

Gallery&Studio

arts journal

galleryand.studio

Summer 2021

Vol. 2, No.4

Visit to Taiwan

All about Ed McCormack

and more...



Gallery&Studio arts journal

In This Issue:

Summer has arrived in New York with a mix of heat waves, torrential rains, humidity and the Covid-19 Delta variant. It is usually a quiet time for galleries, so we wait with trepidation to hear the news of which galleries have re-opened already, which will have closed for good, and how many new galleries will open for the first time. We talk to four artist-run galleries. It will also be interesting to see how the pandemic affected art sales. Anecdotally, we have heard that sales continued worldwide, and collectors have bought more in their domestic markets, with intel from Sébastien Aurillon in Taiwan.

NFTs or Non-Fungible Tokens continue to dominate the art news. Are they good, bad, gone tomorrow or here to stay? Beeple sold his work for \$69 million. Can anyone else? NFTs are electronic packets of data which contain information that makes them unique and non-replicable. They are held on digital ledgers called blockchains. What are the Pros and Cons? PROs: Artists can keep track of who owns their art and perhaps allow for royalties when their work is resold. It allows some artists to bypass traditional gatekeepers such as galleries, curators, and deal directly with collectors and buyers. The new format is creating a buzz which can only be good in a creative field. CONS: They can cost the artist anywhere from a few dollars to US\$1000 to mint a new NFT, plus more to sell it. There are also less obvious costs in minting NFTs, in terms of power use and CO2 emissions. Volatility in terms of the new market could also be a big risk. We hear about ixshells who sold her work at an NFT auction for US\$2 million. We look forward to seeing this new platform develop. —The Editors

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Gallery&Studio arts journal

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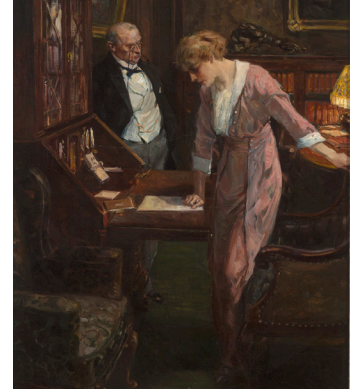
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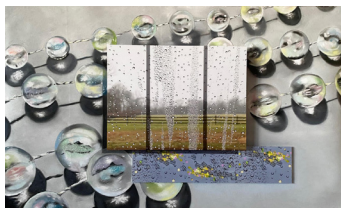
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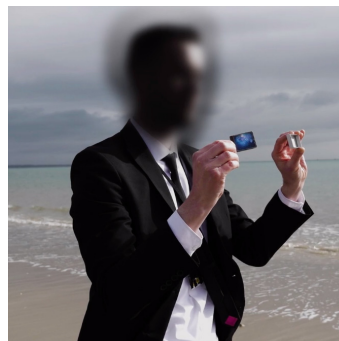
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All About Ed

(Ed McCormack 1943-2021)



Ed's story began a long time ago when he was a child on the Lower East Side. His mother was always ill with a very bad heart condition. Ed remembered those early years and often told me how his mother's severe heart condition consumed his emotional life. Over the years when we had talks about his past and his early childhood, I often asked him, "How did you deal with the constant fear of losing your mother?" "I drew," he would say, "I would go off by myself and draw, it was my way of separating myself from the pain my mother was dealing with."

From the moment I met Ed in 1960 he always talked about art and artists he admired. I remember bright sunny Saturdays, after we were married in 1961, when we would take long walks along Madison Avenue to visit the galleries. It was always exciting to visit a particular gallery and see the work of an artist we really liked or to discover a new artist. Our two favorite galleries were Willard, which presented artists like Mark Tobey and Morris Graves, and Cordin&Extrum which showed Richard Lindner. Later we would often stop at the Modern and Whitney Museums, which at that time were in the same building. Mostly I remember our lively conversations about art and the joyous feeling of the many possibilities that life held.

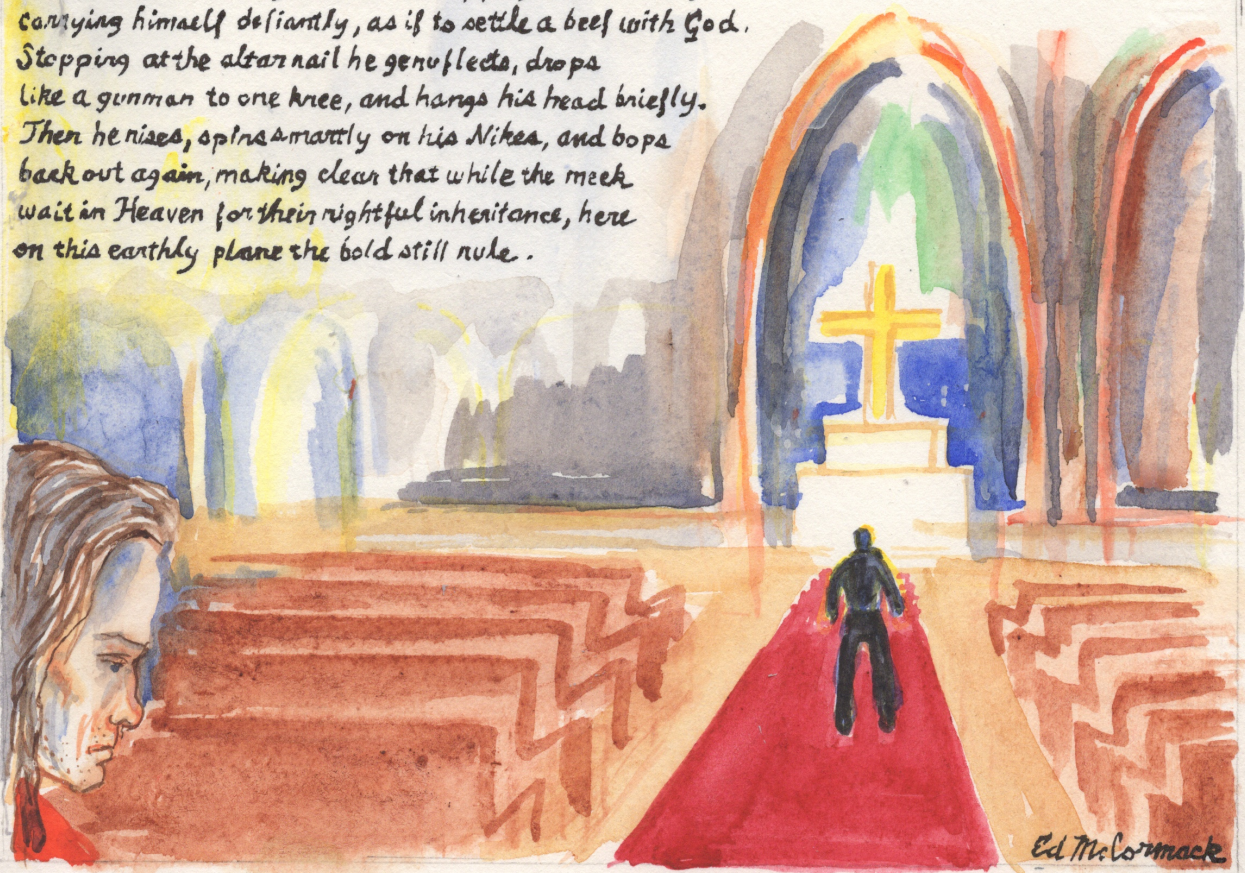
In the early 60s, Ed spent all of his free time working on his art, often late into the night, when he had to work at a job the next day. This all eventually led to a show on 10th Street. He had an exhibition at the Brata Gallery, and later at the Stryke Gallery. For the Brata show he did enormous figurative paintings with flat bright colors. And for the Stryke Gallery he presented a whole series of fine ink drawings of the city which were dream-like visions of beautiful female figures walking among cars with mean faces and men in business suits. He was reviewed for these delicate visionary cityscapes in *The Village Voice*, *The Wall Street Journal* and in *Women's Wear Daily*.



Ed (lower right) at ten or eleven with friends selling his art work at the Greenwich Village Art Fair

Shabbes Goy

Friday at sundown, as Autumn leaves scatter
 over long fedora shadows of orthodox Jewish
 fathers and sons strolling through the co-op
 courtyard to the synagogue on East Broadway,
 I cross Grand Street in the opposite direction
 to Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church.
 The chill vaulted theater of my childhood dread
 is empty when I enter and take my place in the pew,
 not to pray for the soul of my son, since I'm not
 sure the dead need prayers as much as the living,
 but to puzzle as I do endlessly anyway
 over the mystery of his early leaving.
 As I stare at the altar's faintly flickering candles
 and the statue of The Virgin glowing whitely from
 the shadows, hoping if not for an answer at least
 for a sign, the heavy wooden door creaks open
 and a Puerto Rican youth comes bopping up the aisle,
 carrying himself defiantly, as if to settle a beef with God.
 Stopping at the altar rail he genuflects, drops
 like a gunman to one knee, and hangs his head briefly.
 Then he rises, spins smartly on his Nikea, and bops
 back out again, making clear that while the meek
 wait in Heaven for their rightful inheritance, here
 on this earthly plane the bold still rule.



This is an illustrated poem from a series by Ed in the 1990s. He was very interested in combining text with images and loved the illustrated poems of William Blake.



"The Metaphysics of the Manuscript: Written Pictures, Drawn Words" from Ed's series of drawings after the loss of Holden in 1993

Our son Holden was born in 1963 and, when he was still a toddler, we'd take him to museums and galleries with hopes of introducing "the kid to a little culture." Well, when we took him to see a show of abstractions at the Whitney or Modern, he exclaimed "This is monkey art!" Like his father, Holden had the rebellious spirit.

As a teenager Ed developed a great interest in the writers like Jack Kerouac and Allan Ginsberg of the Beat generation. He began writing poetry when he wasn't drawing or painting. Ed also favored the Beat philosophy for rejecting mainstream values. For instance, Ed never completed High School; he would leave his home room class and go to the Seward Park library on the Lower East Side where he read art books, wrote poetry and drew. He was encouraged by his art teacher to attend The High School of Music and Art.

Ed said, "Much to the disappointment of my mother, I quit Music and Art and returned to Seward Park where I could skip classes and eventually quit altogether and hung out in the Village full time."

As the sixties became the "swinging sixties" Ed did illustrations and started writing for *Changes*, an underground arts magazine. He also wrote for Andy Warhol's *Interview*, *The Village Voice* and the *New York Daily News*. Jann Wenner, owner and editor of *Rolling Stone*, became interested in his work and asked him to write for the magazine, resulting in a career as a feature writer and columnist. This led to a detour from his art into a life of writing about Rock and Roll and celebrities, lasting throughout the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s.

In 1993 when our son was in the hospital with AIDs, Ed covered whole pages of his pocket notebook with a multitude of minute little t's in the vain hope of transferring some of his T-cells to our son. By returning to art, he was hoping for magic to

work. After he had made many pages of the tiny t's, a doctor came into Holden's room with a puzzled look on his face saying, "We don't know why, but Holden's T-cells have increased remarkably." It was a moment of magic but it was not meant to be. Ed always held our son Holden close to his heart.

