

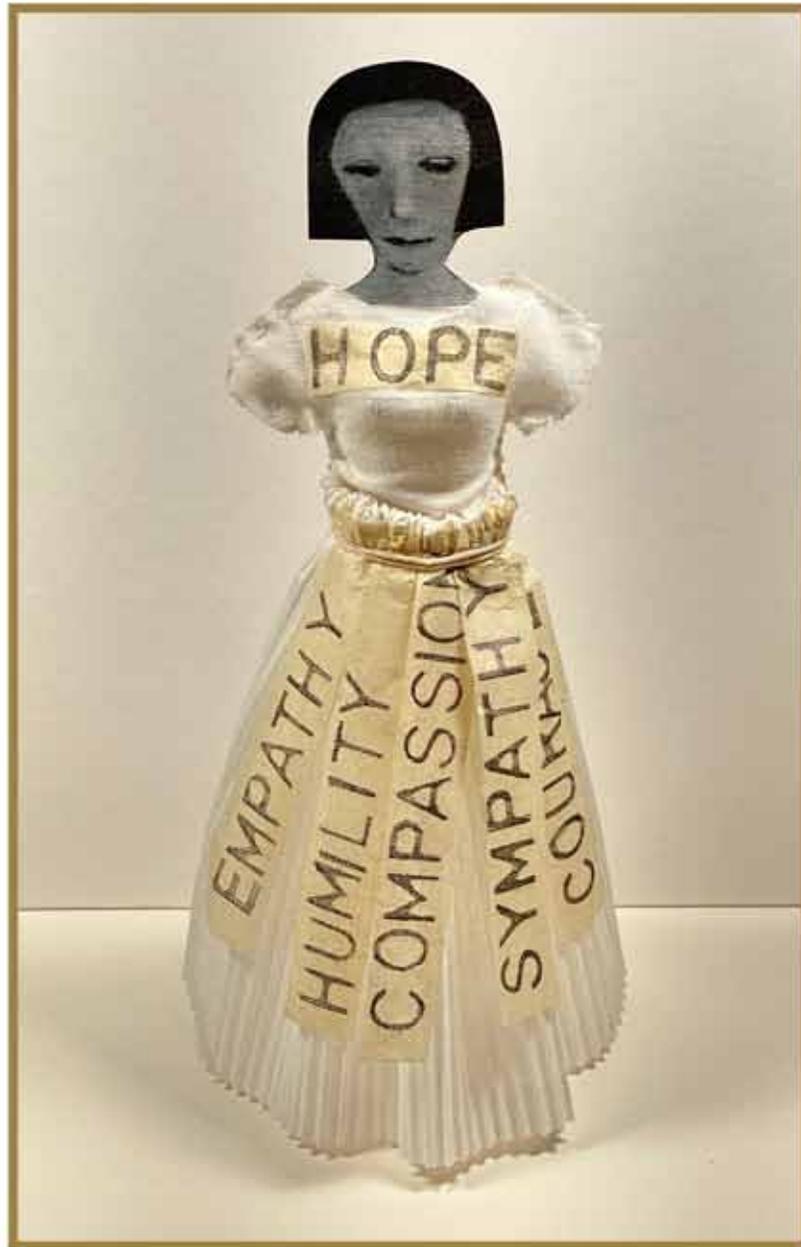
Gallery & Studio

arts journal

Summer 2020

galleryand.studio

Vol. 1, No.3



From Pyle's Pirates
to Performance Art

A Mural is Born
in Harlem

A Drive, Memories
and More . . .

Gallery&Studio arts journal

In This Issue:

We are happy to be able to bring you our third issue of *Gallery&Studio arts journal*. Covid19 and the consequent shutdown resulted in the unfortunate cancellation of the Spring 2020 issue, but we are back on track with a Summer issue reflecting on all that has happened during these tumultuous months with special written and visual contributions.

It was good to hear from you the readers and we hope to continue to give you what you desire. G&S has always had a diverse lens on the artworld, in those we cover and in our writers. We continue to expand our breadth of expression. We are also supporters of the lesser known artist, so much so, that you will find it in our mission statement.

It continues to be a challenging time, not only due to the pandemic, but the associated economic downturn and the social change that is blossoming. We were also very saddened by the passing of one of our own. As artists, we record the times, articulate the message, and galvanize change through our chosen media. Gallery&Studio is here to witness and promote the resulting creativity, as we continue to be driven by the philosophy of equality, justice, peace, and great art.

—The Editors

Front Cover Art by Linda Dujack, “Words Matter”

Back Cover Art by Susan Laing, “Lily Pads”

Gallery&Studio arts journal

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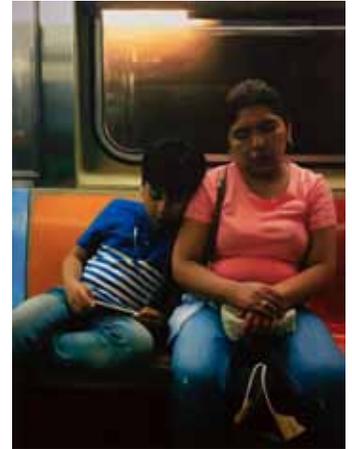
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The Many Talents of Liz Curtin

by Christine Graf

The artist, Liz Curtin is like a magician with a hatful of beautiful, creative artwork. Curtin just doesn't do one thing very well, she does a boatload of things really well. Mixed media, artist's books, quilting, printing, ceramics, and guitar playing. Just to name a few.

In the spirit of full disclosure, Liz is a close friend of mine and I'm pleased to celebrate her in this feature. Whenever Liz and I visit together, her hands are always moving like birds weaving a nest. She'll be sewing a quilt piece, working on an art book, making rust stains on canvas to create an aged effect, and yes – whittling is her latest endeavor from sticks she's picked up on her walks. Liz is a collector and sees art possibility everywhere in the streets and trash cans of New York City. Whatever she finds triggers her active imagination. The world is a treasure hunt and art will be made from it.

Curtin's monumental piece, "Celestial Bodies" is an installation which consists of over 2,000 mixed media, paper circles sewn together creating floating lines of thread. The effect created by the light is magical, as circular shadows dance back and forth animated by the air. Circles filled with every hue on the palette; blues, pinks, purples, greens. I'm reminded of our humanity—that each one of us has our own hue, our own body of mixed media, our spirits. We have variations as a people. Can we become like this beautiful artwork, and honor and come together in harmony?

Perhaps Curtin is suggesting that "Celestial Bodies" is a kinetic, visual extravaganza where one feels joy and beauty in such an installation. It physically jacks up my endorphins whenever I look at it.



"Something To Hold Onto"

"To Life" is the name of the artwork similar to "Celestial Bodies" except it is two-dimensional. It has 100 circles of every color and technique, each circle different; another celebration that exudes a joyful exuberance and again a festival of color is the dominant feature.

The piece, "Something To Hold Onto," is a book-like assemblage wrapped in altered tissue paper, tied in twine with turquoise beads and two blue objects made of clay, suggesting some kind of talisman or good

luck charms. When the book is opened it becomes one piece that is sectioned by threads. One pictures it filled with poetry, mystery, and secrets that tantalizes the imagination. This piece also exhibits a deft use of materials and craftsmanship. G&S

Liz Curtin's art can be seen at Carter Burden Gallery in New York City and at artsy.com. She also teaches mixed media, sewing, and guitar at Carter Burden Covello Community Center in New York City.



“Celestial Bodies”

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Janet Mitchell: In Our Own Words and Voices

by Marina Hadley



AGM audience

Telling the stories of African

American people in their own words and voices has been the lifelong journey of Janet Mitchell, Founder and CEO of AGM Theater Company, Inc. in Harlem, New York. The aim of AGM is to provide a professional African American theater experience to an underserved audience as well as offering mentorship and rare opportunities particularly to women, in non-acting roles such as directing, production and theater management.



Janet Mitchell

Their main home is New Basement of Dreams in Harlem where they perform smaller productions, interviews, and readings. For larger productions, they use Theater 71 located on 71st Street between Broadway and Columbus Ave.

It all started however at the tender age of 12 when Janet Mitchell's parents took her to see *The Sty of the Blind Pig*, produced by the Negro Ensemble Company at the St Mark's Theater in the Village. They arrived as the theater lights were going down and the audience was settling down. As the play started, Mitchell was instantly transported by the magic of theater. At that moment she knew, she "needed to be in Show Business!"

