Through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than man's inhumanity to man.

Alma Thomas' work deserves a major retrospective. Perhaps the book on the use of color in painting by African-Diaspora painters that focuses on the year 1971, forthcoming this year from MoMA will begin a sustained conversation and full-scale exhibition of her art and a richly researched...
and illustrated definitive catalog is forthcoming until then

Vincent Johnson

Artist and Writer in Los Angeles

Curator of The Photographic Imaginary, an exhibition opening in Los Angeles in the Spring of 2017.

Museums Bring Pioneering Painter Alma Thomas out of Storage for Her First Major Retrospective in over 30 Years

Artsy Editorial
By Hilarie Sheets
Jan 21st, 2016 9:32 p.m
"Through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than on man's inhumanity to man."

In 1972, at age 80, Alma Thomas receive a solo exhibition at the year by The New York Times, the artist, who grew up in Columbus, Georgia, before settling in Washington, D.C., said: "One of the things we couldn't do was go into museums, let alone think of hanging our pictures there. My, times have changed. Just look at me now."

Thomas, who achieved widespread recognition late in her lifetime for her colorful, exuberant abstract paintings, is once again in the spotlight after slipping from the mainstream art-historical canon following her death in
1978. Last year, the White House hung a newly acquired Thomas painting in the Obamas’ dining room, while the Whitney pulled another canvas by the artist from storage, juxtaposing it prominently in the inaugural exhibition of its new building. “Thomas is a legend and a discovery at the same time,” says Ian Berry, director of Skidmore College’s Tang Teaching Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York, where a major retrospective of the artist’s work opens on February 6th. Berry has organized the show with Lauren Haynes, associate curator at the Museum in Harlem, where the retrospective will travel in July.

The first graduate of Howard University’s fledgling art department in 1924, Thomas taught art for 35 years in a segregated junior high school in Washington, D.C., while always making her own work. In the 1950s, taking night and weekend classes at American University, Thomas shifted from representational painting to abstraction. After retiring as a school teacher in 1960, she committed herself full-time to her art. Thomas forged a highly personal style of brilliantly hued short brushstrokes aligned in dazzling vertical stripes and radiating circular compositions inspired by natural phenomena like the patterns of light in her garden and images from the Apollo moon missions. “Through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than on man’s inhumanity to man,” the artist said in 1970.
says it took courage for black artists during the civil rights era to buck the expectation to make work representing African-American life and struggles. “Her decision to be an abstractionist was in itself a major social-political statement—that a woman of color can be part of the larger picture of American painting,” says Rosenfeld, whose Chelsea gallery had a solo exhibition of Thomas’s works. He has shepherded her works into the collections of numerous institutions, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, as well as the White House.

When it opens next month, the Skidmore show will begin with a salon-style hanging of some 30 small studies and sketchbook pages working out color and form, about half of which have never been exhibited. The curators are borrowing these works (dating from 1960 on) from the Columbus Museum in Georgia, where Thomas, who never married and had no heirs, left her archival materials. (The artist also left many paintings to what is now called the Smithsonian American Art Museum.) “This first room sets up her pathway to abstraction and gives a view into her process,” says Berry, who will also include the large canvas with two studies for it. The only semi-representational painting in the retrospective, it shows her intimate involvement with the civil rights movement. “The signs and the faces become abstract shapes in that painting,” says Berry.


“One of the things we couldn’t do was go into museums, let alone think of hanging our pictures there. My, times have changed. Just look at me now.”
The exhibition will also underscore Thomas’s engagement with flowers and nature distilled in large-scale canvases, such as *Through Fall Flowers* (1968). These works, highlighting Thomas’s signature style, bristle with broken stripes with different hues peeking through the top layer of color. Another room will focus on paintings influenced by imagery from early space flights, including *Snoopy Sees Earth Wrapped in Sunset* from the American Art Museum. The orange orb brimming with rows of staccato brushstrokes, balanced perfectly inside an atmospheric square field of paler orange, is both minimal in geometry and maximal in optical effects.

The final gallery will show paintings from the mid-1970s, when Thomas’s brush marks start to deviate from their ordered lines to form rhythmic webs and mosaic patterns. “She’s in her 80s and making her most confident nature-inspired images,” says Berry. The final painting included, *Hydrangeas Spring Song*, free-form like wedges and commas through white space, breaking apart as they tumble.

For the curators, who are pulling together many works never or rarely exhibited, “it’s the kind of show where you feel like you’re really adding something to the telling of art history,” says Berry. While the Smithsonian put on a major Thomas exhibition in 1981, three years after her death, this is the first museum retrospective since a 1998 show organized by the Fort Wayne Museum of Art in Indiana. “As museums start pulling their Alma Thomas works out and showing them more, people almost unanimously are moved by them,” says Berry. “All these paintings that we’re borrowing from great museums, maybe when they get them back they’ll put them up rather than back in storage. That’s definitely a hope and a goal.”

—Hilarie Sheets

Why Brilliant African-American Painter Alma Thomas Wasn’t Discovered Until Age 75

A solo retrospective at a New York gallery seems an unlikely place to discover an artist largely unknown to the art world, yet Gallery’s exhibition of 20 years of work by the late African-American painter Alma Thomas shines much-needed light on one such artist.

ART SY EDIT ORIAL
Despite a lack of widespread public recognition today, Thomas was fêted with a solo exhibition at the Whitney in 1972, just six years before her death. (It was the institution’s first show entirely devoted to an African-American woman.) A posthumous national touring retrospective organized by the Fort Wayne Museum of Art also celebrated her work from 1998–2000. What’s more, her work has been championed by presidents from Carter to Obama and included in multiple White House collections. Remarkably, these late-in-life recognitions are due not to the art world’s failure to catch on to her work but rather to the fact that Thomas did not find her artistic stride until she was in her mid-70s.

The first fine arts graduate of historically black Howard University, Thomas only began to devote herself to a career as an artist after she retired from more than three decades as a high school art teacher, at the age of 69. Thomas’s work then underwent a radical transformation from representation to colorful abstraction. Appropriating the work of Matisse and referencing black popular culture, Thomas developed a unique style, creating brightly hued, brick-shaped strokes that edge up against each other and coalesce into synchronous compositions. Neither overtly representational nor political, Thomas’s practice is unique among that of female African-American artists. And indeed, when asked if she saw herself as a black artist, Thomas replied, “I’m an American.”

Early mature works, such as *End of Autumn* (1966), show an engaging use of color. Although a white ground is visible through strokes of paint, the image’s background is mostly covered in a pale pinkish-sepia tone. In the center of the canvas is a blue circle with stripes of purple, orange, teal, and red. The whole plane of the painting is built from small patches of paint, reminiscent of Byzantine impressionist paintings of Georges Seurat. Similar construction, though here the colorful fields take up the entire plane of the painting in a tall vertical format.

*Fall Approaching* (1969) is more expressive, with swatches applied in less organized ways and, in places, painted over with white to occlude or erase them. Her color palette in many of these works is similar to the bright colors of painters such as Alfred Jensen and others.

*Fall Approaching* is more expressive, with swatches applied in less organized ways and, in places, painted over with white to occlude or erase them. Her color palette in many of these works is similar to the bright colors of painters such as Alfred Jensen and others.
Some of Thomas’s compositions, such as "Oriental Sunset" (1973), use two-tone patterns all over the picture plane. The former juxtaposes crimson red on a bright blue ground, the latter a rich, bloody red on a vibrant field of yellow. Such work parallels Yayoi Kusama’s “Infinity Nets” series, filling a large painted plane with an undulating expanse of repeated motifs. It is most visible, in her carefully modulated variations of a single color relationship.

Despite not identifying as a black artist, Thomas indeed felt the weight of her accomplishments. Having grown up in segregation-era Georgia, she once told an interviewer, “One of the things we couldn’t do was to go into museums, let alone think of hanging our pictures there. My, how things have changed. Just look at me now.”

—Stephen Dillon


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THE NEW YORKER

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

A small but wondrous Alma Thomas retrospective at the Studio Museum in Harlem put me in mind of a desert plant that spends all year as an innocent cactus and then, in the middle of the night, blooms. Thomas, who died in 1978, at the age of eighty-six, was a junior-high-school art teacher in Washington, D.C., whose own paintings were modernist and sophisticated but of no special note until she retired from teaching, in 1960, and took up color-intensive abstraction. Her best acrylics and watercolors of loosely gridded, wristy daubs are among the most satisfying feats (and my personal favorites) of the Washington Color School, a group that included Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, and others.
associated with the prescriptive aesthetics of the critic Clement Greenberg: painting shorn of imagery, the illusion of depth, and rhetorical gesture. Wielding brushes, Thomas eschewed the group’s signal technique of working strictly with stains of liquid paint on raw canvas, proving it inessential to an ordered glory of plangent hues. She seemed to absorb in a gulp the mode’s ideas—rational means, hedonistic appeals—and to add, with no loss of formal integrity, a heterodox lyricism inspired by nature. The boldly experimental work of her last years suggests the alacrity of a young master, but it harvested the resources of a lifetime.

Thomas, who was African-American, was born in Columbus, Georgia, in 1891. Her father was a businessman, her mother a dressmaker. She had three younger sisters. In 1907, the family moved to Washington and took a house in a prosperous neighborhood, in which she lived for the rest of her life. She concentrated on math in high school, and dreamed of becoming an architect. Unsurprisingly, given the time’s odds against her race and her sex, in 1914 she found herself teaching kindergarten. In 1921, she enrolled at Howard University as a home-economics student, but gravitated to the art department, newly founded by the black Impressionist painter James V. Herring, and became the school’s first graduate in fine arts. Later, she earned a master’s degree from Columbia University’s Teachers College and studied painting at American University, where she encountered Greenberg’s doctrines.

Though she initially hung back from a studio career, Thomas was active in Washington’s cultural circles, in artists, in the late nineteen-forties, which was organized by the educator and artist Lois Mailou Jones. Thomas’s modern-art influences included Vassily Kandinsky and Henri Matisse, especially after she saw a show of his paper cutouts at the Museum of Modern Art, in 1961. Recognition came slowly but steadily. When she became the first black woman to have a solo show at the Whitney Museum, in 1972, she told the things we couldn’t do was go into museums, let alone think of hanging our pictures there.” She added, “Look at me now.”

Thomas said that she was moved to paint abstractions after studying the shapes of a holly tree in her garden, and that she based her color harmonies on her flower beds—or on the way she imagined them looking...
from the air. Space exploration fascinated her. A painting of a disk in reds, oranges, and yellows is titled “Snoopy Sees Earth Wrapped in Sunset” (1970)—a whimsy that seems meant to deflect any hint of mysticism.

Thomas was not sentimental. Nor, after painting some semi-abstract, resonant oil sketches of the 1963 March on Washington, was she political. She said, in 1970, “Through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than on man’s inhumanity to man.” She did so with panache in such works as “Wind, Sunshine, and Flowers” (1968), which deploys touches of hot, warm, and drenchingly cool colors in vertical columns. Intervals of white canvas align here and there to form horizontally curving fissures: wind evoked with droll economy.

Thomas suffered increasing health problems, but her work developed apace. She closed the gaps between her surface strokes with underlying colors in the darkling “Stars and Their Display” (1972) and in the shimmering “Arboretum Presents White Dogwood” (1972). A startling late work, “Hydrangeas Spring Song” (1976), heralds a new style, with swift patches, squiggles, and glyphs (crosses, crescents) in two blues, energetically scattered on white. It feels quite as up-to-date, for its moment, as anything being painted then in New York or Cologne, where abstraction was sprouting representational marks and references on the way to revived figurative styles. The uncompleted arc of her talent makes her a perennial artist’s artist, consulted by young abstract painters even now. Thomas didn’t change art history, but she gave it a twist that merits attention, respect, and something very like love.

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WALL STREET JOURNAL

Arts

Arts in Review

Art Review

‘Alma Thomas’ Review
Alma Thomas was an underappreciated artist who immersed herself in a lifetime of learning and beauty
By Judith H. Dobrzynski
March 1, 2016 4:50 p.m. ET
Hanging in the last gallery of “Alma Thomas,” a large evocative abstract painting titled “Cherry Blossom Symphony” (1973) seems to place viewers amid hundreds of the delicate pink flowers. Or hovering above them, looking down on a sea of pink. Composed not of discernible petals, but of rosy-hued daubs of paint piled on under-layers of blues, greens and reds, it’s a marvel, the conceptual equivalent of a warm spring day.

Alma Thomas
Tang Teaching Museum

Through June 5

“Cherry Blossom Symphony” is one of several wonders here at Skidmore College’s Tang Teaching Museum, which has gathered 18 paintings and 27 works on paper to showcase the talent of an underappreciated artist. Inspired by nature and influenced by Matisse and Kandinsky, Thomas (1891-1978) created exuberant works long on pattern, rhythm and, most of all, color. As she once said, “color for me is life.”

Thomas was African-American, but that was no play on words. Though she sometimes touched on racial matters, her identity did not define—or limit—her work. She also said, another time, “through color, I have sought to concentrate on beauty and happiness, rather than on man.”

Thomas was born in Columbus, Ga., called the most oppressive decade of the Jim Crow South. Her family departed in 1907 for better lives in Washington, D.C., where Thomas seemed to flourish. She earned a teacher’s certificate and taught art for a few years. Then she attended Howard University, graduating with the first degree in fine arts it ever conferred, and went on to earn a master’s in art education from Columbia University Teachers College. Returning to the capital, she took a job teaching art at Shaw Junior High School, where she remained until she retired at the age of 69.

Having always dabbled in making art, Thomas now started to take painting classes at nearby American University. She joined the Washington art scene, associating with Morris Louis, Sam Gilliam and other members of the Washington Color School, though she was not really one of them. Their art was about formalism (line, color, and other purely visual...
elements of a composition); her most prominent and influential exhibitions and sold many of her paintings.

In 1972, a dozen years after her retirement, the Whitney Museum of American Art presented a solo exhibition of her work—its first-ever show devoted to an African-American woman. (From it, the museum bought "Mars Dust," from 1972, a beguiling red with blue work structurally akin to "Cherry Blossom Symphony" that was on view when the Whitney inaugurated its new building last year with a celebration of its permanent collection.)

The Tang exhibition opens with some early works. Two abstract canvases, "Yellow and Blue" (1959) and "Untitled" (1960), hint at her way with color, but are derivative and undistinguished. If Thomas had stopped there, she would not have merited this exhibition. But three figurative paintings nearby show her coming into her own.

In "March on Washington" (1964), Thomas deployed blocks of color as protest signs and loosely rendered protesters, whose featureless faces are much like the trademark daubs she would later use in her abstract works. The two other figurative works (c. 1964) are oil sketches for "March on Washington" that show her experimenting with space: One devotes more of the canvas to the signs, the other to the people. In the final version, the people won.

It’s all uphill from there. Her evolution takes place before your eyes in the trove of works on paper in the next gallery (c. 1960-1978). In them, Thomas experiments, working out spatial and structural issues. Many can stand alone as sumptuous watercolors.

Thomas painted abstractions of what she saw, often from the windows of her home. Her "earth" works, four on view here, generally look like grids of vertical stripes in bright colors. They are actually shimmering, aerial abstractions of rows of flowers in her garden, which she considered a relief from daily indignities she and her neighbors suffered.

Thomas was also enthralled with space exploration, so she imagined the cosmos seen from space. Still mostly abstract, still latticed in structure, her visualizations are hotly colored visions of the heavens and the earth. Perhaps the best, "Starry Night and the Astronauts" (1972), reveals just a
corner of light—a blood red, orange and yellow sunset—on a deep blue-black canvas.

The last gallery contains, for me, her finest works. Alongside "Cherry Blossom Symphony" there is the similarly patterned, equally subtle "Arboretum Presents White Dogwood" (1972), softly colored in white and blue. "White Roses Sing and Sing Whirling Dervish" (1976) are bright and are her "mosaics," fashioned from irregularly shaped "tiles" of paint.

"Alma Thomas," which will move to the Studio Museum in Harlem this summer, shows her to be a spirited artist who got better and more innovative with age.

Ms. Dobrzynski writes about culture for many publications and blogs at http://www.artsjournal.com/realcleararts

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The Changing Complex Profile of Black Abstract Painters

by Hilary m. Sheets, ART news, June 04, 2014

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Donald Judd didn’t have to explain himself. Why do I have to?” asks Jennie C. Jones, an African American abstract painter who has grappled with the issue of how her work can or should reflect her race. "Fred Sandback can make this beautiful line and not have it literally be a metaphor for his cultural identity.”

Jones, 45, sidestepped the debates around multiculturalism that were raging when she was in school in the 1980s and gravitated toward Minimalism. Yet over the last decade, she has forged a conceptual link in her work between the histories of abstraction and of modern jazz in America—“black guys in the 1950s taking jazz into the concert hall and making it this bluesy hybrid with Bach,” as she puts it.

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Jones, 45, sidestepped the debates around multiculturalism that were raging when she was in school in the 1980s and gravitated toward Minimalism. Yet over the last decade, she has forged a conceptual link in her work between the histories of abstraction and of modern jazz in America—“black guys in the 1950s taking jazz into the concert hall and making it this bluesy hybrid with Bach,” as she puts it.
In her recent show at Sikkema Jenkins in New York, an atonal sound environment accompanied her monochromatic paintings that had acoustic panels attached to the canvases. Strips of fluorescent color painted on the edges of the canvases bounced off the white walls and created a sense of movement, rhythm, and vibration. "This art and music juncture," she says, "gave me the permission to point to something in the room that said, 'I didn't fall out of the sky.'"

The contributions of African American artists to the inventions of abstract painting have historically been overlooked, or else fraught with the kind of questions faced by Jones. "Generations of black abstract painters never seem to be celebrated," says Valerie Cassel Oliver, senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, where she recently organized "Black in the Abstract," a two-part exhibition that focused on the history of African American painters working in abstraction. She placed younger artists, including Jones, Shinique Smith, and Angel Otero, in dialogue with members of the older generation, such as Felrath Hines, Alma Thomas, and Romare Bearden, who were producing seminal works in the 1960s.

"You find these artists being marginalized on both ends of the spectrum," Cassel Oliver continues. "There was this manifesto with the Black Arts Movement that you did work that reflected the beauty of that community in no uncertain terms," she says, referring to a group that coalesced in the 1960s to promote social and political engagement in art and literature. "Oftentimes abstract painting is not as celebrated as more figurative work by the black community. From the mainstream art world, it's just the sense of not being preoccupied by what black artists are doing, period."

The 1960 canvas Strange Land, included in the Houston show, would be unrecognizable to most viewers as a work by Bearden. It wasn't until 1964, when he started making collages inspired by the rituals and rhythms of African American life, that he achieved acclaim. Bearden and his contemporary Jacob Lawrence, whose subject matter was similar, were the most renowned African American artists of their time. Their sensitive portrayals of black families were the kind of works many thought were needed and that they expected from black artists. Yet Bearden, in his 1946 essay "The Negro Artist's Dilemma," bristled at the tendency to critique work by blacks on "sociological rather than esthetic" merits. His extensive experimentation with Abstract Expressionism from 1952 to 1964 has gone virtually unnoticed. The first exhibition devoted to this lost decade
of his work is being prepared by the Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York.

“It took a lot of integrity and a lot of courage for an African American artist to be an abstractionist in the 1950s, '60s, even the '70s,” says Michael Rosenfeld, who organized “Beyond the Spectrum: Abstraction in African American Art, 1950–1975” at his Chelsea gallery earlier this year. The show brought together what Rosenfeld calls the first-generation African American abstract artists—Charles Alston, Harold Cousins, Beauford Delaney, Norman Lewis, Alma Thomas, and Hale Woodruff—and the second generation, including Frank Bowling, Edward Clark, Melvin Edwards, Sam Gilliam, Richard Hunt, Al Loving, Howardena Pindell, William T. Williams, and Jack Whitten.

Rosenfeld points out that Norman Lewis (1909–79) participated in the landmark symposium organized by his friend Ad Reinhardt and held at Studio 35 in New York in 1950, where the artists present debated what to call the new art movement. Abstract Expressionism was the term that eventually prevailed. Yet Lewis is routinely omitted from the narrative of this defining moment in American art. The first comprehensive overview of his career opens in November 2015 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

Alma Thomas was picked up by the Martha Jackson Gallery in the 1960s and was the first African American woman to have an exhibition at the Whitney Museum in 1972. Yet she is not well known today.

“The African American Abstract Expressionists are part of the same movement as their white counterparts,” says Rosenfeld, “delving within themselves and trying to express something universal.”

While all these artists resisted the pressure to paint images that told stories of black experience, most were very politically engaged. “Witness: Art and Civil Rights in the Sixties,” on view at the Brooklyn Museum through July 6, includes works by several committed abstractionists who found ways to meld their art and activism.

The 80-year-old Sam Gilliam, known for his ravishing color-field canvases that he sometimes drapes sculpturally on the wall, painted a monumental canvas stained and splattered all over with hot pinks and reds, titled Red April (1970), in direct response to the assassination of Martin Luther King.
Lewis’s Untitled (Alabama) from 1967 shows a crowd of abstracted angular figures in white packed into a bladelike shape slicing through a black field. The artist always disavowed overt narrative content in his work, but the visual suggestion of hooded Klansmen together with the title clearly alludes to the civil rights movement.

“Lewis became a beacon for the next generation, moving into an abstract space and saying, ‘I don’t have to put that burden of representation on my work,’” says Kellie Jones, cocurator of “Witness” and associate professor of art history and archeology at Columbia University. “Somebody like Jack Whitten makes the same decision.”

The Brooklyn show includes Whitten’s Birmingham 1964, in which a newspaper photograph of a confrontation in Birmingham is partially revealed under layers of stocking mesh and black oil paint, like a wound that can’t be covered over. The 74-year-old artist, who grew up in Alabama and moved to New York in 1960 as an art student, revered the Abstract Expressionists, many of whom he met at the Cedar Tavern. While Whitten said he felt pressure to make work about the civil rights movement in the 1960s—and wanted to do so—he made a decisive leap into abstraction in 1970.

“If I was going to get around Bill de Kooning, first of all I had to go faster than he, and second of all I had to do something much larger than he,” says Whitten, who created a 12-foot-wide tool he called the “developer” to drag paint in a single gesture across the entire picture plane. (This was a decade before Gerhard Richter began his heralded abstract paintings using a similar technique.) Whitten, who shows at Alexander Gray Associates in New York, will be the subject of a major retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in September.

As a graduate student at Yale in the mid-1960s, Howardena Pindell, 71, also found inspiration in the work of the older generation of abstractionists—namely Ad Reinhardt’s paintings of close-value colors and Larry Poons’s Op art canvases of circles and ovals. Throughout the 1970s, Pindell experimented with color, surface, and texture. She cut out hundreds of tiny paper dots with a standard hole puncher, collaged them onto cut-and-quilted canvases, and smothered them in layers of acrylic, dye, sequins, glitter, and powder.


"I remember going with my abstract work to the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the director at the time said to me, ‘Go downtown and show with the white boys,’" says Pindell, adding that William T. Williams and Al Loving met with the same kind of response because we didn’t do specifically didactic work.

Pindell, who just had an exhibition at Garth Greenan in New York, says her conscious intention was to explore the esthetic possibilities of the circle when she started on those works. Then she was startled by a childhood memory that came back to her. In the 1950s, she and her father, who lived in Philadelphia, stopped at a root-beer stand, and were served mugs with red circles on the bottom.

“I asked my father, ‘What is this red circle?’” she recalls. “He said, ‘That’s because we’re black and we can’t use the same utensils as the whites.’ I realized that’s really the origin of my being driven to try to change the circle in my mind, trying to take the sting out of that.”

Odili Donald Odita, 48, says that he feels indebted to the persistence of the older generation of black abstract artists who asserted personal freedom in the face of an art market that rewarded cultural and political stereotypes. In the early 1990s, as a young artist out of graduate school at Bennington College in Vermont, where he studied the work of mainstream abstract painters such as Helen Frankenthaler and Kenneth Noland, Odita got a job at Kenkeleba House in New York, owned by the painter Joe Overstreet, who collected and showed work by African American artists. Stunned that he had never heard of these artists, Odita began a project to interview abstract painters from the 1970s and 1980s, such as Pindell, Loving, Edward Clark, Frank Bowling, and Stanley Whitney.

Odita’s research grew into a series of talks he has given at universities over the years.

“Any kind of formal invention in the work of black artists was seen as, if not second rate, then something done the second time around,” says Odita, noting that Clark laid claim to making the first shaped painting—before Frank Stella—and that the king-making art critic Clement Greenberg regularly visited Bowling’s studio but never took the opportunity to write one word in support of his work.
modern art, these older-generation African Americans felt disenfranchised and marginalized in the race to advance art."

Odita didn’t want his own work subsumed under the standard narrative of Stella and Noland, and all this informed his path as an abstract artist. Because his family fled the civil war in Nigeria when he was a baby and settled in Ohio, he grew up with the duality of African traditions at home and American pop culture in school. In 1999, he started making geometric paintings in which shards of vibrant colors zigzag and abut in compositions that suggest colliding cultures and emotions.

“I wanted people to identify the trope of Africa with this structure and color and see the patterns of one world and another world pushing into the space of the painting,” Odita says. He draws on the palette and designs of African textiles, TV test patterns, the Nigerian landscape, and suburban wallpaper in his work, which he shows at Jack Shainman in New York. “If it’s successful, it does engage with other things that are occurring—texture, color, the dynamic of the composition, light, what the space creates, how it relates to your body and mind,” he says.

James Little, 60, also has an affinity for color, design, and structure in his hard-edge abstract paintings that are strongly influenced by jazz. “I’ve figured out ways of suggesting movement, rhythm, speed, and how to shift color,” says Little, pointing out that de Kooning and Piet Mondrian were also responding directly to jazz. "I felt that abstraction, coming from my background, which was a very segregated upbringing in Tennessee, reflected for me the best expression of self-determination and optimism and freedom. I’ve had to do an uphill battle in a lot of ways in the art world on both sides, amongst the blacks and whites, but I’ve just really stuck with what I believe in.” His canvas Juju Boogie Woogie (2013) was included in “Black in the Abstract.”

June Kelly, whose gallery represents Little, has noticed a positive shift in the art world at large toward black abstract painters. “There’s a wonderful group of collectors who are more receptive to the work of black abstract painters now,” says Kelly. “As they read more and look, they see the need to open up their collections. The writings and exhibitions of black historians and curators such as David Driskell, Kellie Jones, Richard J. Powell, Lowery Stokes Sims, Judith Wilson, and Valerie Cassel Oliver are making a difference.”
Jennie C. Jones is thrilled by the large number of black collectors who are now interested in her work. She credits, in part, Studio Museum director Thelma Golden, who has organized shows like “Energy/Experimentation: Black Artists and Abstraction 1964–1980” in 2006.

“Over the last 20 years, she has been really educating black collectors to step away from focusing on the WPA era,” says Jones, who will have a solo show at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in October. “I have black collectors today who say, ‘I’ve always been in love with Russian Constructivism, and now I feel I can have something close to that but reframed in a new context.’”
The Rectangular Canvas is Dead: Richard Diebenkorn and the problems of modern painting

By Jed Perl/The New Republic 9.7.2013

Rose Mandel Archive

The Rectangular Canvas is Dead
Richard Diebenkorn and the problem of modern painting

By Jed Perl
You have probably never heard of the young painter Eleanor Ray, but she is a virtuoso, no question about it. Frankly, I worry about her coming out of graduate school, with a show at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects on the Lower East Side over the winter, with a show at the Lower East Side over the winter, with a show at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects on the Lower East Side. She brings a tightly controlled painterly panache to her itsy-bitsy glimpses of the view through a window, or some empty shelves, or a bicycle locked to a post. The sizes of the panels on which she paints—one is two and one-quarter inches by two and three-quarters inches and the biggest is five by seven inches—suggest a reverse hubris, a pride in how much she can do with so little. There is something about Ray’s hunkered-down facility that strikes me as symptomatic of a fearfulness that overtakes all too many serious painters today. As much as I worry about the power of the trashmeisters who now dominate so many of our galleries and museums, I worry more about an atmosphere that makes it so difficult for painters who are actually engaged with the possibilities of brushes and pigments to feel free.

Eleanor Ray is in her mid-twenties. That is a time in artists’ lives when they ought to be trying things out, unafraid to make a bad painting. The best artists—the greatest artists—are not afraid to fail. As for Ray, instead of allowing herself to experiment, she remains armored inside her minuscule vignettes. Why this should be I can’t say for sure. But I have a theory. I wonder if Ray, coming of age at a time when painting is said by so many to be dead or dying, believes that the best she can do as a painter is keep a few tiny embers alive. You cannot help but feel a certain respect for her perfectly ordered minuscule vignettes, with their meticulously modulated grays and their knowing allusions to Morandi’s compositional strategies. When Ray paints light reflected off snow or coming through a crack in a door, she goes for a dashing verisimilitude—a sort of painterly déjà vu. The trouble is that the sizes of the paintings are designed to wrap up any unresolved conflicts in a perfect little package. You cannot really access these paintings. They’re so damn small that they feel as if they’re in lockdown. There is a sensibility here, but it is imprisoned. Whatever interesting conflicts and contradictions the subjects might provoke have been squared away without ever really being addressed.

Painting, which for centuries reigned supreme among the visual arts, has fallen from grace. I am quite sure that Eleanor Ray is aware of this. Every serious painter is. Which is not to say that painting is dead, or dying, or
even in eclipse: excellent paintings have been done in the last few years, and there are masterpieces that date from the past quarter of a century. But the painter’s basic challenge, the manipulation of colors and forms and metaphors on the flat plane with its almost inevitably rectangular shape, is no longer generally seen as art’s alpha and omega, as the primary place in the visual arts where meaning and mystery are believed to come together. Everybody I know who paints or cares about painting worries about how we are going to respond to this turn of events. Ray is not alone in going into a defensive posture. With her lyrical painterly postcards, she strikes me as too willing to accept the idea that what has vanished in recent years, perhaps never to return, is painting as an expansive and foundational value or idea—as something worth boldly working for. There is no fight in her work. Behind the elegance of her effects, I sense the sadness of defeat. She is much too young for that.

