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WOMEN TO IN ART TODAY

INSIDE

Women challenged to smash artistic, sexual and gender stereotypes

Howardena Pindell's powerful life and political art

A journey into Richard Shipps' counterform world

Remembering Jim Yood: Death robs Chicago of a beloved artistic voice

\$8 U.S.

New Art Examiner

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The **New Art Examiner** is looking for writers interested in the visual arts in any major metropolitan area in the U.S. You would start with short reviews of exhibition in your area. Later, longer essays on contemporary visual art issues could be accepted.

Please send a sample of your writing (no more than a few pages) to:

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The New Art Examiner is a publication whose purpose is to examine the definition and transmission of culture in our society; the decision-making processes within museums and schools and the agencies of patronage which determine the manner in which culture shall be transmitted; the value systems which presently influence the making of art as well as its study in exhibitions and books; and, in particular, the interaction of these factors with the visual art milieu.

EDITORIAL POLICY

As the New Art Examiner has consistently raised the issues of conflict of interest and censorship. We think it appropriate that we make clear to our readers the editorial policy we have evolved since our inception:

1. No writer may review an exhibition originated or curated by a fellow faculty member or another employee, or any past or present student, from the institution in which they are currently employed. The New Art Examiner welcomes enthusiastic and sincere representation, so the editor can assign such an exhibition to other writers without the burden of conflict of interest.

2. There shall be no editorial favor in response to the purchase of advertisements.

3. The New Art Examiner welcomes all letters to the Editor and guarantees publishing. Very occasionally letters may be slightly edited for spelling or grammar or if the content is considered to be libellous.

4. The New Art Examiner does not have an affiliation with any particular style or ideology, or social commitment that may be expressed or represented in any art form. All political, ethical and social commentary are welcome. The New Art Examiner has actively sought diversity. All opinions are solely of the writer. This applies equally to editorial staff when they pen articles under their own name.

5. The general mandate of the New Art Examiner is well defined in the statement of purpose above.

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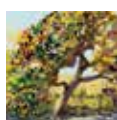
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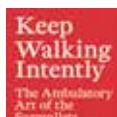
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Women in Art Today

Introduction: Everyday Resistance in the Art Space

by Jeffreen M. Hayes

Art is one of the few spaces where the silenced, the invisible and the othered can turn their experiences into radical acts that challenge projected racial, sexual and gendered stereotypes. Contemporary art for women, femme-identified people and women artists of color is a powerful mode of resistance in our current socio-political times.

While some are currently looking to these artists for their responses, their work, for the most part, has always engaged in the socio-political issues, as these issues have been present for them long before the current political climate. Artists like Andrea Chung, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Kirsten Leenaars, and Deborah Roberts use their artistic voices to call attention to the very issues that woke up America during and immediately after the election of Donald Trump—immigration, racism, sexism and violence, among many others.

The artists listed above are a small sampling of the many women artists and women artists of color doing the work of truth-telling. They define their work for themselves as a radical act of self-definition, an important practice taken from Black feminist practices. In this moment, those in and outside of the art world look to artists, and specifically women-identifying artists, to make sense of the unraveling of our values and humanity.

Since the election of Trump to the presidency, women, femme-identified people and people of color have employed myriad ways to organize, protest and resist. Some participated in marches and organizations such as the Women's March, Black Lives Matter, March for Our Lives, and May Day Action. Some used their social media platforms to highlight the value of communities vulnerable to America's current policies.

Just to be clear, many of these policies have been bubbling to the surface for a long time, and many of these individuals have been using their platforms to create this space since long before the 2016 election night. Then, of course, there are artists, curators, art museums, art spaces and philanthropic foundations that are stepping up to this moment of urgency, one key aspect of which is to reconnect with each other and with our humanity.

How are these intertwined entities responding or stepping up?

By actively challenging the status quo of the white, heterosexual, male-dominated and male-centric art world and practicing inclusion and equity. Women artists and women artists of color can only be supported when those of us with access to the halls of power, myself included, intentionally create opportunities and access for those living in the margins. What this means is that curators, art museums, art spaces and

Andrea Chung *PURE*, 2016
Black soap, size varied.
Image courtesy of the artist.



the foundations are removing the barriers to financial support, exhibitions and studio support.

We are responding by inviting artists in to do exhibitions, residencies, and programming and connecting them to our colleagues in positions to help them evolve. Philanthropic foundations are partnering with women-led and African, Latino(a), Asian, Arab, and Native American- (ALAANA)-led arts non-profits to support their efforts by granting funds in an equitable manner. The latter is important work for the resistance and how artists and arts organizations can thrive not only in the moment but also when the fervor dies down because the fervor **always dies down** when it comes to **women** and **people of color**.

When the fervor dies down, the challenges that these artists—women and people of color—face continue: lack of critical reviews, media profiles and attention, equitable access to residency programs that provide financial support for the duration of the program, support for artist mothers, access to grants and artist fellowships, sales of work in the gallery and secondary market and, perhaps most important, being seen as artists contributing to our culture and society.

There is a bit of a double-edged sword in that identifying as a woman, femme or woman artist of color can be limiting for some while it is something to embrace without apology for others. However an artist identifies, today is a time of empowerment through the arts and the artistic voice.

The artistic voice is a safe space.

Some of the most powerful and impactful works in contemporary art are the works that connect lived experiences with an awareness of how beautiful difference is and can be in a moment where difference is the primary reason for hate and division. More and more women and women artists of color are gaining access to share **their** experiences in **their** artistic voice.

Let's work together to support and uplift their voices and the safe spaces in which they must live today and for generations to come. ■



Deborah Roberts, *Double Dare*, 2018, Mixed media on paper. Image courtesy of the artist.

Jeffreen M. Hayes, Ph.D., is a curator and executive director of Threewalls, a Chicago non-profit organization dedicated to contemporary art practice and discussion.

Jennifer Ling Datchuk, *Whitewash*, 2017, video performance. Image courtesy of Walley Films.



Looking Back, Looking Forward: Howardena Pindell

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

By Aniko Berman

Howardena Pindell's long career can be characterized by, among other things, an overarching sense of dissonance, of the seemingly irreconcilable. She is, among other things, an academically trained figurative painter who has prolifically contributed to unique modes of abstraction; a black artist whose work was not considered "black" enough; a creator occupied by both physical and cerebral experience, crossing the binary upheld even today; and an active artist who worked inside and outside the system, participating as a curator and scholar, too, and who crossed from modernism into postmodernism. Perhaps the most notable dissonance can be located in her recognition, which is disproportionately misaligned with her various achievements as creator, curator, teacher, and activist. What Remains to Be Seen highlights this dissonance and explicates

it, transforming the nebulous discordance of Pindell's practice and reception into something more akin to illuminating non-linearity. A Yale graduate (the only African-American MFA there in 1967), one of the first African-American curators at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, a founding member of the bellwether A.I.R. Gallery, and an ardent activist and author, Pindell has come in and out of the focus over the course of her five-plus-decades-long career. This show, curated by the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's Naomi Beckwith and Valerie Cassel Oliver of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, deftly translates the artist's expansive, idiosyncratic practice into a narrative at once smoothly decipherable and nuanced for a contemporary audience, firmly rooting her in the canon and leaving the door ajar for future scholarship.

The exhibition is organized, neatly, into two parts: pre-1979—the year of a major, life-altering car accident—and post-1979. At first pass, this symmetry



Howardena Pindell, *Free, White and 21*, 1980. Videotape (color, sound). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Garth Greenan and Bryan Davidson Blue, 2014.22. Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

appears facile, perhaps even reductive; it echoes the accepted narrative about Pindell's practice until now: the traumatic physical and emotional injuries she sustained conjured in her a commitment to activism, a pivot reflected in the figuration that creeps into her work following her accident. Pindell herself has attested to this, and there is certainly a visible shift in her works that appears to uphold this argument. However, the curators' symmetrical framing in truth belies a much more complex logic, for it both promotes and tears down this line of thinking; they demonstrate its accuracy through a chronologically progressive survey of artworks while also noting its inadequacy in terms of fully comprehending the artist's arc, pointing out very persuasively the stylistic consistencies that occur and re-occur throughout her career as a means of reconciling these two previously irreconcilable portions. In addition to this formal reading, the exhibition maps Pindell's career against contextualizing cultural



Howardena Pindell, *Untitled*, 1968. Garth Greenan Gallery. Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

markers; included with Pindell's creative output is her historical significance, presented as a masterful oeuvre in and of itself.

The development of Pindell's abstractions, as presented in the first half of the show, offers a fascinating look at her experiments in color, which at some point dovetail with her unique use of hole-punched grids and signature sewing style, resulting in the mesmerizing large-scale abstractions for which she is known. An early example of figuration, completed during her first year of grad school, is a skeleton that appears to be glowing from within; lying prone, but vivified (again, dissonance). Just a few years later, Pindell's color exploration has been reduced to elegant abstractions—fields of pastel dots against somber backgrounds, affecting the viewer's sense of perspective. This painterly mode ceases once she moves to New York after grad school, where circumstances require her to "work blind," as Beckwith notes in her contribution to the exhibition's catalogue; that is, her cramped Manhattan quarters don't offer the kind of natural light required by that mode. So, grids and numbers become her medium. The resultant works, subscribing to the austere, rational minimalist

tenet of the grid (although, as the wall texts point out, Pindell's mathematician father's ledger books may have also been an inspiration), are remarkably playful, with Pindell's human presence always close at hand. Consider *1-6031 with Additions, Corrections, and Coffee Stain* (1973). It is a massive piece of graph paper on which she drew thousands of numbers in sequence. The title already expresses the human-ness, the imperfection of the system (c.f. corrections, coffee stain), and though the very feat of patience and muscle memory feels both impressive and oppressive, the unevenness of the

columns represents a welcome sign of breathing life. Similarly, Pindell's large-scale gridded fabric *Untitled* (1968-70) hangs against a wall, its bottom row resting limply on the ground. It is a grid to pack up and take with you; a grid that is toothless and soft and wholly corporeal, sensuous even.