Scouring the New York Amsterdam News, sometime later, she came across an advertisement for a play in the Little Theater at the Harlem YMCA. Encouraged by her parents she went to director Franklin Thomas to see if she could get a part. He did not have an acting role for her on this occasion (she was only 14 years of age), but he offered her the job as the prop person which she eagerly accepted. That led her to be in the right place for the next play, which was *Anna Lucasta*, in which she played the role of Katie. From then on, Mitchell was

befriended and mentored by Thomas and the other members of the theater group. They took her to Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, taught her the craft and business of theater, further "igniting" her desire for this life.

Her first production at the precocious age of 19, was not theater but a film of Gertrude Greenridge's *The Gift from Saturday*. Her first Executive Producers were her parents, Clarence and Adrian Mitchell.

In the following years, Mitchell acted, directed, produced, and wrote plays. She joined the Hadley Players (Harlem Artists Development League Especially for You) where she appeared in several productions. She began to realize though that producing interested her more than the acting. She served in several officer roles ending up as the CEO. In 2014, She founded Mitchell Entertainment Group and went on to produce many plays and events.

You would be forgiven for thinking that this was a full life, but Mitchell

simultaneously went to college and then started her own company providing investigation services for insurance companies and other corporations. Mitchell was a Private Investigator for 13 years!

9-11 brought changes to her industry and she decided to go to graduate school and reimaged herself in a new career as a social worker. This passion for helping people and listening to people's stories, spills out into her theater work.

In 2017, Mitchell started the AGM Theater Company as a non-profit organization with friends Ka'ran Bridges and Pearl Williams. The company is named after Mitchell's mother (Adrian Graham Mitchell). Her mother had attended not only every production that Mitchell was ever involved in, but every showing. She taught her that there was nothing that she could not achieve. It is an appropriate honor for a woman who worked hard to support and encourage her daughter who has in turn had such an impact on the lives of so many people. Cynthia Kitt, AGM's Production Manager and, Marketing & Media Coordinator, says of Mitchell "I admire her integrity, follow through, passion for the theater and sincerity." Joining AGM was like becoming "family." It is an atmosphere that Mitchell consciously cultivates.

Small organizations such as AGM are critical, especially when they have strong connections to their local communities. However, at times like this when the economy is hurting, they must work extra hard to find funding



Second Look Rehearsal Photo

and grants. Mitchell says a positive outlook is imperative. Productions may have to be reduced in the meantime, but the one thing that she is adamant about is that AGM will always produce professional theater, with an integrity that ensures experienced professionals are paid, safety is not compromised and the highest quality of production is created and offered to their audience.

Mitchell and AGM tell us the

African American story in their own unique words and voices. Their next production will be *Election 2020!!* which screens simultaneously on Zoom and Facebook on August 21st. The event is free. Please join them and consider supporting their worthwhile work. G&S

For more information:
agmtheatercompany.org



Janet Mitchell with her mother

“Still life is the touchstone of painting”

Manet’s comment about still life as a touchstone springs to mind whenever I look at Dolya Dogal’s exquisite paintings of flowers and fruit. Her sole discipline is the traditional still life, an over-simplified description that fails to project her distinctive and evocative works of art. Her naturalist’s eye and inventive brush are a revelation.

As a child in St. Petersburg, Russia, Dogal used colored pencils to draw dandelions’ tiny florets and deeply-notched leaves. When the dandelions turned to fragile fluff and most of the seed-heads drifted away, she learned to depict the gossamer filaments that survived, composing the rest from memory. She participated in painting classes at the Hermitage but is essentially self-taught.

Since coming to Wilmington, Delaware, in 1981, Dogal has exhibited her work in the US, Israel, Japan, and the UK, and has also developed a strong following of collectors. Today she paints every day, teaches privately, and exhibits her work regionally. In her home-based teaching studio—its dusty-green and apricot-colored walls densely hung with a selection of her paintings—she occasionally hosts guests for relaxed conversation about art.

A few examples show how Dogal’s paintings may conjure up the sumptuous precision of the Old Masters and/or a more naturalistic approach to the genre.

“Fruit, Glass, and Pitcher on Wood Table” has the exactitude and elegance treasured by the 17th and 18th century Dutch and Flemish painters of still life’s Golden Age.

Dogal’s attention to gleaming surfaces, carefully positioned objects, and subtle color relationships is evident. Rough surfaces on the oranges and lemon contrast with the high polish of silver. The spoon’s curved edges



“Fruit, Glass, and Pitcher on Wood Table,” oil on canvas



“Winter Landscape,” acrylic on canvas

echo the bowl’s outline, while the pitcher’s finial is also a series of curves. Corners of the table are the only sharp edges in the scene. The off-center

Dolya Dogal mingles the visionary with simplicity

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.



“Lilies of the Valley and Violets with Blue-and-White Ceramic Box,” oil on canvas

spoon and a cut lemon bring to mind not just an arranging hand but also daily activities.

In “Purple Orchids in Glass Pitcher with Grapes on Marble Table” an apparently natural imperfection—an orchid’s missing petals—lets us notice entwined stems in a bouquet replete with nuances of color.

Washes of dark-olive green flicker along the wall and throughout the translucent glass. Graduated tones of violet shimmer across both sides of the petals. Veined marble adds a note of cold brightness to the scene. The water is perfectly still, but the velvety flowers seem in motion. Stems interlace, and petals whirl toward and away from us as if in flight.

“Lilies of the Valley and Violets with Blue-and-White Ceramic Box” brings to mind blooms—some delicate, some sturdy—from a finely-tended garden. Sprays of lily of the valley arch down to the open ceramic box. The bell-shaped white flowers mix with violets at the center, and a few green leaves come toward us. Stems mingle in a glinting glass. The warm-brown wood table merges almost imperceptibly into the coruscating greenish-gold background. Near the top of



“Purple Orchids in Glass Pitcher with Grapes on Marble Table,” oil on canvas

the floral pyramid, a glow suggests a ray of sunlight in a cool, darkened room.

In “Winter Landscape,” Dogal recently returned to her interest in landscape, using black and white acrylic paint. Bare tree trunks are reflected in shimmering but calm water. Clarity fades in the distance, yielding to leaves’ tracery against a cloudy sky. Beams of light brightens a path ahead that may seem haunting, entrancing, or both, depending on our mood.

Dogal’s mastery is seasoned by imagination, observation and discipline. As she interweaves nature and art, she blends respect for tradition with a contemporary flair. She bears out another of Manet’s beliefs—that “a painter can say anything he wants with fruit or flowers or even clouds.” G&S

Dolya Dogal is represented by
Somerville Manning Gallery, enville, DE 19807
(302) 652-0271
somervillemannings.com

Competition Winner: Teruhisa Tahara

by Marina Hadley

The winner of the competition “Art with Words” is Japanese artist Teruhisa Tahara.

Tahara’s concept revolves around modern-day life. Since the internet has positioned itself at the core of our existence, he suggests that our lives have become more convenient and richer with information. However, the flip side is that it may be causing our emotional and creative capabilities to be eroded at the same time.

Personally, he does not believe that mankind has a rosy future but rather that we are walking a path of decay. He wants to suggest to the viewer that the evolution of civilization is hastening the decline of humanity. Tahara however tries to interpret this with humor and irony.

Tahara seamlessly amalgamates the disparate within his images. The analog and digital, the earthly and the cosmic, the creative with the robotic, the organic with the geometric. He makes these different



“The Recession” acrylic and pen on paper

Runners-up:



Arline Mann, “The Reunion,” Watercolor



Marilyn Henrion, “Subway I,”
Mixed media



Carole Kunstadt
“PRESSING ON No. 106”
Mixed media

components appear as if they belong together harmoniously as they should in a perfect world. Science and the arts, organic and non-organic, history and tomorrow. He finds humor in robotic and alien characters enjoying human emotions and activities, leaving man to negotiate through the attendant chaos.

Tahara incorporates line drawings into his paintings which evokes Saul Steinberg, the renowned artist who often graced the cover of the New Yorker Magazine with his illustrative humor depicting a prior, more analog, society.