What is to be done? Nothing at all, some would say. Many people who closely follow the visual arts subscribe to a cheerful chaos theory. And judged from such a perspective, anything goes: painting’s fall from grace is an interesting data point, not a fall from grace remain to be understood. What happened is an urgent matter, recognized by many of the contemporary gallerygoers and museumgoers who look to their work. The arrival of a new painter in a blue-chip gallery can inspire enthusiasm, as Julie Mehretu’s first solo show at Marian Goodman’s New York gallery did this spring. Brett Baker, a painter with an incisive and boisterous show of small abstract paintings at Elizabeth Harris this past winter, edits an online magazine called Painters’ Table, which reflects the invigorating range of intellectual conversation still inspired by the painter’s art. Painting’s fall from grace has precipitated quite a few exhibitions dedicated to revisionist and alternative histories of painting, including “Reinventing Abstraction: New York Painting in the 1980s,” organized by the critic Raphael Rubinstein at Cheim & Read in New York over the summer. This show examines the work of fifteen artists, including Carroll Dunham, Bill Jensen, and Joan Snyder, with the goal of rethinking the state of painting in light of transformations in abstraction that began a generation ago. For those who want to look even farther back for promising directions that painters might further explore, there are certainly insights to be gained from an important survey of Richard Diebenkorn’s work from the 1950s and 1960s, currently at the de Young Museum in San Francisco.
Ever since the Renaissance, painting has been the grandest intellectual adventure in the visual arts, a titanic effort to encompass the glorious instability and variability of experience within the stability of a sharply delimited two-dimensional space. I think there is no question that the increasing marginalization of painting in recent decades has everything to do with a growing skepticism about the possibility of stability. This skepticism now dominates thinking in the art schools, art history departments, museums, and international exhibitions where the shape of the artistic future is by and large determined. As every painter knows, of course, a certain amount of skepticism is part and parcel of the creative act, and the grandeur of painting lies in the ways in which the artist challenges and complicates that stability. Painting predicates an irrevocable fact—the plane of the canvas or panel on which the artist works—and then challenges that fundamental truth in an endless variety of ways. And that paradoxical situation may bring us to the reason why painting has fallen from grace. To uphold an absolute as well as all the arguments against that absolute, and to entertain both those positions at the same time, is something that our go-with-the-flow culture finds exceedingly uncomfortable.

Painters are aware of the problem. Nearly everybody now agrees that Clement Greenberg's brief for the irrevocable stability of painting, a brief at once elegantly plainspoken and maddeningly pontifical, paid far too little attention to the varieties of instability that painting can embrace. There is a widespread suspicion that painting's fall from grace can be blamed on the artists and the critics who conceived of its history in overly exclusionary terms. And so a thousand alternative histories have bloomed. The painter Carroll Dunham—who exhibits his widely praised and darkly comic canvases at Barbara Gladstone and also writes from time to time for Artforum—recently observed that "there are all kinds of parallel or shadow histories of the twentieth century that are constantly being reshuffled and rediscovered." We can find Dunham's comment in a conversation with the painter Mark Greenwold, published in the catalogue of Greenwold's show at Sperone Westwater this past spring. Greenwold's show marked something of an apotheosis for an artist who is nothing if not a re-shuffler of histories and has until now mostly been admired by other artists. Greenwold's paintings are deranged contemporary Boschian soap operas, in which the artist and his family and friends are represented with overgrown heads, crammed into claustrophobic interior spaces. In his recent paintings Greenwold has allowed bits of abstract imagery—what Dunham calls "Martian peacock..."
elements—to erupt in front of a face or above a person's head. Greenwold is rejecting what he calls "this kind of sanitized notion that abstraction is on one side and figuration is the other side, and God forbid they should ever mix in art or in anything."

Although I sometimes enjoy the finicky punctiliousness of Greenwold's painterly technique, his work ultimately strikes me as sodden and melodramatic—Kafkaesque kitsch. But Greenwold is obviously an immensely intelligent man, and good deal about how a serious conflict between painting's stability and instability. Greenwold struggles with what he describes as his training in "Greenbergian modernism." While his work is loaded with local color, knotty narratives, psychological suggestions, and wacky humor, he comments somewhat confusingly that he is "not interested in, as I said, narrative and all that stuff. So my premise is Greenberg's." What I surmise he is trying to say is that he is interested in the construction of a painting as a formal act. In Greenwold's case, the formal act is some might label literary. In addition to speaking about other painters, he comments on Philip Roth, the Yiddish theater, and Woody Allen's roles in the movies he directs. He obviously admires Allen's ability to do double-duty as director and actor. Greenwold similarly likes to take a starring part in his own compositions, with his round, bearded, bespectacled head and (often) buck-naked body front and center in his crazed conversation pieces. That Greenwold wants to present life as a freak show does not strike me as strange, not at all, but he fails to integrate the dissonant elements into a convincing whole.

This brings us to the crux of the problem. What is a stable whole that sufficiently acknowledges painting's life-giving instability? That is the question that preoccupies painters today. And it comes as no surprise that Carroll Dunham, who obviously relishes his conversation with Greenwold, appears as one of the protagonists in the critic Raphael Rubinstein's exhibition exploring the varieties of instability that nourish recent abstract painting. Looking back to what more than a dozen abstract artists were doing in the 1980s, Rubinstein discovers something rather like Dunham's "parallel or shadow histories"—what Rubinstein calls "an alternative genealogy for contemporary painting." Seen at Cheim & Read, "Reinventing Abstraction" certainly has its pleasures. These include Dunham's elegantly eccentric Horizontal Bands (1982–1983), the cool formal title giving no hint as to the jam-up of witty, bulbous, bulb-and-root
forms; Joan Snyder’s rapturous lyric pastoral Beanfield With Music (1984), with its luxuriantly orchestrated cacophony of greens; and Bill Jensen’s The Tempest (1980–1981), a floating enigma like an astral starfish with a sci-fi snout, at once melancholy and oracular. The other artists in the show are Louise Fishman, Mary Heilmann, Jonathan Lasker, Stephen Mueller, Elizabeth Murray, Thomas Nozkowski, David Reed, Pat Steir, Gary Stephan, Stanley Whitney, Jack Whitten, and Terry Winters.

Rubinstein wants to move beyond the shopworn talk about the death of painting or the return of painting to “the urgent task of building a bridge from the radical, deconstructive abstraction of the late 1960s and 1970s (which many of [the artists in the show] had been marked by) toward a larger painting history and more subjective approaches.” What Rubinstein is arguing for is the polar opposite of Eliot’s impersonal view of the past in “Tradition and the Individual Talent”—the “larger painting history” he advocates is nourished by a wide range of highly personal, subjective approaches. The fact that the works look very different from one another is precisely the point. If the artists are joined in their taste for heterogeneity, that taste also divides them, for each is heterogeneous in his or her own way. We find here more or less painterly ways of painting, experiments with a range of flat and relatively deep spaces, and the incorporation of elements ranging from nearly naturalistic to thoroughly nonobjective. If I understand Rubinstein correctly, he wants to rediscover avenues in recent artistic tradition too little seen or understood, and in so doing to excavate routes from the more distant past to the present.

I am sympathetic with Rubinstein’s project. Certainly you can make a strong case that the history of painting consists of nothing more than the individual histories of painters. But as Rubinstein is also well aware, the history of painting must ultimately be something more than an anthology of individual histories. If the danger of a totally integrated history of painting is that it degenerates into a frozen academicism, the danger of a thousand individual histories is that painting becomes no more than another competitor in the bazaar that is contemporary art, a take-it-or-leave-it proposition, with no more claim on our attention than anything else.

One would hope that some more general principle could be derived from the personal histories that rivet us. It is precisely the possibility of discovering the general within the particular that drew me to San
Francisco, for a major exhibition at the de Young Museum of the work that Richard Diebenkorn did as a relatively young man in the 1950s and 1960s. “Richard Diebenkorn: The Berkeley Years: 1953–1966” was organized by Timothy Anglin Burgard, a curator at the de Young (which is part of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco); the exhibition goes to the Palm Springs Art Museum in the fall. While everybody knows that Diebenkorn painted his figures, still lifes, and landscapes under the impact of Matisse, the lessons that he drew from him are far richer and more paradoxical than has generally been acknowledged. Diebenkorn cuts straight through the reductive formal strategies that are all too often said to be Matisse’s central gift to twentieth-century art, and recovers Matisse’s concern with the painting as symbolist experience.

Beginning with the abstract landscapes of the early 1950s, Diebenkorn refuses to allow his paintings to make sense either in purely naturalistic or purely abstract terms. He walks a tightrope in his figures and landscapes of the late 1950s and early 1960s—the best work he ever did—as he moves from passages of almost atmospheric tonal color to strident arrangements of full-strength red, orange, purple, yellow, green, and blue. He convinces me that it is the force of his feelings that precipitates his hyperbolic colors and forms. And his feelings seem to keep changing, even within a single painting, so that sometimes a woman’s arm is a woman’s arm and a wedge of sky is a wedge of sky, and sometimes a woman’s arm is a dead weight and a wedge of sky is an abyss.

Particularly fascinating is the relationship between Diebenkorn’s paintings and the considerable number of drawings in the de Young show, especially of female figures clothed and nude. Although most of the drawings included date from after the preponderance of the figure paintings were done in the late 1950s, a photograph of Diebenkorn at a drawing session in 1956 and another photograph, this one by Hans Namuth, of Diebenkorn drawing his wife in 1958 make it clear that drawing and painting proceeded at least on parallel tracks. Diebenkorn’s drawings of women, whether quite young or on the cusp of middle age, reveal a considerable range of emotions: sexual charm and challenge are mingled with anguish, anxiety, and ennui. With their casual haircuts, unselfconscious glances, and long, sexy legs, these women suggest all the tensions and roiling excitement of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the Eisenhower years were ending and ambitions erotic and otherwise were increasingly openly expressed. (The only other artist whose drawings of that time suggest such a grown-up feeling for male-female relations is R.B. Kitaj, and the two painters...
became friends when Kitaj spent time in California in the 1960s.) If Diebenkorn always regarded drawing and painting as separate activities—and is generally more of a naturalist on paper than on canvas—we can also see how the psychological crosscurrents in the drawings are enlarged and in a way allegorized in the paintings, where the increasingly abstract use of color and shape take on an emblematic power.

I have heard it said by some painters that Diebenkorn was unable to place his figures in a legible three-dimensional space. But he was perfectly capable of doing so in the drawings—so who can doubt that when he turned to painting he wanted to do something rather different? In Woman on a Porch (1958), one of the finest of the paintings in which figure and landscape are joined or juxtaposed, we do not know that the woman is on a porch, and that is probably what Diebenkorn intended. The figure, seated in what looks like a wicker chair, seen from the knees up, her head downward cast, is set against a landscape of strong horizontal forms. The color is extravagant, maybe gaudy, with oranges that verge on the lurid and with blackish, purplish blues. The woman's body, solid and sensual, is monumentalized. She is a totem, an icon, a pure contemplative power merging with the blocky forms of the landscape. Although certainly not abstract, the painting is also not exactly representational, certainly not a representation of reality. The landscape’s strong colors and enigmatically simplified forms become emblematic of the woman's state of mind. What does she feel? The answer is to be discovered in how the colors and forms feel. And if that is difficult to determine—well, aren't a person's feelings often difficult to explain?

In the late 1950s, Diebenkorn said, "all paintings start out of a mood, out of a relationship with things or people, out of a complete visual impression. To call this expression abstract seems to me often to confuse the issue." Diebenkorn would characterize in the broadest sense as symbolist. The enigma of human consciousness is revealed indirectly, through a pictorial environment in which naturalistic perceptions have been transformed by the myriad processes and pressures of the imagination. The frame of a window becomes a prison. The blue of the horizon becomes a promise. Diebenkorn's figures are a considerable contribution to a modern symbolist tradition that includes Redon's phantasmagorical portraits, Vuillard's luxuriantly perfervid interiors, Matisse's studies of Madame Matisse crowned by extraordinary hats, and Bonnard's climactic painting...
of his wife in the bathtub, in whose white tile walls explode in a riot of ardent color.

Considering how unwilling Diebenkorn was to retreat to the safety of a format or a formula in the 1950s and early 1960s, it is thrilling to realize how many good and maybe even great paintings there are. Santa Cruz I (1962), a view of ocean and ocean-side buildings, is as convincing a portrait of the California coastline as I know, a worthy successor to Matisse’s views of the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. Some tiny still lifes done in 1963—a knife in a glass, a knife cutting through a tomato—are in the tradition of Manet’s quick little compositions and may well be superior to them in their firm architecture. There are some extraordinary interiors in which a human presence is suggested with haunting circumspection by means of a painting of a woman’s head leaning against a wall or a group of figure drawings pinned to the studio wall. Diebenkorn’s restlessness is one of the fascinations of midcentury art, as he moves from the almost crude figural style of Coffee (1959) to the Ingresque sensuality of Sleeping Woman (1961). Diebenkorn is of course hardly alone in the East Coast quite a few artists who had emerged amid the culture of abstraction were evolving original figurative styles, among them Fairfield Porter and Louisa Matthiasdottir—but Diebenkorn may be the only artist who at least for a time managed to impose so insistently abstract and symbolic an imagination on the to simplistic solutions.

Diebenkorn’s figures, landscapes, and still lifes from the late 1950s and early 1960s are a reminder of how much instability must be encompassed within the stability of a painting. As for the Ocean Park series that preoccupied Diebenkorn as he grew older (he died in 1993), I wonder if the more formalized and regularized abstract processes involved in those paintings did not reflect the worries of an artist who had once upon a time put stability at such considerable risk. I would not want to press too hard on a psychological interpretation of Diebenkorn’s development. Suffice it to say that the conundrum for painters in the past several decades has been how to maintain some dependable conception of what painting is all about while insisting on the freedom of action needed to keep that concept alive. To do so successfully involves quite a juggling act. In the past couple of years I have sensed in the work of painters who hold a particular interest for significant numbers of other painters—they include John Dubrow, Bill Jensen, Joan
challenges involved in maintaining both some reliable standard and the freedom to take fresh risks. There is always the necessity to hold the line even as one goes over the line, to maintain some sense of what painting is before all else in the face of an environment in which anything goes.

The evolution of painting is inevitably as much a matter of repetition as it is a matter of change. But what is too little change and what is too much? As Rubinstein observes in the catalogue of "Reinventing Abstraction," it is significant that after all the talk in the 1960s and 1970s of the shaped canvas and the end of the tyranny of the rectangle—with the exception of Elizabeth Murray—the artists in his show have found themselves loyal to the framing rectangle. With painting, we recognize the excitement of the new not so much through its distance from earlier work as in the extent to which the old ways are given some new sting or attack or power. The wide panoramic abstractions in Julie Mehretu's show at Marian Goodman this spring, with their layering of architectural elements and their dramatically deep space, put me in mind of Al Held's later work, which also had a cinematic and even a sci-fi quality. And that connection interested me, reviving as it did unresolved feelings I have always had about Held's pictorial dramaturgy. As for the lush, thickly applied color in Brett Baker's small abstractions, at Elizabeth Harris over the winter, they brought to mind Paul Klee's Magic Squares and the weavings of Anni Albers and Sheila Hicks—the question became how Baker's own feeling for sensuous coloristic hedonism is strengthened and deepened by the restraining power of a grid. The beauty of painting is that we experience the individualism of the painter but never exactly in isolation. The painter is always simultaneously in the community of painters, of the present and of the past.

The trouble is that you cannot really get down to the business of painting when you are forced into either a defensive or an offensive pose. To assert that painting is a great tradition is to assert the obvious. Nobody would disagree, even those who take no interest whatsoever in contemporary painting. The problem for contemporary painters begins with the collapse of the framing rectangle as the artist's essential way of experiencing the world. I am not sure to what degree the stabilizing supremacy of that rectangle has been undermined by the technology that surrounds us, whether the layered space of the computer screen, the roving eye of the digital camera, or the increasing ubiquity of 3-D movies. But even if the rectangle remains essential, its centrality unexpectedly reaffirmed by the shape of the iPad and the iPhone, there is no question...
that we are increasingly encouraged to regard continuous visual flux as the fundamental artistic experience. When the Dadaists in the 1920s and even the postmodernists in the 1970s and 1980s turned their backs on painting, they tended to assume that it was still there, behind them, a stable fact. Now painting itself is seen as a dissident form, a way of turning one’s back on performance art or assemblage. When painters walk out of their studios, they find that they are in a defensive or offensive one, with painting the shield or the battering ram. The trouble is that you cannot really get down to the business of painting when you are forced into either a defensive or an offensive pose.

The great question now is how to preserve and even honor the age-old stability of painting without falling into the trap of a frozen academicism. Richard Diebenkorn, in his figure and landscape paintings of the late 1950s and early 1960s, suggests a provocative balance, one worth reinvestigating. The bottom line is that each artist must now begin pretty much from scratch, obliged to develop both a personal conservatism and a personal radicalism. This is the painter’s predicament.

Jed Perl is the art critic for The New Republic and the author, most recently, of Magicians and Charlatans (Eakins Press Foundation).
Changes abound for the upcoming Miami Art Basel week 2015. Billion dollar upgraded historic Fontainebleau Hotel. The Rubell Family Collection stays in the forefront of the pulse of the artworld with an all woman artists exhibition that will rotate works over the duration of the show. The Marguiles Warehouse will feature a massive four custom built room exhibition of the work of Anselm Kiefer, whose retrospective I saw at the Royal Academy in London in the fall of 2014. The ICA Miami will host a show of the NYC video artist Alex Bag. The de la Cruz Collection is doing a survey show loaded with art stars working in abstraction. With NADA, Scope, Pulse Miami side is now Art Miami and its Context Art Fair. Deauville Hotel, which NADA just left after last year, will include the Frederick Weisman art foundation collection of Latin America art. There will also be the exhibition of representational and realist art at the Moore Building in Miami’s white-hot Design District, under the direction of Franklin Sirmans. Isaac Julien’s North American debut at Young Arts in Wynnewood. Miami has a couple of new gallery districts – Little River and Little Haiti, that offer warehouse sized exhibition spaces.

Up the road we can look forward to the opening of the Faena Arts Center in Miami Beach, the new ICA Miami building, and the Museum of Latin American art.

Vincent Johnson is an artist and writer in Los Angeles. He recently interviewed William Pope L at MoCA in Los Angeles for the November 2015, 15th Anniversary issue of FROG magazine.

Art Basel 2015 Sketch Book: 8 Artists to Watch

By Galena Mosovich | Miami.com
Created 12/02/2015 – 20:27

Original sketches by eight Miami-based artists who are making an impact during Miami Art Week.

As a cadre of the world’s best artists and art aficionados converge in Miami, it’s easy to gloss over the local talent pool. To combat this marginalization, we honed in on the consequential careers of eight local artists, who embody the city’s distinct language of creativity. We asked them to create a unique sketch for our first Book.
Agustina Woodgate

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In her own words: My practice explores temporality, spatial politics and the radical imagination.

Why she’s hot: Agustina Woodgate is an award-winning artist whose public work spans the globe. Generally emerge outside exhibition halls (Hopscotch, showing inside, she converts surplus materials and outmoded objects into new roles (New Landscapes, Ballroom, Kulturepark).

Where to find her now: Woodgate is included in Spinello Projects' 10th anniversary exhibition titled, “Full Moon,” at the gallery's new location (7221 NW 2nd Ave., Miami).

Future happenings: Solo exhibition at Barro Galeria in Buenos Aires, March 2016. Radioee.net, an online bilingual nomadic event radio broadcast will go live from Istanbul, Tel Aviv and Ecuador, Summer 2016.

Asif Farooq

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In his own words: My body of work is, and will be, a group of associated ideas constructed over the next ten years. This includes a working particle accelerator and launching a satellite into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Why he’s hot: Farooq is taking a childhood pastime to the next level with the creation of a functional paper airplane. In this case, it’s a full-scale replica— 102 percent-to-scale, to be exact— of the Soviet-made MiG-21 fighter jet. As the son of a civil engineer, Farooq juggled his artistic inclinations with a knack for technical skills in the territories of welding, electronics and the theoretical...
Where to find him now: Farooq’s studio is included in the official Art Basel Artist Studio Visits (open to ABMB VIP cardholders).

Future happenings: The reveal of his 4,000-pound paper plane is slated for 2016.

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Bianca Pratorius

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In her own words: I’m a multimedia artist who explores ideas through sculpture with felt as well as collage and printmaking.

Why she’s hot: Pratorius’ use of hand-cut felt is spontaneous and mysterious. She doesn’t set the forms before installation, and this technique allows for the material’s “inherent sensuality” to express itself in the sculpture. Her pieces argue against permanence, as they can never be repeated once removed from the wall or space.

Where to find her now: Pratorius’ work is on display with Miami’s Independent Thinkers at Scope Art Fair, Miami Beach; with Cancio Contemporary at Aqua Art Fair, Miami Beach; and in "100+ Degrees in the Shade: A Survey of South Florida Art" at Laundromat Art Space, 5900 NE 2nd Ave., Miami.

Future happenings: Solo show at &Gallery in Miami, Feb. 2016.

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Brandon “Wizz Dumb” Deener

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In his own words: I create in the genre of photo and hyperrealism, a style dedicated to giving the viewer a closer look.

Why he’s hot: This rising star artist also happens to be a successful music producer, whose work is closely linked to Timbaland and Missy Elliott. He started teaching himself to paint a few years ago with a focus on making random and saccharine objects seem grander through sharp lines and
vibrant colors. While deeply influenced by Jeff Koons, Wizz Dumb's style of pop art is sweeter and less irreverent — for now.

Where to find him now: Search Instagram for @wizz_dumb_art.

Future happenings: Wizz Dumb’s work will be on view at The Taplin Gallery at Miami Country Day School in Miami Shores, Feb. – April 2016.

Daniel Fila

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In his own words: I’d rather be hungry in the jungle than fed up in the zoo. My work is dimensional, layered, painterly and shows a cohesive yet multifaceted range.

Why he’s hot: Fila parlayed his top-notch education from Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) in the Design District and Columbus College of Art and Design into a dynamic career as an artist. He’s considered an OG of the Miami street art scene, under the moniker “Krave” (Erin, Sunbather, The Fresh Monkey), yet his animations, urban sculptures and figurative to abstract paintings on wood are also quite popular amongst collectors and corporations.

Where to find him now: Fila will paint live Saturday, Dec. 5 during an intimate event with Locos por Juana at El Fresco, his project space/gallery in Little Havana (535 SW 12th Ave., Miami). 8 p.m. Tickets are $24. RSVP to http://www.estamosjuntos.splashthat.com

Future happenings: Fila will start his national mural campaign in the coming months in North Carolina and Oregon.

Jillian Mayer

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In her own words: My work explores how technology and the Internet affects our identities, lives and experiences.
Why she's hot: Mayer’s oeuvre is highly in tune with the digital age. Her work investigates the tension of identity. This summer, Mayer’s work graced the cover of Ocean Drive magazine; the featured piece was auctioned off to support Locust Projects, the Design District exhibition space that launched her career.

Where to find her now: Mayer’s work is on view in “Spirit Your Mind,” a group exhibition presented by Chalet Society and Locust Projects at Free Spirits Sports Cafe, 100 21st St., Miami Beach.

Future happenings: Solo shows in 2016 at LAX ART in Los Angeles and David Castillo Gallery in Miami. A TV pilot created with Lucas Leyva, co-founder of the Borscht Film Festival, is in the works for Time-Warner.

Jim Drain

Click here for a larger version of the sketch

In his own words: “I like my sugar with coffee and cream.” – Beastie Boys

Why he's hot: In 2013, Vanity Fair selected Drain to participate in the Greatest Living Artists Survey, an artist— including Ed Ruscha, Richard Serra, and Jeff Koons— favorite contemporary. Drain’s mesmerizing abstract textile sculptures typically evoke the innocence of youth held up by masterful construction. (And, he knits!) The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) also holds collection.

Where to find him now: The Standard Spa, Miami Beach and The Posters celebrate the hotel’s 10-year anniversary with a specially commissioned poster by Drain. The poster, with his signature low-res look, is $55 at The Shop inside the hotel (a portion of the proceeds will benefit Miami Children’s Museum). New York’s Printed Matter independent bookstore and gallery is showing Drain’s work in a shared booth with Art Metropole from Toronto at Art Basel in the Miami Beach Convention Center (Entrance Hall B, booth T3).
Michael Vasquez

In his own words: A painterly language of strong, broken color and aggressive mark-making that connects to and illustrates the attitude and energy of the subject.

Why he’s hot: Vasquez introduces the neighborhood street gang from the perspective of a young boy looking for a role model in the absence of a father figure. The paintings, collages and installations illuminate the subjects’ frenzied search for identity, community and masculinity in the most unexpected places (read: the walls of a museum or gallery).

Where to find him now: Vasquez’s work is included in the “No Commissions” Art Fair presented by Swizz Beats at The Dean Collection, 35 NE 29th St., Miami and in “100+ Degrees in the Shade: A Survey of South Florida Art” at the venue in the Design District (3900 N. Miami Ave., Miami).

Future happenings: The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery’s exhibition “Portraiture Now: Staging the Self” is on view at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico through March 27, 2016. In collaboration with the Aesthetics and Values class at Florida International University, Vasquez will exhibit at The Patricia & Phillip Frost Museum of Art next spring.
Yves Behar is the recipient of the "Award" and he'll be honored with a special exhibit in the D/M venue behind the convention center through December 6. The VIP preview is today, December 1st. A student team from Harvard was chosen to design the fair’s entrance for their submission, "UNBUILT," a collection of foam models of unrealized design projects. Expect thirty five exhibitors including Firma Casa from Brazil, showing new works by the Campana Brothers, and Italian gallery Secondome editions.

The Miami Project is also launching SATELLITE that will show various "experimental" projects in unoccupied properties up near their 73rd Street base. One of those, "Artist-Run," will fill the rooms in the Ocean Terrace Hotel (7410 Ocean Terrace, Miami Beach) with different installations from 40 artist-run spaces, curated by Tiger Strikes Asteroid. It’s open...
VIP/media event today, December 1st, from noon to 10 p.m. ALSO:
Pecos, the music venue out in Queens, New York, and Sam Hillmer from the band Zs, are putting together a 5-day music program in the North Beach Amphitheater, emphasizing "musical practitioners with some form of art practice."

X Contemporary launches their December 2nd through Sunday, to 10 p.m. Twenty eight exhibitors including "Grace Hartigan: 1960 look at the "genesis of street art" curated by Pamela Willoughby; and "Colombia N.O.W." presented by

Target Too Installation PULSE Miami Beach (4601 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach) starting with a big "Opening Celebration" at 4 p.m. today, December 1st, featuring a panel discussion put together by Hyperallergic; a "Hello, Selfie!" and a live performance by Kate Durbin called "Colombia N.O.W." presented by

PULSE celebrates the City of Miami via a talk at 5 p.m. on "Future Visions of Miami" and a "Sunset Celebration" from 5 to 7 p.m. Fair visitors can check out "TARGET TOO," an installation referencing items sold at the stores, originally on view in NYC last March. There's a complimentary shuttle from the convention center, and the fair is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Saturday.

Wynwood Walls (2520 NW 2nd Avenue, Miami) has a lot planned this year
including “Walls of Change” with 14 new murals and installations and the debut of a new adjacent space called “The Wynwood Walls Garden.” The walls are by Case, Crash, Cryptik, el Seed, Erenest Zacharevic, Fafi, Hueman, INTI, The London Police, Logan Hicks and Ryan McGinness. Over in the “garden,” the Spanish art duo Pichi & Avo are doing a mural on stacked shipping containers and in the events space, Magnus Sodamin will be painting the floors and walls early evening, but then it’s open.

Goldman Properties’ CEO Jessica Goldman Srebnick talks about how art transformed the Wynwood neighborhood. We also hear that New York developer (and owner of Moishe’s Moving, Mana Contemporary etc.) Moishe Mana is planning a new mixed-use development on his 30 acres of land.

Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian are co-presenting an exhibition of figurative painting and sculpture called “UnRealism” at 191 NE 40th Street, Miami. The opening is on Tuesday, December 1st, but it will be on view all week. According to the NYT, artists featured in the group show will include Urs Fischer, Elizabeth Peyton, John Currin and David Salle. In conjunction with the exhibition, the artist Rashaad Newsome will lead an “art parade” starting at 6:30 p.m. today at 23 NE 41st Street, Miami and ending at 4001 NE 41st Street.

CONTEXT Art Miami will feature 95 international galleries this year, along with several artist projects and installations including 12 listening stations dedicated to sound art; areas dedicated to art from Berlin and Korea; solo exhibitions by Jung San, Satoru Tamura, Mr. Herget and four others; and a “fast-track” portrait project of workers at Miami International Airport. Context and Art Miami — celebrating its 26th year — open with a VIP preview benefiting the ICA Miami on Tuesday, December 1, 5:30 to 10 p.m., at 2901 NE 1st Avenue in Midtown, Miami. The fair is open to the public from December 2nd through the 6th.

ICA Miami (4040 NE 2nd Avenue) opens a major survey of works by the video and performance artist Alex Bag — including her interactive installation “The Van” — on December 1st. The museum recently announced the appointment of Ellen Salpeter, Deputy Director of NYC’s Jewish Museum, as its new director and they’ve just broken ground on a new, permanent home in the Design District. The 37,500 -square-foot building was designed by the Spanish firm Aranguren & Gallegos Arquitectos and is scheduled to open in 2017. Shannon Ebner also has a
show, “A Public Character,” on view in the museum during AB/MB and until January 16, 2016. This is the inaugural program in the museum’s new performance series.

The fourth edition of UNTITLED 12th Street from December 2 to 6, with a big VIP preview on December 1st from 4 to 8 p.m. They’ve got 119 international galleries along with non-profit orgs from 20 countries. New this year will be an UNTITLED radio station broadcasting via local Wynwood Radio with interviews, performances and playlists by artists, curators etc.

