks essentially engineered as considerations for the mind. Usurping the artist's reign, we can attribute the ascendance of the curatorial gesture to Szeemann. The imaginary science of pataphysics was the overarching conceit to which he



When Attitudes Become Form (installation shot), 1969. Featuring ***Carl Andre***, "*Steel Piece*", 1968 (fore); ***Mel Bochner***, "*Thirteen Sheets of 8 ½" Graph Paper*", 1969 (center wall); ***Franz Erhard Walther***, "*Objects*", 1965-8 (background). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

subscribed. Pataphysics is the application of reason to a completely irrational hypothesis with resulting conclusions intended to do nothing more than generate ideas. The "new art" of *Attitudes*, like any artistic "movement" or tendency, emerged unevenly and tentatively, before Szeemann and his artists refined its theoretical course. This was an exhibition of attitudes, where one had to wade through the mire of ambiguity to find traces of perception. Presciently, the artistic effort to carve niches of unbridled autonomy paralleled Szeemann's own efforts for creative agency and professional autonomy. Post *Attitudes*, Szeemann remade himself into a disseminator for the one-man Agency for Intellectual Immigrant Labor, after resigning from the stultifying institution that bound him, the Kunsthalle Bern.

The exhibition meant neither to cure the art of its time, much less to define it. Veritable daydreams, the artworks prevailed amidst a period of tumultuous precarity. There was a (political) moment to contend with—Vietnam, Paris, Italy. The conceptualization of *Attitudes* began one month after May 1968, a period marked by considerable social unrest. 20,000 protestors in Paris bore the brunt of the French government's condoned retaliation, which prompted severe disillusionment within liberal politics. September, 1969 is also remembered as the Hot Autumn, during which groups of Northern Italian workers strained to secure better working conditions and wages in their contention with capitalist efficiency, by way of absentee resistance and self-organization.

And in the midst of the era of Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author,"—when it was out of fashion to identify an artist's psychological state, political views, historical context, religion, ethnicity, etc., with his work—Szeemann staged a platform for the analysis of an art reliant on authorial identity. That is to say, authorial identity, was to be taken as a cue for understanding and interpreting, exposing the experiences and biases of the artists. Szeemann articulated his own criticality from a traditionally distanced, if not covert position as an "exhibition maker." Szeeman's curatorial strategy was the orchestration of a large, heterogeneous grouping of artists, He culled from disparate geographies and disciplines, with only tenuous commonalities borne from their attitudes towards de-materialization and the attendant de-commoditization of the art object.

Ironically, the lack of focus that the exhibition was criticized for was an attribute Szeemann aimed precisely to disseminate. As Szeemann said, "There is no such thing as synthesis of arts, and there mustn't be—then it becomes not art but power politics." (1) Szeemann's curatorial impulse was pure—his itinerant mode of synthesizing a Romantic engagement with a cacophony of conceptual, categorical ambiguities was aimed to purposefully create internal incoherence, or mixed feelings if you will. It can be argued that our western psychosis was plagued with a hegemonic struggle. Harald Szeemann was a healing agent, interned with the power to make difference visible via exhibition.

Presenting Absence: the catalogue as discursive double

By Peta Rake

Nowadays, curatorial practice is by no means limited to the arrangement of artworks within spaces of exhibition. Rather, the discursive double of the exhibition—that of the catalogue—play an important and necessary part of the exhibition process and outcome. They serve not only as a framework in which to enter the choice of artworks included in the exhibition but often as the only living means of documentation that exists after the show closes. Further they mark an important inclusion in exhibition history—one that is fraught with a lack of visual documentation of the actual "look" of the exhibition—and remain often as important as the show itself.

Harald Szeemann's 1969 exhibition *Live Inside Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern marks the near-beginning of a trajectory of exhibition practice that implemented the catalogue not only as an accompanying document but as a further space of exhibition. The exhibition is now recognized as a landmark historical moment that grounded the practices of a generation of conceptual artists. It has also become a spectre in collective memory as an event that remains both highly critiqued and glorified, not only for the annals of exhibition history, but for the understanding and construction of art history. Szeemann's status as a maverick curator—or "exhibition-maker,"—have created a mythical status for this exhibition, ultimately leading to his resignation shortly after from the Kunsthalle Bern. According to his catalogue essay, *When Attitudes Become Form* "appears to lack unity, looks strangely complicated, like a compendium of stories told in the first person singular," and it is this very relationship of disunity that is at the core of his treatment of the catalogue as an alternative space to exhibit artists.

In total sixty-nine artists were included in the exhibition (seventy, if you count Daniel Buren's 'un-invite' which resulted in him turning up and unofficially exhibiting his stripe posters nearby the Kunsthalle). However, only forty artists exhibited tanglible works in the final exhibition. What this meant, was that the catalogue represented a total view of the exhibition, with all artists included. It wasn't a matter of space to exhibit all artists chosen, but of the actual intent and practice of the types of artwork Szeemann wished to group. The exhibition subtitle *Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information* grouped what seemed a disparate array of practices from artists involved in Arte Povera, Anti-Form, Conceptual art, and Land art, under the dictum that celebrated a belief in artistic process, with Szeemann stating, "(we consciously avoided the expressions object and experiment)" and rather sought "forms through which these artistic positions are expressed." What's more is that the grouping of practices, while unusual at the time, were in the process of interrogating form itself, and the suggested terminology of 'Anti-Form,' 'Micro-Emotive Art,' 'Possible Art,' 'Impossible Art,' and 'Earth Art', "describe only one aspect of the style; the obvious opposition to form." (1) Furthermore the directive "Live Inside Your Head" assumes an important status, with Szeemann himself stating that "never before has the inner bearing of the artist been turned so directly into artwork… The artists represented in this present exhibition are in no way object-makers."

The emphasis of process both internally and externally meant that the activities of the remaining artists not exhibited could "only be 'reported,' since their products cannot be exhibited." (2) And in as such, the necessity of the catalogue came into play. Housed in a loose-leaf office-binder, the *When Attitudes Become Form* catalogue featured acknowledgements from the sponsor, Phillip Morris Europe, essays by Scott Burton, Gregoire Muller, John A. Murphy, Tommaso Trini, as well as biographies and bibliographies of all artists in the exhibition. The 168-page publication also featured 204 illustrations of artist works, many of which account events, activities, and instructions. The lineage of artistic development from the early 1960s Happenings are seen here in the form of the artist "document," a mode in which Szeemann asked for in his compiling of the catalogue. In a letter addressed to the artists he states,

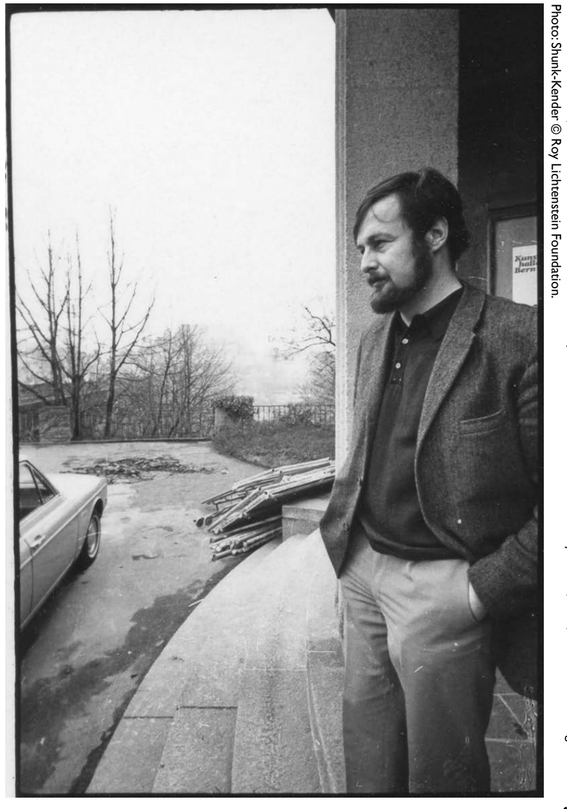
"I am compiling a book of presentations by artists which are primarily intended to stimulate visualisation in the mind of the reader. I would like to invite you to participate. The contributions should be two-dimensional. Other than this requirement, the only basis for selection of material will be the judgement as to whether or not the PRIMARY action of the work is the stimulation of imagery, thought, or conception. The visual appearance of the work must be less important than the mental action initiated by the work."

In as much the entries from the artists were many and varied, and Szeemann postures that "the 'Conceptual Artists' are represented by working plans, which no longer require further realization;" this incorporated Paul Cotton's scan that included all of his bodily measurements in lieu of a biography; Douglas Huebler's instructions for a Site Sculpture Project *Duration Piece #9* that was to take place on January 9, 1969 in Berkeley, California; wall marking instructions from Sol Lewitt; and a map instructional by Richard Long, that outlined one of his walks. Speaking directly to the form of these practices, the inclusion inside the catalogue suited not only the materiality and two-dimensions of these works, but also, a push towards the exhibiting of "mental action." The act of creativity therefore no longer rests in "interpretation and design, and certainly not in the intellectual processing of found material", but rather the "physical manifestation of the creative act is merely a document." (3)

A large group of artists primarily "the 'Earth Artists,'" however are not represented by works, but with "information" and the catalogue featured, photograph's of the landwork, *Perspective correction* 1968 by Jan Dibbets; Micheal Heizer's documentation of land interventions *Dissipute #2* in Black Rock Desert, Nevada; blueprints of Earthworks by Stephen James Kaltenbach; Dennis Oppenheim's *Landslide* earthworks; a proposal for an outdoor piece that was prohibited to be photographed by Paul Pechter; and a land intervention by Markus Raetz that proposed the building of an 'arbitrarily deep, arbitrarily long' underground gap between Dover and Calais. While some of these artists (Heizer, Raetz) also manifested other works in and around the show, these insertions into the catalogue serve as lasting remnants of works that were otherwise ephemeral and difficult to capture.

The publication served as a Rolodex of the recent tendencies in artistic practice before 1969, touting the catalogue space as equally important as the physicality of exhibition space. It could therefore be argued that the form of information was the red thread in this exhibition, and in no way did materiality serve as a precedent in heirachizing the form of works. The practice of exhibitions extending into the catalogue has become not only a necessity but often a form in which art practice exists. The example set out here by Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form* also extends to practices like Seth Seiglaub, who actually touted the catalogue *as* an exhibition. His projects charted a lineage of artist's books but instead of the artwork-as-publication, the entirety of the catalogue became an exhibition unto itself, something that also pushes against the understanding of what constitutes curatorial practice. In his "curating" of publications as exhibitions in the late 1960s onwards, he worked with many artists that were included in *When Attitudes Become Form*, (4) Douglas Huebler, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Joseph Kosuth, Richard Long, and Robert Smithson among others. This practice could also extend to the series of artist published magazines in the 1970s, from General Idea's FILE Magazine, that operated as "alternatives to, or expansions of, the gallery or museum; at least after Dan Graham and Robert Smithson, magazines became a place where art was not only reviewed but realized." (5)

The catalogue as an 'information extension' also could be said of the publication of the 1969 *Information* exhibition, curated by Kynaston McShine at MOMA in New York; as well as Catherine David's mammoth addendum to *documenta X*, the Poetics/Politics catalogue, which featured roadmaps of theory and thought from both artists and philosophers. With alternative arts publishing experiencing a second-wind at the moment, the space of the catalogue as exhibition becomes a way in which curators and artists can find alternative and perhaps more suitable ways in which to exhibit and even circulate artwork. Szeemann's implementation of the *When Attitudes Become Form* catalogue as a discursive exhibition "space" offers a pathway that combines exhibiting artwork alongside the "information extension" of the curatorial premise. In itself, this can be highly problematic territory, but nevertheless remains a site that begs for further experimentation.



Harald Szeemann, curator of *When Attitudes Become Form*, with ***Michael Heizer's*** "*Bern Depression*", 1969, visible in the background. Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes will take place at the ***CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts***, San Francisco, from September 13 to December 15, 2012.

****Footnotes**

When Attitudes Transform Consciousness:
Phenomenology and Institutional Critique in *When Attitudes Become Form*
by Heidi Rabben

(1) Harrison, Charles, "Against Precedents" in Rattemeyer, Christian, and W. A. L. Beeren. 2010. *Exhibiting the new art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When attitudes become form' 1969*. London: Afterall. 194-199.
(2) Harrison organized the second iteration of the exhibition at the ICA London.
(3) Richard Serra created a *Splash Piece* from molten lead in the front gallery, Zorio lit suspended cables on fire indoors, and Robert Barry released a radioisotope from the roof of the Kunsthalle.
(4) For example, Daniel Buren interprets this expanded field by contributing striped posters to a kiosk across the street, though he was not invited to participate in the official exhibition, and official participant Richard Long conducts a three-day solo hike into the Swiss mountains, literally carrying his artwork beyond the city limits.
(5) As elaborated by Benjamin Buchloch, "…just as the work negates the specularity of the traditional artistic object by literally withdrawing rather than adding visual data in the construct, so this act of perceptual withdrawal operates at the same time as a physical (and symbolic) intervention in the institutional power and property relations underlying the supposed neutrality of "mere" devices of presentation." - Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions." *October*, vol. 55, (Winter 1990) pp. 136.

An Accumulation of Objects and Situations: When Attitudes Become Form
By Jesi Khadivi

(1) The most recognizable photograph of *Bern Depression*, discussed here, was taken by the photographer Balthazar Burkhard, who shot many of Szeemann's exhibitions at the Kunsthalle, but there are others that also represent the work taken by the photographers Harry Shunk and Janos Kender.
(2) Exhibiting the New Art: Op Losse Schroeven and When Attitudes Become
(3) In her introduction to *Harald Szeemann: Individual Methodology* Florence Derieux writes, "It is now widely accepted that the art history of the second half of the twentieth century is no longer a history of artworks, but a history of exhibitions," a sentiment that circulates widely in much writing and discussion around curatorial practice and its history.
(4) "Midnight: nocturnal walk through the forest to help facilitate the convergence of the various points of view."

Vital Signs
By Daniella Fernandez Murphy
(1) Hans-Joachim Müller, Harald Szeemann: Exhibition-Maker, (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006), 77–8.

Presenting Absence: the catalogue as discursive double
by Peta Rake

(1) Szeeman, Harald. 1969. "When Attitudes become form – Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information". In Bezzola, Tobia and Kurzmeyer, Roman (Eds.) 2007. *Harald Szeeman – with by through because towards despite*. (Voldemeer: Zurich). 225-227.
(2) Hans Strelow, in *Frankfurter Allgemeite Zeitung* (10 April 1969)
(3) *Is*. Israeli Weekly (25 April 1969).
(4) Interestingly Seth Seiglaub was also included in the acknowledgements section of the *When Attitudes Become Form* catalogue.
(5) Deidrichsen, Deidrich. 2002. "Glad Rag" *artforum*. April. 1-6.

Installation shots, ***When Attitudes Become Form***, 1969. Featuring artists ***Lawrence Weiner*** (column one); ***Ger van Elk*** (column two); ***Gary B. Kuehn*** (column three); and ***Reiner Ruthenbeck*** (column four). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

Installation shots, ***When Attitudes Become Form***, 1969. Featuring artists ***Giovanni Anselmo*** (top two images, column one, and column two); ***Jannis Kounellis*** (bottom image, column one); ***Richard Artschwager*** (column three); and ***Markus Raetz*** (column four). Photo: Shunk-Kender © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

TOM MARIONI

Art Etiquette: Questions on art and complaints & comments on the art world

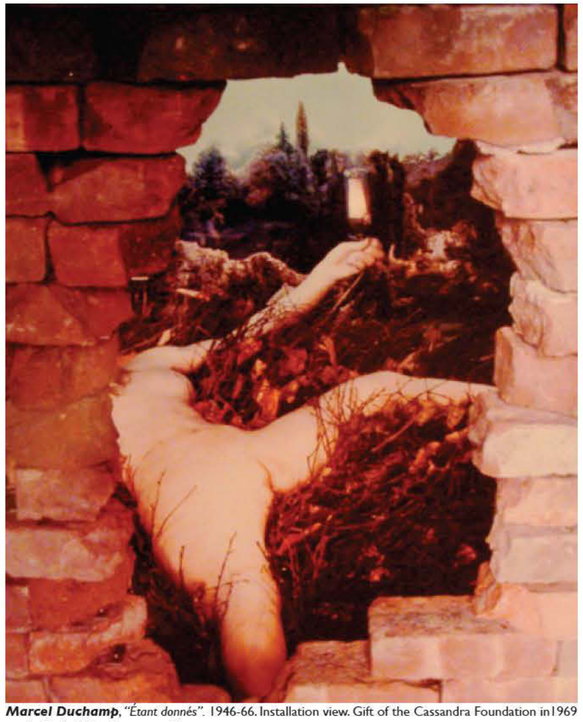
****What is a concept?**
-Chris Rusak

--A concept, according to the dictionary, is "an abstract idea, a general notion, a plan or intention, a conception." Duchamp was the first to use the term concept art; since the '60s, the correct term has been conceptual art. When critics use the term conceptualism it implies that this is a movement with a manifesto, but I think conceptual art is such a broad idea with so many arms and styles that there cannot be a manifesto to define it. Einstein was a physicist and a conceptualist but he was not a conceptual artist. Conceptual art began in the late '60s and had ended by the late '70s. New generations of neo-conceptual artists come around every other decade.

****Did Duchamp base his Etant Donnes installation on a particular woman? And did he really quit art early in his career?**
-Maria Martins

--Two different mistresses, one from the 1930s and one from the 1940s, were models for the torso in Duchamp's masterpiece installation, Etant Donnes, which he worked on in private from 1946 until his death in 1968. He cast the private parts of his mistress in the 1940s for the figure in Etant Donnes, and later also used the cast for a multiple called Female Fig Leaf. Duchamp announced in 1912, after his famous Nude Descending a Staircase that he was quitting painting, and made Fountain (the urinal displayed in the Armory show) and other readymades. In 1917 he said he was quitting art altogether to play chess. He said that chess was the same as making sculpture in your head, constructing your moves in advance.

****My girlfriend makes work that appears to be using our relationship as the subject. On occasion the conceptual kernel may have come from our relationship; however it is just as likely that it was inspired by something else. My mother visited recently and expressed concern about my relationship being on public view. I don't feel exposed, as I understand where the line between fact and fiction lies. Can you advise me on how to reassure my mother about the situation?**
-Josh Keller & Carissa Potter



***Marcel Duchamp**, "Étant donnés". 1946-66. Installation view. Gift of the Cassandra Foundation in1969 to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.*

--A conceptual artist in Los Angeles in 1970 made a series of Polaroids of the men she had slept with sitting on her bed in their underwear. More recently in London Tracey Emin made a work called Everyone I Have Ever Slept With (1963-1995), and as a Turner Prize nominee in 1999 exhibited My Bed at the Tate Gallery in London. Tell your mother there are precedents to your girlfriend's work. It is a legitimate pursuit, even if it might be derivative. On the other hand, maybe it's not a good idea to be an actor in someone's play without being paid for it.

****I go to museum exhibitions with the expectation that I will gain some degree of insight to the work I encounter. I think of museums not only as repositories of art objects but as institutions with a mission to educate those who visit about the work on display. All too often, I find a paucity of informational labeling accompanying the individual pieces in the exhibition. This is especially frustrating in the case of exhibitions of conceptual work since the artist's intent is often elusive or even impenetrable to the average viewer thereby eliminating any possibility of an educational experience. Since there would be so much more to be gained with some measure of informational labeling, why do museums, or more specifically curators, take the elitist high road of assuming all visitors share the same degree of insight as they do?**
-T. Vincent Meyer

--One of the jobs of a curator is to interpret the art for the public. But if the artist is not clear about the intent of the work, the curator may have a hard time interpreting it. Or, possibly, the work is labeled by a young curator who wants to try to show intelligence by creating explanations so convoluted that only a few can understand them. It does help if you, the viewer, know some art history, because you get from a work of art what you bring to it, and the more you know the more you get. Museums are collectors of things they consider the best examples of a culture's product as well as being educational institutions.

****What is the role of the art critic?**
-Alan Greenberg

--A newspaper art critic came to my studio a few years ago, and I asked him for his opinion of my work. He said, "It's worthless." I said, "I know, but I would like to hear it anyway." One job of the art critic is to see art, report on it and understand it the way a dog smells the ass of another dog to know what his master feeds him.

*****Is documentation of a conceptual art action or performance necessary for it to be of significance?***
-Diane Roby

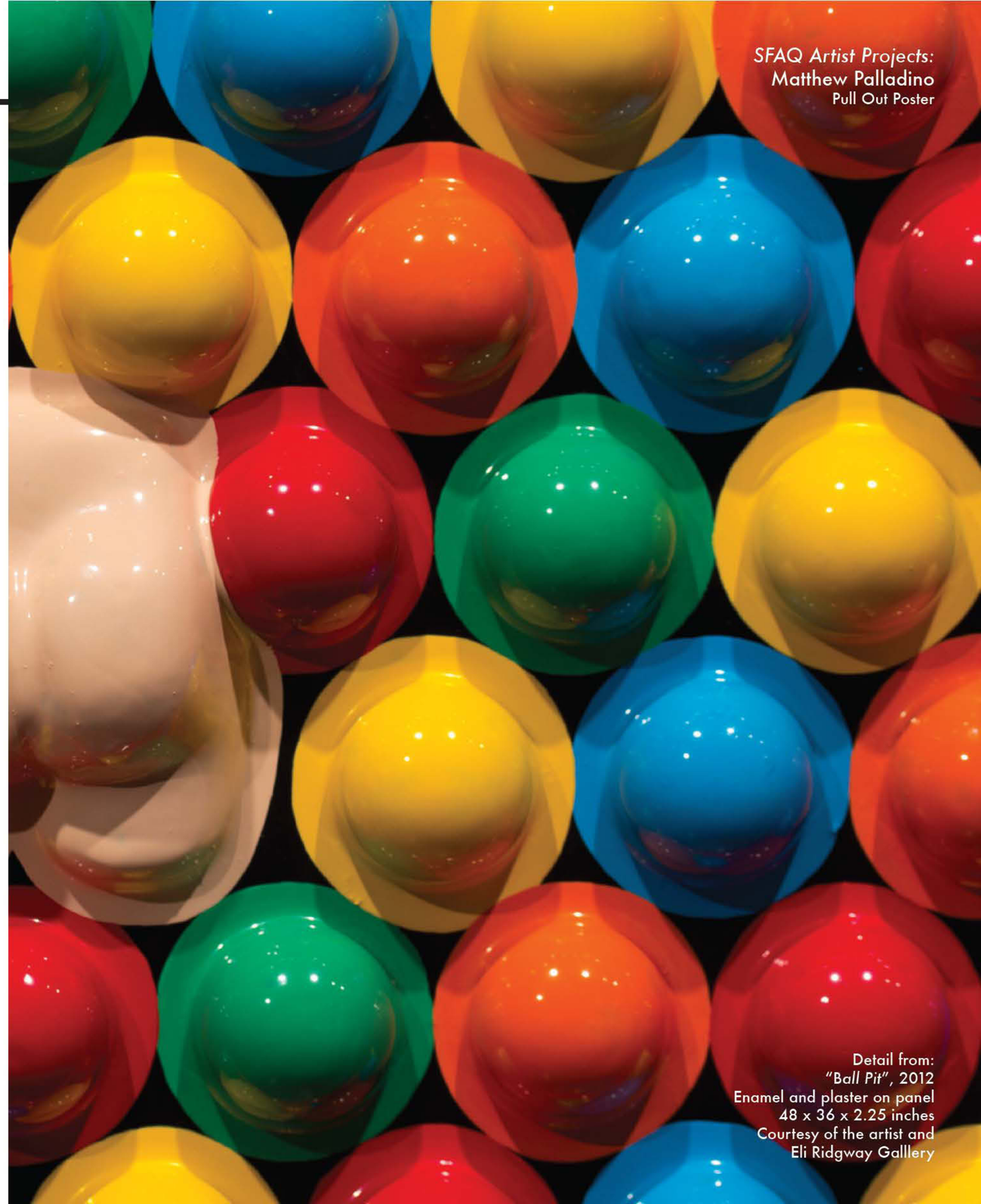
--If an art action is not documented, only word of mouth can allow it to live into the future and into art history. It would be in the interest of the artist to have a recording in order to get more gigs. If the event were Custer's Last Stand, the hill where the fight was lost could become the record, and the made-up story would become legend.