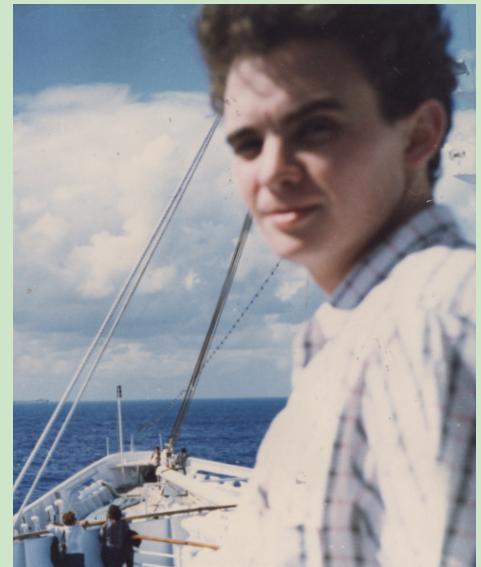
Ed started doing art reviews in the late 1980s. In the beginning he was working for Bruno and Margot Palmer-Poroner of *ARTspeak*. When they stopped publishing the magazine, we founded *Gallery&Studio* magazine in 1998. Ed was very happy to be writing about art since it had been so very important to him throughout his life. We would go together to take notes for articles and I worked on the production. We loaded up a truck and delivered the magazines to the galleries throughout New York City. We were very happy because this was something we could do together. It was such a sense of accomplishment every time a new issue came out. The magazine continued until a sunny fall day in 2014. It seemed like just another day when I returned to our apartment after visiting a friend, but I found Ed ill and disoriented and from that instant everything changed. At the hospital the doctor said he had had a hemorrhagic stroke and would require brain surgery. Ed struggled with the aftereffects of the stroke until this past April 28, 2021.

Along with the highlights of his life, his spirit will continue on in his artwork, writing and the story of his life, to be told in his upcoming book titled: "Hoodlum Heart: Confessions of a Test Dummy for the Crash and Burn Generation."

He often said: "As far back as I can remember I was constantly drawing. My mother always said I was born with a pencil in my hand."

I am sure he had one in his hand when he left this world.

Jeannie McCormack



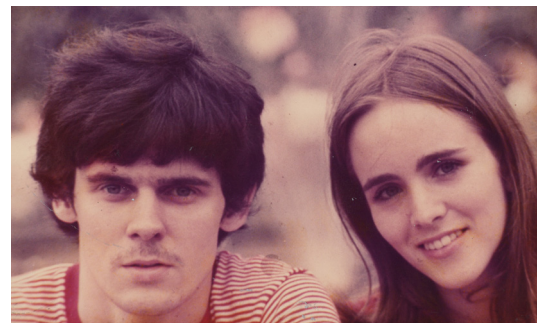
DEAR HOLDEN

*Hard to believe the world has gone on
almost ten years without you
and without the me only you knew.*

*They say a part of us dies
with the one for whom we grieve.
But I say its more like a whole self:
the self we saw mirrored in the eyes
of the one in whose gaze we
lived most vividly.*

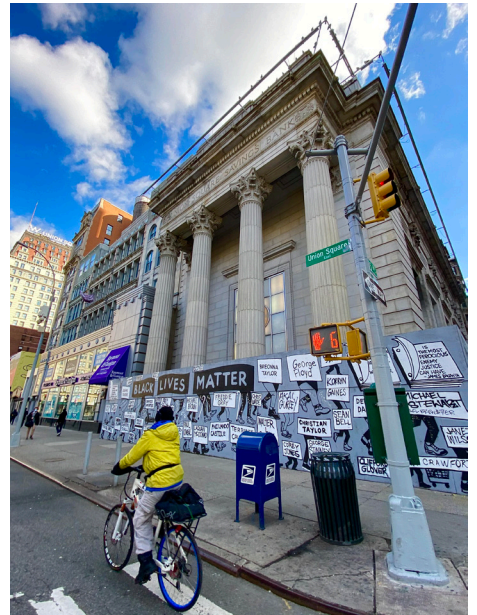
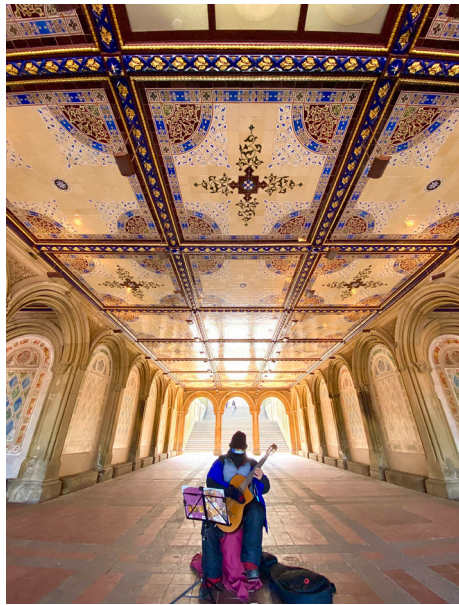
*Remembering your keen wit,
I only hope the afterlife
is sufficiently absurd to keep
you amused, and not so
insipidly heavenly as not to include
stupid politicians, pompous clergymen,
pontificating pop stars and other
staples of our once shared scorn.*

*You'll be happy to know it's still
ridiculous here, although nowhere
near as much fun as when you
were here, too, and all my mirth
magnified in your sky-blue eyes.*

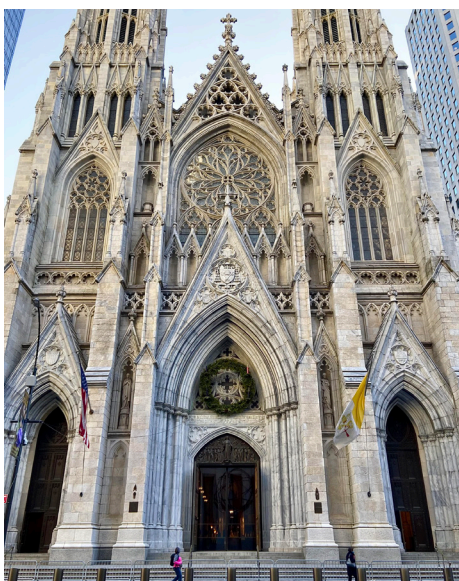
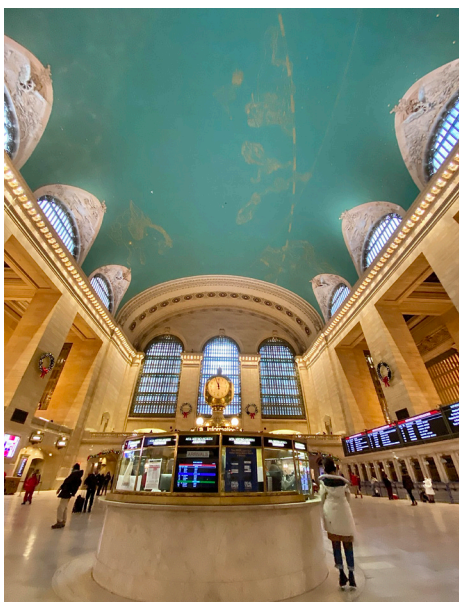


Ed and Jeannie in the early 60s

H O P E



Photographs by Smiljana Peros
Instagram: @smiljanagram



Spring is turning to summer, days longer with air warmer as we shyly venture into city streets following the terrible time of dangerous contagion. As George Harrison sang, “Little darlin’, it’s been a long, cold, lonely winter” but then, tenderly, he declared, “Here Comes the Sun!” I am sure New Yorkers agree with his words as we feel exhausted but relieved as the deadly virus fades.

Photos of our city were taken during the pandemic by a roving photographer, accentuating the city’s emptiness, its byways traversed by so many fewer individuals, now masked and fearful of contracting disease. \Crowds are nowhere to be seen and each crystalline colored picture depicts almost singular people, lonely wanderers on semi-deserted sidewalks.

A masked musician at Bethesda Fountain, his voice, though muted, hopefully warbles kind lyrics to fill the cavernous space. The man’s festive costume lessens our melancholy as we see him play his songs.

The massive Flatiron Building, still a testament to an earlier engineering feat, sits in the distance as a sole shopper trudges nearby, unmindful of the building’s enduring significance.

The A-Train takes one rider north as subways remain mostly empty, cars shiny and clean without the untidy intrusions of perspiring people. Above ground, Time Square billboards blink at empty bright red bistro tables, protected by a few guards while a singular cyclist pedals by forlornly.

A scarlet raincoated mother keeps her baby safe in stroller on a gloomy afternoon. Perhaps during a healthy time, she would bring her child to St. Pat’s for baptism, but now, the church is shuttered in cautious COVID response.

A covered redhead protects herself in mask, sunglasses and fake fur, while Union Square posters plead mercy and justice for aspirations long delayed.

Grand Central’s stars grace the ceiling over occasional travelers who amble through the elegant hall, quietly. We hope celestial signs above passengers’ heads presage good fortune beyond our nightmarish time and look to the skies to guide us through any malaise remaining.

But through this all a melody travels to our ears, its sound becomes much bolder and we feel a solace come.

Above the concrete, puffy clouds will drift on blue with sun.

Our town revives as voices lift and golden rays do come.

The healing light now covers us and keeps us safe and strong.

We look beyond the hardest days with hope and ardent song.

Poem by Anne Rudder

Shared Visions: The Artist-Run Gallery

by Linda Ganus Albulescu



Landmark Arts Building, with entrances at 547 W. 27th St. / 548 W. 28th St.

Gallery&Studio co-founder Ed McCormack was a big fan of artist-run galleries, remarking that “artists are the best proponents of their own work.” For many artists trying to exhibit and sell their work, artist-run, artist-owned, and cooperative galleries offer alternatives to commercial galleries in major urban centers like New York and Los Angeles; less dependent on profits, members often feel freer to take creative risks and experiment with their practices. Ranging from medium-sized conventional “white-cube” spaces sharing space in commercial buildings to innovative displays tucked away in surprising locations, artist-run galleries are more nimble and able to pivot and adapt during times of economic and social upheaval like the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

What does it take to successfully steer an artist-run gallery? Besides creating artwork, members must meet myriad challenges that are otherwise handled by larger commercial gallery administration: promoting and sustaining the work and the space, creating business plans, attracting foot traffic as well as virtual eyeballs to visit the work, building collector lists, and keeping abreast of the current discourse and trends in the art world. In addition to these skills, it is helpful for an artist-run/cooperative Gallery Director to be both diplomatic and decisive; to be able to identify and leverage their members’ strengths; create a welcoming and inclusive environment for artists and visitors, and encourage a spirit of cooperation, problem-solving, and a sense of togetherness among all involved in the gallery.

One building that houses several artist-run galleries in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood is the Landmark Arts Building, with entrances at 547 W. 27th St. / 548 W. 28th St. Completed in 1899, this striking Gilded Age building has many spaces filled with abundant natural light from large windows, a gallerist’s dream come true. The Building is owned and managed by Jim Pastreich, a long time supporter of the arts, and the Pinetree Group. Gallery&Studio recently talked to several artist-directors in the building to get their thoughts about nurturing a gallery, including Vernita Nemec (Viridian Gallery); Marianna Winterdale (Noho M55 Gallery); Denise Adler (Pictor Gallery); and Marcia Clark (Blue Mountain Gallery).

Directors were asked about the history of their galleries; their mission; their artist-members and their practices; any advantages or disadvantages that faced artist-run/owned galleries; and how they are envision future goals/exhibitions at each of their galleries. We are so grateful for their generous, thoughtful responses.*

**The following is a summary of each gallery director’s responses. The complete responses may be viewed on the G&S website: galleryand.studio/2021/07/28/shared-visions.*

Vernita Nemec, Viridian Gallery

Viridian celebrated its 50th year in 2018. The gallery started in Soho as the Second Story Spring Street Gallery and eventually settled at 548 West 28th where we are now. At Viridian, we pride ourselves on showing outstanding art of underrepresented and emerging artists of all ages. We call ourselves an “artist-owned” gallery rather than a cooperative gallery: my assistant director and I handle all the gallery business, and the artists have complete control of what art they show. I feel those of us involved with showing at and running artist-owned and cooperative galleries are the “real” artists who continue to make art from our souls rather than for the marketplace. We have been creating new programs that focus on Young Artists and Artist Estates, and have also expanded our digital presence. In August, a week-long exhibit of Japanese artists curated by Sai Morikawa. In the fall, a competition, juried by Susan Harris. In addition, we will be doing more online activities, including studio visits and interviews of gallery artists.

