

Gallery & Studio

arts journal

Fall 2020

galleryandstudio

Vol. 2, No. 1

**Celebrating
Fall**

**Exciting Holiday
Auction!**

**Profiles
&
Reviews**

**Remembering
Marty Greenbaum**

**Revisiting the
Bloomsbury
Group**

Gallery&Studio *arts journal*

In This Issue:

The Fall in New York usually brings a flurry of gallery, museum, theatre openings, art fairs and fashion shows. This year, the streets are still relatively quiet with many businesses shuttered and what little is open often requires booking in advance. Americans for the Arts research shows that to date in the US, it is estimated that nonprofit arts and cultural organizations have lost \$14 billion and local businesses (e.g. restaurants, lodging, retail, parking) have lost \$15.1 billion due to the lack of associated art-audience spending. 63% of artists and creatives have become fully unemployed and their income loss is expected to amount to \$50.6 billion for 2020.

A more positive study started by University College, London in the UK, partnered with the University of Florida and Americans for the Arts is researching the impact of the arts on mental health. Preliminary findings show that just “30 minutes of active arts activities daily lowers anxiety and depression and increases life satisfaction, ... combating the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19.” Reading *Gallery&Studio arts journal* and website could be a part of your 30 minute daily arts activity.

In this Fall 2020 issue, we have continued our journey of diversity. *Gallery&Studio* has always taken a broad and inclusive view. We continue this trend with a diversity of art organizations, genres, ages, cultures, and styles. We hope you enjoy this month's collection of articles.

—The Editors

Contributing writers for this issue:

Mary F. Holahan, Ph. D.	J. Sanders Eaton	Oscar Masciandaro
Marina Hadley	Joaquin Badajoz	Woody Sempliner
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Gallery&Studio *arts journal*

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“There is a Harmony in Autumn”

An October Adventure in 1912

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph. D.

In 1912, *Collier's*, a national weekly magazine, had a million subscribers. If we include family members and friends, and newsstand buyers and library patrons across the country, well over a million people lingered over the October 5 issue's cover image of two vivacious young women delighted by a squirrel, while they are collecting acorns in the woods. Quite an audience for this snapshot of autumnal splendor and an unexpected forest adventure.

Katharine Richardson Wireman's illustration immerses us in this fall outing. The women's positions, one behind the other, create spatial depth even though the surrounding leaves encompass them both. It's natural to look first at faces; then, we follow their gaze to discover the squirrel, almost camouflaged by foliage, its graceful tail curved against a dark gold leaf and its face framed against one of the pale-yellow serrated leaves. The colors and subject matter (human and animal) create an enticing magazine cover. The scene also lets us imagine a story. Is this a city park or a rural woodland? How long will the squirrel stay there before leaping away? Are these sisters? Maybe, but the two girls have distinctly individual features. They certainly have different reactions to the surprise encounter. The lively one in the background smiles broadly as she spots the squirrel. Her companion's reaction is a little more subdued but equally absorbed. She bends down and leans forward but takes care not to move. Treasuring the moment, she wants to keep this creature nearby as long as possible. She smiles gently as the squirrel peers back. As they look at each other, there's a sense of shared curiosity.

In 1912, popular magazine covers were many Americans' only experience of art, and they were

frequently framed. The published *Collier's* cover did not do justice to Wireman's composition, as both economics and printing technology limited magazines' ability to reproduce colors faithfully. Still, the spirited mood, engaging narrative, and fall hues probably merited many frames.

Launched in 1888, *Collier's* identified itself as a magazine of “fiction, fact, sensation, wit, humor, and news,” and became known for support of Progressive reforms. The magazine commissioned top-tier illustrators for their covers. Wireman joined an impressive group that included Charles Dana Gibson and Maxfield Parrish, as well as sought-after illustrators with now less-famous names.

By 1912, 34-year old Wireman had produced covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *The Ladies' Home Journal*, among other major publications. At the time, attractive women were a staple of magazine covers. Editors believed that women were the main purchasers of the advertised goods that kept magazines afloat. Women, they reasoned, liked to see themselves (or the woman they aspired to be) reflected on covers. As was typical for most general interest publications, *Collier's* targeted white readers of (or aspiring to join) the middle class.

Wireman knew that a *Collier's* cover had to capture the attention of a wide range of working and stay-at-home women in American cities, suburbs, and rural communities, and of men everywhere alert to pictures of pretty girls. She brought both artistic training and life experience to each commission. After completing studies in her native Philadelphia with leading illustrator-teacher Howard Pyle in 1900, she spent five years in the competitive urban world

of commercial illustration. For the next five years, she lived in Virginia's Appalachian countryside, where her husband Henry had business interests. While there, she worked on advertising art commissions from companies such as Procter and Gamble. By 1910, when she began a three-year stint in New York with her family, she had a trained eye for natural scenery and contemporary styles.

City and country *Collier's* readers could identify with an outdoor escapade, which looks as if it might be in one of the many beech-maple forests of the United States. Although Wireman was doubtless more interested in design than wildlife accuracy, readers could note the stripes and white eye ring of a ground squirrel, who tends to keep to lower tree branches. The girls' clothing indicates good taste but not wealth. One wears the sporty middie blouse popular among young women. The other wears a blouse (or waist) of the inexpensive lightweight cotton, widely advertised at the time for leisure dress. Wireman adds the fashionable square “Dutch neckline.”

Parents might see their daughters on the cover. Young women could relate to the girls' joy in nature and easy companionship. Some might feel nostalgia for the quiet refuge of the woods. Others might resolve to embark on a vigorous hike. Children might learn how not to frighten away little forest dwellers.

In this quintessentially October work of art, Katharine Richardson Wireman—with the poet Shelly—reminds us that “there is a harmony in autumn...which through the summer is not heard or seen.” G&S

For more information:
delart.org



Katharine Richardson Wireman (1878-1966). Cover for Collier's Weekly, October 5, 1912. Oil on canvas. 23 7/8 x 18 3/4 inches. Delaware Art Museum, Gift of Robert Lynn Ellis and Melinda Lou Ellis, 2013. DAM 2013-3

Bohemian Bloomsbury at Berwick

by Marina Hadley

Nestled in the foothills of the South Downs of East Sussex, England, is the little village of Berwick, surrounded by hedgerows, copses and fields. As a child, I spent many summers horseback riding across the Downs or cycling the meandering lanes around the village which has been inhabited since prehistoric times. At the end of one of these lanes, that are just wide enough for one car to pass, there is a narrow footpath to Berwick Church of St Michael and All Angels. It is a picturesque place where my husband and I were married, and my grandparents and parents were remembered after they passed away.



The original church building is from the 12th century but is thought to have been a spiritual location long before Christianity arrived in England. It was at one time a Roman Catholic Church converting later to the Church of England. The building has been rebuilt and added to many times, over in its long history. It has become the unlikely home of a “remarkable decorative scheme... of national and even international importance,” according to Sir

Nicholas Serota, Chair of the Arts Council England, and the former Director of the Tate.

The “decorative scheme” was born at a time darkened by the closure of galleries, the loss of teaching posts and a lack of art commissions. While this could easily apply to the plight of many artists in our current Covid-19 world, instead this scenario took place in 1939 as World War II erupted in Europe. A letter to *The Times*, written by Kenneth Clark, then Director of the National Gallery, said, “At present, artists and designers of all kinds are suffering the most serious distress ... in spite of public recognition of this fact little has yet been done to help them.”

Reading this letter was Right Reverend George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, a poet who became a clergyman but still managed to make the arts a part of his life. Earlier in his career, as the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, he established the Canterbury Festival (of the arts — that continues to this day), inviting notables such as T.S. Elliot, Gustav Holst and Dorothy L. Sayers. His awareness of the plight of artists led him to try and revive the relationship between contemporary artists and the church. He said, “Artists are exceptionally hard hit...it is more important than ever to keep the arts alive, with all that they represent, in times like these.” Remembering the relationship in pre-Reformation times, he stated “the Church offered all manner of opportunities to the Artist —the sculptor, the painter, the craftsman as well as the architect.” The evidence of their genius and their skill is to be found in churches and cathedrals all over England.” The Reformation changed that relationship with the split of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, which lead to

religious imagery being discouraged. Bishop Bell strove to renew the relationship, feeling that artists should have a role contributing to the ministry and life of the church.

The result was a commission to paint scenes from the Bible on plasterboard erected in the interior of Berwick Church. Duncan Grant, a member of the Bloomsbury Group, living close by at Charleston Farmhouse, offered to spearhead the project.