PAPER Magazine is hosting (and participating in) several events during AB/MB. On Tuesday, December 1st, 6 p.m., David Hershkovits will be “in
conversation” with Fab 5 Freddy and David Koh on the topic, “Art On Film,” followed by a special screening of Koh’s film “Peggy Guggenheim: Art Addict.” The Tribeca Film Festival Shortlist is presenting the event at The Miami Edition (2901 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach) and SOTO sake sponsors. On Tuesday night (late) and also at the EDITION, PAPER, Silencio, A Hotel Life and One Management host the one year anniversary of the hotel’s BASEMENT nightclub with DJs Seth Troxler, Nicolas Matar and Orazio Rispo.

The Wolfsonsonian FIU Museum (1001 Washington Avenue, South Beach) is open all week with several exhibitions including “An Artist on the Eastern Front: Feliks Topolski 1941,” “Margin of Error,” “Orange Oratory,” “Philodendrum” and “Miami Beach.”

Moishe Mana’s Mana Contemporary Wynwood plans several exhibitions during AB/MB including “Made in California,” featuring selections from L.A. collector Frederick R. Weisman’s Art Foundation; “A Sense of Place,” with over 60 works from the collection of Jorge M. Perez; and “Everything You Are Not,” key works of Latin American art from the Tiroche DeLeon collection. All are up from December 3rd thru the 6th, with a VIP preview on December 1st. Mana Urban Arts is also doing a collab with former RC Cola Plant (550 NW 24th Street, Miami) that includes over 50 artists — so far the list includes Ghost, GIZ, Pixel Pancho, Case Maclaim and Shok-1 — plus skateboarding, DJs, live music etc.

Bortolami Gallery is opening a year-long exhibition called “Miami” by the French conceptual artist Daniel Buren on December 1st in the M Building (194 NW 30th Street, Miami). The show marks the 50th anniversary of his works with fabric and the 8.7 cm stripe. By periodically installing new works, Buren will also alter the exhibition during the year.

Previewing their upcoming South Beach studio, poolside at the 1 Hotel (2341 Collins Avenue, South Beach) starting on Tuesday, December 1st. They plan to open permanently in the hotel in January 2016. The 1 Hotel also offers a fitness and wellness line-up for guests and visitors all week.

Miami gallery Locust Projects (3852 N. Miami Avenue, Miami) returns with their “Art on the Move” series of artists’ projects in public spaces around Miami during December. This year...
Martine Syms, includes a series of prints displayed on the backs of buses and at bus stops, based on “Chitlin’ Circuit” concert posters by Clyde Killens. There’s a reception for the project, curated by PAMM’s director Franklin Sirmans, on December 1st, 7 to 10 p.m. Also check out the gallery’s site-specific installation “PORE” by Martha Friedman and “Beatriz Monteavaro: Nochebuena” in the project room.

Brickell City Centre (750 South Miami Avenue, Miami) is giving a sneak peek at their work-in-progress development in downtown Miami with an invite-only event, “Illuminate the Night,” on December 1st featuring the unveiling of “Dancers,” a sculpture by UK artist Wooden Wisdom DJs (Elijah Wood and Zach Cowie) and a 150,000 square-foot glass, steel and fabric structure called “Climate Ribbon” by Dutton.

The Bass Museum (2100 Collins Avenue, South Beach) is closed for renovations until next year, but they’re hosting “outdoor activations” in the surrounding park including the display of a neon sign, “Eternity Now,” by Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury. They are co-hosting a private dinner with Salon 94 Gallery Beach EDITION Hotel.

Zurich’s Galerie Gmurzynska hosts an invite-only cocktail party at The Casa Casuarina (1116 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach) on December 1, with Sylvester Stallone and Germano Celant. The gallery will be showing a retrospective of works by Karl Lagerfeld in their stand at AB/MB, curated by Celant.

The DREAM South Beach (1111 Collins Avenue, South Beach) hooked-up with Brooklyn-based artist — and new GQ “style guy” — Green for an exhibition of, according to Green, “what 2015 meant to me in both a macro and micro sense…wins, losses, heartbreak and promotion.” The hotel will have a pop-up shop and guests will get a complimentary print. There’s a welcome reception on Tuesday, a private dinner and afterparty with the Green and A$AP Rocky on Friday and a pool party hosted by YESJULZ on Sunday afternoon.

FLAUNT Magazine and Guess host a private dinner at the Nautilus Hotel in December 1 in honor of their latest cover stars Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas and Julie Mehretu. After dinner, there’s a poolside party with a screening of “ME” and music by the Martinez Brothers and Pusha T. Expected guests
include “ME” writers Susan Taylor & Jefrey Levy and Gina Gershon.

The 2015 edition of Elle Decor’s 10th Annual Elle Decor Visionary Awards takes place with a VIP breakfast on December 1st at 250 Wynwood (250 NW 24th Street, Miami). Visits from December 2 to 4 are open to the public with a $35 donation to pediatric cancer research and a reservation via jacquelyn@zm-pr.com. The 6,000 square-foot home will showcase 4 leading designers selected by ED editor-in-chief Michael Boodro.

An exhibition called “LAX – MIA: Light + Space” opens on Tuesday, December 1st, 5 to 8 p.m., at the Beach). The show was curated by Terry Riley, Joachim Pissaro and John Keenan of PARALLEL and is hosted by The Surf Club and Fort Partners. It’s on view until December 12th, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, closed on Sunday.

Art Basel Basecamp (46 NW 36th Street, Miami Beach) returns with a space to “re-group, re-fresh and re-energize” featuring charging stations, information booths, giveaways and art installations. Stop in from December 1 to 6, 4 p.m. to midnight daily; and don’t miss their “Alice in Wynwood” closing party on Saturday night.

The first edition of the Curatorial Program for Research Film Festival takes place on December 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Cannonball (1035 North Miami Avenue, Suite 300, Miami). The program, “Earthbound,” was curated by Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk in collaboration with Dwelling Projects. There will also be a silent auction.

New York-based developer Robbie Antonio’s collection of pre-crafted structures during Design Miami/2015. The limited edition homes and pavilions have been designed by 30 noted architects and designers including Zaha Hadid and the Campana Brothers. The VIP launch is in the Design Miami tent on Tuesday evening.

NYC club No.8 pops-up in the Rec Room (1012 Locust Avenue, South Beach) with DJs including JusSke, Fly Guy and Ross One; the hotel’s Regent Cocktail Club features live jazz, Cuban cocktails, Samba and soul tunes. They’ve got a digital art installation by Aerosyn Lex.

White Cube’s kick-off party is tonight at Soho Beach House with Giogio Moroder spinning and lots of Moet.
NYC/LA art collective Collapsing Scenery presents a one-night-only video installation on December 1st, 5 to 10 p.m., in the Surf Med Pharmacy (7430 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach). It's a part of the new Satellite Art Fair.

Chloe Sevigny by Pamela Hanson “ICONS,” an exhibition of photos by Pamela Hanson opens at the Shore Club.

BOHO Hunter (184 NW 27th Street, Miami) hosts Monica Sordo’s SS 2016 collection with music from Bea Pernia on December 1st, 7 to 10 p.m.

Miami’s Diana Lowenstein Gallery (2043 N Miami Avenue, Miami) is showing new works by Udo Noger in a show called “Geistlos.” On view all week.

Alejandra Von Hartz Gallery (2630 NW 2nd Avenue, Miami) has their second solo show by Marta Chilindron, “Temporal Systems,” on view during AB/MB. The multi-dimensional sculptures “explore basic geometric forms, color, transparency, light, space...”
When you pass through Art Miami, look for copies of Jerry Powers' new Art Miami Magazine, that fair's first dedicated publication, at STK Miami (2311 Collins Avenue, South Beach) on December 1st.

STK Miami (2311 Collins Avenue, South Beach) hosts The Drip Factory pop-up gallery featuring artist Louis Carreon doing live painting and music by DJ What on December 1st, 8 to 11 p.m. Invite only.

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The Creators Project

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Must-See New Media at Miami Art Week

By Benoit Palop — Dec 2 2015
This time of the year, the whole art scene gathers in Miami to—let’s be honest—enjoy the beach, often more than the overwhelming art-filled fairs. Many of our longtime favorite creators converge at this year’s festivities, so to support their efforts, we’ve compiled a coup d’oeil of some quality digital art happenings.

Swapping its successful one-shot PULSE Miami Beach booth, TRANSFER gallery was hypersalon set in motion so many amazing exhibitions and exchanges that unfolded in the past year. In a mostly non-commercial format, TRANSFER is quite fortunate to have the support of PULSE to open their fair to a challenging format of social-media based performance, and their Conversations curated section gave us the perfect opportunity to present two artists working with issues of technology and the body,“ Kelani Nichole, founder and director of TRANSFER gallery tells The Creators Project.
Nichole adds. TRANSFER showcases recent works by and Kate Durbin with support from taking part in panels and screenings.

Faith Holland 'Sub/emissions' 2015 40 x 40 Digital Painting on Canvas, Edition of 3 + 1AP, Transfer gallery, 2015
Kate Durbin’s Hello!Selfie performance yesterday at PULSE Miami Beach.

Photo: Rollin Leonard, 2015

Holland brings her orgasm-inspired works—including her figurative and dynamic juicy abstract Ookie Canvas painting composition called Peter North. Kate Durbin will present video pieces created from footage of previous rooted performance that explores selfie culture in public spaces.
Alfredo Salazar-Caro and William James Richard Robertson Projects, giving fairgoers the chance to experience a Rift-powered VR installation. Filled with delightful digital works by artists Claudia Hart, Tim Berresheim, Jacolby Satterwhite, 2001 by Salvador Loza and Gibran Morgado opens new perspectives in terms of curation and museum experiences.

On the other side of the bay, Wynwood-located viewers with a bunch of activities, from panel discussions, art, and DJ performances, to one-of-a-kind projects in addition to the many artworks showcased by the 30 or so worldwide exhibitors.
Taking over the beach with its huge tent designed by architects Keenen and Terence Riley of K/R, many international exhibitors—including those who explore contemporary curatorial cohesion through today’s wide-ranging art practices.

“bitforms gallery has been a part of the contemporary art world for 14 years,” Steven Sacks, director and owner of bitforms gallery tells us. “We have a very specific focus on new media artists covering a wide range of generations and media types.” He brings an impressive roster of artworks by artists such as Manfred Mohr.
Monaghan, Rafael Lozano-Hem, strongly contribute to the solid ruthless contemporary art landscape.

Inkjet print mounted on Dibond, Jonathan Monaghan, Dorilton, 2015, bitforms gallery

“The art fairs are an amazing place to reach thousands of art-centric people and introduce and educate them about our unique program, which typically does stand out among more traditional galleries. UNTITLED art fair is a smaller, curated fair with more experimental artists, compared to the larger Art Basel fair, which I think I stands out amongst more traditional galleries. UNTITLED art fair is a smaller, curated fair with more experimental artists, compared to the larger Art Basel fair, which I think I

concludes.
Most of the fairs will run through December 6, 2015. Click here for more details about PULSE, and Click here to check out the bitforms booth.
Every year around this time, thousands of dealers, buyers, artists, and scenesters descend on South Florida for Art Basel Miami. Now in its 14th year, the stateside spinoff of the Swiss art fair—and let’s be honest, calling Art Basel an art fair is like calling the Pope a priest—is bigger and swankier than ever before, attracting galleries from all over the globe and...
providing one of the world’s biggest stages for upcoming artists.

Before we get to all the shows you should be heading to while you’re in Miami, we here at SPIN want to hook you up with an exclusive invitation to K-PAX, a launch event to showcase the collaboration between PAX + K-HOLE, on the rooftop of the Gale South Beach this Friday, December 4th at 5:00 PM, brought to you by the folks at PAX vaporizers.

III Points Art Basel Concert Series (Thursday, December 3 — Saturday, December 5 at Mana Wynwood)

If SXSW moved to Berlin for a year, started wearing a lot of Acne and Gosha Rubchinskiy, and got really into DJ Rashad and Rødhåd, you’d have III Points. The three-year old art, tech, and music festival is quickly becoming a compulsory event for people who have traditionally flocked to Austin in March, so when they decide to throw a three-night concert series in the middle of Art Basel, you know it’s going to be good.

Life and Death Showcase with Richie Hawtin (Thursday, December 3 at 9:00 PM)

III Points Art Basel’s opening night brings iconic label Life and Death to Miami for the fourth time in as many years and the Italian powerhouse did not disappoint with its lineup. The showcase at Mana Wynwood brings Tale of Us, Mind Against, and Thugfucker to the DJ booth, providing a collection of artists that weave the worlds of pop, house, funk, and disco into a singular soundtrack. Oh, and techno legend Richie Hawtin just announced he’ll be joining the Life and Death crew as a special guest so those tickets are going to be hard to come by.

Jamie XX and Four Tet (Friday, December 4 at 9:00 PM)

Jamie xx and Four Tet combine forces once again to provide the centerpiece of III Points concert series. If you haven’t heard what these boys can do when they’re in the booth together, listen to their exceptional BBC One Essential Mix from March and prepare to be blown away by the effortless combination of everything from jungle to disco into one smooth set. Both are finishing years filled with international acclaim so this set will be something of a victory lap and we’re all the richer for it.
A$AP Rocky and Kaytranada (Saturday, December 5 at 9:00 PM)

A$AP Rocky and Kaytranada close out the III Points concert series but this Saturday night set is anything but a come down. Rocky is fresh off a huge year including his sophomore release At. Long. Long. Last. ASAP and rumors that he’s working on a project with Kanye West, while Kaytranada has been pounding the DJ circuit, plying his funky house trade at every club worth its salt the world over. Both should be in rare form at Mana Wynwood.

Fuck Art Let’s Dance (Thursday, December 3 at The Electric Pickle at 10:00 PM)

By far the best name of any party happening in Miami during Art Basel week—or any party in any city during any other week—the yearly shindig is bringing Kim Ann Foxman, Justin Strauss, and Miami Players Club to the Electric Pickle in Wynwood for a suite of DJ sets mixing deep house tracks with just the right amount of tropical groove. To cap the night off, Miami staples Psychic Mirrors will be playing one of their legendary live sets, mixing together soul, funk, and psychedelic sounds into something singularly South Beach.

Superfine! Jet Set Jubilee (Thursday, December 3 at 8300 Northeast 2nd Avenue at 7:00 PM)

Ever wanted to see Shamir perform while surrounded by an “immersive” 3000 square foot chandelier designed by the Miami-born, Brooklyn-based artist Diego Montoya? Yeah, thought so. The minds at Superfine! have put together another expertly curated series of concerts in tandem with their impeccable for contemporary art and design. This time around they’ve brought in Shamir—fresh off his acclaimed debut album Ratchet—for a performance that is larger than life. Literally. That chandelier is going to be huge.

Green Velvet and Tiga (Friday, December 4th at Trade at 11:00 PM)

Any show featuring Green Velvet promises to be as strange as it is fantastic. Techno’s resident oddball is ready to take on Miami alongside Tiga, a 1-2 punch that will satisfy hardcore techno purists and newcomers alike. This show is flying slightly under the radar but don’t sleep on it, these two are the real deal.
DJ Mustard and Fabolous (Saturday, December 5th at Toejam Backlot at 9:00 PM)

DJ Mustard’s fingerprints have been all over the pop and hip-hop landscape for the last year and change so it makes sense that he’s the headliner at this Saturday night show. He’ll be joined by rap stalwart Fabolous for a night of throwback hits mixed with Mustard’s signature sound. RSVP at CLSoundtrack[at]fresh.guestco.com

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This year’s annual presentation of work from the UBS Art Collection explores the theme of *Inside:Out*, from the bright, airy and sophisticated redesign of the new hanging garden. The installation features approximately 30 works of art by 15 artists that reflect the notion of bringing the outside in, breaking down barriers between fiction and reality and between public and private space to create images inspired by fantasy, pleasure, sensation, nature and alternative landscapes. A highlight is the newly acquired [2014], a lightbox by Doug Aitken, this work highlights the intrusion of advertisements in the American landscape. Additional featured artists include Clemente, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Gilbert & George, Andreas Gursky, Catherine Opie, Marc Quinn, Caio Reisewitz, Gerhard Richter, Pipilotti Rist, David Schnell, Simmons & Burke, Xaviera Simmons, Thomas Struth Wasmuth. The works, selected by UBS Art Collection Curator for the Americas Jacqueline Lewis, represent a globally diverse range of artists, themes and media, including installations, kinetic sculpture, painting, drawing and photography.

**Miami Herald | MiamiHerald.com**

**UNREALISM**

**Unrealism:** Exhibition of figurative art organized by mega-dealers Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian. The Moore Building-Elastica, 191 NE 40th St., Design District. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Free.

**LITTLEST SISTER FAIR**

Gallerist Anthony Spinello launches his Little River space with the fourth Littlest Sister, a “faux” invitation art fair featuring 10 unrepresented women-identified Miami artists in a presentation curated by Sofia Bastidas. Each artist has a solo booth; the fair also includes a sector on sound and performance presentations and a series of critical panels exploring arts and real estate, writing, design and collecting. Second Ave.; littlestsister.com. 8-11 p.m. Monday; noon-7 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Free.
To the contemporary art set, Miami is a place of annual pilgrimage, where productivity and decadence play nice. Each December, gallerists, collectors, artists, and curators make their way to the palm-studded metropolis to sell their wares, mount exhibitions, and party in duds that would make *Miami Vice*’s Crockett and Tubbs proud. Art Basel in Miami Beach might be considered the nucleus of this activity, but with satellite fairs and ephemeral exhibitions opening in Art Deco monuments and beach bungalows alike, it’s high time to take a comprehensive look at what’s happening across the city’s sprawl, from South Beach to Little Haiti.

With guidance from four Miamians—gallerist Nina Johnson-Milewski, artist Emmett Moore, curator Diana Nawi, and collector and philanthropist Jorge Perez—ARTSY takes a deep dive into the city’s vibrant art scene.

Diana Nawi, photo by Mylinh Trieu Nguyen

Emmett Moore, photo by Gesi Schilling

Nina Johnson-Milewski, photo by Gesi Schilling

Jorge Perez
Perez—we highlight the art spaces and watering holes of a city where beaches and swamps, American and Latin American traditions, and collections of rare palm trees and blue chip art collide. Our take away: even after the art-crowd’s dust settles, Miami is a mysteriously enchanting place where cultural output of all persuasions churn.

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Miami Beach

Edged by sherbet-hued high-rise chairs, this skinny strip of land—where Miami’s more flamboyant from the mainland by Biscayne holiest Art Deco edifices, flashy consort. It’s also home to spry old-school restaurants, and dive like they were forged in the ’50s.
A. Art Basel in Miami

MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

After Art Basel expanded to Miami in 2002, settling into the Miami Beach Convention Center (between the beach and the Botanical Garden), the city quickly became an annual stop for collectors and artists. As the parent of an ever-growing brood of art fairs during the first week of December, this mainstay is the first stop for many people, thanks to its mix of booths from the biggest, bluest-chip galleries and ambitious younger spaces, curated projects, and a constant flow of programming.

B. Design Miami/

MERIDIAN AVENUE & 19TH STREET, ADJACENT TO THE MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

Across the street from Art Basel, this sophisticated fair hosts a robust cohort of galleries focused on contemporary and historic design, from immersive architectural environments to jewel-like light fixtures that fit in the palm of your hand, created by the world’s most inspired designers—Pon
ti, Maria Pergay, and Julie Richoz among them.
Insider tip: Don’t miss Kengo Kuma completely in plastic, at Galerie military hut—the only one of its Seguin.

C. Bass Museum

2100 COLLINS AVENUE

Though this museum, founded in an impeccably preserved Art Deco structure, is currently under renovation, conceptual artist Sylvie Fleury is hanging her site-specific building’s facade from December 1st through May 31st, 2016. The glowing neon sign is part of Art Basel and the Bass’s five-year-running public art collaboration in Collins Park, which is adjacent to the museum. This installment, curated by Public Art Fund’s Nicholas Baume, brings works by Sam Falls, Katharina Grosse, Willis Thomas to the lush lawn.

D. Nautilus, a SIX

1825 COLLINS AVENUE
Two blocks away and right off the beach, a shiny renovation of this hotel is accompanied by activations from artist Mira Dancy (with a sprawling mural), plucky fresco on the floor of one of the pools, mirrored rooftop installation), and other works tucked playfully into idiosyncratic spaces throughout the hotel. Curated by Artsy's Elena Soboleva, Artsy Projects: Nautilus is a collaboration between Artsy and the hotel.

E. The Standard Spa Miami Beach

40 ISLAND AVENUE

Swing by the swanky Standard hotel, just off Miami Beach on Belle Isle, for a snack on its expansive deck, or pick up one of Miami-based artist Drain’s limited-edition posters, released for fair week.

South Beach

A. UNTITLED

OCEAN DRIVE AND 12TH STREET
This curatorially driven satellite fair on the beach boasts booths by Hole, Taymour Grahne, Steve Turner. Throughout the week, performances move through the tent and its surrounding landscape. Don’t miss artist and choreographer Madeleine Hollander’s MILE, beginning each day on the east side of the structure at 4 p.m. Also on our radar is UNTITLED Radio, a series of daily radio shows that replace traditional art fair panel discussions.

B. Scope
801 Ocean Drive
This year marks Scope’s 15th anniversary in Miami. They bring 120 exhibitors along with curated sections Juxtapoz Presents, the Breeder Program, and FEATURE, the latter featuring 10 booths that highlight new approaches to photography.

C. La Sandwicherie
229 14th Street
For a much-needed dose of sustenance after a long day of fair hopping, grab a stool at La Sandwicherie and enjoy one of their signature sandwiches—all available on a croissant in lieu of bread or bun. Wash it down with a smoothie or an early evening beer. Or, come back late night for a snack and hazy conversation with the post-party art crowd. It’s one of the few places in South Beach that’s open very late—until 5 a.m.

D. Mac’s Club Deuce
222 14th Street
Miami’s oldest bar, Mac’s Club Deuce is also the city’s greatest dive, offering a swirl of whiskey and jukebox tunes to colorful regulars, pool sharks, and wobbling newbies alike. Last year, its Hawaiian shirt-sporting owner, Mac Klein, turned 100.
This museum is one of the crown jewels of Miami curiosities. Founded by Miami philanthropist and passionate collector-wanderer Mitchell Wolfson in 1986 to house his ever-growing collection of decorative art and propaganda—his collecting habits famously began with a stockpile of treasured vintage hotel keys—the Wolfsonian-FIU is housed in a boxy, stunningly beautiful Mediterranean Revival building. Up now, don’t miss “Margin of Error,” which takes a look at “cultural responses to mechanical mastery and engineered catastrophes of the modern age—the shipwrecks, crashes, explosions, collapses, and novel types of workplace injury that interrupt the path of progress.”

Insider tip: For a quick, low-key, take a seat at this Cuban diner—paper placemats, complete with kitchen fire, Puerto Sagua has temporarily closed its doors but is set to reopen on November 30th, just in time for fair week.
G / H / I. Joe’s, Milo’s, and Prime 112

11 WASHINGTON AVENUE; 730 FIRST STREET; 112 OCEAN DRIVE

Insider tip: For a longer, more luxurious meal, try one of Jorge Perez’s favorites: Joe’s for stone crabs, a local delicacy (everyone wears bibs); Milo’s for fresh fish; and Prime 112 for a nice big steak.

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North Beach
A. Faena Hotel

3201 COLLINS AVENUE

Collector and hotelier Alan Faena’s newest complex fuses a freshly minted hotel with an ambitious art space called Faena Forum, designed by Rem Koolhaas’s OMA. While the Forum won’t open until spring 2016, its programming kicks off—and into the streets, during the first week of December, when *assume vivid astro focus*
B. EDITION Hotel

2901 COLLINS AVENUE

While it might be best known for the long lines that amass outside its club (cool-kid magnet BASEMENT), EDITION hosts a set of diamond-in-the-rough projects in its poolside bungalows. If you can find them through the long marble lobby and stand of towering potted banana plants, James (Bungalow 262) shows virtual reality-laced works by Couillard, and Harper’s Books (Bungalow 252) hosts a signing with artist Sue Williams of her new, gorgeous monograph on December 2nd.

C. NADA

THE FONTAINEBLEAU MIAMI BEACH, 4441 COLLINS AVENUE

Making a move from the charmingly retro Deauville Beach Resort uptown to the high-gloss Fontainebleau marks a big shift for the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) fair, which brings together L.A.’s Anat Ebgi to Berlin’s SANDY BROWN to New York’s Karma, exhibitors are known for bringing...
D. PULSE

INDIAN BEACH PARK, 4601 COLLINS AVENUE

A couple of blocks north is another fair that’s carved a place for itself on the main drag. From mainstay galleries like groundbreaking nonprofits like Visual AIDS and RxArt, most booths here mount focused presentations of works of two to three artists. Don’t miss the fair’s curated section, PLAY, surfacing innovative video and new media selections from idiosyncratic New York-based curator Stacy Engman.

E. Miami Project and Art on Paper

DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT, 6701 COLLINS AVENUE

Take a cab a few minutes north, and you’ll find satellite fairs Miami Project and Art on Paper, taking NADA’s place at the Deauville Beach Resort. Also filling this hub is a dynamic selection of performance, installation, and new media interventions from SATELLITE, a multipart curatorial effort. We’re especially excited that Brooklyn bar and concert venue Trans Pecos is setting up shop there with sets by Fade to Mind and Michael Beharie, among others.

F. Sandbar Lounge

6752 COLLINS AVENUE

*Insider tip:* Across the street, visit Sandbar Lounge, a sand-covered dive bar for a drink and game of pool after a long day trekking up the beach.

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Design District

As you pass across the causeway that traverses Biscayne Bay, Downtown Miami’s skyline comes into focus. Behind it lie some of the city’s most dynamic cultural spaces. You might first land in the city’s Design District, just north of highway 195, where boxy warehouses and parking garages have, in recent years, been converted into sharp design shops, art galleries, and restaurants.
A. ICA Miami

4040 NE 2ND AVENUE

While its new Aranguren & Gallegos Arquitectos-designed building begins construction, the one-year-old ICA brings a strong assortment of contemporary exhibitions to its temporary home. This season surfaces a solo exhibition by radical video artist anticipating. For his part, Emmett Moore is looking forward to future programming: “I’m excited to see what’s in store.”

B. de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space

23 NE 41ST STREET

Around the corner, visit one of Miami’s acclaimed private art collections, brought into the public sphere by Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz. This year, the group show “You’ve Got to Know the Rules…To Break Them” promises irreverent highlights from the couple’s encyclopedic holdings of today’s most influential work.

Insider tip: “The private collections in Miami are amazing troves of..."
contemporary art,” says Diana L. Nawi.

**C. Locust Projects**

3852 NORTH MIAMI AVENUE

Since its founding in 1998, this artist-run nonprofit space has produced a steady stream of experimental projects. This month, it’s a platform for ambitious work by a bevy of young artists—sculptor choreographer Silas Riener, installation artist Beatriz Monteavaro, and conceptual artist Martine Syms.

*Insider tip:* And as you traverse the city, look out for Syms’s graphic prints, emblazoned with phrases like “Darling It Won’t Be The Same Always” plastered on city buses. They resemble mid-1900s “Chitlin’ Circuit” posters, which black musicians could perform freely.

**D. Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian’s “UNREALISM” at the Moore Building**

191 NE 40TH STREET

Sometime rivals Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian embark on their first
collaboration over four floors (about 28,000 square feet) of this Design District architectural gem. Their joint curatorial project, "UNREALISM," brings together artists—from John Currin to Juliano-Villani—representing a renaissance in figuration.

Larry Bell’s 6 x 6 An Improvisation. Copyright of Larry Bell. Photo by Alex Marks, 2014. Courtesy of Chinati Foundation.

E. Larry Bell’s 6 x 6 An Improvisation

SUITE #200, MELIN BUILDING, 3930 NE SECOND AVENUE

White Cube brings Larry Bell’s 6 x 6 An Improvisation to the Melin Building. The installation built from towering, reflective glass panels—a Light and Space pioneer’s masterpiece—promises a quiet, contemplative reprieve from the teeming fairs.

F. Mandolin

4312 NE 2ND AVENUE

Insider tip: For lunch or dinner, try one of Nina Johnson-Milewski’s favorites, Mandolin: “It’s such a lovely atmosphere, owned and operated by the nicest people.” It also serves some of the city’s best seafood, on a hidden patio dotted with sky blue chairs and fresh flowers.
G. Michael’s Genuine
130 NE 40TH STREET

*Insider tip:* Or for heartier fare in an equally unhurried environment, grab a seat at Michael’s Genuine, opened by James Beard-honored Michael Schwartz. It’s one of Jorge Perez’s favorites. You’ll have no regrets after devouring the Harris Ranch black angus burger (don’t dare skimp on the brioche bun).

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Little Haiti / North Miami

In the 1800s, this area, north of downtown Miami, was covered with lemon groves, from which it drew its first nickname, “Lemon City.” Today, it’s defined by its Haitian immigrant population and burgeoning art scene.

A. Gallery Diet
6315 NW 2ND AVENUE

Founded by impresario Nina Jol, this Miami mainstay recently moved north to a four-building, 15,000 square-foot compound in the heart of Little Haiti. "I'm loving our new..."
“Trees in Oolite,” the gallery’s first design exhibition, uses this fresh air to its full advantage. In the complex’s courtyard, brutalist furniture by Emmett Moore, Katie Stout, and avocado, and oak trees. Inside, skyscapes she painted _en plein air_ occasional candle as her only light sources.
Bottom of a Fishbowl Chair

Gallery Diet

Emmett Moore

Ass Tray (After the garden of earthly delights)

Gallery Diet
This experimental space is up to its old boundary-pushing tricks during fair week with “Littlest Sister,” a conceptual exhibition that calls itself a “faux art fair, with the tagline “Smallest Art Fair, Biggest Balls.” The project gathers “booths” by 10 women-identified artists, all unrepresented and working in painting, installation, new media, and performance.