****How can artists, art teachers, and art writers occupy and transform the capitalist art world? (And why is mainstream art still measured and limited by Roman, Judeo-Christian, Western standards--why does this still so heavily dominate in the art world?)**
-Deborah and Clarence

--In the non-capitalist (theocratic or communist) world, art's purpose is to glorify the state or the church. In America in the 1960s, the time of pop art (especially Andy Warhol), art was about capitalism—mass-produced commercial products and money. In the 1970's, when conceptual art, a moral and political movement, became the avant-garde, capitalism was not glorified, and almost no one bought this art (also, the economy was bad).

Now, the economy is bad because the banks (capitalism) got out of control and also because of the little Bush kid's expensive unnecessary wars. In art, the morally bankrupt Damien Hirst covered a human skull with diamonds and created a symbol for war about money that made him rich and famous.

Continued on page 51



SFAQ Artist Projects:
Matthew Palladino
Pull Out Poster

Detail from:
"Ball Pit", 2012
Enamel and plaster on panel
48 x 36 x 2.25 inches
Courtesy of the artist and
Eli Ridgway Galllery

AVERAGE BFA DEGREE

$168,392

AVERAGE MFA DEGREE

$98,244

SAN FRANCISCO ARTS QUARTERLY

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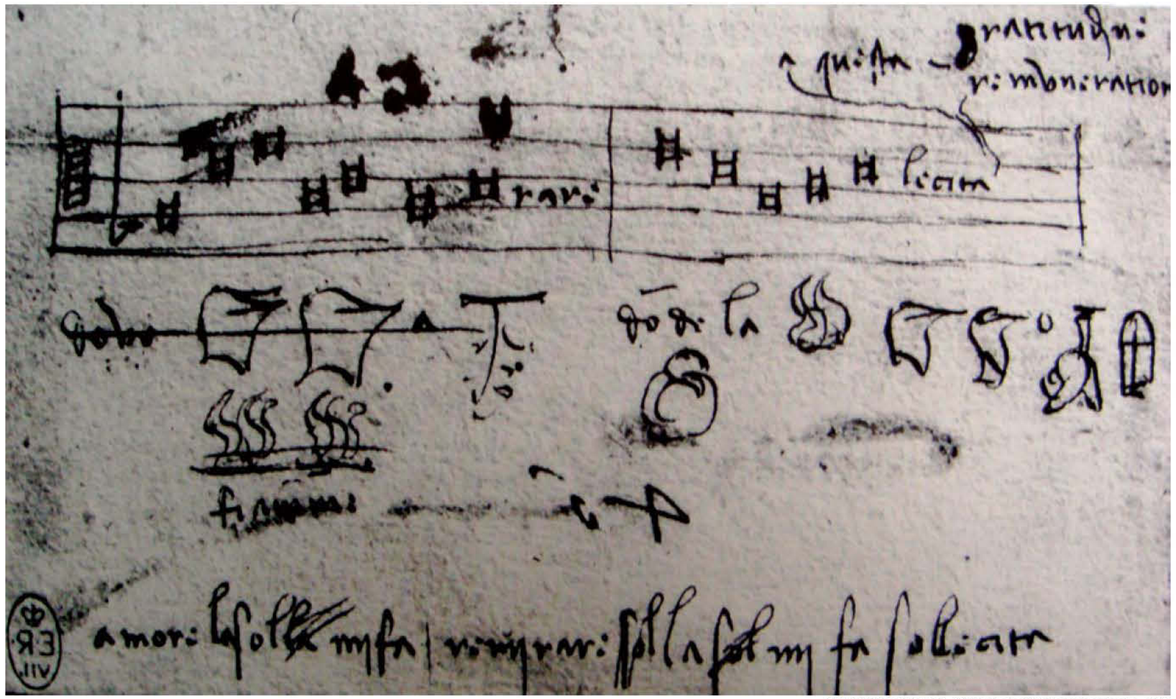
IT'S ABOUT
F#CKING TIME
FOR A FREE
ART PUBLICATION

SFAQ

SO GOOD IT SHOULD BE ILLEGAL



Leonardo da Vinci. Music score. Unknown source. C. 1480.

Many international biennials and art festivals are now including artists from third world countries. If each country would stay true to its own style, we would not have so much politically correct art and possibly not become a world of standardized, mediocre, generic, boring art that doesn't offend anyone. I am offended by non-offensive art.

****Was Leonardo da Vinci a conceptual artist?**
-Lisa Gherardini

--Leonardo was not only a conceptual artist, he was the son of God. I'm surprised to have to point that out. He wrote a piece of music that could have been written today. The phrase in Italian, Amore sol la mi fa re mi rare, la sol mi fa, sol lecita translates to "Love only makes me remember, it alone makes me alert." Leonardo wrote this phrase as music, using the sounds of words like do ra mi fa sol la te do in the musical score. This phrase was written as musical notes and becomes language and systems conceptual art.

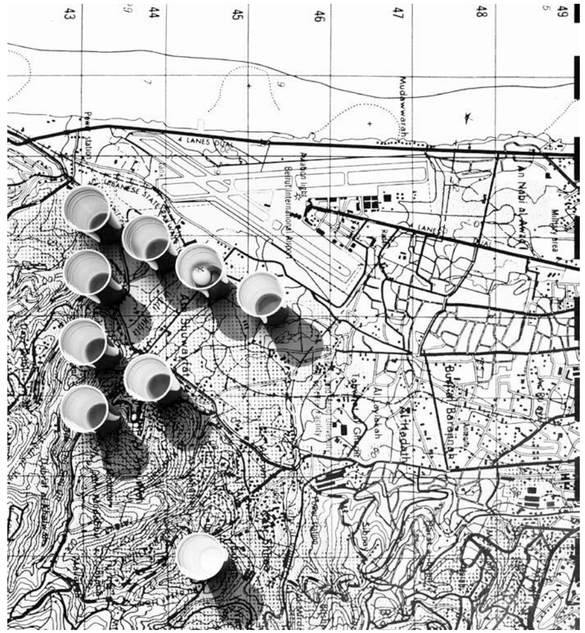
*****Where are we going in art?***
-Thomas Benton

--I think we are going toward organic natural materials; Duchamp said the erotic is the fourth dimension. Right now the purpose of some art is to scold the public. There is a save-the-world, journalistic, media-driven, grievance art that we are tending to take for granted after a decade of it. Certain subjects in art have been run into the ground: gender identity, theatrical performance art, video installation, cartoon art, and pathetic bad painting. It's time for a little comic relief.
An artist comes home to find his house burned down to the ground. He asks the fireman what happened and is told the director of the art museum came to his house, murdered his family and burned his house down. The artist says, "You mean the director of the museum came to MY house?"

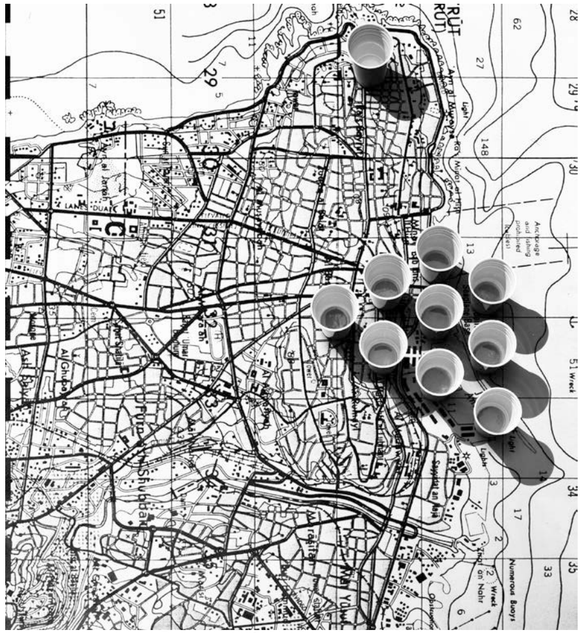
Galerie Sfeir-Semler *Beirut and Hamburg*

Andree Sfeir-Semler
Interviewed by Andrew McClintock

***Yto Barrada**, "Lyautey Unit Blocks", 2010, wood, paint, dimensions variable. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.*



***Rayyane Tabet ,** "How To Play Beirut (South)", Inkjet print on archival paper, 153cm x 138 cm, 2010. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.*



***Rayyane Tabet,** "How To Play Beirut (North)", Inkjet print on archival paper, 153cm x 138 cm, 2010. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.*

So you come from a filmmaking background, please talk about how this has changed your perception of the business-side of running a gallery, as well as influenced what you look for in artists you work with.
In fact, when you have started as an artist and not as an art specialist or historian you know what it is to do art and you look much more carefully on things because you can't be bluffed. If you've done it yourself you become much tighter on quality because you know what's good. You this as well when you've study contemporary art, which I did both traditionally and with a very contemporary way of looking at it. I've written a Ph.D. on the art scene in the 19th century titled "Die Maler am Pariser Salon 1791-1880", so all this background gets you a very strong foundation to look at art from an inside view. Whenever I work with artists I love it, we have now the visit of Wael Shawky, one of our Lebanese artists, and we have been working all day on his documentary project. It's the most fascinating part of the work, to assist the artist in conceiving an art piece, listening to what he wants to do and trying to get out of him what is in his deeper inside; to fully relate with his art piece, or at least listen to it and catch what's strongest in his thoughts.

Yes, definitely. I come from an art making background as well, and own a gallery in San Francisco. And [working with artists is] my favorite part as well, along with working as an artist with the artist. Being able to understand the artist's process more.
Yes - In fact I have never learned the commercial part of what I do. I've never done any studies in marketing, business, or in economy. I guess that when you are born Lebanese, you have this somehow in your blood because the Phoenician have traded for centuries. In fact, actually, I never try to sell things or make offers if I'm not approached first by the collector. I don't feel like a dealer or a gallerist, but rather a curator. The collectors are convinced by the quality of what we do and of the strength of the quality of level we aim. Whenever I talk to a client I never try to tell him how great the piece of art is, I rather try to tell him what the piece of art is about. And I leave it up to him if he decides to like it or not. Because you never can talk about loving something. You can either love it or not, but you can shape the meaning of an artist's piece by discussing it with a viewer.

And in fact, most of the stuff we work with is pretty dry, so the clients we get are very interesting people because they're attracted by something as dry as we have.

You mean dry because it's conceptually based or minimalist?
Yes, and also because it's not appealing stuff that you can decorate your apartment with. Most of the artists we work with are conceptual artists, and most of the work we deal in is minimal and reduced.

So you first opened your gallery in Kiel, Germany?
This is correct. You're informed, I don't know where you got your information! I mean, there is only one reason to open a gallery in an out-of-the-way city, my husband was working in Kiel, so we moved to Kiel and then we had a daughter so we stayed there. I felt like I was in the North Pole, it was the one and only gallery in town, which is at the very north of Germany. It was the one and only gallery working in the region north of Hamburg. There was nothing else, the eastern part of Germany with the border and water on the other side. I started very early, I started going to art fairs very soon, because no one would come to Kiel to buy art. I needed to go elsewhere.

Is this why you moved to Hamburg to re-open the gallery? Can you please talk about this decision, specifically from the point of view of Hamburg verses Berlin?
When we were free to move, because our daughter left home, we had the choice between going to Berlin and coming to Hamburg. I say we, because my husband also has a profession, and we needed to coordinate these two professions. I must say I did not go to Berlin because there are 500 galleries there and the city's main economy is tourism. Also there aren't that many art collectors but it does have a abundance of artists. On the other hand Hamburg is the wealthiest city in Germany. Hamburg certainly does not have the number of visitors we would get in Berlin, but we have a number of very important collectors. Harald Falckenberg is in Hamburg as well as many other very big collectors who live in the city and support the local art scene.

Berlin sounds like in San Francisco in the sense that everybody's an artist but there is a lack of larger collectors.
Well there are not many artists in Hamburg, there is a very good art school though. Many important teachers have taught in Hamburg, and some of them still do, like Andreas Sominski who is a teacher at the Art Academy. As far as other good galleries there are a few in Hamburg I must say. We're not many but we all know each other. The everyday quality of life in Hamburg is very nice and nowadays you just don't just work in your own four walls you work all over the globe. You don't soley rely on the city you're in. If I was to decide again now, I may regret not having gone to Berlin which is always something that I think about.

But now we have the gallery in Beirut. We opened back in 2005 as a branch to Hamburg, and now Beirut has become the main gallery and Hamburg works for Beirut. Because with the growth of what we did, what we started in the Middle East, the Middle East has suddenly, become a worldwide scene that the world is interested in. Everyone goes to Beirut to visit the gallery.

Your gallery is one of the largest commercial art spaces in the Middle East.
The first to start with. There was no "white cube" in the Middle East before we opened. None, nothing, nil.

Have you seen the local community in Beirut react to your presence? I know you're from there originally, but the physical community, the kind of non-arts community around the gallery, as well as the arts community in general? I know you just mentioned it has become pretty flourishing, do you feel like it's a new epicenter, like a lot of people are paying attention to what's going on in Beirut?
I mean, the art scene in Beirut is developing very, very fast, and there is now an art school, not like the ones which existed before. The scene is developing a lot. When we started Beirut I wondered if I would go the route of opening up a foundation [Non-Profit] or a commercial gallery. But I decided to open the commercial gallery for a very simple reason. I wanted to leave an impact on the region and send works to the region. I wanted to generate new works. If you are a foundation, you make one show with the artist and that's it, but if you are an art gallery you assist the artist and you document the work. You produce the work and try to place the work all over the world in collections and get reviews.

So you're developing the base?
So I decided to make a gallery and not a foundation.

Right you're working on developing this base of Middle Eastern artists with the intention of building an international presence.
We've already put them on a international presence. Many of them are in important public collections: Walid Raad in National Gallery Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin, NY MOMA (just to name a few), Akram Zaatari is in Centre Pompidou and Tate Modern ´collections. Akram Zaatari & Yto Barrada will be showing big installations at the San Francisco MOMA in September. I won't be coming to San Francisco because it's too far but you will be able to see the show. In fact, the gallery in Beirut over the last few years has really generated several artists who are now on the agenda of many curators and many museums. Two of our very young artists, Mounira Al Solh from Beirut and Rayyane Tabet from Ashqout, Lebanon are in

> "You should know that many artists from the Arab world are not Muslims. Many of them are Christians, a few others are Jewish, even though they're Arabs. So it's very wrong to formulate the art by a religion. You don't speak of art in the western world talking of Christian art, do you? And this is probably the biggest failure of viewing the art in the Arab world. We should formulate it around the language and the culture because they all speak Arabic, and that is the main link."

Felix Schramm, *"Less Roses"*. Site specific installation. 2007. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.

the New Museum's Triennial "The Ungovernables". Rayyane Tabet made his own bedroom in textile, a very big sculpture in textile, in canvas. Mounira Al Solh works in a very expressive way with street lights in Beirut through collages and drawings on transparent paper.

What are the main misconceptions Westerners have about contemporary Middle Eastern art?
Remember the show that happened at NY MOMA a few years ago? It was the first one in the states that was art in the Islamic world or something like this. You should know that many artists from the Arab world are not Muslims. Many of them are Christians, a few others are Jewish, even though they're Arabs. So it's very wrong to formulate Middle Eastern art by religion. You don't speak of art in the Western world by referring to it as Christian art, do you? This is probably the biggest failure of viewing the art in the Arab world. We should formulate it around the language and the culture because they all speak Arabic, and that is the main link. They all have a similar culture. Of course there are diversities by religion, but whoever is an artist is generally a freed person in his mind and is not addicted or ideated to a religion in particular. So this is why, I mean, even if someone believes and practices his religion, it does not influence his art work. If it were the art wouldn't be free and if the art is not free it wouldn't be interesting. Art needs to observe and to look at social structures. It shouldn't be biased by any way of looking at things. Of course, it's always subjective; it's the viewing of the single artist, but if that view would be biased by certain religious view points it wouldn't be interesting anymore.

So the programming that you do is known for being curated like a museum in the sense that the shows are longer, and you work with a lot of conceptual and minimalist artists. You also do large site-specific installations in your shows?
If you look at the Beirut space you will see a commercial gallery, I mean in [Chelsea] it's different, but generally and historically, a commercial gallery doesn't have a space of 1,000 square meters [10,800 sq feet], it's very big. Whenever we do a show, it's always the curator's exhibition which means we have a message. And we try to work with the artist on a presentation that is really more of a way to work in museums and in nonprofit spaces, rather than in a commercial gallery. Galleries in Chelsea that do this seem…well we don't try to impress the visitors by the art pieces. We don't try to make a huge show just because it's a huge space. If it's big it should be because of a certain conceptual reason...we don't use gold because gold shines. So we're really very severe about quality.

It takes me years to decide if I'm going to represent an artist or not. And whenever I decide to represent an artist the gallery invest lots of energy in spreading and supporting the work. We try also to work with the artist and pull out of them all they can give. We don't just let go and get the work and hang it on the wall.

So I read a quote from you, and I'll paraphrase a little bit here, but you were questioning the sanity of some contemporary artists who are under 50 and selling work for over $100,000. You said this before the crash in 2006 in a short piece for "The Guardian" (UK). Do you feel now that the international market has gained a little sanity and realism about pricing since the crash?
There is a lot of money being invested in art, and contemporary art is very expensive at the moment. But the expenses that you face as a gallery are enormous. So it becomes like the elephant in the room. You end up needing many assistants and the space to show the work. If you are going to an art fair, you have a rent of $50,000. And so it becomes like a company. It becomes like, you lose unfortunately your serenity and your underground feelings when you become like a professional enterprise. And professional enterprises dictates necessities.

When you have an artist for example who is now producing a film for Documenta, and he calls me on Sunday and he says his six figure budget is gone, (Thank God this production is sponsored by several institutions) we need to be able to find more money. You understand? We just sold his first work to the Tate. A major US Museum is on it's way to buy a work, but this artist is only starting to become an important person and collected by big museums and he's spending a few hundred thousand to make a film. So when you have all these expenses you just can't sell the work after that for $5,000. You need somehow to cover your expenses.

And this is the problem you face with most conceptual art because it's much more expensive to produce than an oil on a canvas. I don't need to tell you, but production including lighting is also extremely expensive, and I'm facing this now with my artist. But it must be right, so you end up with an enormous lighting budget and you've done nothing besides light the space. You know what I mean. You're paying for those lights which are rented for three months for a hundred a day, 20,000 euros and you just have put the lights there for the piece.

So imagine that we need to somehow finance this stuff, so when we sell an art piece we have to cover the costs of all this production. So actually an art collector becomes like a sponsor. So whoever is buying this art piece from these artists is like covering the costs of the production of the art work.

I like the idea of the collector becoming a sponsor of culture.
Whenever a collector is buying installations he is, of course, sponsoring culture. He's not decorating his home or buying a painting at an auction. These works never sell at auctions, and the auctions don't want these works.

Right, they want the oil paintings.
Yes, of course, they want a painting that you can carry out of the auction room and they want a work that you can show to the public while they're being auctioned.

You've been on the international art fair circuit since you first opened your gallery in Kiel. What would you say about comparing art fairs in New York and Miami to newer fairs like Art Dubai. What would you say some of the differences are?
Enormous. They have nothing to do with each other. When we started Art Dubai we were like pioneers working to actually inform the people on what is contemporary art. We are like writing an ABC dictionary, and we had people visiting who would ask us, "Is this for sale? Is this art? Why is this art?". We were giving introductions and talking on podiums and organizing public discussions, or tools to inform them on art. This is what Art Dubai is about. When you go to the Armory Show or to the Miami art fairs all you need to tell the people is the price. It's really a huge difference. You can't compare it.

Its great that you're so invested in championing contemporary and conceptual art in the Middle East and bringing this kind of culture to an area that has not been exposed to it before.
We are even changing the customs laws in Lebanon because when you fill in those papers for customs there is no space for "Art". If I have a sculpture its considered a chair or a table or an antique piece. They don't have a word for contemporary or conceptual art because no one has imported something like this any time before me. They would buy stuff, hang it in a gallery, sell it, or keep it in their storage. But working on art works that people in Lebanon have conceived, producing them in Germany because of the materials and the quality of the production, bringing them back to Beirut as objects and then saying this is only art when the art is issued a certificate, this is why we need to bring them back on production costs. This is something that troubles them a lot. In fact, our next show is now again stuck in customs because they don't believe, they think we're cheating them. They think we cannot import plastic because its not a piece of art, so they don't believe us, they wonder why we're bringing this stuff and saying this is art.

You mentioned customs obviously, but have you run into any other problems of censorship just because some contemporary art might be considered offensive?
As far as censorship goes not in Beirut, however in Dubai the works you are showing at the fair must go first through censorship, and only if they pass this you are allowed to show them. Many pieces were turned down, not from us, but from others. And the thing about Lebanon is it's the only free country in the whole Middle East. It has always been a democracy. The only democracy in the Middle East. It's a banana republic, it's chaos; that is, you can be killed for your opinion, but you may have one. There is no censorship in Lebanon, but in Dubai or in Saudi Arabia, you would never be able to show certain things, but we don't face this in Lebanon because Lebanon is really pretty free.