During this time, Pindell developed a method of applying paint through another grid of sorts, created by hole-punching stiff card stock. Using this as a stencil, Pindell would spray paint several veils of color onto canvas, creating works such as a large untitled green and pink abstraction from 1970. Recalling pointillist gestures, the work appears to be vibrating with light

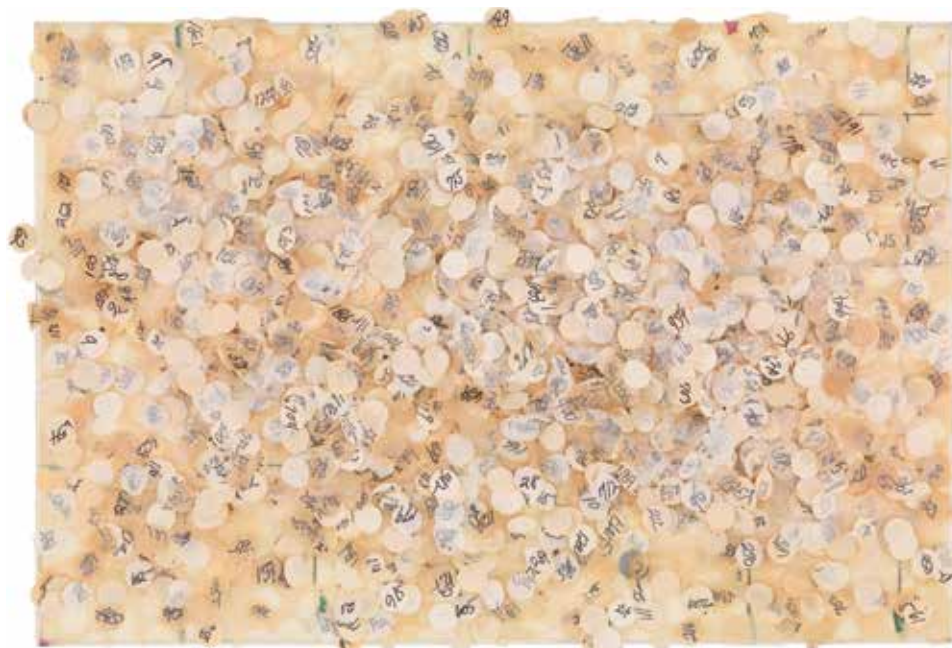
Howardena Pindell, *Untitled*, 1968.

Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.



and motion, suggesting particles, or the hazy light of a daydream. Not surprisingly, Pindell amassed a copious collection of punched-out chads, and she soon incorporated this unexpected art supply into her work. These little disks, which she often marked with numbers, began to populate her works on paper and in paintings alike. At a small scale, they look like precious notations; in larger compositions, such as one from 1972-73 which also features spray-painted veils of color (the first such work), the little chads look like distant faraway stars in the night sky. This then gives way to giant accumulations of chads on the surfaces of unstretched canvases—riveting swaths of enigmatic texture in pastel hues, such as *New York: Night Light* (1977), a light pink confection of punched-out dots, as well as the stencils themselves. One room in particular features four of these wholly absorbing works; a moment of pause should be required for any visitor to get lost in the delicious, meditative, ethereal feeling they inspire.

We are brought back to reality in the 1979, the mid-point of the exhibition, which is represented by an entire section dedicated to that year in Pindell's life and in the world at large. To underline the historical importance of this year, the section also features a timeline of Pindell's career up until then. Since 1967, Pindell had been employed at the MoMA, rising up the ranks to become one of their first African-American curators, of Prints and Illustrated Books. During the 1970s, she was also included in public exhibitions at Spelman College, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, for example (although she was famously excluded from the newly-formed Studio Museum in Harlem, her favored abstractions not being deemed "black" enough). In 1973, she travelled to Africa with another pioneering African American curator, Lowery Stokes Sims, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and earned a grant to work in Paris in 1975. Also active in the downtown arts scene, in 1972 Pindell was a founding member of A.I.R. (Artists in



Howardena Pindell, *Untitled #58*, 1974. Mixed media on board; 5 × 8 in. Collection of James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach, New York. Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

Residence) Gallery, a trailblazing feminist nonprofit exhibition space. In 1979, another downtown nonprofit gallery, Artists Space, organized an exhibition of charcoal drawings by white artist Donald Newman, crassly titled "The Nigger Drawings." This prompted Pindell, along with a group of peers, to create the group Action Against Racism in the Arts (AARA), which wrote a letter to the gallery in protest. The controversy was largely perceived as a free speech issue, and Pindell was thus seen as promoting censorship. Increasingly alienated from her coworkers at MoMA, Pindell resigned from her position after twelve years at the institution and entered an associate professor position at SUNY Stony Brook. It is here that she sustained the traumatic head injury from a car accident, altering the course of her life and her work.

Notably, the room focused Howardena's dramatic experiences in the year 1979 also features several walls jam-packed with other major events around the world that same year, transporting the viewer to the specifics of Pindell's time and place when these very personal events occurred. This also illustrates the sociopolitical crises that were playing out at the time, and which Pindell would very vocally respond to in her later works. This gesture also makes one think about our own time and place: what will our "room" look like in the future? How can we think about our own context and that of the art produced today?

Pindell suffered amnesia from the accident, and the work that immediately follows it can be read as a means of recalling her life and reclaiming her memories. In this light, her video piece *Free, White and 21* (1980) is a mnemonic device wherein she plays herself (recounting instances of racism from her past), as well as a white counterpart (Pindell in white makeup and a blonde wig) offering pithy rebuttals such as, “After all we have done for you... we will find other tokens.” This iconic work, Pindell’s outspoken rebuke against her supposed “feminist” allies, whose liberal tendencies still excluded overt discussions of racism (and which ultimately prompted her resignation from A.I.R. in 1973), is indeed a departure from the dreamy formalism of the aforementioned abstractions: its content is far more autobiographical and politically-charged, and of course, it presents the use of a new medium (video) featuring the image of the artist herself. However, then again, perhaps it is not such a departure. Considered along with her earlier work, one might see the same vivid hues in the background, or the material of the bandage she wraps and then unwraps around her head as not dissimilar from her demonstrated interest in gauzy textiles, or still her form itself as not in fact so absent from the labor-intensive assemblages and numbered grids from her pre-1979 life.

And so, a sort of dual reckoning occurs in the second part of the show in which a continuity is revealed at the same time as a chasm is formed. The tight, historical approach of the first half unravels in the second part of the show, which is by and large arranged thematically, befitting the notion that Pindell has always been Pindell, even if we’ve failed to see it.

Indeed, she continues to laboriously work her surfaces in the *Autobiography* series of the 1980s, marrying disparate materials from her life together, but now boldly goes steps further. If previously, the chad could be seen as the remnant of a necessary physical act in her artmaking, and thus a sort of piece from her daily life as a creator, now the presence of her world and her world vision becomes even stronger; now bits of postcards she collected or sent on her travels, photographs she took, and even portions of text convey specific content drawn directly from her lived experience and her personal worldview. In some cases, such as in *Autobiography: Fire (Suttee)* (1986-87), she herself gives physical form to this works. She traces the outline of her body on canvas, literally embedding herself in a field of her own making; she is thus subject and object.



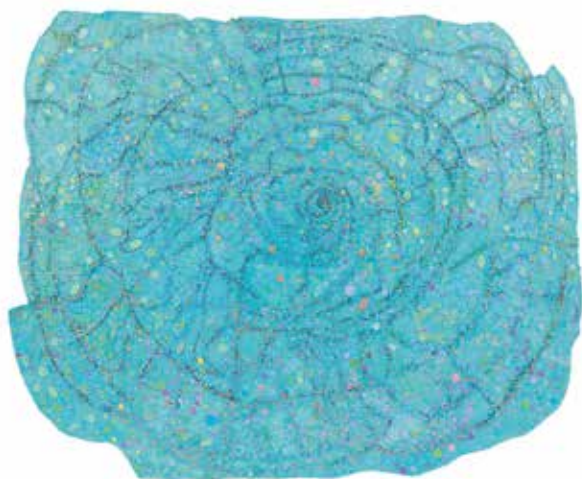
Howardena Pindell, *Astronomy: Saturn, Nebula*, 2008. Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

Pindell’s interest in connecting varied, dissonant elements plays out across the show’s entirety—opposing registers, layers and materials in her earlier works; different moments in time and objective/subjective experience later—and this gesture can be seen quite wonderfully in her ongoing series of *Video Drawings*. In these works, she adheres translucent sheets of clear acetate marked with arrows, numbers and similarly directive graphic forms onto her television screen, taking a photo when the image beneath appears to match up compellingly with the overlay. This series began in the 1970s, often with images taken from sports; here, the movement of bodies piqued Pindell’s formalist interest, and the resultant works suggest enigmatic choreography or game plans, nonspecifically implying a link between the two layers of text/image. Of course, chance, the found object, and even the stencil are all present here as well, and resonate deeply with her hole-punch works. Later, this process became a locale for more overt political protest. *War: A Thousand Points of Light (White Phosphorus)* (1988) combines an image of a white phosphorous bomb explosion with the phrase “a thousand points of light,” promoted by George H.W. Bush as a positive metaphor for US volunteerism. In the year of the photograph’s making, Saddam Hussein used white phosphorous in an attack on a city in Southern Kurdistan. The intended benevolence of the phrase becomes gravely ironic when juxtaposed with the lights of the bomb, which in turn chillingly suggests celebratory Fourth of July fireworks.

In the 1990s and 2000s, Pindell continued creating overt, intense responses to the failings of society, addressing everything from war to apartheid to the AIDS crisis and police brutality through her particular formal lexicon. *Hunger: The Color of Bones* (2014) features a large, mixed-media canvas banner with images and text related to “starvation,” “wars,” “holocausts,” “genocide,” and “drought,” in front of which is field of human skeletons. This trans-historical diorama of sorts—evoking everything from natural disasters and our inadequate responses to them to war and to even the horrific tragedy of the Donner party—conveys an amalgamation of the moral crimes we have perpetuated against ourselves.