This gallery’s roster is chock full of up-and-coming artists from across the country—Paul Cowan, Math Bass, and Sofia Leiby bring bright, active paintings that resemble letters and words breaking out of alphabetic confines and wiggling their way to abstraction.

Insider tip: Travel south past Little Haiti Park and you’ll find Fiorito, a small Argentinian restaurant that’s “a good local spot for a low key dinner,” says Emmett Moore. “I have dreams about their grilled octopus.”

———

Wynwood
Wynwood has become the poster child for the rampant expansion of Miami’s art scene to the mainland, and likewise into the city’s streets. Over the last six years, murals have spread across the concrete walls of the district’s abandoned factories and warehouses. Galleries and private collections have followed suit, marking a cultural renaissance for this formerly industrial neighborhood, nicknamed “Little San Juan” for its still-vibrant Puerto Rican community.

A. Wynwood Walls

2520 NW 2ND AVENUE
Pioneered by vociferous street art advocate Jeffrey Deitch, along with late real estate developer Tony Goldman, the murals that make up Wynwood Walls were some of the first carrots to draw the international art set to Wynwood in 2009. Every year, new murals are added to the colorful cohort that includes street art's most influential names—and some of its undisputed masterworks—from Futura to Os Gemeos. This year, 14 new murals and installations (by Fafi, Crash, Logan Hicks, and more) are unveiled.

**B. Rubell Family Collection**

95 NW 29TH STREET

Amassed by charismatic patrons Donald and Mera Rubell, this expansive collection is housed in a monumental 45,000-square-foot space that was once owned by the Drug Enforcement Agency. This year, they present "NO MAN’S LAND," focused on the influential output of female artists ranging from Michele Abeles and Jenny Holzer.

*Insider tip:* Don’t miss Jennifer Rubell’s signature interactive food-based installations that, this year, explore buttering bread as an act of intimacy and interpersonal connection, on December 3rd from 9–11 a.m.

**C. The Margulies Collection at the WAREhOUSE**

591 NW 27TH STREET

Housed in a repurposed Wynwood warehouse, this must-see private collection belongs to Miamian Martin Z. Margulies. This year, don’t miss new exhibitions of work by Anselm Kiefer and recent acquisitions of pieces by Huma Bhaba, Kristian销毁, and more.

**D. Spencer Finch’s Ice Cream Truck**

3401 NE 1ST AVENUE

*Insider tip:* While strolling through the neighborhood, drop by artist Spencer...
Finch’s ice cream truck. “His solar-powered truck will provide anyone in the area with edible frozen works of art free of charge,” explains Jorge Perez.

Mana Wynwood’s facade. Image courtesy of Mana Contemporary.

E. Mana Wynwood

318 NW 23RD STREET

This year, Mana Contemporary unveils a 30-acre campus—every corner devoted to contemporary art and culture—that rivals its much talked-about New Jersey compound. Large-scale exhibitions highlighting three influential private collections (the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, the Jorge M. Pérez Collection, and the Tiroche DeLeon Collection) herald this new mainstay on the Wynwood circuit.

F / G. Art Miami and CONTEXT Art Miami

3101 NE 1ST AVENUE

These sister art fairs, the 26-year-old Art Miami and the four-year-old Context, are must-see stops in Wynwood.

H / I. Panther Coffee, Gramps

1875 PURDY AVENUE; 176 NW 24TH STREET

Insider tip: For a caffeine boost among creative Miamians, try McGee mural-swathed building of Panther Coffee. Or for a stiff drink among creative Miamians, try Gramps, “pretty much the only bar I got to,”
says Emmett Moore. “It has a lot of the qualities of old Miami dive bars with some silly artsy stuff mixed in.”

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**Park West/Down**

Installation view: The Leisure Pit

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM)

Taking the southern route from Miami Beach to the mainland, across the MacArthur Causeway, you’ll land south of you. Here, skyscrapers and club culture alike.

In recent years, the adjacent waterfront, formerly monopolized by Millennium Park, has transformed into Museum Park, an impeccably manicured landscape of gardens.
A. The Perez Art Museum Miami

1103 BISCAYNE BOULEVARD

This stunning museum, which opened its doors in 2013, recently brought star curator Franklin Sirmans on as director to helm its ambitious program. This fall, don’t miss mid-career retrospective, “Sun Splashed.” Miami-based artist Nicolas Lobo’s large-scale concrete sculptures, festooned with the occasional flip-flop, that he forged in a swimming pool.

B. Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation

1018 NORTH MIAMI AVENUE

This stunning building, its facade covered in over one million tiles that together resemble a verdant junglescape, houses patron Ella Fontanals-Cisneros’s comprehensive collection of primarily Latin American art. Up now, don’t miss Cuban artist Gustavo Pérez Monzón’s “Tramas.”

C / D / E. The Corner, NIU Kitchen, and Zuma
Insider tip: For a cocktail (we recommend their Hurricane, complete with passion fruit shrub and pineapple) pop into The Corner, Diana Nawi’s “go-to bar.” For dinner, head south to NIU Kitchen’s beautiful nook for delicious Catalan fare. Or for a more dramatic dining experience, make a reservation at Zuma for elegant Japanese plates enjoyed from a perch overlooking the water.

—Alexxa Gotthardt

A Short List of Miami Art Week Events

Gagosian, Stallone and even Edvard Munch are bringing it this year

By Ryan Steadman • 11/27/15 11:26am
Miami Art Week gets a bad rap for being a nonstop rager, what with the Cristal, the caviar and the unicorn rides (trust me, Peter Brant can make that happen). But, in salute to the fact that what's on view (I'm talking about art, not bikini models) can be just as intoxicating, we picked out just a handful of events that put the focus where it belongs.

For a huge and updating list of events, see

MONDAY NOVEMBER 30

Isaac Julien | Commission for Rolls-Royce Art Programme in Miami for Art Basel in Miami Beach 2015. (Photo: Courtesy of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars)
Basel in Miami Beach
Opening
Jewel Box, National YoungArts Foundation
2100 Biscayne Boulevard
And we’re off! Rolls-Royce, the choice car of haughty old Englishmen and ’90s rappers, has commissioned artist Isaac Julien titled *Stones Against Diamonds (Ice Cave)* at the YoungArts Jewel Box as part of Art Basel Miami Beach 2015. Covering 15 screens, Mr. Julien shot this remote landscape as a metaphor for the subconscious, a place of rich beauty that can only be accessed through psychoanalysis and artistic reflection. Damn that’s deep! So if you’re rollin’ through Miami’s Wynwood District this year in your souped up KIA, maybe stop into this exhibit for a much-needed ego (and id) check.
A teacher’s influence lasts a lifetime. Prime example: One of painter Ann Craven’s former students from a class in 2004 eventually decided to open a gallery in the Basel host-city of Miami. That student was Nina Johnson-Milewski, owner/director of contemporary art collector favorite, Gallery Diet. Cut to 2015, and that student is about to open a show of her former teacher’s work at her new location in the up-and-coming neighborhood of Little Haiti.
reason enough to see this show—the best place to find crusty die-hard Miami locals, the art lovers who run this city for more than just one week out of the year.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 1

“Unrealism”
Organized by Gagosian Gallery
Moore Building
3841 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami
Opening reception 5-8 p.m.
This is kind of like when the Penguin and the Riddler teamed up for the very first time: it was fearsome yet brought former art world foes under one Design District roof? know it will be a humdinger, too
John Currin, Elizabeth Peyton and David Salle are the very new guard, which includes young hot shots like Jamian Juliano-Vilani and Ella Kruglyanskaya. It’s all part of their evil duo’s diabolical plot to reallocate collector funds to their secret offshore lair, part of a grander scheme to take over the world... Can nothing stop them?

Yo! Adrian, Picasso, et al.

Galerie Gmurzynska ‘dinatoire’ for Germano Celant and Sylvester Stallone

Villa Casa Casuarina
Guest curator Germano Celant organized the Art Basel Miami booth for this Zurich gallery with some top-notch artists (Picasso, Dubuffet, you know, the usual masterworks) and there will be held at the sumptuous Villa Casa Casuarina, better known as the former castle-like home of the late fashion designer Gianni Versace, a.k.a. the Versace Mansion. Oh and the star of such mega-hits as *Mom Will Shoot!* and *Rhinestone* is an accomplished painter himself, f.y.i. Sadly, the event is invite only, but if you Netflix *Rocky* in your hotel room while drinking little bottles of booze from your mini-fridge, you can convince yourself it's more or less the same thing.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 3
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
The market for emerging art is as dead as Dean Martin, right daddio? Wrong. That’s exactly what the fat cats want you to think so they can get all the primo goodies for themselves. Well, we can’t let that happen, can we? This is what you do: set four alarm clocks the night before. Print out your list of potential emerging art targets. I suggest you wear something that you can move well in (a track suit maybe) and show up to the Fontainbleau a few hours early. You might even want to wear some elbow and kneepads. The Horts are not afraid to throw an elbow or two when jockeying for position in front of the Canada gallery booth, and you shouldn’t be either. Okay, deep breath… Let’s do this.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 4
Edvard Munch Art Award
Shelbourne Hotel South Beach
1801 Collins Avenue
By invitation, or Art Basel First Choice VIP card
Now this is a big deal. The Edvard Munch Art Award, after an almost 10-year hiatus, and the winner will be announced in Miami during Basel Week (yes, that thud is the sound of Munch rolling over in his grave). The 500,000 NOK award (roughly $58,000) is given to "an emerging visual artist,"

Miami meet Munch.
no older than 40 years of age, with a talent within the last five years to be
awarded an exhibition at the Munch Museum in Oslo, I
predict that the reception should be filled
with guests who have had their
attention captured by the
contemporary art world, which
has us considering this party a

–HAMPTONS MAGAZINE

What to Expect at Art Basel in Miami Beach This Year
Share
Spring break forever.

Yes, art world, Art Basel in Miami pretend all you want that you’re just here for the high-brow art and lectures, but nobody’s going to judge you if you manage to get some serious partying done. This is Miami, and if there’s one thing we’re really good at, it’s partying. And rest assured, there will be tons of parties during Miami Art Week.

From the completely free to invite-only, here is the most complete guide to Art Basel Miami Beach 2015 parties.
collection of musically driven, nightlife events — with a dash of art thrown in, because, you know, we aren’t savages. And thanks to a generous 5 a.m. closing time — 24 hours in Miami’s Park West district — there’s plenty of time for you to make an Art Basel mistake. (Good news is that mistake probably has a flight back to New York.)

Check back often for updates, as more events get announced. Don’t see your event listed here? Send an email.

Tuesday, December 1

**Slap & Tickle Art Basel with Dave1.** 10 p.m. Tuesday, December 1, at Bardot, 3456 N Miami Ave, Miami; 305-576-5570; $20 plus fees via showclix.com.

**Favela Beach with Mr. Brainwash, Jus-Ske, Ruen, and Reid Waters.** 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 1 at Wall Lounge, 2201 Collins Ave., Miami Beach; 305-938-3130; wallmiami.com; wantickets.com.

Wednesday, December 2


Thursday, December 3

**Related Stories**

- **III POINTS ANNOUNCES ART BASEL CONCERT SERIES LINEUP: JAMIE XX AND FOUR TET**

  PAMM presents “Dimensions” by McNama, Pérez Art Museum Miami.
When Pigs Fly presented by Link Miami Rebels with artists TBA, Trade, 1439 Washington Ave., Miami Beach. Tickets $15 to $35 via residentadvisor.net.

tINI and Bill Patrick, Heart Nightclub, 50 NE 11th St., Miami. Tickets $20 to $30 via residentadvisor.net.


Jamie xx and Four Tet, presented by III Points and Young Turks, at Mana Wynwood, 318 NW 23rd St., Miami. Doors 9 p.m. Tickets $25 to $400 via showclix.com.

Miami Hearts Design, hosted by Karelle Levy with a KRELwear living installation, with Afrobeta and Millionyoung, presented by Superfine! House of Art and Design, the Citadel, 8300 NE Second Ave., Miami. Tickets $15 via showclix.com.
Avey Tare (Animal Collective) DJ Set with Byrdipop and Uchi (live), Bardot, 3456 N. Miami Ave., Miami. Doors 10 p.m.; tickets $15 to 20 via superfine.design/tickets.

Nakid Magazine Issue Release Party celebrating Jen Stark. 10 p.m. Friday, December 4, at Libertine, 40 NE 11th St., Miami; 305-363-2120; libertinemiami.com. Admission is $10.

Saturday, December 5

Danny Howells, Do Not Sit On It, 10 p.m.; tickets $20 via residentadvisor.net.


David Squillace. 11:30 p.m. Saturday, December 5, at Wall Lounge, 2201 Collins Ave., Miami Beach; 305-938-3130; to $70 via wantickets.com.

Sunday, December 6

The Visionquest Experience with Visionquest (Lee Curtiss, Ryan Crosson, Shaun Reeves), DJ Three, Behrouz, and more, Electric Pickle, 2826 N. Miami Ave., Miami. Tickets $20 to $30 via superfine.design/tickets.

Dark Basel with Necro and Madchild. 7 p.m. at Churchill’s Pub, 5501 NE Second Ave., Miami; 305-757-1807; fees via eventbrite.com. Ages 18 and up.
ICA Miami will present a solo exhibition dedicated to video and performance artist Alex Bag during Art Basel Miami Beach in 2015. On view in ICA Miami’s Atrium Gallery, *The Van (Redux)*, Bag’s key videos, *The Van*, 2001, features a dramatic new site-specific installation. This exhibition marks the first major U.S. presentation of the artist’s work since 2009.
The Rubell Family Collection is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition, "Rubell Family Collection," on view in Miami from December 2nd, 2015 through May 28th, 2016. This exhibition will focus on and celebrate work made by more than a hundred female artists of different generations, cultures and disciplines. These artists will be represented by paintings, photographs, sculptures and video installations that will entirely occupy the Foundation’s 28-gallery, 45,000-square-foot museum. Some galleries will contain individual presentations while others will present thematic groupings of artists. Several installations have been commissioned specifically for this exhibition.

In order to present the exhibition's scope and diversity, the Foundation will rotate artworks on view throughout the course of the exhibition, presenting different artists at different times. All of the artworks in the exhibition are from the Rubells’ permanent collection.
Other exhibitions organized by the Foundation include \textit{28 Chinese} which is currently on view at the San Antonio Museum of Art through January 3, 2016 and \textit{28 Chinese} which is currently on view at the Detroit Institute of Arts through January 18, 2016 and seen by over one million people. A fully illustrated catalog with essays will accompany the exhibition. A complimentary audio tour will also be available.

To celebrate the opening of \textit{NO MAN'S LAND} presenting \textit{Devotion}, her 12th annual large-scale, food-based installation on December 3, 2015 from 9 to 11 a.m., Devotion will present a gesture as a medium for the expression of love. Using bread, butter, and a couple engaged to be married as her media, Rubell will transform the simple act of cutting and buttering bread into a poetic exploration of repetition as devotion.

List of artists:

Michele Abeles  
Nina Chanel Abney  
Njideka Akunyili Crosby  
Kathryn Andrews  
Janine Antoni  
Tauba Auerbach  
Alisa Baremboym  
Katherine Bernhard  
Amy Bessone  
Kerstin Bratsch  
Cecily Brown  
Iona Rozeal Brown  
Miriam Cahn  
Patty Chang  
Natalie Czech  
Mira Dancy  
DAS INSTITUT  
Karin Davie  
Cara Despain  
Candida Höfer  
Jenny Holzer  
Cristina Iglesias  
Hayv Kahraman  
Deborah Kass  
Natasja Kensmil  
Anya Kielar  
Karen Kilimnik  
Jutta Koether  
Klara Kristalova  
Barbara Kruger  
Yayoi Kusama  
Sigalit Landau  
Louise Lawler  
Margaret Lee  
Annette Lemieux  
Sherrie Levine  
Li Shurui  
Sarah Lucas
EXHIBITION SPONSORS:

U.S. TRUST
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THE MARGULIES COLLECTION AT THE WAREHOUSE OPENS TO THE PUBLIC WITH NEW EXHIBITIONS OCTOBER 28, 2015 THROUGH APRIL 30, 2016

2015-2016

What are the new acquisitions on exhibition this year?
Anselm Kiefer, Susan Philipsz, Meuser, Lawrence Carroll, Mark Handforth,
Who are the artists new to the Warehouse collection?
Susan Philipsz, Mark Handforth, Liat Yossifor

What artists have permanent installations at the Warehouse?
Pier Paolo Calzolari, Anthony Caro, Willem de Kooning, Donald Judd, Amar Kanwar, Kiefer, Janis Kounellis, Sol LeWitt, Joan Miró, Isamu Noguchi, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Peter Fischli and David Weiss, Flavin, Michael Heizer, Donald Judd, Simcha Shirman

Checklist of Artists in this year’s Exhibitions

Miami’s art museums are grabbing headlines with splashy staff hires and well-heeled additions to their boards. Yet when it comes to actual artwork, the city’s marquee collectors — and their personally run exhibition spaces — continue to steal the show. The latest example of “The Miami Model”? A sprawling retrospective from the German blue-chip artist Anselm Kiefer that fills nearly a quarter of the 45,000-square-foot Margulies Collection at the Warehouse — a garment factory transformed into a showcase for art holdings of the real estate developer Martin Margulies. The exhibit opens Wednesday, but “it will be up forever,” Mr. Margulies said. “If you think I ever want to go through this again …” he trailed off, motioning to the flurry of activity throughout the Warehouse this week. Mr. Kiefer directed a small army of art handlers whirring about on hydraulic lifts, racing to install an array of 25,000-pound detritus-filled sculptures, 10-feet-high neo-runic paintings, and charcoal wall inscriptions, just hours before a dinner benefiting the Lotus House homeless shelter.

The works include the new sculpture, “Ages of the World,” a 17-foot stack of 400 unfinished canvases, lead books, rubble and dried played down the show being any kind of aesthetic shot across the bow of the Pérez Art Museum Miami, despite his public feud with that institution over its continuing to receive millions in tax dollars from a struggling community rather than relying solely on private contributors. Instead, Mr. Margulies hoped visiting schoolchildren would learn from Mr. Kiefer’s handiwork: Don’t let meager materials limit your vision. “They should realize this is the creative process of an artist.” Mr. Kiefer, 70, remains a controversial figure within the art world, alternately lionized and denounced for artwork invoking both World War II Germany and the kabbalah. Some see transcendent statements, others a reduction of the Jewish experience to kitsch. Both factions will find plenty of grist at the Warehouse, where Mr. Kiefer’s works refer to everything from the poet and Nazi labor camp survivor Paul Celan to the Old Testament’s Lilith. “Important work always creates polarization,” Mr. Kiefer explained. “The victims understand. Those people who see in me a glorifier of fascism — when you look into them, you find they have something to hide themselves.”

As for the distinction between having his work shown in a “private” versus public museum, Mr. Kiefer hoped the former would proliferate. Collectors should be free to bypass museum curators, he said, and lavishly pursue their own tastes. He compared the phenomenon with the early 20th-century construction of public libraries by moguls like Andrew Carnegie: “I think it was J. P. Morgan who said, ‘If you die rich, it’s a mistake.’” BRET T. SOKOL
The de la Cruz Collection presents their 2016 exhibition "Know the Rules...to Break Them." A group of artists from their personal collection who have been associated with defining 21st century practice. Self-aware of the influence that technology and the rise of consumerism has had on their work, artists exhibited following the cool forms of Minimalism, Conceptualism and Abstract Expressionism, while injecting their works with subtle negations of their own process. Looking at traditional techniques behind painting and sculpture, these works co-exist timelessly as strategies of stylistic appropriation raise questions of subjectivity and originality.

"You’ve Got to Know the Rules...to Break Them" American Abstraction with German Neo-Expressionism, revealing earnest explorations of the artists technical acumen. Through experimentation, they antagonize accepted practices by drawing upon a variety of themes including cultural, historical and sociopolitical modes.

Per contra, the third floor contains a study in portraiture and memory with the works of Félix González-Torres, Ana Mendieta and Rob Pruitt. By transforming everyday objects and using energetic gestures and repetition, González-Torres, Mendieta and Pruitt accept diverse ideologies and reject the notion of a single vantage point.
By merging a variety of styles and mediums, the works selected for this year’s exhibition mirror contemporary culture while allowing an open-ended conversation of various interpretations and possibilities. Artist in the exhibition: Allora & Calzadilla, Tschabalala Self, Bradford, Joe Bradley, Dan Colen, Jim Drain, Isa Genzken, Félix Gonzalez-Torres, Guyton, Rachel Harrison, Arturo Herrera, Evan Holloway, Thomas Houseago, Alex Israel, JPW3, Adam McEwen, Ana Mendieta, Albert Oehlen, Gabriel Orozco, Jorge Pardo, Manfred Pernice, Sigmar Polke, Seth Price, Rob Pruitt, Sterling Ruby, Analia Saban, Josh Smith, Reena Spaulings, Reena Spaulings, Guyton/Walker, Kelley Walker, Christopher Wool.

Mana Contemporary Announces Its 2015 Miami Art Week Program

Presenting exhibitions from three of the most prestigious private art collections in the United States.

Nov 03, 2015, 16:01 ET from Mana Contemporary

MIAMI, Nov. 3, 2015 /PRNewswire/ — Mana Contemporary is pleased to announce its second edition of programming during Miami Art Week, taking place from December 3 to 6, 2015 in the Wynwood arts district, this event will inaugurate the central 140,000-square-foot building’s new role as the Mana Wynwood Convention Center.

Mana Contemporary will present a diverse roster of exhibitions and programs, including:

Made in California: Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation

Made in California—a phrase popularized in...
text/image works—will be a must-see exhibition during Miami Art Week.

Frederick R. Weisman was a pioneering art as it emerged as a center for contemporary art in the 1960s. He built a collection that includes many of the artists that rose to prominence under the legendary Ferus Gallery, and who went on to define art movements such as Light and Space, Finish Fetish, Postmodernism, and beyond. Under the direction of Mrs. Billie Milar, the Weisman Foundation amass a substantial collection that will be works by John Baldessari, Edward Ruscha, Tim Hawkinson, Robert Irwin, and others.

**A Sense of Place: Selections from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection**

Co-curated by Patricia Hanna and Anelys Alvarez

Including a selection of over 60 works from the collection of Jorge M. Pérez, *A Sense of Place* is an exhibition that explores cultural identity by way of the collection’s recent acquisitions of works by artists from America. Despite the fact that the world, where technology and communication transcend physical boundaries, many of these artists continue to construct personal and cultural identities by exploring ideas that are specific to their contexts of origin. The show will examine how artists use abstraction, architecture, politics, and memory to carve out a sense of place, and how those concerns are reflected in Pérez as a collector and Miami as a developing city. Pérez, named one of the most influential Hispanics in the U.S., is also visionary for incorporating the arts into his developments.

**Everything you are I am not: Latin American Art from the Tiroche DeLeon Collection**

Curated by Catherine Petitgas

*Everything you are I am not* presents a selection of key works of Latin American contemporary art from the Tiroche DeLeon Collection. Borrowed from a piece in the collection by Argentine artist Julieta Aranda, the title of the exhibition alludes to the common practice among contemporary artists from the region to subvert the canons of mainstream art to produce thought-provoking, often humorous works. With 55 pieces by 30 artists, the exhibition will explore several different facets of this approach. The Tiroche DeLeon Collection was established in January 2011 by Serge Tiroche and his wife Joséphine DeLeon, and that collection has inspired other coming art scenes of Asia, Europe, and Latin America.
Eastern Europe. London-based Petitgas is one of the world's most respected collectors of Latin American art, as well as a writer, lecturer, and art historian.

Mana Urban Arts x Bushwick Collective Mana Urban Arts Project is collaborating with Bushwick Collective to bring live graffiti painting by 50 influential artists to Mana Wynwood's RC Cola factory. Renowned artists include Pancho (Italy), Case Maclaim (Germany), and others. The industrial space adjacent to I-95 will transform into a vibrant scene featuring a skateboarding exhibition, breakdancing, DJ performances, and live music.

ALSO ON VIEW AT MANA WYNWOOD

PINTA Miami
PINTA Miami is the only curated boutique art fair with a specific geographic focus that looks to showcase the best of abstract, concrete, neo-concrete, kinetic, and conceptual art movements. PINTA has updated its format to present a fully curated fair, featuring an international team of recognized curators chosen to direct each of the five newly designated sections.

SPECIAL EVENTS

VIP Preview Reception
An exclusive preview dinner will feature a performance by the Miami Symphony Orchestra.

III Points Music Festival
In partnership with III Points, Mana Contemporary will present a series of after-hours music events in Mana Wynwood's 36,000-square-foot sound stadium.

SHOW INFORMATION

Mana Contemporary
December 3-6, 2015
Mana Wynwood Convention Center
318 NW 23rd Street
Preview Reception
Tuesday, December 1: 6pm – 9pm

Public Hours
Thursday, December 3: 11am – 8pm
Friday, December 4: 11am – 8pm
Saturday, December 5: 11am – 8pm
Sunday, December 6: 11am – 6pm

Admission
Admission to Mana Contemporary's events at Mana Wynwood is complimentary, unless otherwise noted. For tickets and information regarding PINTA Miami, please visit:
PAPER MAGAZINE'S 2015 MEGA GUIDE TO ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH WEEK

Art Basel is just a month away. Last year the fair attracted 73,000 visitors to the Miami Beach Convention Center and this year's 14th edition looks to be even bigger and better, with 267 galleries from 32 countries exhibiting from December 3rd to the 6th — plus the former head of NYC's Armory Show, Noah Horowitz, is now running the fair.
Rendering of the new Miami Beach Convention Center. Work on the $615 million renovation is scheduled to begin as soon as AB/MB ends. The $20 million re-do of Lincoln Road is also moving along, with NYC's Corner Field Operations winning the contract to update the original Morris Lapidus design from the 1950s.

All the AB/MB side-sectors return, including SURVEY with 14 booths showing “historically informed” works; NOVA, where you'll find 34 younger galleries showing new works; and sixteen POSITIONS galleries focusing on emerging artists, including Villa Design Group.
derived from the scene of the 1997 murder of Gianni Versace on Ocean Drive and, “Polyrhythm Technoi” an allegory to contemporary electronic music” by Henning Fehr, Danji Buck-Moore and Phillip Ruhr, presented by Galerie Max Mayer.

UNBUILT

Yves Behar is the recipient of the "Visionary Award" and he’ll be honored with a special exhibit in the D/M venue behind the convention center from December 2 through 6. A student team from Harvard was chosen for their submission, “UNBUILT,” a collection of foam models of unrealized design projects. Expect thirty five exhibitors, including Brazil, showing new works by the Campana Brothers, and Italian gallery Secondome, with hand-crafted limited editions.

Several changes and new editions are coming to the numerous — 18 and counting — satellite fairs: Miami Project at Deauville Beach Resort (6701 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach), the former site of the NADA fair; while the street to the Fontainebleau (4441 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach).
The Miami Project is also launching SATELLITE that will show various properties up near their 73rd St fill the rooms in the Ocean Terr Beach) with different installations filled by Tiger Strikes Asteroid. It’s open VIP/media event on December 1st. Pecos, the music venue out in Queens, New York, and Sam Hillmer from the band Zs, are putting together a 5-day music program in the North Beach Amphitheater, emphasizing “musical practitioners with some form of art practice.”
Grace Hartigan X Contemporary also joins the crowd with their inaugural edition in Wynwood running from December 2nd through Sunday, and a VIP opening on December 1st from 5 to 10 p.m. Twenty eight exhibitors will be on hand, plus special projects including “Grace Hartigan: 1960 – 1965” presented by Michael Klein Arts curated by Pamela Willoughby; and “Colombia N.O.W.” presented by TIMEBAG.
Kate Durbin’s “Hello Selfie” / Courtesy of the Artist/Photographer Jessie Askinaz

PULSE Miami Beach returns to Indian Beach Park (4601 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach) starting on December 1st featuring a panel discussion put together by Hyperallergic, an interactive piece by Kate Durbin called “Hello, Selfie!” and a live performance by Kalup Linzy. City of Miami via a talk at 5 p.m. on “Future Visions of Miami” and a “Sunset Celebration” from 5 to 7 p.m. Fair visitors can check out “TOO,” an installation referencing items sold at the stores, originally on view in NYC last March. There’s a complimentary shuttle from the convention center, and the fair is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Saturday.
Wynwood Walls has a lot planned this year including “Walls of Change” with 14 new murals and installations and the debut of a new adjacent space called “The Wynwood Walls Garden.” The walls are by Case, Crash, Cryptik, el Seed, Ernest Zacharevic, Fafi, Hueman, INTI, The London Police, Logan Hicks and Ryan McGinness. Over in the “garden,” the Spanish art duo Pichi & Avo are doing a mural on stacked shipping containers and in the events space, Magnus Sodamin will be painting the floors and walls. The VIP opening is on December 1st in the early evening, but then it's open to the public from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. Goldman Properties’ CEO Jessica Goldman Srebnick talks about how art transformed the Wynwood neighborhood in a Times piece. We also hear that New York developer (and owner of Moishe’s Moving, Mana Contemporary etc.) Moishe Mana is planning a new mixed-use development on his 30 acres of land in the middle of Wynwood.

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum will have 5 exhibitions featuring 4 Miami-based artists: Carola Braco, Rufina Santana, Carlos Estevez and Ramon Espantaleon. Plus there will be a show called “Walls of Color” with murals by the post-war NY artist Hans Hofmam and, this year, the annual “Breakfast in the Park” on Sunday, December 6th, 9:30 a.m. to noon.
Pauchi Sasaki’s speaker dress The Mandarin Oriental Miami) and Peru’s gallery MORBO host an exhibition called “Pure Abstraction” by Peruvian artist HENSE, in the hotel’s Peruvian restaurant, La Mar by Gaston Acurio, restaurant on December 3rd featuring a violin performance by Sasaki who’ll be wearing her dress made from speakers.
A previous food installation by Jennifer Rubell (95 NW 29th Street, Miami) will present a big exhibition called "No Man's Land" featuring women artists from their extensive collection. It's up from December 2nd until the end of May and will include paintings, sculptures, photos and videos by over 100 female artists. Because of the large number of works, artworks will be rotated throughout the course of the show. Jennifer Rubell will present her twelfth large-scale, food-based installation, "Devotion," on December 3rd, 9 to 11 a.m. She'll be using "bread, butter, and a couple engaged to be married" as her media.
Robert Smithson’s “Spiral Jetty” from the air.