Inspiration however comes from the legendary, classical pianist, Martha Argerich, known for her dynamic, and emotionally rich, musicality. Tahara explains that music cannot be expressed figuratively but can be richly expressed abstractly. That impact can be seen in his abstract geometric work “The Recession.” It is a subject that he is well qualified to explain as an Economics major and living through the lengthy economic depression that has plagued Japan on and off since the 1990s.

Ed and Jeannie McCormack felt the positioning of the word ‘Recession’ strongly in the piece validated the concept of the competition, “Art with Words,” with the swirling magnetic lines symbolizing the chaos of a recession. The humor in the characters however balances the somber subject. Ed McCormack applauds the risk of working in illustration and drawing, an oft-undervalued art style.

Tahara is also inspired by the words of Paul Klee: “Art does not reproduce what is visible, it makes things visible.” A worthy goal. G&S

celesteprize.com/teruhisatahara

Chronicles from a Suspended City

by Stefania Carrozzini

This year will certainly be a year to remember. As far as I was concerned, I never, ever, thought that it could happen. That I would not be allowed to travel to New York and London, that all my flights would be cancelled. In the twenty-four years of my coming to the U.S.A., I have never missed a single year in the Big Apple. But above all, the unbelievable postponement of the planned exhibitions—in March in New York at Dacia Gallery and in London at Camden Image Gallery. The first one, “Art and Desire”, featuring three artists, Mar Delestal, Riitta Nelimarkka and Anastasia Domingo. Both shows will be rescheduled for this Fall.

At times like this, all that we want to do is to restart our lives and continue with our projects. During the days of lockdown in Milan, I realized how important art is. It is a part of life that we cannot live without and I consider myself very lucky to have received this gift. I resumed painting on canvas, and in the middle of this surreal climate, I tried to see business shutdown more as an opportunity than a loss.

Meanwhile, all the shows planned for my exhibition space in Milan have suffered the effects of this planetary stoppage and have had to be postponed. “Power of Nature,” a solo exhibition by Japanese artist Yuko Shinozaki, and “Female Runes,” a solo exhibition by Norwegian artist Groan, deferred to September 2020 and, “Moments of Time,” a solo by Daria Martinoni, postponed until November 2021.

In March, perhaps a little to exorcise fear, creativity exploded on the balconies of Milan and the rest of Italy, even though I for one never understood that there was much to celebrate. The evil virus saw fit to spread from China to Italy. Who would have thought that those choirs on the balconies of the Wuhan ghost towns would also be replicated in Italy and Europe? Then on TV, the media bombardment did the rest to create nations of terrified people. We heard everything from virologists and scientists to doctors, who all contradicted each other. We heard everything and the exact opposite of everything. In short not the ideal environment to get concrete, factual understanding about what was happening.

Here in Italy they have banned autopsies for both Covid and non-Covid patients. It is as if other diseases do not exist. The virus has completely eradicated them! Irony aside, there is nothing left to do but to cry. Our doctors have done everything possible to keep the situation under control. The lockdown period in Milan was so hard that I did wonder if it was constitutional to force citizens to stay at home—treated as if we were the worst criminals. We hope that all this suffering has produced at least some beneficial results in terms of containing the contagion.

The news from abroad has not been calming and in particular the intensification of social conflicts has left



Milan Cathedral

us speechless. Issues are coming to a head now because the virus has laid bare many hidden problems. In this scenario, what can art do?

My industry has been significantly affected by the crisis, precisely because organizing exhibitions involves gatherings. Many galleries and art fair operators have moved events on line, although in my opinion art needs a physical presence. Art breathes and you need to be in its magnetic field to understand it.

Art in the past has been subjugated by museum policy, manipulated by political propaganda, which has seen artists not so much as creators, but proponents of a journalistic, ideological art, packaged within a conceptual style. I have avoided thinking about exhibitions and the pandemic or current political issues, precisely because I have never believed in art that is mired in propaganda. Art for me has always been about the sublimation of dreams, spiritual dimensions, as well as theatre. The great factory of dreams has always needed to be transposed and there are but a few masters who can make the everyday light transcendental. G&S

stefaniacarrozzini.com

Practice Makes Perfect: The Art of Christian Chavant

by Sébastien Aurillon

The first time I met Christian I was having dinner with him and his then wife in their lovely home in Paris. It was sometime late in 2000.

“My husband is a cartoonist” she had previously mentioned at work—she and I had been coworkers for a short period of time—which had me quite intrigued. I started picturing all sorts of stereotypes, including hubby doubled over a drawing table, wearing thick framed 60s style glasses, enslaved to the grind of his HB pencil.

Christian, a fair skin young looking man was nowhere near those clichés. I was instantly drawn to his soft-spoken manners as well as impressed by his knowledge and wisdom in all topics related to culture. That night we talked about movies, music, visual art, and literature. At the end of dinner, eager to see his work, he happily took us to his drawing table, pulling out large Canson sheets of awe-inspiring watercolors and ink drawings.

“I started drawing as early as 4 years old,” Christian recalls, “influenced by my older brother who was already drawing. In those days that’s what we were doing all day long. We were very much influenced by Marvel publications (published under the “Strange” label). Fascinated by the white page, starting with a pencil stroke and just going from there. I also love to watch other people draw, almost like a magic trick”.

His mother could only draw two things: the “Deux Chevaux” car by Citroen (an old French classic) and the face of a woman. Yet Christian believes that this was a pivotal moment in his creative awakening.

Once he graduated high school, Christian spent two years training in drawing techniques at the prestigious decorative arts school Olivier de Serre in Paris. This is when, at the beginning of the 1990s, he found



Photographed by Jérémie Chavant

himself looking for a job at a time when France was already deep into recession.

“A former teacher at Olivier de Serre called me to let me know that Bayard Presse—one of France’s oldest leading publishing company who specialized in the children’s sector—was looking for a part time graphics editor. I was very excited to work for a publishing company that focused on kids’ publications.”

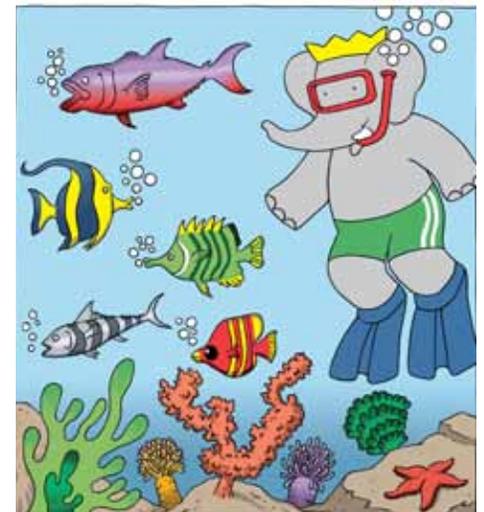
“Part of my job consisted of creating illustrations for “Babar Magazine” a monthly edition and spin off “Babar the Elephant,” the world-famous comic character.”

A couple of years later Christian started working for another renown French cartoon, “Asterix,” collaborating with the Albert René publishing company.

However Babar started again in the mid-nineties at a time when Christian was able to focus on more personal works. Various collaborations with writers ensued and some were even selected for

the “Young Talents Competition” organized by Glénat Publishings, during the prestigious Angoulême International Comics Festival in France, the third largest comic book festival in the world.

The new century brought another huge change in Christian’s work when he hired an agent and started working for TV commercials and movies by creating storyboards.



Christian was drawing them all, from cars to food products, often spending sleepless nights drawing for urgent commissions or for a movie director making last minute changes to existing work.

Back in those days Christian's technique evolved as he trained in graphic design software. "I found very little pleasure when I first moved to digital drawing but working on Babar allowed me to continue enjoying working by hand," Christian shared with me.

The years that lead to 2014 weren't always filled with work and, despite being praised for his excellent work and unique attention to detail, Christian wasn't always getting commissions on a regular basis.

It took working with a new technique and a change of agent to bring Christian renewed success: "I started drawing faster, the stroke of the drawing was feeling pleasant again. I had worked so hard for the commercial and movie industries that for some time it felt like I had destroyed my drawing technique because of the speed that was required," he said.

Christian is a genuine artist, whose authenticity makes him a 'purist.' "I had to put everything into perspective in order to bring renewed quality into my work," he added. "I had chosen heavy production versus quality and I had to change that."

I am a proud owner of several of his great works that I have acquired throughout the years. Christian's love of drawing, his passion for talented artists and painters are always reflecting in his art.