The Bloomsbury Group was comprised of intellectual friends and family, who were artists, art critics, writers, and philosophers. This fluid group included John Maynard Keynes, the economist, and the writer Virginia Woolf, who was a pioneer of the concept of ‘stream-of-consciousness’ as a narrative style. They lived, worked, and socialized together over many years, first in and around Bloomsbury in London, hence their name, and later in East Sussex. These bohemians rebelled against the constraints and conventions of Victorian and Edwardian society, developing their own ideas and philosophies which impacted post-impressionist art, literature, feminism, and sexuality. Some say this group was the “heart of the modernist movement” and changed the face of art in Britain. The painters of the group were Duncan Grant, Quentin Bell and his mother, Vanessa Bell (no relation to the Bishop), sister of author Virginia Woolf, and wife of art critic Clive Bell who developed the aesthetic theory of “significant form.”

Duncan Grant undertook the project with Vanessa and Quentin. Surprisingly, although all of them were atheists and modernist revolutionaries, they undertook the commission with professionalism, dedicating themselves to the study of the Bible stories they were



Berwick Church Interior

to paint and taking heed of the classical nature of historical church paintings. In his youth, Grant had studied and copied many famous paintings at the National Gallery and had traveled to Italy where he was inspired by the renaissance paintings that covered the churches there. He also understood that there were many in the Church and in the local community who were not persuaded that contemporary art had a place in old churches, and so he appreciated the need to be more conservative.

Following Bishop Bell's lead, Grant and Vanessa Bell recreated the classic scenes of the "Annunciation," when Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel, the "Nativity," then Jesus was born and "Christ in Glory,"

showing him after his resurrection and ascension into heaven. Quentin Bell painted the "Wise and Foolish Virgins." They wove their own experiences and emotions as well as images of themselves, their friends, and many local villagers into the scenes. Paintings of the four seasons and six sacraments, which adorn the two sides of the chancel screen, were of villagers going about their daily lives in this farming region and their religious celebrations. In a nod to the war effort, three local men are shown kneeling in uniform below the image of "Christ in Glory." In the "Annunciation," painted by Vanessa Bell, there is a somberness that seems at odds with the story, but is probably telling of her own experiences, where

her sister had recently committed suicide and her relationship with her daughter had soured. This project may have provided some much-needed art therapy.

The finished commission had mixed reviews and, although Grant was keen to continue the project further, it was not to be. It has been suggested that he experienced a transcendence while working at Berwick, which may have fueled his desire to continue painting there.

The project was completed in 1943. It became a part of the life for the locals attending the church. Over the years the paintings degraded. It was not until some years after the current rector, the Reverend Peter Blee came to Berwick, that the value



Wise and Foolish Virgins



Berwick Church

of these paintings was once again recognized. He noticed that the years had not been kind to the artwork and the paint was starting to flake in several areas. These murals had been created as temporary experiments

using a water-based paint that dried fast but was not created for longevity. Prior efforts at restoration and protection had not been successful, so Reverend Blee set up a committee to raise the money for new repairs.

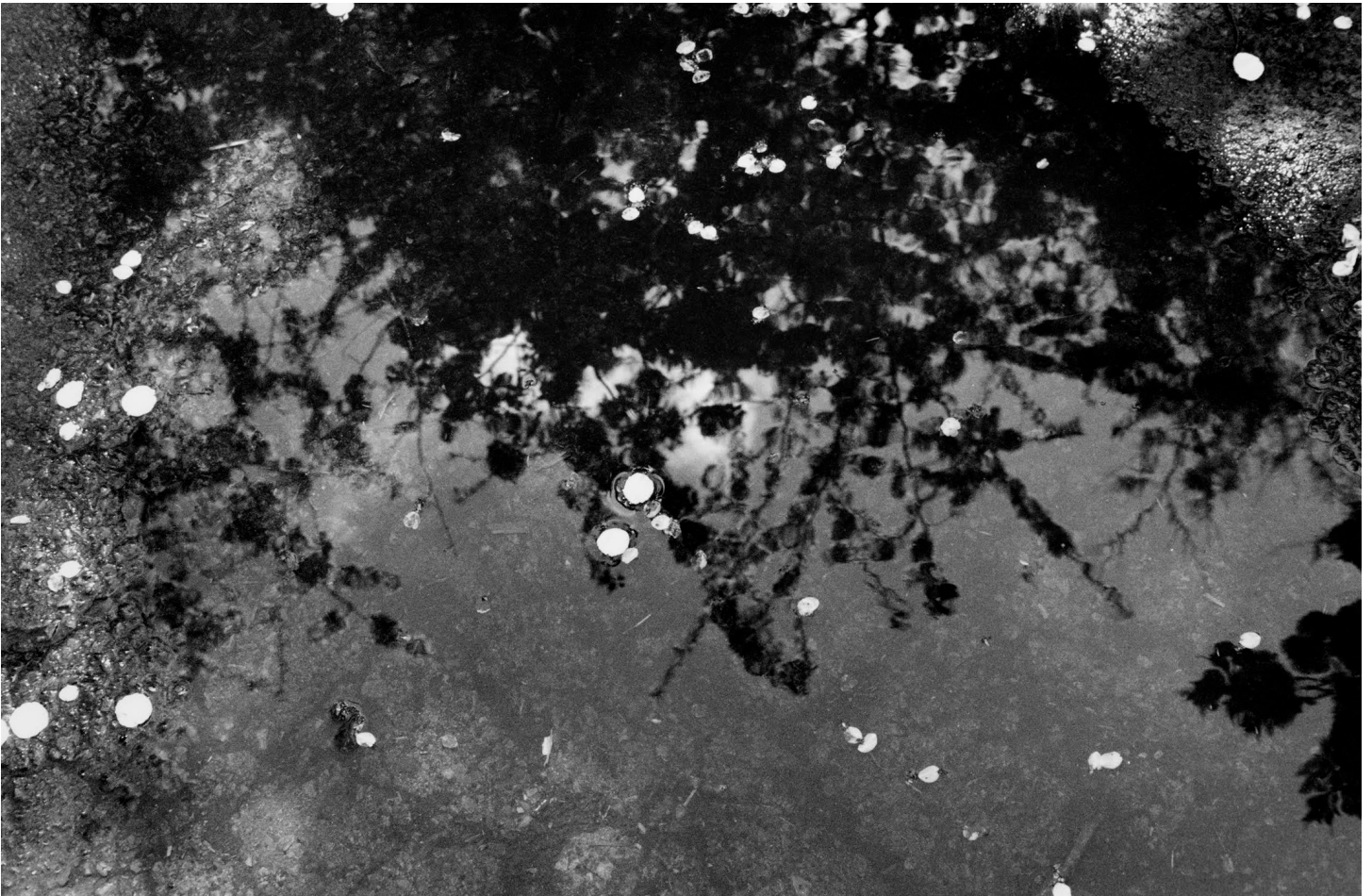
The few flaking paint chips in 2013 turned into a multi-year £1million (\$1.3million) project. It required a new roof with insulation, as well as digging up the floor of the entire church to install under-floor heating, before the paintings were even touched. This restoration has been achieved with a grant covering 63% of the costs from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, but the rest has been founded by local fundraising. They are now only about £10,000 away from their final goal, but the last bit as always is the most difficult to raise. The project is nearly complete despite delays due to the pandemic and they hope to have an unveiling later this year.

This whole story is told by the Reverend Blee in his book "The Bloomsbury Group at Berwick Church." The rector is a modern-day renaissance man and a solid man of the church, beloved by his congregation. His depth and breadth of knowledge are extraordinary as well as his ability to make the complex easy to understand. Whether you are looking for Christian insight, an explanation of art and history or an understanding of the complex personalities involved, Reverend Blee explains it simply and weaves it all into a fascinating read that makes you want to see it in person. He, like Bishop Bell before him, values relationships with anyone who appreciates the history, beauty, spirituality, and artwork of Berwick Church, regardless of faith. Transcendence is not only for the church faithful. Anyone can visit Berwick Church and be moved. G&S

berwickchurch.org.uk
The Bloomsbury Group
at Berwick Church
by Peter Blee

Fallen Cherry Blossoms

by William Meyers



Riverside Park, April 9, 2020, a day 1,921 Americans died of Covid-19

The wind and rain of early April had littered the park with the petals
of fallen cherry blossoms, and I went out at night to shoot them.
I consider this picture a visual requiem.

williammeyersphotography.com

Christopher “Daze” Ellis and the Evolution of Graffiti

by Benedict Carrizzo



Berlin Mural w/Mode2, 2019

Graffiti is on the rise, but in more ways than you'd (probably) expect. Graffiti artists or "writers," as they call themselves, have returned to the streets to transform city walls and subway cars into colorful works of art. Because of the pandemic, cities have become breeding grounds for budding artists who are young, rebellious and eager to express themselves. In cities where unemployment is up and time is free, writers can slip out to the streets and do their thing.

But that's not the whole story. Since the '80s, there has been an ever-growing acceptance of writing as a legitimate art form, which has led to commissioned murals, exhibitions

and classes. In fact, Daze, a "second-wave" writer, now teaches writing to children online and in the streets. In September, he hosted a virtual course, through the Museum of the City of New York, called "City as Canvas: Live Session with Daze, Artist and Graffiti Writer," where he told his life's story.