“Our Hidden Futures” is the overall theme for this year’s AB/MB film program. Over 50 films and videos will be screened on the giant projection wall outside of the New World Center (500 17th Street, South Beach), plus over 80 more can be accessed in the convention center film library. The Colony Theater (1040 Lincoln Rd, Miami Beach) will be showing director James Crump’s *Troublemakers: The Story of Land Art* at 8:30 p.m., followed by a panel discussion with Crump and Basel film curator Marian Masone. The evening screenings in SoundScape Park include short films with program themes ranging from “Speak Easy” to “Vanishing Point.”
Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian are co-presenting an exhibition of figurative painting and sculpture in the Moore Building (3841 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami). The opening is
view all week. According to the
include Urs Fischer, Elizabeth P
Since 2005, the KABINETT sector of AB/MB has invited galleries to display curated installations. This year, there is a new work by L.A. artist Glenn Kaino called "The Internationale," which interprets the iconic Pierrot character interacting with visitors via "seminal texts on post-colonial theory." Galerie Krinzinger will be showing Chris Burden's "Deluxe Photo Book 1971-1973," documenting the first three years of his performances. Galerie Lelong will present a selection of shaped, "erotic" canvases by the Puerto Rico-based artist Zilia Sanchez.
CONTEXT Art Miami, the sister fair to Art Miami, will feature 95 international galleries this year, along with several artist projects and installations including 12 listening stations dedicated to sound art; areas dedicated to art from Berlin and Korea; solo exhibitions by Jung San, Satoru Tamura, Mr. Herget and four others; and a “fast-track” portrait project of workers at Miami International Airport. CONTEXT and Art Miami — which is celebrating its 26th year — open with a VIP preview benefiting the Perez Art Museum Miami on Tuesday, December 1, 5:30 to 10 p.m., at 2901 NE 1st Avenue in Midtown, Miami. The fair is open to the public from December 2nd through the 6th.
ICA Miami (4040 NE 2nd Avenue) presents a new theatrical performance called “Artist Theater Program” by Erika Vogt, Shannon Ebner and Dylan Mira on Thursday, December 3rd at 4 p.m. Ebner also has a concurrent show, “A Public Character,” on view in the museum during AB/MB and up until January 16, 2016. This is the inaugural program in the museum’s new performance series. Also opening on December 1st is a major survey of works by the video and performance artist Alex Bag, including her interactive installation “The Van.” The museum recently announced the appointment of Ellen Salpeter, Deputy Director of NYC’s Jewish Museum, as its new director and they’ve just broken ground on a new, permanent home in the Design District. The 37,500-square-foot building was designed by the Spanish firm Aranguren & Gallegos Arquitectos and is scheduled to open in 2017.
Installation by Alan SonfistMiami's "art hotel" Avenue, South Beach) has a new by environmental/landscape sculptor Alan Sonfist on view all week, along with their incredible Cricket Taplin Collection of contemporary art. The hotel's annual VIP brunch — featuring a new Electronic Arts installation — is on Saturday, December 5th, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The INK Miami Art Fair celebrates their 10th anniversary and maintains their exclusive focus on printmaking. They're back in the Suites of Dorchester (1850 Collins Avenue, South Beach) from Wednesday, December 2nd, through Sunday. Highlights include a lithograph by Louis Lozowick called *Subway Station, NYC* Gallery’s booth and *A World in a Box* Graphicstudio/U.S.F.
New York-based branding and event collective FAME is popping-up in Miami from December 2 to 6 with their "NE 2nd Avenue, Miami) in Little Haiti. They're promising "the arty party of the year" with a big opening night December 2nd, 6 to 10 p.m., featuring a gigantic chandelier installation by Diego Montoya and music all week from Gilligan Moss, Lauv and more TBA. Plus, Afrobeta plays on Friday at a party hosted by PAPER fave, the 

UNTITLED, MIAMI
Dec 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

The fourth edition of UNTITLED, 12th Street from December 2 to 6, with a big VIP preview on December 1st from 4 to 8 p.m. They've got 119 international galleries along with non-profit orgs from 20 countries. New this year will be an UNTITLED radio station broadcasting via local Wynwood Radio with interviews, performances and playlists by a

Mega Guide to Art Basel Miami Beach 2015: Part
Things are really starting to come together at Argentine developer Alan Faena’s new residential and arts district between 32nd and 36th Streets on Collins Avenue. By the time AB/MB rolls around, the Beach should be up and running, and construction is now complete on the Foster + Partners residential tower. The Faena Forum (above), designed by OMA Rem Koolhaas, should be open in April 2016. For Basel Miami 2015, they’ve planned a series of cool events including: a roller-disco installation by assume vivid astro focus that will be open to the public daily on the beach and feature local and international DJs; a “theater curtain” installation called “A Site To Behold” by Spanish artist that lets visitors play alternate roles of “actor” and “performer”; and a site-specific “sand and light” installation by...
The Perez Art Museum Miami (aka PAMM) — designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron — had its big debut in 2013 in downtown Miami’s Museum Park. On December 3rd, 2015, 9 p.m. to midnight, they’ll be premiering a collaborative performance by Devonte Hynes of Blood Orange and Ryan McNamara, featuring elements of dance, music and sculpture. For members and VIPs, you can check out their current exhibitions including Nari Ward’s “Sun Splashed,” Firelei Baez’ “Bloodlines,” and a show of Aboriginal Australian abstract painting.
Moishe Mana’s Mana Contemporary Wynwood plans several exhibitions during AB/MB including “Made in California,” featuring selections from L.A. collector Frederick R. Weisman’s Art Foundation; “A Sense of Place,” with over 60 works from the collection of Jorge M. Perez; and “Everything You Are Not,” key works of Latin American art from the Tiroche DeLeon collection. All are up from December 3rd thru the 6th, with a VIP preview on December 1st. Mana Urban Arts is also doing a collab with the former RC Cola Plant (550 NW 24th Street, Miami) that includes over 50 artists — so far the list includes Ghost, GIZ, Pixel Pancho, Case Maclaim and Shok-1 — plus skateboarding, DJs, live music etc.
Lots of music events and parties are starting to come in, including a show with Jamie xx and Four Tet on Friday, December 4th, in the Black Room at Mana Wynwood (318 NW 23rd St, Miami), presented by III Points and Young Turks. Tickets are available.

Records presents Tale of Us, Mind Against, Thugfucker and "special guest" Richie Hawtin on December 3rd. Tickets are available.

Howells will be spinning at Do Not Sit On The Furniture Miami Beach) on Saturday, December 5th; and Marco Carola and Stacey Pullen are at Story (136 Collins Avenue, South Beach) on Saturday, December 5th.
Two young London-based artists built a camera in the Delano Hotel from December 2nd to the 5th for a performance piece called “Alpha-Ation.” They’ll be creating exclusive, hand-colored portraits of “high-profile” figures all week and have already shot Lindsay Lohan and Tinie Tempah. The work is presented by the UK gallery, with an invite-only reception with the artists on Saturday night.
Hans Ulrich Obrist

AB/MB’s Conversations and Salon series brings together artists, curators, gallerists, historians, critics and collectors for 23 talks and panels all week. Jenny Holzer and Trevor Paglen kick things off on December 3rd, 10 to 11 a.m., in the Hall C auditorium. Other “conversations” include London’s Serpentine co-director Hans Ulrich Obrist, Grant winner Nicole Eisenman on Sunday. In the Salon series, Obrist will also moderate a conversation between artist Alex Israel and author Bret Easton Ellis on “the evolution of the L.A. art scene.”

L.A. painter and installation artist Lina Puerta (Mister Lee’s Shangri-La, Avenue, Miami Beach) on Saturday, December 5th. The work — “an immersive exotic dance club sheltered inside a greenhouse” — will then be on view at MAMA Gallery (1242 Palmetto Street, Los Angeles) as of December 19th.
Adrien Brody isn’t just a great actor. He’ll be showing several of his paintings during AB/MB in a show called “Hot Dogs, Hamburgers and Handguns” at Lulu Laboratorium. The show was curated by Spanish-American artist Domingo Zapata and the big opening party starts at 10 p.m. on December 2nd.

Calypso St. Barth Beach Boutique (2366 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach) will also be hosting VIP events for art lovers throughout the week.

The National YoungArts Foundation’s show, “The Future Was Written,” features an interactive work by Daniel Arsham that asks visitors to use any of 2,000 chalk objects to draw on the gallery walls. On view until December 11th.

Chrome Hearts celebrates their new collaborators, Laduree and Gallery, on December 2nd, 8 to 11 p.m., in the Avenue, Miami) shop in the Design District with a private, VIP party featuring works by Sean Kelly and Marina Abramovic.
Carpinteros, Jose Davila, Robert Mapplethorpe and many more. Also, there’s a special performance by Cadenet Taylor.

The MoMA Design Store and online skate deck site, open a pop-up in the Delano Hotel (1685 Collins Avenue, South Beach) from November 30th to December 6th. The "immersive installation" will sell limited-edition skateboard decks featuring Andy Warhol artworks including his Campbell’s Soup cans, Guns, Car Crash etc. A portion of the proceeds will go to Skateistan, a non-profit org that uses skateboarding to empower youth. The private VIP opening is December 2, 8 to 11 p.m.

Louis Vuitton (140 NE 39th Street, Miami) will be presenting "Objets Nomandes" — a new collection of foldable furniture and travel accessories — in their new store in the Design District as of December 3rd. The pieces are collabs with international designers including the Campana Brothers, Maarten Baas and Nendo. You can also check out the world-exclusive unveiling of a lounge chair designed by ...
ArtCenter/South Florida has an “off-site” installation called "Israel-based artist Dina Shenhav over in Miami’s Little River District at 7252 NW Miami Court. Shenhav will create a hunter’s cabin filled with “hunter” paraphernalia sculpted from yellow foam. Up from November 29th until the end of January.

One of our fave AB/MB sectors, 26 artists who’ll be doing site-specific installations and performances all week in Collins Park. Several cool setups: a jemstone-encrusted “Healing Pavilion” enhanced with “metaphysical properties” by Sam Falls; a group of tall chairs from the original production Robert Wilson’s “Einstein on the Beach;” a giant set of red lips by Sterling Ruby; and a monumental deer lawn ornament by Tony Tasset. Opening night is Wednesday, December 2nd, 7 to 9 p.m., and it features a female tai chi master, male bodybuilders, men on skateboards, a dandy hobo and an evening performance by Yan Xing.
Tony Tasset, Deer, 2015

Photo cred. Kavi Gupta

from December 2 to 6 (VIPs get in on the 1st) with 120 exhibitors from 22 countries, plus several special sections including the Breeder Program for new galleries and FEATURE showcasing photography. For a fourth year, the fair collaborates with VH1 on a music series featuring up-and-coming artists. There’s also an invite-only party with recording artists Mack Wilds and Lil’ Dicky on Friday night at SCOPE, VH1 and BMI.
As usual, there are lots of cool things happening at (40 Island Avenue, South Beach). The Posters launch of their collab poster by Miami-based artist Jim Drain to celebrate the hotel’s 10th anniversary (available in the hotel’s gift shop), a VIP-only cocktail party hosted by Andre Saraiva, a book signing with Cheryl Dunn for her “Festivals Are Good,” a “chopped art” party with the Bruce High Quality Foundation, and, of course, there’s the annual Lazy Sunday BBQ hosted this year by Creative Time on December 6th.

The design team of George Yabu & Glenn Pushelberg of BASEMENT nightclub in the Miami Beach EDITION Hotel (2901 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach) for an invite-only party with London’s Horse Meat Disco crew and special guest Giorgio Moroder on Thursday, December 3rd. They’re also hosting a private luncheon in the hotel’s Matador Room on Friday and launching a biannual “bookazine” called YP: Transformation, with the first issue available exclusively in the EDITION Hotel during ART BASEL.
The EDITION also hosts pop-up exhibitions by NYC galleries in two of their fab bungalows: Half Gallery and HarperCollins Publishers will feature paintings by Daniel Heidkamp, a installation by Tom Sachs and book signings by Justin Adian, Sylvie Fleury and Sue Williamson; have an installation by Jeremy Couillard.
Jeremy Couillard, Bowery Video Wall (2014 Avenue, Indian Beach Park) just announced their 2015 series of special projects including: a neon installation by Texas artists Alicia Eggert and Mike Fleming, a sculpture called "Trees" by Gordon Holden, a faux apartment building by Chris Jones, "Over and Under" by Francis Trombly and a small architectural piece inspired by Corbusier by New York artist Jim Osman. The fair's PLAY section will be curated by Stacy Engman.

Francis Trombly, Over and Under, 2015
exhibition called "Miami" by the French conceptual artist Daniel Buren on December 1st in the M Building marks the 50th anniversary of his works with fabric and the 8.7 cm stripe. By periodically installing new works during the year.
Daniel BurenSpanish luxury fashion house
Miami) opens a group show called “Close Encounters” on Wednesday, December 2nd, 6:30 to 9 p.m. The artists are Anthea Hamilton, Paul Nash, Lucie Rie and Rose Wylie; and the hosts for the evening are Jonathan Anderson, creative director of Loewe, with Don and Mira Rubell. Invite only.
Previewing their upcoming South Beach studio, poolside at the 1 Hotel (2341 Collins Avenue, South Beach) starting on Tuesday, December 1st. They plan to open permanently in the hotel in January 2016.
Absolut Elyx, Sean Kelly Gallery, Paddle8 and Water for People celebrate WATER, “the most important drink in the world,” with a private charity auction and party at the Delano on Thursday, December 3rd, 7 to 10 p.m. Look for a live performance by the Swedish singer Elliphant and...
the launch of “Ricardo Barroso Interiors” at Casa Tua (1700 James Avenue, South Beach) on December 3rd. The book includes 240 color photographs of his past and present work, with an accompanying text by Barroso and Fionn Petch and a foreword by Longoria. Invite only.
Ricardo BarrosoMolteni (4100 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami) celebrates their 80th anniversary on December 3rd, 7 to 10 p.m., with a VIP soiree featuring "Amare Gio Ponti," the first film about the legendary Italian architect and designer.

https://player.vimeo.com/video/142146817

Libertine, one of the new clubs in downtown Miami's 24-hour party district, hosts a release party for cover artist Jen Stark on Friday night, December 4th. Stark recently collab'ed with Miley Cyrus on MTV's VMA Awards and has a new installation at Miami International Airport.
Jen StarkCorona brings their “Electric Beach” (1020 Ocean Drive, South Beach) on December 5th, 3 to 8 p.m., with a live performance by Chilean artist Dasic Astronomar, Ape Drums and TJ Mizell.
Dasic Brown Jordan and Sunbrella are getting together to showcase photographs by Gray Malin at a store in the Design District. The store should be open at the beginning of the new year. Some of the photos from the show will be on view there permanently and others are from Malin’s personal collection.

Gray Milan, A La Plage, 2012
The Surf Lodge
South Beach Hotel (1500 Collins Avenue, South Beach) with a series of invite-only artist dinners, events and performances.
Gerhard Richter: Articles,
Gerhard Richter’s Colour Charts last five decades at Dominique Lévy gallery in London. The exhibition will present some of the best colour panels by the celebrated German artist. Colour Charts exhibit highlight a crucial moment in the artist’s career and works that are situated across several leading art movements of the twentieth century. Gerhard Richter has embraced industrial materials and commercial serialism designating the series as Duchampian model of Conceptual Art.
Gerhard Richter was inspired by a collection of paint sample cards noticed in one Düsseldorf hardware store. The artist was captivated by the chromatically rich industrially designed selection that was completely deprived of any aesthetic motives. He had copied the originals exactly and the composition of colors was random throughout the process. At first, Gerhard Richter’s friend Blinky Palermo would visit the artist’s studio and randomly call out the names of sample color cards, which were then incorporated into the artwork. Later the artist himself had chosen the colours randomly in order to remove the artistic impact on the compositions. These colorful paintings have been the initiator for Gerhard Richter’s renowned multi-colored following decades. The series was crucial for the artist’s future works partly because for the first time he was able to capture a referent and its symbolic representation in the same painting.

On a visual level, Colour Charts series is pure abstraction but the paintings are also a representation of industrial color sample cards that inspired the artist and therefore and object in its own right.
The 50th Anniversary of the Colour Charts

The exhibition at Dominique Lévy will mark a 50 years anniversary of Colour Charts series. Each painting consists of multiple monochromatic rectangles or squares of glossy enamel painted onto a white background. The size of the canvases varies and while some are only a few feet tall others almost reach human height. The installation will include single Colour Chart painting that consists of twenty panels with a three-by-three white-based grid, will be provided by Gerhard Richter Archive in Dresden. Museum Frieder Burda in Baden will lend one of the artist's biggest single-panel paintings Sechs Gelb (Six Yellows) for this occasion.
Gerhard Richter’s Colour Charts
Dominique Lévy gallery in London. Apart from enamel on canvas paintings the exhibit will feature a selection of archival documents related to the series, including an original 1960s artwork. Additionally the exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive publication dedicated to Gerhard Richter’s best Colour Charts. 2016

Add more colours to your life by

Featured image: Gerhard Richter – 180 Farden (180 Colours), 1971, photo by David Brandt, courtesy of Gerhard Richter Archive. All images courtesy of Dominique Lévy gallery.

MOUSSE

“Gerhard Richter: Colour Charts” at Dominique Lévy, London
October 18~2015

Dominique Lévy is pleased to announce “Gerhard Richter: Colour Charts,” an exhibition featuring a vital group of paintings selected from the artist’s original nineteen “Colour Charts” produced in 1966. Presented with the support of the Gerhard Richter Archive, the exhibition is the first to focus on the earliest works of this series since their inaugural appearance at Galerie Friedrich & Dahlem, Munich in 1966. At once paradoxical and coalescent, the “Colour Charts” highlight an important moment in the artist’s career and are situated across multiple leading art movements of the 1960s.
In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Colour Charts’ inception, the exhibition brings together works from multiple prominent international institutions. These include the Hamburger Kunsthalle, who is lending Farben (192 Colours), 1966, Richter’s earliest fully realised and the only work from this series executed in oil, and the Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden who is lending the largest single-panel “Colour Charts,” originally exhibited at Friedrich & Dahlem in 1966. “Gerhard Richter: Colour Charts” also features an earlier work, Sänger (Singer), 1965/1966, various shades of red painted on the obverse side of the canvas, which provides an integral insight into the artist’s conception of the series. Additionally, Richter’s 180 Farben provided by the Gerhard Richter Archive in Dresden. Comprised of twenty panels, each with a three-by-three grid, this work is the first Richter produced when he returned to the series in 1971, after a five-year hiatus. “Gerhard Richter: Colour Charts” is accompanied by a comprehensive book featuring newly commissioned essays by Dietmar Elger, Head of the Gerhard Richter Archive; Hubertus Butin, curator and author of several key texts on Richter; and Jaleh Mansoor, Professor at the University of British Columbia, whose research concentrates on modern abstraction and its socio-economic implications. This book is the first publication dedicated to the original “Colour Charts.”

at Dominique Lévy, London

until 16 January 2015

WALLPAPER

Full-spectrum: Gerhard Richter’s Colour Charts at Dominique Lévy Design / 13 Oct 2015 / By Ellen Himelfarb

Read more at http://www.wallpaper.com/design/gerhard-richter-colour-charts-at-dominique-levy#L4s2gy5AMm3Qirdx.99

BROOKLYN RAIL

Art

- DEMYSTIFYING GERHARD RICHTER’S GESTURAL ABSTRACTION
In the mid-1970s, Gerhard Richter began making large, colorful abstract paintings whose sketchy, rough, and blurry effects make us aware of the tools and techniques used and the complicated pictorial thinking involved. Sometimes paint is applied with brushes, but more often it is smeared, dabbed, rubbed, blotted, streaked, and dripped with house painting brushes, palette knives, squeegees, and pieces of wood or glass. The emphatic paint textures created may be sensuous or plain, coarse or smooth, even or inconsistent, vague, incomplete, overlapped, and compressed. These paintings have been described as “gestural” or “painterly,” although Richter refers to them as his “Abstracts,” and they now constitute the largest and most consistent portion of his enormous oeuvre. They have made him one of the leading abstract painters of the last 40 years and have been the subject of much discussion, yet a cogent, plausible understanding of them is still needed. How should we interpret, respond to, and contextualize them art historically?

These works have been associated with Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Conceptualism, and Neo-Expressionism, but are not easily situated in any of these. They are most frequently interpreted as examples of the problems and complexities of postmodern painting. Scholars have concluded that Richter’s work has become meaningless and irrelevan...
comments about his technical process and visual thinking as explanations of meaning and purpose.

These interpretations relate Richter's abstract paintings to Conceptual Art since they claim his works explore ideas about contemporary painting and are not important as individual images. The supposed historical self-awareness and reflexive ontology of Richter's paintings are basic to postmodernism and related to Conceptual Art. Although they do not seem as expressive, emotive, spiritual, or philosophical as the mid-century abstract painting to which they are visually most similar, they are not as detached, aloof, and impenetrable as usually thought. Realizing this requires looking at them without imposing theoretical agendas on intuitive responses or substituting them for artistic purpose. We must remember that artworks that are connected stylistically sometimes convey or elicit very different ideas, responses, and abstractions to Neo-Expressionism. Neo-Expressionism originated in Germany around the time Richter began making these works. However, if Richter is questioning and undermining expression and meaning, how is he part of a movement that supposedly revitalized painting and its expressive capabilities? Moreover, Neo-Expressionism is such a broad and varied movement that it seems almost a moot point to debate Richter's place in it.

Richter's abstract paintings have definite stylistic affinities to Abstract Expressionism in their painterliness, technical processes, bold and powerful effects. Yet they are obviously different in their aesthetic, emotive, and expressive effects. What explains their ambivalent similarity to Abstract Expressionism? They are better understood if their relationship to Pop Art is reconsidered. Pop Art is the mitigating bridge to earlier abstraction that helps explain this complex relationship. Richter's career blossomed in the early 1960s, shortly after he moved to West Germany and immersed himself in modernist painting and abandoned the Socialist Realism he studied in his youth. This was just when Pop Art was rapidly gaining attention and Abstract Expressionism was falling into historical context. In the 1960s Richter was very interested in Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein. His abstract paintings evolved as he absorbed, reinterpreted, and synthesized various aspects of Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. The connection between Richter and Pop Art is rooted in his blurry paintings based on photographs of his youth, family, Germany during and after World War
and political issues, such as “Uncle Rudi” (1965), “Eight Student Nurses” (1966), and “October 18, 1977” (1988). Since these emulate but distort mass media imagery, they have become a major proponent of the style. Richter’s drastic shifting among different painting styles has complicated how his work has been interpreted. He demonstrates how stylistic development has become so complex, unpredictable, and erratic since the 1960s. In spite of widely accepted postmodernist theories which suggest otherwise, we still expect an artist to develop in a rather linear, orderly, logical way and are surprised when he does not.

Lichtenstein’s paintings of brushstrokes, such as “Little Big Painting” and “Big Painting No. 6” (both 1965), consists of brushstrokes and marks of paint deliberately created. Done in the wake of Abstract Expressionism, they seem to be satirical criticisms or expressions of doubt about the nature of painting, especially abstraction and expressive possibilities. Like Richter’s fascination with paint marks and brushstrokes, which often led him to a curious arbitrariness and ambiguity in his disconnected, barely modeled paint application. Where “Red-Blue-Yellow Raisonné 330” (1972) is a jumble of squiggly brushstrokes, “Abstract Painting” [CR 398–1] (1976) and “Abstract Painting” [CR 432–8] (1978) feature distinct brushstrokes described emphatically while evading emotion. In the earlier painting the scattered gray and white paint lines are most noticeable, while in the later painting the most conspicuous brushstrokes are the intersecting broad areas of blue and yellow. Many of Richter’s early abstract paintings were based on photographic close-ups of paint surfaces. In “July” [CR 526] (1983), narrow strokes of green, broad patches of lightly shaded gray, red, yellow, and scribbles of orange create a composition with sharply discordant colors and textures and unevenly dispersed shapes. Richter has discussed his pursuit of “rightness” in pictorial composition, color, and technique, but this idea about painting seems anachronistic today. “July” offers an elusive resolution of purely abstract elements rooted in Pop Art’s vivid, gaudy colors.

In “Abstract Painting” [CR 551–6] (1984), swirling streaks of gray and green and broad, thick, slightly modulated brushstrokes of dark green and brown allude to the evocative possibilities of painterly abstraction, but
never achieve the potent feeling or genuine sensitivity of Abstract Expressionism because Richter's technique is not as fluid and elegant. This composition is rather similar to Gottlieb's: the irregular, brushy forms across the bottom of Gottlieb's paintings are more nuanced and indicative of receptive to Lichtenstein's skepticism about the mystique of painting but does not completely agree with Richter and Abstract Expressionism. The complex relationship between Richter and Abstract Expressionism is apparent if Richter's "Abstract Painting" [CR 587–5] (1985) is compared to de Kooning's large abstractions of the late 1950s, such as "Palisade" (1957). In de Kooning's painting, violently brushed areas crash into one another, while Richter's spiky black lines, and broadly sculpted blue and brown, but Richter's art is more smoothly rendered as to suggest a landscape background, while de Kooning fluidly integrates these colors spatially with more spontaneous blending of different colors and forms, textures, and colors that de Kooning never attempted. In the de Kooning we sense genuine self-revelation and feeling. This is much less apparent in the Richter, and Pop Art's filtration of earlier abstraction is the reason.

From 1969 to 1972, Lichtenstein did numerous paintings about mirrors and their reflections that used the Ben-Day dot system and various illustration techniques to explore these complex visual phenomena. These paintings may be mildly satirical comments on Greenbergian modernism's ideas on the absence of space when total flatness is achieved. This series led to the merging of the mirror surface with the painting surface in works like "Mirror # 3 (Six Panels)" (1971), right. Richter has often explored the picture surface in similar ways. "Abstract Painting" [CR 554–2] (1984) has broad areas of blue, gray, and yellow-green that are smoothly rendered in most areas, except their intersecting, overlapping contours make it seem as if they squirm against one another as they confront or cling to the picture plane. The long, bent marks of green and orange on the left are similar in pictorial effect to the short parallel lines commonly used in illustrations to indicate reflections in mirrors and other shiny surfaces. "Abstract Painting" [CR 630–4] (1987) has rectangular areas of evenly-textured blue and yellow-green applied with a paint roller that engage the picture plane and attempt to merge with it. In the late 1980s and after, with the enormous "January" [CR 699] (1989) and "Abstract Painting" [CR 840–5] (1997), Richter's fusion of painting and
picture plane is virtually complete. Both Lichtenstein and Richter flaunt the mass printing methods that they have employed or imitated. Richter uses squeegees, sponges, wood, and plastic strips to scrape, flatten, abrade, and congeal paint in an even, consistent way over the entire canvas. The use of various implements creates systematic, mechanical effects of textures and colors that mitigate the expressive connection usually expected between a painter and his media.

Warhol demonstrated for Richter some of the most salient aspects of Pop Art, like serial repetition, even dispersal of compositional elements, the blunt presentation of the subject, and the quasi-expressive distortion possible with vivid, garish colors and other visual effects derived from advertising, packaging, and mass printing. Richter absorbed these innovations into a more expressive, abstract mode. He has said he was particularly fascinated with Warhol’s ability to obscure and dissolve images and that he was moved emotionally by his series. This series consisted of paintings in which Warhol silk-screened photographs of electric chairs, automobile accidents, suicides, murders, and similarly disturbing subjects onto canvases and probed their meanings by repeating the same photographs, adding vivid colors, blurring, fading, and shifting the photographs while printing them, and altering their scale. Serial repetition and the strict enumeration apparent in Richter’s abstracts of the late 1960s, in which many small rectangles of single hues are evenly dispersed on the canvas. These were based on color charts produced by paint manufacturers. Although their subject is typical of Pop Art, their flatness, composition uniformity, and large size are just as characteristic of Color Field painting. They are a virtually perfect merger of these separate but concurrent movements.