The exhibition closes with works that convey Pindell’s interest in cosmology, a fittingly macro zoom out that allows her an expanded view of the world in which we live, perhaps allowing some relief from the travails of humanity’s imperfections; we are nothing but small, chance happenings in a vast, infinite universe. As another section devoted to Pindell’s many travels around the globe shows, she relishes the opportunity to shift her perspective through engagement with other ways of seeing and being. Circular shapes—mirroring, of course, her beloved chad—coil and spiral into organically organized compositions. Created with her signature sewing process, a stalwart reference to her grids, as well as African textiles she encountered on trips to Africa in the 1970s, and featuring a highly textured mixed media surface, works such as *Night Flight* (2015-16) look back to her beginnings and forward to her future as a both an artistic creator and a human citizen of this planet. As the exhibition title suggests,

Howardena Pindell, *Night Flight*, 2015–16. Mixed media on canvas; 75 × 63 in. Garth Greenan Gallery. Image courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.



this is a survey that eagerly anticipates what will come next for her as a seasoned, searching creator and for us as a society more generally.

It should be noted that the exhibition’s catalogue is not merely an accompaniment but also a true extension of the show. It features an array of essays addressing the various rich aspects of Pindell’s practice by a heady mix of peers (e.g., Lowery Stokes Sims and artist Charles Gaines), and those whose own roads owe much to Pindell’s trailblazing path (e.g., Naomi Beckwith, Valerie Cassel Oliver, and MCA Assistant Curator Grace Deveney). It also includes an invaluable chronology of Pindell’s life tracked against a backdrop of significant world events by Sarah Cowan, which encapsulates Pindell’s dynamic relevance not only as contemporary artist, but also as an activist and a pioneering curator. Finally, it includes interviews with the artist and her own writing, *The Howardena Pindell Papers*, which attest to her status as a veritable renaissance woman. She provides a multilayered, dynamic creator-model that is a necessary response to the complex circumstances in which we all live and operate today. As the curators write in their own opening thoughts, the show “aims to examine one artist’s creative and social output in a way that allows us to think about contemporary practices in which object making, activism, advocacy, scholarship, and self-actualization become increasingly and inextricably intertwined.” What remains to be seen, indeed. ■

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Aniko Berman is an art writer based in Chicago. She previously covered the art world in New York, writing reviews and artist interviews for various publications including *Flash Art International*. She is currently Director at Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

Nina Chanel Abney Paired with Keith Haring at Chicago Cultural Center

by Rebecca Memoli

Keith Haring, one of art's earliest cartoon-style practitioners, is expertly paired with a female artist, Nina Chanel Abney, whose art reflects similar connection, in an exciting exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center. Their canvases bring a sense of raw energy and attitude to those Beaux-Arts galleries.

Keith Haring's *Chicago Mural* project was earlier on view at Midway Airport and removed while the airport was undergoing renovations. Haring's style and way of working is intuitive and scarcely, if ever, planned out.

The exhibit's accompanying video shows Haring painting the black outlines of the mural directly onto 488 feet of white painted wood panels. The outlines were then filled in over one day by 500 Chicago Public Schools students. Haring came to the city at the invitation of a local teacher, and the Chicago Mural's creation was celebrated with a Keith Haring Week in May, 1989.

Haring managed to create a style that is quick to make and easily read. His philosophy about art was that it should be accessible to everyone. He gave the same amount of effort to a large painting as to a chalk drawing in a New York City subway station. It makes sense that, with this philosophy, he would be devoted to creating the *Chicago Mural* and donating his time to a project that united and inspired so many Chicago students.



Artist Nina Chanel Abney poses with her work, *First and Last*, part of the Nasher Museum's collection, and featured in the exhibition "Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush." Image courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Photo by J Caldwell.

The partial mural on display covers two adjoining walls of the Sydney R. Yates gallery. Shades are drawn over the windows; the lighting is quite low and moody, giving the mural a strange, monumental quality. There is stark contrast between the ornately decorated walls and the weathered-looking mural.

A doorway leads visitors into the Exhibition Hall where Nina Chanel Abney's "Royal Flush" is on view. "Royal Flush" is a survey of Abney's work over the last ten years, including collages and several large-scale

Composite of a portion of the Haring *Chicago Mural* made from photos taken by Marcelino Y. Fahd.





Nina Chanel Abney, *Untitled (FUCK T*E *OP)*, 2014. Acrylic on canvas, 72 × 108 inches. Collection of Kamaal Fareed. Image courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion. © Nina Chanel Abney.

paintings. Abney uses mixed media, including spray paint. Like Haring, she rarely sketches or plans her pieces, instead working quickly and intuitively.

Several of Abney's paintings address issues of police violence. In these pieces, the police appear as both black and white. *Untitled (IXI Black)* shows a black cop in a verbal altercation with a white man. The eyebrows of both figures are key for discerning this situation. The white man's eyebrow angles downward sharply and the red dot on his cheek shows exasperation. The look on the policeman's face in contrast is one of worry as his eyebrow angles upward. One can't help but wonder at how different this painting would feel if the races were reversed.

Untitled (XXXXXX) depicts two black policemen restraining a white man with a police badge—another

cop, or, intriguingly, a man impersonating a cop—who has no legs but appears to be in a kneeling position. Stenciled birds and plants fill the center of the canvas and obscure most of the text except for the word KILL. In both paintings, Abney represents black cops and creates a storyline for them, a perspective that seems overlooked in media accounts. Her narrative is one of retribution for the lives taken and a call for accountability.

The style of Abney's more recent work is similar to collage but still remains large scale. I found the ghoulish painted figures in her earlier work more interesting to look at than the flat, solid planes of skin tone in her newer work. However, this approach is clearly

a way of simplifying the imagery and language and helps her build a complex, yet cohesive, narrative. This direction is quite compelling.

Abney's most recent work, *Catfish*, consists of 4 panels of posing and contorted bodies. Their forms complement Haring's energetic shapes, visible through the doorway into the adjoining gallery. Each panel has a flat, colored background, and the addition of figures, stencils, and text create movement and depth.

The accompanying text takes on an interesting role, being both symbolic and alphabetic. X's appear in the background as well as on the figures. Each panel gives the sense of instant judgment that we experience in today's web-driven culture. Viewers are guided from panel to panel by the text.





Nina Chanel Abney, *Catfish*, 2017. Unique ultrachrome pigmented print, acrylic, and spray paint on canvas, 102 x 216 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, New York. Image courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion. © Nina Chanel Abney.

Although each scene is explicit, it is not clear what is driving these qualifying phrases: NOPE... WOW... YES... NO? The movement through this painting feels very much like swiping or scrolling from profile to profile on Tinder or Instagram.

Abney and Haring have a unique way of reflecting current cultural trends. Haring's work was iconic for his AIDS era. The vibrant colors and expressive black outline are indicative of a cartoon-like quality that now creates a feeling of nostalgia. Abney is more interested in the use of emojis as a means of abbreviating language through symbols. The language is condensed, which allows her narrative to be more complex. It feels quintessentially millennial.

The exhibition of Abney's provocative work, paired with Haring's *Chicago Mural*, makes a bold statement about art's intrinsic ties to the culture of its times. ■

Keith Haring, *A Chicago Mural*, and Nina Chanel Abney, "Royal Flus." at the Chicago Cultural Center, Exhibit Hall, 4th Floor North February 10–May 6, 2018 (Abney) and March 3–September 23, 2018 (Haring)

Rebecca Memoli is a Chicago-based photographer and curator. She received her BFA from Pratt Institute and her MFA in Photography from Columbia College. Her work has been featured in several national and international group shows. Her latest curatorial project is "The Feeling is Mutual."



Nina Chanel Abney, *Mad 51st*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 inches. Collection of Jeanne Williams and Jason Greenman. Image courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion. © Nina Chanel Abney.

“Vivarium”: Mary Lou Zelazny at Carl Hammer Gallery

by Bruce Thorn

“Vivarium” is Mary Lou Zelazny’s fifth solo exhibition at the Carl Hammer Gallery. Zelazny has always possessed a unique style, an engaging combination of painting and collage that, while supported by recognizable objects and figures, veers deftly towards abstraction, now more than ever. The new work marks noticeable changes in subject matter and methods.

Earlier presentations have focused on floating thoughts and associations that help form personal identity and the interior worlds of the mind. Those works had much in common with surrealism and cubism, slicing and dicing figures, objects and vanishing points while embracing minutiae, intensity and anxiety.

By contrast, “Vivarium” offers uncluttered landscapes and floral still lifes in pared-down compositions, where the fun and energy also happen in negative space, belonging to the surrounding air as much as to the trees and flowers on display.

With fewer narrative elements involved than in past works, Zelazny offers idyllic botanical stages where figure and ground attempt to melt into one flux of energy.

Flowers and trees are composed as if they are subjects for portraiture. Their use as protagonists serves as a basic design device or matrix upon which Zelazny celebrates color, movement and an unbridled enthusiasm for life.

Such a practice evokes many recent works by Richard Hull, which have involved the basic design of a horse’s tail as a point of departure for painterly exploration, or Don Baum’s simple house constructions, which served as starting points for his fluid reveries.

Zelazny works through an eclectic plethora of art historical influences with a confidence devoid of second-guessing. Comparing her to other Chicago artists is on point; it’s the city where she was born, raised, educated and has spent most of her life.

The semi-abstract combination of collage with painting reminds one of Ray Yoshida, the iconic professor who taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1959 to 2005. Zelazny’s dense layering of content brings to mind Paul Lamantia’s compulsive over-painting and crowding. As with many Chicago

artists, one might also trace Zelazny’s fondness for getting lost in labor-intensive details back to Ivan Albright.

The landscapes in “Vivarium” are all inspired by walks along the Des Plaines River on the Northwest Side of Chicago, where Zelazny has long enjoyed the practice of plein air landscape painting, producing straightforward, small scenes on location. This interest has until now kept a safe distance from the more complex works shown at her exhibitions. “Vivarium” attempts to bring this disparate love into her mix of major ambitions.

Zelazny’s method of collage successfully fits the content of the new work. In the past, she cut and rearranged found printed matter. Many of those components were not archival and have faded or changed coloration over the years. By 2011’s “The Cake Lady Returns,” she was reprinting found images with more archival Epson inks. This time around, most of the collage elements are handmade with acrylic paints using a loose, gestural, abstract monotype process similar to Max Ernst’s frottage and decalomania. These dancing brushstrokes are the only occasion where Zelazny shows no fear of complete, non-representational abstraction.