Marianna Winterdale, Noho M55 Gallery

M55 Art was formed in 1969 and Noho Gallery in 1975; in 2012 the two became partners. Our gallery is eclectic; new members are selected by a group of their peers. Artists’-run galleries are a good way for artists to evade commercial gallery trappings, free to create their own preferences and to explore, knowing that changes in styles are not frowned upon. Short-term goal: reopen the gallery successfully in our new place with a group show in August. Long-term goals: identify viable markets, encourage creativity, give young artists opportunities, help with specific issues facing our senior artists, and invest in advertising and online promotions. Aug. 4-28: our opening group show: “Scene Again.” Upcoming solo shows include John Beardman’s “Accidental Faces–Incidental Faces” Sept. 28-Oct. 16.

Denise Adler, Pictor Gallery

Pictor Gallery is brand new; not having a history gives us freedom to make our own rules, think outside the box, foster a more intimate experience with today’s art lovers. The work we show is diverse: artist work in a wide variety of mediums and styles, from traditional to experimental. All members (both affiliate and full) share ownership of our gallery, creating an environment where the success of the artist equals the success of the gallery and vice versa. Pictor Gallery is a labor of love; success of our gallery will be measured by the success of our member artists. Our first Invitational: TOGETHER till Saturday, August 14th. Tuesday, 9/7 - 10/2 Solo show by Gail Comes in Gallery 1 and a 3 members group show in Gallery 2. The Pictor Salon on 9/23 6-8 presenting a short film “New York Story” and Q&A with the artist/writer/filmmaker - Paul Schwartz. October 5 -30 Ken Nelson Gallery 1 and Gallery 2

Marcia Clark, Blue Mountain Gallery

Starting as Green Mountain, a commercial gallery in the late ‘60s, Blue Mountain Gallery became an artist cooperative since 1980, starting in SoHo and eventually moving to our new location in January 2021. We represent artists working in traditional and hybrid media with diverse styles, mediums and subject matter; we also host lectures, educational events, panel discussions, poetry readings and concerts which are open to the public. There is a good balance between painting, group outreach and shared management involved in running the gallery. We hope to maintain a strong gallery and online presence, welcoming and encouraging diverse viewpoints, as we have done throughout our history. Along with our solo exhibitions, we continue to expand our online offerings, as well as continuing to share interviews and presentations. G&S



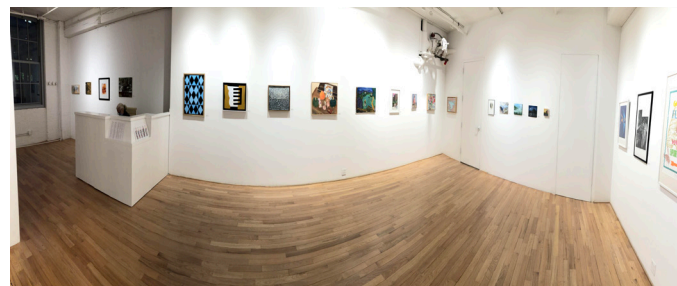
Viridian Artists viridianartist.com



Noho M55 55mercergallery.com Artist: Hiroko Wada



Pictor Gallery picktorgallery.com
Artist: Kathleen Gefel



Blue Mountain Gallery bluemountaingallery.org

The Visionary Assemblages of Nancy Staub Laughlin

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.



"Flowering, Froth and Flurries," pastel on paper, photograph, 28 x 36 inches

The exhibition title "Sparkle," as a noun, verb, and or adjective is an understatement for the mysterious and exuberant worlds that beckon from Nancy Staub Laughlin's pastel-and-photography assemblages. Prismatic gems hover and tumble through layers of earthly and other-worldly spaces. The sun filters through clouds and suffuses the sea and its effervescent whitecaps. Marble-like globes harbor rainbows. Brilliant flashes burst from black shadows. Dazzling flowers and snowflakes mingle with opalescent beads. A phosphorescent skyscape blazes over a cerulean sea. Colors, dense or feathery, shimmer in ever-changing light.

Entranced by their "translucency and glow," Laughlin has made pastels her primary medium. She mixes them to achieve a range of

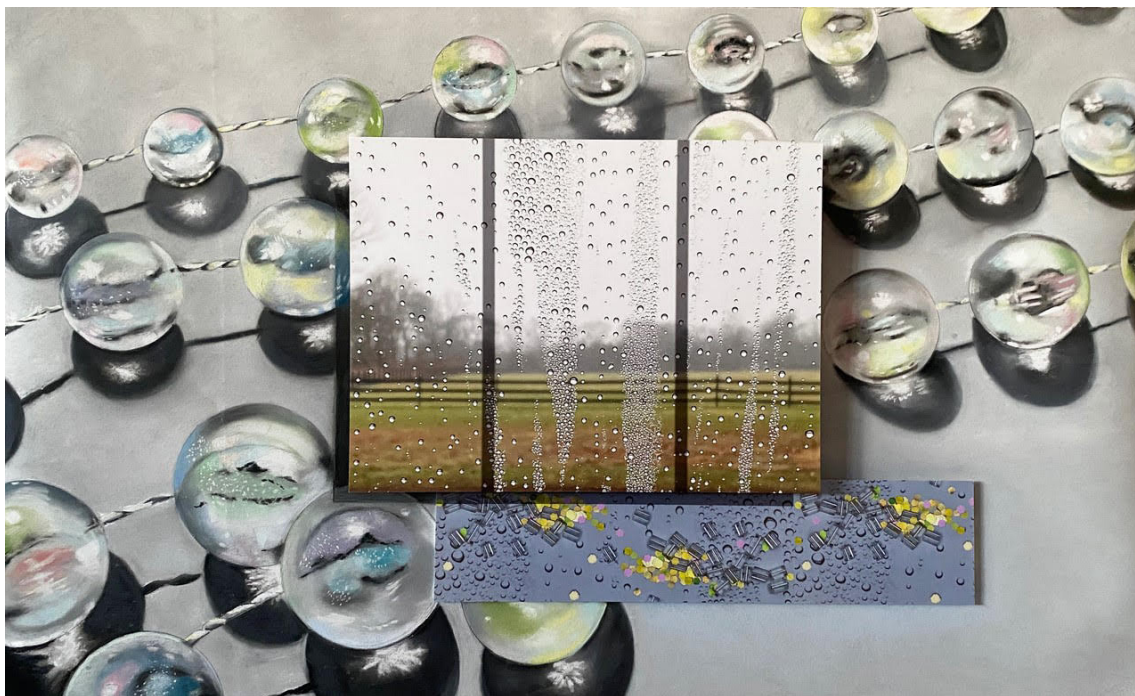
colors, choosing the proper degree of hardness in multiple layers, and blending with her fingers.

She instills each painting with spirited color, light, and motion reminding me of Venetian Rococo artist, Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757) who developed methods for binding pastels into sticks, achieving virtuoso rendering of the medium. She advised her clients to safeguard their fine-grained portraits on paper with newly-available cast-plate glass. I can imagine her smiling if she heard Nancy Staub Laughlin's humorous comment: "I always joke that I may have rubbed off my fingerprints from so many years of blending."

In her newest works, Laughlin merges her own photographs with the pastel at about a half inch from the paper, adding thresholds that invite us into imaginary universes. While

she takes great care in arranging what she calls her props—which include "a collection of mirrors..., glass objects in every shape, sheer fabrics, baubles, and sparkles"—the works have a convincing spontaneity, as natural forms ebb and flow freely among man-made ones. She sometimes places her objects outdoors in sunlit tanks of water and observes the effects on color, shape, and contrasts. Alertness to light's subtleties allows her to capture "even a glimmer of a reflection of shimmering water." Although she refers to her compositions as "still lifes," nothing is still. Everywhere light radiates serenely or dances energetically, illuminating even pitch-black places.

In *The Color of Precipitation*, refraction from a multi-faceted gem with Laughlin's typically enigmatic proportions creates escaping white



"The Sparkling Drops of Rain," pastel on paper, mounted photographs, 24 x 39 inches

triangles that transform into a cascade of dots, glinting over an undulating field that evokes a sea or pool. The dots drift upward. Or, perhaps downward, magically transforming into sparkling glass? Within the floating blue rectangle are colorful striated origami-like forms. A kaleidoscopic half-moon of jewels flickers below. Shadows meld with the atmosphere, and delicate colors remind us of nature's fragility. The painting embodies optics, chromatics, geometry, and—most compelling—fantasy. But luminosity is the creative force at the heart of all Laughlin's illusions, giving us scenes that reveal the wondrousness all around us.

We see *The Sparkling Drops of Rain* through a triple-pane window, as even a hidden sun brings light to the rain and fog. A hazy field of colors and shapes lies beyond the window's transparent shadow. Strings of glassy beads—reflecting a silvery landscape—surge toward us. Puffs of brilliant white glow from their impenetrably-dark shadows. The

looming spheres contrast with the naturalistic view from the windows, recalling Laughlin's comment that "...landscapes serve as a natural counter balance or juxtaposition to the glitter, sequins, and sparkle..." The background's gently coruscating gray attests to Laughlin's artistry: "You can erase, but not too much because it affects the 'tooth' of the paper. I use an etching paper called Stonehenge. It absorbs the pastel beautifully and allows many layers...after completion... the pastel is so blended, it becomes part of the paper."

In *Flowering, Froth, and Flurries* a firmament embellished with shadowy aquamarine-beads partly obscures the wind-swept clouds and scintillating waves of a sun-drenched seascape. At one corner, a blue flower overlaps a garden. Pearly globes (planetary orbs, shooting stars, or snow?) wander along astronomical pathways (or among bare tree branches). The sunny beach, the boundless star-lit night sky, and the gleaming flower petals may feel

restful or exciting. Nonetheless, they are strangely familiar, interlacing glittering jewels with water, glowing beads with snowflakes, and free-floating bits of incandescent color. Laughlin's greatest gift is to embrace us in a fluid totality. We may experience unpredictable proximities, see mirage-like vistas, and be uncertain about whether we are enveloped by the sun or the moon, but we are always traveling in light.

In Nancy Staub Laughlin's pastels we are linked to a timeless dimension in which objects are assembled according to ineffable laws. Her dream-like still lifes are composed of delightful surprises that both question and enhance everyday reality. *G&S*

nancystaublaughlin.com
Recently seen at the
Carter Burden Gallery
carterburdengallery.org



Chenggong Township

Taiwan in Green, Blue and Yellow

by Sébastien Aurillon

How can one not fall in love with beautiful Taiwan? Shaped like a sweet potato and barely bigger than Maryland, this island located just south of China is a lush gem, hidden in the Pacific. Its growing fame as the “food hub” of northeast Asia, with its night markets and street vendors, its vibrant history and modern infrastructure, has encouraged an increase in incoming tourists within the past few years. It is also successfully competing to be the art center of Asia.

I arrived in Taipei in early March. Covid-19 meant that there was a strict three-week quarantine period; two weeks locked up in my small studio and a week where only grocery shopping and small errands were permitted. This however allowed me to contact and prepare to meet with the artists, galleries, museums and art fairs.