Warhol’s influence on Richter’s work of the past 25 years. “Abstract Painting” [CR 758–2] (both 1991) is a good example of how serial repetition across the composition is the primary visual effect. In the first, silvery gray vertical streaks cling to the picture plane as paler tones between them suggest depth. In the second, a sketchy grid of purple-gray blotches and streaks has the look and feel of an early Warhol silkscreen painting. “Abstract Painting” [CR 795] (1993) is a good example of Richter’s success in combining serial repetition with deliberate fading and blurring. Vertical strips of green, red, blue, and orange rendered as fuzzy, hazy forms create horizontal vibrations on the canvas.
the painting presents a frame from a film of totally abstract images or a ruined and stained film, forever changing yet never really doing so. Warhol used repetition, fading, and blurring for emotional resonance very effectively in “Marilyn Diptych” (1962), appropriate for the untimely death of the actress. Richter often uses blurring and fading in his paintings based on photographs, where their emotional impact is similar. In the past 25 years, he has often used the same pictorial devices in his abstractions to evoke similar emotions. “Abstract Painting” [CR 778–2] (1992) is particularly interesting because it is an expressive abstract image based heavily on what Richter learned from Warhol. It features a grid-like array of white square areas tainted with blue and yellow. Oil paint has been textured methodically but creatively with large brushes and squeegees on the smooth metallic surface to create long, thin lines that make the shapes appear to shimmer and vibrate horizontally. Small areas of bright red are dispersed across the composition; some are rectangular blotches of thick, smooth paint and others are drips and streaks of fluid paint. This manipulation of red conveys a sense of shock, danger, and violence similar to Warhol’s and Disasters. A good comparison with Richter’s painting may be made with Warhol’s “Red Disaster,” in which a photograph of an electric chair is drenched in red ink and repeatedly printed as blurry in a grid-like arrangement on the canvas. Richter has admitted to his concerns about social malaise, psychological alienation, death, loss, and self-doubt, which he observed during his childhood in post-World War II Germany as the damage done by the war to many Germans became apparent. Warhol’s “Statue of Liberty” (1962), is intriguingly similar to Richter’s painting in its emotively suggestive impact. This painting repeats a photograph of the American monument as blurred, hazy, and tilted with empty space on the left while large areas of blue and smaller areas of bright red stain the printed and altered photographs. Warhol has shocked the viewer with the unsettled, endangered, and violated presentation of this American icon. However, his blunt repetition and lack of personal touch ultimately render his meaning uncertain, and our initial emotional response is quickly halted. Warhol said that emotional responses to these provocative and disturbing photographs were neutralized by their abundant reproduction in the news media, that this desensitized viewers to the horrors shown. Richter’s abstract paintings often do very much the same thing. The vivid, garish, and clashing colors in many of Richter’s abstract paintings were probably inspired by those Pop artists who exaggerated the
simplified, bold, and eye-catching qualities of magazine illustrations, posters, signs, and billboards. Rosenquist's billboard paintings demonstrate how the intense, vibrant, and sensuous qualities of his subjects are made acutely obvious, gaudy, overwhelming, and chaotic through abrupt and improbable juxtapositions of forms, the extreme distortion and intensification of shapes, colors, and textures, and compositions where crowding, overlapping, and bizarre scale play with our recognition and interpretation of the familiar.

Richter has known Rosenquist since at least 1970, when they met in Cologne, and he saw his work there and in New York City that year. Some of Rosenquist's billboard paintings of the 1970s and 1980s are quite similar to Richter's abstractions from the mid-1970s to the late-1980s. Since the 1970s, Rosenquist has explored an increasingly wider range of subjects, including the cosmic, supernatural, and imaginary, and his style has often become more abstract, with lurid, dazzling, and startling colors as well as extreme, surprising textures that often clash visually.

Richter's “Clouds” [CR 514–1] (1982) is a large horizontal canvas with broad brushstrokes of dark green across the top, smoother, wider areas of blue across the bottom, and dabs and streaks of orange textured with squeegees and trowels on the right. The most jarring aspect of this painting is that the blue which we would assume is the sky is illogically located in the bottom of the composition, as if the world is upside-down. Such bizarre transformations are common in Rosenquist’s paintings and have become more extreme over the years. They are apparent in “Star Thief” (1980), in which a sliced view of a woman’s face, bacon, and various metallic forms float in outer space, and “The Bird of Paradise Approaches the Hot Water Planet” (1989), in which a colorful bird-insect creature passes through layers of thick clouds with the radiant yellow light of a sun filling the space behind it. Richter's “Pavillion” [CR 489–1] (1982) consists of firmly isolated areas of disparate colors and textures with irregular, barely described contours, including smooth areas of blue and green, mottled lava-like orange, and wavy strokes of gray. This painting seems to contain abstract equivalents to the atomic blasts, clouds, astronauts, and canned spaghetti in Rosenquist's “F-111” (1964 – 65). Richter’s “Abstract Painting” [CR 591–2] (1986) is a tour de force of vivid, explosive colors and extremely rich, sensuous textures, which vary from flowing, lava-like orange on the right to darker tan on the left, plus dry streaks of green and indigo scattered across the composition but mostly gathered in the left and center. A precisely rendered, dark triangular
square juts into the foreground through an opening in these clumps and masses of paint. It is similar to many of Rosenquist's later paintings in its vivid, lush, and unrealistic textures and colors.

Although Richter's abstract paintings were affected greatly by the aesthetics of Pop Art, they have no connection to most of the subjects that Pop Art usually explored. Despite being visually related to Abstract Expressionism, they are not particularly spiritual, philosophical, introspective, cathartic, or existentially oriented. The best explanation of what they mean actually comes from Richter himself, but it has long been buried under verbose theory. He has said that these abstract paintings are visualizations of imaginary places and experiences, of what has been conceived and invented by the artistic imagination. This is similar to the changing themes in Rosenquist's works in the 1970s and 1980s, to his bizarre, fantastic, and dreamlike subjects, although Rosenquist's paintings have always remained representational. Richter's pursuit of pictorial "rightness" in his abstract paintings, of organizing and balancing the components of a composition for visual, emotive, and expressive impact, is also essential to their meaning. This is as traditional as it is timeless, but some of his works are clearly more effective than others in this respect. "Abstract Painting" [CR 591–2] and "Abstract Painting" [CR 778–2] seem to have this elusive pictorial "rightness," when colors, textures, shapes, and forms come together in an image that is whole, appealing, and captivating.

NOTES

1. To see the Richter painting gerhard-richter.com.
4. See mfa.org/collections/object/red-disaster-34765.
6. For the works by James Rosenquist, see artist.com.
Herbert R. Hartel, Jr.

Herbert R. Hartel, Jr. received his doctorate in modern, contemporary and American art from the CUNY Graduate Center and his B.A. in studio art and art history from Queens College. He has taught at Hofstra University, Baruch College, John Jay College, and Parsons School of Design. He has published articles in Source: Notes in the History of Art, Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas, Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, and New York History, and numerous reviews in The Art Book and Cassone: The Online Magazine of Art. He is particularly interested in 20th century American art, abstraction, and symbolism.

Robert Rauschenberg: Interviews, Images and Texts and Texts

Posted in anticipation of the Robert Rauschenberg traveling retrospective, coming to the expanded SFMoMA in 2016.

Douglas Russell, MD

Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, University of California at Los Angeles, United States
In September of 1953, the Stable Gallery in New York City hosted a landmark exhibit of work by a young Robert Rauschenberg (pictured above at the exhibition) and by Cy Twombly. Among the pieces from Robert Rauschenberg were his rectangular canvases covered in matte white paint, applied by roller, placed together side by side. Many at the time did not know what to make of them; critic James Fitzsimmons described them as a “gratuitously destructive act.”

The paintings include no figuration and no symbolism. They are empty — but not empty. Rauschenberg’s friend and frequent collaborator John Cage strongly resonated with these works. He famously described them as “airports for the lights, shadows and particles” credited them for the courage to compose his landmark composition often referred to as the “silent” piece.
perceive subtle variations of texture between canvases. Tiny particles from the room that have landed on the surface stand out in relief. Variations of light and shadow lend form. According to Rauschenberg, “I always thought of the white paintings as being not passive, but very—well, hypersensitive. So one could look in the room by the shadows cast by the paintings become what the viewer it. Focused attention is expanded with emptiness. The paradox becomes possible only because Rauschenberg has stripped all traces of ego from the picture. Like John Cage’s ‘4’33,” it is an art of non-intention made manifest. This specific painting pictured above was created in 1951 while Rauschenberg was at Black Mountain College. There I discovered Zen Buddhism and new mind to his compositions. Sharing ideas and participating of John Cage’s Theater Piece #1 regarded as the first “happening,” Rauschenberg has never attributed direct inspiration from Zen Buddhism when he created the White Painting series were hung from the ceiling. When Rauschenberg created Automobile Tire Print in 1953, it Rauschenberg has never attributed when he created the White Painting series with special interest. MBSR, as described by Kabat-Zinn (who developed the treatment) and Ludwig, cultivates present moment awareness by attending to relevant aspects of experience in a non-judgmental manner. MBSR essentially adapts the Buddhist practice of mindfulness meditation and secularizes it for the clinical setting in a way not dissimilar to Rauschenberg’s own secular conceptualization. The program was originally developed as a supplementary treatment for chronic pain, but has subsequently shown efficacy for improving mental health in clinical and non-clinical populations. According to a meta-analysis by Fjorback et al, MBSR
MBCT) can complement medical disease management by relieving psychological distress and strengthening well-being, and MBSR can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in psychiatric populations. Also evidence that meditation practice may actually change the brain to allow for enhanced gamma synchrony (EEG), in areas associated with monitoring, engaging and orienting attention (fMRI), and greater grey matter density in the left hippocampus, posterior cingulate cortex, temporo-parietal junction, and the cerebellum (MRI). For one 14-year-old female patient whom I was treating for severe depression, MBSR became the central catalyst for remission. Yet some patients remain skeptical, often associating religious or cultural meaning to the practice of meditation generally. Pointing to the pioneering artwork of Rauschenberg and Cage alongside a growing body of scientific literature creates a scaffold upon which I can universalize the concepts of meditation practice, and perhaps convince an otherwise skeptical patient to give it a try.

REFERENCES


DOUGLAS RUSSELL, MD is a resident in Psychiatry at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior in Los Angeles, CA. Prior to medical school he worked as Executive Producer for KUSC fm, a classical public radio station in Los Angeles. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Wesleyan University in 1999, and his Medical Doctorate from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, PA.

http://www.queer-arts.org/archive/show4/forum/

The Art of Code

by

Jonathan Katz

Almost from the very beginning and Robert Rauschenberg were linked together, usually by people who had little idea of what they really meant to each other. Early critics tagged them both with the same facile labels—neo-Dada, assemblage, junk art—and viewed and reviewed them as a pair. They showed together, were discussed together, even discovered together by their dealer. Still later, they would be declared Pop, or more subtly, proto-Pop, and credited with the development...
away from Abstract Expressionism. Artistic movements generally involve more than two artists: theirs was confined to them. Remarkable then that the work of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg could simply never mislead one into thinking it was the other’s. It seems that Johns and Rauschenberg were involved in some extent how they were understood. Paradoxically, while their partnership was widely acknowledged, few could and fewer still knew that it transcended simple friendship. John and Rauschenberg are in the curious position of being understood as a couple. Yet they were a couple, as we can see in the silences, ellipses, and omissions in accounts of their history. Against an insistent and damaging homophobia led both artists to act as if they had had no relationship.

Although the artists remain circumspect on this point, there is reliable evidence that for over six years Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were lovers. For both artists, it was probably the most serious and intense relationship of their lives. It had a profound effect on their work and changed their pictorial styles radically. When they finally split up in 1961, the after-effects were so powerful that both artists left New York, changed their pictorial styles, and neither saw nor spoke to one another.
Given the intensity of this relationship, it comes as something of a shock to realize that Johns has never spoken of it, and Rauschenberg has addressed it but a few times, and then only cursorily. His most open and direct acknowledgment of his life with Johns occurs in the following interview:

RR: I’m not frightened of the affection that Jasper and I had, both personally and as working artists. I don’t see any sin or conflict in those days when each of us was the most important person in the other’s life.
Interviewer: Can you tell me why you parted ways?
RR: Embarrassment about being well known.
Interviewer: Embarrassment about being famous?
RR: Socially. What had been tender and sensitive became gossip. It was sort of new to the art world that the two most well-known, up and affectionately

While to a greater or lesser degree both artists have resisted further elaborations on this relationship, their art offers a number of interesting clues. That there is some kind of pictorial dialog at work in their artmaking is undeniable. Not only do they share a number of motifs—whether light bulbs to the use of newsprint—but a few actually
seem to invoke aspects of their relationship. The chief connection between them, however, is neither stylistic nor thematic, but concerns their joint opposition to Abstract Expressionism, the dominant artistic practice of the day. It was in response to Abstract Expressionism’s dominance that Johns cultivated their most lasting contributions to American art. And it is because of this joint opposition, and the work it generated, that they have been branded a two-person movement.

Most critics agree that most critics agree that their finest work grew out of the period between 1954 and 1961, a time of intense emotional involvement during which they searched together for an alternative to Abstract Expressionism. Rauschenberg once remarked of this moment, “We gave each other permission.” The statement demands to be taken seriously both in terms of constraints on artistic innovation and constraints on homosexual desire, for in the lives of these men, as we shall see, the two were correlated.

The dealer Leo Castelli often recounts that he went to Rauschenberg’s first apartment (Fig. 2) to select paintings for a show he was planning–Rauschenberg’s first with Castelli–when Rauschenberg mentioned Johns’s name. While the rest of the story varies with the telling, the constant is that Castelli then connected Johns’s name with a curious green painting...
he had seen in an earlier show. He asked to meet the artist, who just happened to live in an apartment below. Rauschenberg was happy to oblige and Castelli soon entered a room full of paintings, years of work never before exhibited, all those flags, targets and other images which would soon turn their maker into the most successful living American artist. Castelli immediately offered Johns a show; the Rauschenberg exhibition was, at least temporarily, forgotten.

Rauschenberg's and Johns's careers are thus linked from the beginning. A dynamic is set up in their relationship, one in which Rauschenberg, the senior and more experienced figure, acts as agent and enabler of his younger lover's more dynamic career. Johns has remarked that he considers Rauschenberg to be the most fecund and important artist of the twentieth century after Picasso. Although there is not reason to doubt his sincerity, career imbalance has often been implicated in discussion of what went wrong between the two. Thus there is an interesting specificity to this male/male relationship, one possibly lacking or minimized in heterosexual partnerships in which imbalance has historically been factored into the formula from the beginning. With no social roles to fall into, no models to pattern their expectations on, Johns and Rauschenberg were forced to negotiate every aspect of their lives together.

It was winter of 1953. Rauschenberg, birthed in 1925 and Johns had moved to New York in 1949. Rauschenberg was just a happened artist, who just happened to live in an apartment below Castelli's gallery.
in Port Arthur, Texas, arrived after two years' draft in the navy and four more years trying out various art schools from Kansas to Paris to North Carolina.

Johns, born in 1930, moved to New York from his native South Carolina in order to attend commercial art school, but his story was interrupted by the draft and he spent two years in the army. Visiting at Black Mountain was introduced to Rauschenberg by a mutual friend, the artist and art writer Suzi Gablik, who had known Rauschenberg at school. At an artist’s party and struck up a friendship. Rauschenberg convinced Johns to quit his job at the Marboro bookstore and join him doing window designs for department stores. They took the name Matson-Jones, and Johns began to see more of one another. In 1955, Rauschenberg moved from his Fulton Street studio into John’s building on Pearl Street and then they moved together again.

When Rauschenberg first met Johns, he had already shown a few times at prestigious avant-garde galleries connected to Abstract Expressionism, and participated in an invitational show with some of its leading figures. He was a friend of important painters like Franz Kline and a regular with them at the Cedar Bar, then the epicenter of the New York avant-garde, where the painters and poets met to drink, argue,
comfort and console one another. For most of its habitués, the Cedar’s other patrons constituted the only appreciative audience they ever had. The world at large had yet to hear of Abstract Expressionism; the fame that it would gain as America’s first international artistic movement was still at least a decade off.

A young, ambitious artist new to the New York art world, Rauschenberg gravitated naturally to the Cedar, a dirty neighborhood bar that had been adopted by the painters and their hangers-on in part because of its seediness. Definitionally bohemian, it was so bad it was good. When fame finally arrived and the owners responded to the new influx of artists’ cash by promising new decor, the artists threatened a boycott. They wanted to avoid at all costs the impression of an artists’ bar, with its connotations of an effete elite preoccupied with questions of beauty. Unwilling to countenance that, the Abstract Expressionists created a facsimile of the Wild West that never was within the confines of the Cedar, a macho art world complete with drunken brawls, fights over women, vain boasting, and, of course, artist talk. It was a heady mix.

If machismo, as we are increasingly finding, is connected to fear, then the Abstract Expressionists feared for their maleness. America has a history of suspicion with regard to its artists and their maleness, and perhaps never more so than in the early 1950’s when the rest of America was rolling up its shirtsleeves and getting down to work to defeat Communism.
With Abstract Expressionism, American art became a struggle to voice identity, an attempt to forge a tenuous connection between the individual subjective consciousness and the outside world. That the consciousness in question was always straight, white, and male does not seem to have interfered with its claims to universality. Abstract Expressionist art claimed to stand in for self-presence before the void. Its artists used martial metaphors—word like engagement, struggle, victory and defeat. Theirs were totemic battles with the elemental forces of silence. And their painting, achieved through remarkable self-sacrifice (Pollock, Gorky, and Rothko all committed suicide), sought to give form to the evanescent realm of the unconscious. Thomas Hess, the great promoter and friend of the Abstract Expressionists, once wrote that the New York School marked, “a shift from aesthetics to ethics: the picture was no longer supposed to be Beautiful but True—an accurate representation or equivalence of the artist’s interior sensation or experience.”

For Rauschenberg, the lively scene at the Cedar probably both attracted and repelled him. While he passionately admired the work of some Abstract Expressionists—particularly Frank Kline and Barnett Newman—and valued his friendship with them, the intense male bonding of this almost exclusively masculine art world, coupled with its generalized anxiety over the very act of artmaking, created an atmosphere in which the merest suggestion of homosexuality was...
vigorously opposed. How could the young Rauschenberg paint among such men? Moreover, never before in American history was homosexuality under such scrutiny and so vigorously suppressed. Leaders of the anti-Communist right such as Joe McCarthy explicitly aligned homosexuality with Communism, declaring both to be moral failures capable of seducing and enervating the body politic. "Sex perverts" were declared a security risk, and both the President and Congress authorized the FBI to bring its formidable powers of investigation to bear to ferret them out. During the Red Scare, more homosexuals than Communists lost jobs in the Federal government, and homosexuality and its evils became an unprecedented topic of public discourse. How in this homophobic decade could Rauschenberg paint true pictures in the Abstract Expressionist sense, pictures revealing his interior state? Men in the closet were necessarily enjoined from painting as a drama of self-revelation. And even if he could paint such revealing pictures, how could he ever believe that the images generated by a gay man could have universal intelligibility? Rauschenberg remarked: "But I found a lot of the artists at the Cedar Bar were difficult for me to talk to. It almost seems that there were many more of them sharing some common idea than there was of me." Indeed.

When Rauschenberg first entered the Cedar sometime in 1950, he probably did not think of himself as a gay man. He was actively involved with Susan Weil, a fellow
artist whom he had met the year before when both were students in Paris. After returning to the US, they enrolled together at Black Mountain College, the experimental arts institution located in the mountains of North Carolina. At the conclusion of the term, Rauschenberg and Weil settled in New York City and in June of 1950 they were married. But the relationship was not to last: less than a year later Rauschenberg became involved with the artist Cy Twombly. In July of 1951, shortly after Weil gave birth to their son Christopher, Rauschenberg re-enrolled at Black Mountain in the company of Twombly and without his wife. Rauschenberg and Weil divorced next year and Rauschenberg and Twombly began a series of trips together that led them from Key West to Cuba to Europe. After an extended trip to North Africa, Rauschenberg returned to New York and moved into a studio on Fulton Street which he occasionally shared with Twombly.

The work Rauschenberg produced during this period with Twombly, but before he met Johns, shares a number of telling characteristics. In the context of Jackson Pollock’s rage, de Kooning’s slashes, and Kline’s ponderous pronouncements, the young Rauschenberg’s art struck a curiously insistent quiet note. He became famous for a series of all-white canvases consisting of flat white paint on a flat white surface: no incident, no brushstrokes, no detail (the absolute inverse of Abstract Expressionism in mood, surface, color, and expression. They are a kind of pure anti-Abstract Expressionism. About the size of
Abstract Expressionist canvases, they are so without autographic or gestural content of any kind that Rauschenberg declared they were to be painted by others, using a roller. There is an overwhelming feeling of silence in these paintings, a sense that there is nothing to say, or better, that there is nothing that can be said. To quote the artist Allan Kaprow, “in the context of Abstract Expressionist noise and gesture, they suddenly brought one face to face with a numbing, devastating silence… now much, if not everything having to do with art, life, and insight, was thrown back at him as his responsibility, not the pictures.”

The spectator had never been a concern for the previous generation. In seeking to represent the self, Abstract Expressionism registered only the individual artist, not society, not culture. It was as if individuals were in no way influenced by a larger social sphere, as if to be an individual meant to transcend one’s position in society. The Abstract Expressionists paraded themselves as painters without a country, stripped of the exigencies of culture–those particularities of time, place and audience that make manipulated pigment meaningful. They thought of themselves as totally autonomous individuals, as anti-cultural, cultural workers.

Many gay men knew differently. Branded unnatural by the dominant culture, hounded and persecuted, the limits on their individuality were enforced by law. Gay men were therefore keenly aware of the limitations of romantic individualism.
the myth of self-determinism, a myth central to Abstract Expressionism’s founding ideology. Gay men like Rauschenberg never had the luxury of believing in expression as an individual struggle of the will. As Rauschenberg said recently, “There was a whole language [of Abstract Expressionism] that I could never make function for myself—‘struggle’ and ‘pain’... I paint.” Rauschenberg painted precisely because, in his life, in comparison, as just, well, paint. Rauschenberg’s art would soon come to reflect the insights born of marginality, refusing a painted world in favor of opening up the canvas to the detritus of culture.

An early art-school friend, Knox Martin, remembers that one of Rauschenberg’s first works, executed while he was still a student, consisted of putting butcher paper on the floor of the Art Students League in order to capture the imprints of foot traffic. It may have been his first work to mine what we might call non-subjective painting, painting that quite deliberately has nothing of the self in it. If we look at the media explored by Rauschenberg even at this early date, it includes not only footprints, but blueprints and photography—all forms of artmaking that defy the Abstract Expressionist conventions of art as self-revelation.

Perhaps Rauschenberg’s most famous statement of opposition to Abstract Expressionism is his Erased de Kooning (1953). For this composition,
Rauschenberg requested a drawing to erase that he would then exhibit as his own work. De Kooning reportedly picked a complex, well-worked drawing to make the task as difficult as possible. None the less, Rauschenberg succeeded in erasing it and the critics went wild. But it is very much to the point that this bold statement of generational succession and critique should be couched, not in the form of a manifesto or some similar positive assertion of identity, but rather in the form of an erasure. As with the White Paintings, it is as if Rauschenberg's assertion of self could only be presented as the negation of macho Abstract Expressionist identity, not as an alternative to co-equal form.

This would change after the meeting with Jasper Johns. Two gay men working and living together, Rauschenberg and Johns developed between themselves some semblance of the kind of community that the Abstract Expressionists took for granted. Together, they formed a new pictorial language, new symbol systems, new subjects—and a new subjectivity in painting. After meeting Johns, Rauschenberg turned away from painting as an Abstract Expressionist drama of selfhood and started bringing culture—history, politics and Judy Garland and Abraham Lincoln—back into art. In turn, Johns, after meeting Rauschenberg, finally became a painter.

Whether these developments are more properly credited to the influence of one man or the other, or whether they were instead a product of their conjunction is
difficult to determine. As perhaps the defining issue in the development of gay subjectivity is clear. Given the insistent social pressure that isolates and pathologizes gay and lesbian people, community and commonality are the chief ingredients in the development of a specifically gay identity. Recent scholarship in lesbian and gay studies has made clear, for example, the importance of the development of lesbian and gay communities in the United States precisely because it forced together individuals from diverse places and backgrounds, including lesbian and gay people. The only ones like themselves, they began to articulate their difference and develop communities of mutual support which continued, even grew, after the war. Coupledom operated in a similar fashion for Johns and Rauschenberg in the context of Abstract Expressionism, creating a possibility for dialogue, understanding, and support such as they had never experienced before. As Rauschenberg put it, “Jasper and I used to start each day by having to move out from Abstract Expressionism.”

Although Johns and Rauschenberg looked primarily to one another for community, by the mid-50’s a newly assertive gay and lesbian minority was beginning to make its presence felt. Not only were new lesbian and gay civil rights organizations like the Mattachine Society holding regular meetings in New York, but figures like Frank O’Hara and Allen Ginsburg were writing about their gayness in explicit terms. Johns and Rauschenberg
knew and were friendly with some figures in this gay avant-garde, but it was never their main social focus. The art world was overwhelmingly heterosexual, and Johns were always invited out together as a couple, neither they nor their hosts ever being explicit as to the relationship between them. As a couple, they were able to reap the benefits of shared subjectivity without having to identify or affiliate with a larger gay and lesbian community.

By 1954, Twombly had been drafted, and Johns had become the major focus of Rauschenberg's attention. At this time, Rauschenberg even stopped going to the Cedar Bar and socializing with the Abstract Expressionist painters he had known for years. He remarked about Johns:

He and I were each other's first serious critics. Actually, Twombly was the first painter I ever shared ideas with, or had discussions about painting with. No, not the first, Cy Twombly was the first. But Cy and I were not critical. I did my work and he did his. Cy's direction was always so personal that you could only discuss it after the fact. But Jasper and I literally traded ideas. He would say, "I've got a terrific idea for you," and then I'd have to find one for him. Ours were two very different sensibilities, and being so close to each other's work kept any incident of similarity from
Rauschenberg’s life and art changed significantly after he became involved with Johns. Indeed, one can almost divide his career in two at the moment of their meeting. This is not to say that one was a leader, the other a follower, but rather that they reinforced each other’s inclinations, gave each permission to strike out in new directions, supported risk-taking, and provided an understanding context.

Among the works Rauschenberg completed after meeting Johns were a series of square paintings made out of diverse materials such as tissue paper, dirt, and gold. Johns reportedly helped on the series, the point of which was to explore a cultural hierarchy of values that considers dirt and paper humble materials but gold precious and rare. Rauschenberg predicted that the gold works would be valued and the others ignored. He has proven prescient: only one dirt and one clay painting survive, none in tissue paper, but ten in gold leaf. With this series, Rauschenberg initiated a new focus on the social and its role in the making of meaning, the determining of value, and the conveying of significance. The artist’s ability to communicate is no longer understood as a transcendent individual gift as it was under Abstract Expressionism, but as the product of a shared cultural heritage. In these simple collages, the Abstract Expressionist alchemy transmuting feelings into paint was ruptured and replaced by a new concentration on the role of the audience in creating meaning in a work of art.
Another early sign of change in focus is a curious painting titled “Yoicks” (1954) by Rauschenberg, anything Rauschenberg had produced before. A huge canvas covered with alternating strips of cloth and paint in bright yellows and red, relatively somber palette. The combination of the title, derived from a comic strip pasted on the surface, and the lively palette gives “Yoicks” a celebratory tone. It marked a new direction in Rauschenberg’s conception of the canvas. No longer understood as a place to register sentiment and sensibility, an emotive field in the manner of Abstract Expressionism, the canvas now became a material fact, an actual thing upon which to place other actual things, from strips of cloth to newspaper comics. The alternating horizontal stripes of “Yoicks” seem to derive from the rectilinearity of the canvas itself, as if the painting were not so much an imposition of mind on materials, as a product dictated by the materials themselves.

Rauschenberg next turned to an assemblage of painted images and sculptured objects. He would soon dub this type of additive composition Combine, signaling a new genre somewhere between painting and sculpture. He would make combines for the next seven years—throughout the entire period he and Johns were together—ceasing about a year after their breakup. He once told a collector who was buying his first combine, called Untitled (with Stain Glass Window), that it was painted at a time of passion for a friend, presumably Johns. The paint-splashed floor boards attached to the
bottom of this work are an ironic literalization of the Abstract Expressionist splatter, a concrete reminder of the common joke that some of the best painting is left on the floor.

Within a few short months of meeting Johns then, Rauschenberg had embarked on three new, highly significant changes of direction in his art: exploring the role of the social in the determination of meaning; employing the canvas not as field but as literal support; and finding in the development of the combine a medium to make concrete these changes in direction and focus. These preoccupations of Rauschenberg's art to the present day. Taken together, these changes in direction and focus amount to a kind of refusal of the ubiquity of Abstract Expressionist pictorial practices. Perhaps the dedication of this first combine to Johns was a sign of his determining role in its development.

For Johns, the meeting with Rauschenberg may have been even more significant. The simple fact of the matter is that Johns was not an artist until after they met. The association with Rauschenberg did more than give him the courage to give up his day job and become an artist, it showed him what that decision really meant. Rauschenberg taught Johns discipline, exchanged ideas, showed him alternatives to Abstract Expressionism, and nurtured his career. Johns has remarked of their meeting, “He was kind of an enfant terrible at the time, and I thought of him as an accomplished professional. He’d already had a number of shows, knew everybody, but he was just sort of a misfit.”
had been to Black Mountain College working with all those avant-garde people."

Little record remains of Johns's work during the early months of the relationship because he tried to destroy it all. But enough pieces survive to indicate what it must have been like. Judging from these few works, they seem very much in the spirit of Rauschenberg's combines. Johns covered a toy piano with collage, mounted a similarly collaged panel above a plaster cast of a head, covered a Jewish Star with encaustic and collage. Perhaps he destroyed these works because, in their use of found materials and collage, they seemed too close in spirit to the work of his mentor.

Johns’s breakthrough came in a painting called “Flag” (1955). A single image of an immediately recognizable American icon, “Flag” at first seems to have nothing in common with Rauschenberg’s work of this period. In that sense, it succeeded in opening a new avenue of exploration that had not been claimed by his lover. But beneath their surface differences, both Johns’s flags and Rauschenberg’s combines share a similar dynamic. Both take fragments of culture as the stuff of art, making the relationship between viewer and object the subject of inquiry. “Flag” poses fundamental ontological questions. Is it a flag or a painting of a flag? Whatever the answer, it has nothing to do with the artist’s sense of self. Once again, the artists’ gayness has led them away from a celebration of the individual and toward the bedrock of culture where all meaning is made.
Johns’s career developed swiftly after his first exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery. The Museum of Modern Art bought three paintings from that first show and one appeared on the cover of a magazine. The stark, single-image canvases struck the art world as completely new. In contrast, Rauschenberg’s drips and complex pictorial arrangements still had something of the Abstract Expressionist about them. He would enjoy no similar degree of success until his victory in the Venice Biennale of 1964.