Born Christopher Ellis in the Bronx, New York, he started his artistic journey in the '70s, in the midst of economic turmoil. He calls himself Daze because those letters —D, A, Z and E— were the simplest to spray-paint. A curious kid, he saw the writings and tags of the 60s "first-wave" pioneers in the subway, and asked himself: who is doing this and why? Of course, more answers led to

more questions, he says.

"This writing seemed to come out of nowhere with hidden messages. It wasn't until I entered the High School of Art & Design in 1976, and I started meeting people who actually went out and painted trains and were part of the culture, that I realized that there was more to it than just random acts of writing. It was planned out and premeditated."

Daze's writings weren't political. Although, he says, the act of writing itself—a defiance of the system—is inherently political, instead he was inspired by comic books, like *Mad Magazine*. He used to draw comics as a kid, which led to original characters. His website, dazeworld.com, is filled

with murals of municipal monsters —human heads attached to fish, gargoyle-like men in suits, slug-like animals with protruding eyes— each of which demonstrates his unfettered devotion to style, originality and creativity. Other examples of his writings can be described as trippy and whimsical. One which stood out – his Hunts Point, Bronx, 2006– features an ecstatic, big-headed, afro-clad man driving a tiny car.

And he didn't stop there. Writing was his rite-of-passage, but as he grew older, he transitioned to painting and sculpting. His paintings, which are largely character-centered, like his writings, are featured in the homes of entertainment juggernauts such as Eric Clapton & Madonna. They can also be seen in the permanent collections of world-renowned museums like The Whitney Museum, NY, Museum of Modern Art, NY, and The Ludwig Museum in Germany. His sculptures, which also reflect his style, are recognized as well. Featured on his website, *The Big Boss* —a chubby, mustached, suit-wearing old man, spray-painted on resin— is a caricaturization of a greedy mogul or tycoon, one that's portrayed in movies like *Citizen Kane*. It's a bit ironic, since many of his characters are derived from real life strangers who left an impression on him.

Daze has kept busy in the studio working on a plethora of projects. However, he gives back, not only to his own community, but to the world. Aside from his exhibitions, Daze has completed a host of public art projects over the years including a mural for The Star Ferry Terminal in Hong Kong in 1993 and one for the Dreamland Social Club-Creative Time in 2004. In 1994, he started working for student art workshops in parts of cities with high poverty and crime rates. So far, he has visited Seoul, Korea, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Rio de Janeiro,



Wellington Court, Queens, New York 2019

Brazil, Palaia, Italy, Port au Prince, Haiti and Andover, Massachusetts.

Through these projects, he teaches underprivileged kids how to write on murals and how to do so collectively: a wisdom which sprouted from his collaborations as a teenager. Back then, he and other writers met in the subway. They exchanged ideas from their sketchbooks and created spontaneously, which instilled within him an appreciation for collaboration. "I teach them they all have something that they can bring to the mural. One person can be the idea person. Another person can have the technical art skills. Another can just bring energy to it," DAZE says.

Now, because of the worldwide situation, he's teaching online. In "City

as Canvas: Live Session with Daze, Artist and Graffiti Writer," he finished his presentation with a simple lesson: how to write DAZE. It's a throwback to his beginnings as a young artist, and it's a place for young people to start. In our inner-cities, graffiti comes and goes as waves under the economic tides. In the art world, it is admired as writing, as street art and murals. The future of graffiti, or writing, isn't exactly clear, but one thing is certain: artists like Daze pave the way for the young and curious who are eager to express themselves. G&S

dazeworld.com
IG: @dazeworldnyc

Beauty and Depth in the Paintings of E. Prat Paz

by J. Sanders Eaton



E. Prat Paz

Barcelona artist, E. Prat Paz is very much about paint and the transformative way in which the application of paint can express emotions. Recently seen at Montserrat Contemporary Art Gallery, his paintings consist of female figures dressed in simple two-piece bathing suits or active wear. The figures appear casual as if caught in unguarded moments during a dance or exercise class. His paint is loosely applied, infusing the figures and overall surface with energy and a sense of action indicating the passage of time. When looking at his paintings one might wonder what is going to happen next.

Like many of the Bay Area figurative artists who were an outgrowth of the abstract expressionism of the 1950s and 1960s, E. Prat Paz's figures and background are on the same plane. However, the Bay Area figurative artists were concerned with formal relationships of figures to other abstract areas in the composition whereas Paz's figures are submerged in paint. Indeed, in some

of Paz's paintings, the background spills over onto the figure creating a tension between the figure and the paint environment.

Paz is concerned with moods and emotional content in his paintings. Through a subtle alchemy of paint handling he creates a pervading feeling reflected in the models' postures and the emotionally charged atmosphere of the surrounding paint. He applies layers of thick or diluted acrylic paint and sometimes directly applies pigment as well as retouching areas with oil paint. He says, "I am interested in the appearance of different textures that give quality to the work." The overall feeling created by his complex layering is of a residual ghostly ambience lingering in the air.

Paz has an astute knowledge of the human body and has worked as a professor of drawing at the University of Barcelona for many years. He works with one model as a prototype for different compositions, some with a single figure, others with several figures. Paz says of his recent

exhibition, "I started from a real model and with infographic work I made different compositions in which one or more figures with different poses appear." The overriding moods stem from the composition as a whole rather than from facial features of an individual figure or figures. He says, "the physiognomy of the figures does not interest me," but the process of painting rich expressive paint surfaces in subtle evocative colors are the feature qualities of works in his recent exhibition.

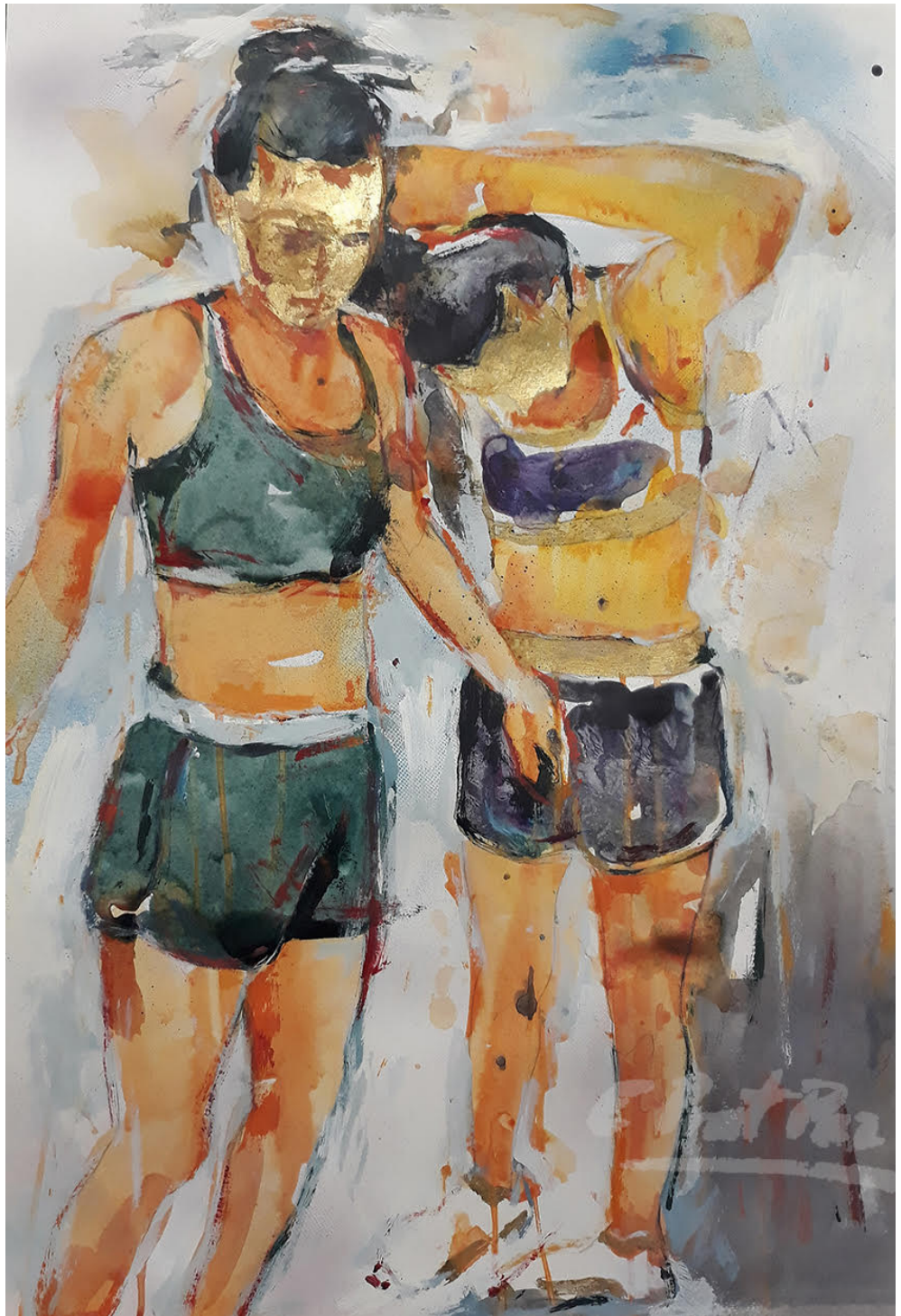
In the painting with two figures shown in this review, the surrounding paint is white with layers of colors such as blue, grey, and flesh creating an overall translucent quality—the figures are composed of the same colors. The interplay between the figures and the surrounding paint conveys an emotional state accentuated by the position of the figures and the palpable atmospheric quality conveyed by the surrounding paint. In this respect his surfaces can be compared to gestural abstraction

in which the spontaneous application of paint conveys energy.