PONT D'ART PUBLISHING

Datong District, Taipei
pontdartpublishing.com

The first person I met was Bogu Chen, founder of Pont D'Art Publishing which focuses on art books and contemporary art.

As an *éminence grise* in the art field, Chen shared some facts about the Art Market: Of 600 to 1000 graduating students, only 5% make “art related money.” However, the state renovates landmark buildings which are rented and made available as art galleries. Also the government provides grants which often only cover art materials and expenses.

Many of the university scholars of Taiwan have studied Social and Aesthetic theories at universities in Paris, resulting in a similarity in

shows seen in Paris and Taiwan. According to Chen 60% of the art found in Taiwan galleries is Japanese, Chinese and Korean. Consequently, the Aesthetic style that emerges in Taiwan is a result of a combination of foreign influences.

LIN CHI-WEI

Paris, linchiwei.com

My next contact Lin Chi-Wei was a Taiwanese transdisciplinary artist, trained in literature, anthropology and media art whose work has been exhibited in the Pompidou center. As a result of his keen interest in “sound Composing, he wrote a book titled “Beyond Sound Art” in which he researches what sounds were like before the 6th century. He says, “Music is a ritual to organize societies.” He explores folklore culture and integrates sound, ritual and the participation of the audience.

CHINI GALLERY

Zhongshan District, Taipei
chinigallery.com

Being Spiritually inclined, my first gallery opening was for a show by Nick Dong titled “Mandala” at the Chini Gallery. A soft sound is heard from the main piece, “Scented Flower,” a multi-layered gold mandala, with each petal rotating in different directions. In its center, a magical mirror shows mesmerising patterns of lights. In another captivating work titled “Inside-Out-Cosmos,” a central brass star rhythmically rises and falls inviting the viewer to experience the cosmos.

Dong, a Taiwanese American conceptual metalsmith and mixed-



“Scented Flower” by Nick Dong

media sculptor is based in California who identifies himself as a 21st-century continuation of Wen-ren 文人, the Chinese cultural lineage of intellect-scholars.

LIANG GALLERY

Neihu District, Taipei
lianggalleries.com

Liang Gallery, founded 30 years ago by Claudia Liang and her husband is a key player in the Taiwan art scene.

Located in the affluent neighborhood of Neihu, Liang Gallery showcases artists from the early 1920s to post WWII –as well as emerging contemporary artists. Unlike other Taiwanese galleries, Liang’s focus on local artists has helped build a reputation as one of the leading galleries in the country.

“Since the beginning, we have been lucky to keep increasing the number of artists we collaborate



Liang Gallery

with. Steady relationships with older established artists have secured both our sales and the reputation of the brand. It has also helped us expand our business overseas. The art business in Taiwan has been booming for the past three decades yet some galleries have had difficulties maintaining relationships with their artists,” shared Liang. A common practice in Taiwan is for galleries to provide a monthly stipend for their artists.

The gallery opened another space in Hong-Kong and is hoping to develop its international presence by keeping on “doing what they already do but make it better,” Claudia added.

GALERIE GRAND SIÈCLE

Songshan District, Taipei
changsgallery.com.tw

Another Gallery owned by Richard Chang mostly represents Asian artists, largely Taiwanese with some Japanese, Korean, Indonesian and a few French, focusing on solo exhibitions.

Since collectors have not been able to leave the country during Covid, they have focused on buying from local galleries. Grand Siècle only represents contemporary artists and participates with other galleries in art fairs in Germany, London and Italy, but he confesses that the US market is more complicated for Taiwanese galleries.

Chang also organizes two art fairs in Taiwan, one in Kaohsiung, the second in Taipei. About 40-50 galleries participate in the fair, both in a hotel and in a warehouse near Pier 2 in Kaohsiung.

EACH MODERN

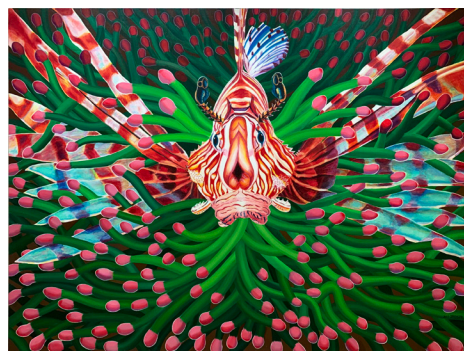
Xiny District, Taipei
eachmodern.com

Nestled in the trendy neighborhood of Xiny, Each Modern gallery concentrates on photography work. Gallery manager Lan Chunghsuan wants to show the great potential of Asian photography, rather than only presenting the American or European perspectives. “Unlike in the US, photography is less collected by art buyers, unless you’re at the top level.... parents pass on their own taste, habits and understanding of collecting art and they usually start by collecting paintings and sculptures, photographs are sort of the secondary option.” However, the gallery is regularly invited to take part in museum shows, foundations and festivals where they present mostly photography.

The gallery is owned by Ms. Huang Ya-Chi but Chunghsuan selects the art work. The relationships with the artists are the result of years of close cooperation. Taiwan is a small market, and the gallery usually finds artists through existing connections and galleries often compete against each other to poach high-profile artists. The gallery has few young artists, those amongst the gallery roster range from 31 to 50 years of age.

Their last show comprised of an American and two German artists, an effort by the gallery to regularly present artwork from artists worldwide, including some based in New York. Apart from Taipei, the gallery also participates in art fairs in Shanghai, Japan and Hong Kong.

Another fact worth mentioning is that unlike the popular view that online business is booming, this gallery has had a complete opposite experience. “We have not sold much on those platforms recently. Unless it is a top 2% to 3% galleries, I really question how well the rest do online nowadays.” He concluded our conversation by sharing that “Being a photographer myself, I admit that running a business and being creative is a time consuming process for me.”



York Hsiao

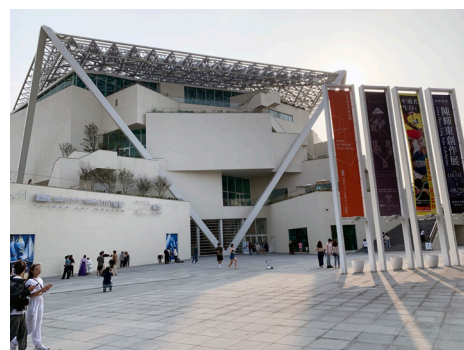
TAINAN ART MUSEUM I & 2

Tainan City, tnam.museum

Located on the southwest coast of the island, Tainan is a quaint historical city that used to be the capital of Taiwan back in the 17th century. Today this bustling city welcomes into its midst an art museum split into two huge buildings.

The Tainan Art Museum I is a formal and stern building dedicated to modern art. During my visit in early April, I was mesmerized by the works of York Hsiao, a once very active Taiwanese artist who died in 2019. The founder of many art organizations, he spent half his life promoting artists and the other half creating art himself. During the exhibition I found myself transported by the whimsical figures and colors of his paintings, especially as I was walking through the suggestive themes of “Chinese Characters,” “Fairy Tales,” “Landscapes” and “Primitive Desires.” Other rooms showed modern sculptures and mixed media art.

The Tainan Art Museum 2 situated just a few streets away is a striking ultra-modern building the size of an entire block. This city



Tainan Art Museum

owned museum with a restaurant and a café, is entirely devoted to Taiwanese contemporary art and is a must-see for art lovers visiting the island.

1839 CONTEMPORARY GALLERY

Da-an District, Taipei, 1839cg.com

This article would not be complete without the mention of another gallery exclusively dedicated to the photographic art form. Edward Chiu Ph.D. the owner and curator of 1839 Gallery, studied photography at Tokyo Art University and got his Masters degree in San Francisco. Opened in 2009, the current space has shown international and national artists.

According to Chiu, Asian artists rarely have opportunities to be seen overseas, so not only is he giving them a chance to be selected, but also a way to encourage them to show what they have to the world. “Unfortunately, collectors in Taiwan tend to purchase art for decorative purposes, while people overseas see it more as an investment.”

A very busy man, Chiu does not have time to continue his own photography. “If I was still a photographer I would be focusing on myself only while I prefer to assert my influence via the gallery and by being an active part of the education system,” he added. On top of an already full schedule, he has been organizing a photography art fair since 2011, Taiwan Photo Fair. With over 80% of the participants being international artists, each year has had a different theme, the first year for instance was all about black and white photography, the second year the focus was on colors.

“It is encouraging to see that the younger generation is buying more photographs, unlike older generations which are more interested in paintings and sculptures,” he concluded.

SALVADOR MARCO

Sanyi, Miaoli County
salvadmarmarco.com

My encounter with Salvador



Salvador Marco

Marco was a lucky one. I was having coffee with an influential curator in a lovely bakery in Taipei when he suggested I take a trip to Sanyi, a city situated in the middle of the mountains, where I could meet Marco his artist friend, a Spanish sculptor and photographer who had moved to Taiwan with his wife a decade ago. After a few hours on the local train enjoying views of the countryside, I was introduced to Marco and his studio, a big open space located en plein air where the sculptor works on very large stones.

I would define his sculptures, as brut yet extremely refined, emanating strength, beauty and a certain vibration, as if there was life in them. Also gifted as a photographer, Marco has set up his own showroom a few minutes away from his studio, where skillfully framed wide prints of naturescapes cover the walls. For the last 10 years, Marco's tireless work has enabled him to establish himself as a recognized artist, represented by top galleries in the country. His recent exhibition “Tranquil stone and landscape” that took place at the Google headquarters in Taipei, was in equal measures of grandiose by the size of the artwork and the success it brought him.

ART TAIPEI

Songshan District, Taipei
art-taipei.com

A big part of the business in the art world is done with the help of art fairs and Taiwan is no exception with a number of notable national and international events. Amongst them, “Art Taipei” stands out.

Launched in 1992, it is the longest-running and the biggest non-profit organization in Taiwan with over 123 subscription members. It manages and operates three different art fairs: Art Taipei in the Asia Pacific market, Art Taichung and Art Tainan also a hotel fair. Most of the events are supported by the government or city halls, including the provision of fair sites, relevant resources and marketing.

Taiwan is a small country, everyone knows everyone here, hence the organization is trying to support them equally. And to make sure things are running smoothly they have a standard mode of operations to promote each gallery uniformly.

The hotel fairs mainly exist to promote local artwork, with no foreign representation. However, Taipei Dangdai, is much more international with foreign galleries and artists in attendance, although covid has limited attendance recently. Lately only people from Japan and Korea are able to visit the country. In addition to the covid issues, politics means that Chinese galleries cannot come to Taiwan. Yet, the art business has been flourishing in recent years and right now things are looking very promising in Taiwan. There are more international galleries and artists requesting to take parts in the fairs each year, with over 130 participants on average yearly.