Would you say it's because there's always been a balance of different religions such as Christians and Muslims so there's never been completely one set viewpoint?
Lebanon has eighteen different religions. The interesting thing about Lebanon, of course, we have had a very long civil war, but we still have a very independent society. You have people on the beach without a bikini, I mean, naked almost, and next to them you have someone covered from head to feet. So this is something you would not see in the other Arab countries.

Okay. So my next question is, not to sound naïve, but do you think artists working together from traditionally hostile backgrounds, such as an Israeli artist and a Palestinian artist can help transcend tensions on a wider scale, not just in the arts community?
I don't think that this is possible. I don't think that art is able to work beyond politics. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has proven that this is not possible. The fact that they were not allowed to perform in Israel has proven that this is not possible. I think this is naïve. I think this is not—art can open eyes, but it cannot change societies. It cannot change politics. I think it's naïve to invite artists on a boat, which has been done—it's not even an allegory, it has really physically been done—invite Palestinian and Israeli artists on a ship and tell them to make works together. This is silly and naïve. I think the governments and the majority of the people in each society can work on their own to give freedom and open-mindedness in all societies. But I don't think that you can bring the two together and think that this will influence politics.

Andree Sfeir-Semler, 2010. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler.

Timo Nasseri, Philippe Taaffe, Christine Streuli. Installation view of group exhibition. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.

Wael Shawky, *"Cabaret Crusades: The Horror Show File"*. Film still. Courtesy Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut/ Hamburg.

Steven Leiber (1957 - 2012)

Steven Leiber and the Vagaries of the Avant-Garde

Written by John Held, Jr.

Steven Leiber left us on January 28, 2012, his premature departure at 54 leaving behind a legacy yet to be fully explored. He had assembled an unprecedented collection of artistic ephemera of the sixties and seventies; not paintings or sculpture of the era, but the minutia of the art world: artist created postcards, stickers, exhibition announcements, advertisements… aspects of the creative process that most couldn't or wouldn't accept as art.

Additionally, Steven ran a more conventional trade in contemporary art reference books, exhibition catalogs, artist publications and multiples, which continues to be made available through the website, *stevenleiberbasement.com*.

A native of San Francisco, Steven graduated from Lowell High School and went on to study English at the University of California, Berkeley, where he obtained a bachelor's degree. After graduation he began working at the Simon Lowinsky Gallery, while studying for a law degree at Golden Gate University in 1982. Dual degrees in hand, he opened the Steven Leiber Gallery in Downtown San Francisco, but soon relocated the enterprise to his grandmother's basement in the Marina district, where he remained.

I began patronizing Steven's services as a dealer of the post-war contemporary avant-garde art in the early nineties, while still living in Dallas, Texas. I had several shows in San Francisco during this period, always looking forward to browsing Steven's basement on Toledo Way in the Marina during my visits.

It was a wonderland, plain and simple, and the only place on the West Coast to view materials of the nature that interested me (Fluxus, Mail Art) in bulk. Not in Los Angeles. On the East Coast, only Printed Matter bookstore (and before its demise, Franklin Furnace Archive), as well as private dealer Barbara Moore, who had been a participant in Fluxus, dealt in this material. Moore's private collection sold this past decade to Harvard University for over $1,000,000.

Allow me to provide some context for my appreciation of Steven. I was thrust into the cultural avant-garde in my twenties, schooled by Jean Brown of Tyringham, Massachusetts, a collector of the avant-garde living some two hours from my residence in Upstate New York. I stumbled upon her in 1976, while doing research on the artistic use of the rubber stamp. As a librarian, the title of the article I happened upon was particularly relevant to me - "Preservation of the Avant-Garde."

"It is always the marginal she stresses-such manifestations as concrete poetry, rubber stamp art, the vagaries of video. She is after elusive connections, the small interstices that relate the recent past to less-publicized present-day directions...Other borderline movements she considers extensions of Dada and also perhaps Fluxus are Postcard Art and Lettrisme. For some years certain artists have denounced what they view as the sterility of museums and private galleries. They resent, too, the difficulty of breaking through the official barriers that prevent them from reaching a public, and as a result they are turning to 'mail art' via postcards and letters." (Katherine Kuh, "Preservation of the Avant-Garde," *Saturday Review*, New York, 4(3), October 30, 1976, pp. 55-57).

Jean Brown and her husband Leonard started collecting Dada and Surrealist "ephemera" in the mid-fifties. Not the artworks of the movement, that was beyond their financial reach, but the exhibition invitations, posters, periodicals, correspondence, and other flotsam and jetsam of the movements, at the time all but ignored except for librarians (which Jean was). When Leonard died, Jean was quick to perpetuate his memory by expanding the collection to include Fluxus, a contemporary expression of Neo-Dada, informed by her attendance at a New York Fluxfest. She soon became one of the chief financial supporters of George Maciunas, the energetic maestro behind the movement, who (after establishing SoHo as an innovative artist community) moved to be near her at the end of his life (he died in 1978). On the second floor of her Shaker Seed House, Maciunas constructed an archive to house her collection in the manner of the Shakers (there were chairs hung from the walls)- simple and functional, in keeping with his notion of a "concrete" art indistinguishable from practical necessity.

I languished for years in a world bereft of any meaningful examination or understanding of Fluxus. Mail Art, a democratic open network of international artists inspired by the earlier cultural activism of Fluxus, drew heavily from the movement – especially in creative uses of the postal system, the performative aspect, development of inexpensive multiples, use of the artist publication as "alternative space" and the blending of art and life into a series of "events."

Then in 1994, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis staged the exhibition, "In the Spirit of Fluxus," accompanied by a major exhibition catalog. This was the long delayed moment Fluxus was thrust center stage into the dialogue of contemporary art, becoming the new darling of art students hungry for additional meat on the bones of Duchamp. Unbeknownst to them, they owed it in large part to Steven Leiber.

"I bought a collection in the late '80s that came from an artist, Jeff Berner, who was associated with Fluxus. He had a Flux shop; I'm not sure how functional it was. What I mean is, I'm not sure it was a shop. It wasn't clear to me that he sold very many editions. Granted, not that many Fluxus editions were sold between 1961 and 1978, so this guy had multiple copies of this or that edition.

In addition, this collection also had a great deal of material concerning visual poetry, concrete poetry, and a certain amount of Beat and countercultural material from the '60s. In the process of making sense of what this collection was—I mean it's a bit of an exaggeration to call it a collection. It was twenty-one boxes of material without an index in no order, just twenty-one boxes of crap.

And I think I spent approximately a year with a colleague making sense of it. In the process, it became clear to me that what was most exciting was not the most obvious material, not the things that I actually went to buy, which was primarily the Fluxus material; it was the other things. For Fluxus events or festivals, there wasn't necessarily a thing that would have come out of the exhibition. You didn't buy a painting; you showed up, saw what went on, and in time, what becomes the collectable aspect of it is the flyer, the poster, the relic, the printed material that was generated from these events.

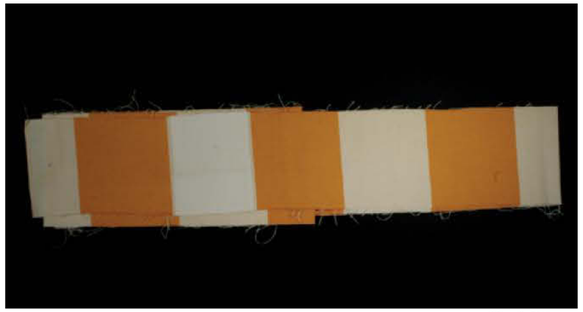
So I guess my interest in artist ephemera specifically, and art ephemera in general, (grew) out of that inquiry."

(The above and following excerpted conversations are from an interview that took place October 9, 2010, at Eli Ridgway Gallery. Brian Andrews, Patricia Maloney, Duncan MacKenzie interviewed Leiber. To hear the full interview, listen to Episode 278 on www.*BadatSports*.)

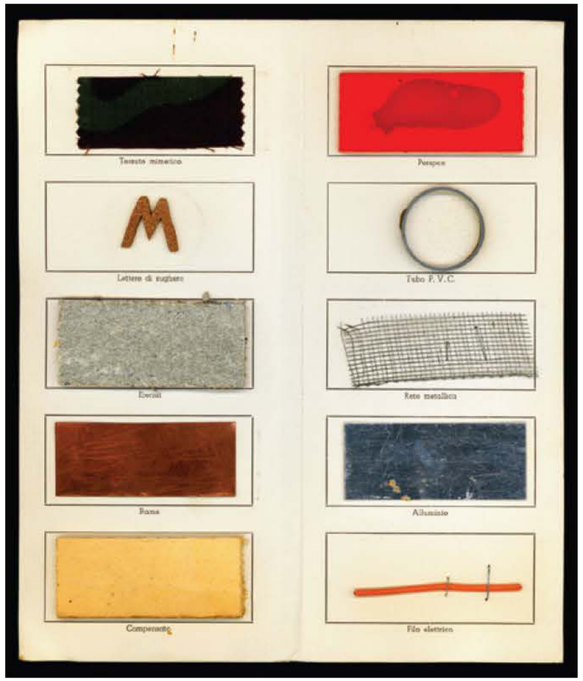
After the acquisition of the Berner material, Leiber added to his Fluxus holdings, filling in the gaps. It wasn't that difficult at the time. All it took was an understanding of the importance of the material and a bit of pocket change. Among a variety of sources, Leiber was acquiring material from Barbara Moore's Bound and Unbound bookstore in New York City, and scouring Europe for additional material.

After Leiber's sale of the Berner acquisition to the Walker, and its subsequent exhibition, Fluxus items became increasingly difficult to acquire. Jon Hendricks, once in partnership with Moore, became curator of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, after the Detroit couple (grandparents of San Francisco based dealer Jessica Silverman) became interested in the field. One of the most comprehensive Fluxus accumulations in the world, the Silverman Collection was recently donated to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, has been shown in part and is scheduled to become the focus of a major exhibition in the near future.

Leiber's participation in the institutional placement of Fluxus as a valid twentieth century avant-garde movement was crucial. Not only did he broker the acquisition of major Fluxus collections by museums and private collectors, his broader interests beyond Fluxus, especially Conceptual Art, enabled him to establish a framework for fair market value for unconventional



Daniel Buren
"Demultiple". Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany. 1973. Linen with orange and white vertical stripes with the penultimate stripe painted white. Comes with a numbered certificate. Edition of 68 copies. 3.75" x 83".



Alighiero Boetti
"ALIGHIERO BOETTI". Christian Stein, Turin, Italy. 1967. Announcement card. Folded. Offset lithograph and mixed media, including camouflage fabric, cork letter, asbestos lumber, copper, plywood, Perspex, PVC tube, wire netting, aluminum, and electric cable mounted on inside. Printed on both sides. Folded: 9.75" x 4.25". Unfolded: 9.75" x 8.25".

art. The ability to do this for unusual and undefined artistic endeavor demanded a major skill set based on both research and intuition.

Mail Art lost an irreplaceable friend in the passing of Leiber. More than any other respected art world figure (be it academic, curator, collector, bibliographer or archivist; all of which he was) Steven was one of only a handful of dealers in the world to perceive and handle Mail Art as a commercially viable interest to collectors, libraries and museums (Paul Robertson in Scotland; Jean Aquis in Switzerland, David Platzker in New York are others that come to mind). I regret all that his early death deprived us of.

Leiber's knowledge of artistic ephemera was made manifest with the 2001 CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts exhibition he guest curated, "Extra Art: A Survey of Artists' Ephemera, 1960-1999." The wide ranging survey was documented in a stunning exhibition catalog organized by Leiber and published by Smart Art Press, to which Leiber contributed an essay (with co-author Todd Alden).

In this essay, Leiber and Alden outlined their main areas of interest in the acquisition of artist-produced artifacts - from buttons to business cards: Beat Art (especially Wallace Berman, Bruce Conner, and George Herms), Pop, Nouveau Réalisme, Happenings, Fluxus, Visual Poetry, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Land and Earth Art, Postminimal and Arte Povera, Performance and Body Art, Correspondence and Mail Art.

These artistic strains served not only the structuring of the exhibition, but informed his selection of materials in his private art dealership, an important facet of which was the sale of books, especially reference and artists books for the above mentioned fields. As a source of obscure marginal printed materials, Leiber established a worldwide clientele and reputation.

Aside from the sale of artists' ephemera and art books, Leiber's practice included the inventorying and appraisal of collections incorporating the materials in his fields of interest for both acquisition and tax purposes. In this, Leiber was aided not only by a degree in Law, which proved invaluable in matters of estate planning, but a sibling relationship with a New York art dealer in one of the city's most influential galleries (younger brother David is the director of Sperone Westwater). Among the artists on whose collections he worked were Allan Kaprow, General Idea, Claes Oldenburg and the collections of Avalanche Magazine and Art Metropole.

Steven had been mentoring a new generation of curators and artists through his role as adjunct professor at the California College of the Arts.

"For example, with students, I'm often pulling out artist file material for them to review for, say, an essay on a particular artwork. I provide the students with the research material to write their essay. There's basic information in these artist files. I keep clippings, photographs of works that I've sold or that were offered to me, price lists, as much documentation as I can or that I have access to, or that comes to me on the artist that I'm covering.

…I absolutely agree that the ephemera is pretty much the primary carrier of the work. It behooves the artist to pay attention."

Exceeding most artists in his knowledge of innovative artistic thought and production, Leiber was so steeped in the historical minutia of his areas of interest that he was often asked to share his expertise. This extended to our mutual friend Milan Hughston, Chief Librarian of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Bridging associated fields of art history, scholarship, collecting, bibliography, dealership, law, consultation, Steven Leiber was a renaissance man with the vision and perspective to spot artistic trends years before they surfaced.

The collections he put together to highlight his holdings were made available to a selected audience through his dealer catalogs, which became works of art in and of themselves. Fifty-three were produced. Last year, a selection was publicly displayed in the library of the National Gallery of Canada, an institution he often consulted for and with. The exhibition was on view until April 27, 2012.

Reporting his death in the *New York Times*, Roberta Smith, remarked that, "As a dealer, he became known for the specially designed catalogs he began publishing in 1992. Each had a different design that paid homage to the material on offer or even mimicked it. One catalog was in the form of a cardboard box of library cards; another, a roll of undeveloped film; a third was mail art – a series of postcards mailed daily for a month."

Steven Leiber was an avant-garde artist trapped in the body of an art dealer. This will be further revealed as the full range of the body of work he collected is opened to anticipated public display. In addition to his knowledgeable and well-placed brother, Steven's wife Leigh Markopoulos, the chair of the Graduate Studies Program in Curatorial Practice, is superbly suited to carry forth Steven's legacy.

A scholarship fund has been established to perpetuate Steven's memory and assist in the training of future curatorial students. Gifts in his honor can be made to: Steven Leiber Scholarship Fund, California College of the Arts, 5212 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94618.


Alan ! I would appreciate your concurrence on this or related subject. George.

FLUXUS
1. To purge. A fluid discharge, esp. an excessive discharge, from the bowels or other part.
2. A continuous moving on or passing, as of a flowing stream.
3. a streamy copious flow.
4. the setting of the tide toward the shore
5. Any substance or mixture, as silicates, limestone, and fluorite, used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals.

SKELETON PLAN FOR CONTENTS OF THE FIRST 6 ISSUES:

NO.1 U.S. ISSUE, Jan.1962
Walter De Maria — Deflating the NY abstract expressionists
A.Kaprow or G.Brecht — "Environment-happenings", origins and aesthetics. historical precedent
★ — Neo junk art - Dadaism in sculpture & collage
La Monte Young — Neo Dada in U.S.
Henry Flynt — Manifesto (?)
Walter De Maria — Philosophical basis for neo Dada
★ — Meaningless work
Joe Byrd — Neo indeterminacy in poetry & music
Dick Higgins — Audience attitude revaluated
Philip Corner — Politics in art
★ C.Maxfield — New art and new society
Jonas Mekas — Development of electronic music in US
George Maciunas — ★ (cinema)
— The great fakers of architecture: M.v.d.Rohe, Saarinen, Bauhaft, Stone, Wright, etc.
★ — Atlas of new art and music in US

NO.2 JAPANESE ISSUE, March 1962, ed.Toshi Ichiyanagi
S.Morita (?) — Japanese abstract chirography, essay on origins, development, aesthetics & folio of full scale reproductions)
Kenzo Tange (?) — New installist architecture
★ — Experimental cinema
Toshi Ichiyanagi — ★
Philip Corner — Relationship between traditional Japanese music and new Western concrete music.
★ — Japanese electronic music
Ayo or★ — Sculpture from inside
★★★★

NO.3 HOMAGE TO THE DISTANT PAST
★ — Overtone pattern and polychromy of Medieval and Renaissance musical instruments
Don Smithers — 13th, and 14th.century instrumentation
Philip Corner — The radicals of 14th.century secular music.
G.Maciunas — Development of abstraction in 7th.cent to 9th. century European migration art.
★ — Ying Yuch Chieh, the ink splashor of Chan painters in Sung dyn.
★ — Machine music of Athanasius Kircher.
★★★★

NO.4 HOMAGE TO DADA (ed. by Tristan Tzara ?)
★ — Origins and aesthetics of junk collage
★ — Origins of noise music (Luitisme) in Futurist and Dada works (Russolo, Ball, Tzara etc.)
★★ — Poemes simultanes
★ — Dada theatre - "happenings"
★ — Abstract sound poetry of Tzara, Ball, Arp, Hausmann, Schwitters.
★ — Significance of Dada political orientation
★★★

let me know what you would prefer

No.5 WEST EUROPEAN ISSUE
Peter Land & ★ — Development of Brutalist architecture
P.Schaeffer ,or — origins, development and aesthetics of
Fred.K'Prieberg or★ — magnetic tape music.
G.Maciunas — Concretism vs. Illusionism
" — Development & aesthetics of European abstract chirography. (folio of full scale rep.)
★ — Lettrism of Isidore Isou
★ — Kranichsteiner Musikinstitut
★ — Neo Dada
★ — Experiments in cinema
★ — Atlas of new music and art in Europe
★★

NO.6 EAST EUROPEAN ISSUE
G.Maciunas — Letter
Penderecki or★ — New Polish concrete music
Patkowski or★ — Polish electronic music
A.Rannit or★ — Early Soviet literary experiments:
★ — V.Klebikov, I.Selvinsky, K.Fedin etc.
Grigori Chukhrai (?) — Zdanevitch, Kruchonyx, Terentiev - dada
ETC magazine (?) — Film making procedures in Soviet studios.
★ — Principles of Dialectic Materialism in concrete art.
★ — Experimental cinema in East Europe
★ — Potentialities of concrete prefabrication in Soviet architecture
★ — study of reactionary counterrevolution in art
★★★★

★ to be determined
Notes: most musical essays will be illustrated where necessary with records attached to book.

EDITORS: Publisher & editor in chief: George Maciunas
U.S.Section: Philip Corner, Walter De Maria, Dick Higgins (?), Jonas Mekas,
Japanese Section: Toshi Ichiyanagi
West European Section: Nam June Paik ?
Sylvano Bussotti, Peter Land and ★
East European Section: G.Maciunas.

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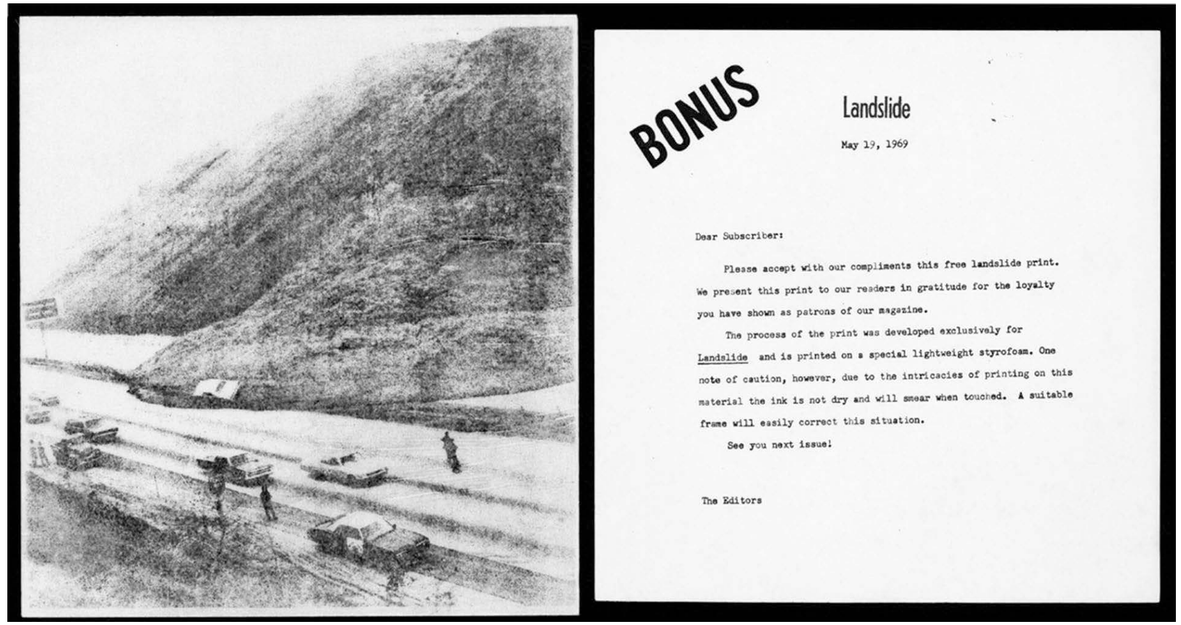
87-15 165th STREET
JAMAICA 32, N. Y.

George Maciunas
"Alan! I would appreciate your concurrence on this or related subject." nd. Typescript letter with pen additions on mustard colored paper. Letter/document sent to Allan Kaprow requesting commentary/editing. 24.75" x 6".


BONUS

Landslide

May 19, 1969

Dear Subscriber:

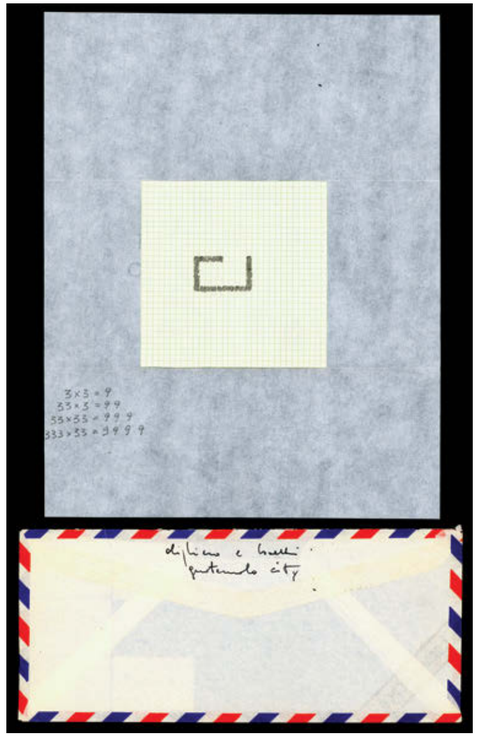
Please accept with our compliments this free landslide print. We present this print to our readers in gratitude for the loyalty you have shown as patrons of our magazine.