One particular work follows the artist’s previous direction, and that is *Motes* (2017), a claustrophobic

Mary Lou Zelazny, *Motes*, 2017, acrylic, oil and collage on canvas 44x59”. Image courtesy of the artist and Carl Hammer Gallery



exploration that includes a female figure lying on her back underneath a tree and stereoscopically rising up towards an aqueous blue sky that is somehow bathed in daylight, while contemplating little specks that float through the air, captured, like spider threads, in sunbeams.

Figures, branches, butterflies, birds, bees and dandelion puffballs all look as if they inhabit a sea world's existential vortex. Even in a complex picture like *Motes*, movement and gesture lead to focal points and bring unity to the deconstructive nature inherent with collage, resulting in a détente somewhere between frenzy and calm.

As a colorist, Zelazny also achieves détente between a desire to shout and an inclination for silence. The pale, demure blues and greens that bathe *The Eyed Tree #7* seem to ward off more flamboyant possibilities insinuated by the presence of cadmium reds and greens through the specks of rose, violet, turquoise and alizarin lurking in the monotype foliage. An almost paint-by-number attention is given to reflections in the flaccid pond ripples. Distance in the landscape is indicated simply as warm yellow-green.

Two floral still lifes are also noteworthy: *Beaded Echo* and *The Burlington Bequest* (both 2016) each present a vase of flowers and play with the dichotomy between modern and academic painting. The flowers in both are mostly abstractions and monotype segments, but in *The Burlington Bequest*, one flower out of the large bouquet, perhaps a Maximilian sunflower, is painted in a naturalistic style. It blends right in with hardly a notice. Heavy flowers droop down to

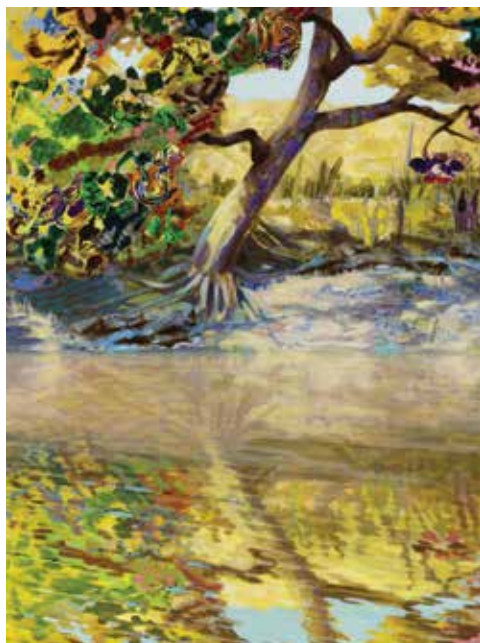


Mary Lou Zelazny, *The Blackeyed Tree #2*, 2017, acrylic, oil and collage on canvas 48x56". Image courtesy of the artist and Carl Hammer Gallery

the table, and the weightiness of the bouquet seems to be the real subject. *Beaded Echo* contrasts a naturalistically-rendered vase and tablecloth with a happily slap-dashed rendering of flowers.

Blackeyed Tree #2 gets as close to non-representational abstraction as possible without losing the subject altogether. A nocturnal tree is illuminated by distant stars. Branches bow low to the ground, where darkness devours shadows. That one solitary tree peeking out of the night becomes a conversation, a display of pyrotechnics that both speaks and listens. ■

Bruce Thorn is a Chicago based painter and musician. He has degrees in painting and drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a Contributing Editor to the New Art Examiner.



(Left) Mary Lou Zelazny, *The Eyed Tree #7*, 2017, acrylic, oil and collage on canvas 62x46". Image courtesy of the artist and Carl Hammer Gallery



(Right) Mary Lou Zelazny, *Beaded Echo*, 2016, acrylic, oil and collage on canvas 46x36". Image courtesy of the artist and Carl Hammer Gallery

“Far From the Tree”: Judy Ledgerwood at Rhona Hoffman Gallery

by Phillip Barcio

Judy Ledgerwood’s “Far From the Tree” exhibit at Rhona Hoffman’s new gallery space affirms the power of paint. The eight works in the show tremble with expressionistic abandon and proclaim the artist’s love for the medium.

The iconic *Yoni* (2018) radiates with elemental pride—thick squirts of raw paint coming straight from the tubes; a mesh of intuitive brush strokes supporting the oozing, linear mounds; an avalanche of primordial drips advancing downward, acquiescing to gravity’s incessant and inevitable lure. Ledgerwood’s hand, arm, body and mind are all represented here, with corporeal authority.



Judy Ledgerwood, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 2018. Oil and metallic oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Rhona Hoffman Gallery.

Sunshine and Shadow (2018) drew me in yet denied my eye a place to land: there was too much to look at. Relaxing my gaze, I see everything more clearly. (I see) shapes and color relationships; an array of ogees that echo 9th century Tunisian wall tiles; the interlacing patterns of an Incan textile. All of this and none of this is there. This painting inspired me to see what was in front of me and what was lurking within me.



Judy Ledgerwood, *Tiny Dancer*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 36 x 30 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Rhona Hoffman Gallery.

Tiny Dancer (2017) welcomes viewers to the visceral pleasure of texture and hue. It calmed my eyes with its harmonious triangles. That relaxed state continued as I gazed into *Sheela* (2018), a mix of geometric shapes and symbolic, concentric yonis. These paintings point me towards an examination of paint as a medium, paint as an action, and paint as a meta-rhetorical tool.

Two large-scale vertical canvases—*Drunkards Path* (2018) and *Hopscotch Chelsea Rose* (2018)—which hang side by side in the exhibition, act as Yin Yang complements to each other. *Drunkard’s Path* is a statement of surrender; a loss of control; a descent into madness that nonetheless conveys its own sort of undeniable balance. *Hopscotch Chelsea Rose* is a

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Barbara Crane at 90: Two Galleries Pay Tribute to Celebrated Chicago Photographer

by Amanda Lancour

Barbara Crane is a noted American photographer born in 1928 in Chicago. During her four score and ten years, she has lived through the Great Depression and the Second World War. She has also witnessed Chicago's transformation over more than half a century.

After a career that has included 75 solo exhibitions and 170 group exhibitions, Crane's work has earned a place in the permanent collections of major museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in the New York City. All the while, she constantly taught at noteworthy institutions.

Crane has worked in a wide variety of techniques, formats, and materials including Polaroid, gelatin silver and platinum prints. She is the most important woman photographer associated with the IIT Institute of Design. Crane is, in short, a powerful woman whose artworks are considered on par with those of such other great women artists as Imogen Cunningham, Frida Kahlo, and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Her body of work is notable for the vast amount of experimentation and constant probing she conducted into the photographic medium as to what visual language photography speaks. She is truly one of the leaders in both honing and teaching the technical aspects of photography as well as in pushing abstract creative boundaries. The results were seen recently in two congruent solo shows dedicated to celebrating her achievements and her 90th birthday.



Barbara Crane, *Tucson, AZ, 1979-80* [012], polaroid print. Image courtesy of Catherine Edelman Gallery.



Barbara Crane, *Tucson, AZ, 1979* [004], polaroid print with drawing. Image courtesy of Catherine Edelman Gallery.

Crane developed a relationship with Polaroid and was one of the few photographers given privileged, unlimited access to their film. This allowed her to experiment and test the limits of this new photographic material. "Barbara Crane: The Polaroid Years" at the Catherine Edelman Gallery features some of Crane's best-known Polaroid work from the late 1970-80s and includes recent work from 2012. In this curated exhibit, the pieces are subtly more colorful and smaller. They also express the free-spiritedness of instant film of the time.

Crane would experiment with film until she found something she liked and then would try repeating that subject matter in a series of works. As seen in *Tucson, AZ, 1979-80* [012], she captures a social study of humanity in a snapshot, as a man carries his child in a warm embrace wrapped visually in the cool tones of color.

Similar in color tone is *Tucson, AZ, 1979* [004], a tactile, relatable, everyday subject matter expressed in a unique illustrative drawing created by pressing on the Polaroid pack film with a scribe, moving the emulsion around, leaving an outline of the subjects and, in some cases, leaving part of the original photograph. The resulting effect is a singularly illustrative work before there was Illustrator.

What is truly profound about Barbara Crane's work is that she not only constantly experimented with

what photography is and could do but also with the boundaries of the visual language it could speak when capturing the world in front of a lens. Her obviously well-honed technical expertise as seen in her large format prints derived from 5x7 negatives is seen at the Stephen Daiter Gallery, which exhibited her work in the show “Barbara Crane at Ninety: A Look at Selected Series.”

Daiter’s solo exhibition features curated silver gelatin prints that are as magnificent in size as they are in tone. The exhibition focuses on five series of large photographic works: the Neon Series (1969), People of the North Portal (1970-71), Still Life: Natures Mortes (2000-02), Multiple Human Forms (1968-69), and Chicago Loop (1976-78). It is obvious that the negatives are expertly exposed and meticulously printed, mimicking Crane’s meticulous, diligent and thorough practice of examining one thought, subject, series, and medium.

She once presented Ansel Adams, 26 years her senior, with a body of work. Impressed, Adams hired her to teach at his Yosemite Park photographic workshops. Crane applied the knowledge she gained from her technical, compositional, and tonal studies in the Chicago Loop Series to her Yosemite teachings.

As seen in her series, *People of the North Portal* (1970-71), Crane would shoot people day in and day out while exiting Chicago’s Museum of Science and Industry. She exposes and prints for an entire rich tonal range in the subject, letting the negative space be the darkest black. This leaves a purposeful, powerful, dark negative space while pulling the viewer back into the subject as seen in the North Portal series.



Barbara Crane, *People of the North Portal*, 1970-71, gelatin silver photographic print. Image courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery.

Crane works in series: people, faces, places and forms, usually alive, but sometimes dead. In a series of still lifes titled, *Still Life: Natures Mortes* (2000-02), Crane focuses on dead animals. While capturing a gruesome subject, these large silver gelatin prints, in contrast, are quite elegant and beautiful. You would not think to even ask if the animal were dead or alive, you just simply think, “Wow, what a beautiful photograph.” One only later found out a bird was dead when the still life was composed and the film exposed. We see this below in the image, *Still Lifes: Natures Mortes* (bird with head down), 1999-2001.