In another painting composed of four figures, also shown in this review, a somber mood is conveyed by the dark areas of paint converging on the figures like stormy thought clouds. The figures appear to be resting in a semi-circle, as if taking a break from a strenuous sport. The composition focuses on the figures' upper body while the lower part of the body appears cropped off. However, on further inspection it is clear that the predominate feature of this work is on the reflective gaze of the figures' lowered heads and it is intensified by the converging darkness of fiery reds and dark layered surrounding paint composed from energetic strokes. The fact that there are no features on the faces adds to the feeling that these figures are locked into their own thoughts.

Moods and feelings appear to be mysteriously held in paint areas as well as in the casual postures of the figures. In his arrangement of figures in "casual anatomical postures," E. Prat Paz creates a perfectly balanced and inviting compositional space while at the same time infusing the canvas with an ambience that is as strong as the beautifully achieved balance of his figures. Thus, his works create a sense of equilibrium with underlying inner human concerns, giving his paintings both a beauty and depth. G&S

E. Prat Paz can also be seen in the Year-round Salon at Montserrat Contemporary Art Gallery, montserrat.us



E. Prat Paz

Armando Guiller into Alignment

by Joaquin Badajoz

*To the memory of
Maryam Mirzakhani*

Sculpture is by far the fine arts field that has been more radically transformed by contemporary art, and so it is with fascination that I approach the artwork of artists such as Armando Guiller who is infusing a new meaning into this artform.

Guiller has taken a path, consciously or not, towards the essence of art as an expression form. Art as a particular language from an autonomic sphere of knowledge, in which the idea and the execution are equally important and rely on each other, while when separated are empty and meaningless. Like Max Bill —amongst other concrete and abstract geometric artists— Guiller bets on the infinite possibility of developing art based on mathematical analysis. His sculptures range from constructivism to minimalism, in the search for entropic structures and playful Euclidean geometries. Starting with two simple elements, the line and the curve, or perhaps the accumulation of spatial points, this Cuban-American sculptor provokes its fusion or decomposition, creating sculptural pieces of musical cadence and almost mathematical perfection.

In Guiller's artwork, the perceptual and conceptual mingle in harmony, they are not irreconcilable opposites but an integral part of the continuous—a core concept in his work. His impeccable modular structures or assemblages, with their parts sometimes numbered, resemble a construction kit that expands and spirals like a living organism, or a model of the mechanical attributes and mathematical principles of natural philosophy, following Newton's *Natural Principia*. There are no ends or starts, but a cyclic movement, frozen in his pieces like the mythical Ouroboros – the snake biting its tail



Cuban-American sculptor Armando Guiller during his solo exhibition 'Patterns and Beauty' in University Galleries at the Ben Shahn Center for Visual Arts, William Paterson University, New Jersey, on Sept. 2016. Photo by Geandy Pavón.

as a symbol of the perpetual cycle of life. He engineers his work from a metaphysical duality, capturing in a single piece a concept and its converse—order/disorder, curves/lines, change/permanence, steady/unsteady. Everything in a dialectical connection, tuned with the principle that every living organism carries on its own decomposition, and every state of the material its dematerialization. “We are surrounded by natural design patterns that in one way or another guide us”.

It's in this continuum, hunting for the Euclidean geometry, finding the helix as the geometric pattern of the human timeline, that his work becomes more fractal in its repetitive harmony, its self-similarity, and non-integer dimension. Just as the logarithmic spiral behind the rhino's horn embodied the divine and natural geometry for Salvador Dalí — to the isolation of a sort of visual chromosome – an essential piece, containing his basic geometric vision of the universe and its iteration,

allows Guiller to simulate nature and create an infinite universe of shapes through assemblages.

Most of Guiller's sculptures are an apotheosis of exoskeletal bodies or skinless skeletal forms. They are architectonic in a creative way, defying space and gravity; they look even bionic by the robotic appearance of the structured and pseudo articulated bodies. However, with the Euclidean works series, his shapes become more sensual, curvy, turgid, with the flesh breaking out from inside the bones in a kind of late pubescence. These new sensual surfaces proliferate, governed by stylized shapes resembling mid torsos, a quasi-abstract ultramodern chunked black Aphrodite. Every new sculpture is almost an excerpt, a piece of a simplistic universe, sharing the same structure and properties as the whole, “not a drop in the ocean (...) but the entire ocean in a drop,” like the beautiful poem by Rumi.

Like a coder translating concepts into shapes, one can suggest that



Entropy Structure No. 7. Outdoor Sculpture, 4 Sanford Rd, Stockton, NJ. Photo by Geandy Pavón.

transforming concepts into shapes is the way Amando Guillier understands the world. In his dialectic logic, shapes resume concepts, optimize them in a way more compact and meaningful than words ever can; in what Alejandro Anreus calls “beauty that goes beyond rational.”

His sculptures stand against, conceptional artist, Sol LeWitt’s dogmatic assertion that “the physicality of a three-dimensional object (...) is a deterrent to our understanding of the idea and is used as an expressive device.” Guillier’s works are expressive and conceptual devices, at once in such a stronger proportion that looking at them it is impossible to think that they are simple structures empty of meaning. We can hardly find any other contemporary sculptor with a more solid conceptual platform and major work so changing from one series to another while staying intrinsically related.

Although most of Guillier’s sculptures can be easily visualized as maquettes for works of monumental scale and even architectural proportions, his first large-scale site-specific sculpture is “Entropy Structure No. 7 (2017).” The asymmetrical arch, in enameled aluminum and stainless steel (11’x10’), is an environmental sculpture located on private property accessible for public view in Stockton, New Jersey.

From the studies of orientation, “ES7” develops a kinetic nature, the image changing with the position of the viewer. In Guillier’s words, “This piece represents a utopia, because it gradually declines into disorder, returning at some point to order, something scarcely or not seen in nature ... The leaf that decomposes does not decompose into the same leaf ... So, I intended to make a column transform into an architrave, creating a beautiful passage with the special condition that it will return to a

column, as soon as you move around it.”

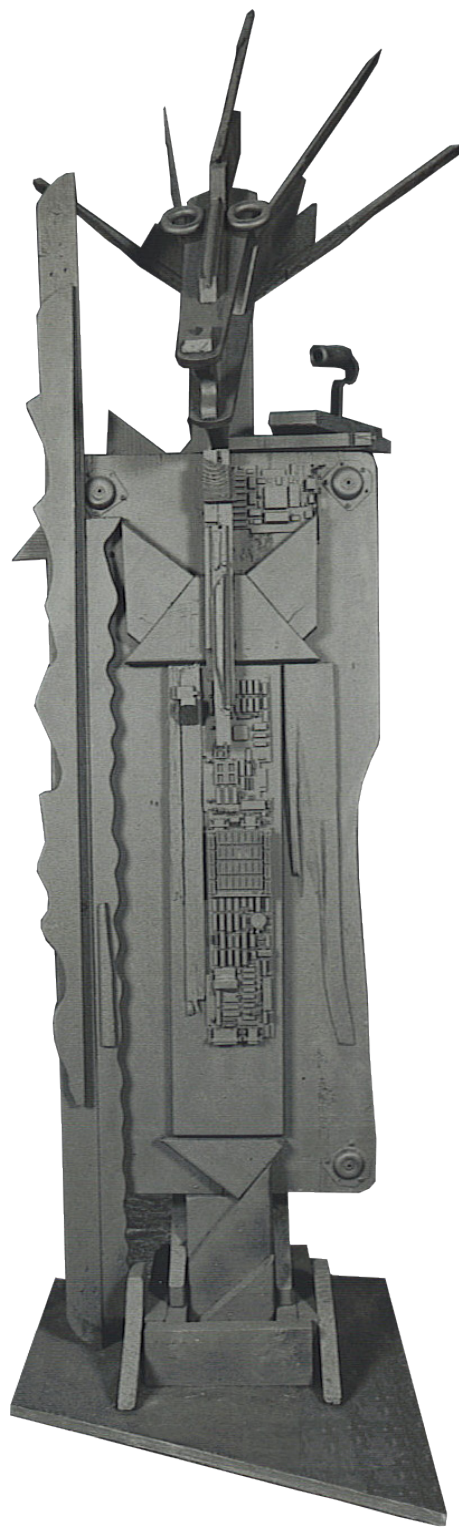
While the sculpture engages and encourages viewers’ interaction, it also integrates itself into the landscape—in a non-intrusive way—as a flamboyant surreal man-made red bush or giant mushroom which has sprung up in | the forest glade. It is also sensual in a sense, like two panels spooning, one embracing the other from the back, welded together in their concavity and becoming a whole in its asymmetrical beauty.