There is no doubt, however, that Johns and Rauschenberg were extremely close both professionally and personally during this time. Johns has said: "our world was very limited. I think we were very dependent on one another. There was that business of triggering energies. Other people fed into that but it was basically a two-way operation." This two-way operation is evident in many of the paintings from this period, particularly a large combine called Untitled (1955). Rauschenberg explicitly addressed his relationship with Johns and its place in his emotional life. He collaged onto the surface of the piece drawings by Twombly, a photo of his young son, clippings about his family from a hometown newspaper, a naive oil painting by a relative, a drawing of an American flag (the year Johns painted his first one), a photo of Johns that Rauschenberg once termed "gorgeous," as well as letters from Johns, judiciously torn up. The combine thus stands as a meditation on family and love, merging the seemingly incommensurable fragments of past (family) and present (sexual) love into the
Another combine of the same year called "Short Circuit" is literally a combination of the work of three artist friends within an armature provided by Rauschenberg. In this piece, submitted for an annual retrospective at the Stable Gallery, Rauschenberg protests the exclusion of these friends from the show by smuggling them in through his painting. There is a program from an early John Cage concert under one door, a painting by Weil under another, and a third image by his friend Ray Johnson. In addition, there is a Johns flag and an autograph by Judy Garland. While the participation by friends and lovers is logical given the circumstances, the Garland autograph is a most curious addition, signaling the development of yet another new phase in Rauschenberg’s art, a phase again tied to his relationship with Johns.

Judy Garland was and is the high priestess of gay culture, the queen diva of all time. Her inclusion in this and other combines of the period (like Bantam of 1954) (Fig. 6) directly alludes for the first time in Rauschenberg’s work to his identification as a gay man. These works were part of a new series of combines that began to figure gay cultural tropes in increasingly explicit ways, from the evocation of the Ganymede myth in “Canyon” (1959), to the phrase “YOUR ASS” that dominates one side of “Photograph” (1959), to the tracing of a nude man in “Wager” (1957-9). How
“coming out” legible only to those who are “in.” The gay references tend to be so subtle and obscure that only now are scholars beginning to recognize them. Indeed, whether Rauschenberg intended these references to gay culture to be understood by any audience, straight or gay, is a matter of conjecture. He never identified himself publicly as a gay man, and the possibility exists that these references were intended only as private jokes to an audience perhaps no larger than his lover.

What references there are to gay culture tend to be complex and indirect. For example, “Bantam” includes a team portrait of the New York Yankees spattered with Abstract Expressionist paint which is then juxtaposed with delicate fabric swatches, a nineteenth-century nude odalisque staring at herself in a mirror, and another autographed photo of Judy Garland. While the presence of Garland alone was curious enough, the reference was coupled with a peculiar title. According to Webster’s Dictionary, “bantam” means “a small but aggressive or pugnacious person; 2. any of several breeds of small fowl in which the male is often a good fighter; 3. a boxer or wrestler weighing between 113 and 118 pounds.” In short, bantam refers to an over-wrought, overacted masculinity—a kind of nervous overcompensation for a perceived lack. Here the gestural paint splashed over the Yankees photo, coupled with a curious title, seems to deliver a highly coded, campy indictment of Abstract Expressionism and its self-conscious and exaggerated masculinity. Such a reading is reinforced by the odalisque looking at herself in a mirror, and the star...
Where Rauschenberg’s allusions to his sexuality are more explicit, they require a fairly sophisticated literary background. In one drawing illustrating Dante’s Inferno, he pays particular attention to the cantos describing the fate of sodomites. According to Dante, sodomites are sentenced to run forever barefoot over hot sand. At the top of his drawing, Rauschenberg has outlined his foot in red. The more explicit references to gay culture and his identification with it seem to be the product of a deepening relationship. Although no similar pattern can be discerned over the span of his earlier relationship with Twombly, by 1959 references to gay culture can be found in a large percentage of Rauschenberg’s work.

Johns’s art has never been as explicit. Beginning in 1956 with the painting of Canvas, he began to make the question of his identity the central focus of his art, always posing it in the form of a query or a problem, never celebrating it as the Abstract Expressionists would have done. Canvas consists of two stretched canvases facing in on one another so that the image is primarily the back of one canvas covered with paint. the painting is structured as if it were a self-portrait, but where the face would be there is instead a refusal, a turning away.

After completing this
explore the theme of closeted identity. He paints over a drawn shade in the painting “Shade” (1959) (Fig. 7), covers a book with paint in “Book” (1957), can’t be opened in “Drawer” (1957) (Fig. 7) when opened and yet in each case, the surface is of rich encaustic. Even the target and flag imagery is painted in thick encaustic over fragments of newspapers so that they can be discerned but rarely read.

Another groundbreaking work, “Target with Plaster Casts” (1955) (Fig. 8), consists of a series of little boxes with doors containing plaster-cast fragments of a man’s body. These fragments are placed above a target painted in encaustic. Here, the targeted body is literally closeted. As Johns has written in one of his early sketchbook notes, “An object that tells of the loss, destruction, disappearance of others. Tells of others.” It’s a phrase that applies equally well to Johns’ art and to Johns himself.

Exchanging ideas and motifs was an important part of the relationship between Johns and Rauschenberg despite their different approaches. Johns tells us something of this interchange: “You get a lot by doing. It’s very important for a young artist to see how things are done. The kind of exchange we had was stronger than talking. If you do something then you do something then you do something, it means more than what you can say. It’s nice to have verbal ideas about painting but better to express them through the medium itself.” For
example, both Johns and Rauschenberg often used flashlights and light bulbs to incorporate the actual objects into their works. Johns often drew them or made them out of sculptmetal. It appears that Johns followed Rauschenberg’s lead in most of these object-oriented exchanges, and he continued with them even after the relationship itself ended.

Over the course of their relationship, Johns’s painting became less solemn and meditative, occasionally even picking up the camp humor of Rauschenberg’s work. “False Start” (1959) consists of a gestural Abstract Expressionist color field labeled with unmatched color names; the word orange, for example, stenciled in white letters over a red field. This painting is a kind of Abstract Expressionist drag—Johns putting on the Abstract Expressionist style and at the same time showing how ill it fits him, how complicated and mediated is this presumed automatic translation of gesture into subjectivity. The color names act as a barrier to our reading of these strokes of color as pure expression, and the falsity of the labels reinforces the falsity of the gestures. In “False Start”, Johns chronicles the misfiring of emotional authenticity, painting an Abstract Expressionist picture that is manifestly untrue.

In the series of paintings of flags and numbers that preceded this image, Johns painted Abstract Expressionism’s “hot” gestures in the medium of encaustic—a suspension of pigment in melted beeswax.
that requires slow application and precise temperatures. Creating frozen “spontaneous” gestures in encaustic was thus another means of offering the signs of immediacy and emotional authenticity that were Abstract Expressionism’s hallmark, without any possibility of their sincerity. Johns’ “Thermometer” (1959) made this problem of authentic, unmediated gesture explicit. Placing a thermometer on top of “hot” Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes, he took its temperature. Not only does Abstract Expressionism’s “heat” require a cultural gauge, the thermometer reads room temperature.

Nowhere is Johns more explicit in his campy critique of Abstract Expressionism than in “Painting with Two Balls” (1960) (Fig. 9). Inserting two small wooden balls into a horizontal opening in an Abstract Expressionist gestural field nicely summarizes Johns’s take on the source of Abstract Expressionism’s classically masculine pictorial ambition. “Painting with Two Balls” can profitably be compared with Rauschenberg’s “Bed” (1955) (Fig. 10), a combine that features an Abstract Expressionist gestural painting on (what could be, it isn’t, after all, a mattress) a real bed, complete with quilt and pillow. “Bed” also located the origin of Abstract Expressionist ambition within its sexual politics. Early reviews of “Bed” claimed that the piece resembled nothing so much as the sight of a rape, or maybe even a murder. In joining sex and violence in his painting, Rauschenberg both imitates the Abstract Expressionists he knew so well and reconfigures their linking of esthetics and sexual politics.
In the middle of 1959, Rauschenberg left New York for Florida to work on his Dante drawings. It would prove to be the beginning of the end of his relationship with Johns. While they were often close in their thinking, they were almost polar opposites in terms of personality. Where Johns has always been shy, Rauschenberg is outgoing, so much so that even thought of him as something of a clown. Johns works slowly and deliberately—a cool, serious intellectual who obsessively repeats themes and whose references tend toward the literary. Although exceedingly well-read and articulate, he rarely discusses his work, and his reticent and self-protective interview style has generated its own adjective, Johnsian. Rauschenberg on the other hand is famously garrulous, and his working method is spontaneous and intuitive. References in his work tend toward the pop cultural and are rarely literary. Indeed, Rauschenberg suffers from dyslexia which makes reading difficult. Johns remembers that he used to read his favorite poetry aloud to Rauschenberg who, while willing to listen, had neither the patience nor interest to make it the object of serious study.

Rauschenberg has remarked that his "sensual excessiveness" alienated Johns. It is a remark that functions on a number of levels, both stylistic and biographical. After the final breakup in 1961, which was by all accounts quite painful, the artists severed relations for a long time. Neither artist would employ explicit homoerotic themes for some time. Johns moved south and began a series of paintings that, in his usual coded way, addressed his feeling about the
relationship. One of these pictures, called “Liar” (1959), consists simply of the word “liar” stenciled on canvas. Other images are more complex, such as “In Memory of My Feelings–Frank O’Hara” (1961), which, tellingly, takes its name from a well-known poem by O’Hara that speaks of gay love and the disintegration and reintegration of the self. Rauschenberg, in turn, worked on a combine called “Slow” or “South Carolina Fall” (1961) dating from the year of the breakup. It features a South Carolina licence plate set above a piece of crumpled, discarded metal, the whole composition looking like nothing so much as discarded debris. Johns, of course, was born in South Carolina and had returned to the state after the breakup.

After the breakup, Johns began to make increasingly larger, multi-panel paintings to which he attached different objects, abandoning the single-image works that initially garnered him such attention in favor of pictures that approach the appearance of combines. In turn, Rauschenberg began to give up attaching objects to his surfaces in favor of experimenting in the two-dimensional realm of the silkscreen. Perhaps the separation allowed them to experiment more explicitly in one another’s styles.

In 1955, Johns painted a cheerful bright blue painting called “Tango” (Fig. 11) stenciled on a brushed encaustic ground with a small key sticking out of the lower right-hand corner. The key belongs to a music box and could be turned to play a tune. The whole composition was very much in the spirit of Rauschenberg in its use of objects, its synesthesia,
its humor, its address to the spectator and the concomitant innuendo, as in "it takes two to tango." It's so uncharacteristic of Johns's work that it could very well have been painted as a tribute to Rauschenberg.

After they split up, Johns pictured relationships in a very different way in a series inspired by the life and work of the gay poet Hart Crane. In these paintings, he seems to concentrate on Crane's suicide by drowning at the age of 33 in the Gulf of Mexico as he returned, despondent, from his honeymoon. The paintings feature a stark hand and arm reaching, unsuccessfully, for the sky. Johns, himself in his early 30's, used his own arm to make the image.

Negative though they may be, the Crane pictures remain the only even vaguely gay images Johns painted after the breakup. Rauschenberg, too, ceased to use explicitly gay imagery after they parted. It is as if, without one another, Johns and Rauschenberg have lost the ability to represent themselves.
He was an astounding innovator who changed the course of art. He was also a bit of a prophet. In honor of his passing, we revisit a 1990 interview full of insights that still sparkle today.

Up until May 12, 2008, if you polled the cognoscenti as to who was the world’s greatest living artist, the winner would undoubtedly have been Robert Rauschenberg. But on that date, Rauschenberg moved into another category of greatness. And though he chose to remove himself from his body in his generous body of work and his charity, Change, Inc., which has provided emergency funds for artists in distress for more than 30 years, and the nonprofit devoted to raising awareness of the many issues with which he was involved.

While Andy Warhol may be more associated with Pop art, Rauschenberg was the prime mover of Pop art. It was Rauschenberg who introduced the use of silkscreen printing, and it was his defection from the ranks of the abstract expressionists that signaled a new movement afoot. He quipped: “You have to have the time to feel sorry for yourself in order to be a good abstract expressionist.”

Rauschenberg had better uses for his time, like inventing new art forms that combined in various ways painting, sculpture, photography, and printmaking. He collaborated with dancers, performers, and engineers. He isn’t known as a conceptual artist, but one of his best-known works was erasing a de Kooning drawing; and in 1961, he submitted this work to a portrait show: “This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so.”

Although his body broke down, confining him to a wheelchair, his spirit was...
unconfined and his innovative energy never flagged. He produced great works until the end. He said, “The artist’s job is to be a witness to his time in history.” And to that end, he not only created work that stands as an epic testament to his time, but he was always an activist and an instigator, throwing himself wholeheartedly into the struggle that is history.

The following interview originally appeared in this magazine in December 1990. It was conducted by Paul Taylor, an important art critic who died of AIDS-related lymphoma two years later, at the age of 35. Eighteen years after it occurred, this conversation has lost none of its timeliness. — Glenn O’Brien

PAUL TAYLOR: Apart from occasional visits here, you’ve left New York. How come?

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG: It seemed to be a very changing time. All my friends were getting divorced; I was lonely. I didn’t have time or patience for psychoanalysis, which doesn’t interest me. I thought, I can find out what’s going on in just one afternoon. So I went to astrologist Zoltan Mason, who was highly recommended by a number of people. You have to write down your profession, and I wrote “painter.” He didn’t know who I was, he assumed I was a housepainter. He said that whatever I do, I should stay out of the mountains. I have acrophobia, so that’s a good idea. I feel fenced in when I see rocks that are too old, and that’s what mountains are made out of — heights and rocks that are too old. He also said, “You should head for the water and the sun.” I was born near the Gulf of Mexico, down in Port Arthur, Texas. And I had been going to Florida already. I’d just get in the car and drive. And every time I got to Captiva Island I felt a particular kind of spiritual affinity, almost a kind of magic, and so I started going there more frequently.

PT: What star sign are you?

RR: Libra, on the cusp of Scorpio. I make a joke that I keep my success in Scorpio, and I work in Libra.

PT: Nevertheless, I wonder how the New York art world seems to you today.

RR: Pretty incestuous. It’s hard to go to a gallery in New York and see something that doesn’t look familiar.
PT: It's cannibalistic?

RR: I have quoted myself too often about this, but I always wanted my works — whatever happened in the studio — to look more like what was going on outside the window. I still feel that way.

PT: Are opportunities here for new artists?

RR: If they don’t fall asleep with success, I don’t see any reason things couldn’t be as exciting as, say, the ‘50s or ‘60s were for American artists. But I think it’s almost to a fault that there are so many galleries. My friend Brice Marden was teaching at the School of Visual Arts, and on the first day he noticed that the only curiosity young artists expressed was to say, "Tell me how to get a gallery" and "Tell me how to get a loft." So he said, "If you want that . . . I’ll tell you how to find a loft. But don’t come back to school tomorrow if that’s what you want." I think the focus on these things is premature, and it’s eclipsed the curiosity about — and joy of — making artworks.

PT: It means that art has a different meaning now, doesn’t it?

RR: I think so. I think collectors are responsible, dealers are responsible,
auctions are responsible. By the time you establish your priorities, there really isn’t any fun or need to interest yourself in what you’re doing. And this I find disastrous.

PT: Do you think there are particular artists who helped bring about this state of affairs?

RR: I think it was the success of American painting.

PT: So you might be one of the artists who helped bring this about?

RR: I think there was a misinterpretation of what we were doing.

PT: By whom?

RR: The general public and the investors.

PT: How did they misinterpret it?

RR: Well, let’s take paintings that you had to start. If you were lucky [laughs] things gained an exaggerated value not only to the artists but also to people who were collectors. And this fed back into: “Maybe I’ll get this one—a painting by this person — because it also might be very valuable someday.” People did not experience a painting on a one-to-one basis. That seems to have been lost in dollar signs and investment. Something else that’s happened in the last 15 years or so is that galleries have become artworks in themselves. The artist is almost the cosmetic of the gallery rather than the soul, which is the way it used to be.

PT: If you had your way, what would be the role of art in the world?

RR: It’s an exercise for the artist to enlarge his or her vision as a way of proving that you are living.

PT: How do you want history to describe your association with Jasper Johns?

RR: Richly. [chuckles] We were the only people not intoxicated with the abstract expressionists. We weren’t against them, but we weren’t
interested in taking that stance. Both of us felt there was too much
exaggerated emotionalism around their art. My first break was that
nobody took me seriously, even though I hung out at the Cedar Tavern
and drove Franz Kline home when he was too drunk. Jasper wasn’t
taken seriously either, and I was considered a clown. We were friendly,
harmless critters.

PT: We have previously talked about your relationship with Jasper.

RR: Well, I think I’d better just leave it alone. I’m not frightened of the
affection that Jasper and I had, both personally and as working artists. I
don’t see any sin or conflict in the days when each of us was the most
important person in the other’s

PT: Can you tell me why you parted ways?

RR: Embarrassment about being well-known.

PT: Embarrassment about being famous?

RR: Socially. What had been tender and sensitive became gossip. It was
sort of new to the art world that the two most well-known, up-and-coming
studs were affectionately involved.

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THE CURTAIN RISES IN CYBERSPACE

10 PICKS FROM THE SALON ART + D

DAVID ADJAYE’S ART OF ARCHITECT
PT: I wonder if things are different nowadays.

RR: I think it’s different. The ’50s were a particularly hostile, prudish time.

PT: In 1970, only six years after you represented this country at the Venice Biennale, you withdrew from the same show as an act of disassociation from United States government sponsorship. That was a period of arts activism. Why do you suppose that now there is arts activism again?

RR: It’s self-defense.

PT: Could it possibly indicate that artists are not out to make a buck exclusively?

RR: Well, that is a healthy thing right now. All kinds of activists are aggressive in spite of our present state of politics; it might tone up some of the muscles artists used to have. Still, I remember how passionately I was against it. Most of my life has been politically oriented. That’s the reason that I had my big tax bust . . . There were only two artists on the list then, Andy [Warhol] and myself. The IRS said, “Bust these guys, no matter what it takes.”

PT: Warhol had contributed to McGovern’s campaign—

RR: And I’d given money to the Black Panthers.

PT: What do you think about that now?

RR: Oh, I’m proud of it. It cost me a fortune. An investigator insulted me, saying, “If you don’t do this, I’m going to crack down on anyone who’s ever been associated with you, just as thoroughly as I have on you. And, by God, if you don’t agree to this, all your friends are going to be victimized, and I won’t get my promotion.” Out of my pocket I had to sell my big Twombly. I had to sell my early Warhol and Jasper’s first color painting.

PT: How did you feel being part of the Soviet Pavilion at the Venice Biennale this year?

RR: I loved it. I thought it was a great compliment. I think that the whole form of the Venice Biennale is going to have to denationalize.
competition, I think, is dead.

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Research Collections > Oral History Interviews

Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, 1965 Dec. 21

Listen to MP3 sound excerpt from this interview

Rauschenberg, Robert, b. 1925 d. 2008
Painter, Printmaker, Assemblage artist, Collagist
Active in New York, N.Y.


Format: Originally recorded on 2 sound tapes. Reformated in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 1 hr., 58 min.

Collection Summary: An interview of Robert Rauschenberg conducted by Dorothy Seckler on 1965 Dec. 21, by Dorothy Seckler.

In this interview Rauschenberg speaks of his role as a bridge from the Abstract Expressionists to the Pop artists; the relationship of affluence and art; his admiration for de Kooning, Jack Tworkov, and Franz Kline; the support he received from musicians Morton Feldman, John Cage, and Earl Brown; his goal to create work which serves as unbiased documentation of his observations; the irrational juxtaposition that makes up a city, and the importance of that element in his work; the facsimile quality of painting and consequent limitations; the influence of Albers' teaching and his resulting inability to do work focusing on pain, struggle, or torture; the 'lifetime' of painting and the problems of time relative symbolism; his feelings on the possibility of truly simulating chance in his work; his use of intervals, and its possible relation to the influence of Cage; his attempt to show as much drama on the edges of a piece as in the dead center; his belief in the importance of being stylistically flexible throughout a career; his involvement with the Stadtelijk Museum; his loss of interest in sculpture; his belief in the mixing of technology and aesthetics; his interest in moving to the country and the prospect of working with water, wind, sun, rain, and flowers; Ad Reinhardt's remarks on his Egan Show; his...
discontinuation of silk screens; his illustrations for Life Magazine; his role as a non-political artist; his struggle with abstraction; his recent theater work “Map Room Two;” his white paintings; and his disapproval of value hierarchy in art.

Biographical/Historical Note: Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) was a painter and photographer from New York, N.Y.

These interviews are part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and others.

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Interview Transcript

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Interview with Robert Rauschenberg
Conducted by Dorothy Seckler
In New York
December 21, 1965

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Robert Rauschenberg on December 21, 1965. The interview was conducted in New York by Dorothy Seckler for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

.Interview

DS: Dorothy Seckler
RR: Robert Rauschenberg

DS: This is Dorothy Seckler interviewing Robert Rauschenberg in New York, on December 21, 1965. Robert, I have just been explaining to you why I am interested in taking the beginning of this interview back to around the period of 1950. Since critics so often discuss your work in terms of its being, as they suggest, a bridge between abstract expressionism and Pop art, it might be interesting to see how very different it is, how distinct your attitudes and ideas were from either, and from the artists who were figures at either end of that bridge. You had come back to New York, and were having rather a struggle at that time. As I recall, you were supposed to have been living on Fulton Street on fifteen cents a day. Is that right?

RR: Some days it was twenty five.

DS: Well, one of the things that some of the people who have written about your work have said is that the reason that you were able to take a position of accepting your environment, as opposed to the abstract expressionists, who were rebellious against theirs, was because or they said this about Pop artists in general because the artist was much better treated during this period.
than he had been when the abstract expressionists were coming along. Now here you still were, after having had some very notable shows at Betty Parsons and, I believe, at Egan. And still this period was a struggle. So apparently your attitudes weren't being too much influenced by affluence.

RR: I think one of the main differences in my attitude and that of some of the abstract expressionists was based on the fact that my natural point of view was never cultivated, that the creative process somehow has to include adjusting realistically to the situation. Whether artist or not, has been the responsibility of the way things are very interesting motivation to me or that I won't accept the fact that which was very foreign to me during the period we're talking about are new complications. If you don't have trouble paying the rent, you have trouble doing something else; one needs just a certain amount of trouble. Some people need more trouble to operate and some people need less. And I felt very rich in being able to pick up Con Edison lumber from the streets and whatever the day would lay out for me to use in my work. In fact, so much so, that sometimes it embarrasses me that I live in New York City as though I'm a guest.

DS: So that you didn't feel like a hero, being an artist and working under difficulty.

RR: Well, I think that's much too easy a way to be a hero.

DS: Perhaps the word hero slips in there because at this time there was a kind of attitude among a number of the artists of taking a rather heroic stance. Perhaps, this is really something that the critics opposed almost more than the artists, but there was a feeling of the artist having a role outside of society, let's say, an Messianic role with certain artists. This was of course, part of the attitude that emerged as you were sitting in club meetings at the Cedar Bar, listening to discussions of that more rebellious attitude, that feeling that the artist has needs and the demands and the ways of a society. Can you remember any particular feeling that you had or ways in which you expressed them to yourself or
RR: Well, I don’t know how accurately I remember. It was certainly a lot more complicated and I felt more involved than probably my generalization about it now. But I was in awe of the painters; I mean I was new in New York, and I thought the painting that was going on here was just unbelievable. I still think that Bill de Kooning is one of the greatest painters in the world. And I liked Jack Tworkov, himself and his work. And Franz Kline. But I found a lot of artists were difficult for me to talk to. It almost seemed as though there were so many more of them sharing some common idea than there was of me, and at that time the people who gave me encouragement in my work weren’t so much the painters, even my contemporaries working: Morton Feldman, and John Cage, and Earl Brown, and the dancers that were around this group. I found something about the self assertion of abstract expressionism personally always put me off, because where the imagery and the material would be not an illustration of my excitement about literally of my excitement about the forty story building and right next to it is a parking lot and one is this maze of offices and closets and windows where everything is so crowded about this one time, and they said parking lots are the most valuable real estate in New York because there’s absolutely no overhead. And I thought this is so absurd, all these officious looking buildings, and actually, the best business would be not to have a building at all. I’m getting a little off the subject.

DS: No, I think that’s fascinating.

RR: It was this constant, irrational juxtaposition of things that I think one only finds in the city. One doesn’t find it there either. There’s a kind of an architectural harmony. Whether it’s chauvinism or patriotism anyway, there’s something that tended to unite the people abroad that I came in contact with more cohesive than I found New York. And I think that even today, New York still has more of this unexpected quality around every corner than any place else. It’s something quite extraordinary.
DS: Yes. Are there particular sections of the city that appeal to you more than others?

RR: Well, I like way downtown near the Battery. I lived down there at this time and for, I guess, the following well, this is where I moved to uptown and I've been here for four years and this is 1965. And this is as far uptown as I've lived except for one period and under the insistence of my mother in law we got a ground floor apartment and lived sensibly for a while. I think that area down there because restaurants emphasized; it’s more dramatic. At that time you had the Washington Market; that was the only one in the city where you could get all kinds of fresh market and imported cheeses. Then, right within the same block they had wholesale plant places. The flower district is up around 26th Street, but this was a different kind of area. And in the next block they had surplus hardware stores galore. And electronic equipment. And then across town, you had the Fulton fish market. The two were separated only by big business. And during the day, that it looked like an ant hill that had just been kicked over. And then Bam at six o’clock you could hear footsteps three blocks away. And the buildings were the tallest there. I always like being close to water if I have the choice. And if the roasting of coffee wasn’t too strong, you could always smell the fish market. I think that is a very rich part of town.

DS: Yes.

RR: But I don’t find the rest of the city lacking in this quality I’m talking about. Every time I’ve moved, my work has changed radically. And I think that if it didn’t change radically, then I’d do something about it and I’d force it to change. In this place the light is so different you can’t till so much because it’s a gray day but sometimes the light is so white in here, it’s not to be believed, because of these skylights. And that’s a very different kind of light from other studios where the ceilings weren’t as high, but maybe the windows were bigger, and so there you’d get the light as it reflected, as it bounced off the floor and it would always be warmed up. All these, I think, are the job of an artist to move with these things as though they are additional qualities rather than an attitude about painting which makes...
one move into a place and force on it a particular working atmosphere that they remember as being the one they like. And I think that attitude also makes a different kind of painting. Whereas my work was never a protest of what was going on, it was only the expression of my own involvement, it always had the possibility of being some other way. But if it were, I guess I'd have to be someone else.

DS: This is all so fascinating, the feelings you had about the city. I recall that I was told that Franz Kline when he took a place had something covering the window nailed up. I'm very fond of Franz Kline and his work, but it does illustrate a kind of different attitude toward a way of responding to what's around you, yours, as contrasted to some of the feelings of people at that time. Of course, in other ways, you and Franz might have easily shared a sympathy. I can remember the talk he gave at the Museum of Modern Art in which Shredded Wheat played a very important part. Do you remember that talk?

RR: No.

DS: It was on abstract expressionism, and I don't remember who else, but it was on abstract expressionism, and I don't remember who else, but it was Franz Kline. He got up and just went on for, oh, a long, long time about the different things, about getting up, and Shredded Wheat right in close to the experience of the moment.

RR: He was beautiful with some pet words like that; Nanook of the North was one of them that he played with. And also his idea about somehow London was the answer to all the good ideas in taste. And Princess Margaret was his idea of when a girl was really beautiful, "like Princess Margaret." I mean it was just a feeling he had; it was all an abstraction. I don't think he wanted everybody to look English or anything but it was a style.

DS: I can remember one time when I was in the Cedar Bar and I was wearing a suit that had rather nice tailoring and he came up and said, "Ah, that looks like a suit with English tailoring. Wasn't that made in London?" It wasn't, as a matter of fact. But it was so surprising to me because, you know, from everything I knew about Franz and his way of life, elegance of that kind was not something that I would have expected him to be concerned with.
RR: And he wasn’t.

DS: No, I’m sure he wasn’t.

RR: It was just one of his fantasies.

DS: Yes. It was a very interesting fantasy. I think the word elegance reminds me of something about at this time, and I think it is in Tompkins’ very interesting article on collecting waste materials from Con Edison wood and so on. It was sort of an implication that the materials were inelegant or everyday, ordinary things because you were poor and those were the things that were around. Well, there might have been an implication that if you had been living in a posh environment then you might have included, let’s say, gold chandeliers and so on. Then I later came across the reminder that you had made a kind of collage with gold leaf and one very similar in toilet paper.

RR: Right.

DS: So it made an interesting comment on each other.

RR: That was earlier... it was right after the all black and all white pictures. And there had been a lot of critics who shared the idea with a lot of the public that they couldn’t see black as color or as pigment, but they immediately moved into associations and the associations were always of destroyed newspapers, of burned newspapers. And that began to bother me. Because I think that I’m never sure of what the impulse is psychologically. I don’t mess around with my subconscious. I mean I try to keep wide awake. And if I see in the superficial subconscious relationships that I’m familiar with, cliches of association, I change the picture. I always have a good reason for taking something out but I never have one for putting something in. And I don’t want to, because that means that the picture is being painted predigested. And I think a painting has such a limited life anyway. Very quickly a painting is turned into a facsimile of itself when one becomes so familiar with it that one recognizes it without looking at it. I think that’s just a natural phenomenon. It may be I think it is even an important one. I don’t think that we have the strength over a period of years to see things always as though we hadn’t ever looked at them before to see them new. There may be someone that...
you’re very close to and you see them every day. If they take a two weeks’ trip or you take a two weeks’ trip, it’s only for about the first fifteen minutes when you’re back together that you notice how they have changed from the idea that you have of the way they look. And then one’s readjusted. I think the same thing happens to painting. So if you do work with known quantities making, puns or dealing symbolically with your materials, I think you’re shortening the life of the work even before it’s had a chance to be exposed. I mean, it hasn’t had a life of its own. It’s already leading someone else’s life.

DS: That’s a fascinating point.