Still Lifes: Natures Mortes (bird with head down), 1999-2001, gelatin silver photographic print. Image courtesy of Stephen Daiter Gallery.

Photography has been Barbara Crane’s one love ever since she helped her father in the darkroom. Dedicated, she never stopped working diligently throughout the last seven decades, skimming just below the surface of popular recognition. Her life is quite refreshing in an age where everyone is vying to be a social media celebrity. These two shows pay tribute to Crane’s life in photography. ■

The Stephen Daiter Gallery exhibit ran from March 2–May 5. The Catherine Edelman show was on display through April with a closing celebration April 28.

Amanda Lancour is a photographer and art writer with a background in art history and gallery curation during her formative years. She recently relocated back to Chicago from New York City.

D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P

Hatch Art

by K.A. Letts

“D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P,” an exhibit of new work by young Detroit artists Shaina Kasztelan and Heidi Barlow at Hatch Art, offers a visual thrill ride in which artifacts of low-brow consumer culture are disaggregated and reassembled in a fine art context. Barlow and Kasztelan share a studio and a sensibility characterized by aggressive femininity and ambivalence toward their culturally assigned roles. They know what’s expected of them, and they aren’t having it.

“D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P’s” antic mood masks the quiet depression that forms the underlying theme of the work. In spite of their youth, or because of it, Kasztelan and Barlow are fully aware of their ambiguous position in a society that treats them as consumable sex objects while simultaneously hoping to profit from their buying power.

Of the two artists, Kasztelan is the more confrontational. She is an enraged, virtuosic satirist of consumerism, employing dollar store kitsch and cheap hobby shop playthings to communicate deeply personal and implicitly political messages with the mass-manufactured means at her disposal. She has fabricated three separate but related bodies of work for “D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P.” The first, a series of bedazzled, readymade handbags, slyly refers to Freud’s identification of the purse as a subconscious metaphor for female genitalia. Any idea that this constitutes a sexual invitation, however, is belied by the menacing clowns and

Shaina Kasztelan

NO THNX

Denim jeans on stretcher, acrylic paint, appliques, embroidery. Image courtesy of K. A. Letts.



sharp-toothed kitties with which they are embellished. Her denim jeans-derived pieces—using the back pockets only—are decorated with smiley faces dripping blood, appliqued flames, rainbows, hearts and stars. Not content to merely decorate, she attaches additional objects such as tamagotchis, rabbits’ feet and chains. Slogans neatly embroidered on back jeans pockets like “Kiss My Goth Ass” and “NO THNX” make it perfectly clear that this artist is “Nobody’s Princess.”

Kasztelan’s most sustained and ambitious artworks are her five altar-like mini-ofrendas. She picks and chooses globalized imagery from Japanese amine, American low-brow and Hispanic cultures, conjuring a bleak yet comic worldview populated by dime store clowns, black cats, pills, quasi-religious figures, Barbies, skeletons and Kewpies. Kasztelan’s saturated color palette is somewhat determined by the objects she selects, but she doubles down with applied ornamentation, carefully finishing each diorama with acrylic “icing” reminiscent of Mexican Day of the Dead sugar skulls and capping it off with cheap artificial flowers and fabric trim. The effect of these meticulously curated triptychs is both saccharine and menacing.

Her large painting *Kawaii Dream House* (*kawaii* refers to the quality of cuteness in Japanese culture) represents a new direction in her work. She forgoes the use of readymades here while retaining the aggressively sweet color, symmetry and multicultural references of her previous work. Kasztelan has created an attractive but ominously uninhabited dream house in the clouds, set against a saturated tangerine sky and surmounted by a rainbow. She clearly suspects that this conventionally pretty confection is an elabo-

Continued on page 26.



Shaina Kasztelan
Black Cat Carnival
Readymade purse,
readymade plastic
toys, lace trim. Image
courtesy of K. A. Letts

“Thank you for having me”: Margot Bergman at Corbett vs. Dempsey

by Shanna Zentner

When viewing the paintings of Margot Bergman, one is confronted with portraits that propose incongruity between self and body. What does it mean when a head has one crisp, glowing, saccharine eye while the other is muddled, scratchy or reddened and buried within painted flesh?

Are we meant to contemplate a dyad of selves, one perhaps false and idealized while the second is messy, unclear and, at times, crudely outlined?

Bergman is known for her thrift store paintings. These are made by painting a second portrait over a found portrait while allowing for parts of the original face to remain visible within the revised and reborn painting. Often, the original portrait is visible in the forehead—a kind of third eye—of the newer, larger portrait.

The effect provides space to question the relationships between outsider or naïve painting and Bergman’s work, as well as the psychological querying involved in describing a face within a face.

It is this psychological dimension, particularly the consideration of self-presentation, which is the substance of the work in her latest exhibition at Corbett vs. Dempsey gallery. These portraits emphasize the multiplicity of form required to describe a person using repeated and overlaid facial features rather than the face-within-a-face strategy in Bergman’s previous work.

Whereas the latter strategy invites a comparison between inner and outer versions of identity, the current portraits offer images in flux, not unlike Philip K. Dick’s image-shifting suits in Richard Linklater’s film adaptation of “A Scanner Darkly,” except without the obfuscation. Bergman’s characters are not hiding. They are confident, projecting awareness of their own complexity rather than confusion over their shifting natures.

The portraits’ eyes seem to rest either on top of or beneath the skin as opposed to being structurally integral to the head. Although differing dramatically from each other, each eye looks directly and unflinchingly outward. One might be tempted to describe the faces as dyads: two different pairs of eyes, therefore only two different souls occupying the same head.

Yet the lips often pronounce the chatter of a multiplicity. In *Margaret*, there are multiple sets of lips drawn boldly in crayon over painted lips of pink and ochre. The total number of mouths is unclear, creating the odd sensation of a mouth at rest while simultaneously in motion, possibly in speech.

In *Brenda*, the mouth is the central ingress. Paint strokes circle around each of the lips as if they had danced into existence, enclosing the mouth to form the face. In these paintings, the mouths show lips parted, dashed, circled and, occasionally, baring teeth.

Margot Bergman, (left to right) *Margaret* (2017), *Sandy* (2018), *Brenda* (2015), *Gertrude* (2017-2018), Images courtesy of Corbett vs. Dempsey and the artist



In *Sandy*, a bold green dash crosses over the bottom of a pair of gray lips. The green is a crossing-out and a second mouth.

These are not passive portraits. The overlay of mouths describe active voices while the eyes demand our attention.

Sandy is a compelling example of the paintings' examination of the relationship between head and environment. Sandy's hair mimics the waves of the suggested seascape behind them. The hair becomes blue at its border with the blue sea and blue continues to take over the hair, replacing brunette waves with water.

The hair turns into background and vice versa, concretizing the interdependence of self. Is the head's reflection of the surrounding, external world creating its environment, or is the environment infesting the head?

In *Effie and Ida*, the hair is illuminated on the right side by a light source outside of the painting's frame. Besides the characters' outward stares, this is the only clear gesture toward a world outside of the painted space. The illumination, outside of view, can offer a reminder of our own projections into the space of the painting.

What is the self beyond our reflections of those things which are projected onto us? Bergman's artworks embody selves which absorb their environment while remaining defiantly distinct and staring back. ■

Shanna Zentner is a Post-MFA teaching fellow in the Department of Visual Arts (DOVA) at the University of Chicago. This is her first appearance in the New Art Examiner.

"Far From The Tree" Continued from page 15.

statement of planning and repetition; an expression of the power of patterns; an embrace of stability, calmness, and security. The value of both extremes is validated by the contrasts between the two works.

The largest painting in the show was the monumental *Grandma's Flower Garden* (2006). This painting felt like the intellectual and aesthetic primordial spring from which the rest of her work evolved. It assured me that whether I follow the track of abstraction, reading only the rich, formalist bounty of these works, or choose instead to explore their innumerable, symbolic narrative mysteries within the compositions, either way, I will arrive at the same place: a world of relationships, processes, and patterns.

Thinking back on this exhibition, I am reminded of the landmark essay, "Art Hysterical Notions of Progress and Culture" (1977-78), by Valerie Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff. Judy Ledgerwood is the contemporary heir to its revolutionary wisdom. The works in "Far From the Tree" declare with expressionistic authority the truth revealed by the Pattern and Decoration movement of the last generation but smack down its pedantic cobwebs, making way for fresh, electric, painterly joy. ■

Judy Ledgerwood's "Far From the Tree" is on view at Rhona Hoffman Gallery, 1711 West Chicago Avenue, through May 19, 2018.



Judy Ledgerwood, *Hopscotch Chelsea Rose*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 76 x 46 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Rhona Hoffman Gallery.

Phillip Barcio is an art writer and fiction author whose work appears regularly in Hyperallergic, IdeelArt, La Gazette Drouot and the New Art Examiner. His fiction has appeared in Space Squid and the Swamp Ape Review. He has work forthcoming in Western Humanities Review.

Works that Caught Our Eye



(Above) Camille lemmolo, *Dissection of the American Empire*, 2018. Installation seen at the artist's studio.



(Above) Jose Rodriguez, *Untitled*, 2016, mixed media. Seen at Las Manos Gallery, Chicago.



(Left) Tom Robinson, *Firenze*, 1994, wood. Seen at Tom Robinson Gallery, Chiacgo..

(Below) Dan Tamarkin, *Blue of Havana (for Diane Wakoski)*, photograph. Seen at Rangefinder Gallery, Chicago

(Below) Ron Copeland, *Mozaic lamps*. Seen at Line Dot Editions, Chicago.`



“Dancing in the Counterform”: The Paper Work of Richard Shipps

by Evan Carter

More often than not, the university galleries that I visit are fashioned after the modern white cube. The style of a university art gallery can reflect the values of the institution and what its perceived value of art might be.

The State Street Gallery at Robert Morris University is not the austere white cube overseen by a specific curatorial model. Applications for exhibitions can be submitted on the gallery website, and the space itself lacks the air of formality that is commonly associated with the white cube. The recent exhibition “Dancing in the Counterform” contains a selection of work by artist Richard Shipps that could stand up in the white cube gallery but takes on a different life on State Street.