The process of the print was developed exclusively for Landslide and is printed on a special lightweight styrofoam. One note of caution, however, due to the intricacies of printing on this material the ink is not dry and will smear when touched. A suitable frame will easily correct this situation.

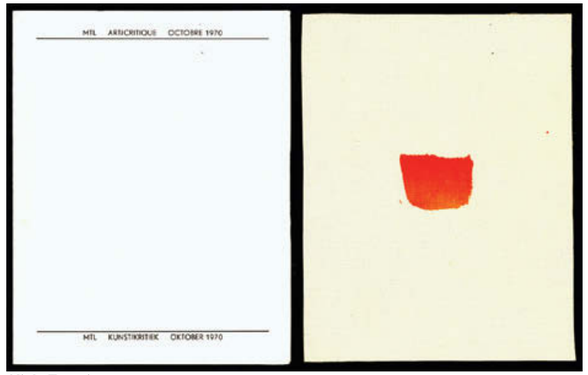
See you next issue!

The Editors

Anonymous
"LANDSLIDE no. 6 (bonus issue)." LANDSLIDE, Los Angeles, CA. 1969. Mimeograph print on Styrofoam sheet and mimeographed letter in envelope. Sheet: 9" x 8.5"; letter: 8.75" x 8.5".


3×3=9
33×3=99
333×33=9999

Alighiero Boetti
"Untitled". 1974. One of six envelopes each containing a mounted drawing. Each envelope is signed on the verso. Envelopes are 4.25" x 9.5". Drawings are 11" x 8.5".


MTL ARTICRITIQUE OCTOBRE 1970

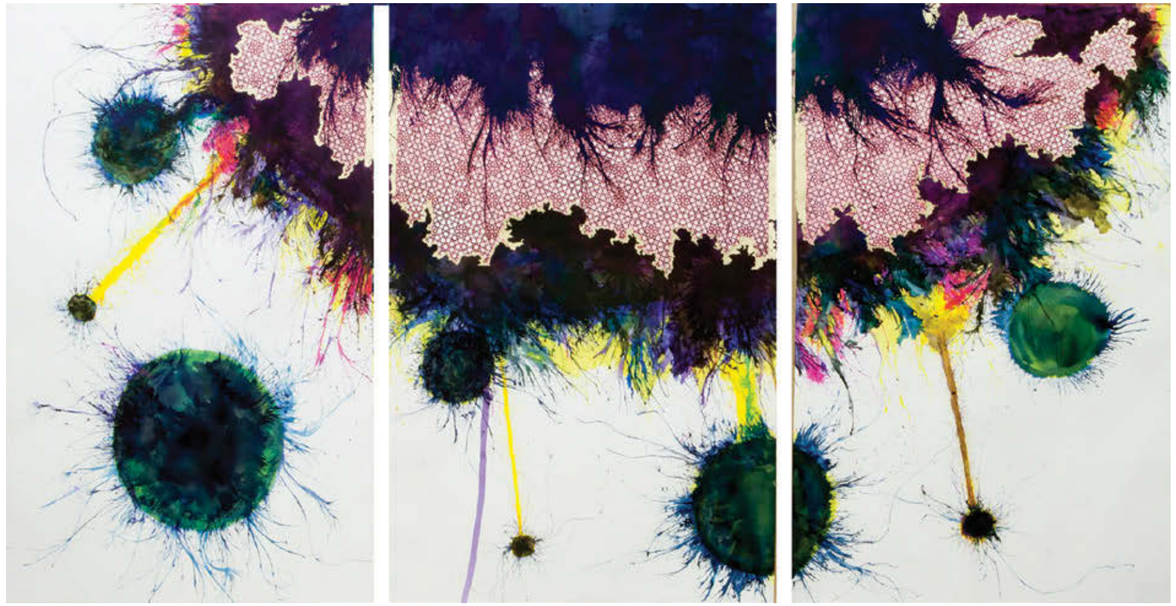
MTL KUNSTKRITIEK OKTOBER 1970

Niele Toroni
"MTL ART/CRITIQUE." 1970. Paint on canvas in printed folder. Canvas: 10.5" x 8.25". Folder: 10.75" x 8.5".


Eleanor Antin
"[100 BOOTS]". Self-published, Solana Beach, CA. 1971 – 73. Series of 51 postcards. Offset lithograph printed. Printed on both sides. Photographs by Philip Steinmetz. 4.5" x 7" each.

Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern

Raman Frey and Wendi Norris
Interviewed by Gabe Scott



Sherin Guirguis *"Untitled (Maad Wu Gazr)"*. Triptych, ink and watercolor on hand-cut paper. 78 x 48 in each panel. 2012. Courtesy of the artist and Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern.

Raman Frey and Wendi Norris began their San Francisco art endeavor in 2003, blazing a trail to become the most significant hometown players on the global arts market. In the last ten years, they have been responsible for the debuts of significant artists from Asia, Australia, the Middle East and beyond. The partners have also been equally active in launching the careers of local and regional artists on to the major international stage. They are consistently two of the most respected representatives of both San Francisco and the United States at domestic and international art fairs. Their cohesive vision, tireless efforts and ambition for making the ideal match between art and its connoisseurs demonstrates their unflagging commitment. Their contemporary program boasts the likes of Mary Anne Kluth, Clare Rojas, Kate Eric, Amir H. Fallah, Keegan McHargue and many others. In addition, they have been able to find the resources to pair an impressive roster of 20th Century Modern work, including Andre Masson, Yves Tanguy, Leonora Carrington, Max Ernst, Wifredo Lam and Dorothea Tanning. I was fortunate enough to have a lengthy discussion with Raman and Wendi to discuss what makes their programming and passion so unique.

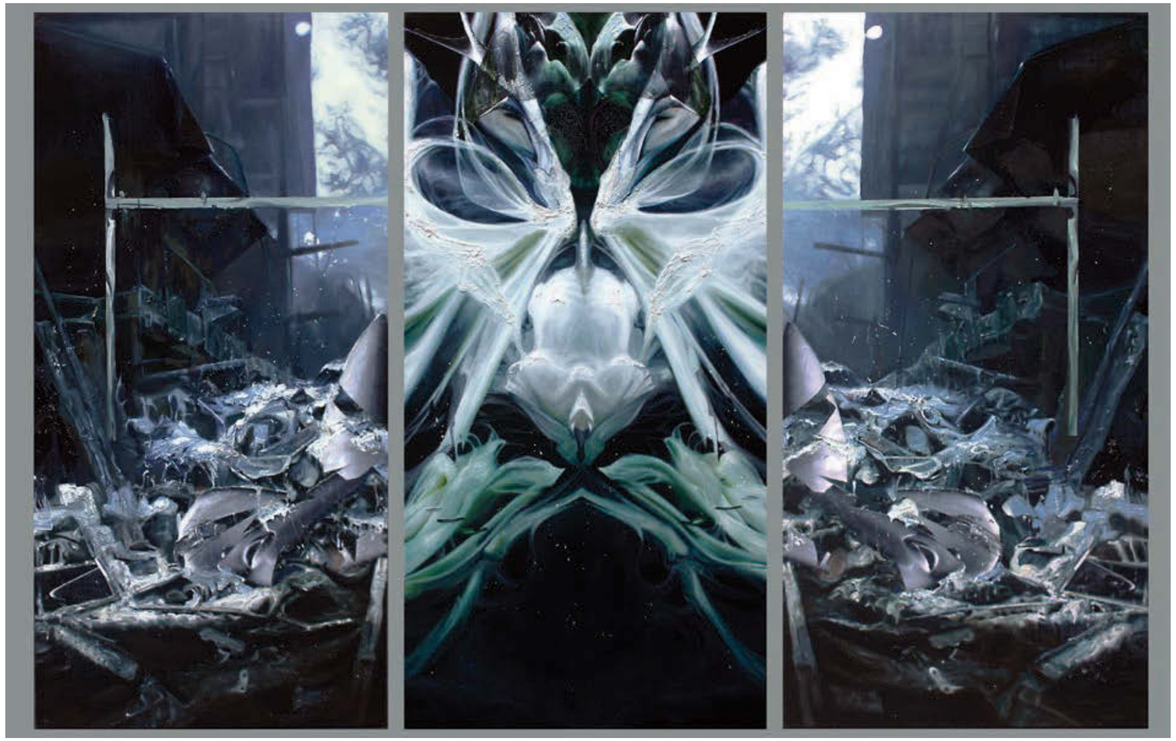
The two of you present a unique and dynamic combination given the difference in your professional and academic backgrounds. One side art and antiquities, the other in executive management and economics. What do you feel is particularly unique about your business and creative partnership?

Wendi Norris: Even though Raman and I have different professional and educational backgrounds, and even different styles, we are remarkably aligned in our vision and values for the gallery. There is a creative tension and productive energy we have when it comes to making decisions about hiring, programming, art fairs and all other major decisions we make. We both like healthy, even vigorous, debate and discourse. That lively process, maybe it comes from both of us having lived and worked as expats in Paris, lends to better outcomes—from both a creative and a business perspective. And, ultimately, we do what's best for the gallery, without compromising our core beliefs, and we are both on board with the final decisions. I have found that many people, Americans mainly, don't like to engage in true debate, for fear of offending or for a real distaste for it. Raman and I both thrive on it.

Raman Frey: When we began, I think many of our friends, supporters and artists all looked at our backgrounds and made a very logical assumption, one we initially internalized, that we had fully complementary skill sets and that the sum of our efforts would be far greater than the sum of our parts. To some degree this was true at the outset – I can't imagine having written our initial business plan or qualified for our first SBA loan without Wendi and I had worked already in galleries in New York, Paris and San Francisco.

As the business evolved, I believe we both learned enormously about contemporary art, from people in the art world, books, doing, as well as the historical artists we deal in and how to be a successful gallery on an international stage. Where we have ended I think is the happiest of all outcomes. I cannot match Wendi's ever improving business acumen, a set of proficiencies that she began to develop even before beginning her MBA at Georgetown, but I do believe I'm a much better, more focused and strategic businessman as a result of our partnership, of all that Wendi has taught me. When it comes to art, though I may wax a little intellectual, we both weigh in heavily on every artist we sign on, and every year we are fortunate enough to be more and more selective and our artist roster improves as a result. I now expect to be thrilled and awed by our artist's proposals as a matter of course, an aspiration for our gallery which is now a reality. Wendi has an incredible eye and an instinctive feel for how the parts will or won't work together. She is sensitive to the varying ways that artists operate and has a talent for encouraging and supporting our artists through times of success and occasional creative slumps. We curate, effectively I think, as a team with Melissa Bernabei on each exhibition, which usually lasts eight weeks. This process teaches us each to put our egos aside and throw out suggestions as to what makes the most sense. Melissa is savvy; she weighs in on which artists we might work with, how they might complement our roster and how an exhibition or art fair booth might most effectively be installed. Our artist roster has now evolved to a point where most of our gallery exhibitions are timed to coincide with our artists' exhibitions at museums, here in the U.S. and abroad.

Wendi and I were recently discussing what exactly it is we do and I tossed out the phrase "a meaning shop." These are some of the things we share, an obsession with improvement, great ambition, a love for working with brilliant artists across numerous media and an ability to draw our collectors attention to art's greatest rewards. For the museums and private collectors we place art with, this is less about money and more about the value and thoughtfulness of our experiences during our lives; hence, we're a shop that deals in meaning more than specific objects and more focused on fostering a kind of transformative alchemy of meanings than on making a buck.



Josh Hagler *"The Birth (in three acts)"* 2011. Digital 3D models, inkjet print on canvas, oil, silicone, collage on canvas with steel frames. 80 x 126 in. Courtesy of the artist and Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern.
Act 1: *"If you're not careful, you're going to ruin somebody's life, so why don't you think about what you're doing before you do it."* **Act 2**: *"I know I know you, I made you, and you don't disappoint me. I love you regardless."*
Act 3: *"I'm not condoning what I did, but I'm clearly here because of it. I'm sitting here. With you."*

You spent your first seven years or so in a much smaller space up off of Union Square and now are smack in the middle of the Yerba Buena Arts District. Besides having more space, what did you see as the major advantages of moving from your prior location on Geary St. to the new location in Yerba Buena? What do you feel you gained and lost in the move? Where there any significant programming changes that came from it? Any you foresee in the future?

Raman Frey: We now have 160 linear feet of frontage on two streets, and everything is on the ground level. So not only is our space actually physically bigger (5100 sq ft), but the impact when people walk in is much bigger. Viewers immediately see work from both programs - there's no more "I can't find the modern material". It was kind of sequestered before.

Wendi Norris: And I think from a personal programming perspective, having a space like this also enables us to attract stronger artists. But more importantly, it really inspires our roster of artists. When we were building the space out, Raman and I held a meeting with our architects, and about six of our artists came in and did a walkthrough of the space. The artists were giving feedback directly to the architects, which really changed the entire layout of our space. For us, every time we are planning a show for an artist, we now have this ability to say "ok, what is resonating with you? Are you liking the ceilings, the walls, the concrete, the materials. Pick your area and propose how you want to lay this out." That enables us to really work with our artists and each show can be very different from the last, which is fun for us.

Raman Frey: A key in recurring conversation with Gensler, our Architect, was two things: sight lines and flexibility; there being removable walls, another wall being on wheels. So now, we've been able to designate Galleries 1-5. The back gallery, Gallery 5 is essentially used as our New Media room, and that really came out of our conversation with the artists. Once you pull the curtain back there, you can have complete darkness so we can do multi channel videos. We had a project in March that had a four channel video by Josh Hagler, that was amazing in there.

Wendi Norris: That is a very concrete, tangible result in the space; the multi media room. We've shown two artists using video and have done really well finding good collectors for their video. That is something we could not have done in the old space.

In terms of helping to build private collections for people, obviously there needs to be a certain amount of capital present. Given the individual has resources, do you often find yourselves helping people build collections from the start or do you mostly work with more seasoned collectors?

Wendi Norris: Both. Always both.

Raman Frey: We hope to always be receptive to the first time buyer, and some of the people we work with have been doing this longer than I've been alive.

Wendi Norris: I think it's equally spread across different kinds of collectors. It could be anybody from the Rubells in Miami or the Hort's collection in NY; these are major collectors. We also have several local collectors, who's collections, their whole houses, (and now many are on the boards of local museums), have been built by us. We're also very magnanimous, we like to refer our clients to other galleries and we do it quite a bit. This last year, we've done a lot of big institutional sales.

Raman Frey: Yes, recently we've had a lot more institutional sales. For instance, I sold a

Wendi Norris and ***Raman Frey*** in Frey Norris Contemporary and Modern, San Francisco

piece to the Art Institute in Chicago, Wendi just placed a piece in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and we also placed work in the Spencer Art Museum at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence.

Do you feel like you have a different philosophical approach, whether you're working with an individual or with an organization or a foundation, as far as building a body of work for someone?

Raman Frey: I think there's a nice parallel in the sense that ideally both should be extremely thoughtful and should involve a lot of back and forth dialogue. But the acquisition process with institutions of course tends to be a lot more bureaucratic. It takes more time, everyone's got their procedures and you just kind of have to roll with the procedures.

Wendi Norris: And established collections, they already have their curatorial agenda 'baked'. First of all, for us, it involves finding what in our program already fits within their agenda. But then, it's also hopefully (and this is something we do pretty actively) getting them to expand their program to consider other things that we find to be valuable - as well as what fits [their collection]. There's a big local collector who buys a lot of video and installation work from around the world who bought from us this year. But introducing him to Australian artists - he has no Australian artists in his collection - has been a big deal, trying to get him to take that leap of faith next. So now, he is very curious and he has a curatorial team who look at stuff for him. A lot of times, we're dealing with a curatorial team of those big collections. For me, personally, I think there is something so gratifying about finding a home for a piece of art, like a match maker. And sometimes I get kind of emotional about it, I just had this beautiful sculpture by Laurel Roth that was purchased and went to a fantastic collection so I couldn't be happier. But I'm also sad to say goodbye, as I wont see it until I go to Portland and visit the collection.

What kind of personal satisfaction does it give you to help build collections, from a curatorial perspective? What does it mean for you to connect specific works of art with specific connoisseurs who will truly appreciate that individual work or group of works?

Wendi Norris: It makes my day - it's the best thing ever.

Julio Cesar Morales, *"Contrabando"*. 2011. Single channel projection on HD video, 15 minutes, Edition of 3. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern.

Raman Frey: We have this playground. This is where Wendi and I get to play. It's a land of constant shifting, project to project, interpretive possibilities. So every day has become something new, magic and wonderful. No one has described that better for me than (critic) Jerry Saltz - he talks about what it's like to have a gallery functioning from a very sincere place where your imagination is engaged, your intellect is engaged, you're emotionally engaged and then the money can happen after that. So, I think a great art collection is very similar. Collectors will come to you, and the reason they have a lot of excess wealth or can afford to collect art is because they've been very hard working and they have been very focused on wealth generation. And so, it's a little bit of a leap when they first start to collect art, not to see art from the perspective of a strict financial investment. Inevitably you can kind of shift, and I think most collectors do, because they're thoughtful and open to the art, you shift your values from "will I see a financial return from this object" to "when I go in to my house, my imagination is stimulated". My paradigms have shifted and when I see things that are new or unfamiliar instead of me trying to pin them down and say "I've got the definitive interpretation" or "this has this specific utilitarian purpose". I can look at those things, hold all of those possible meanings in a nice place of suspension and find that very stimulating. It's at least a source for conversations.

Wendi Norris: I guess for me on an emotional level, there's no greater satisfaction than to pick up the phone and call one of our artists and tell them "I just sold your centerpiece of the show" to a major museum institution, or to the CEO of Nike or to the Rubells, or to a lovely young couple that just got married and this is their wedding present to themselves. It doesn't matter. We like to bring the collectors to meet the artists because it makes it personal for them. But when that can't happen, and a lot of times it can't, I like to bring the collector and the reaction to the artist. Our artists are working in isolation most of the time and all of our artists are full time. None of them are lazy. They are industrious and we have the utmost respect for each and every one of them. It's a tough choice to be an artist and I feel that for them everyday and when we can make their collection and their careers more institutionalized, legitimized, whatever, provide them a livelihood - that's what we're in it for.

I feel you have the most globally sophisticated roster and program of any gallery in the Bay Area. Not simply just by virtue of representing artists from five continents, but by your participation in art fairs around the world. For those of us who don't get to travel to the fairs in places like Dubai, give us a little insight into what collectors in a couple of far away locations are after and what it's like culturally from a collector's perspective

Raman Frey: Nobody in Dubai has a small house.

Wendi Norris: Dubai is our favorite fair to do. The people are so warm and lovely. Hong Kong and Dubai are very similar. Raman and I have spent many years in both markets, so we have a good grasp for it. They are both epicenters of their regions, so in Dubai, you have everyone from the entire region attending. The culture is very warm and loving and considerate and so most of the clients there like to work with art consultants if they're just starting out because they are trying to be really thoughtful and deliberate about their collection. It's funny, because they will say to us "let me go think about this and I will get back to you tomorrow" and they actually call or come in the next day. There's no pretense in what they're doing. When we first went there four years ago, we had no idea what to expect in terms of the gender issues, and to be honest, the billions of dollars of discretionary income in that region is primarily in the hands of the women. Women are making the decisions in art. There was just an article in Modern Painters, I believe, that of the top ten "influential people" in the art world, the number one person is a Shiekha of that region, who is one of our biggest clients. She is a lovely person and very supportive. When I am in Dubai and I'm not installing work, they don't even let your feet hit the ground; they are so hospitable. So no matter what preconceived notions we have as Americans of that part of the world, Raman and I have experienced overwhelming love and acceptance.

Raman Frey: Also, another misconception about Dubai is that it is an 'Arab' place. And it was really a surprise to me - I've heard numbers from anywhere from eight to twenty percent of the population there is actually (Emirati) the other eighty to ninety percent of the people there are from every point on the planet. It's super cosmopolitan and in some ways, it's the most cosmopolitan place I've been. We were there last time, and I had jet lag, so I go up to the rooftop bar. I walk in, there's twenty people in the bar, and I count seven different languages among those twenty people. There's not a lot of places like that in the world outside of say, Honk Kong or Geneva. And because the cultural institutions there are still so nascent, and these people are so cosmopolitan, I think there's a real strong thirst there for cultural conversation, for cultural exposure, which has been wonderful for us.

Wendi Norris: Hong Kong has been quite different for us. The Hong Kong fair we've been doing for years was purchased by Basel. So now it is Hong Kong Basel. We knew a couple of years ago when we were staring right across from our booth into Larry Gagosian's booth, it was only a matter of time [before it got too big].

Raman Frey: We used to joke about being able to sell something to someone in Azerbaijan; I don't think I could even locate Azerbaijan on a map. I have a vague idea, like there is an American military base there, I think they have a lot of natural gas. Through the fair in Dubai we met and have this ongoing dialogue with a consulting firm actually based out of Vancouver, and finally we did a deal for a whole bunch of art in an amazing hotel. This will be in the middle of downtown Baku, Azerbaijan. I'm pretty excited to go there and meet all of these people and take a little cruise on the Caspian Sea.

Wendi Norris: No matter where you go in the world, art is distinctive in that it is such a personal thing we're doing. For instance, if I were buying an expensive piece of jewelry, I don't let someone into my home necessarily. The majority of the time, we're in someone's home, seeing where they live and you become friends with these people no matter where they are in the world or how similar or alike you are; it's a highly personal thing. I feel like the collectors we deal with, we have a lot in common with them, no matter where they're from, and those differences make it interesting.

Do you have any other additional curatorial or large scale projects in the works soon?

Raman Frey: 2012 is packed - we've got nine exhibitions coming up – eight contemporary, one modern.

Wendi Norris: And several of them are coordinated with museum shows where the artists are. One of the biggest things we've done to date was the Remedios Varo show in January. She is one of our modern artists; she passed away in '63. Born in Spain but lived in Mexico. This was her first gallery exhibition in fifty years, the last was 1962, the year preceding her death. So to assemble these rare works, there will be fifteen in the show, plus a bunch of ephemera. We also produced a sixty page catalogue and held a round table at YBCA with panelists from the New York Times, LACMA, and the Museum of Modern Art Mexico City. We are really excited with our 2012 calendar, as it will be our best yet in terms of our program. It's balanced between locally based artists and international artists as well.

What significant debuts can we look out for in 2012 from Frey Norris?

Raman Frey: In March we had Sherin Guirguis who is Egyptian, and her work is really rooted in what's been happening with the political clashes at Tahrir Square in Cairo.