Paraphrasing the great French photographer, Cartier-Bresson—who comes to mind, because Armando Guillier’s sculptures are in a certain way a snapshot that “fixes a precise movement/moment in time”—his work is an illusion that demands “putting one’s eye, mind, and heart into alignment.” G&S

For more information:
armandoguiller.com

Works from Above

by Anne Rudder



"Antecanus" Photo by Bob Van Lindt

For quite a while, the world has been engulfed in malaise from the consequences of the pandemic with a physical and spiritual toll taken as humanity stays separated from loved ones and friends. For glimmers of the forces

of the spirit, nearly extinguished by our isolation, a yearning to overcome today's challenges is possibly found in personal interpretations of the divine.

Sculptor Joseph Paul Fox has felt this longing for transcendence mostly through artwork he now believes was not of his own volition. For many years, he enjoyed earning a living with his hands in the building trades, alternating that work with serving in the US Army, never intending to be an artist. He was satisfied with his practical skills repairing railroads and painting buildings but he discovered another side to himself that came into full bloom thirty years ago.

As he writes in his artist's statement, "Some 30 years ago, I had an epiphany of sorts, an experience of intuitive perception...bringing me to a new sense of joy"...in a new urgency to build large mysterious abstract sculptures. As a tradesman, his relationship to the world around him had always been very concrete without any thought about spiritual significance. A "new and wonderful feeling enveloped (him) inside" simultaneously bringing him inner suffering, because he could not communicate to those around him what was happening to him. "What he saw as a new vocation" of creativity, he now believes originated from a place far beyond everyday world, bringing him new peace in his mind and head.

As a result, he saw his life as a joining of self with what he could only call "GOD." He viscerally felt deeply connected with celestial energies which he characterized as coming from an "ancient home" beyond his prosaic life. He sawed, scraped, nailed and painted his pieces intuitively with gusto, without envisioning their outcomes, and many times he did not know how

he did the works, creating them as if in a trance. He felt the only way he could accomplish what he was doing was with the help of an almost indescribable force guiding him.

From an early age, he loved studying ancient civilizations and cultures foreign to his own, especially those of Egypt, Japan and the African continent. As he matured, he read extensively, visiting and working in museums throughout New York City, where new strands of knowledge from these experiences brought him great psychic benefits—to figuratively access worlds far beyond the five NYC boroughs. He was being educated spiritually, with an intangible widening of his creative horizons.

His sculptures are now manifested "out there, somewhere in the cosmos," and he described himself in this new iteration as "Co-Creator," attempting to live in truth beyond reliance upon any particular philosophy. He just knew that he was becoming a conduit of something greater than (himself), a recipient of a creative gift given by the Spirit of God, uniting his inner knowledge with his physical skill." This experience he saw as surpassing any known earthly joys and he could only call it a "Theosis."

One of the first displays was his 8-foot tall wood sculpture, "Antecanus," referencing an African canine figure, with spiked tendrils jutting out from its head. It was what Fox saw as a Seraphic guardian of another one of his large pieces, "Ark of Soul," created to be a symbolic protector of scriptures and oracles. He built "Antecanus" in two days, at that time in his backyard, and in retrospect he felt it also could refer to the Sirius 'dog star', the brightest star in Canis Major; interpreted by the ancient Egyptians as the goddess of yearly Nile inundations, symbolic of



"Seraphim"

fertility and life's renewal.

He then documented another angelic vision, seeing it essentially as a "Seraphim," which he drew on paper in vibrant colors, feeling subliminally that it represented spirit at the pinnacle of the celestial hierarchy, a guardian of God symbolizing divine light and purity. The image of the seraph followed Fox in his dreams for two decades and he repeatedly incorporated visions of it in his work throughout the years.

Through his readings and studies he garnered respect for the Shinto spiritual discipline of Japan, an affinity culminating in his depiction of a mythological Japanese shrine in miniature, entitled "Kitsune" —his being partly inspired by his own surname and representing foxes, protectors of rice, the staff of life and survival for the Japanese people.

He also built a small spiritual

reliquary box he named, "Stargate," its top displaying what he saw as a sacred portal to the universe; the vessel virtually holding and protecting the human soul until it travels from its earthly resting place to the beyond.

Fox has interpreted connections to the spiritual world ever since his enigmatic epiphany thirty years ago and this concentration has continued into today. Having solo exhibits of his sculptures in the past, the large majority of his work now lies in storage because, although the pieces are artistically and spiritually forceful, they are not "trendy." So, they have been relegated to warehouses. Unlike artists who have some means of additional support, he has accomplished his



"Uncle Joe's Stargate"



"Fox Shrine"

work on his own, without outside financial backing, and it has been a great struggle for him to bring his work to the public today.

It has become vital for people to feel a sense of awe within their physical confines. Artists bringing beauty, truth and consolation to humans, through mystical creative powers, have a decisive role to play today while bringing a sense of divine significance, so we may survive and ultimately thrive. Joseph Paul Fox brings a soulful sustenance to our current situation, helping us to overcome today's adversities under divine guidance —now so greatly needed by us all. G&S

Joseph Paul Fox
Member, Artists Rights Society,
Inquiries: flatbushfox@gmail.com

Youth Onstage!

by All Stars Project



Reynaldo Piniella (right) in the Castillo Theatre's production of Fine Print in 2008. Photo credit: Ronald L. Glassman

The All Stars Project's Youth Onstage! Program Introduces Young People to Performance, Development and the World of Theater.

When actor and playwright Reynaldo Piniella was growing up in East New York – one of the most impoverished communities in Brooklyn – he was a shy and ‘pretty closed off’ kid who knew little of life outside his neighborhood. This changed when Piniella began attending John Bowne High School in Queens, where he was first introduced to theater and Youth Onstage! (YO!), a program of the All Stars Project (ASP), that Piniella openly credits with transforming his life.

“I was going through a hard time in my life,” explains Piniella. “My parents had separated, I had to make new friends, I was dealing with work, school and a long commute, so I fell into a pretty bad funk.” Fortunately, an English teacher who saw ‘something’ in Piniella told him that if he wanted to pass, he had to participate in class every day. Since she was also a drama teacher, his participation often involved performing in classroom play readings. “At some point,” he recalls, “she told me I was a ‘natural’ and suggested I audition for drama class, which I agreed to only after she told me I wouldn’t have to take English.”

That same year, Piniella met

the ASP, whose mission is to transform the lives of youth in poor communities, using the power of play and performance. According to Piniella, he was immediately responsive to the ASP’s mission and especially liked that its programs are free and accessible to all young people. He traveled to the ASP’s performing arts and development center, on West 42nd Street in Manhattan, to audition for YO!, which introduces young people, ages 14 to 21, to performance, improv and the world of theater, under the direction of volunteer theater professionals.

The unique opportunity to be able to audition in front of experienced theater professionals



Reynaldo Piniella (front, left) in the Castillo Theatre's production of Coming of Age in Korea, in 2009. Photo credit: Diane Stiles

made a big impact on Piniella. "Having them see something of worth in me was emboldening. I fell in love with YO! and the Castillo Theatre [ASP's Off-off-Broadway theater] because, for the first time in my life, I had a sense of direction, a place where I could have a voice, a place where I could transform and live outside small circumstances of my life."

Over the course of eight weeks, Piniella's YO! cohorts met twice a week for classes in acting, voice, projection, breath, improvisation and movement, classes that students found especially challenging. "We were a bunch of Black and Latinx kids, so we did not want to act like a cow or roll around on the ground. But we soon learned that YO! was a space where we could 'act the fool' without the judgment of school, which was empowering. I know that it helped me and others to become more confident, to approach learning with new openness and curiosity, and to push ourselves to

be our best."

Upon graduating from YO!, Piniella performed in a number of Castillo Theatre productions and launched his professional career in both screen and stage. In addition to several Off-Broadway credits, including *The Toilet* at the New Federal Theatre, *The Death of the Last Black Man* at the Signature Theatre and *The Space Between the Letters* at The Public, he has received the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship from Theatre Communications Group and the Thomas Barbour Playwrights Award.

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down theater in New York City, Piniella accepted an offer from ASP to come back to YO! as a teacher in the virtual space, which allows him to work with kids from around the country. He is delighted by their "flexibility, preparation, readiness to play and willingness to push me to grow as a teacher," and is not surprised. "The ASP and YO! are all

about development, about failing in the pursuit of growth, about going outside your comfort zone and stretching in ways you don't think are possible."