The gallery has a showroom feel, with neon red lights running across the outside. It provides floating walls to allow the room with exhibitions to be busy with things to look at. “Dancing in the Counterform” is no exception.

This exhibition by Richard Shipps contains dozens of works selected and arranged by the artist and spanning roughly ten years of his career. I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Shipps and gaining insight into the work that I may not have had otherwise.

I had many questions for the artist about topics ranging from his selection of materials to his process, as well as the role that the traditions and history of paper cutting plays in his work. Here is what I learned.

Shipps’ work is consistent in that he cuts paper to create a composition on its surface, but there is variation in material and method. Paper is almost always the substrate, but some use watercolor paper while others are made using Tyvek, which allows for more experimentation with paint and durability. Many of the paper pieces are mounted on walls behind glass, while others hang from the ceiling or travel from a wall to wrap around a pillar. These sculptural pieces blend in more with the space and feel more at home in the State Street Gallery atmosphere than they might have in a white cube gallery.

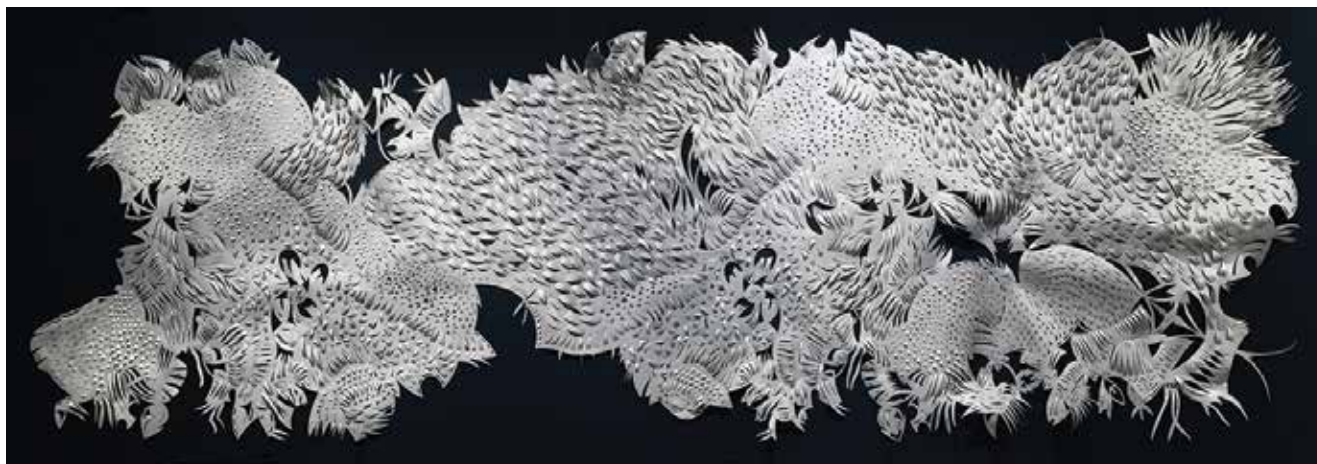
The artist generously explained the processes behind a number of pieces and some far more procedurally than others. *Sarondish Fulcrum* is a piece on Tyvek paper that he described as beginning with one cut from which each subsequent cut is a response. The abstract composition utilizes patterns of textures that clash and allow a kind of figure to emerge.

Shapes cut from the central areas of the black paper are turned over and border the rest of the image. They are red on their opposite side and feel like runic characters, adding to the playfully sinister and demonic qualities associated with this color scheme. This was aided in that I couldn’t help but see the relief cuts as eyes, feathers, scales and claws.

These figurative and narrative elements are absent in other pieces. Works that are freed from the rectangle

Richard Shipps,
*Textured Hex
Panel*, 2011-2016,
acrylic paint on
Tyvek paper.
Image courtesy
of Richard Shipps





Richard Shipps, *Organic Flow 21*, 2016, Tyvek paper, 48”h x 140”w. Image courtesy of Richard Shipps

are abundant in this exhibition. A series of colorful shapes, entitled *Textured Hex Panels*, are arranged horizontally along a wall, making what is the largest installed work in the whole show. These shapes in blue, orange, green, yellow, and purple playfully clash with modernist reverie from afar while asking viewers to take a closer look at the intricate cuts that give them texture and definition not exclusive to their shape and color.

But their presence in the room speaks more to the activity in the space. *Textured Hex Panels* is displayed in the open southern side of the gallery around a seating area where people sit and talk or do work. The piece itself feels like a companion to the human activity in the space rather than something that demands the undivided attention and inspection of the viewer.

Much of Shipps’ work is focused on form and light and would be very interesting to see in the formal space of the white cube where their intricacies could be isolated without the visual busyness of the downtown gallery. Nevertheless, Richard’s work functions well in this space. Despite being inanimate objects, they are rhythmic and kinetic in the way abstract painting can be and allude to some of the abstract expressionist aesthetics of Pollack in both form and the esoteric titling.

Pieces such as *Organic Flow 21* and *Latin Rhythm* suggest a channeling of something felt but unseen, while other pieces refer to qualities that are more apparent in the work. *Shadow Maker* hangs by a wall, casting shadows through the cuts in the paper, while other images made with single incisions bear that as their title and a number to mark its place in the series.

I pressed the artist on his relationship to traditions in paper cutting. The art form has been used to create elaborate decorations for a variety of cultural events,

from holidays to wedding ceremonies, and spans centuries and cultures from around the globe. Although Shipps looks at these traditions, he does not prioritize them as reference points to his own work.

He also looks to art history and contemporary art at large, which he says sometimes influences his approach. Paper-cutting is not absent from art history. Matisse was known for his paper collages, as were the Surrealists and Cubists. Contemporary artists like Kara Walker, Sara Sze, and Julie Mehretu utilize paper-cutting in their mixed media projects, which are often driven by weighty concepts and social narratives.

This work is different in that Shipps is dedicated to the process and what he discovers along the way. In our discussion, I see the connection to the modern western traditions of painting and drawing and his employment of paper-cutting techniques to create what I believe he considers a “Counterform.”

I see these works more as unique hybrids of sculpture, drawing, and painting that embody the aesthetics of western modernism while playfully flying in the face of painting and sculpture as the preeminent forms of the period. As an artist, Richard Shipps seems to revel in his materials and process while simultaneously offering objects that play the role of a missing link in the history of modern art. ■

“Dancing in the Counterform” was at the Robert Morris University Gallery, 401 South State Street, from March 26 to April 26.

Evan Carter is a contributing editor of the New Art Examiner. He earned his MFA degree in 2017 from the University of Chicago and wrote about Documenta 14 in a prior issue of the Examiner.

“Keep Walking Intently” by Lori Waxman

by Nathan Worchester

A principle of the New Art Examiner is that it not only examines new art but also examines old art in new ways. With that ideal grown to Himalayan scale in his caffeine-addled brain, local critic and alleged “crank” Nathan Worchester set out to analyze “Keep Walking Intently,” a new book by art critic and academic Lori Waxman, over the course of a long, mildly intent walk of his own. What follows is his written reflection on the book. A link to the accompanying video review can be found at the end of this article.

Some people can’t really *think* unless they’re walking. Wandering becomes wondering, and the consequent blundering uncovers insights that can’t be caught in a recliner.

Our language bears the traces of this association, even in metaphors already rotting into cliché. We talk about trails of thought, steps to knowledge, and, in epiphanic flights, the road to Damascus.

Many of our best critical minds have been peripatetic, sometimes because they had to flee the place they criticized. Think of debased Diogenes the Cynic, dogging the streets of Athens with lamp and tub. Think also of Samuel Johnson tripping over London cobblestones for his own and Boswell’s amusement. More recently, Rebecca Solnit, the first explainer of mansplaining (and current occupant of Harper’s Magazine’s “Easy Chair” post), published a book-length meditation on walking.

For the Surrealists, Situationists, and Fluxus participants (Fluxi? Fluxfolx?) that Lori Waxman describes in “Keep Walking Intently,” walking provoked thinking; even more critically, it provided less ratiocentric and more automatic perceptions of psychological, visual, and sociopolitical facets of reality that guided their artistic practice.

In one of her many brief departures from the book’s main chronology, Waxman name-checks Solnit. She also turns to Oxbridge-certified badass and avid flâneur Will Self. In Waxman’s view, Self’s city-spanning strolls function as a substitute for the alcohol and drugs he once abused.

Though these contemporary walker-writers inform her analysis, Waxman hews to a relatively linear historical narrative. Over 281 pages that only sometimes ramble, she links the Surrealists to Situationist International (plus other discontented Parisian artists of the mid-twentieth century) to Fluxus and its offshoots. All of them used walks to create. In addition, and particularly in the case of the latter two movements, art and creation were identified with walking itself.

The Surrealists were given to gambols, often in a squad and frequently in vague pursuit of female “tail.” Waxman begins her book by describing a dispiriting and somewhat random walk that André Breton led through the streets of Paris in 1921, back when he still saw himself as a Dadaist. In 1924, Breton published the first Surrealist Manifesto, moving beyond Dada and launching a movement that would, in Breton’s words, seek “psychic

automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought.” For the Surrealists, “any other manner” included long, moonlit walks through the forgotten neighborhoods of Paris.

The Surrealists that Waxman describes in Part I do not include as many visual artists as one might anticipate. Breton, Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, and Philippe Soupault were mostly known as writers. Urban photographer Brassai and painter Joan Miró are two notable exceptions. Miró’s *Lady Strolling on the Rambla of Barcelona*, though included partly because of the way it objectifies the streetwalker being depicted, is a particular highlight.

In Part II, “Drifting toward a Situationist Revolution,” the slightly increased representation of visual and conceptual artists could very well have seemed like a jump from Part I. To her credit, however, Waxman ably explains how Guy Debord’s Situationist International (SI) and various fellow travelers picked up where the Surrealists left off (or, more accurately, when this new generation of the French avant-garde rejected their Surrealist progenitors).