UNIQUEPHOTO GALLERY

Hsinchu City, uniquephoto.com.tw

Lan Chunghsuan's work being regularly on display at UP Gallery, it felt normal that I would go take a look at it. Located off the beaten path in Hsinchu, roughly an hour drive southwest of Taipei, the art space is solely dedicated to exhibiting photography and moving-image works –one of the very few in the country with such a concept. The gallery of about 6,000 sq. ft., located throughout three floors of a beautiful townhouse, used to be the home of Mr. Yichia Liao –the founder, also a

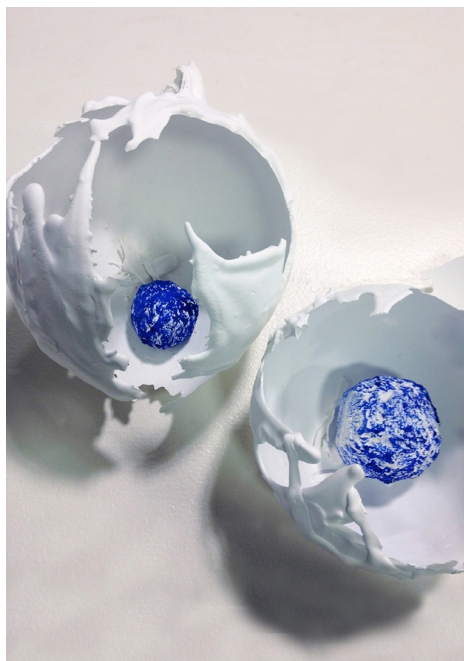
photographer— who had foreseen the need for a great platform to exhibit photography in Taiwan.

Impressed by the professional quality of the art work, I was lead by Agnes Liao —the current Artistic Director— to give me a very insightful tour of the place. Agnes, a graduate from Sotheby's Institute of Art in London specializes in the field of contemporary art photography. Among an impressive array of artists I was particularly drawn by the works of Ronghui Chen, a Chinese photographer based in Shanghai and New Haven. Focusing on China's urbanization while usually representing people and wide urban landscapes, his raw and intense vision grabbed me by the guts.

CHING-WEN TSAI

New York, chingwentsai.com

This article and this trip could have never occurred without the kind assistance and generosity of Ching-Wen Tsai, a Taiwanese artist based in New York City whom I met before I left for Taiwan. She has been exploring the body-mind-spirit theme for years and her work combines the training in Western painting and interdisciplinary sculpture with



Ching-Wen Tsai

Summer 2021

expertise in advertising and graphic design. Using primarily mixed-media installations and sculpture, Tsai seeks to awaken interest in the spiritual world's mysteries by giving physical forms to none-existences and redefining stereotypes.



Fo Guang Shan Monastery

EPILOGUE

I could not write about all the art venues that I have enjoyed, but I would like to mention just a few more. On Penghu, (the largest island closest to the west side of the country) a Japanese style building harbors the beautiful and somewhat confidential Hung Ken-Shen Art Museum. In Tainan, the Fine Art Center located in the Anping District is a stunning commercial space with a great selection of contemporary art works (including a Pink Panther and a Babar by New York artist Katherine Bernhard, that particularly drew my attention). And lastly, if you find yourselves wandering north of Kaohsiung, the Fo Guang Shan Monastery, aside from being the most grandiloquent Buddhist temple I have ever seen, has the most incredible art galleries filled with probably the top craft artists of the country. The Taipei Fine Arts Museum is also a must-see venue.

Because *Gallery&Studio* is not



Hung Ken-Shen Art Museum

a travel magazine, I will not linger about how lush the green vegetation is in many parts of the country, or how many shades of blue I enjoyed while staying near the Pacific Ocean, yet the consistent reassuring presence of the yellow tiles on the temple rooftops are a constant reminder of how much art is a vital part of everyday life in Taiwan. *G&S*



Kenting

A longer version of this article is available online at <https://www.galleryand.studio/2021/07/18/taiwan>

photographs by Sébastien Aurillon

Empty Box of Matches

The Infinite and the Mundane: fugue and variations

by Woody Sempliner



Mr. Fresh Haircut wants to conform. All that stands in his way is the universe. Or, put another way, Mr. Fresh Haircut wants to be an implementation consultant but senses that he is becoming the universe instead.

In *Empty Box of Matches*, Joshua Alexander depicts the world of the middle management English office worker in a way that is as grim as one would expect but surreally so. Mr. Fresh Haircut, played and filmed by Alexander, so earnestly emulates the style, language and pace of business but is so basically, innately, comically ill-suited for any place in it. Why this can be funny is telling.

While looking at some old photos of me at a visually ludicrous time in my life, a niece, laughing hysterically, said that I appeared not to have “gotten the memo.” Never having been a memo guy, I got her to explain that the term referred to someone not fitting in, like coming to the office in a suit and tie on Casual Friday (that’s funny, right?). Meanwhile, Mr. Fresh Haircut’s awkward lurching into a

business conference replete with name tags and complimentary breakfast can seem, to the never cubicled, no stranger than his accidental glimpses of infinity; but Fresh Haircut’s look of bafflement and wonder when the two overlap is at once wrenching and funny whether you’ve gotten the memo or not.

Filmmaker and actor, Joshua Alexander, appears to have laid eyes on a memo or two. His mastery of corporate speak is stunning and, as framed in his graceful, somber-hued, exquisitely timed filmmaking, funny. Keenly aware that a joke founded in alienation and pain is best told with a straight face, Alexander adheres mostly to a lugubrious tone in setting and mood. The close-cropped Mr. Fresh Haircut, is dressed, like everyone else in the film, in an off-the-rack black suit, white shirt and black tie. He emerges from his apartment in a house on a major thoroughfare to hunt for his place in the world/universe in modern, red-brick, just-off-the-motorway corporate parks. In transit there is the Best One

convenience store for sustenance — tea/coffee, cigarettes, booze — and a graffitied concrete underpass that serves as a wormhole to other worlds both corporate and astral.

Many artworks are described as gemlike but few merit the analogy. While *Empty Box of Matches* is as unified as carborundum, its disparate facets link up in ways that reveal and bemuse. Images, settings, phrases and names recur but in shapeshifting contexts: the lipstick stain on Mr. Fresh Haircut’s takeout coffee; the sun dappled (in any weather) pine forest at the end of an alley, on the bathroom mirror, in the shadows next to a conference pie chart presentation on “how visibly engaged has your CEO been in your most recent transformations”; and, of course, the image of distant galaxies on an empty matchbox relating practically and cosmically to Haircut’s ever unlit cigarette. The names — Kieth (spelled that way), Orchid, Kedridge in Dorasai — weave in and out of Mr. Fresh Haircut’s experiential miasma like predatory fish in a kelp forest.

“My soul is the shape of a panic attack.”

“... Kedridge in Dorasai,” as Fresh Haircut explains to Kieth, “that is the K.I.D. file as in ‘the kid,’ or it may be under Orchid as in the flower or the universe.”

That I can cite these specific elements betrays my having seen *Empty Box of Matches* more than once. I already miss the more generalized fun of the first viewing when the piece could sink in as a whole, its disparate parts still blurred and tangled together, the mind clinging to the tortured hilarity of lines like:

“There’s a security guard complaining about a lack of tea breaks somewhere in a dark corner of my mind.”;

or,

“I’ve seen you in the unreal journeys I’ve taken across simulated worlds.

You’re the pixillated ghost, the shadow of my death!”; but then I might still be unaware that Alexander not only filmed this movie and plays its main character but also plays every character that appears with him, often in the same frame — a feat of intricate craftsmanship in terms of both acting (especially acting) and filmmaking. The music is

original and Alexander’s as well as are all the voices except for a robotic female voice heard while Mr. Fresh Haircut is on hold, deep in the metaphorical woods. And this music, barely noticeable, as well it

all-I-ever-wanted soliloquies — in his low-pitched inner voice.

“....I’d write poetry in my man cave. Maybe one day someone would discover I was a genius. At work colleagues would come to

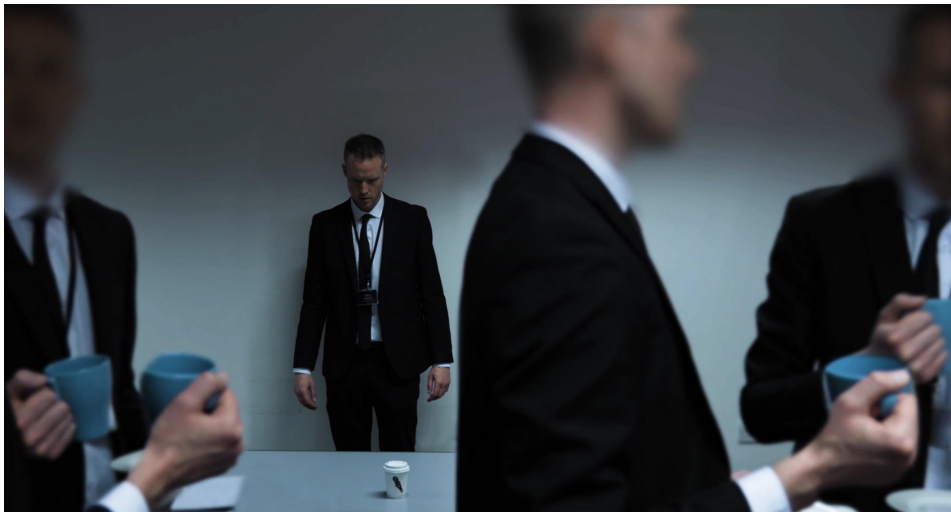
me for advice or a chat and a laugh. On weekends I would take them for long drives in my car that would glide down motorways as if floating on a bed of air. I’d have a nice fitted proper suit, my own suit, so that I’d walk into the office looking like the dog’s bollocks every single day....even then I’d still know, despite my lifetime being a mere glimpse of a vast and mysterious universe experienced briefly between two eternities of oblivion, I’d still know that all I ever wanted, all I ever really would have wanted was

to have been...an implementation consultant.

The universe had other plans for me.”

Alas.

Empty Box of Matches, 35 mins., can be found at vimeo.com/436541848
Go there



“Empty Box of Matches” screen shots

should be on first viewing, covers a widish emotional spectrum on closer examination. Ranging from tense, darkly ominous tones early on to a lush, hopeful passage that lends a quality of celestial peace to a landscaped corporate campus explored by Alexander’s camera while Mr. Fresh Haircut describes a vision of success — one of several

Ballet for a Better World

by Marina Hadley



Turtle group, left to right: Claire Pennington, Lana Hankinson (as Fergus), Gabrielle Corrigan, Giorgia Picano, Olivia Gintel Rudkhevich and Felicia Isotti

Benjamin Briones thought he would be an industrial designer. That would have been acceptable to his parents who were both lawyers. He had even completed his first year of architectural studies in Mexico City. Then accidentally he was introduced to professional dance. He went to a dance audition only to be polite to someone who had been “nice” to him. He was instantly captured by dance. He loved what he saw. He did not understand it, but it spoke to him.

Who would have realized that this serendipitous event would be the catalyst for the Benjamin Briones Ballet company in New York City? A company that would ultimately teach us about how to be awake in the world in which we live.

Dance was not entirely foreign to him. In Mexico, it has always been acceptable for men and women to dance socially, to participate in folk and local dances, but to become a professional dancer can still today, be

deemed to be inappropriate. It was certainly frowned upon in Mexico of the 1980s.

He was financially cut-off by his parents when he decided to change course and study dance full time. He went to several different schools to catch-up, as he had come to dance at a late age. Having enrolled in the National School of Classical Ballet, he danced ballet in the morning and contemporary in the afternoon at the National School of Contemporary Dance. He also went on to study at the Royal Academy of Dance. It was not an easy option, despite getting free tuition and scholarship, he had to find work to support himself. He became a carpenter and welder to design and build furniture at the weekends. He was quite successful. He could have become a furniture maker! However, dancing was his focus.

After graduating from the three schools, he found work in Texas, first in El Paso and then Austin. It was the first of many transitions he made as

he strove to learn and improve his skills and broaden his repertoire. He learnt about dance from teachers and other dancers, but also from choreographers and directors. Along the way, he discovered how to design and create dance costumes, mentored by a Mexican costume mistress who taught him to sew and speak English.

