Gallery&Studio

arts journal

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Things look familiar, but they are often eerily "other."

Gallery&Studio arts journal

In This Issue:

What will the new Art Season bring us this year? The calendar year started with optimism as more and more people came out to visit theaters, movies, concert halls, galleries, museums, art fairs and auctions, as the world opened up after the effects of Covid 19. People wanted to see the real deal, not just images on their digital screens. There have been significant successes already, as in the overwhelming response to the Barbi and Oppenheimer movies, concerts by Taylor Swift, Beyonce, Brandi Carlile and Willie Nelson, art exhibitions of Edward Hopper at the Whitney, Salvador Dali at the Art Museum of Chicago, Johannes Vermeer at the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam, just to name a few.

However continuing uneasiness in the financial markets and high interest rates seem to be chipping away at the arts. Art grants are vulnerable, and spending on the arts remains high at the top-end but has dipped everywhere else. The writers' strike in the US has affected both film and TV production.

How will the last four months of 2023, evolve? In New York we are looking forward to an exciting array of exhibitions of Black and Women artists and the Tate in London will showcase Philip Guston as well as 100 female artists in "Women in Revolt!" What are you looking forward to? What do you recommend we go and see in your neighborhood?

—The Editors

Front Cover *Untitled*, 1998 by David Rosenak

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arts journal

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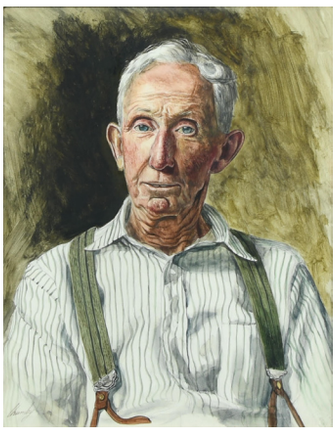

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The World in Greytones: The Art of David Rosenak

by Dr. Bill Thierfelder

If you look up the artist David Rosenak on any search engine, you will be challenged. There's no outright biography to be found. Instead, you have to dig through several (often obscure) sources, and what you come up with are enticing tidbits.

What a lot of digging will reveal is that he was a part-time Office Support Specialist for the Portland Water Bureau (in Oregon); that he was included in an exhibition called *Unorthodox* at the Jewish Museum in New York City in 2015 (apparently detailed by his actor brother Max in an impossible-to-find short documentary); and that he's been shown in three group shows in the last nine years. A 2009 news item tells us he has a second story studio above a laundromat; that he was raised in California; that his mother and sister were also artists (he keeps some of their pieces in his studio); and that he spends so much time on his paintings (only one or two a year) that he leaves many unfinished.

What seems to come across in all the research is an extremely private man who's been an active painter for several decades—yet has kept nearly his entire body of work to himself in his home and studio (he didn't want to part with it). Only within the last year did he make the decision to gift these paintings to the Portland Art Museum (PAM) where twenty-two of those remarkable pieces were on exhibit this summer in a show called *Untitled (Plaid Pantry)*.

Those PAM paintings reveal several key things. Most obvious is the lack of any color. Every piece looks like a black and white photograph —or more accurately— a grayscale photo. Indeed, only until you get quite close do you see the meticulous brush strokes. It turns out that Rosenak was born color blind. His gray-dominant palette —which he adopted as a young man in Johnston College in Southern California —lets us see the world as he does.

Then there's the size —with few exceptions, every painting is small. Several are only six or seven inches wide. We enter the physical smallness of the painting only to discover a whole world on the other side. One is perhaps reminded of Emily Dickinson living much of her life in the bedroom of her parents' Amherst home while she created a universe full of truth in poems rarely more than a few stanzas long.

Next, you realize that every piece is rendered in acrylics on smooth plywood. The use of wood rather than a cloth canvas helps to enhance the "matte finish" photographic effect.

Then, there's the subject matter. Almost every piece is a detailed observation of his workplace, home, or studio, providing an intimate connection to everyday things such as the speckled shadows cast from trees, the glimmer of a rain-covered street, the shadows of buildings on a sidewalk, or the pleasant glow of light emerging from a window in the early evening. We see sparse interiors, back porches, the local convenience store, and fenced-in backyards —almost all of them depictions of the Buckman neighborhood in Southeast Portland where he moved to in 1981. His is a quotidian universe.

Finally, you realize something else: Where are all the people? With the exception of an occasional solo figure or two in backyards or gardens, each of the worlds that Rosenak creates feels quiet and contemplative. These are not ominous post-apocalyptic scenes devoid of humanity; no, these are solitary, perhaps even lonely images that exude monk-like, Edward Hopper-like silence.