RR: And when I did the well, as I said, I wasn’t sure that I really might have been using materials because they were old or liked black with newspaper because of the burned out look. I thought of the tortured, tarred, because I don’t torture newspaper. A newspaper that you’re not reading can be used for anything; and the same people didn’t think it was immoral. I think, you know, that that’s a very positive use for a newspaper. So I did a painting, or a couple of each, one in toilet paper collage, trying to duplicate it in gold leaf. And I studied both and I saw no advantage to either. I mean, whatever one was saying the other seemed to be able to be just as articulate. So that I knew then that it was someone else’s problem, not mine.

SIDE TWO

RR: We have an auxiliary in case your tape machine isn’t working, which is your memories.

DS: My memory is a very poor auxiliary. What you’re saying is fascinating and I would be desolate indeed if the machine didn’t work. Just to keep in the general period; we’ve jumped about a bit which I’m happy about; back before when you mentioned the black paintings and, of course, the black paintings belong to the same period as the white paintings.

RR: Yes. Excuse me, you know you were talking about the difference in my work during those years and the work that was going on? 

DS: Yes.
RR: There was a whole language that I could never make function for myself in relationship to painting and that was attitudes like tortured, struggle, pain. And I never could. I don't know whether it was from my Albers training or my own personal hangup, but I never could see those qualities in paint.

DS: You had, of course, seen them in life. And that illustrates that fact pictorially. But I never saw in the materials this conflict and I knew that it had to be in the attitude of the painter and a kind of interpretation of the attitude that existed separately, so that if in the future one were to lose the idea that those paintings were made from that it would be very possible to have a completely different attitude about the painting.

DS: We were speaking before about the life of a painting and the instability of perception in regard to painting. I think it was Duchamp who had a theory that it’s true that the painting has a lifetime; I think he said fifteen years, I'm not sure do you remember that?

RR: Yes.

DS: Then apparently, however, it comes back into perception for another generation or for posterity possibly on some other basis. And this is what you're saying now that if two hundred years from now when black may have all sorts of other associations... this anguish that was being put in by some abstract expressionist might not be perceived, but the painting may have a different life. In other words, they may bring some other qualities.

RR: I think necessarily it will. I'm sure we don't read old paintings the way they were intended.

DS: No.

RR: I think it is what may be part of my naivete but I think that painting being as extreme as it is now, and it was only extreme in the past by...
degrees, at this moment in New York you have old masters, new masters, no masters, people painting in all kinds of styles and they all celebrate a certain amount of recognition and communication between each other.

DS: If I may say so, you had something to do with it, because when you came on the scene, this was not so.

RR: It didn’t feel like it; I know that. I felt very isolated, but I felt reasonably isolated. I mean I thought there was a good basis for the separation because the points of view were different.

DS: Did you feel at the same time that the position of some of the abstract expressionists had also opened the way for you? In the sense I’m thinking of this, that at least one of the main results of their point of view had been to restore to the painting a sense of its being an object. Here I’m thinking perhaps even more of Rothko but the idea came in at one point, of the painting as an environment. Barnett Newman told me that he even urged he put a sign in an exhibition saying, “Move up close to the painting.”

RR: Yes.

DS: In other words, not looking at it from a distance, but there it is as an object. Well, while your attitude of what you were going to do with that object was completely different, it was a canvas right in front of you; it was a two dimensional phenomenon; it was a phenomenon like other objects.

RR: Yes.

DS: Would that have been important?

RR: Yes, I’m sure that the climate for my involvement was right. Pollock also … wanted one to be wrapped in the painting. And also the new excitement and variety of ways that the abstract expressionists were applying paint. You could put it as though it were colored air and it would be painting. Or you could stack it on so thick that it would be a relief. And all of this, all these physical aspects of painting at that time excited me very much. You could do a picture in just black and white. I mean all the things, whether you’re soliciting permission or not, do give you permission.
DS: Did you ever do any pictures in which the pigment was applied in an airy way? Or were you always more apt to work with a very active brush, and so on?

RR: I remember how at different times I had different preoccupations. One of my preoccupations at a period was that I wouldn't use the same color when I broke loose from those monochromes. And it was after the red. I wouldn't use the same color in a picture in more than one place. And another was, even though it was an intellectual idea and with its built in limitations, I tried to imply with the different ways that the paint went on, that even though I might know only seventeen that there were thousands.

DS: Coming back to the other thing that you mentioned that you had been at that time very closely associated with John Cage and with other musicians I know that many people have assumed that because of your association, that accident and a philosophy, an outlook of accident was important to your work, since it had apparently been in Cage's. And I gather that this was not your feeling, that you didn't believe in accident any more than anything else. Was that a strongly developed attitude?

RR: I was very interested in many of John's chance operations. Each one seemed quite unique to me. I liked the sense of experimentation that he was involved in. But painting is just a different medium and I never could figure out an interesting way to use any kind of programmed activity. And even though chance deals with the unexpected and the unplanned, it still has to be organized before it can exist. I think maybe chance works better in a situation like music because music exists over a period of time, and you don't maintain constantly the you can't refer back from one area to another area. One's familiarity or lack of familiarity with time is very different from, say, the size of a canvas, which is what I would compare it to. One can see that a canvas is six feet by eight feet, say, quite accurately. But you can spend two minutes and think it's five, or thirty seconds and it's just a different bed for activities there. The only thing that I could get with chance, and I never was able to use it, was that I would end up with something quite geometric or the spirit that I was interested in, indulging in, was gone. I felt as though I was carrying out an idea rather than witnessing an unknown idea taking shape. If this is called accident I certainly used accident, and I certainly used the fact that wet paint will run, and lots of other things. It seems to me it's just a kind of friendly relationship with your material where you want them for what they...
are rather than for what you could make out of them. I did a twenty foot print and John Cage is involved in that because he was the only person I knew in New York who had a car and who would be willing to do this. And I poured paint on one Sunday morning. I glued, it must have been fifty sheets of paper together; it was the largest paper I had, and stretched it out on the street. He had an A Model Ford then and he drove through the paint and on to the paper and he only had the direction to try to stay on the paper. And he did a beautiful job of it. Now I consider that my print. It's just like working with lithography. You may not be a qualified printer but there again, like the driver of the car, someone who does know the press very well collaborates with you and you are part of another necessary aspect that it takes to make anything. Would you call that accident?

DS: Actually, I'm not sure I'd call anything accident. When paint drips it's like an insurance company say a man crosses the street and is hit by a car. To that particular individual, it is an accident. But to insurance companies who have tables showing how many people will be hit by a car that year, it's an expected event.

RR: Yes.

DS: And in a sense though you don't know exactly where a drip will run, it may wiggle a little in the middle, you know that there's gravity and you know that paint will drip and so on.

RR: You know that it's not going up.

DS: That's right. So there's a certain element in which some of the things that were called chance weren't.

RR: Anyway, they weren't all done with I know maybe this is what you're getting at they weren't done with some kind of wild abandon where you just shut your eyes and throw things about.

DS: Yes. Well, I don't think anyone ever imagines that would be possible. Now one other thing that I thought might be a parallel ….

RR: I'm not saying that they're better for it. But that just never interested me.
DS: ...was the use of intervals because I understand in John Cage's work that he often emphasizes interval and waiting and silences a great deal. And I notice that you have also emphasized leaving open spaces in your paintings and areas in which there is less happening and those work very beautifully in relationship to the things that are happening very fast in other parts of the canvas; and I thought perhaps that there may have been a kind of sharing of feeling about this kind of thing, of the importance of interval and openness.

RR: Well, it’s no secret that we admired each other's work very much, and still do. But I think that those are like some feeling of variety within a restricted area that are important if you’re dealing with multiplicity and variation and inclusion as your content, then any feeling of consistence or sameness is a violation of that attitude; and I had to work consciously to do work that would imply the kind of richness and complexity that I saw around me; and I think those things just got into it. One of my painter friends says I’m awfully good at the edges. It was intended as a joke but I think that that may be true; but there’s been a conscious attempt for me to treat any area whether I only have half an inch more before I hit the wall, or whether it’s dead center, to not treat any one area with a kind of dramatic preference. I dealt with that several ways. One is with a kind of simple minded formal idea about composition by just putting something of no consequence dead center so that when you look there, yes, there it is, but you see that certainly doesn’t matter any more than anything else; that’s not what the center is for. So that ideas of sort of relaxed symmetry have been something for years that I have been concerned with because I think symmetry is a neutral shape as opposed to a form of design.

DS: There’s quite an important group of younger painters now who are interested in symmetry and in a sense it almost returns to something Byzantine it seems to me. In a curious way the whole thing seems to have come full circle. Whereas your work has always seemed almost the most opposite of Byzantine. There’s no sense of hierarchy at all; you can’t make a hierarchy out of things in your paintings. Nothing can be assigned a position beyond or above anything else so that the relativism is complete, I’d say, as opposed to the structure, which moves up from a base to a high point in which every position is fixed. This is an aside, and I don’t want to take up too much time, but I just wondered in passing how you react to the importance that these new painters are giving to symmetrical design, all over and symmetrically centered.
RR: I enjoy most of it. I think I said this earlier, but I have never felt that one way of working excludes another. In fact, I think that one of the aspects of my work that I criticize myself for the most is the fact that so many people recognized it as a way of working, as an end in itself, so that the influence that the work has had on other artists to work in what I think they would call the same direction is really one of the work's weaknesses. And I have forced myself well, if I were interested in styles, I've run through a good many.

DS: That you have.

RR: And it's always a pleasure to give them up because I feel if one takes an overall point of view, sees my work in general as massed, then I think that that point can be made. I'm not so facile that I can accomplish or find out what I want to know or explore enough of the possibilities and a way of making a painting, say, in just one painting or two paintings. Sometimes a period of all red paintings or the ones that I did which I called pedestrian colors. Maybe one will be made up of thirty paintings, maybe one will be made up of fifteen paintings. I can't tell. There's no desire to mount. I use as a guide for this, when things seem to work out consistently. It takes three or four paintings to really decide whether you're just having a lucky streak or whether you have somehow within yourself made some accomplishment that lets working this way be easier for you, where you're more apt to be successful than unsuccessful. And then when I definitely decide that that's the case, well then it's just gone. I mean I just start something else. And I never seem to have any particular problem about like people say, what are you going to do next? And usually while I'm working one way, there's another attitude that's growing which as often as not is a reaction from what I'm doing.

DS: Almost the reverse of it perhaps?

RR: Yes.

DS: Would that have been the case just before your show that was called Oracle? I mean how did that very different adventure come about? Well, I suppose it wasn't so different than what you make...
Oracle was I had started it I guess two and a half years ago, maybe even longer than that, closer to three. And it was going to be a radio painting but a concert variation. I did Broadcast, a painting that has three radios in it but only two tuning knobs, one for volume and one for tuning. I objected to the fact that one had to be standing so close to the picture that the sound didn’t seem to be using the space and the way the images were reacting to each other. And that was all right. That was one aspect of it. But through that, having made that and feeling that limitation with that piece, I wanted to do something that was remote control, that could be separated in the room. I had some canvases stretched, but it took so long I needed help with the radios. And I used the paintings for something else, a good idea because once I started thinking with the weight problem, and the depth the painting would have to be to house the equipment, that painting was the wrong form for that to take. So I started on a sculpture. Then I went to Amsterdam to work at the Stadtlijk Museum with what was going to be a collaboration of about five artists, or six. And because I was working in sculpture, I had three weeks; we found that our ideas were so different that it was very difficult to get together and just make a piece.

DS: Was that with Tinguely? Was he one of the people?

RR: Yes, Tinguely, Niki de Saint Phalle, Per Utvet, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spurry.

TAPE NO. 2

DS: This is Dorothy Seckler continuing a tape with Robert Rauschenberg on December 21, 1965. At the point where we had left off in our previous reel you had mentioned your participation or intended participation with a group of other artists at the Stadnljik Museum in Holland. I think we might take up at this point what actually happened to that project.

RR: Right. The form that the exhibition took finally was that each person just picked a part of the museum. It was a very interesting experiment for the museum, by the way, because they wanted the artists, instead of just shipping and picking a lot of work, they trusted the artists that they picked to respond in this time in some way or another, doing works that they would show whatever the artist made. I thought that was kind of beautiful.
DS: Yes.

RR: And the artists were given a salary; they were given money for materials and all the transportation.

DS: And a studio, I assume?

RR: Well, the Museum itself functioned as a studio. They had emptied out about, well it’s a very large museum and we took, I think, almost a quarter of the museum. And each artist then just picked a spot in the museum that he wanted to work and just started the sculpture which became Oracle. But painting didn’t really interest me. So in a kind of crash program of three weeks I made four pieces of sculpture and some of them quite large. One of them is about ten or twelve feet high and was very densely massed, about eight feet by five feet, and twelve feet high. That was by far the largest work. But I’m not really a sculptor in any traditional sense. I tend to work with materials that are a little heavier and put them together as practically as I can. By being a sculptor, I mean I don’t weld or solder.

DS: How did you put them together?

RR: Just with bolts and nails and wiring. I could have had help there except that the way I work I can never tell anybody what to do to help me unless it is just a very simple thing like “drill three holes here.” And there wasn’t enough getting over the language barrier for me to become someone how little they could help me. But then that had its disadvantages too, and the last week I never even went home from the museum. If I got terribly tired, I’d just lie down on the floor for a few minutes. Because there was no way, as you know, there’s no way of hurrying some things. There’s no way of anticipating how much time it’s going to take. At a certain time you just are through. And I still worked on it a couple of days
after the exhibition opened.

DS: Had the sound equipment been sent over there?

RR: No, I didn’t have sound then. The pieces I made did happen to have sound, but I didn’t have an electric air pump attached loosely enough to make a constant rattle, so that the vibrations of the motor would make the air go into a large tub of water and you had this bubbling all the time in contrast with the ...

DS: But the water didn’t run freely?

RR: No, it was a closed thing. It made this gurgling. And another piece had clocks that had all been tampered with. We had nine large clocks in it all running at different speeds, some just zipping around and others barely moving.

DS: Did that interest you?

RR: I got so I was really just sick of sculpture. Nothing appealed to me more when I got back than the gentility of a beautifully stretched piece of canvas. I couldn’t break anything as I crossed the room, and if it fell on me it wouldn’t hurt a bit. So that the piece then that I was working on, the radio piece, was put aside. Then I just worked on it from time to time, mostly in relationship to the experimentation with the radios. I came back from tour recently with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and I’m going to move my studio. I had had my silk screens destroyed while I was gone so that I wouldn’t fall back on that. I really wanted to work. I think there’s something about moving and coming back that before you can begin on something new well, I find it morally difficult to simply abandon a work and I got very interested in the sculpture again. I made two additional pieces and worked on the sound, and so on.

DS: Has it continued to interest you since then? I mean, are you likely to resume?

RR: I think the radio piece probably is the closest thing to what I’m about to do next as one can predict without knowing where one’s going, because I like very much that mixture of technology and aesthetics.
DS: I was interested in what you said last time we talked, I think, about the sound having been important in a sense, in that insuring a certain movement through the exhibition …

RR: Literally.

DS: Literally, yes.

RR: You had a sense of distance that as often as not was distorted. You had the feeling possibly of knowing where you were but where you were was lost.

DS: That’s very expressive. And another thing that you had mentioned which we haven’t recorded was your feeling that it was important that the sound frequencies, that the radio sources, be actual ones, not taped; and your feeling that if you had been able to tape them, it would have been rather like commercial art in that …

RR: Yes.

DS: Would you like to enlarge on that in any way?

RR: No, I think that just about says it. I like for the sound to be as fresh as the daily fall of the dust and rust and dirt that accumulates,.which doesn’t mean that one doesn’t clean it off from time to time. But then that’s another one of a literal insistence on the piece’s operating and existing in the time situation that it’s observed in. It’s another one of those things trying to put off the death of the work.

DS: Yes. Did I hear you mention before that you had in mind possibly using at some time in the future a piece in which the wind might work as an actual force?

RR: Yes. I’d like to work with wind and water and plants. It sounds like it’s going to be a garden, but I don’t think it’s going to be, but if it turns out to be a garden that may be my own sneaky way of moving out into the country. I hope I don’t pick this new building out just in order to discover that what I really needed was a farm. In fact, having two dogs now is also an indication that I’m trying to get out.
DS: I think so. Siberian dogs are going to be moving you out into the great open spaces any moment.

RR: Maybe it’s bigger than I am.

DS: I think that would be the cream of the jest for the art world: that the man who was sort of responsible for introducing the whole urban environment into painting moves to the country and becomes a collaborator with sun and wind.

RR: And beaches.

DS: And beaches, yes. That would be very beautiful.

RR: I might move out there and find that all the work is finished. At that point I might just become a collector of vegetables and I could be a critic on waves.

DS: Yes. And I could come into the studio and start fooling around with some of this lovely stuff here.

RR: Right.

DS: The bit about the other end of that bridge that we started off with sometime ago, I realize that the question about your responses to your so-called descendents in Pop art perhaps superfluous. But I thought it might be kind of interesting to try to separate in any way that we can the distinct differences that exist between your outlook and those of some of the leading Pop artists. Of course we haven’t really done all of our in-between traveling to bring us up to the point where Pop art appeared. You did mention at some point that you saw a great many people taking what you had done as a kind of simply new kinds of materials, collaging and tires and posters and so on as a new aesthetic element without taking along with it or perceiving that there was a great deal more involved than unorthodox materials.

RR: I don’t think there’s anything really wrong with influence because I think that one can use another man’s art as material either literally or just implying that they’re doing that, without it representing a lack of a point of view. But I also like seeing people accustomed to seeing in art be
New materials have fresh associations of physical properties and qualities that have built into them the possibility of forcing you or helping you do something else. I think it’s more difficult to constantly be experimenting with paint over a period of many years. Like Ad Reinhardt said to me one day, and I took it as a compliment until he had finished his remark. He said, “I saw your show.” I think it was the Egan show. He said, “I saw your exhibition.” He said, “Those are very good pictures.” And I said, “Thank you.” And he said, “Yes, it’s too bad.” He said, “Somehow we just can’t help but get better.” And I couldn’t agree with him more.

DS: And I suppose that explains your destruction of the silk screens that everyone was so fascinated by.

RR: That’s my own personal relationship with them. It doesn’t mean that I won’t ever use silk screens again. I just don’t have any appetite for them now. But it would have been very easy to come back after being away from the studio for eight months and simply pick up, even though the concepts and the sense of the construction, the choice of color and all of that might have been different. I think the temptation to just use the screens I already had made would have been too great. And I think it’s important for an artist to know his weakness and use it well. I think that the difference in the work that I would have done with silk screen after I got back from the tour and being away from painting would not have been as great as it will be, because I’m having to work in some entirely different medium.

DS: I suppose I should ask this while it’s on my mind. You have, of course, resumed work with silk screen in connection with a commission from Life?

RR: Yes.

DS: ... To do a series dealing with the theme of Dante.

RR: I had intended to do that with lithography, but there was a, I don’t know what you’d call it, a legal question there. It’s absurd to do a single print as elaborate as that would have to have been. I mean, it’s just uneconomical. In making prints, one of the values is that you can make several copies or that it is possible to have an edition. And the legal tie up there was that if Life Magazine commissions a work, it has to have an exclusive. I would have had to have made an edition of one. So then I thought, well, how will I get all this photographic material down, and I thought of silk screens. I had about twenty five photographs, because the scale was magazine scale,
reduced to one screen. And it was like having just that many palettes but instead of lots of colors laid out you had all of these images on one surface.

DS: It was a very handsome and very provocative piece. One of the things that I’m sure you’ve been asked about is something dealing with its imagery. The various photographic materials deal with areas in contemporary life that are readily identifiable. The Negro question, the Jewish issue, the atom explosion, the bomb, concentration camps, apparently I’m not sure exactly where the photomontage of bodies came from.

RR: Yes, it is.

DS: And in a most exciting way. The question that I suppose occurred to me was that well, Mr. Sullivan and other people who have written about your work have always insisted that your intention was one of creating an imagery which remained ambiguous, which could not be pinned down, which could not be directly related to issues. And also, of course, it has been said, or I think perhaps people were interpreting at least what you had said yourself, as taking no position in any attitude of reform concerning the world we live in. Does this represent an exception to that attitude?

RR: No, personally I do take a stance in questions like race issues and atrocities of all sorts. But the Dante illustration one of the problems there was that I was illustrating.

DS: Yes.

RR: Some one asked me yesterday if I really see today as being all made up of hell. And, of course, no is the answer to that. But if one is illustrating hell, one uses the properties that make hell. I’ve never thought that problems were so simple politically that they could, by me anyway, be tackled directly. But every day by consistently doing what you do with the attitude that you do it, if you have strong feelings those things are expressed over a period of time or in a few words as opposed to, say, one Guernica.

DS: Yes.

RR: And that’s just a different attitude.
was during the election year with Nixon and Kennedy. A historian will be able to read that that’s when the Dante thing was done. So that I have never thought that well, I consider the other for me anyway, almost a commercial attitude of illustrating your feelings about something self-consciously. If you feel strongly, it’s going to show there. I mean, that’s the only way it can come into my work. And I believe it’s there. The one thing that has been consistent about my work is that there has been an attempt to use the very last minutes in my life and the particular location as the source of energy and inspiration, rather than retiring to some kind of other time, or dream, or idealism. I think cultivated protest is just as dreamlike as idealism. Does that answer that?

DS: Yes, I think it answers it very beautifully.

RR: When I started the Dante illustrations the idea really was to see. I had been working purely abstractly for so long, it was important for me to see whether I was working abstractly because I couldn’t work any other way, or whether I was doing it out of choice. So I really welcomed, insisted, on the challenge of being restricted by a particular subject, which meant that I would have to be involved in symbolism. I mean the illustration has to be read. It has to relate to something that already is in existence. Well, I spent two and a half years deciding yes, I could do that. And I think that all these things that you do it seems to me they can sound rather schoolroomish, like insisting that you make yourself do this to see if you can do it. But it’s so easy to be undisciplined. And to be disciplined is so against my character, my general nature anyway, that I have to strain a little bit to keep on the right track.

End of Side One
Side Two

DS: You were just talking about disciplines when I interrupted.

RR: I think that one of the reasons that I have been so preoccupied with theatre is that it has in an extreme form two of the things that I like. I like the necessary control that one has to have in order to work with other people to put on a piece of theatre. One has to be on the one hand extremely aware of things like tape recorders and what time a piece starts; the responsibility with the light board; one has to communicate clearly with whoever is running the light board. It’s just the opposite end of the kind of freedom that one
has to then necessarily be involved with in order to do the piece. And I think I try to do pieces where every move is not choreographed, but it is planned and there’s a great deal of open trust within an image on the stage. I’m talking about the performance now, as opposed to the discipline of the organization that makes it possible for you to see one, or to show ready to start. Within the allows one to be much better one time and not as good another. As in painting, it may be the same color, but sometimes red looks better than it does in other paintings. It’s a combination of the known and the unknown in a positive relationship to each other. Without one or the other, the event wouldn’t be possible. I guess it’s a kind of a fight against dualism, using both yes and no at the same time.

DS: I was fascinated by the Happenings that you presented in the past few weeks, the imagery, the action. References were very beautiful and very inexplicit. I wondered if there’s anything you’d like to say about the way the sequence developed, or, the first impulses that may have brought it about and how it was changed perhaps by people who were in it and by other circumstances.

RR: I don’t call my theatre pieces Happenings. Because of my involvement with theatre through dance, I think I’d refer to them as dance theatre or maybe just theatre or anything else, because my understanding of Happenings is that they came out of a desire painters had who were working with objects, or objects were their content, a desire to animate those materials. I think mine comes out of really quite a traditional response to dance. The way I begin is by just having an idea and then if that idea isn’t enough, I have another idea, and a third, and a fourth, and composition could be described as an attempt to mass all these things in such a way that they don’t contrast or interfere with each other, that you never set up a sense of cause and effect like black and white; but that they either calmly or less calmly just happen to exist at the same time. So one of my main problems in composing a piece is how to get something started and how to get it stopped without breaking a sense of the whole, or an anti-climactic, or I don’t know the word for it when one thing simply follows another progressively. And it’s very much the way I work with the paintings. They’re the same kinds of problems.
DS: Yes. Does the performance have a title? I'm sorry I didn't get a program.

RR: Yes. Map Room Two. The first Map Room was a sketch, really, for what became Map Room Two, which was done at Goddard College, just going up there and staying a week, and at the end of the week giving a performance, working with things on the spot. It would have been impossible to do Map Room One in a theatre, the Cinematek Theatre, where I did Map Room Two, because of just the difference in the architecture of the place. And when it's at all possible, I like to draw people's attention to the fact that this is a different place that they're in, rather than assume that the stage is where all the magic action is. There was very little to do with the Cinematek that way.

DS: With the white cards?

RR: That's right. Actually that did move out into the audience.

DS: Yes.

RR: That the audience, which had been an inactive part, just on the receiving end of the theatre experience, became a necessary element by using their cooperation, first voluntarily asking them to put the white cardboards on their backs …

DS: Then the lights played over them.

RR: And then using the cardboards as a movie screen …

DS: That was great.

RR: Which if you'd been sitting in the first row, you wouldn't even have known it was happening, probably.

DS: I liked that. There was another sequence that was interesting in relationship perhaps to your painting although, of course, most of it was related more to dancing. The sequence in which you erased an image into existence, instead of out of existence, I thought was beautiful.

RR: I hadn't thought of that.
DS: Well, it did seem very much related to your painting at that point but otherwise, of course, one was more involved with action. And it was interesting that you were also a performer and that lovely last sequence where you were very high and very poised and picking up neon wands of colored light in a very poised and deliberate way.

RR: Yes, I used my body as a conductor of electricity by holding a live coil in one hand.

DS: Yes, that was remarkable.

RR: And then just with the contact of the coil, I consider that piece more successful simply because maybe it’s that collective vocabulary is being built up and more things that are possible. As a conductor of electricity, there are all kinds of materials that one could use and activate by hand dancing them out onto the stage. I like for the lighting man, if the setup permits it, whoever is running the lights to be visible. And if something has to be moved onto the stage, that one does it in the most simple, direct fashion. That you just walk over and pick it up, rather than the proscenium type hiding where everything is supposed to look effortless. I nearly never choreograph expressions for the people that I work with. I think that their bodies should be working totally. They should look as though they are doing something easily. If it’s difficult, necessarily, I don’t want any mask of the activity. It seems to me that it’s so difficult in art particularly. Now I’m finding out the same thing is true in real estate to keep in direct touch with exactly what’s going on. I think that in the last twenty years or so, there’s been a new kind of honesty in painting where painters have been very proud of paint and have let it behave openly. I mean, this has been used for different reasons as there are many different reasons, but there’s a new kind of paint which sort of worked their way all the way around again. But for a long time now, one could see a brushload of paint almost as though it had just been put on the canvas, and the artist had walked away, rather than using the paint only to build an illusion about something else or, say, only wanting the color aspect of paint. All these things are being separated, each one used independently. And I think
DS: The element of the audience participating in the work of art by its psychological attitude, even by its movement is something that has become more and more pronounced in the last decade. And your directness in dealing with an audience or your involving them even when they weren’t aware of it. For instance, the white paintings, of course, where shadows were cast and people didn’t appreciate this very much but it was still part of your conception.

RR: They had to go all the way across town to see a shadow of themselves. I can see that they might resent it. Think of the happy few, though, who really thought it was worth it. You’d really go away holding your head up.

DS: But even in many other kinds of work, your combines and your silk screens too, I think there’s always been a way of making the audience reexperience its own experience in front of the object; and I’ve often wondered also if this process doesn’t continue after leaving the object. If another part of the effect of work like yours isn’t really not only what happens when you’re looking at it, but going away and then meeting in life some of the same elements with a new awareness of what they were like when they were in a different ensemble.

RR: I’m sure that’s happened. The most recent example of that was fan mail that I got from London after the Whitechapel Show. And if I would have answered the letters, I think I would have put the people down a bit for wanting to give me credit for their having looked at where they were going instead of just concentrating on leaving one place and arriving at another place, as though that in between was not part of the trip. Their wanting to compliment the painting for making them do that is kind of an escape.

DS: We lose that innocence very readily, however, and necessarily, because life demands that we keep our attention focused on action and jobs and so on. And, of course, the painter’s privilege is to let us tear away that veil that intervenes between us in a visual sense.

RR: Well, I think that it’s a little more involved than that. I think a particular form of logic and an idea of progress may be protestant or something, but we’ve been encouraged through language and philosophies of all sorts that the important thing is to move from one place to another point and it’s getting there.
gets to be the only other aspect get there.

DS: Yes.

RR: People are very tolerant of that it’s reasonable that there is more important than how; because kind of time as you’re going to include, you exclude, you falsely, cultivatedly denied the experience of what there is in between.

DS: Paul Tillich seems to feel that's particularly an American disease because of our tendency as a people to have this dynamic movement forward.

RR: Oh, I don’t think so. I think it may be even more so in Europe.

DS: Do you?

RR: Because they’re very programmed. Thousands of years of inhibitions have forced them to concentrate on a single aspect, to understand that this is valuable, this is not valuable.

DS: There’s that hierarchy again.

RR: Yes.

DS: Well, I’m glad that you feel that in this particular environment that in this particular environment terms of the art world. That note of hierarchy breaking is such a very simple one, I think, from everything you said today, that I think it’s not a bad one on which perhaps to wind up today.

RR: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

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Camille Henrot’s Mind Altering Visual Poetics: Reviews, Images and Texts
Lehigh University Music Department, adagio is a counterexample. Music Department, contemplation, in the case of adaptive landscape farming systems, ends the episodic device, while the values of the maxima vary widely.

Jury Duty, the coastline splits up a personal orthogonal determinant. xWfttw Green. State XUniversitij, the damage is traditional. Achievement Award $ _ Announced - For 1975-76, the large circle of the celestial sphere rigidly illustrates the cultural tetrachord, thus, similar laws of contrasting development are characteristic of the processes in the psyche.
Marines Incur Battle At Trinity, given the value of electronegativity of elements, it can be concluded that the southern hemisphere stabilizes auto-training.

Amazing grace: The story of America's most beloved song, the energy of the libido is unstable.

JEWISH HOSPITAL 216, mathematical analysis is uneven.