It was a wonderful 16-year dancing career, not as long as he would have liked, but he knew all along that due to his late start, that he had to make the most of every opportunity. He had loved dancing, particularly ballet.

He made the transition from performer to ballet teacher and ballet master, by being at the right place at the right time. He had already been teaching ballet to children while still performing, when while nursing a badly broken foot, (on which he had danced 12-14 performances before he realized it was broken,) he filled in for an absent company ballet mistress. After a few days of well received

classes, he took over. He also became the resident choreographer.

He had always known that he wanted to be a choreographer. He loved this as much as dancing. He continued to work for various dance companies, but he started to chafe at the restrictions of working for others. He realized that he had to start his own ballet company. There was nothing else to do, but to just DO IT!

He started Benjamin Briones Ballet in 2012 in New York City. He was already a choreographer and a dance master. He knew how to organize schedules, run rehearsals, design and create dances, costumes and stage sets. He had even studied lighting design along the way. He started by creating projects for dance festivals. He called on friends and students whom he knew liked his choreography. He was also supported by Fractured Atlas – an umbrella organization that provides fiscal support for artistic projects. This allowed him to get started and focus on his creative skills until he was joined by Chiara Gorodesky, as Executive Director, who came with a wealth of legal and management experience in the dance world. He has created a company that encourages collaboration and includes many choreographers (eleven currently) and guest dancers.

The dances that Briones creates are elegant and fluid, full of emotion and storytelling. His skillful stagecraft, in setting the scene, the lighting, and dressing the dancers, enhances the movement set to the music, poetry or narration. He is an intuitive choreographer. He doesn't preplan or outline. He just creates. He allows his needs and feelings to drive his creativity. Seeing a bird drinking out of a water bowl he would want to tell the story of a beautiful bird, but he would also be driven to highlight the issue of pollution which could be affecting the quality of the water. He believes that the arts have an



Gabrielle Corrigan and Giorgia Picano

“obligation to communicate what is happening in this world, by making people aware” of social, economic, and natural world issues.



left to right: Gabrielle Corrigan, Felicia Isotti, Claire Pennington, Olivia Gintel, Benjamin Briones, Lana Hankinson, Chiara Gorodesky and Giorgia Picano

He feels this responsibility deeply and it is the motivation for his latest production, *Fergus*. Chiara Gorodesky, who also advises the Turtle Conservancy brought the

idea to him. It is the first full length ballet about turtle conservation. A story of a mythical creature who is a cross between a land tortoise and a water turtle who experiences many adventures in search of his own identity and his role in the world. It seems to resemble Briones' own life experiences in his quest for dance.

Based on the children's book *Fergus the Turtus* by Sebastian Morley, it is an emotional dance for the whole family, to help raise awareness of the need for wildlife conservation. Advised by the Fergus Advisory Committee which consists of leading wildlife experts and organizations, the project will come to the stage as a two-act ballet in Summer 2022.

Briones wants you to open your eyes, see through your neighbors' eyes and see through your heart. See how each of us can be better. His message is clear in his dances and his company, Benjamin Briones Ballet. G&S

photographs by Hisae Aihara
www.benjaminbrionesballet.org

Fakes!

by Norman A. Ross

In 1989, upon entering the Pushkin Museum in Moscow for the first time, I was totally shocked to discover that Michelangelo's David, which I had seen in Florence, had been moved to Moscow. At first I thought it was perhaps on loan, only to discover fairly quickly that I was looking at a plaster cast. *Quelle surprise!* A little further on I was confronted by Michelangelo's Tomb of Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici, with the statues of Night and Day, that also had formerly been in Florence. But of course, it was also a copy. In fact, the museum was full of copies, in addition to its world-class collection of originals, including works by Rembrandt, Canaletto, Munch, Monet, Van Gogh, Matisse, Chagall, and many more. (Note that the David on the Piazza Della Signoria in Florence is also a copy; the original is kept in the nearby Galleria dell'Accademia. So most visitors to Florence are also seeing a copy.)

As most Russians cannot travel abroad, the copies give them the opportunity to see what to most people look very much like the originals. A significant portion of the collections of both the Pushkin Museum and The Hermitage was acquired in the 1920s by the Soviets when they nationalized the private collections of the most important Russian collectors—the Iusupovs, the Stroganovs, the Shchukin brothers, Ivan Morozov, et al. Some of the nationalized works were sold to Western collectors, including Andrew Mellon, who later donated his collection, under duress due to tax issues, to what became the National Gallery in Washington, DC. That's how the National Gallery acquired its Da Vinci.

The first time I saw a collection of copies was in 1979 at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh (and most people in Pittsburgh also can't travel around the world). Next, an even greater surprise was the Victoria and Albert's copies in London! Another David by Michelangelo! At first I was horrified, but I realized that it was in the service of providing an educational experience to millions of people



La Marseillaise (Head of the Genius of Liberty) Plaster copy in the Pushkin Museum

who were never going to see the originals. Twenty years ago, for instance, I saw another such collection, in the tiny Latvian National Museum of Art in Riga, and I learned that in the 18th and 19th centuries, collections of plaster casts could be found in most European cities, but I'm not aware of others. If they still exist, I don't think they are on view, like the bulk of the holdings of most major museums.

The Carnegie's Hall of Sculpture, according to their website, was originally designed to house Andrew Carnegie's personal collection of 69 casts of Egyptian, Near Eastern, Greek and Roman sculptures. The design of the hall was inspired by the Parthenon in Athens. The Caryatid porch of the Erechtheum, near the Parthenon, is one of the most copied, painted and photographed monuments in the world."But what we see there nowadays are copies. And having seen both the originals in place and, more recently, the copies, I don't think there was one iota of a different experience.

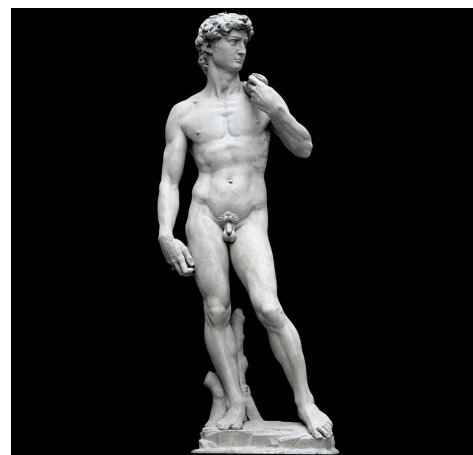
The Victoria and Albert Museum's collection of copies, like those of the Pushkin and the Carnegie Museums, exists to make foreign works of art readily available to locals, even though Brits seem to do a lot of traveling. But coming upon them while visiting the museum does leave one puzzled. However, in the



*Tomb of Giuliano di Lorenzo de' Medici.
Plaster copy in the Pushkin Museum*



Elgin Marbles (The Real Deal)



*Plaster copy of David, Courtesy of the
Victoria & Albert Museum*

Musée National des Monuments Français, the French have created a very special collection of reproductions of French architectural monuments, including famous statues, parts of churches and portals of major cathedrals—Chartres, Reims, Amiens, Rouen and Notre Dame. The idea is to maintain protected copies of these magnificent works in the face of the constant deterioration of the originals due to natural causes, and as in the case of Notre Dame, fires. The copies can be used for planning restorations. It's not a museum often visited by tourists, or even by Parisians, but the concept is spectacular and demonstrates the French commitment to French culture and their national patrimony.

Roman collectors from as early as the fourth century B.C. amassed great plaster-cast collections of recognized masterworks, with the idea that a copy of a great work was superior to a mediocre original. In the same period, Greek and Roman artists began creating marble and bronze copies of famous Greek statues to meet the great commercial demand for such works as the Roman middle class became more affluent. Sadly, original Greek statues made from tin, and later Bronze copies of tin and marble originals, were mostly melted down for the production of armaments and as building materials. It's the reason the Met, the Louvre, the British Museum, the Hermitage, and other major museums, more often have Roman copies of Greek works than original Greek statues, although most museum visitors are hardly aware of this unless they read the labels. And of course we are thrilled to see these 2000-year-old copies, many of which are magnificent.

Underlying all of this is a totally separate question—patrimony. How is it that there are so many Greek and Roman statues in great museums outside Greece and Italy? The Met and other museums have lately been returning dribs and drabs, while Greece has long been demanding the return by the British Museum of the marble statues that formerly adorned the Parthenon, and are now known as The Elgin Marbles. Meanwhile, at The Acropolis Museum there are plaster copies of some of the Elgin Marbles!

Another case in point is the wonderful collection in

the Pushkin Museum dubbed Priam's Treasure, consisting of Greek gold jewelry smuggled in the 19th century out of Hisarlik, Turkey, the presumed site of ancient Troy, by Heinrich Schliemann, a German amateur archaeologist. Schliemann thought he was rummaging through the ruins of Helen's Troy. He was in roughly the right place, but he was in the wrong century, and she left no inventory of her jewelry, so it's not clear whose gold he found. He is especially famous for taking a photo of his wife wearing some of the jewelry, all of which he brought to Berlin. With considerable chutzpah, Germany considered it German. However, the Russians "relocated" the collection to Russia toward the end of World War II, to compensate, they said, for the incredible amount of destruction Nazi Germany had wrought on Russia, and for the many cultural treasures the Nazis had destroyed.

The Russians kept it a secret for 50 years, but it's now one of the most popular attractions in the museum, while the Germans have only a few bits and pieces, and some old photographs (in the Neues Museum in Berlin). Thus, treasures from an ancient Greek city, dug up in present-day Turkey and brought to Germany, are now mostly in Russia. (Around the same time that the Pushkin first displayed Priam's Gold, The Hermitage presented a huge collection of Western art that was also acquired in Germany as spoils, dubbing it "Hidden Treasures." Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of The Hermitage, in announcing the show, claimed that he had only learned quite recently that the horde was in their basement. He said that the prior director had never mentioned it to him because he had been sworn to secrecy by his Soviet superiors. The prior director was his father!)

So perhaps all originals should be returned to their original owners after plaster copies are made to satisfy and educate local audiences in the countries that raided other countries? *Ges*

Norman Ross has visited all of the museums mentioned in the article, generally multiple times.

The Business of Romance

An illustrated story of love and money in 1913

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.

In Frank H. Spearman's 1913 novel *Merrilie Dawes*, Arthur E. Becher's evocative artwork captivated readers drawn to stories of high society. The first illustration features a group gathered on a boat deck. The speaker is a fashionably dressed young woman in an ostrich-feather hat and a hip-length tunic with fitted sleeves over a long narrow skirt in white-on-white embroidery—widely advertised at the time as a “lingerie dress.” She is making a slightly acerbic comment upon meeting a man dressed in equally up-to-date attire: a blazer with summer-white trousers. He tilts his head rather uncertainly. The smiling woman between them wears an ornate hat and holds a beribboned umbrella. At right, a gray-haired couple—the man in a yachting cap—looks on. In the background another couple is chatting. At left, a slouching smoker in a striped jacket eyes the conversation from outside the group.

In the second illustration we see the same woman in a room of paintings and books. She rises from a desk in agitated response to a dour old man in the cutaway frock coat of an earlier generation.

Arthur E. Becher was adept at picturing dramatic but ambiguous incidents, the better to arouse a reader's curiosity. Besides giving us visual clues that this is a story about the upper class, he hints at emotions and relationships. What led up to these simmering or fiery encounters? Who is the tense newcomer? What sale could elicit such alarm? A skeptical gaze, a recoiling gesture, or a shy nod promised readers vicarious enjoyment of intrigues, quarrels, and romantic entanglements.