Quoted in a Portland Water Bureau newsletter in March of 2015, Rosenak says: "I've been making pretty much the same painting over and over for decades, trying to get a better result." He also states: "My favorite paintings seize my mind [and are] vivid yet mysterious[;] it's like being eyeball-to-eyeball with a loved one. That's the experience I'd like my work to provide a viewer and it's best if I don't interfere with words for what I don't have words for."

In a 2011 video interview that's shown as part of the exhibit (it's also available only after some deep online searching), Rosenak states that Persian and Indian miniature paintings were a major influence along with the brief, intense short stories of fellow Oregonian Raymond Carver. What we also learn is that he produces so few paintings a year partially because of his early onset Parkinson's disease. Over time, with the failing use of his quivering right hand, he learned to use his left one with nearly equal dexterity.

What the interview also reveals is that rather than creating sketches for each painting, Rosenak often takes photos of his intended subject and sometimes combines multiple images meticulously. As a result, some of his paintings are a composite of several views melded into a single, imaginary image —which explains why one of the untitled paintings of his Portland neighborhood from 1996 contains "an incongruous orange grove and dirt road...grafted from memories of Southern California."

While all of the untitled paintings —hence the title of the show: *Untitled (Plaid Pantry)* —are quite extraordinary, several stand out. One image (only 5.5 x 8 inches in size) is a scene of New York City (see front cover) painted in 1998; it was created from a photo that he took in 1980 when he was 23 years old. At the time he was staying in Chelsea, and the view shows what he saw looking

east from West 28th Street and 10th Avenue. The beautiful baroque lines of the fence are juxtaposed with the cityscape beyond while the bare trees and the high, nearly invisible clouds create a cold, crisp sense of winter. What makes the painting unique is its subject matter. It's the only image in the recent PAM show not depicting a neighborhood in Portland.

Looking at *"Untitled"* (1989-1991), we see the same focused detail. It's a world in miniature—only 15 by 6.5 inches. You are putting your eye to a microscope and seeing a whole neighborhood. Rosenak states on the label copy: "Looking south on SE 25th [Avenue] from Lone Fir Cemetery along SE Morrison, This was [my] third or fourth cityscape and by far the smallest of my cityscapes." Yet, the piece overflows with painstaking specificity.

His 1992 untitled painting depicting his shadow near his front porch door is particularly intriguing. As you enter the scene, you begin to realize that everything to either side of the center is tilted, creating a slightly "fisheye lens" effect. The porch on the left bends towards the street ever so slightly; and the door, window, and railing on the right tilt towards the barely visible backyard. Everything is subtly off-kilter.

So, yes, at first glance, each painting seems photorealistic; but a closer examination reveals subtle nuances of composition that remove the work from the realm of slavish reproduction. Each painting truly presents a parallel world. Things look familiar, but they are often eerily "other." And it is that "otherness" in the guise of the familiar that creates such a satisfying experience. *G&S*

portlandartmuseum.org

"Untitled" (1996)

"Untitled" (1989-1991)

"Untitled" (1992)

The Enduring Sculptures of Dana King

by Julia Szabo

"Guided by Justice" (photograph courtesy of Equal Justice Initiative, Montgomery, AL)

Bronze monument sculptor Dana King signs off her emails with a quote from one of Black History's most formidable pillars, the great humanitarian and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune: "Without faith, nothing is possible; with it, nothing is impossible."

Bethune has not been immortalized in bronze—yet—by King, who proudly focuses her practice on bringing to life the African Ancestors who have so much to teach this country and the world. With an impressive list of current commissions, King is gaining well-deserved national acclaim for her breathtaking depictions of "Black Bodies in Bronze." It's safe to say that Mary McLeod Bethune would approve.

Consider *Guided By Justice* (2018), three individual statues depicting women who participated in the Montgomery bus boycott, protesting the policy of racial segregation on the Alabama capital's public transit system. Every detail of these dignified figures—down to a pair of mid-century eyeglass frames—is meticulously realized with equal parts timeless emotional impact, painstaking accuracy, and purest love. Resolutely walking a graveled path at Montgomery's National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the figures appear so lifelike, one assumes they are the work of a sculptor who has been practicing her art for a lifetime.

In fact, King is living proof that it's never too late to pivot and dedicate oneself to art. She worked in broadcast journalism for 25 years, rising to the top of her profession at KPIX in San Francisco: "I was the evening anchor, and prior to that I worked in the field," she says. "I have five Emmys, two Edward R. Murrows, two Gracies. I loved what I did, until I didn't love it anymore." Art called to her, and she was compelled to answer. "I always knew I was going to be an artist," she says.