Wendi Norris: We just placed her work in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and several of the world's top collections. She was also in the California Biennial.

Raman Frey: Running concurrently was Josh Hagler's show which was unbelievable; dealing with the foundations of the human predicament and psychology. He created an installation, where you walked through a charred, relief sculpture wall and you walked through it into the four channel video. Then you have a chorus of these people, these evangelists, with vocals overlapping, sometimes taking turns speaking..

Wendi Norris: He'd been working on this for years with a team of six digital animators. And his triptych, "The Birth" is one of the best contemporary paintings I've seen.

Wendi Norris: In May, we have the American debut for Indian artist Jagannath Panda alongside a show for Japanese artist Tomokazu Matsuyama. Both shows coincide with their museum activities. Matsu has a solo exhibition at the Katzen Museum in Washington, DC and Jagannath is a major contributor to the Asian Art Museum's "Phantom of Asia" exhibition.

Raman Frey: Wendi is a founding member of the Asian Contemporary Arts Consortium and has been very involved with all contemporary Asian efforts, institutional and programmatic, in the Bay Area. We clearly wanted to support these activities, it reflects what we have been championing all along. After I first met Jagannath while scouting artists in India three years ago, we felt this timing was idyllic.

Wendi Norris: It is truly rewarding to see our collective efforts paying off for our artists, our community and our gallery in such a way.

"It's a land of constant shifting, project to project, interpretive possibilities....No one has described that better for me than (critic) Jerry Saltz - he talks about what it's like to have a gallery functioning from a very sincere place where your imagination is engaged, your intellect is engaged, you're emotionally engaged and then the money can happen after that."

-Raman Frey

Laurel Roth *"Regalia"* . Mixed media including fake fingernails, nail polish, barrettes, false eyelashes, jewelry, walnut, swarovski crystal. 2011.63 x 40 x 22 in.
Courtesy Frey Norris Contemporary and Modern

Michael Joo

Interviewed by Korakrit Arunanondchai

Michael Joo, *"Headless"*, 2000. Urethane foam, pigment, vinyl plastic, styrene plastic, urethane plastic, stainless steel wire, neodymium magnets, 66 x 336 x 216 in. Courtesy of the artist and Sonje Museum, Kyungju, Korea.

Michael Joo is a rare artist who's practice intersects multiple disciplines from both the core and periphery of art history's framework. His body of work is often difficult to sum up due to its vastness. For the past two years, Michael has been a mentor to me, and has opened the door to artistic discourse during our many studio visits. Today we will be talking about his work.

So when you entered the Yale MFA program – you knew you wanted to be an artist for a living. When did you start there again?
I started in '89.

I saw "The Tripod".
Oh yeah, way back. That was undergraduate.

And "The Dog".
Yeah, I was doing a lot of things with prosthetics and [calories] back then.

So who were you looking at? I just feel like back then people were really confused? Because your work is very scientific, you know?
I was looking at artists like Hans Haacke, or Robert Rauschenberg who was doing collaborations with Billy Klüver in Sweden and Experiments in Art and Technology; 1960's Haacke works involving environmental concerns, water purification pieces, which are amazing. I was also looking at Barry Le Va, and Oyvind Fahlstrom, mostly his paintings in the 60s, some of his installations… Jana Sterbak, Rebecca Horn.

Let's talk about your art practices because from then to now, your body of work is just so wide. I feel like you have four or five things developing at once and they just kind of get pushed forward. Let's start with the installation "Yellow, Yellower, Yellowest". The piece contains three beakers of yellow liquid, labeled as the urine of Ghengis Khan, Benedict Arnold and you – the Artist.
One of the themes in my work I'm concerned with is the notion of transformation, and how we perceive that transformation; in a very loose way it relates to our preconceptions about spirituality, the S-word… terms like that—it's like the impossibility of the idea of setting out to be subversive. As soon as you utter the word, it's gone. In "Yellow, Yellower, Yellowest," I was interested in playing with the meaning of the color yellow. I had taken color theory classes

Michael Joo, *"Yellow, Yellower, Yellowest"*. 1992. Engraved aluminum shelf, glass beakers, urine, preservative, vinyl. 156 x 96 x 48 inches. Photograph by Tim Lloyd. Courtesy of the artist.

Michael Joo, *"Smokescreen"*, 1996. Video Projector, Vinyl. Dimensions Variable. Courtesy of the artist.

that had traumatized me. The repetition of trying to reproduce color… and so I worked with this color yellow for awhile and tried to extend some of its meaning. In this piece I was just basically asking, could you get to the root or essence of that color in a more immediate way? So I pissed in three different beakers at three different times of the day. I thought that would be my scientific control, the time of day, and then I let it evaporate to crystals to see what happened to the color. The samples that they denote were listed as Genghis Khan, Benedict Arnold and Michael Joo -- in that order. I thought that it could be seen as another way of determining through language how the color yellow was assigned to identities. The tray that they sat on, engraved, Yellow, Yellower and Yellowest, to throw in the idea of value, or hierarchy. It smelled very bad.

This was left in the gallery?
It was just left to evaporate over time.

It's interesting, like coming into a laboratory—starting with something pretty out there, like spirituality, then incorporating a poetic internal thinking, and in the end the final product. I'd actually like to talk about "Salt Transfer Cycle". That seems like a really important piece.
There's a lot to be read in between the lines of information. Scientific language can be precise and exact, and reek of authority, but can also be extended to comical proportions with, say, ingredient listings. I was really obsessed with the concrete poetry, for instance, on the back of a candy bar - something with all of its artificial ingredients, none of which you really knew, but was something named, something verifiable. If you're standing in line at the checkout counter reading ingredient and caloric information, it could be seen as a tiny moment of alternate reality - when you read all this information and you try to project what you're going to do with all that stuff, what it means to you, there's a little hidden meaning inside of that moment, too.

It goes kind of unnoticed.
Yeah, I think we get completely conditioned to ignore that part of day-to-day information upload.

Do you think this is how science and information works, the way it parallels modernism, as a metaphor for truth? These are all the ingredients, this is truth, but in the end it's still not understood. Even in truth – it's a lie, it misrepresents itself as something accessible or supposedly useful: the label.
Definitely, but it seems authoritative. You don't always know whether science and "information" are one and the same. But science is used typically as the language of authority, coated in specialized knowledge and fields of study. It has naming in its core, identifying and naming.

With "Salt Transfer Cycle", you're talking about performance. As an Asian man, using yourself within the performance draws questions of identity and how it can be perceived as "ready-made."
Yeah, that's a great point. I like you saying that, that an identity could be "ready-made", that identity is already made based on physical appearance. This long-haired Asian guy.

Because always, it's weird, in the Western World an Asian man using his body to do a performance is different—there's a difference in that, the cultural and political baggage that comes with it.
That was definitely a concern of mine, confusing that identity and its complexities. Playing with assumptions of essentialism.

Do you want to unpack for us the role your identity plays in terms of your body of work?
I think that it's related to the difference between adaptation and assimilation, or intuition and instinct. I will set up conditions or parameters for encounter and then go along with them and react to the set-up. The body's reaction to these new conditions might be seen as analogous to how our perceptions of identity are continually in flux. In "Salt Transfer Cycle" I wanted this Asian protagonist to go from east to west by going west rather than going towards the east. So I started in Chinatown, which I thought was appropriate, and had dumped 2,000 pounds of MSG into my studio with cranes and such. Then I did a performance of swimming through the MSG.

So there was an audience?
No, it was just the camera people. It wasn't so important to me that it was open to an audience at the time. I knew that it was going to be documented, and in a way the fact of doing it was enough—the one take was part of the whole point of it. It wasn't an endurance test, but it had to do with completion of a task, I guess. And then seeing what it looked like.

I understand—that much MSG, does it do something to your body when you're swimming in it?
It's always debated, but I'm pretty allergic to it and I grew up with it in the household all the time. After the performance, there was a cloud of broken MSG crystal floating in the air, and I had fallen down, I think, that day and gotten a cut, so I was getting it in my blood. Yeah, it definitely made me feel a bit dizzy…

At which point did you realize that you had to address the fact that you're Asian in your work?
That was something I was very conscious of from the beginning. That's why I thought of putting the image of myself back into the work, even though I had done other live performances for closed circuit. I had done installations that were based upon the residue of a lot of activity, but I still wouldn't feature my own image which I felt was adversely affecting the perceptions of the work itself.

Because of the label: Korean-American?
Sure, yeah. And that knowledge of it, even if it wasn't said.

But I feel like you can't escape it, right? Your work is always going to come with a label.
Sure, but you can avoid it to some extent. And at the time I was taking advantage of some of it: Pan-Asian stereotypes. I grew up as a relatively isolated member of that "group" in the Midwest, as a kid with very few role models in popular culture, so I grew up kind of obsessed with rejecting all those things. When I did my first show in '92 and work before that, through grad school, occasionally it would touch or play upon things I was exposed to, which had a lot to do with some of the naming, or shallowness of naming in the Pan-Asian sphere. So when I did this piece, it was very much about giving people what they were asking for. It was putting

Michael Joo. *"Mongoloid-Version B-29 (Miss Megook Painting #1)"*
1993-2003. Aluminum aircraft fuselage, stainless steel, enamel paint, urethane varnish. 88 x 72 x 24 in. Photograph by Tom Powel Imaging. Courtesy of the artist.

this primal Asian character, naked and everything, right out in front of you. And I don't think I really thought about it too much at the time, but my hair happened to be very long, so there was a bit of a slippage between identities, whether it was indigenous—people thought I was Native American, or whatever it might have been. That kind of slippage interested me too. It's grossly generalizing based upon its physical nature.

This concept of slippage is interesting. The body as an image – the crossovers between gender, race and identity. Aspects of the body itself perceived as labels for identification.
I was dealing a lot with the actions and ramifications of making sculpture, and thinking about what happened along the route from conceptualizing an artwork, initiating the process of its development, and what happens before it becomes something, or in a way, what's in between concept and process, and what happens before it gets to residue. In the case of this particular work, it was a question of what happened with calories and energy expended during its making. What happened to what was invisible. Salt was used as a stand-in for energy, or sweat, and MSG was the artifice. In the three parts of the video I swam through a ton of MSG in my studio in Chinatown, ran across the Salt Flats in Utah, accumulating salt on my body as the residue of the activity. Finally, I waited on a hillside in South Korea as a human salt lick for local elk. I thought I would enact a transformation of artifice (or concept) in the studio, and follow that idea's gradual transformation into salt that was licked off of my body by animals; into something that was so real, it got into the blood stream of the elk and fabric of reality.

Was this the point when the natural world came into your work?
No, it had come up often before, but this was the most direct instance. I still thought of the natural world as a 24 hour factory. A foil for thoughts on production and manufacturing; producing ready-made artifacts like antlers continually.

So is the elk a ready-made or is the cycle that the elk fits into a ready-made?
A bit of both perhaps. I think that the cycle that the elk undergoes from mating impulse to rutting to the dropping of the antlers might be seen as a kind of manufacturing cycle.

So it's almost like Warhol using the soup can; the can representing the final product of an industrial process. When objects are assembled and placed, each one contains its own cycle. Does that make sense? When you pull in the elk's antlers, that's the icon, the image as a representative of the cycle. And this piece is just wow too, spanning from Utah to Korea.
The middle point of that, after swimming through 2,000 pounds of MSG, was to get to a place where it was very real - where the MSG, the artificial flavor enhancer became this bed of pure geologically produced salt. So I went to the salt beds of Utah and found by coordinates the place where they actually raced the speed record cars from the 70s and I ran along that path, parodying evolution. Something that was really linear, but linear in the way that it was futilely cyclical, like land-speed record runs, expending all this energy to set a record that would only stand to be broken. Those perversions of cyclical and linear elements are something I think of as a play between Western and Eastern motifs.

I want to talk now about "Mongoloid Version B-29 (Miss Megook Paintings #1 and #2)", because it kind of connects your bodies.
It's still a continuation of that group of work. I was putting myself, my image, back in the work, and trying to address different perceptions about reality. "Salt Transfer Cycle", I think, was concerned with present tense. We're going to take this salt off my body and put it in their blood stream, you know, and you can shit and piss it out, or sweat it out. It was a metaphor for reality. In "Miss Megook…", I wanted to work with something that dealt with the past to distort reality. I started collecting parts from airplanes that flew over Korea or China during the Korean War; that shared the same air-space, and in effect the same social, political, and historical space as my parents.

So I went to the desert in Arizona and started combing some of the airplane graveyards and hooked up with this old Air Force fellow who let me cut out old parts of old cargo planes that flew over Korea in the war. I was interested in this particular plane called "Miss-Megook", which would literally mean "miss me gook", aimed at the North Koreans or Chinese, you know, Miss This Plane. So it was kind of a derogatory challenge, and then in a way, I liked the confusion that "megook" in Korean means "American." So that kind of play, is a fairly conscious Duchampian gesture. I was also interested that an image was used to give the plane identity.

Right. "Salt Transfer Cycle" was specific, but it still kind of passes the parallel, the human cycle. Then "Miss Megook" is going further into a specific "event," it happened and it's extremely political. Really like, addressing a political aspect of history and playing with that, as you did in "Smokescreen." Would you like to talk about that?
Many of my works are concerned with the idea of fragmentation and reunification, or a kind of reassembly or reconstruction. "Smokescreen" is a video work that I shot at the immigration and naturalization building at the World Trade Towers in the early 90s. I shot the flag from behind, from the backside and then re-projected it through smoke. I thought that the artificial smoke that made an extrusion of the video projection light would be a way of bringing together a two-dimensional icon and three-dimensional reality and space.

So you were writing the names with a laser in between that space?
That's right, I was writing the names of all the countries I could remember that the US was involved with commercially or militarily. It was basically every country I could remember, and I was writing it with a laser pen and watching out simultaneously for guards.

So now let's talk about some earlier work like "Headless (Mfg. Portrait)", your use of Buddha and your relationship with Buddhism. I think it comes up in a few pieces, your use of the Buddha sculpture.
I grew up in a household with both Christian and traditional Korean Buddhist practices. The Buddhist was eventually pushed out and only remained as books and texts. Buddhism occupied a space for me that was kind of esoteric and intellectual. I found out more about it in texts because it wasn't so much in practice. My mother was very Christian. At the time we used to have a lot of Korean practices, ancestor worship and such things, as well as some practices that were a direct offshoot of Buddhism. But the temples in the house all disappeared over time. Shadows of some kind of past. It seemed real. It seemed about space. Christianity pushed Buddhism out, so it seemed to be something that was lost.

You're talking about the "Bodi Obfuscatus", so the camera abstraction, you're saying it's lost, is that action to reinvestigate the loss?
The Buddhist iconography for me in any of the sculptures that I use, they're always headless. They're always more like the leftovers of Angkor Wat, and I always see them as sculpture that's been desecrated. So there's something that signals incompletion, as well as a sort of misleading stereotypical profile of an identity. Because it looks like the Buddha, but it's just a body, no face and there's no head. The position of the body of Buddha often means something, but really the visage, as far as that it's sculpture, means almost everything. So it's always missing to me and replaced with something technological, American, or western, rather.

Right, "Headless."
Yeah, I mean "Headless (Mfg. Portrait)", they were 64 casts of Nerf-foam bodies sculpted to look like those of a seated Buddha figure and hand-colored with actual terracotta mixed with pigment. Then I inserted neodymium magnets into the bodies and heads, keeping these toy heads from 100 years of American manufacturing suspended over the bodies. So those things are an identity that was designed in America, made in Asia and brought back to America over a hundred years of time. I think of the collection of heads as a self-portrait of manufacturing.

It's interesting that the heads of the original Buddha usually come here.
Yeah, as art artifacts bearing testimony to colonial times. The bodies are left behind.

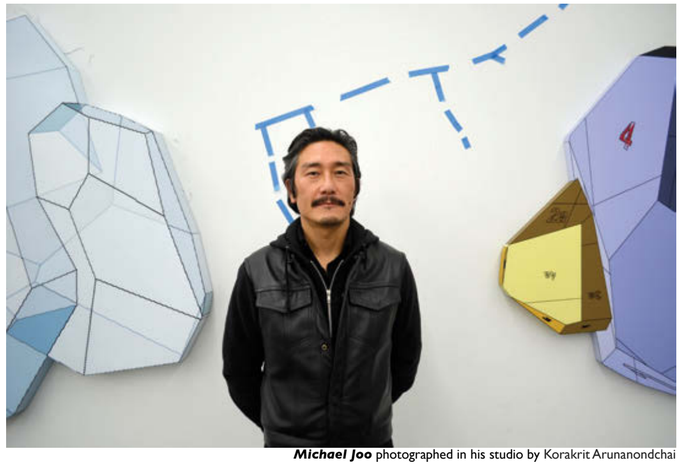
Lets talk about what the sculpture "God II" relates to—does it relate to "Circannual Rhythm (Pibloktok)", the piece you did at the List Visual Arts Center at MIT?
"God II" is a sculpture cast in resin that was clothed in a mix of my father's clothes and used clothing given to me by Inupiaq hunter friends. The sculpture is placed on a super-refrigerated

Michael Joo.
"Visible". 1999-2000.
Urethane, nylon, plastic, glass, walnut, patinated steel.
60 x 48 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist and Public Art Magazine, Seoul, Korea.

base that transforms the viewers' breath, perspiration etc., into a mass of ice that slowly envelops and obliterates the figure. I guess it could relate to "Circannual Rhythm" if you see it as a work that questions the center… That piece is a three channel video, with each channel made up of three individual frames, all projected in a fifty foot long composite of images. So set of nine, so three sets of three, and each of these veins, to me, deal with different perceptions of time and space. The first part, which is the central part, depicts a journey north along the Dalton Highway in Alaska, following the Trans-Alaska pipeline. I liked the idea of walking this roadway up to the north where the land is actually disappearing and which becomes a sort of seasonal landscape of ice. I thought of it as strangely parallel to transformation over time of organic matter to fossil fuel, and was further interested in the small amount of human energy or calories you'd expend walking against the flow of some millions of years' worth of fossil fuel. So transformation is another theme common to both works. In other parts of "Circannual Rhythm", I outfitted a taxidermied caribou sculpture with infrared cameras in its body cavity, placed it in the Denali Park wilderness and videotaped from the sculpture's perspective from a quarter mile away for ten days. A final aspect of the work involved an Inupiaq whale hunter having a seizure on the frozen edge of the Arctic Ocean.

I guess I'm interested in this piece because it seems like a progression or related to the "Salt Transfer" piece, and also I was trying to relate it to "God II." Was it in the same show?
Yeah, it was. But I had made "God II" previously, actually. I had made "God II" before that. But at the time I had been exploring Alaska.

Your work has been called "hermetic philosophy"? That's an interesting phrase. I don't know if I totally agree with that. Is it too much for one to assume it's "hermetic"?
If by hermetic you mean, possessed of its own internal logic, then it might apply. But not in an obtuse or inaccessible way. Understanding is a bit overrated because sometimes it means encapsulating and being categorized. I don't know if that's always the right thing. The hermetic practice implies kind of hieroglyphic signs, and fragments, parts of a campfire to try to put together the story of how those bones got there. More recently I have trained fifty live surveillance cameras on the visage of a 3rd Century BC statue of the Buddha, dispersing the fragmented images throughout hundreds of mirrors and monitors surrounding the space. I have also been casting molds of sculptures as the final work, and destroying the originals or trying to replicate the gestural paintings made by protestors onto police riot shields during clashes over economic policies. They deal with the idea of simultaneity. Nothing is hidden in these works. They are the shadows of their former selves and selves to be. The evidence and logic is contained within them and right in front of you.



Michael Joo photographed in his studio by Korakrit Arunanondchai

"I think that it [Identity] related to the difference between adaptation and assimilation, or intuition and instinct. I will set up conditions or parameters for encounter and then go along with them and react to the set-up. The body's reaction to these new conditions might be seen as analogous to how our perceptions of identity are continually in flux."

Genesis BREYER P-ORRIDGE

Interviewed by Dean Dempsey

Breyer P-Orridge
"Red Chair Posed", 2008
C-print mounted on Plexiglas
56.5 x 72 inches
Edition of 3
Courtesy of the artists and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

She arrives about an hour late, dressed in all black except for a denim cut-off jacket and a walking cane that seemed more likely to be used in poking away small children than for support. Genesis Breyer P-Orridge has platinum blond hair and gold teeth, wearing a small pin on her vest that reads "Not Every Ejaculation Deserves a Name". She strikes me as spectacular, the perfect cocktail of wit, horror and charm - the sort of stranger I'd cozy up beside in a nameless back alley bar for a chance at conversation.

Credited as the pioneer of the Industrial music genre, Genesis, now 62, is widely known for fronting the bands Throbbing Gristle and later Psychic TV, which is still active. Since the late 1960's, Genesis has been musically and artistically exploring subjects of sex, murder and the occult. Then Neil Andrew Megson, she first formed COUM Transmissions after dropping out of school and taking a fancy instead to anarchic counter culture (or dope and dreams as I prefer to imagine).The artist collectives were called "wreckers of civilization" by members of the British government and narrowly avoided jail time for creating pornographic mail-art of Queen Elizabeth. What a treat!

"Breyer P-Orridge I'm Mortality" is the enduring-duo's second solo show at Invisible Exports, a space focused on contemporary and avant-garde artists at their modest, dumbbell shaped gallery on the Lower East Side. They are small but mighty, and have managed to whip up a dynamic exhibition program and just last year even graced us all with art by the beloved Prince of Puke (not Genesis, silly, she'd be more like the Bride of Blood, or the Duchess of Demons), John Waters. In this exhibition, Genesis Breyer P-Orridge focuses on her body, which includes the multiple surgeries she and her late wife Lady Jaye underwent to look like one another, or perhaps meet halfway in a new pandrogynous form.

Genesis ' work has been exhibited at The Tate Britain, the ICA and Serpentine Gallery in London, the ICA Philadelphia, the Musee D'Art Modern in Paris, among various other international museum and art spaces.The Breyer P-Orridge story is now a motion picture, The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye directed by Marie Lozier, currently released in theatres globally.

As I interview her, Genesis seems straddled between universes and times. It's sometimes unclear who, when or where she's talking about. She incessantly speaks as "we", or the Breyer P-Orridge that is what her now deceased partner in crime and love Lady Jaye called the "separate person who is both of us. Both of us are in all of our art.That third being, Breyer P-Orridge, is always present." In Genesis' eyes, the collaboration hasn't ended, but simply, the collaborator has "dropped her body" five years ago at age thirty eight.

DEAN DEMPSEY: How has it felt putting together this exhibition?