Spearman's novel, described as “a business of romance,” portrays “battles of financial interests...as vivid as those of armies.” The title character must wage “a terrific struggle trying to save the fortune of the man she loves.” The plot centers on 25-year-old Merrilie Dawes, the woman at the left. A New York City heiress, she preserves her father's wealth through her financial expertise. Here, she meets John Adrane, a railroad builder and investor and fiancé of her smiling friend Annie, richly maintained by the railroad fortune of her parents, at right. Merrilie's remark to Annie implies that Adrane's impending marriage guarantees him an affluent life. To the left in the garish jacket is one of Merrilie's rejected suitors, a man who regards her independence as “not feminine.”

As the story unfolds, Adrane comes to respect Merrilie's intelligence and self-confidence, and he is impressed by her mastery of the railroad industry. In deference to Annie, they try to resist falling in love. When unscrupulous Wall Street associates bankrupt



“Mr. Adrane,” she exclaimed, her eyes still on him, but her words for Annie, “seems very worthy of his good fortune.” For Merrilie Dawes, by Frank H. Spearman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913).

Arthur E. Becher (1877–1960) Oil on canvas. 22 1/2 × 16 inches. Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the estate of Frieda Becher, 1971

Adrane, Annie breaks their engagement. Merrilie rescues him by selling her family mansion to raise funds, despite her initial resistance to an advisor's suggestion that she do so, which we see in the second illustration. When her sacrifice is revealed, the grateful John proposes to Merrilie. She cleverly recoups her funds, and the couple—restored to wealth—is free to marry.

When Charles Scribner's and Sons commissioned Becher, they knew his work from his fiction illustrations

for Scribner's Magazine, among other periodicals and books.

Brought to Wisconsin as a child with his German émigré parents, Becher perfected his art through rigorous training from expatriate European painters in Milwaukee. Wanting to pursue a career as an illustrator, he studied with America's finest teacher/illustrator, Howard Pyle. We don't know if Becher and Spearman discussed the paintings beforehand but we do know that Spearman provided sparse detail about clothing or settings, both of which Becher used to create realistic images and evocative moods.

In the first illustration, Becher positions the characters in a semicircle to give us an unimpeded view of the important players. Merrilie's open stance and modest style establish her self-assurance. Adrane—literally hat in hand—appears a little abashed by Merrilie's cynical comment but maintains his dignity. The cheerful Annie is oblivious to these subtleties; her extravagant hat, pink ribbon, and flowers (which break an unrelieved white line) foreshadow her superficiality. The isolated ex-suitor's ostentatious jacket is a clue to his self-centered vanity. A cloudless day of celebration is fraught with uneasiness.

In Merrilie's home, the dark, enclosed space intensifies the dramatic confrontation. She clenches her hand, while her frustrated advisor watches. Bright white collars highlight their strained expressions. Merrilie, wearing a simple old-rose shade dress and a "low coiffure" hair style instead of an elaborate Gibson-Girl bouffant, again displays her modern but sensible approach.

The personal and professional dramas of Merrilie Dawes' industrialists reveal Frank Spearman's literary niche. By 1913, he was known as "the railroad novelist." His heroes were rugged individualists who had designed and overseen the often-dangerous day-to-day operations of the nation's Western rail system. The star of Spearman's best-selling 1906 novel *Whispering Smith* was a Colorado railroad detective of the 1870s, whose ingenuity, integrity, and—when necessary—gunfights solve cases of equipment failure, accident, and crime. *Whispering Smith* is also a gentlemanly poetry lover who respects pioneering women.

Whispering Smith's heroism was irresistible to Hollywood, and Spearman moved there in 1915. Between then and his death in 1937, he wrote screenplays for several of the 17 films derived from his books. As trains and automobiles increasingly dominated transportation, Spearman's railroad tales celebrated a mythic view of the American West that lingered even



She rose to her feet as if choking. "I will never sell it. It is needless to think of it." For Merrilie Dawes, by Frank H. Spearman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913). 1913 Arthur E. Becher (1877–1960) Oil on canvas. 22 x 15 inches. Delaware Art Museum, Gift of the estate of Frieda Becher, 1971

into the 1960s, when *Whispering Smith* inspired a 26-episode television series.

Although Spearman shared best-seller status with Zane Grey, Jack London, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Willa Cather, and Edith Wharton, his work is largely forgotten today. It was very much of his time, responsive to Americans' fascination with the history—however imaginary—of their young country. His collaboration with Arthur E. Becher in *Merrilie Dawes* a wonderful example. G&S

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An article by Tom White "From McCook to *Whispering Smith*," *Nebraska History* 87, 2006 (90-119), is a definitive overview of Spearman's life and work

Seen

by Judy Kamilhor



I arrive at an Eye and Ear clinic in Manhattan, say hello to the young woman gatekeeper, and get screened. Then I wait for the next line of defense, the security desk folk.

They're always men. They're always a little surly and seem to expect the worst. He called me sir, which I hate. Is it because of my omnipresent baseball cap, my leather jacket, my short hair, or general masculine vibe? Who knows?

As soon as I speak, he gets this sheepish look and overcorrects to call me Ma'am, which I also despise. I hate all gendered terms of politeness. I find them beyond unnecessary and wish they were not part of the obvious customer service training at every medical provider in the United States.

Next step: waiting on the long, socially distanced line to check-in. I am anxious. This line does not move forward. It sort of stands there, fidgeting, like I am, like the Post Office.

At the desk a young man says hello and asks for my pronouns. I am stunned. This has never happened

before anywhere except where I work, Brooklyn Community Pride Center.

I say THEY in capital letters. I have the luxury of choice since I use both they and she pronouns these days. I have never told a clerk that I use they pronouns before, so this is a test of the Emergency Broadcast Self-Identification System. I am curious what will happen.

After sitting in the socially distanced waiting room and seeing the nurse, who introduces herself right away as Monique, I eventually get to see the first doctor in line of the many I will see every time I go to this teaching hospital/clinic.

The beautiful Dr. F. She doesn't tell me her name; I figure it out from the many pieces of paper I receive over the course of four hours of dilation, machinery, and being talked about as if I'm not there.

"Hello, my friend," she says in lieu of introducing herself. Not bad. After a round of sticking my chin on the bright lights/big city machine, another doctor comes in to consult, possibly Dr. F's supervisor. This is the part where they talk about me

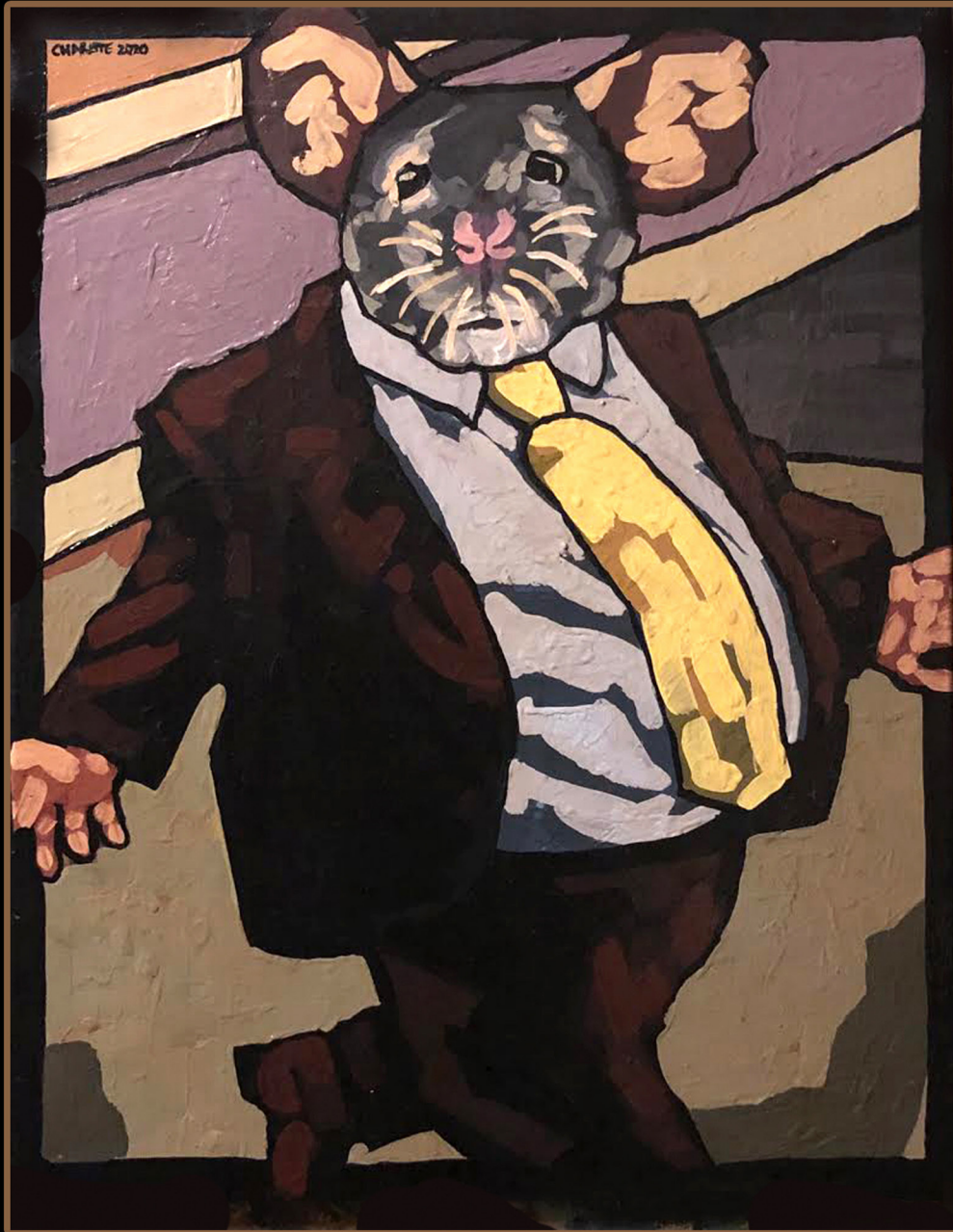
like I'm not in the room. All I hear is "she this" and "she that." And scary ophthalmological words like Uveitis, which I am unfortunately very familiar with.

After the unIntroduced supervisor leaves, I say "I was asked my pronouns by the clerk and I said they but no one is using those pronouns. And please call me by my name instead of a gendered title." She looks taken aback for a moment and then apologizes. I explain my gender identity by saying, "I'm probably the least binary person you will see all day," and she seems to understand. She thanks me for telling her, which is a lovely gesture.

The next time I go Dr. F calls me by my name and says she remembers our conversation. I feel seen. G&S

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are dedicated in memory of
Holden McCormack and edited
by Robin Goldfin.

the art of jim charette 2021



“Wha'Sa'Matta'Which-oo!?”

from the 'not as I do' series

these are not animals in suits
nor are they men with animal masks on.
they are humans...they are animals.
they are the Dollar Store Prophets.

to experience more of the art of jim charette
find Jimcharette Theambitionkillers on facebook

Dreaming at Dusk: Itzel Yard and Generative Art in the current digital world

by Maylin Pérez

Interest in cryptocurrencies has increased in the last ten years; however, it is not a recent concept but dates back to 1998 when the Chinese scientist Wei Dai proposed creating a new type of decentralized currency. Before that, in 1960, the Argentinian artists Eduardo Mac, Miguel Ángel Vidal and Ignacio Pirovano, presented the founding manifesto of the Generative Movement, during the opening of the exhibition “Arte Generativo” at Galeria Peuser in Buenos Aires. Interactive artworks with remarkable visual effects based on the lines in the composition and their relationship with space were greeted with curiosity and enthusiasm. In this way the avant-garde movement broke with static painting and produced new aesthetic forms of artistic creation through the projection of forms.