Piniella reflected on the experience of teaching and building a program similar to the one from which he graduated. "Now, I see myself as an activist and educator as much as an artist. The values that I learned at the All Stars Project have everything to do with uplifting young people that look like me, engaging poverty, and working to create a better world. During this time of righteous protest and 'Black Lives Matter,' we all need to find ways to open doors for young people across this country. I am proud to do this as a theatre artist and a community builder." G&S

You can learn more about the All Stars Project, Inc. and Youth Onstage! by visiting <https://allstars.org>.

Adventurous Experiments

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.

Call me literal-minded but I pay close attention to exhibition titles. They can elicit enlightenment or puzzlement. Anticipating Layered Abstraction, I experienced a bit of both. I knew the large body of abstract work by Margo Allman and Helen Mason, well-established artists who work in various



Margo Allman (b. 1933).
“Black Herculon Assemblages,” 1976.
Fiber, variable dimensions.
Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the artist,
2015. ©Margo Allman

media. But a quick look around the gallery, at the Delaware Art Museum, dispelled any mystery about “layered,” as I fathomed its multiple meanings in the 139 paintings, drawings, and sculptures on view. I saw many invitations to look (and sometimes walk) within and around these works of art.

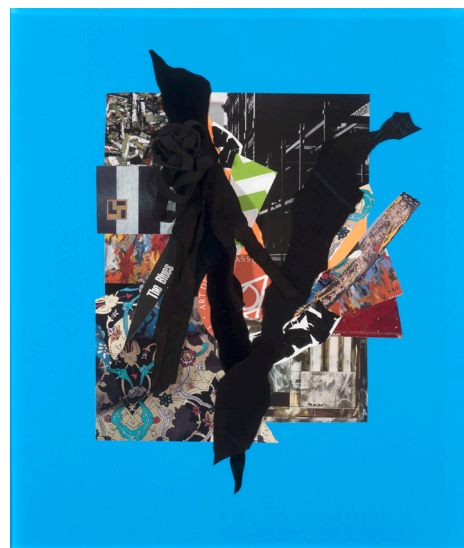
Margo Allman has said that awareness of forms, spaces, colors, and light—natural and man-made—galvanize her art. “Black Herculon Assemblages” sprang from such

perceptions.

In 1976, she ordered 600 pounds of black Herculon yarn (a brand name for a strong, lightweight synthetic fiber). Working primarily on her porch, Allman designed and crocheted some of the yarn into 75 variously-shaped pouches into which she stuffed the rest of the unwieldy material. With hooks attached to the top and bottom of each piece, a grouping can be configured in different ways. The biomorphic shapes evoke undulating microscopic organisms suddenly grown ominously life-size. But I felt a playful quality, too, as I walked around and noticed how the voids created



Margo Allman (b. 1933).
“Ovoidal Divisions,” 2018. Acrylic on
panel, 38 7/8 x 20 1/8 inches. Margo
Allman (b. 1933) Courtesy of the artist.
©Margo Allman



Helen Mason (born 1926).
“Calligraphic Collaboration (blue,
collage II),” 2015. Paper, rubber, and
Plexiglas, 24 x 22 x 4 inches. Courtesy of
the artist. ©Helen Mason

their own shapes. With difficulty, I resisted the temptation to touch this very tactile sculpture.

Allman’s “Ovoidal Divisions” bursts into color and motion, conjuring up at first glance nature’s predictable symmetries. But there are subtle variations in what appears to be an orderly grid of ovoid forms placed upright and sideways, and interspersed with opaque black and white dots and swaths of bright color. There are no duplicates here. Most ovoids are translucent, each one filtering light differently. All float against a darker background scattered with luminous white dots. Are these egg-shaped structures falling through or emerging from an enigmatic dark firmament? It’s as if astronomy and biology joined forces to produce this magical scene.

Helen Mason notes that she looks for new ways to use unconventional materials. For her collage, “Calligraphic Collaboration,” she transformed discarded pieces of industrial black rubber into graceful

knotted curves and angled edges suggestive of a secret alphabet.

On one glossy rubber strip, the words “The Blues” set a mood of exuberance and grief, melody, dissonance and transitions between major and minor keys. The musical allusion resonates with colliding fragments of urban architecture, a logo, floral designs, hard-edge and painterly geometric constructions, slashes of color, and muted tones. The collage breaks free of any confines into the brilliant blue background. During Mason’s four months in Japan, she focused on Japanese designs for wrapping, tying, and bundling, a craft originally devised for transporting goods and for gift-giving. In “Diagonal Bundle,” she reinterprets these ancient techniques in contemporary materials, combined with the Japanese reverence for the color black. Mason inserted iridescent anodized aluminum tubes (representing scrolls) into rubber hoses. Polyurethane tape (referring to the belt worn with traditional



Helen Mason (born 1926). “Diagonal Bundle,” c. 1988. Anodized aluminum and rubber, 48 x 22 x 22 inches. Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the artist, 2017. ©Helen Mason



Helen Mason (born 1926). “Untitled Garden,” 2020. Mixed media, 52 x 96 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist. ©Helen Mason. Installation image of *Layered Abstraction: Margo Allman and Helen Mason, 2020*, Photograph by Carson Zullinger. ©Delaware Art Museum/Margo Allman (born 1933). “Wall installation of Drawing #22, 2019 and Drawing #23,” 2019. Ink printed on adhesive polyester fabric. Courtesy of the artist. ©Margo Allman

Japanese clothing) holds the bundle together and causes the tubes to rotate outward, as if energized from within. Ties above and below the tape recall gift-giving customs and convey the presence of the artist’s hand. The inserts changed color as I moved around, their metallic sheen reminiscent of natural elements such as minerals and seashells. The whole effect is both serene and lively.

The juxtaposition of Mason’s Garden and Allman’s Wall installation crystallizes a conversation between the artists. Mason’s lustrous black sculpture is a garden abstracted from nature. Its spiky leaves, swaying reeds, and glistening ponds are quintessentially terrestrial. Surrounding the garden, Allman’s drawings—enlarged from small,

etching-like ones—suggest spider webs and planets swirling above through endless space.

Margo Allman and Helen Mason share an adventurous spirit. They delight in experimenting with unusual materials at the intersection of art, craft, and nature. And then they envision what’s possible, get to work, and create unique works of art. In the spirit of Michelangelo: “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.” G&S

Layered Abstraction
through January 17, 2021
Delaware Art Museum,
Toll free: 866 232 3714 www.delart.org

Miracle on Fifth Avenue

by Oscar Masciandaro



C helsea, sometime in the mid-90s. A grey, overcast day in mid-December. Dirty snow mixing with a drizzle of rain. I'm on my lunch hour wandering up 5th avenue looking for a single, solitary xmas present. I've long since abdicated all of my holiday shopping duties to my wife who seems born to be the mistress of all things gift related. She starts sometime in the midsummer heat of July with idle musings about matching friends and family with sweaters and video games and Chanel N° 5. By October we have multiple piles of perfectly gift wrapped boxes spilling out of the limited closet space of our NY apartment. That said, I still have to buy at least one gift of course, that's the one for her. So today I'm out on the hunt. She's notoriously tough to shop for and is the first to admit it. There are apparently, extra dimensions visible only to her that determine how well and how much she might like any given gift. After years of marriage, what any of these qualities might be are still completely opaque to me.

I wander into one of those stores that sell things that nobody particularly needs and everyone seems to want. Executive toys. Overpriced radios. Fancy picture frames of impossibly happy

families with magnificent teeth. So close to the holiday break, it's packed with people, mostly like me I guess, picking things up, doing a mental calculation against an internal database of friends and family to see if any item might be a match before moving on. The muzak this year seems shrill and particularly desperate. Some recycled holiday tune is begging the shoppers to buy something; please, something, anything... IT'S THE HOLIDAY.

Quite unexpectedly, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong come on. Ella is as smooth and sweet as a milk shake. Louis' rasp of a voice, a survivor of every smoke filled club and juke joint he's ever played in. Like cream and strong black coffee they're feeding a hunger I didn't even know I had.

Louis even manages to add syllables where there aren't any.

He-e-eav-en, I'm in heaven...

All of us shoppers start to move with some singularity of purpose. A rubenesque, older woman in an expensive looking fur takes me by both hands, apparently delighted to have so easily found a willing dance partner.

And the cares that hung around me through the week...

Whatever spell that's affecting the two of us is metastasizing to

everyone in the store. The usual array of angry, sullen and over scheduled New Yorkers, already out late past the end of their lunch hours, start to melt into the arms of total strangers. They waltz and glide across an improvised dance floor, racks full of ominously fragile looking merchandise be damned.

Seem to vanish like a gambler's lucky streak.