Waxman includes a map from Internationale situationniste 1 that is based on the actual day-to-day movements of a young Parisienne across her city



Lori Waxman

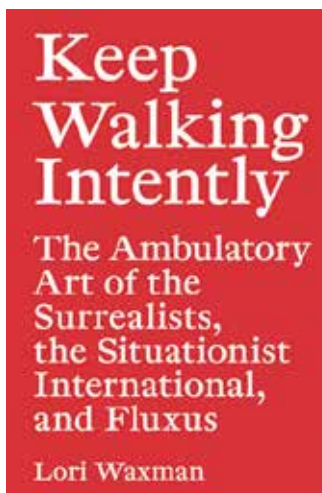
during one year. The resulting image vividly illustrates how routinized her existence really was. For the SI, which used the work of Johan Huizinga to redefine man as a game-player rather than as a thinker or as a featherless biped, this showed the need for greater physical and psychic freedom of movement. Somewhat poignantly, the Situationists struggled for this freedom in a city that, with the rise of the automobile, was growing more and more hostile to pedestrians.

Perhaps the SI's map is part of a larger fractal. Zooming in further, the Parisienne would likely only walk to a few places within her apartment building, within her unit, and within her room. For many people, that may be for the best. Humans seem to thrive on routine. Taken to an extreme, however, regimented behavior can shade into the sort of behavioral stereotypy that is categorized as pathological - the stuff of autism or schizophrenia, evidence of a self shuttered from external stimuli.

The other extreme, which the SI explored through the practice of *dérive*, or urban drifting, and through *détournement*, which is roughly equivalent to culture jamming, can give rise to its own pathologies. Debord, a heavy drinker, sought inspiration for his drifts in Thomas de Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," which employs an ironical lexicon borrowed from colonial-era exploration and conquest to describe its author's aimless wanderings across early 19th century London.

Waxman's coverage of Fluxus in Part III feels like a bit of an afterthought, though it does give her the opportunity to discuss Yoko Ono's exploration of walking and gender. Ono's work is almost antipodal to that of the Surrealists chronicled in Part I. In Waxman's interpretation, the Surrealists' symbolic, erotic, and symbolically erotic treatment of women ignores female subjectivity ("the living, breathing women whom the Surrealists passed by in the street"); women are merely the key to the city—their wild, feminine Paris—and to the self.

As Waxman periodically (and accurately) notes, the Surrealists and SI were almost uniformly male and, though not uniformly white, far less international than the clique that Fluxus founder George Maciunas attracted. Then again, these aspects of Fluxus are part of what separate it so completely from the earlier,



mostly French avant-garde movements that Waxman describes in Parts I and II.

As a genealogy of intellectual influence and affinity, the book might have been more successful as a narrower survey of Dada, Surrealism, SI, and immediate offshoots thereof, with digressions to discuss modern parallels in the work of Ono, John Cage, and other late twentieth century ambulators on the international art scene. But that would likely have limited Waxman's ability to engage with post-sixties politics.

Walking, Waxman concedes, is "not in and of itself a revolutionary or polemical act." However, the anarcho-communist political aims of many if not most of the walkers she describes are a unifying theme across the book. Breton and Aragon belonged to the French Communist Party. Debord's thinking was fundamentally Marxist. Maciunas, according to Waxman, "believed firmly in a radical left politics modeled on Soviet notions of collective culture" and felt that Fluxus "could serve as art for the masses in a Marxist-Leninist sense." This political focus even persists when Waxman is drawing contemporary parallels. At one point, for example, she connects the Situationists' *dérive* to parkour as practiced in a bombed-out section of the Gaza Strip.

There are sometimes news stories about people who walk fifteen, twenty, or even more miles back and forth to work. If this sort of thing can be meaningfully interpreted as a political gesture, it seems more reactionary than revolutionary. It's raw, and it's atavistic, the muscle memory of agricultural or industrial labor in the era of deindustrialization and the welfare state. Debord, I imagine, would drily note that the miles traveled are almost certainly the exact same either way—a long, diesel-smelling stretch of Rural Route Whatever/Wherever, zipped up and down as fast as possible like a lead-lined workingman's jumpsuit.

Waxman presents walking during these eras as anti-modern, at least if the modern is identified with advanced engineering, the nation state, and similar innovations from the Anglo (19th) and American (20th) centuries, respectively. Strangely enough, though, modernity, and modern capitalism in particular, is quite capable of assimilating its self-described opposition (the resistance, as it were).

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Waxman happily notes that a group of Times Square streetwalkers spontaneously joined in Fluxworker Ben Patterson's "A Lawful Dance," which involved walking back and forth across the street in compliance with a walk sign. In near-future Times Square, wealthy tourists will be able to reenact "A Lawful Dance" under MoMA supervision and with the assistance of streetwalkers played by a local improv troupe.

Is the Fitbit revolutionary? Not in the way many of these artists may have liked, though if they shared David Hockney's childlike passion for iPad painting, they wouldn't have minded as long as the results were interesting.

Coming almost a century after Breton's fateful 1921 walk, "Keep Walking Intently" indirectly illustrates how certain forms of artmaking can gain and then lose

credibility as paths to more radical destinations. At a time when experiences are loudly touted as the best way for savvy consumers to maximize their utility, perhaps the art object once again hums with greater promise. ■

"Keep Walking Intently: The Ambulatory Art of the Surrealists, the Situationist International, and Fluxus" (2018) is published by Sternberg Press in Berlin and is available for purchase at the Graham Foundation Bookshop (Madlener House, 4 West Burton Place) or on Amazon.

American-born millennial and thought leader Nathan Worcester has been writing for the New Art Examiner since 2017. When the police notice him jaywalking on Ogden Avenue, he explains that it's a performance piece that he calls "Unlawful Dance."



Heidi Barlow, *CK1 Perfume, Maybelline Great Lash, Red Lipstick*, Papier mache, acrylic paint, Installation detail. Photo courtesy of K.A. Letts



Heidi Barlow, *Installation*, wood shelf, wall paint, papier mache, acrylic paint. Photo courtesy of K.A. Letts

D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P Continued from page 18.

rate trap. *Kawaii Dream House* brings to mind Takashi Murakami's sunny, anime-derived images, but Kasztelan's sensibility points to a darker and more sinister destination.

In contrast to Shaina Kasztelan's angry, funny, extroverted work, Heidi Barlow's same-size replicas of the contents of her bedroom are intimate, inward-looking and, in a way, more poignant. The lovingly recreated contents of her personal space—cosmetics, personal care items, cell phones, prescription bottles, junk food—are both intensely private and exhibitionistic, as if the artist's interior landscape has been turned inside out and put on display. The objects are made of papier-mâché, a homely material whose low-brow provenance lends warmth and humor to what is otherwise merely the unremarkable furniture of a young woman's private life. Her installation suggests a girly boudoir, complete with pastel stripes and pink-and-white furniture. Three round vanity mirrors provide

her most pointed social commentary. She sees herself in the central reflection, surrounded by cute pink unicorns and teddy bears embedded in toxic sludge, confined within a circle of dependency that she longs to transcend but fears to leave.

The internet and cheap imports made the work in "D3PR3\$\$1ON N4P" possible, but Kasztelan and Barlow have made it compelling. Their imaginatively maximalist collection of tchotchkes, junk food, electronics and drugs (both prescription and recreational) provide up-to-the-minute social commentary and a pointed critique of 21st century capitalism. They illustrate a social landscape transformed by technology and globalization while at the same time pointing out that the struggle to overcome sexual discrimination and economic inequality continues. ■

K.A. Letts is a working artist <http://kalettsart.com> and art blogger <http://rustbeltarts.com>. She is a graduate of Barnard College (BA) and Yale Drama School (MFA Set and Costume Design).

“CERTAINTY and DOUBT: Paintings by Dan Ramirez”

by Tom Mullaney

This will be a metaphysical review—my first one. The dictionary defines metaphysical as “concerned with first principles and ultimate grounds” such as Being and Time. It is also defined as being “concerned with abstract thought or subjects, such as Existence and Truth.”

Judged by those standards, Dan Ramirez is an artist who demands to be viewed in both physical as well as metaphysical terms. For 40 years, he has grappled to capture those lofty concepts in his art.

His artist statement references both a philosopher and a leading abstract expressionist painter, C.S. Pierce and Barnett Newman. Pierce speaks of “the sensuous element of thought,” while Newman says, “my life is physical and...my life is also metaphysical.”

Ramirez, according to art scholar Richard Shiff, believes that the objects he creates assume their meaning in his presence, not a meaning he instills but one that the work itself offers up to perception.

I first came in contact with Ramirez’s work in a 1979 exhibit at the Renaissance Society, soon after he received his M.F.A degree from the University of Chicago. Back then, I looked but was clueless as to the deeper meaning of those striking abstract forms.

I now see that those largely geometric shapes are at the base of all artistic practice: color, surface, shape, angle and light. Ramirez, when confronting the canvas, is grappling with those elemental forces to capture, in physical form, certain ineffable truths.

He seeks to capture approximations of Plato’s Ur-text for concepts such as Truth, Belief, Beauty and, centrally, the Divine. Lately, he has been tussling, in his mind and practice, with the concepts of Certainty and Doubt.

This book, “Certainty and Doubt: Paintings by Dan Ramirez” resulted from an exhibition of the artist’s work at the Chazen Museum of Art on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus last year, curated by Ann Sinfield. It has been published with impressive production values, from the quality of the prints, three highly-informed essays and two double-folds, to the cover jacket itself, which references the shiny, graphite surfaces of Ramirez’s paintings. Its silver, velvety sheen is a delight to touch.

As to the book’s contents, they encompass works from Ramirez’s earliest days (1975) up to 2017, the latest. While it would be satisfying to say that his works have always displayed virtuosic certainty, it would be false. Doubt has inhabited his art just as much. As a painter, Ramirez has had an equal fascination with illusion, particularly with the optical illusion of Necker’s Cube.

A viewer can discern different shapes—a cube, a square, a rhomboid—when looking at a Necker’s cube since no visual cues on the shape’s orientation are given. Similarly, Ramirez has applied washes of graphite to many of his paintings so that they assume shifting perceptions as one’s viewing angle changes.

At the start of his career, Ramirez titled works in the book “Untitled.” But, starting in 1976-77, he titled a series of works a “TL-P” number, like “TL-P 6.421” or “TL-P 6.432.” The source of this identifier is Ramirez’s deep interest in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and his ideas about language’s limitations.