He sometimes says he should have pushed his own work as a graphic novelist more, but when people come to my place and see his unique ink drawings and original watercolors they are as much mesmerized as I was twenty years ago, when I first laid eyes on his work, after a lovely Parisian dinner. G&S



Images of Babar the Elephant drawn by Christian Chavant

A Metaphor for Our Time

by Christine Graf



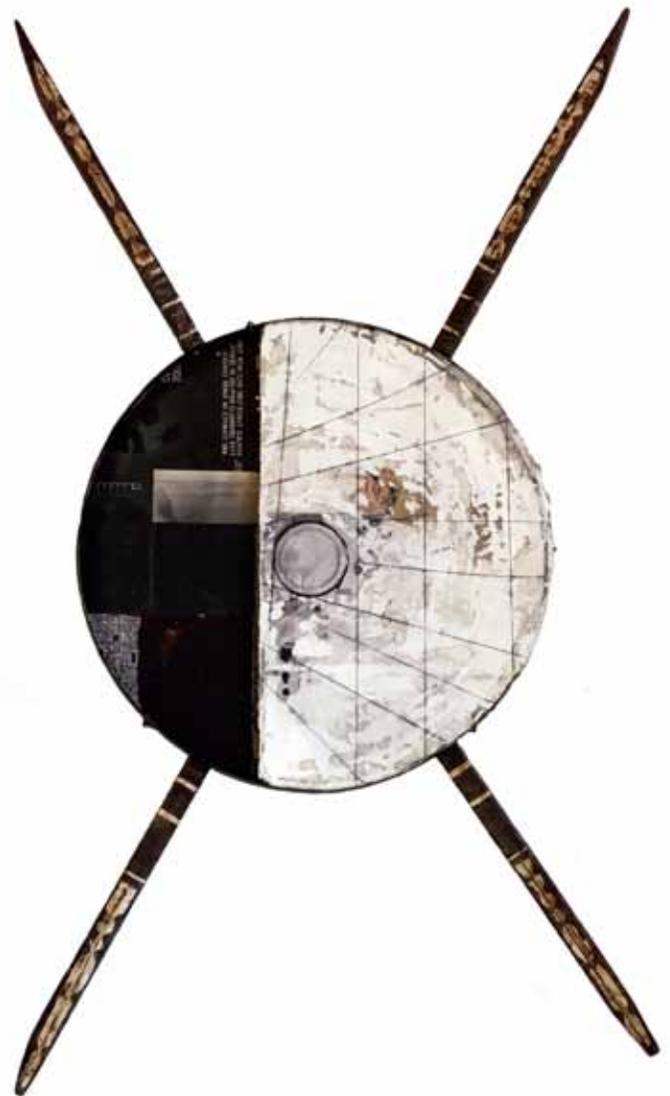
Group of Shields

Crystal Neubauer's art has the faint echo of Hannelore Baron, yet she's found her own unique voice as a collage and assemblage artist, using mixed media such as encaustic wax and salvaged scraps. Neubauer began her art career constructing two dimensional collages using mostly vintage materials that evoke a poetic sensibility and love of her materials. Those elements evince a respect for what has been discarded and that can be renewed and made whole through art.

Neubauer has expanded her visual repertoire to three dimensional pieces that she calls shields. In the artwork, "Storm and Silence," there is a round wooden plaque with spear-like shapes extending out from the center. The circular base is beautifully collaged and painted in neutrals, predominately in black and white. The circle shape suggests the earth, with latitudinal and longitudinal lines crossing each in the white section. This is striking artwork that reflects the moment we are now living in. Shields as metaphor is not lost on the viewer, while we are now wearing protective gear, our masks as metaphor. This piece is redolent of the divide between black and white, the struggle for power of people of color, butting up against the white world. Are we safeguarding ourselves against each in our differences, or are we turning inward to find answers to the great global questions? One suspects that Neubauer is hoping we'll ask these questions.

Neubauer's love for her materials, her reverence for the abandoned, the broken, old, and torn likens that with wabi-sabi, the Japanese philosophy that reveres the cracked cup, the rusted tool. In "Storm and Silence" the title itself points to the storms that are brewing in the world, and the silence and inaction that has muffled it. Is she asking, "Isn't it time to fix the broken world? Neubauer's art is intensely personal. "Storm and Silence" could also be the dichotomy and struggle that one feels in their own life. In Neubauer's artist's statement she says, "I see these items as a metaphor for our own lives that seek to bring them together in a way that opens up the viewer to a deeper experience of personal redemption—where every part of who you are is embraced and nurtured."

Neubauer uses encaustic medium in most of her recent work adding a layer of mystery, and it also acts as an elegant shield to a group of seven pieces, of elongated rectangles, each with it's own set of intriguing titles, such as, "Art Saves" and "He Loves Me Not, Not, Not, Not, Not." These pieces have an ancient quality to them as if they were from the 17th century. They're totemic in nature. Grouped together they tell a story, one of beauty and craftsmanship by using gold and silver pieces of metal, wood, paint and layers of hot



"Storm and Silence"

wax. Crosses are often a feature of her art, as if to say, "Art Heals" or as a signal that one must protect the soul of the self; that the shield isn't about pushing away, but acts more as a guardian, protecting the good. Neubauer's gift is that she has an artist's consciousness and creates poetry from that. She lets the light in. G&S

Crystal Neubauer is represented by Xanadu Gallery in Scottsdale, AZ. IMA Gallery in Seattle, WA. and Addington gallery in Chicago, IL.
FB: Crystal Marie Canary Rising

A Mural is Born in Harlem



Black Lives Matter

Photographs by Anthony Wilburn

“The Black Lives Matter movement is more than a declaration of being a political statement, it also embodies a feeling. It is that feeling I wanted to capture as artists worked on the Black Lives Matter mural in Harlem.”



Anthony Wilburn is a physical therapist with over 10 years of experience as general practitioner. When he is not assisting individuals in restoring their quality of life through motion, he is thoroughly immersed in the city with his camera. “I’m a New York City based photographer with a personal interest in highlighting the cultural diversity in the five boroughs.” G&S

Performance Art and the Age of Corona

by David Rodgers

“A few of the nobility, indeed, who loved the amusements of the stage, encouraged the players to act in their houses privately; but the watchful eyes of furious zealots prevented all public exhibitions, except, as the author of *Historia Histrionica* asserts, now and then such as were given with great caution and privacy “

—The Closure of the English Theatres by the Puritans, 1642, theatredatabase.com

The Coronavirus is not a political zealot, but it has closed theaters, along with art spaces, galleries and museums just as effectively. The English had to wait 18 years for their theaters to reopen. Let's hope that the current need to preserve the common good by not gathering in close quarters does not become a long-term situation. In the coming weeks and months more and more changes in our daily conduct will become apparent as a result of this outbreak. What are some of the changes that will be experienced by artists, with the restrictions (imposed, or self-derived) on outlets for their work? I am not only concerned with gallery-based visual artists, but also with performance art, my own area of experience. Artists, fortunately, are unlikely to become outlaws for holding illicit gatherings to share their art.....

Let me take a moment to mention some elements that characterize performance art, to see where the changes might occur. By its nature, performance art tends to have a somewhat flexible definition; it takes many forms and overlaps into other areas of artistic expression. Obviously there are grey areas, which is the source of much dynamic ambiguity and vitality. We can make a very broad definition in which musical performance and theater are included, but these disciplines have their own separate concerns. A more specific definition might be

that performance art includes the presence of the artist as a part of the work, and includes both the presence of the artist and the existence of the viewer or audience. Basically, the performance artist does something which somebody else witnesses and experiences. Thus, the performance artist devises some kind of activity or scenario with intention; intention both of the activity itself and the intention that it is shared. The use of galleries and museums as venues for performance art is well-established, as is the usage of public and private spaces for performance activities. The commonality, however, is that all of these choices assume that there will be a live group of attendees as an audience. Performance art includes the participation of an audience. At the moment, however, this is not possible. New means of presenting the artist's ideas to its witnesses will need to be devised.