The dirty snow that was blanketing the city now seems crystalline and magically white. Now, we're just miniature figures in a snow globe. Waltzing, pirouetting to notes spinning from a music box.

When we're out together dancing to cheek to cheek.

And just like that, the music stops. A new couple comes in from the outside, the open door letting in a blast of arctic air. They stand at the entrance perplexed at the tableau of what looks like a scene from a Noel Coward musical. We all stop, looking a bit guilty and self conscious for no particular reason. My dance partner gives me a wink and wraps her coat around her before moving on. G&S

For more information:
oscarmasciandaro.com

Film's Poetic Subconscious

by Woody Sempliner

Warning: exposure to film festivals at an impressionable age may lead to a chronic weakness for obscure films of irregular length with little or no narrative cohesion. I speak from personal experience.

My problem began in the last century back in the Midwest with a festival that would solicit entries via artfully printed brochures sent out, if you can imagine, in the mail. Most but not all of the respondents were students or teaching artists at college art departments across the U.S. and Canada, and the operative term to describe their work was, “experimental.” To enter, one’s film had to be 16mm and to “evidence a high regard for film as a creative medium.” The festival promised to screen every film in its entirety and to program as many as time would allow. Thus, in long hours of viewing through weeks of wintry nights, an addiction incubated.

Full disclosure: I am still at it. But, honestly, it’s not like it used to be. And I swear, like everything else, I’ve changed!

While a few hundred 16mm films used to seem like a lot, a film festival now can receive thousands of entries electronically. Instead of ten people watching films together in a dark and chilly room, screening is done by many individuals at home with their laptops. Digital technology has made filmmaking more like writing, a medium for which the tools are commonly available. It can seem seductively easy. Experimental is still used as a word to define a kind of category, and filmmakers are fond of applying it to their work. But in truth, most new filmic experiments are uncannily similar to the old ones of long ago leaving the current experimental works representing something more like a genre reflecting a style that was



Clips from “Century of Smoke”

experimental once, when new. In short, the old “underground cinema” of the last century has grown up and become something like the poetic subconscious of mainstream motion picture storytelling.

But where, you might ask, are all these film poems, these paintings that have motion and sound? Well, like one’s own subconscious, they can be hard to find. I had mentally earmarked three documentaries for this article, works I had seen in the last year, but was shocked to find that only one was accessible. A truly fascinating film, about the trade in fighting crickets in China, has simply disappeared along with any trace of its filmmaker. This film was so wonderfully bazaar, at once informative and beautiful, that I took pictures of it with my cell phone — images that I long to share with you but, of course, may not without the filmmaker’s permission.

If you should get wind of Noah Zhang (Zhang Meng Zhou) or his film, “One in a Million,” among the “million” films by the same name, you’re on to something I assure you.

Another, by Indian filmmaker, Alex Xavier, is pure observational cinema shot over a few years on his cell phone. The film’s focus is a little neighbor kid who comes regularly to Xavier’s parents’ house in Cochin, India. Sound prosaic? It is. But Xavier’s camera work has a natural compositional sense that can be mesmerizing. When I saw the film, Xavier was calling it a work in progress. He still is, but you can get a taste of it by visiting the filmmaker’s website: www.alexavier.me.

So, getting back to addictions, the one film of these three that can be tracked down and seen is “Century of Smoke,” a brilliant documentary by Belgian filmmaker, Nicolas Graux. This film takes the viewer to the hinterlands of Laos near the Chinese border. Through Graux’s stately, patient and well composed camera work comes an intimate look at a tiny village nestled in dense forest and surrounded by the interplay of mountains, mist and clouds. The village is a world of wood planks, corrugated roofing, rain, mist, jungle, mud, children, chickens, men, women, the smoke of cooking fires...and the smoke of opium, by which the village both lives and dies seemingly at the same time. When we conjure Hell, isn’t it most often a pretty nice place where there is just one thing that is very wrong? Here the village’s cash crop is opium, but half the village is addicted to it, mostly the men who languish while their women clear the fields, care for the young, cook, clean up around the place and dream aloud of walking away some day.

It is a dark subject beautifully



Clip from "Century of Smoke"

rendered. A story told through visual observation over a rich palette of ambient sound and the stark eloquence of its subjects — Akha with English subtitles. One woman declares her heart strong enough to douse her husband in gasoline and burn him. You don't hear that every day. G&S

Find Nicolas Graux at:
derives.be/en/films/century-of-smoke
Alex Xavier on alexxavier.me

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Arthur French: Esteemed Actor, Director and Educator

by Roger Parris



Negro Ensemble

I remember Arthur's son, Arthur III, a playwright, telling me his Dad exemplifies excellence, integrity and professionalism. The many artists who have worked with Arthur French over the years would certainly agree. Due to Covid 19, I conducted a phone interview with him. These are edited excerpts from the conversation:

Roger: You were in the original cast of the play, "Ceremonies of Dark Old Men." Your character, Jenkins was West Indian and I remember your accent was so perfect. Are you from the West Indies?

Arthur: I was born and raised in Harlem and the Bronx. My mother and father were born in St. Vincent (Caribbean island) and my mother spent some time living in Barbados before moving here. My parents didn't know each other in St. Vincent. When they met in New York they found out their parents knew each other in St. Vincent.

Roger: How influential were they in you choosing acting as a profession?

Arthur: My father always believed in developing a trade, but my mother really supported me when I was a kid. Early on I was interested in dance, singing and music. She sent me to different

artistic schools and I even had a piano recital at Carnegie Hall - I was about 13. When I was older, there was a singing group in my neighborhood in the Bronx. They called themselves, "The Crickets" and they had an engagement in Cleveland. I had a car and they asked me to drive them there. At that point, I wanted to be a disc jockey. Alan Freed was a popular DJ then and I used to hear him on the radio. So I decided to go to a Disc Jockey School, but the payola scandal hit the music scene and the school was closed. That stopped me from pursuing becoming a DJ.

Roger: At what point did you begin your acting career?

Arthur: The Disc Jockey School that was closed was in the same building as Lee Strasberg's Dramatic Workshop. (laughs) I just signed up for acting, movement and speech classes. Peggy Feury was one of the teachers. She was really good. She taught many actors who went on to have very successful careers, but the most important person in my artistic life was Maxwell Glanville. He ran the American Community Theatre. I heard a reading there. No costumes. No scenery. And I felt it was magical. I attended weekly classes and one day Maxie asked me to direct a play. I had never directed a play, but I said yes.

Roger: You were very courageous.

Arthur: I was very stupid (laughs). See, Maxie encouraged us by giving us opportunities and letting us do what we wanted to try. I loved him for that. The play I directed went well.

Roger: You were one of the original members of Negro Ensemble Company. So much good work was produced there. What was that experience like?

Arthur: Robert Hooks (one of the founding members of Negro Ensemble Company) saw a play I was in and asked me to become a member. I appeared in "Happy Ending," "Days of Absence," "Ceremonies of Dark Old Men" and many other plays. At NEC, I just turned myself over to what was happening. I was blessed to be a part of it, loved everybody in the company and learned about life.

Roger: You also worked with Melvin Van Peebles. Wasn't that your first Broadway play?

Arthur: Yes. "Ain't Supposed To Die A Natural Death." That's when I decided to quit my Social Service job.

Roger: You've also been in a number of films and directed many

plays but how did teaching at Herbert Berghof Studio happen?

Arthur: I was an understudy in “Driving Miss Daisy” and Michelle Oliver was the other understudy. She was teaching at Herbert Berghof Studio and she recommended me. I spoke to Herbert and told him I had never taught acting before and he said (accent), “Tell them what you know” (laughs). So I tell the students, “be honest to the character.”

Roger: Have you been able to work at all during this pandemic?

Arthur: Some Zoom readings, a



Arthur flanked by his children, Arthur III and Antonia

podcast and some commercials. I also work with Sloan Kettering in their training program for medical professionals. I usually portray patients dealing with cancer. Sundays, I read poetry at Marge Eliot’s Parlor Entertainment weekly jazz concerts.

Roger: What have you learned about yourself during your fifty year career?

Arthur: I like the world of fantasy. And my father told me, “learn something so well that you won’t have to lift up anything heavier than a pencil.” G&S

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Gwen Black Celebrates the Soul

by Anne Rudder

I recently had the happy opportunity to talk with Gwendolyn “Gwen” Black, fine artist, and arts activist. She is the founder of Arts and JazzFest NYC™, Women in Jazz, and Incorporation of Artists on the Move (IAM), all of which support creativity through the arts. Black is a seminal organizer of groups advocating jazz in New York City, nurturing people, and integrating cultures to uplift the local community. A graduate of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and FIT, in New York City, the skills she learned there, along with her familial exposure to jazz in her hometown of Pittsburgh, inform her creative vocation. She has also been blessed by having Broadway composer Emme Kemp as her godmother and the late jazz pianist/composer Randy Weston as her mentor and friend.