Another of the artist’s influences has been his Catholic roots and the teachings of Catholicism, though, like Wittgenstein, his current belief is more an overall spirituality. This can be seen in works such as *The Kiss of the Infant Jesus* (1980) and *Contemplation of the Virgin var #3* (1981).

Dan Ramirez, *Contemplation of the Virgin, var. #3*, 1981. Photo by Michael Tropea



Take *Contemplation of the Virgin*. It consists of four rectangular panels, two white and two latex. Bisecting the work is a monofilament line running down the center, representing perhaps the Annunciation of Mary by the angel and her life's transformation between the before and after panel.

The same bisecting monofilament line appears in the drawing, *Contemplation of the Son by the Son* (1980), a rich, black aquatint and electrically vibrated dry-point. One side represents the Son of God gazing on the Son of Man.

Ramirez, a bass-playing jazz musician, likes to paint while listening to music. He combined his loves of religion and music in his "Twenty Contemplations on the Infant Jesus" series (1980), influenced by the music of the great 20th century French composer, Olivier Messiaen, a church organist when not composing.

Lately, Dan has begun creating on the computer and turned to Messiaen for a stunning series, "Aletheia and the Cosmos: An Homage to Olivier Messiaen and his 'Visions of the Amen'" (2016-17).

My own Catholic schooling in theology and philosophy plus my love of Messiaen's scores has guided me in looking at and partially understanding the book's images, though that is not a prerequisite for your enjoyment.

Ramirez can paint striking images that stand apart from their religious and philosophical underpinnings. To look at *Celestial City #9* (1983), *Nuages: La Luz/dos* (2002) and *Aletheia: Kosmik Cathedral* (2016) is to simply revel in the sheer power of paint to picture pure Beauty.

Dan Ramirez, *Nuages: La Luz Azul en sus Ojos (Dos)* (study), 2002. Photo by Eric Tadsen.



Dan Ramirez, *Aletheia: Scribe's Reveal*, 2017. Photo by Eric Tadsen.

Ramirez is a master at making a disappearing line, a smudge of paint or a wash of graphite convey a world of meaning and viewing pleasure. His art is all about what Shiff calls "the primacy of experience, the sensory passion felt beyond the limits of conceptualization."

The recent Aletheia series is a philosophic/artistic challenge to the concepts of certainty and doubt. In *Aletheia: Scribe's Reveal* (2017), Ramirez, with a simple pull-back stroke, changes everything. The silver graphite stripe, which one thought captured solid, physical certainty, is revealed as not emptiness but another layer lying behind. Doubt is loosed upon our perceived reality. An illusionistic trick Ramirez must have revealed in.

Here's a book to delight in and ponder! ■

"Certainty and Doubt: Paintings by Dan Ramirez" is published by the Chazen Museum of Art, 2018.

Tom Mullaney is Managing Editor of the New Art Examiner.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Steve Eisenman's recent critique of my essay "How Neoliberal Economics Impacted Art Education" in the Jan/Feb 2018 issue.

First, he is incorrect in assuming I make a "direct connection...between the rise of 'anti-art'...and the reigning ideology of monopoly capitalism." I state something very different: "conceptualism and post-modern ideology had worked to deskill the art object and detach it from its human content...this emptying out paved the way for market values to fill the void." The dematerialization of art was causal to its appropriation by market forces, and as we know, capitalism abhors a vacuum.

Second, it is commendable that Carl Andre had been a progressive activist, but that does not change how his reductive, minimalist art formula deskilld art making, leading to the situation described above.

Third, Eisenman states that I got Neo-Dada's chronology wrong, but the historical period of Fluxus in the 1960s was not my subject. I talk about how conceptualism coexisted with traditional and skilled art forms until the 1990s when it became a practical hegemony as the favored art form in higher education. Many essays from Kuspit's anthologies of this period critique this same trend.

Fourth, Eisenman claims that the relationship I draw between conceptually based teaching and market success is "ludicrous." Yet conceptual art occupies the lion's share of articles in Artforum as well as exhibits

in contemporary art museums. There are acres of conceptual art in today's art fairs where the engines of speculative commodification are constantly roaring. Such power and promotion is hard to miss. To not see this is simply ludicrous.

Fifth, Eisenman mentions that conceptually taught art of social practice programs are not about pursuing financial rewards. It is true that social activism is indeed about the opposite. But on these grounds I feel public deserves a vigorous debate about what are the results these programs achieve. How do they qualify what is effective? Is the focus on classroom-based theory or joining social movements off campus and in communities? Do these programs address the unfairness of massive loan debt that will oppress their students for years to come? There are plenty of questions to ask here.

Finally I have to question Eisenman's association of conceptually based pedagogy with the "disparaged and hardly ever rewarded" critical thinking of Adorno and Kuspit. I recommend he read Kuspit's 2004 anthology "The End of Art," which transparently argues how conceptualism helped lead to the defamatory banalization of all art. To my mind this makes his own strains of intellectual sincerity seem—to borrow his own phrase—fatuous.

Diane Thodos

Remembering A COLLEAGUE—JAMES YOOD (1952-2018)

The news of Jim Yood's death last Friday came as a shock to his family, friends and members of the worldwide art community. He was taken from us much too soon at age 65.

Soon after receiving his advanced degree in art history from the University of Chicago, he started his teaching career. He began at Indiana University Northwest and then moved to Northwestern and, finally, to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) where, among other duties, he headed the Arts Journalism program.

We at the Examiner knew Jim as a fellow journalist who began that phase of his life at our then-fledgling art journal as a freelancer. His association continued through the 1980s, culminating in his appointment as Managing Editor from 1985-87. Over that period, he contributed more than 100 articles and reviews to the Examiner. The world soon learned of his many gifts,

but we knew him first. He was always available to both Michel and me through the years.

His talent was too large for Chicago alone to contain. He became a regular contributor to Artforum, Aperture and VisualArtSource.com among other publications. His books included *Spirited Visions: Portraits of Chicago Artists*, *William Morris: Animal/Artifact*, *Gladys Nilsson and Feasting: A Celebration of Food in Art*. He also served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

SAIC has announced that a memorial service will be held sometime in the fall.

Tom Mullaney

A Remembrance—Neil Goodman

The unexpected passing of James Yood is both profoundly sad and shocking. We at the Examiner and among his many colleagues grieve at the loss, and our first thoughts are for his wife, Lorraine, and his daughter, Lily.

The Chicago art community is deeply affected by his death. He was a friend, colleague, mentor, writer and critic. Our memories and thoughts of him at this time are poignant and bittersweet. I am certain that I am just one of many who are remembering and reminiscing about Jim today.

Jim was a powerful and influential writer, a charismatic and nurturing teacher and a looming and empathetic presence in the local art community. His words sparked generations and his encouragement and compassion marked the beginning of many a career and gave voice to others who were more established. On all levels, he was a "mensch," someone of noble character to both admire and emulate. I, like legions of others, held Jim in the highest regard. His care and concern were constant, and the generations he nurtured will, in turn, nurture others.

My long friendship with Jim started as young faculty members at Indiana University Northwest in the early 1980s. Jim was hired as a part-time art historian. I was an assistant professor in the department of fine arts. As we both taught on Tuesday and Thursday, Jim

would take a bus to 24th and Halsted and then catch a ride with me to Gary, Indiana. If the landscape was stark and desolate, our conversations were not and were most often the best part of my day.

After several years, Jim eventually left for more permanent teaching positions, including at Northwestern University and then, finally, at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He also was editor of the New Art Examiner in the '80s as well as a frequent contributor to numerous art magazines, including Artforum. Jim published numerous catalog essays, wrote book introductions and lectured both nationally and internationally. His career was, in all ways, exemplary and his influence profound and lingering. Without hesitation, as a scholar and critic, he was the voice and words of the Chicago art community and perhaps our most important and influential critic.

As a community, we say "kaddish" for Jim. His spirit and presence were a gift to us all, and I, like many others, feel grateful to have known him and called him my friend. If his life was shorter than what we hoped for, his influence was not. His shadow is long, and his presence will linger. He was loved, and he will be missed.

Neil Goodman is Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts at the University of Indiana, Northwest. He is now the Los Angeles correspondent of the New Art Examiner.

Jim Yood: My Friend and Fellow Artist

On Saturday, April 21st, while having lunch in Pilsen, I received a call informing me of the sudden death of Jim Yood. And, as only memory can do, life for me was jarred in unexpected ways. Only a few days earlier, I was speaking with Jim about art-related issues and a favorite of both of us, the Chicago White Sox. The world was aright with all the ambiance that sharing an intimate moment about life with a friend can possess.

The sudden recollection that Saturday afternoon had little to do with the well-documented stature of a man highly respected for all his contributions as a major art critic and beloved teacher. As would be expected, following Jim's passing, there were numerous social media posts of loving and insightful tributes and testimonies. However, there was one that especially stood out for me.

In January of this year, I and the art world lost another loving friend, art critic Dennis Adrian. Jim brought the attention of Dennis's passing to all of us in an obit in Visual Art Source. It said as much about Jim Yood as it said about the subject he was engaged in capturing. It personified the many gifts of honesty, respect, integrity, empathy and, above all, the thoughtful kindness that Jim possessed.

Given the divergent approaches between Dennis and Jim in their field of art criticism, It is not the kind of subject or context that many writers could handle with such eloquence. Jim could and did. I would like to close this memory by simply restating the initial response I had to the social media post regarding Jim's essay/obit about Dennis Adrian:

Jim's reflections on Adrian are an incredible tribute to a man who I have known personally for over 47 years. Dennis and I were very close friends. It was



Dennis who introduced my art to the Chicago art scene. It was Dennis who helped me to understand the importance of what it meant to be an artist in this great city of ours. And, as Jim so eloquently pointed out, Dennis' writing underscored and elevated the importance and historical presence of much of the great art that Chicago has produced.

Just as I was stunned to hear of Jim's sudden passing, I was stunned when I learned of the death of my incredible mentor and friend, Dennis Adrian. Dennis and I never failed to call each other on our birthday, a date we both shared, June 16. In a few weeks, I will once again be reminded of Dennis, who had a very special place in my heart. As I will continue to miss Jim, the feeling for the loss of both these very special and gifted individuals will be stated once again: Life is much too short. But the presence of such men carve time in ways that can seem forever...and forever shall I remember them both.

Dan Ramirez
April, 2018

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