Since my performing background is in theater, my performances incorporate a live audience. Having a live audience utilizes the inherent power in the presence of other humans. This is an inherent part of our nature that goes back to the very earliest days of storytelling, recounting tales of the day's hunt around the campfire. It is this sharing of the activity of the performance artist which will undergo the greatest adjustment in the future, the relationship between the artist and the audience. Activities requiring a group of people to be in close proximity will be shunned by necessity for some undetermined time to come. This altered idea of witnessing will move toward recreating the experience in a more mediated manner. But how is it possible to present a viable document of an experience such as the well-known performance *Sleep No More*, in which simultaneous actions take place in multiple rooms with dozens of actor/performers?

This was the essence of the show—you couldn't see it all, but you knew it was happening. A video recording of a performance can serve as a document of a particular event, but it does not take the place of the actual event. It would be a great loss if such powerful experiences became obsolete, or even worse, prohibited.

In an article from last year about the activities of one New York gallery, Viridian Artists, I wrote: “The openings at their shows are packed with people mingling, talking, and experiencing the pleasures of fellowship and creativity. Who could ask for more? And so, as everyone hopes, the future for artists in a gallery setting bodes well. It is the core of what Viridian represents. The reward is far more than simple longevity.”

The arrival of the Coronavirus has altered this thesis. Concerns about spreading the virus will make this sort of situation much more difficult to achieve. The ways in which performers adapt their techniques and concerns is very much a question for the coming period. Whether this alteration will be permanent or not, it is too early to say. Will the performance artist employ other forms, such as installation or video or internet? Artists frequently experiment in multiple media and disciplines, so maybe this can be viewed as an opportunity to try other media and methods. Art of all persuasions may be created in isolation, but the results beg to be shared. Musicians will still be able to make recordings, and playwrights will still be writing texts, though each loses something without the actual performance. So, (pardon my semantics), is performance art without performance still performance art?

I realize I am asking way more questions than there are answers for, at the moment. We will all find out together what will



The author at the STRAMU Festival in Würzburg, Germany. Photo by Katrin Heyer

happen. My big question is this: If the new technologies increase the opportunity for communication, can they also foster a real essential human interaction...? Can these new communication technologies somehow replicate the experience of a live human presence while maintaining microbe-safe separation? Virtual reality is already with us, and the implanting of brain stimulation chips to create experiences directly within the mind is not far off. If in the future people are unwilling (or even prevented) from gathering to witness live

performance, and to experience the fellowship and interaction with other artists, we run the risk of losing this powerful component of human physical interaction. The specific changes which evolve are speculative at the moment, but changes will come.

If lasting changes come to the idea of people gathering in person, it is more likely to come for other reasons, of which Coronavirus is just one catalyst. An enforced closing of institutions may later lead to a desire to reinstate them, but the ending of an institution because the times have

moved beyond it is a much more lasting change. Will art historians at some time in the future refer to pre-viral and post-viral art, pre-gallery and post-gallery, pre-gathering and post-gathering art...? Does the new communication technology become the performance artist's last resort? Is direct interaction destined to be remembered only by an older generation? If crisis leads to change, then it looks like the Coronavirus has put a new scenario in place. G&S

davidrogersperformance.com

“Pistol in Belt, Dagger in Hand” –Howard Pyle’s Pirates

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.



So the Treasure Was Divided, 1905, “The Fate of a Treasure Town,” in *Harper’s Monthly Magazine*, December 1905, Howard Pyle (1853–1911), Oil on canvas, 19½ x 29½”, Delaware Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1912

In 1905, readers might have recalled that since 1879 author and illustrator Howard Pyle had published over 20 pirate stories, several in *Harper’s Magazine*. Many of his illustrations had appeared in black and white, before color reproduction was perfected. One commentator, reacting to the opulently robed buccaneer, in “The Buccaneer Was a Picturesque Fellow” and its three accompanying scenes of piracy, “An Attack on a Galleon,” “So the Treasure Was Divided,” and “Extorting Tribute from the Citizens,” noted that they were “the sensation of the magazine world, marvelously rich in color, but not garish; ...dramatically stirring, and vividly romantic.”

Pyle’s glowing palette, convincing characters, and dramatic action were a blend of historical research and artistic expression. “The Fate of a Treasure Town” tells of the 1697 French raid on Cartagena. A stronghold of Spain’s colonial empire, the city stored gold, silver, and other riches taken from the Americas and destined on fleets of galleons for the Spanish court. The raiders included opportunistic buccaneers, an unofficial Caribbean coalition of mostly European pirates with no loyalty to any particular nation.

Pyle’s title for his “picturesque” buccaneer conjures up synonyms such as enchanting and attractive. The informal word “fellow” is

ironic too, as this figure is imposing, threatening, and seems quite ready to use his weaponry should he detect us nearby. His brilliant red cape and sash, and flashing bracelet and earrings, display the bounty of his thievery, as he poses with the self-confidence of a casually violent man. His relaxed but sullen companion guards the treasure, protected from the blazing sun under a makeshift tent. Together they convey both the struggles and rewards of their trade.

In “Attack on a Galleon,” the buccaneers are at work on the “wonderful sea of sapphire and emerald.” In their small, efficient boat, and wearing minimal clothing, the better to scale an imperial galleon and hurl smoke bombs, they

set a fire that illuminates “a flaming space of sky.” Again, Pyle’s words and images convey an inherent conflict—danger and beauty, cruelty and seduction.

In “So the Treasure was Divided,” he sustains this implicit tension with an aristocratic, cigar-smoking pirate commander in a stately feathered hat overseeing “a circle of hungry-eyed, wolfish... partly clad” men. Bent forward anxiously, with a few colorful sashes among them but mostly in ragged shirts, all eye the “shining mass of treasure.” Buccaneers were known for their equitable division of plunder, but there is plainly hierarchy here, and those at the left are clearly worried about their fair share. Suspicion competes with fraternity.

Pyle’s most complex composition is “Extorting Tribute from the Citizens.” The chief buccaneer, his face framed by the gold drapery he will soon seize, adopts a knightly pose with his sword as he forces a citizen to surrender all his “gold, silver and jewels.” The pirate band looks on in anticipation, having completed their work “with their usual dash.” One almost “feels sorry for the poor inhabitants” of Cartagena, Pyle notes, as they fell victim to this “rag-tag army.” Still, should not all that power have been able to defend the city that was “the glory of Spain”? Ambivalence is the natural state of the pirate world.

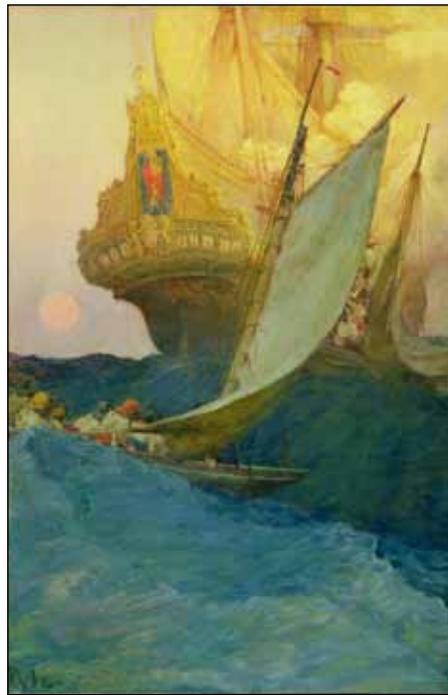
Today, Pyle’s vision of a duplicitous, clever, entertaining pirate lives on in Jack Sparrow, star of Disney’s fantasy movie series

”Pirates of the Caribbean.” His tricorne hat, frockcoat, billowing shirt, ornate jewelry, and well-placed weapons are classic Pyle. Rather than a revival, Sparrow is more of a continuation of Pylesque cinematic pirates. He joins Douglas Fairbanks in “The Black Pirate” (1926), Errol Flynn in “Captain Blood” (1935), and Burt Lancaster in “The Crimson Pirate” (1952)—handsome, wily, and always well-dressed—to keep us wondering with Pyle: “Why is it that the pirate has, and always has had, a certain lurid glamour of the heroic enveloping him round about?” G&S

The phrase “pistol in belt, dagger in hand” is from the poem, “The Buccaneers,” by Don Seitz, Harper’s Magazine, January 1911, p. 288



The Buccaneer Was a Picturesque Fellow, 1905, “The Fate of a Treasure Town,” in Harper’s Monthly Magazine, December 1905, Howard Pyle (1853–1911), Oil on canvas, 30½ x 19½”, Delaware Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1912



An Attack on a Galleon, 1905, “The Fate of a Treasure Town,” in Harper’s Monthly Magazine, December 1905, Howard Pyle (1853–1911), Oil on canvas, 29½ x 19½”, Delaware Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1912



Extorting Tribute from the Citizens, 1905, “The Fate of a Treasure Town,” in Harper’s Monthly Magazine, December 1905, Howard Pyle (1853–1911), Oil on canvas, 29½ x 19½”, Delaware Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1912

To paraphrase the poet, Silvia Plath, "...The becoming self rather than the fixed self, may well be understood intuitively by the poet, in and through the creative practice, exemplifying assemblage..."