For Black, jazz evolved from ancestors looking for relief from troubles, brought on by the cruelties of slavery, with emotions expressed through spirituals – lessening deep hurts encountered in hard lives. She has been creating mixed media paintings of jazz musicians to communicate the spiritual essence of this music, drawing a connection between the aural and the visual, painting and jazz, joined lyrically by melody and graphic line. For her, “painting is a whole bodily flowing,” an adaptation of what one is seeing while music provides opportunities to express what one is feeling. Her mixed media collage of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie was her reaction to Clint Eastwood’s movie, “Bird.” She wished to underscore her feelings that Eastwood did not emphasize Parker’s intellectual qualities enough as a musician in the film. In Black’s piece the viewer sees notes coming from Parker’s mind with Gillespie acting as a mirror to Parker’s intellect, thus bringing out



Parker’s power as a cerebral and emotional musician. 2020 would have been the 100th anniversary of Parker’s birth.

She just completed a piece on the innovative composer and jazz musician, the late Alice Coltrane, wife of the legendary John Coltrane who became a force for good, after overcoming his heroin addiction. Alice and John forged a new spiritual musicality together with Alice becoming a swamini, which Black captures in the mystical quality of her new work. By pairing up both husband and wife when she exhibits the works, she shows both artists as positive influences together in the world at large.

The pandemic has delayed Black’s vision of jazz. Her 2020 summer music festival on Governor’s

Island was put on hold and she is currently creating jazz performances virtually for the public, until audiences can once again congregate in larger groups for concerts. Instead in September, she produced “Jazz by The Water,” a virtual concert celebrating music of the past but featuring contemporary musicians, such as the young Eddie Allen on trumpet, saxophonist Bill Saxton, vocalist Rochelle Thompson, blues singer Cindy Lou Robinson, Joe Chambers, percussionist, and the timeless Emme Kemp.

As an educator, Black is a mentor to young people, focusing on their needs for artistic expression, because the arts have been mostly taken from the classrooms. She also feels it is very important to get children away from entertainment concentrated on

gun violence, which is on the rise and glorified by the media. Black's family was exposed to gun violence and as a result she is looking to develop a mentoring program particularly for young black men who may not have had access to positive resources.

Through her work with the AHRC day program, Black has also nurtured people with disabilities, who have never been exposed to jazz, by organizing a mural project for participants to paint a 20'x 9' work dedicated to Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia." The muralists listened to music while creating the work and the project even transformed a woman, who had been completely non-communicative, into a vibrant participant after she listened to the music while painting.

Gwen Black emphasizes that jazz can be the cultural, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual foundation for future music. Young people often do not have a frame of reference to this rich musical past and it is important to reacquaint them to its history, bringing them beyond the mechanical and cursory to a touchpoint of the intangible immanence. To this end she feels it is important to teach the young how to play instruments in all their intricacies, so that music is a soulful expression producing heartfelt results. She believes people must access what is within themselves in ways that are emotionally healing, in contrast to cultural expressions that are negative and destructive. She says we have to start rethinking the ideas of what we want to expose young people to and that parents should nurture and understand their children to keep them from extolling destructive impulses.

Black feels creative people have the task of carrying forward uplifting experiences, celebrating what brings people together. Mass media has substituted window dressing for real messages originating from the depths of the human soul; and the public should be supporting activities that bring decisions to fruition, based upon essence where resulting changes arise from love.

She says it is also important to hold governments accountable so that the arts are supported not just as societal afterthoughts. She emphasizes that artists find it hard to create if they are always struggling to survive — "the spirit cannot flow freely." She created Arts and Jazz Fest™ as a vehicle to show artists' work in a venue that is a catalyst for deep realizations, being much more than lip service to creativity and just entertainment.

Truly a Renaissance person, Gwen Black champions the arts in so many ways. She is wished good fortune in all her endeavors as she continues to advocate fervently for creativity, her efforts intersecting jazz with the visual experience. We need more people like her to turn the tide on the pessimism we find so predominant now, so that we can indeed celebrate the culture of both beauty and goodness, and in particular advocate for the stirring music of jazz. G&S



Alice Coltrane



John Coltrane

For more informations:
gwenblackarts.com

Remembering Artist Marty Greenbaum (1934-2020)

by Jeannie McCormack

Ed & I have many fond memories of Marty whom we met at the 10th street galleries during the 1960s when Ed was showing his paintings and drawings.

The 10th Street Galleries were close to the Bowery, which in those days was inhabited by the homeless who came to the openings for the wine. They were never turned away. The openings were like a big party every Friday night, open to all. In the 1960s before the real estate prices made it impossible to live as a poor artist in New York City, a group of artists might meet at Katz delicatessen on the Lower East Side before wandering over to the openings. There was a feeling of excitement, freedom and a sense that anything could happen.

The 10th Street openings were very much in the spirit of Happenings which were precursors of the now popular Performance Art. Our good friends Jim and Beverly Hans were married at Jim's opening at the Stryke Gallery and at one of Ed's openings a Rock and Roll group blasted their music so loud half the crowd left the gallery!

Artists had a sense of optimism and excitement about their work. One artist we knew, who didn't have an exhibition lined up, was so excited about his work that he would whip his small paintings out of the pockets of his raincoat and show them to unexpected gallery-goers who had come to see the works on the wall!

It was at this time in our lives that we met Marty Greenbaum at the Stryke Gallery where Ed was also showing his work. I realized then that I was meeting a person who lived and always conducted himself as an artist, unconstrained by the usual conventions. He had a wonderfully surreal air about him—carrying strange objects which he didn't bother to explain. I imagine



Marty Greenbaum (left) with Jeannie and Ed McCormack

they were some objects for one of his assemblages. He and other artists of that period made works from found sources.

Ed described Marty's work in an exhibition essay for Pacifico Fine Art in 2001:

"At a time when most of his contemporaries were calculating how to harden their edges or revamp their styles with the window dressings of Camp, this primal mixed media whizkid from Coney Island labored like an entranced shaman, to conjure up zany beautiful art brut paintings and weird, wax-drizzled voodoo alter assemblages that resembled nothing so much as the ritual artifacts of some lost psychedelic tribe!"

On reading Marty's narrative/bio we learn that he grew up in Coney Island where he worked summers in the Penny Arcades, and was inspired by the carnival atmosphere which he reflected in his work throughout his life. As expressed by David Bourdon of *The Village Voice* about a 1965 Stryke Exhibition:

"Marty Greenbaum's work is genuinely messy, crude and

seemingly generated by a kind of infantile depravity. The show has the look of a sleazy midway at Coney Island It comes on as pathetic, trivial, and awful, and succeeds at being thoroughly enchanting."

In the 1960s Marty was involved with the underground downtown NYC art scene which he considered his "new playground" according to his bio. In an interview, Marty described his working space: "My studio space exists inside and outside of its physical presence; it exists in my brain and the city is always the source. My productivity is dependent on these connections."

His bio also says his works were shown at The Whitney Museum, Smithsonian Institute of Art, as well as many galleries. The Allan Stone Gallery was one of his major collectors. Marty died on January 24, 2020. His wife Eileen Mislove has given us the privilege of sharing some of the highpoints of Marty's life with our readers. For this, we are grateful and wish her solace from her memories and from his art which lives on.



*"Shadow Song," 2005, mixed media
on paper*



*"Diary and Pointer," 1969-2000,
wood, mixed media*

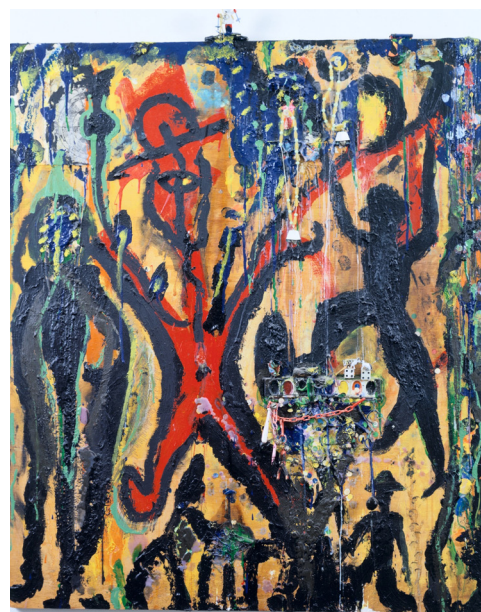


"Rain NY," 1996, mixed media



"Diary in '71 (On the Air Radio)," 1971, mixed media

Works by Marty Greenbaum



"Mojo (Eight), 1997," mixed media

It is difficult to write about such a special artist who is no longer of this world, but no one expressed it better in his bio than Marty himself:

"Looking back, it seems a dream

—the objects that I have made are the archeological artifacts of my treasured New York City—the city that has nourished and fascinated me all my life. My pieces are actual,

the drawing, painting, collage and mixed media of them are personal tattoos, the rough surfaces and weathered skin of the experience of a lifetime." G&S

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