And so, at 48, an age when most artists find themselves at mid-career, King "worked and went to school to get my MFA. I was on the air at night, so I would go to school during the day, and then jam over to the TV studio." Then it was back to the art studio to wash up, and paint. King was "halfway through my MFA in fine art painting" when she took a three-day weekend figurative sculpture course in Sacramento with instructor Philippe Faraut.

"I attended with a friend, because she wanted someone to drive with from San Francisco to Sacramento," King recalls. "I thought, 'Oh, that'd be fun'; I had no expectations." But those three days were life-changing: "Clay spoke to me in a way that no other medium has, ever. I drove back to Sacramento by myself to tell this master sculptor that I couldn't stay, because I didn't have any more room in my head; I just needed to go do this work! And I've been doing it ever since."

That was 2010. King was

The Hon. William Byron Rumford

delighted to join the Thelma Harris Art Gallery in Oakland. "All the work I've ever done is Afrocentric, and I knew I wanted to be rep'd by a black-owned gallery, so I totally stalked her!" Public art is King's abiding passion. "I want people, especially children, to touch my work and commune with it... That's the beauty of public art."

With a profound affinity for young people, Dana King is on a mission to empower them. "I didn't grow up with access to art museums or public art," she says. "I grew up in a small town in Michigan, and I didn't see myself in the public square. I didn't see a sculpture of an African descendant until I was grown. And I want to do everything I can so that kids don't have to wait to see themselves, their families, their history, their importance."

In 2016, four years after re-dedicating herself to art full-time, King received her first public art commission: a portrait of The Hon. William Byron Rumford, the first African American elected to a state public office in Northern California. The monument stands in Rumford's home town, South Berkeley, sporting a 1963 NAACP button as well as the expertly-sculpted spectacles that are a King signature, and a metaphor for her keen artistic vision.

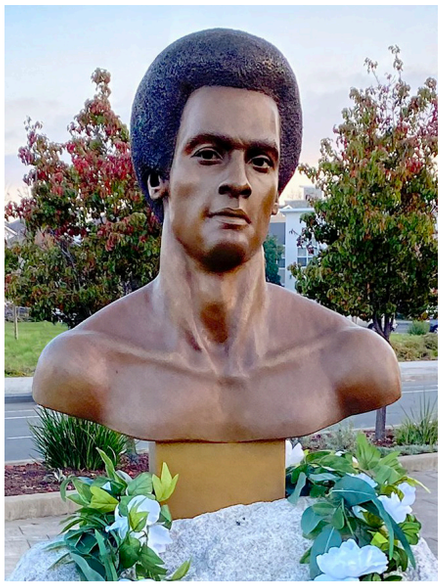
After the Rumford monument came many more, equally powerful, public artworks. Unveiled in 2020, New Haven's monument to William "King" Lanson is Dana King's deeply felt tribute to the formerly enslaved man who arrived in Connecticut at the turn of the last century, where he achieved visionary feats of engineering. King was profoundly moved when New Haven Alder Jeanette Morrison shared that the Lanson monument reminded her of her father, "a proud, strong black man who has taken on the responsibilities to ensure justice for people who look like him."

The following year, 2021, saw the unveiling of two major landmarks created by King: a bust of Dr. Huey P. Newton in West Oakland, commissioned by his widow Fredrika Newton, the first permanent sculpture of a Black

William "King" Lanson

Panther member in the city where the freedom fighters began their mission; and *Monumental Reckoning* in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, a conceptual masterpiece in which 350 Ancestral figures—representing the first stolen human beings to be taken from West Africa in 1619—surround the plinth of white supremacist Francis Scott Key.

She's never not working, yet King made time to serve for nine years on the board of the Oakland Museum of Art (her term ended last year); she currently serves on the boards of Illuminate the Arts in San Francisco (which commissioned *Monumental Reckoning*) and MSeum, the world's first museum to be built by women, for women artists. For MSeum, she will undertake, among other projects, portraits of fellow sculptor Edmonia "Wildfire" Lewis; actor-activist Fredi Washington;