Painter Danièle M. Marin, in "Fragmentation and Simultaneity," is a poet of paint, working in mixed media collage and diptych, abstracting color, form and line, so that her world vessel holding reality, shattered into visual shards, expresses her deep emotions as attempts to mentally rebuild to wholeness a chaotic time ravaged by illness. Due to the pandemic, her works could only be seen virtually, as the gallery was closed in an attempt to keep the contagion at bay. Seen from online, Ms. Marin's paintings are reconstruction strategies, metaphors from the cognitive process, dramatic results both simultaneously subject and object, manifesting the artist's thought processes in acts evolving from efforts to organize life experiences cohesively.

In some ways, this exhibit is a working through of emotions for Ms. Marin, as it is an important major show after her husband's long illness and death. She cared for him at home while he greatly suffered and, because of this protracted trauma, Ms. Marin had to reconfigure her house physically and also had to integrate the situation mentally. This experience deeply changed her, and her art work is now mostly non-objective; painting pulled apart versions of her former life with contentment abruptly curtailed. The works' collaged geometrics are now distorted as arbitrary jagged bits on a frequently divided picture plane interspersed with dark gestured dashes incorporated into strong painted passages.

One might say Ms. Marin lives the process of creating, where results honestly come from her interior emotional space, bringing to consciousness feelings found deep within. Her personal reactions are identifiable to us as universal responses and we become not only moved, but in some ways specific in our sentiments, despite the incessant turmoil hindering thoughtful reactions we may have to the work, as we experience our current chaotic human existence.

By the painting process, Ms. Marin attempts to make dissimilar thoughts whole, integrating cohesively a gamut of emotional and mental constructs. She adjoins two separate canvases in diptychs as single compositions, the disparate parts harmonizing to form a visual oneness. As she creates, she reintegrates disjointed thoughts into healthy wholeness as a way to figuratively recover from the visceral fragmentation she felt after her husband's death. She is making her heart whole again and it is necessary for her healing.

As Ms. Marin confronts the challenges of today, she is grounded in rigorous artistic training at the Louvre and the many years of study continue to inform her work up to the present. For her, Cezanne showed the way; his deformation of classical perspective, shifting the viewer's perception of the picture plane along with the mixing of line gestures and geometric abstract color entities. It helped Ms. Marin realize the abstract expressionist paintings of this show as her fragmented collaged forms pay homage to this seminal modern master. She also acknowledges Franz Kline's bold crossings of lines and planes laid down in energy-filled black and white strokes, coupled

with his quick calligraphic markings, as aids to conjure up the dynamic drives in her pieces. Additionally, she suggests the emotional resonances from some of her works' lyrical passages are influenced by her appreciation of Rembrandt's compassionate depictions of humanity in his sepia-colored drawings.

Although the artistic influencers of Ms. Marin's work are diverse, all contribute technically and subliminally to her continuing process of art making emanating from her innate poetic soul. Linework and brushstrokes are emotive and one of the most important aspects of the creation of her pieces is her flowing painterly method to manifest the works. Vigorous strokes give the paintings their true values and they are the results of Danièle M. Marin's profound mining of the feelings both sad and joyful that she has experienced in her life. Her world was tragically shattered while being tossed by the vagaries of today's existence but she triumphed over these adversities to bring forth carefully considered, accomplished pieces based on long artistic study.

Even though I could not view the paintings in person, I am grateful for the opportunity to see them through today's internet technology. I hope her next exhibit will be physically accessible to the public after the end of this severe pandemic and I look forward to this being a reality once again, soon. G&S

See more of
Danièle M. Marin's
work at
danielemarin.com

Stuart Nicholson: 10 Years Later

by David Rodgers

My good friend Stuart Nicholson and I sometimes joked about being brothers from different mothers. Part of it, of course, was our mutual dedication to the arts. But the other part was that our birthdays are just four days apart. Okay, I should clarify: one year and four days. I was 369 days older than him, so not really delayed twins, but close. Besides, my middle name is Stuart....

I am writing this to remember him, because I am saddened to say that he is no longer with us. I want to bring him back for a few minutes, on the tenth anniversary of his passing. I don't want him to disappear. He was a remarkable guy, as anyone who knew him could attest, and he accomplished a lot in his sadly abbreviated 50 years. Perhaps you knew him also....

Stuart devoted himself to both art and artists. He was a visual and performance artist, musician, curator and gallerist, but mostly he was a people person. His real art was bringing people together. For all of the 15-odd years I knew him, he operated gallery spaces in Manhattan and Brooklyn and never seemed to be without an upcoming event of one kind or another. He was the sort of person who attracted others through his strong, quiet and gentlemanly manner; he was someone that you could look up to.

I met him in 1995 when he was supervising the activities at the Ridge Street Gallery on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. It wasn't his own gallery, but rather a wonderfully idyllic situation that functioned as an artists' collective. In a small and cheerful space, a loosely-knit group of artistic devotees were free to do as they pleased. They chipped in enough money to pay a monthly rent that would now border on the incomprehensibly cheap. Stuart was in charge mostly by default, as a product of his organizational tendencies and a devotion to maintaining a space that we could all play in. On Friday evenings, you would automatically go there because something would be

happening, and you knew your artist friends would be there. It was the kind of situation that artists fantasize about, but hardly expect to really encounter. Stuart made it happen and kept it going. In spite of his low-key manner, Stuart took it quite seriously. We were his family, and he was our patriarch. It was an absolutely magic time.

Eventually, unfortunately, this dream ended when the rent was raised to market levels, and we had to leave it behind. But that didn't stop Stuart; his dedication was such that he wouldn't give up. He turned his own house into a gallery, the Diesel Gallery in Red Hook, Brooklyn, complete with vintage gas pump outside on the sidewalk. I remember going all the way down there to help demolish the walls of several tiny rooms in the front part of his house, to make one big open space for the gallery. We did a quick repair to the remaining walls and painted them white, but then he stopped, put down his brush and said, "That's good enough. This isn't SoHo. Let's have a beer...."

And big crowds of people would gather there for his openings; the Ridge Street artists, Brooklyn artists, others from the neighborhood, people visiting from other countries; whomever, they were all welcome. To Stuart, the importance was that people came and enjoyed both the artwork and each other's company. A good turnout was what satisfied him most. I remember getting a phone call from him the evening of an opening, just before I left to head down. "There's nobody here," he said to me. "Did you invite anyone?" "Of course," I told him. "Stuart, don't worry." "The opening started at 7 o'clock," he protested. I said, "Stuart it's only 7:15. People will be coming." And sure enough, by the time I got there an hour later, the crowd was in full flower. "Not to worry," I told him, "We're here for you, Stuart." He nodded and a little smile flickered across his face, "Some beer's in the fridge, go ahead....."

In a short tribute like this, I can't begin to recount all of the stories

and adventures we had creating and participating in art events around the City. He was always involved in something; it seemed like he knew everyone. Not just in New York, but outside, too. A traveling show he organized and curated went to Washington DC, Phoenix, Denver and then over to Europe and all the way to Moscow. Driving down to DC, his beat-up old Ford Bronco was packed to the gills with artwork stuffed in everywhere, with a handful of paintings lashed to the roof, as well. On another adventure, I got to visit his family down in South Carolina. His elderly parents were truly the quintessence of genteel Southerners. And he was proud to take me to a local restaurant he said had the best grits in town.