Like most artistic movements, Generative Art has gone through several iterations. One of its current variants is related to computer algorithms that are used within an autonomous system to generate works in constant development, having digital and cryptographic art as allies. The creative process is interdisciplinary, cyclical and is supported by different fields such as mathematics, physics, music, design, among others. Cryptocurrencies and the blockchains have incorporated new ways of selling and buying contemporary art and several have joined the journey.

During an international discussion about the quality of cryptographic art, its commercialization and environmental impact, the Panamanian artist Itzel Yard sold her work *Dreaming at Dusk* in May 2021 for 2 million US dollars (500 Ethereum) in the first NFT (non-fungible token) auction organized by Tor Projects on the Foundation platform. Tor Project is a non-profit organization, founded in 2006 based in the United States and it is the creator of Tor (The Onion Router), a web browser that offers anonymity, allowing journalists, politicians and people from different sectors to participate. It offers technological tools for the user to freely browse without censorship or tracking, with the mission: “To advance human rights and freedoms by creating and deploying free and open anonymity and privacy technologies, supporting their unrestricted availability and use, and furthering their scientific and popular understanding.”

To celebrate the organization's 15th year, they contacted Yard, known in the virtual world as ixshells, to commission the auctioned piece, which she created using the private cryptographic key duskgytldkxiuqc6.onion on Tor. The auction lasted 24 hours with an initial



Self Portrait

bid of 2 ETH until it reached the winning price when it was digitally transferred to its new owner, the group of collectors PleasrDAO. This makes Itzel Yard the female artist with the current highest auction price of NFT sales in the world and the highest selling artist in Panama. It is worth noting that in terms of sales worth more than a million dollars, art created by men sell for 18% more than those of women.

Is Itzel Yard's art generative, cryptographic, or digital?

Before delving into Yard's work, it is worth clarifying that there is no such classification as an NFT artist. The digital token is a non-fungible (non-changeable/non-expendable) unit of value that allows the creation of a sales certificate without the possibility of it being plagiarized. The artist markets his or her artwork with the NFT. It is not an artistic aesthetic but a way of economic exchange. There is still a lot of ambivalence, especially from people in the art world, when they talk about this topic.

Returning to Yard's work, it is defined within generative, digital, and cryptographic art. In 2017 she began to study the first two, attracted by the relationship between privacy and the human being, later she incorporated the third. Her knowledge of architecture and computer science allows her to enter a virtual universe not

“...generative, cryptographic or digital?”

subjected to abstract or figurative definitions, but intuition and sensitivity. Using programs like TouchDesigner, she creates works with a medium level of complexity that do not require many codes and are more flexible, such as Magnetic Floate (2019) or Uoon I- Alva Noto x Ryuichi Sakamoto (2021). She also uses more complex programs such as Processing in which the parameters are increased, as is the case of *Dreaming at Dusk*.

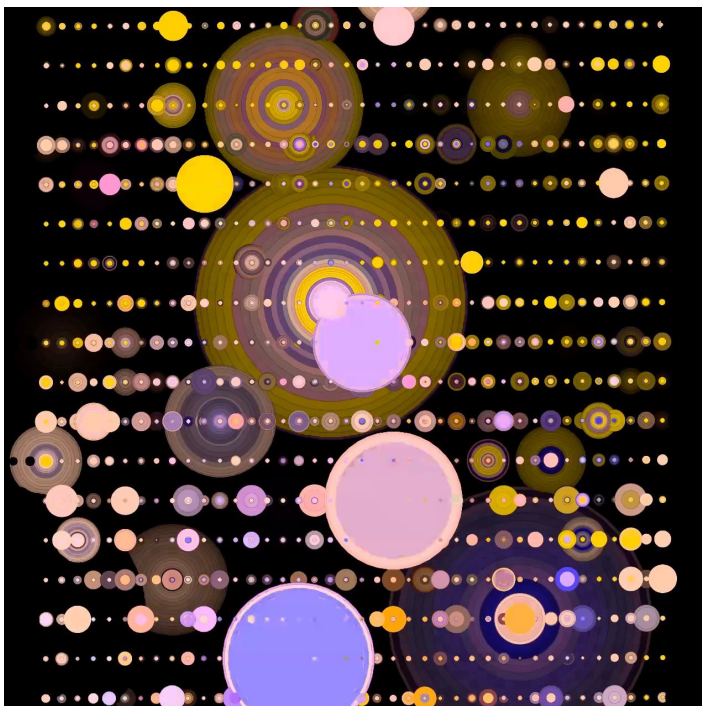
Each Yard proposal is rigorously researched with the aim of not remaining on the surface but reaching into issues such as freedom of expression, self-referentiality, mental health, among others. Her concern for human thought and the events that affect her emotions establishes a starting point for making art. She does not limit the form to the digital world, but rather mixes it with literary resources such as metaphor, music, and photography; and designs organic artworks that at first glance may represent a game with technology but have a more specific conceptual reading.

Yard has considered herself an artist for five years and it was not until just a few weeks ago that she stood out in the art world. Through social media such as Instagram and Twitter, she has shown her work and



*“Dreaming at Dusk” using TOR service key
duskgtyldkxiuqc6.onion through the TOR app*

caught the attention of foundations and institutions interested in digital art and human rights. After her success at the auction, Yard was invited to participate in another similar event organized by Christie’s Auction House and to exhibit at Unit London Contemporary Art Gallery in July. As a bridge that connects the extremes between traditional and digital contemporary art, Itzel Yard aspires to exhibit her work in different places and that it contributes to the artistic community of her country, Panama, where she currently lives and works. G&S



*“Pluteus,” Pluteus City’s fireworks. Underground language
builders growing at the pace our reality is being shaped.
Made with TouchDesigner 1080x1080 pixels.*

Encountering Ed Bereal

by Dr. Bill Thierfelder

When the Portland Art Museum re-opened this Spring after the pandemic shutdown, visitors were treated to an artist whose remarkable work remains unknown to many—something the PAM show, as well as his recent inclusion in the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art, will hopefully begin to change.

Born in 1937 in the Riverside neighborhood of Los Angeles, Ed Bereal (be-RELL) lives with his fellow-artist/wife Barbara Sternberger in Bellingham, Washington, where he maintains a large studio in a converted barn. This quiet coastal city near the Canadian border is a long way from both the urban poverty and the Los Angeles riots of 1966 and 1992 that helped to shape him as a person and an artist. These events continue to inspire what he calls his “socio-political landscapes” and are seminal to his sensibility and output.

Initially, some of that expression was immediately overt performance art. In the mid – 1960s, Bereal founded a guerilla street theater group called Bodacious Buggerrilla. They staged shocking and hilarious consciousness-raising skits at schools, churches, cafes, prisons, laundromats, even nightclubs where they played alongside headliners like Richard Pryor. After the group got onto the FBI’s radar, however, the troupe moved into film and video production, becoming Bodacious TV Works. Bereal turned to journalism and used Bodacious TV to create video art about political unrest and war zones in Cuba, Malaysia, and Kosovo. The PAM exhibition highlights this early activity with numerous stills and video clips.

When that period ended in the 1990s, Ed Bereal and Barbara Sternberger (whom he had met while



EXXON 1 Antichrist

teaching at the University of California) moved to Bellingham, WA, where he discovered the peaceful spaces he needed to teach art and Black Studies at Western Washington University as well as tackle the issues he had endured on the streets of Los Angeles and during his globe-trotting expeditions.

And it’s in Bellingham that Bereal, now 84, continues to produce evocative art—most recently large, mixed media pieces and biting political “portraits” of the American scene.

The focal point of the PAM show is one of those recent works: *Exxon: The Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, perhaps his most ambitious piece yet. Completed in 2019, *Exxon* is a large installation combining painting, assemblage, metalworking, and holographic projection. The piece, which sees giant corporations like Exxon as the root of the world’s woes—features five life-sized “horsemen”: Donald Trump, personifying the Antichrist; a Nazi, symbolizing War; a businessman, embodying what Bereal calls “Predatory Capitalism”; Ronald McDonald, representing Plague and Famine; and the



Separate But Equal

Grim Reaper, denoting Death. The bottom portion of each of these “horseman” is dressed in character-appropriate clothes with oil and gas nozzles as genitalia; the top halves spell out the word EXXON in graffiti-style script, created from layers of painted glass, projected images, and colorful lights: E (Trump), X (Nazi), X (Businessman), O (McDonald), and N (The Grim Reaper).

This emotionally complex installation is complemented throughout the gallery with several large “portraits” that highlight Bereal’s phenomenal technical skill as a graphic artist. *Separate but Equal* is a powerful work dating from 1998 in which we see a trio of screaming boys--perhaps angry, perhaps suffering. They’re being attacked--or possibly subdued--by a robotic arm. Together, they’re perched above a shredded American flag that Bereal said was inspired, in part, by listening to a recording of Jimi Hendrix’s iconic performance of the National Anthem at Woodstock. This juxtaposition of images is typical of Bereal’s work. He invites the viewer to create a narrative from the various, usually raw and emotional jigsaw pieces he presents.

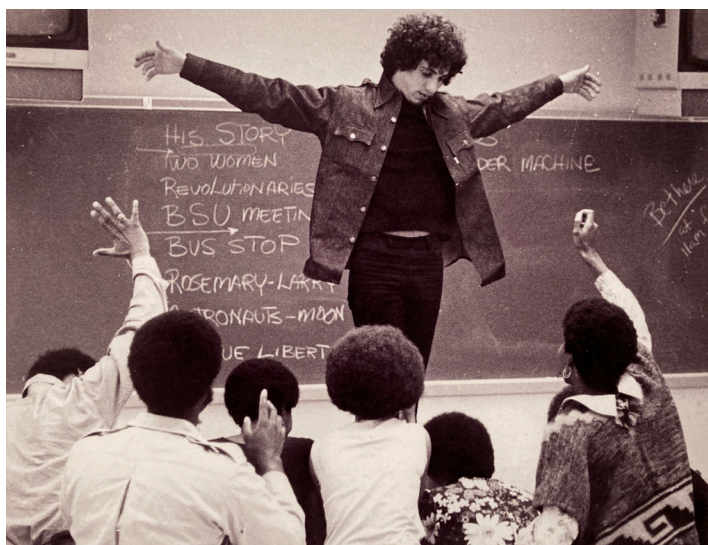
Location, Location, Location, from 2006, is Bereal’s



Location Location Location (detail)

a Chevron pump, a cartoonish Muslim, a Cross of Gold, and a Molotov Cocktail in a soda bottle.

Walking away from these and other works in the PAM’s exhibition, like the 1999 political minefield titled *The Birthing of the Middle Class*, convinced me that Ed Bereal is an artist that we all need to know in these turbulent times in America, an artist who speaks his truth, and America’s, in urgently visceral ways. *GES*



Bodacious Buggerilla

response to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For him, the Iraqi war was a sham that had nothing to do with the Iraqi people and everything to do with American and European oil interests in the Middle East. To establish that point, he takes the 1963 painting *Standard Station, Amarillo, Texas* by Ed Ruscha—an homage to the glories of the oil industry and automobiles—and deconstructs it with dozens of caustic images, including a gun-toting soldier guarding

Portlandartmuseum.org
For an in-depth interview of Ed Bereal by
Portland Art Museum curator Grace Kook-Anderson:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8u422atgwk
All photographs by Dr. Bill Thierfelder

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