GENESIS BREYER P-ORRIDGE: This particular exhibition was probably one of the most pure we've managed to do. And the fact that it was all lying around sort of explains our methodology of working which is a form of unconscious collage, we didn't pick all the objects with the idea of making art. We had them because of some intuition that they had a power or an influence that we were curious about and that assembled themselves. It's a jigsaw of something that's both about pandrogyny and the various elements that are involved, blood, hair, skin, that contain DNA which is the ultimate recording that goes back to the slim mold. We did the whole exhibition with almost no mental thinking at all, everything just flipped in my head like a finished piece.

DD: With your wife and artistic collaborator having passed away, how does the performative element and transcendence of gender change?

GBPO: It's never been about gender, that's a mistake people make. There's obviously a relationship with the idea of gender, but for us the whole point was to erase gender all together and create a new being that was neither male nor female but a combination of the two. We believe the evidence is there: that there is a possibility to maintain a sense of self after psychical death and even reincarnate and return here if you wish. But it's the letting go of Western rational linear concept. We've had too many experiences that suggest anything is possible. There's no proof that we're here. We could be going through the same lifetime over and over again, until we wake up.

DD: Can you articulate a bit more the creation of a new being that is the combination of both male and female?

GBPO: Pandrogyny for us began as a personal quest for ourselves to blend and merge as much as possible. The surgeries and the ways of wearing each other's cloths and so on were just to keep us focused on the task of becoming each other. But of course we believe any binary system, male/female, black/white, Republican/Democrat, Communist/Socialist, etc., are all traps holding the world back. It allows those that enjoy power and violence for its own sake to manipulate and control other people; because once you have the either/or you can have the other, that's different and can be blamed and scapegoated. And that can give a sense of unity to one group and a sense of an enemy at the same time. Which creates wars, violence, greed. For us it's also a sociopolitical concept, saying as human beings we have to let go of ideas of either/or, of nationalities and so on, and think of the human species as being one organism.

DD: Let's talk specifically about this show, "Breyer P-Orridge | I'm Mortality". Where shall we begin?

GBPO: How about here with this video, it's the first one that started it all off.
It's called "Blood Sacrifice," it was a gift to me about a year after Lady Jaye and I got together, hers is the one on the left with her face on it. It's a Chanel N°5 bottle and she filled it with her own blood. And I thought it was pretty fucking fabulous. I kept it, put it in the fridge and a year later I gave her a bottle twice as big as a sort of "anything you can do I can do better!" gesture and we just stored them. One way or another the bigger bottle with my blood in it ended up in the freezer and of course the blood froze like ice and expanded, shattering part of the bottle but not falling apart. And one night it popped in my head the image of the two placed side by side, her bottle of blood on one side and my broken one opposite to thaw back

Genesis Breyer P-Orridge and Lady Jaye
"Love Chair", 2005. C-Print.
Photograph by Laura Leber

"People should stop trying to fit in and rather celebrate difference, and celebrate new options and push them further. Don't be afraid to go for the things you really believe in. And that's what we've always done."

to room temperature. So, we decided to make a video of it and got lucky. The background is a Tibetan pray scarf that was blessed by the second in command to the Dalai Lama. When the Dalai Lama has a spiritual question and is not sure, he returns to the second in command and seeks advice. We wanted a white background and measured the table surface with a level to make sure it was totally flat, and put the two bottles there and let the room warm up and photograph every one or two seconds, and it took about ninty minutes for it to melt and spread. But what fascinates me is when you watch the video the blood from my bottle goes against the laws of physics and spreads across toward her bottle when it should spread evenly in a circle. Here are the layers from that original Tibetan pray scarf.

DD: Why the reoccurrence of the number 23?

GBPO: Well it was my friend William S. Burroughs who turned me on to the number 23 in the 1970's. He was keeping journals and doing collages on every page for decades and started to notice the number 23 cropped up a lot in headlines, "23 Killed in Hotel Fire", "23 Killed when Plane Crashes" and so on. And once he started to keep track of the number 23, it kept coming up more than seemed mathematically probable. He would go somewhere and get room 23, get a bill and it would be $23. We started to use it mainly for things in the universe we would think have more to do with synchronicity, or what myself and Lady Jaye call the "Of Course Factor". "Of course we got room 23, of course we got table 23." Like after the Brion Gysin show at the New Museum we all went for dinner at this Chinese restaurant and got table 23 as we were discussing the whole thing. "Of course it is!" For us it's a friendly number. We don't really have any long theory about it, we just accept it. If you like the magical inexplicable part of the universe, as to why it takes 23 seconds for blood to go around the body for example. This show is very much about alchemy.

DD: Where did you get the inspiration for this sculptural piece?

GBPO: We went to Katmandu in November for a month's rest and I ended up in the intensive care unit. I was getting these really nasty pains in my belly and couldn't even walk. We've had a lot of pain before from art performances and surgeries and such, but this was the worst. We were pretty much delirious but they put me in their ICU and the doctor, who was an American, said "If you hadn't come in now you'd be dead by tomorrow." The doctor asked, "What does the pain feel like?" Out of the blue without considering it we responded "It's like a part crab, part centipede is inside me and it's trying to eat its way out." "Well look at these x-rays" he said. "Your gallbladder is twice its normal size and these white areas here are where part of you has been eaten away by something."

I left the hospital and bought all orange, which is the holy healing color in Nepal. I got various Nagar healing talismans and walking sticks from a shop I know. The Nagar of this very extreme Shiva sect do a lot of hashish and really extreme physical things. And Nagar is the name of the cobra, which is depicted all around the neck and head of Shiva for protection. A week later we went back to the hospital for a checkup and the doctor said, "Well this is very strange, look at these x-rays. Your gallbladder is completely normal, there's nothing there anymore." So for whatever reason it went away. The Nagar live on charity and they carry around these small begging tins which are the same proportions as this piece but only about 9 inches high. We decided to make a giant begging tin, and we also on an impulse bought a cobra door handle. It occurred to us the cobra is meant to be living in the stand, so that's why its tale is there, it's protecting the whole piece. Inside is a reference to the multi-layered Hindu deities. The orange flowers are what are used for healing rituals.

Immortality is rational/irrational. Where does logic stop and magic begin? And how little we in the West know and how much we've missed because we tend to stay on the rational, the real. The holographic version of perception makes more sense to us, and this is a holographic reference to that.

DD: How about your scroll pieces, they look like secret languages.

GBPO: Another time we were in the hospital a friend came to see me and there was this one nurse who was really bad at drawing blood and giving me injections, we'd call her the vampire. The vampire kept making a big mess with blood everywhere, so I used a roll of toilet paper to dab off the blood each time, and that's where these two scrolls came from. We thought

they looked like pictographs, just really amazing. And with this show being so near Chinatown there are those red and gold images with calligraphy in them for good luck and basically spells, which look a bit like these.

DD: Not that you are a hoarder, but what are the discards in "Alchemical Wedding"?

GBPO: Well, one day Lady Jaye came home with these two big wooden carved boxes, one for us each, to keep our hair and finger nails and toe nails and skin in so nobody could curse us or damage us or wish us harm, so these contents are taken from that. The glass on the right contains all of Lady Jaye's hair, toe nails, skin, even pubic hair. And the one on the left contains the same but of mine, and the middle glass is both, mixed together. And that's the "Alchemical Wedding". It references the hidden but also the obvious, and of course there is this whole thing with pandrogyny where we propose that eventually the human species is at a point where it can choose to continue to evolve or remain in its larva state, which we see the binary male/female state to be. And so this represents the male and the female combined into perfection, because most mystical traditions say that whatever supreme power there might be has to contain everything, which is male and female. Hence the divine hermaphrodite in all the alchemical texts. It also has a nice, sort of Duchampian look to it as well.

DD: I imagine the keys to that weird haunted house in *Tails from the Crypt* look like these, what are they really?

GBPO: They are called "Spiral (Thee Source)". In the early 1990's my father died in England. He left me just three things; a broken watch, a broken clock with his name engraved in it and this key, which is from a medieval castle in Whales.

A decade before that, somebody gave me a Psychic cross made out of iron. They have each been lying around ever sense, and one day during the process of creating this exhibition I put them together and it was perfect symmetry. Did he know? Is time linear at all? It just fit together in this perfect way and we welded them together. It became a beautiful object. So we made additional pieces from it, casting them in white resin. This exhibition has been very intuitive, there's no logical progression. The objects make themselves and we try to understand why they've appeared. It's a different way of working.

DD: How about your photo "Coagularis"?

GBPO: This is one Lady Jaye took of me. It's all about transcendence, leaving the body and out of body experiences, which you can have under aesthetics. That's a Jackson Pratt Pump I'm holding. Lady Jaye was a registered nurse, so she told me what it was called and you squeeze it to create suction through the valve and any excess blood is sucked out and you empty it every so often. It's the source of a lot of the blood we used from my body. Lastly is this little person here which is called "Blood Bunny". In the early 90's we met someone who worked with John C. Lilly who did a lot of work in dolphin intelligence, and also the 1980 film *Altered States* is based on his research. He would float in a sensory deprivation tank with no light and take huge quantities of ketamine to leave his own body. We were talking to this other researcher and he said we might want to experiment with ketamine because it's really good for out-of-body experiences.

Ultimately, with myself and Lady Jaye, pandrogyny for ourselves is to maintain a sense of individual self when the consciousness is separated from the body at psychical death. So when my body is dropped and consciousness is released, we can find each other and meld to become one consciousness made of the two, so the blood on "Blood Bunny" is from all the injections we did over a period of three years. The hair on the back is Lady Jaye's ponytail, and it contains my blood, Jaye's blood and ketamine soaked into the wooden rabbit. We got the rabbit near Tijuana and they were selling these touristy things that were all decoratively painted and this one hadn't been finished and we just thought it was a very demonic looking bunny - it didn't look like a bunny at all. So we thought instantly it would be great for soaking up blood, and as we called each other "bunny", it made sense. There is more than ten years of blood on it.

DD: Does Orlan have any bearing on your work? Has she been an influence at all?

GBPO: Orlan was an inspiration to some degree in the beginning. We liked the way she utilizing cosmetic surgery in a new way and confronting female glamour through the ages. Her early work wasn't quite an influence but a recognition and reinforcement that what we were feeling was an inevitable movement of social and creative matters, that we were observing something we felt was already a subtext in culture. For example, when we first came to New York together the sex ads in the back of the Village Voice were nearly all biological women and biological men – the women offering services to heterosexual men, and the guys usually for gay men, and now it's all nearly shemales, but their clientele is still heterosexual men. That's a huge shift, that these thousands of heterosexual men in New York secretly prefer a transsexual. A man-woman. So we saw that as an intuitive grasping by the species toward a new phase. Just the fact the Rupaul is now a sort of successful star on TV and the whole transsexual movement has gone from being the most covert GLBT state of being to almost mainstream, who are being written into movies, TV shows and there's been a big shift.

Lady Jaye used to say something to me which is true of the USA – "America is three countries: the West coast, the East coast and the rest." So we're not blind to the fact that it's still a dangerous conundrum. We chose to take a physical stance, we are prepared to put our bodies under the knife to show that this needs to be discussed. Once you let go of this being the finished human, you can begin to extrapolate all these different options and possibilities. We can use our resources on this planet to the best possible efficiency when people can actually choose who they want to become. They can have horns and furs, they can have feathers, extra limbs, whatever they choose. It's just a matter of letting the imagination take over from logic. We don't really believe in logic. We think it's a trick, another way of blinding us to the options we have.

DD: Do you think something has been lost with the mainstreamization of queer identity?

GBPO: There is a certain aspect amongst the GLBT community who seem to want to simply become as normal as possible, which to us is just puzzling. Why on earth would you want to get the legal and political rights to be just like the people you despise? To us it doesn't make any sense, but that's somebody's choice. You have gay Republicans – how can you be a gay Republican? People should stop trying to fit in and rather celebrate difference, and celebrate new options and push them further. Don't be afraid to go for the things you really believe in. And that's what we've always done. We understand why people can misconstrue what we've done so far because we took breasts as a second sexual characteristic but for us that was because they were an obvious statement. We were prepared to do this to a point where it might even be dangerous for us. Because you know, if you go to the wrong place you could get beaten up for wearing a mini skirt, not being biologically female, we'd been scared a couple times in Brooklyn where we'd been followed by a car "come on darling, get in". If we got in that car we'd be dead. But overall, anything that adds to the consensus of tolerance has to be better. The possibilities should be all inclusive. I mean to me GLBT is great, but why isn't it just queer? And revel in being queer and different, and obviously some people do and we support that. But there is still an awful lot of this planet that would like to regress and go back to the most intolerant, bigoted, violent stage of human history, and that's terrifying.

DD: So there is a movie out about you now, *The Ballade of Genesis and Lady Jaye*, are you flattered?

GBPO: It's a miracle that film has made it to big cinema, and however long it lasts, what a breakthrough for a film about two very unconventional people! And the fact that Marie Losier, the director, focused on love is what worked for it. People all over the globe relate to it as a love story and they are able to be tolerant of the content and not really see it as so strange. In a way she allows the audience to become affectionately interested in us enough for them to let go for awhile their normal prejudice. That's quite miraculous. We're hoping it stays in cinemas long enough to have an impact outside our demographic and to contribute towards rethinking the future. In a way, it's agitprop what we do. It's not just enough to live in the artist's Ivory Tower for us; we have to relate, no matter how obliquely, to the transcendence of the species. And to the way we behave toward each other as creatures.

What a collaboration! Genesis has devoted her whole life to untangling the but-who-am-I-really questions most of us have for just a few short drug-induced hours. And knowing the dramatic transformations of both she and Lady Jaye in the name of creating an all inclusive pandrogynous gender identity, well, it kind of makes Gilbert and George look like soft-serve vanilla. And Breyer P-Orridge is still making art, using archived blood, photos, films, skin and hair to continually make work that imagines a new kind of person. The work of Genesis Breyer P-Orridge leaves their audience frightened, appalled and inspired, how perfect. "Do you know any Haiku's by heart?" I ask her. I like to end these things lightly. "Oh fuck no," she says. "I'm terrible at remembering." I thought for a moment that was one.

Breyer P-Orridge, *"Begging Bin-ESHE"*. 2012. Stainless steel, brass cobra doo knocker, flood light, C-print mounted on plexi, marigolds. 61 x 27 x 27 inches. Courtesy of the artists and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

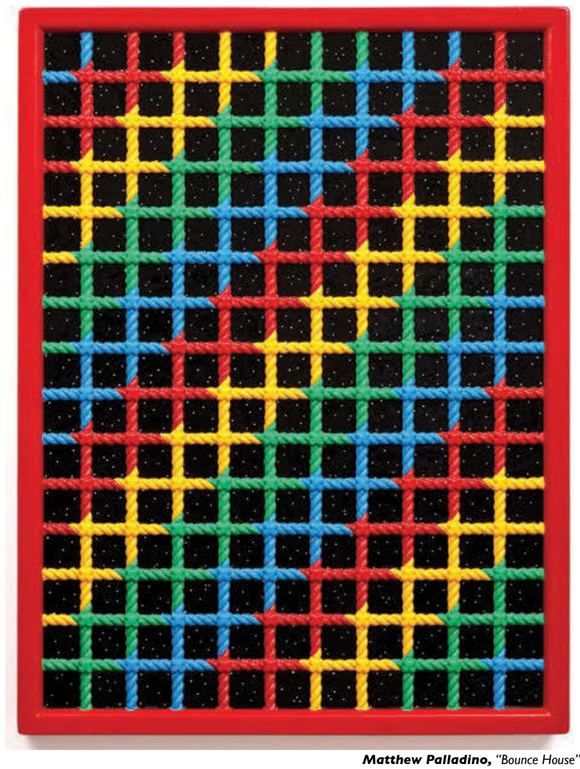
Breyer P-Orridge, *"Alchymical Wedding"*. 2012. Hot-rolled steel frame, hand-blown glass, cork, hair, nails, skin. 14 x 36 x 14 inches. Courtesy of the artists and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

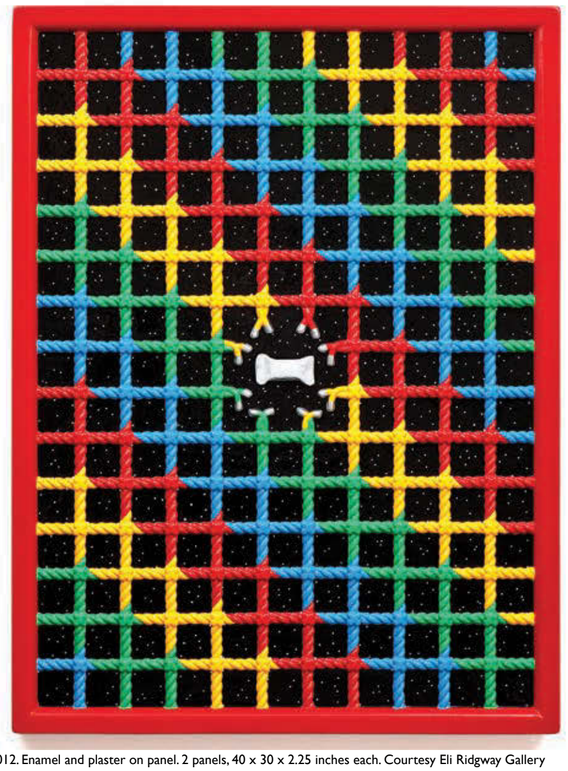
Breyer P-Orridge, *"Spiral (Thee Source)"*. 2012. Welded cast iron. 11.75 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artists and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

Breyer P-Orridge. Production still from *"Blood Sacrifice"* high-definition video, 2011. Archival inkjet print. 8 x 10 inches. Edition of 3. Courtesy of the artists and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

Matthew Palladino

Interviewed by Jamie Alexander





Matthew Palladino, *"Bounce House"*, 2012. Enamel and plaster on panel. 2 panels, 40 x 30 x 2.25 inches each. Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

Matthew Palladino is from San Francisco and has been living in Philadelphia for the last couple years. He's about to move to NYC. His work has been exhibited at Park Life and Eli Ridgway Gallery in San Francisco and Fredericks & Freiser in NYC. This following interview was conducted in March 2012 by Jamie Alexander, owner of Park Life, and friend of the artist.

I've been following your work since I first saw it at your Brown Bear show in 2007 and I've noticed that the content of each body of work you present has a unique narrative, almost unrelated to the previous body, but always seemingly very personal. Can you talk about the elements and narratives of your work?

I'm not sure how to make work impersonal. Or maybe I find it difficult to get excited about things that I don't feel some real connection to. For some reason, words like narrative and illustrative sound derogatory to me, though they tend to be some of the more common descriptors, especially of the earlier work. It's like, if you're a serious singer/songwriter and someone says "Oh, I just love your jingles!". You appreciate their enthusiasm, but you think, I'm trying to write real songs, not jingles, you know?

Your visual painting style can be described flat and colorful with some folk or outsider-art qualities. Can you explain how your style developed or what influenced it? Is there any relationship or influence from SF's Mission School artists?

In high school, people like Margaret Kilgallen, Chris Johanson, Barry Mcgee definitely had an affect on me. Their work had a similar feel to it as the work that had hung on my parent's walls when I was growing up. It just seemed to click. The work just felt so earnest, unpretentious, without need for explanation or justification. When I was younger, that was very inspiring.

It seems that with each new body of work you increase the level of effort in scale, medium and content. These new pieces at Eli Ridgeway gallery even moving into 3-D relief. Is there a drive to keep moving that bar higher or just experimenting with new technique?

The works scale, medium and the level of time committed to it is directly affected by my own resources. I didn't get into watercolor and ink on paper because I had a special affinity for it. I got into it because it was the cheapest way for me to make work at the time. I didn't have any money for supplies back then, and it was easy to steal watercolors from the art store, you know? Paper is relatively inexpensive. But as time has gone by, and I've made a little money, I'm able to take that money and put it back into the work. If I had endless time, money and space, the work would reflect that.

It's important to keep things interesting too. I'm miserable making the same thing over and over. I've tried. The problem is that people sometimes favor a certain grouping of my work over another, and they want more of that. But by that time the works evolved into something else. So I find myself, especially with this newest body of work, trying to assure people that this is just the next step in the work. Not a gimmick or a one-off, but another mutation of the thing that came before it. And that hopefully the work will always be in a state of change.

You spent some time at CCA in the Bay Area. Can you talk about what that experience meant to you and what did you learn from it?

I only got to spend 2 years at CCA. The friends I made there were probably the most lasting, positive I got from attending art school. I didn't really hang out with anyone my age who was interested in art before I went to college.

There's an infamous teacher over at CCA, Franklin Williams, who made a big impression on me. Very eccentric guy, but a wonderful teacher. His classes were very loose. There would maybe be model or something, but really you could do whatever, then he'd walk around the room and interact with people individually. The first day he had us do some still life drawing then had us put them all up on the wall. He then would pick certain ones and expound on them. It was an introductory class, so it was a mix of the different disciplines, people who'd never done life drawing. So I thought mine came out pretty good, I'm feeling confident, like, I got this one. But when he got to me, he started making fun of it. "This guy thinks he can draw!" Ha ha ha.

Matthew Palladino, *"Private Pleasures 2"*, 2010, Acrylic ink on paper. 49 x 37 inches. Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

Matthew Palladino, *"Private Pleasures 1"*, 2010, Acrylic ink on paper. 49 x 37 inches. Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

This treatment went on for pretty much the rest of my time in all his classes. Until then I had gotten nothing but praise and encouragement from adults when it came to art. But he was really hard on me. He'd either tear me down, or completely ignore me. I hated it. He'd baby others, telling them how well they were doing to keep going then he'd just pass me with a grunt sometimes. But he recognized what each individual needed. He saw that my pride needed a kick in the ass, that the work was too precious, and that if I wanted to make work that was truthful rather than pleasant, I'd have to be willing to take risks and to fail. And that's something I've aspired to do ever since.

I know the artist David Huffman also had an impact on you and your work during your time in the Bay Area. Can you talk about that? Were there other artists that influenced you?

I met David at a turning point in my life. As I said I had spent two years at art school, but had just dropped out due to financial complications. While my friends continued their education, I moved back into my parent's house in San Francisco with no money, no job, and no direction. Sort of the same situation that people are in when they graduate college, free of school and commitment for the first time in their lives, but lost when confronted with integrating into the real world. Except I didn't have a degree or any sense of accomplishment and there was no one else in my life who could really relate at that point.

So, I actually started going back to CCA and trying to see if I could audit some classes. A couple of my friends were taking a class with David Huffman so I dropped in. I guess we hit it off. I didn't really know him, but he had actually been the student of Franklin Williams back in the 80's so we bonded a little over that. He was cool. He let me hang out in the room during class while I worked on my stuff.