Then sadly and cruelly, it all fell apart. In early 2009, one of our mutual friends told me that he had just been operated on for cancer. I was shocked; he hadn't told me himself, as he was just too modest. He did well for a while, getting by with much help and attention from his friends. But the cancer was serious and it was a crushing blow to think that this vital, devoted man might be leaving us. I was overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness; he had been the center of our artistic universe for so long, and he couldn't just leave us all to fend for ourselves. These years of knowing him and working with him had been the best years of my time in New York and still are. Stuart had created this artistic universe because he wanted to, and he could, and he cared enough about artists and their creativity to make all of these things happen. What he did was so essential and important to so many people.

In the Summer of 2010, the fates were not to be denied. He left us in August. Perhaps his good works were completed..... I still have the message on my answering machine from a friend telling me of his passing. Maybe it's a cliché, but he lives on in many, many of us. Godspeed Stuart, and thanks. G&S



Stuart Nicholson in his back yard, c 2007. Behind him, one of his artworks, 'The Buddha Buoy', a floating sculpture, (yes, it is a self-portrait), set adrift in New York harbor off Red Hook, Brooklyn, and later recovered by kayak.

Portrait of a Young Painter

by Benedict Carrizzo

A typical twenty-something year old is on his way to work in a subway car, painting a picture of what his life could be. Devon Rodriguez, on the other side, inches ever-closer to his dreams with a daily, deliberate stroke of a brush.

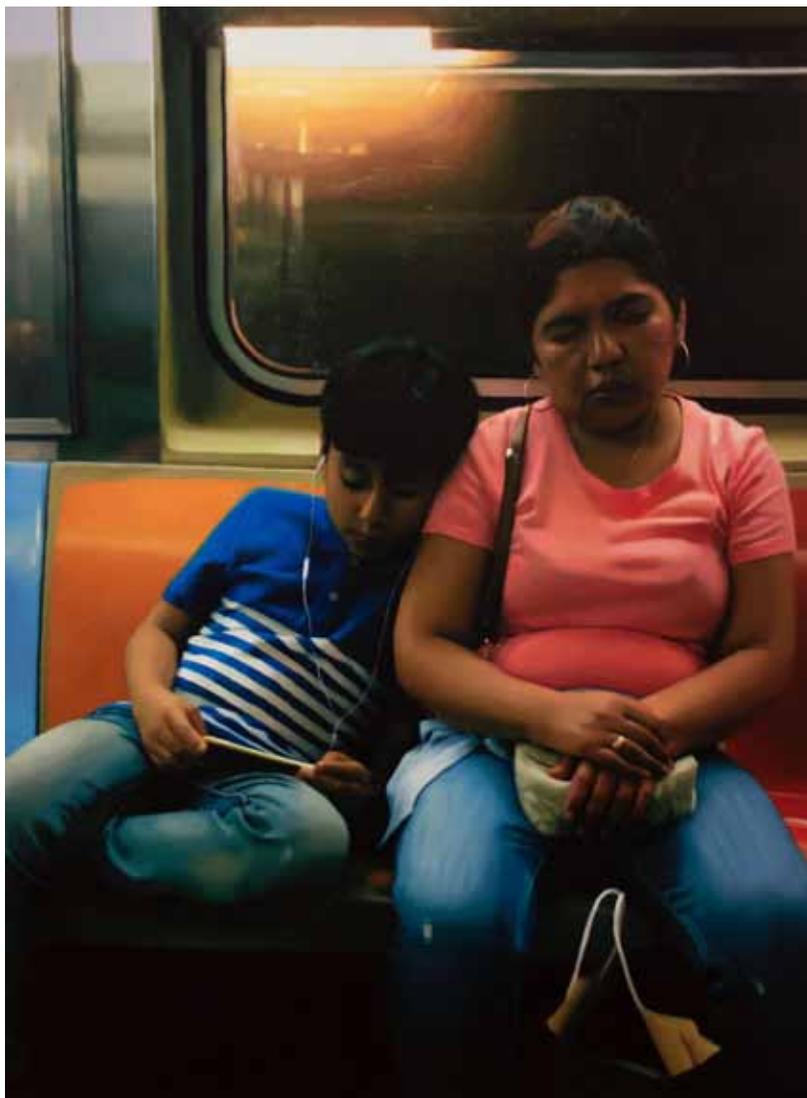
The 24-year-old professional painter grew up in the South Bronx, which is known for its melting pot of cultures — its “ethnic” foods, art and traditions — but also its grittiness. It was a tough upbringing, but thankfully, he overcame the obstacles in his way.

“I grew up in poverty in a broken home but I never wanted my story to end there. I was raised around a lot of tragedy but I always made art. That was my therapy. I’m inspired by the struggle, and I think

that there’s beauty in it. I want to use my talent to capture that rawness.”

Rodriguez’s father was a tattoo artist who specialized in traditional Japanese tattoos. He left his son when he was just four years old but, in spite of this, the young painter says he was an inspiration who “always had this cool aura about him.” His father, indirectly, showed him that he, one day, could become an amazing artist.

As a kid, the budding painter spent his time drawing little gangster figures. As a teenager, he did graffiti. Because of this, he was



“Bronx bound 6 train,” oil on wood, 40 x 30 inches

rejected from his dream school, the High School of Art and Design. His portfolio of drawing fundamentals did not meet expectations at that time.

After six months of transforming his portfolio, he transferred to the High School of Art and Design from Samuel Gompers High School, a facility that would later be shut down for poor performance. There, Rodriguez met James Harrington, an AP Art teacher who inspired him to pursue realism, to trade spray paint for an oil-battered paintbrush.

Seeing a live-demonstration of a

portrait in this class was, according to the young painter, “so beautiful, so realistic, so painterly.” It cemented his love for realism, and instigated his passion for subway art. No, not art in the subway, but art of the subway: replications of those who drudge to work every morning and night, whose daily expressions tell stories

Commuters just see Rodriguez as a “dude on his phone” but, in reality, he’s adding them to an ever-growing collection, one that’s been featured in publications like *The New Yorker*, *The Artist’s Magazine* and *The New York Times Style Magazine*. A portrait he did of John Ahearn, an American sculptor, clad in dirty plaster-covered work clothes, was a finalist at the Smithsonian

National Portrait competition. Ahearn had originally used Devon Rodriguez as a subject for his own work.

So, next time you’re sitting on the subway, pay attention to those around you. They may have a story to tell. Or, they may be telling a story about you. G&S

For more information:
devonrodriguezart.com

Roz Dorlen Brings Us Beyond Our Earthly Realm

by Anne Rudder

Painter and psychologist Roz Dorlen, was to have exhibited her latest transcendent oils, at Jadite Gallery in Manhattan in March of this year, presenting “Out of This World: Spacescapes of the Cosmos.” However, the Universe, in its inscrutable omniscience, intervened via the COVID-19 virus, so that potential viewers, isolated in cramped apartments, had to resort to enjoying them solely online and rely on imagination to experience them remotely.

Dr. Dorlen, an amateur astronomer, draws on references to the pictures of the Hubble Telescope, NASA’s Chandra Xray Observatory, and her own personal equipment to inspire her newest works. The group of twenty paintings express her love for astronomy and art, where her act of observant painting serves to fuse metaphorically both brain hemispheres, fostering a personal visceral connection between science and soul.

Astronomer philosophers have long looked to the stars throughout time to find ways of knowing, the viewing of the celestial bodies reflecting our own subliminal feelings about the multiverse where earth’s singularity allows for superficial initiation into galactic wonders. Dr. Dorlen explores this profound mystery, painting metaphysical abstracts through pigment glazes so the cosmos visually comes to luminous life for the viewer, the painter thus interpreting scientific photos to charge human observation with interstellar breathtaking beauty.

One work, her depiction of the Eagle Nebula, is an artistic expression of this bird’s importance to humanity as a symbol of strength and knowledge which the artist envisions as a mark of spiritual creation. Dr. Dorlen also chooses to paint cosmic parturition in her rendering of a newly formed star, which she entitled “Birth,” connecting cosmic formation with the force of



“Creation,” oil on canvas 30"x 30". An interpretation of two separate stars consisting of 200-300 solar masses.

women birthing life—a magnificent interpretation of deep divinity.

Not only does Dr. Dorlen act as transcriber of life’s founding mysteries through her powers of scientific observation, but she also juxtaposes this looking outward with her psychoanalytic vocation to help people see inwardly so individual experience becomes richer and a personal portal to the soul evolves. She references Egyptian cosmology, painting the constellation Orion and drawing on her attempts to understand the Gaza pyramid that, through its engineering, possibly helped predict the astronomical and spiritual passage of time.

At this very unsure hour, Dr. Dorlen is happy to produce these

meaningful works, the painterly examples helping to allay anxieties we feel right now while living on Earth. The exhibit, curated by her fellow artistic sage, Basha Maryanska, serves to make these abstract paintings signifiers of the eternal so that, when we gaze at the works, we leave our finite cares behind and enter into the soothing timelessness of the celestial, transcending our confined spaces to enter sublime unknown realms. Roz Dorlen helps us travel there and we are enormously grateful. G&S

To view Roz Dorlen’s exhibition at Jadite Gallery, go to rdorlenartist.org.

On the Recent Gallery&Studio Survey

by Anne Rudder

We find ourselves living in a period of upheaval and uncertainty. The pandemic is contributing to a sense of isolation for many and we yearn for connection. *Gallery&Studio* felt there was a need to counteract this overarching sense of apartness and asked readers to respond to questions about their current situations. Here, I share their thoughts.

Responders were asked to characterize themselves according

to their relationships to the arts.

Twenty-seven respondents said they were visual artists; fourteen advised they were writers or critics. One was a poet, another a yoga instructor

and healer. Eight responded they were gallerists and/or curators. Three were filmmakers, six collectors, thirteen museum attendees, and seven called themselves art appreciators. One respondent fell in the unclassified category of 'other.'

In their summations of the current situation in the art world, some were afraid the world would return to the way it was before the pandemic after the crisis is gone, and were not sure they would find themselves in a better, fairer country than the one they previously inhabited. One artist said art buying was not a priority right now, due to the current economic constraints of people being unemployed, and that video, movies and music were more viable forms of enjoyment amidst the current downturn. There was anxiety expressed as to whether people will again buy art when the economy improves. Some artists stated the pandemic was causing them to lose money which was of great concern.

Some artists said that this

time of isolation provided them an opportunity to stay true to their personal artistic visions, accomplishing more without daily distractions, and others feared galleries would remain closed after the end of the contagion, particularly the smaller galleries. One artist felt that brick and mortar galleries should not be abandoned and that the current situation of sharing art online is insufficient in providing satisfying aesthetic experiences; the social aspects of visiting museums and galleries are missed, although virtual visits are of some consolation.

Quite a few artists expressed that G&S could further assist by continuing to publicize lesser known artists, as it seems most exposure of work in the art scene revolves around well-known people rather than the less famous. Some suggested that show openings and listings of exhibitions should be on the website. Some respondents wanted more contemporary artists of color represented.

One artist was helping to support his community by launching an economic coaching program during the downturn; a photographer was documenting the unrest with pictures of the continuing demonstrations, and another visual artist and writer was canvassing the public locally to ascertain what they were currently thinking.

Many agreed that art is needed more than ever right now to alleviate stress. That art should be inspired primarily by truth rather than by the market and through having better intentions shown in artwork, the world would become healthier.

One artist firmly believed art still had great value despite the current turmoil, and another, Orlando Lacro, gave us these helpful words to encourage us; "Art does not change the world; art inspires people to change the world." I believe these words are supportive for all of us to

courageously face these challenges and prevail with confidence. G&S

Thank-you to all those who took the time to respond to the survey. It helps ensure that we remain relevant and of interest to our readers. — The Editors

Artwork by some of our responders.



Steven Fujimoto



Sheila Hecht



Judith Joseph

Her Whole Life Was a Work of Art

by Carolyn Mitchell—Writing Competition Winner

She never claimed to be an artist, yet was recognized as one by all who knew her. She was so creative, a New York company wanted to mass produce her designs. To market them, she would have been sent on tour dressed in buckskin and paraded as a “native American” symbol. She refused, of course!

Beautiful art is often born of great tragedy. The personal wisdom and strength found in arising from suffering can be a powerful source of creative energy. This describes my friend Patty Renteria. She made art of everything she touched.

Patty gave birth to her only son when she was 15. When she was around 40, she lost him to a mission-gone-wrong in Vietnam. Around this time, her alcoholic husband had spent all their money.

As an American living in Mexico, she could not work or be seen working because it is illegal to pay wages to foreigners. Her house was falling apart and legally, she could not fix it.

Broke and in despair, she decided to end her life.

She had an old motorbike with worn tires. “If I go really fast, perhaps a tire will blow.” It didn’t work. She tried racing past a security check point. Maybe the guard will shoot me. That too, had no results. She felt like a complete failure. “I cannot even kill myself.”

Walking along the Mexican shoreline, crying her eyes out, she found herself no longer on the sand, but rather on pebbles. And they spoke to her! She picked up a few and brought them home to her makeshift studio — a place of many creations. She glued, painted, and adorned them to portray teachers, doctors, and other archetypal people.

She obtained Mexican citizenship and became known as the “Guide of Baja.” She was a pillar of the community and touched the lives of many. Those who would visit Patty

Summer 2020



from afar would bring clothes and donations for the poor, and cash for the next batch of “Pebble People.”

Personally, she thought they were trash. She did it solely for the money. How I wish I had one now.

In Baja, she built a hacienda with a striking red, Japanese-style bridge between the main house and her studio cottage. Her vehicle was a converted milk truck. On its side, she had painted a beautiful beach mural. The truck slept two comfortably. I enjoyed many road trips with her.

In the 1990s, Patty built her next

hacienda creation consisting of two palapas (grass-roof structures), a trailer, and an open-bar area. On a hill by herself, for the many who knew her, she was a destination.

In my 40s, I visited her there for a few weeks of nurturing companionship. We slept under the stars. It was the last time I saw her. Shortly after, she passed on. What remains of her in my life are so many cherished memories and four “one of a kind” type earrings she created. G&S

“Drive:” The Longest of the Best

by Woody Sempliner



It is a pity that “Drive” was not streaming online at the outset of the current quarantine. It is a work of conceptual, visual, technical and logistical brilliance that, at fifty seven hours in length, is Presenting Director, James Rasin (“Beautiful Darling” 2010) and Director of Photography, Paul Reuter, with a difficult birth: their “baby” is currently too big to stream, too much data for installation. I had not thought this possible, but I speak cyber with a foreigner’s accent and am assured that custom-designed computer hardware is on the way.

“Drive,” in one shot, records a road trip from Brooklyn to an oceanside parking lot in Malibu. Think of it: how do you do pull this off gracefully, artfully, without a hitch? The simplest things are the hardest to make well—a truly good cup of coffee, the perfectly boiled egg. Here, the concept is crystalline; its execution, Byzantine. Example: the camera’s point of view. You cannot mount a camera and a driver in the same place. Solution: a right-hand drive

car, old enough to be exempt from U.S. import specifications but young enough to make it across the country. In Japan, Rasin found a 1989 Toyota van, the “Master Ace Surf Special, Turbo Diesel.” (Nothing short here.) A custom made camera mount had to be fitted out for the van’s passenger side; behind it, dual video recorders alternating every eleven hours; in front of the camera a specially fabricated neutral density filter that can be adjusted on the fly for the trip’s two sunsets; behind the van another van for support and sleep; and way up ahead, someone to hold the parking place in Malibu. Had you thought of that?

Logistics aside, this film is beautiful. I have watched a two and a half hour clip (yes, for a fifty seven hour film, that is a clip) beginning somewhere east of Amarillo and ending at a gas station in Tucumcari, during which the sun sets and sheet lightning pops in the darkling distance. What is remarkable about Paul Reuter’s cinematography here is how closely it approximates actual

vision. The clip begins with the sky blue but the sun low, sometimes obscured by cloud but sometimes not and shining directly into the lens. Filtration and exposure are constantly, seamlessly and (poor Reuter) tirelessly adjusted so that we see not only the sunset but also the road, the storm clouds ahead, the passing semi trailers reflecting roseate hues of day’s end and finally the lamp-lit world of Interstate at night. A day’s work for the eye but daunting to reproduce with art tools—pen, brush, digital camera.

On balance, “Drive” brings off Rasin’s concept with cut-throat efficiency. How could this one-shot film be more concise, shorter? The work is a wordless narrative that anyone who has ever driven on a highway can feel as immediately as any drama ... and for as long as he or she likes. Up for the ride? *G&S*

For more information:
drivethefilm.com



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During these challenging

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