I had just seen a documentary about Jim Jones and Peoples Temple and it had had this profound affect on me. I've talked about it in another interview already so I won't get into it here, but it shook me. To this day I still can't put my finger on what it was that moved me to the extent that it did. It had the effect of churning up all this shit that started coming out in my work. I was second guessing myself, wondering if this was appropriate stuff to show to other people, all these spiritual and racial ambiguities popping up. But David was very encouraging. His work deals with race. I think being a black artist teaching a largely white group of students, he got a kick out of me trying to tackle some of these things. He told me go for it. Who cares what other people think?

What is it that you'd like people to get out of the art you make?

The work I make is not like science, it doesn't begin with a question. It instead tends to end in a question. It feels more poetic than scientific, though I suppose art is the thing that lay between them.

It's clichéd, but I don't make work with other people in mind. I, of course, hope the work, once done, is appreciated. But my desire is to manifest something into existence that was not there before, that because it solely exists in my mind, cannot exist without my action. My process, while I get a lot out of it, is not the focus of the work. It's a means to an end.

Looking at the work, it's obviously important to me that it has an immediate impact that draws the viewer in, that it engages you at first glance. But once engaged I hope the work causes them to wrestle with their own ambiguities and confusion, as I do when creating the piece. I hope that people have a sense of dissatisfaction that lingers with them afterward, a sense of the mysterious and the absurd. Like a very realistic dream. That's how I feel everyday. Even better if they come to a conclusion, though. I love when people inform me, with authority, what's going on in my work.

How has moving away from the Bay Area changed your perspective on the art world, if at all?

I don't know that living in another city has affected my perspective on the art world as much as participating in the art world has changed my views. Art fairs were a real eye-opener for me. When I went to Miami for the NADA fair, I had no idea what to expect. I quickly found out that the fairs not really geared towards the artists, they're more for everyone else in

Matthew Palladino
"In The Night", 201. (Side View)
Enamel and plaster on panel
48 x 36 x 3 inches
Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

***Matthew Palladino**, "In The Night"*, 201. Enamel and plaster on panel. 48 x 36 x 3 inches. Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

the art world…the collectors, curators, galleries, museums, writers, everyone else... To see the mix of the political/business side of the art world at that scale was new to me. I realized making great work was only a part of being a successful artist.

And NADA was a great fair! Probably the best I've been to. A lot of high quality work all in one place. And people there were nice, not stand-offish at all, very encouraging. But then, going to Miami Basel, it was even more heightened. Very bourgie. Not many young people. Little European men in expensive sun glasses with their plastic-looking wives all done up. The women were all wearing very beautiful shoes, I remember. I spent more time people watching than looking at art. People were standing in front of the art with their backs to it half the time. It was a bit gross to me. And these are the people that rule the art world. People with money, with cultural capital, people with connections. I guess I always knew that, but to see it all in person made me question if this was the community I wanted to aspire to please.

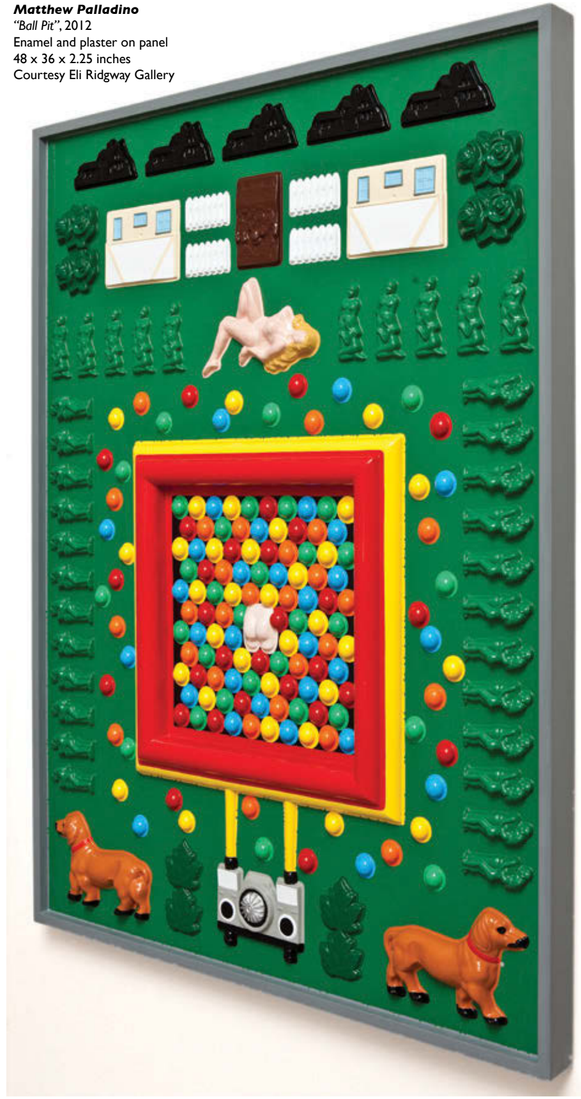
What do you think of the relevancy of the Street Art Movement?
I don't really take much notice of it. It seems like most of it is visually derivative and usually espousing some uninteresting pseudo political view. I've always liked graffiti though. If you follow graffiti, you know the aesthetics of something is only a part of that world. Scale, location and amount are all equally in play. With "street art" aesthetics seem to be the primary focus, maybe with a little illegality thrown in for sex appeal. Street art seems to pander to public opinion while graffiti attacks it. So for me, while there are some very notable exceptions, (Espo's "Love Letters" in Philly for one) I'd take graffiti over street art any day.

It sounds like you grew up in an encouraging environment, artistically. Your sister is an artist too right? Was being an artist something you wanted to do from early on?
My parents have always been very supportive of the arts, and are both artists in their own right. My father is a musician at heart and a programmer by profession. My mother writes poetry, and paints and draws when she's not working at UCSF. And my sister, Zoe Rose, is an incredible singer/songwriter. She's already a star in my mind. I'm bracing myself for her eventual fame.

There was always an emphasis on art growing up in my house. Music, theatre, visual, literature, I think it's just that that was where their passions lay, which rubbed off on me and my sis. It was always made to feel important. They never made it seem like pursuing a life in arts was any more or less worth while than any other job.

I've been consistently impressed with your technical ability. Your Wonder Box paintings from your first Ridgway Gallery show are amazing in the details. Is this a natural skill or something you honed at school?
Thank you! I appreciate that. But I don't think natural skill exists. It's more about what obsessions take hold over the rest. I do believe I had a natural interest in the visual that at some point over-road my other interests. And because that interest was recognized and encouraged, I was able to focus on it, commit myself to exploring it, and from that an intimate familiarity and understanding evolved.

If you do anything enough you're going to get good at it, right? And when you get that close to something the little details that come together to make that thing work become more apparent, and you began to be obsessed by them. You become engulfed in the nuances that most people don't consciously take in, but when confronted with as a whole, are what make the thing seem real and powerful. I wonder if that's something that is lacking nowadays. People don't have time for the details.



Matthew Palladino
"Ball Pit", 2012
Enamel and plaster on panel
48 x 36 x 2.25 inches
Courtesy Eli Ridgway Gallery

***Matthew Palladino**, "Body Pile"*, 17"x22", Water Color and Ink on paper. 2008.
Courtesy of Park Life Gallery

Matthew Palladino

You talked a bit about how you see your work connecting with people. I'm interested in knowing more about views of society. Your work appears to be heavily influenced by popular culture and politics, reflecting a more serious tone, but also exposing the absurdity of things. Is this something you try to do?
I never go into my work with a set goal in mind except to finish. I also don't think of the work as political. Sociological is probably a better way to put it. Exploring "the general in the particular". How things relate, our responses to them, what that tells us about ourselves, those are functions of all the work. While I have very strong feelings about societal issues, there's so much that factors in, I have trouble expressing in words how I feel. But I do have very strong feelings about them. Maybe that's why it creeps into the art, it's one of the few ways I feel I can engage in it. I don't know that I've experienced enough to speak with any authority. But I'm interested in it, I play with it in my work. Everything seems so based in your particular point of reference, it's hard to trust others' thoughts or opinions, let alone your own. I have trouble finding the truth in anything but what I experience first hand, and even then I question how real that is.

What do you think you would be doing if you weren't creating art?
Humor seems to be my overriding obsession. Everyone in my family is very funny. I hope the work doesn't come off as jokey, but there's an undercurrent of humor that I think comes through, a certain amount of absurdity. If I wasn't making art, I would love to be a behind the scenes kind of guy in the comedy world... the editor on Tim and Eric Awesome Show. Or the show-runner on Strangers with Candy. Or the late Mitch Hedberg's agent. Or the guy who brings Stephen Colbert coffee. Something like that. Those people are my heroes.

What sort of work are you working on now? More relief works or returning to paper?
No paper for now. It's the furthest thing from my mind at the moment. I do love to work on paper, but the ideas for objects moved past the limitations of that medium. As an artist, I hope people will come along for the ride, regardless of things as minor as medium. But I guess that's not always the case. People who are truly supporters of my work, and not just the skills I've amassed in one medium or another, seem as excited as I am of moving forward into new worlds. I'd actually like to do even more sculptural, space-filling work, money permitting.

What do you think of the current state of contemporary art?
I really don't know. I tend to follow my friends' and acquaintances' work, and through them their friends' work. So I'm not as informed as I could be. It seems like technology and collaboration seem to be dominating interests of people who write about contemporary art. The internet and other new technologies will continue to reshape the ways we perceive, make and share art. But I don't think it will change the function of art fundamentally.

Jeremiah Jenkins

Interviewed by Michael Nissim

Jeremiah Jenkins, "Credit Trap" credit card, mouse trap, 2"x3". Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

Jeremiah Jenkins, "BP Mandala", sand, 72" diameter. Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

You're from rural Tennessee originally. What was art to you growing up?
The refrigerator door. I didn't have a concept of galleries or museums or fine art at all. Not until I went to college. That's kind of my start, because even in high school it was like the renaissance, the guy worshipped Michelangelo and all that shit, old school. I learned how to paint and draw and stuff like that, but I'd never heard of conceptual art. Had never heard of anything like it and then I go to school. I go to college, because college is the way out of the valley, you know what I mean?

Where did you go to undergrad?
East Tennessee State, which is about an hour away from where I grew up. Which was like the big city in comparison. Johnson City, Tennessee, which I'm sure everyone's heard of. Three Walmarts. My idea of art was very small, I didn't know like—

You could think about it in terms other than a painting or drawing?
Yes. I remember the day when it happened. I was kind of thinking about quitting. I had some introduction to ideas and everything. But then I was in an art history class and I saw this artist, and I couldn't remember the name at the time, but I remembered the piece. It was these giant blocks of ice in front of this gallery, and I was like, "Whoa".

Paul Kos?
Yeah, it was Paul Kos; I didn't even put that together, I had forgotten his name. And that really started it for me and that's where I really started to enjoy it and just dive into it full steam. I had great teachers at ETSU that helped me develop that new energy, Catherine Murray, Don Davis. And then I graduated and I came to SFAI for grad school.

Did you take any time off?
I came right through because I wanted to get out of Tennessee, and it was the best way to get out, to go somewhere. The choice was either School of Visual Arts in New York and San Francisco Art Institute here. The School of Visual Arts in New York needed $1,000 by the 15th of the month to hold my spot, and SFAI needed $500 at the end of the month , so the choice was clear. And I wanted to come to California anyway. So I come to California and everybody's saying, "Oh, there's this guy, you should work with: Paul Kos, I think you'd like him." I started looking up his work and it's that guy. It's the guy that put the ice in front of the gallery. To me that was what made the grad school experience worth it, was the teachers that I worked with and the people I met.

So you worked a lot under Paul, who were some of the other teachers that influenced you?
Well besides Paul, Sharon Grace and John Rolloff. I was a sculpture major, but I was right at that line with new genres because I was experimenting.

It seems after you graduated though, would you say that there was a jump when you kind of departed from sculpture, or started using sculpture in a more conceptual-based way?
I think I've always let the concept drive the sculpture. I think it was really personal changes that made me think a little different. In undergrad I learned how to work with stuff and I started out very political. My approach was that, "I'm going to expose the truth!" I've loosened up on that. I've loosened up on a lot of things. I realized that you don't have to force your message so much, you know? Because then you might as well be yelling at people like a preacher or a protester. And that's not what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to figure out how to say stuff and discover stuff that's not on the surface. That I don't even know that I believe right away.

I think that's what art school does.
Well, it broke me down. Grad school broke me down from that yelling approach. I graduated, and I was in this space where there weren't any firm rules, no more teachers, and I kind of checked out for a while. I needed to rest my soul and process so I could really apply the things that I had learned, as opposed to just going through the motions that you go through in school. I was big on not pigeonholing myself. I didn't want to pigeonhole myself at all.

Into one style or medium?
I didn't want to get into a formula, and I still struggle with this. I see myself doing something that's similar to something I've done before and I'm like "no-no-no-no".

From what I've noticed, I can always tell it's your work when I see it, but it's in very different mediums. Everything from wood burning to scale models.
I think people that know my work or really pay attention can tell it's my work, but my last solo show, people were asking, "So which piece is yours?" Hatch Gallery, last year. Well, they we're all mine, it was all just me. But that's what keeps me interested in it.

Before we started the tape recorder you were talking about a show you judged recently and how art is meant to be this very pure thing that's supposed to be joyful to participate.
I think the analogy I was making was it's like basketball. You've got people who are professional basketball players who spend their whole life eating, breathing, living basketball. They train for it, they work for it, it's all they want to do, it's all they can do. Then you have the people that play on the weekends, or the people that are good, but don't really think that they can be professional. And to be a professional artist, it's like that. It's even maybe a little bit harder than being a professional basketball player. Because if you're a professional basketball player there are many different levels that you can play on. I guess it's the same way with art, but to try and live off of it, it's like being a professional basketball player, you know? And I judged this art contest that was up in Utica, New York, and it was, you know, how do I say this? A little weekend warriorish.

What was the age range?
I don't know, I think like 18 to senior citizen. Some owls and trees and stuff, which, I don't want to knock. There wasn't much out of the box. There were maybe two things out of the box which were my number one and number two picks. But on the day that I went to go judge that art contest, I was walking to the place and I see this red string tied to a branch of a tree. It's winter up there so everything's grey. The string came down the tree and went on the ground. It was just strung across the ground, you know, about 15 feet of red string. And I was just totally captivated. I was like, "wow, is this someone's piece?!", "Is this the work for the contest?" And I watched it, I saw the way the lines went. It was beautiful, it was absolutely beautiful. And then I went to judge this art contest, and everyone was trying too hard. It didn't come close to the string in the tree.

I love natural art phenomena, it gives me great joy to experience it because it reminds me of seeing art for the first time, like you get hit with that "thing". I was at this fair and I was walking around, and there was this area that looked like a booth, but it wasn't, but it was all white walls, and there's this security guard in there with his back turned, making a phone call. I was like, "oh my god, is that—that's amazing! What is that? That's so cool!" That's the only thing I really remember from this fair two years ago. But it's those moments that make it special.
That's how I cheat. Because I use found objects, right? Everything has a nature. I see an object and it gives me a sensation and that sensation leads me to the idea. And sometimes I'll have the sensation without finding the object, and then have to find something that's just got that same essence. I'm just trying to make things that seem like they already are. Seeing the hand in it is all right, but if you have a moment where you're confused that's the best. The fact that you didn't know if the security guard talking on the phone was a piece or not, that's great.

Jeremiah Jenkins, "Inner Attainment", tv, deer hide and antlers, wood 36"x24"x20". Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

Jeremiah Jenkins, "Orthodox Cross", syringes, scalpels, base 24"x 12" x 5". Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

I would say that these ideas started with the conceptual art movement.
Yeah, totally, and then before that, Duchamp and all that.

Yes of course.
Right It's all that stuff that made the ordinary world beauty acceptable. Then you can take that raw material from the world and just mix it together to point to the meaning or point to an idea or a message that you want to get across. I think of it like magic. It's like you make the world. You take a thing and you do something to it to change the meaning or to change the ideas behind it so that when people see it they hear that subtle voice.

So you've also spent a lot of time in Oakland. You worked at Lobot Gallery for a while and have been around the Oakland art scene a lot, as well as the San Francisco art scene.
Rent's cheaper.

Right but if you could, just do a quick comparison of the two, at least from your experience being involved with both scenes.
Well, San Francisco you've got the feeling of an establishment. Established galleries and you've got to kind of work your way in. There's still do-it-yourself spaces, but it's like they have to wear the clothes of the other places a little. It's like the stoner that wears the tie to go to the job. It's that kind of thing. In Oakland, it's just a ripped t-shirt and jeans. You can do whatever you want.

Would you say there's more creativity going on there in the gallery scene?
Raw creativity. That's the thing about Oakland: it's raw.

Which can be really good or...
Well, you know, there's both sides of it. There's some town somewhere in America where people are making raw folk art and it's still creativity. They're carving bears out of logs, but it's...

It goes into what we were talking about in regards to the art judging competition.
Yeah. I feel like the art is defined by the place. And San Francisco is a tourist attraction fancy town. No one comes to vacation in Oakland. Oakland is like New York in the sixties. When they would talk about how dangerous it was and at the same time it's a hotbed for art. Oakland is a place where artists go when they want to live in an industrial building, or they want to live an industrial life. But they don't have to put on a show. You go to the art mumur there and everybody's hanging out. It's not like SF. And I feel like San Francisco gets a little bit more ridiculous every day with the rent prices, you see that a little bit in Oakland, and it's starting, but man, it's got a long way to go. I think it's more about the attitude and the

motivation in the two places.

So what's the title for you upcoming solo exhibition at Ever Gold Gallery in May.
"Shit Doesn't Have To Be So Fucked Up"

Amazing title. Actually before we get into that perhaps you can talk about your sculptural and performance based piece "Blue Collar Bushido" which you showed at Ever Gold in 2010 and more recently it travelled to NYC.
New York, LA, and now it's in Walnut Creek at Bedford Gallery.

That piece is great because you're wearing this fucking epic costume—well, you don't wear it anymore.
I remember when I came up with the idea and I told you what I wanted to do and you said, "yeah, dude, I totally feel that. I was moving these chairs the other day and I just felt like this warrior."

The idea of proletariat art, maybe, or the idea of labor in art.
Yeah, or just labor. I mean , we've got these people that carry our whole culture, our whole world on their backs literally in a lot of cases. They risk their lives, they risk all these things. Building, they build all these things that are supposed to be important to the infrastructure, right? And they can't retire, they aren't appreciated, it's just ridiculous to me. What I wanted to do was a mix of capturing that idea of where you feel like a bad ass when you do that kind of work and also honoring those people.

Then you did that performance at Art PAD last year, where you smashed five cinder blocks, one for every work day while wearing the suite.
Yeah. What I loved was that not everybody noticed that I was doing a performance. Some people thought I was just breaking up cinder blocks. It's like "yeah, I'm wearing a shiny suit of armor..."

How much does that thing weigh?
It's only like 40-45 pounds, but it's really uncomfortable. It's like an oven, and it's a lot harder to move around in than you think. It's this weird spectacle and no one notices because of what I'm doing. Because I'm just doing work. "That was a performance?" "No, that's our uniform. Our uniforms are samurai suits. We have the groundskeepers wear samurai suits while they clean up." But you know what I love about that piece, and really, all my work, is when I see a guy like my dad walk in to the gallery and it's like he doesn't belong there, somebody dragged him along. Told him there would be free beer or free wine or something, right? And he's just there to make people happy, doesn't give a shit about art. And he looks at it and he goes, "Yeah, I get that."

As someone who's had to sit in a lot of art shows and watch gallery spaces and witnessed he flow of people into a gallery setting - well for example with some of the shows they have at Ever Gold are like -
You're scared to come go in.

Yeah, what the fuck is this place? Last month it was Laundromat, this month it's a punk venue, now...It's completely different - it's amazing to see the civilian (non gallery goer) get perplexed by art that can't be described right away as art - they might walk by every few weeks and they get this total other experience about the show.
I see people walk by with that same look.

And they just stand there. It's usually little kids or old people that freak out the most. They're like "oh my god". I enjoy that part, seeing their interactions with the shows, because it's such an honest thing. It's the same thing that you're talking about.
People get turned off by art because they've been led to believe that it's this thing that you have to understand. Sometimes it's great, if you want to understand art and you want to know people and know all about it, then go for it, great. But you don't have to. You can feel it, you can just see it. You can enjoy it, you can dislike it, you can do all those things and you don't have to know shit. You know? That's why street art is so popular, public art, all these things are getting popular because it appeals to everyone on a level that's way more human than academic.

So you are going to be "Occupying" the upcoming artMRKT art fair in San Francisco in May as an official installation
Yeah, as .00000032%. Which is just me.

How did you make that calculation?
That's the percentage that one person is of the total population of America. I got to a point where I found it hard to care. But now, today, It's just...

Well after you try and fight the system for so long it becomes clear that it's all bullshit you know?
I can see both sides of it. I was totally stoked when I saw people marching. Taking it to the streets and everything. And then at the same time , it's like, not everybody who's rich is an asshole, you know? But there are a lot of rich assholes. And somehow I'm rich, though I'm very poor.

There's also a lot of nice rich people that buy art and support the arts in amazing ways - which is probably the best way to spend money these days for those reading this. Supporting culture is the most important thing anyone can do.
Right, and I love them. To see how it's supposed to work and the fact that it doesn't work, I mean, it's people's choice. If we really tore down everything it would be the wild west and whoever's got the guns would all of a sudden be rich, you know what I mean? There's got to be some middle ground, and I think the middle ground that I found is to live like you believe. If you don't believe in something, don't fucking pay it.

I mean, the way it's set up is ridiculous. I was eighteen, actually I don't think I was even eighteen yet when I got my first credit card application handed to me. I didn't know shit. I was like Jed fucking Clampett off the farm. I didn't know shit. My parents didn't know shit. I think there needs to be changes to the system and I'm still not 100% sure that we're not being run by fucking reptilian aliens that want to eat us and enslave us and make us mine gold! I'm still not sure of that. I mean, I wouldn't be surprised either way. If they came out and said, "All right, we're actually human, we've been trying to just develop civilization." I'd be like, "All right." If they came out and said, "We're reptilians and we're trying to make you into slaves…" I'd be like, "of course". But don't get me started.

So you're going to be there at the fair, what is this performance going to look like?
I'm going to live there. I'm either going to wear a suit or a tuxedo and drink wine, but still live kind of rough. Because that's the contradiction of life and of being an artist. It's like, you live in a shit hole, you have to work your ass off, but then you're at some gala with all these fancy people. I've drank gallons of wine, and I've eaten like pounds of fucking brie, you know? Who am I? I'm like this random guy from the country. I really won't be protesting anything. I just want to be in the middle of everything, you know? Because it's not that I don't think the current state of affairs isn't fucked up, I just don't want to be part of that. I want to just exist.

That's a nice little sound bite.
I say bring it home, you know? I mean, there's ways to shape the world even from the alien overlords. You can shape your own world.

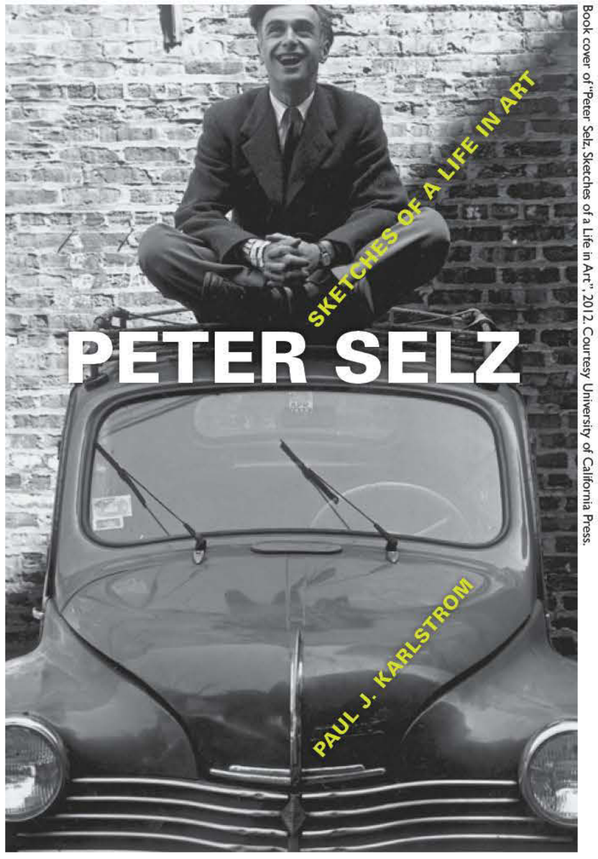
Jeremiah Jenkins, "Statesman's desk set", brass, granite, pens, inkwells, paint, 20"x4"x 15". Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

Jeremiah Jenkins, "Blue Collar Bushido", hardware, industrial mats, mechanics jacket, trash can, varied dimensions. Courtesy of the artist and Ever Gold Gallery

Book Review: Peter Selz - *Sketches of a Life in Art*

Reviewed by John Held, Jr.

Paul Karlstrom (Left) with ***Peter Selz***. Courtesy Paul Karlstrom.



Book cover of "Peter Selz, Sketches of a Life in Art", 2012. Courtesy University of California Press.

Both author and subject should be familiar to readers of the San Francisco Arts Quarterly. Author Karlstrom is an advisor to the periodical and contributed, "Art School Sketches: Notes on the Central Role of Schools in California Art and Culture," in issue 5. Selz was the subject of an interview with publisher Andrew McClintock the following issue. So, it is with great pride we receive their associated effort, "Peter Selz: Sketches of a Life in Art," (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2012).

Although the work is officially a collaboration with Dr. Karlstrom and his wife Ann, recently retired Head of Publications, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Karlstrom and subject had established a long and fruitful working relationship as early as 1982, when Karlstrom first interviewed Selz in his capacity as West Coast Director for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Karlstrom went on to conduct over one hundred and fifty interviews with West Coast art world figures during the course of his tenure at The Archives, establishing himself as the country's most productive and creative cultural interrogator.

Drawing on this tradition, Karlstrom conducted some forty interviews for the book, including ten with Selz. Impeccably researched through the literature as well (owing in great measure to Jeff Gunderson, longtime Art Librarian at the Art Institute, who contributes a detailed Bibliography and Exhibition History), the readable work contains 526 footnotes, leaving the minutia (much of it interesting as well as informative) of the subject for later examination as the text rolls forward at a surprisingly brisk pace for a biography of an art historian.

Selz, however, is no mere art historian. This is at the crux of Karlstrom's argument. He insists that Selz is at heart an artist, at all times taking a creative approach against the very institutions he was administrating. For example: his facilitation of Jean Tinguley's, 1960 "Homage to New York," performance/installation at the Museum of Modern Art, where he was Curator of Painting and Sculpture; his sponsorship of Anna Halprin's provocative, "Parades and Changes," at the 1970 opening of the University Art Museum, Berkeley, where he was Director; and his aid and abetment of Christo's "Running Fence," against vocal opposition within the Marin and Sonoma countryside.

This participation in the art of his time, as well as dredging the dustbins of Art History for fresh and creative perspectives on neglected fields of study (German Expressionism, Art Nouveau, Kinetic Art, Funk Art), was to distinguish Selz's long career, which continues into his ninety-third year as Professor Emeritus at The University of California, Berkeley, and consultant to San Francisco's Meridian Gallery.

Selz's sustained energy evolved from a privileged Jewish-German childhood, taken under the wing by his art dealer grandfather, who ingrained in him a love of the arts. His boyhood ripped asunder by the political circumstances of the era (Germany, 1936), Selz and family headed for New York City and a new start in a strange land. Fortunately (to say the least) another relative, Alfred Stieglitz, was in a position to guide the budding art enthusiast.

In his first professional position at Pomona College, it was a result of his familiarity with Modern German Art ("German Expressionism, 1900-1950") and heritage ("Stieglitz Circle"), which brought him to the attention of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which hired him as Curator of Painting and Sculpture in 1960.

Transcending mere biographical factoid, Karlstrom provides social and cultural context to accompany this introspective portrait of Selz. This is especially true in his depiction of Germany on the eve of Nazi takeover, and again when describing the atmosphere Selz encountered at the Modern, during an era when commercial interests began to rival academic neutrality in the cultural marketplace.

Removing himself to California after his stint at the Modern, Selz opened the new University Art Museum, Berkeley, and began teaching in the Art Department. Among the students he inspired, establishing impressive careers and making significant accomplishments in the art world are Kristine Stiles, Moira Roth, Susan Landauer, Gary Carson and Rupert Garcia.

Although Karlstrom is clearly an energetic champion of the art historian, he is not above exploring certain controversies that have followed Selz over the years, including an untimely 1963 rebuke of Pop Art, and his involvement as an expert witness in the fiasco that was the Mark Rothko Estate trial.

By presenting his subject warts and all, the author has provided us with a rounded portrait of an art historian in the twentieth century, one who took as inspiration the primacy of the artist in his own search for personal liberation.

Peter Selz: Sketches of a Life in Art
Paul J. and Ann Hatch Karlstrom
University of California Press
2012
$34.95

Artadia Junior Council WEST

SFAQ sits down with two of the founding members, Kelly Huang and Rimma Boshernitsan

Artadia Jounior Council WEST members at various events.

Last summer, Artadia launched the Junior Council WEST: a donors group for young professionals who are passionate about contemporary art and who are looking to connect with their peers, exchange ideas and learn about emerging trends in the Bay Area and beyond. The membership is diverse and includes many arts professionals and young collectors. The Junior Council WEST is unique in its national connectivity through the Artadia network and its intimate size, which allows for genuine contacts and conversations.

The invitation-only group has quickly gained momentum thanks to a fabulous launch party at Kadist SF last July, and more importantly, thanks to its dedicated group of Founding Members: Jana Blankenship, Rimma Boshernitsan, Sabrina Buell, Joelle Connolly, Vanessa Critchell, Chris Fitzpatrick, Matthew Goudeau, Kelly Huang, Cynthia Kagay, Alex Matson, Celia Peachey, and Eli Ridgway.

SFAQ spoke with two of the Founding Members, Kelly Huang and Rimma Boshernitsan, to hear more about the group and their plans.

What kind of programs have you hosted in your first year?

Kelly: The Junior Council WEST Founding Members—who all have connections to a wide variety of artists, collectors, and institutions in the Bay Area—came up with an engaging and fun program for our first year. With all of our programs, we try to include a social component (usually dinner or drinks after the main event) to encourage dialogue and create space for our members to get to know one another. To date, we have given our members access to two of the most exciting collections in the Bay Area: the collection of Norah and Norman Stone at Stonescape and the photography collection of Trevor Traina. We think collection visits are a great way to see the various ways in which people live with art and learn about how a collection comes together. To further support and cultivate relationships within the Artadia network, the Junior Council WEST has hosted studio visits with Artadia Awardees such as Jim Goldberg, Leslie Shows and an upcoming visit with Kota Ezawa. Last but not least, our members have been privy to a curator-led walkthrough of two exhibitions at the CCA Wattis Institute this past winter and an upcoming tour of The Workshop Residence.

Where and how did the idea of founding the Junior Council WEST come about?

Kelly: I first learned about Artadia while working at The Renaissance Society in Chicago. Hamza Walker was on the jury for the Atlanta Awards, and was the one who introduced me to the organization. He told me about the history of Artadia and how much ongoing support they provide their Awardees. Around the same time my friend Theaster Gates won an Artadia Award in Chicago. I saw how much it impacted him and his career, and I knew I wanted to get involved. I reached out to Artadia's then Executive Director, Lila Kanner, and she connected me with Rimma, who had also expressed interest after hearing about Artadia's impact through National Board Member, Marjory Graue. It was the perfect match: We both felt that San Francisco was in need of a young professionals group that was centered around contemporary art—a community of active and engaged young professionals. And we both agreed that Artadia, with its mission to provide a network of support and to foster meaningful dialogue, was the perfect organization to work with to build that community.

Artadia was started in San Francisco by art collector Christopher Vroom when he was around the same age as the members of the Junior Council WEST today. What does this say about the role that San Francisco can play in an arts community, and more specifically about the ability of young people to influence it?

Kelly: I think that young professionals have the drive to really engage and shape an arts community. With Artadia's support and with the ambition of our members, I feel that the Junior Council WEST can help shape the culture around contemporary art in the Bay Area by giving support to young artists in the community and educating young collectors.

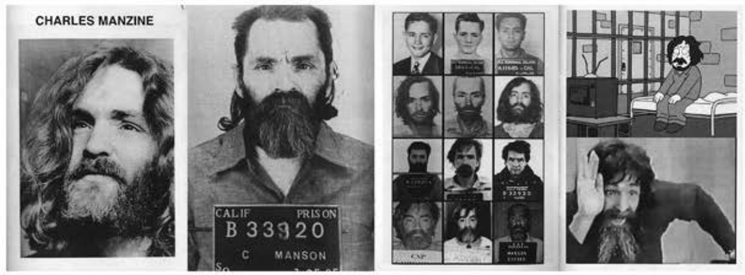
Rimma: To add to that, the Junior Council West is aiming to designate one Artadia Award winner as a Junior Council WEST-sponsored Awardee in the next Bay Area Awards cycle, which is coming up next fall 2012. We are really excited to be involved and make an impact on both the artists and the art world in the Bay Area.

How do you envision the Junior Council WEST in two years?

Rimma: We plan on growing the Junior Council WEST to no more than fifty to sixty members over the next two years. We want the group to remain small and personable. And we want the membership to be diverse—not only arts professionals, but also young collectors and those who have a general interest in contemporary art. The Founding Members are looking forward to dreaming up new unique opportunities in the coming years to engage in all that San Francisco's contemporary art community has to offer.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Junior Council WEST please write to JuniorCouncilWEST@artadia.org.

Zine Reviews



Charles Manzine
The Wormholes

If the cover photo of a bearded, longhaired Charles Manson strikingly resembling Jesus and the clever title of *Charles Manzine* don't have you sold at first glance, you're taking this whole life-on-Planet-Earth thing too seriously. Relax, it's just the man who coined the term Helter Skelter and was labeled "the most dangerous man alive," although there is really no evidence that he ever killed anyone himself. It s eems zines involving humorous content have been absent in recent years, replaced with the more common "it's over your head" art zine. Many early fanzines' original intent was to pay homage to a particular cultural phenomenon, Charles Manson being a legend in the Psychotic cult leader genre. Spending life in prison has not hindered Manson's ability to remain shockingly photogenic over the years and the images catalogued here are a testament to his enigmatic draw/allure/ personality.
www.hamburgereyes.com

The Dark Wave
Jay Howell

Surfing on a coffin and giving the middle finger to a UFO are definitely on my "before I die" check list, although the probability of such occurrences happening does not look favorable. Maybe that's why Jay Howell draws such ridiculously random scenarios; they are not possible in this world. With images that include surfers surfing while spray-painting dolphins, skateboarders riding smoking spliffs, and general shredding in every which way imaginable, the world Jay creates is one I would like to seek residency in. *The Dark Wave* follows a Black Metal band's lead singer through an onstage panic attack, leading to a swift evacuation into the wilderness and his journey to find himself through the world of chance.
Where will he end up?
At the bottom of the abyss or riding the long wave to serenity?
www.theartofskinner.com

Poems To Crush Your Soul
Skinner

Skinner can draw, we know that, but his real talent might be writing punchy, dark poems worthy of this review. I ran into him at the Alternative Press Expo and he mischievously presented the following zine titled *Poems to Crush Your Soul*. Shoved carelessly into the back pocket of my friend's jeans, this little time bomb of vulgarity was patiently waiting to be detonated. After several adult beverages, interest in this oddly non-illustrated work of Skinner's became a priority. Within minutes, the words inside were recited loudly in a slurish, intoxicated tone to people walking by, fellow patrons at a handful of art shows, and anyone who came into close proximity. Reactions included reciprocated laughs or awkward confusion. By nights' end there was no cover and it was mangled, torn, and abused. Eventually, if I remember correctly, it ended up being thrown at someone and abandoned in a San Francisco street. It took a beating but served as a centerpiece of entertainment for an entire night. Most zines I own get looked at once or twice, than live out the rest of their life in a box or on a shelf, seldom getting picked up again. This particular zine lived an accomplished life, even if for only one night.
www.unpianobooks.com

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

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Klari Reis, *SF to Marin* (detail), 2011, Mixed media on floating aluminium panel, 60 in. Diameter. Klari Reis, Courtesy Cynthia Corbett Gallery, London

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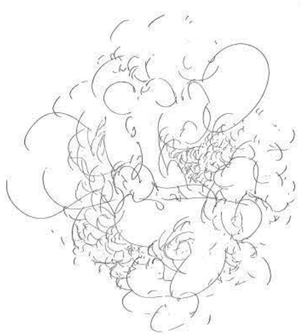

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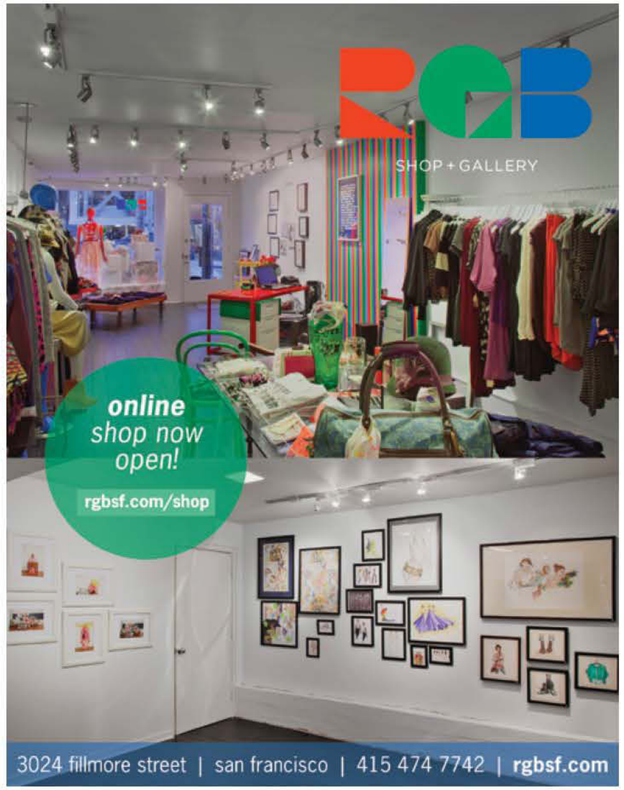

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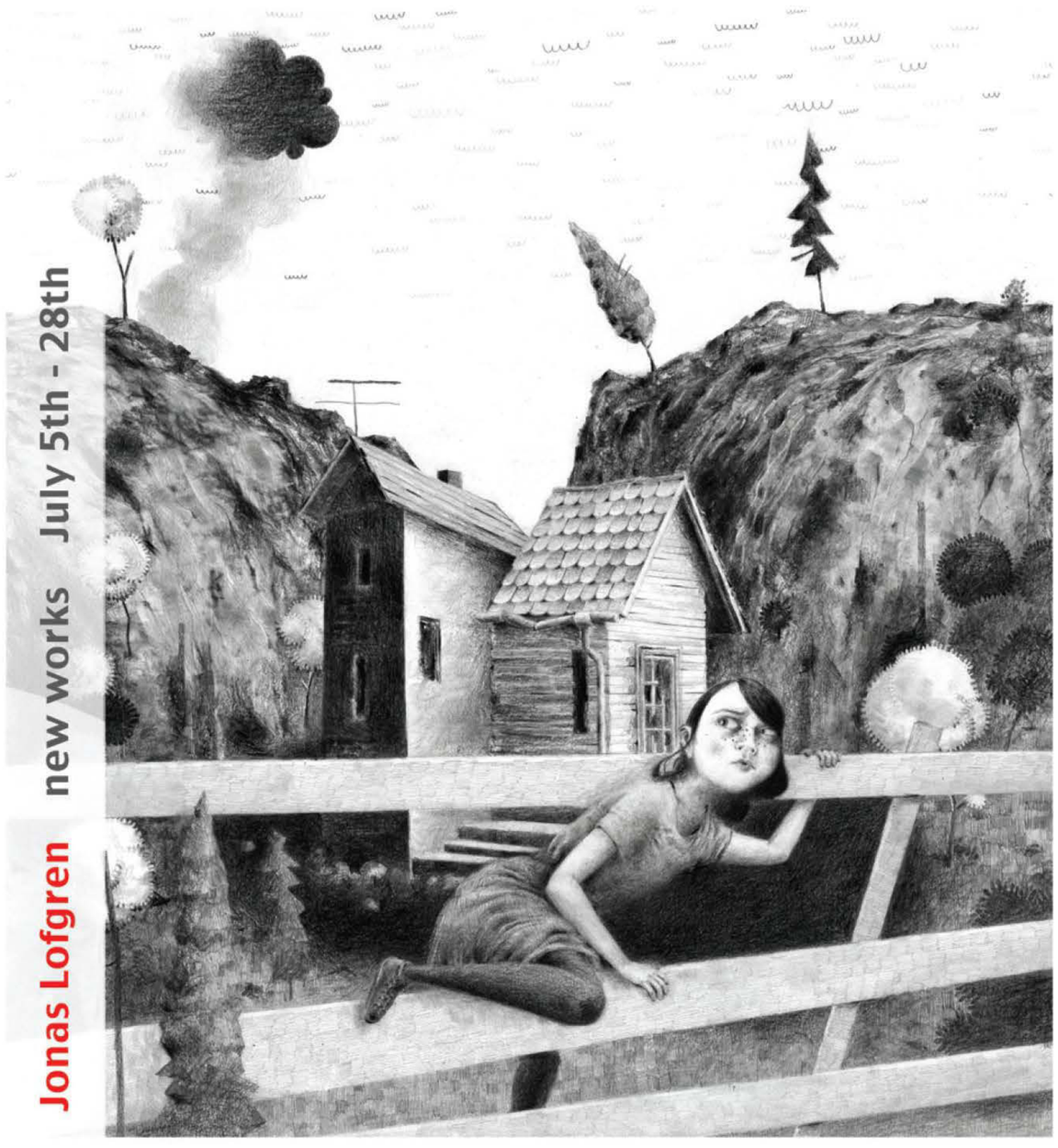

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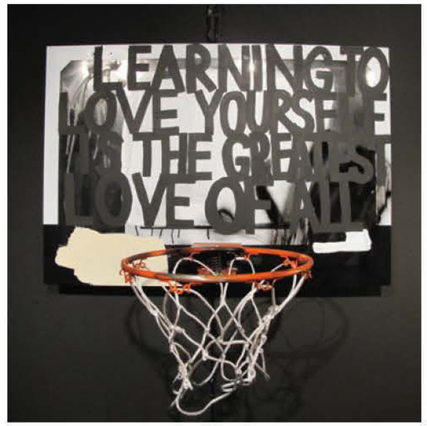

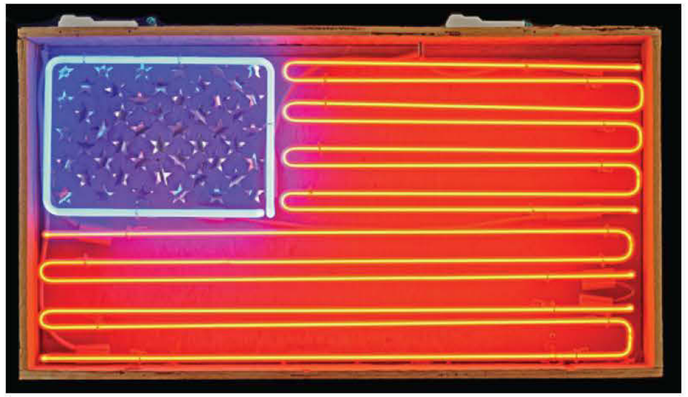

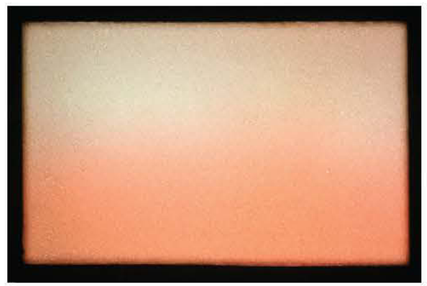

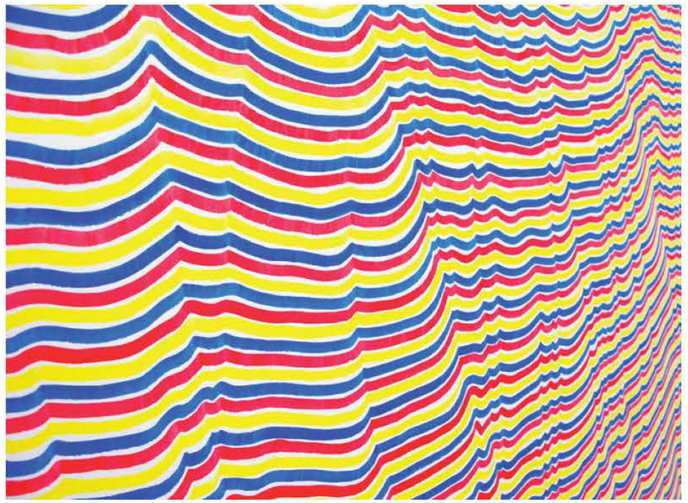

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On the main wall
MAY: **MARCH MADNESS** *Cassius* by Cliff Hengst (top left)

JUNE—JULY: **RECREATIONS OF SOL LEWITT** *#797* (bottom right)

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MAY—JULY: **CAPTURE THE FLAG**
Neon Flag by unknown artist (top right)
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