Dr. Huey P. Newton

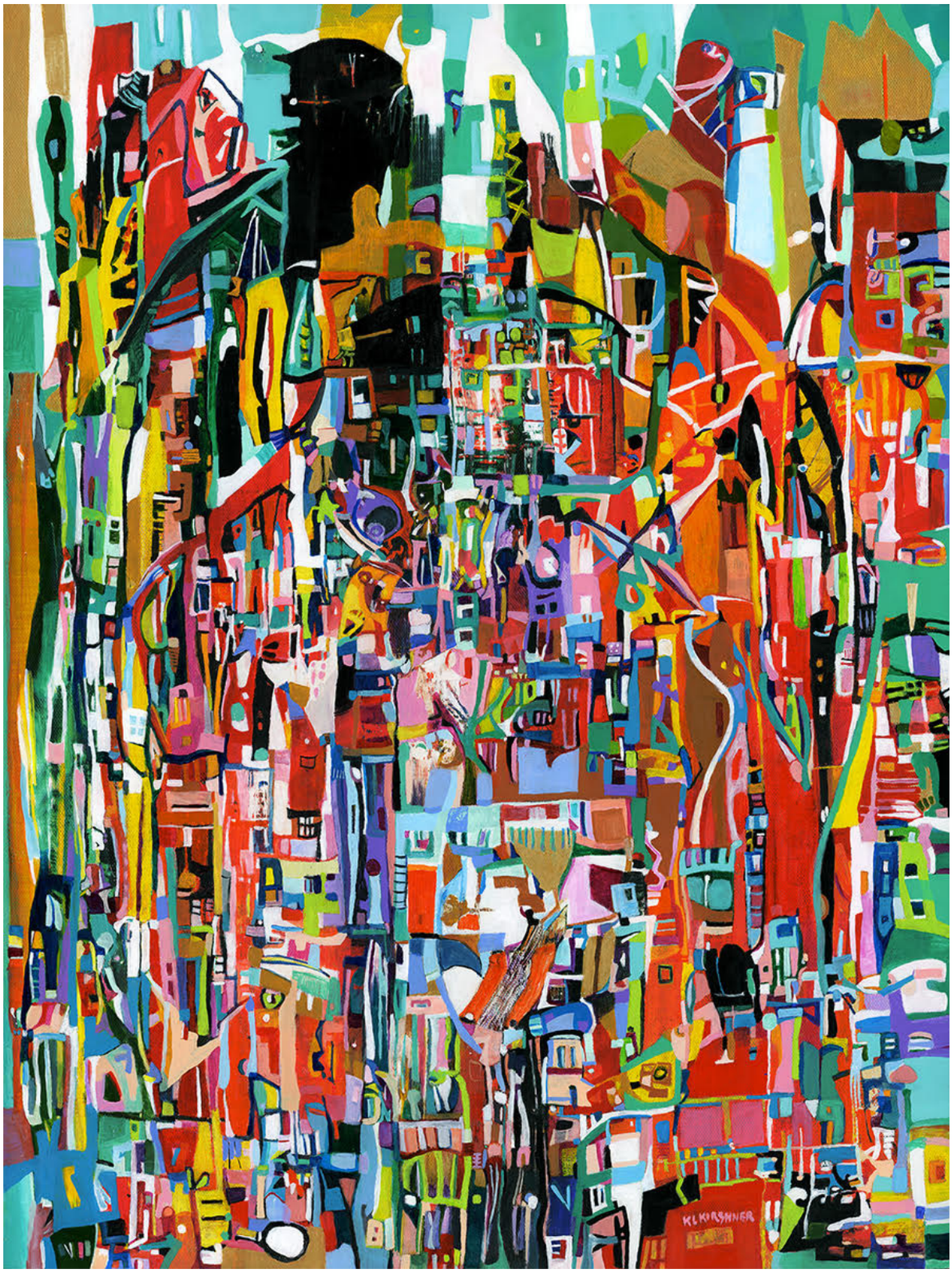
World War II Cadet Nurse Amelia Prillerman; and civil rights activist Patricia Stephens Due.

Righting historical wrongs, in the most beautifully impactful way possible, is a Dana King specialty. "I create memories in bronze for African descendants," she concludes. "We have a right to our memories." *G&S*

danakingart.com

The Striking Originality of Karen L. Kirshner

by Bobbie Leigh



"Faith-2," 48" x 36", acrylic/mixed

The painter Karen L. Kirshner has a sunny disposition which translates into ebullient, sun-flecked paintings. Each of her roughly 20 abstracts, recently on view at the George Billis Gallery in Chelsea, is imbued with a mirage of swirls, shapes circles, lines, dots, and geometric squiggles which blanket the canvas.

They appear to be disconnected but on close viewing, they are intertwined. Consider a Bach oratorio. If the flute player is asleep at the music stand, something essential would be missing. The music would not be transporting. It's the same with Kirshner's acrylic on canvas abstractions. Every brush stroke has its essential role in creating a canvas that is vivid, radiant, and joyful.

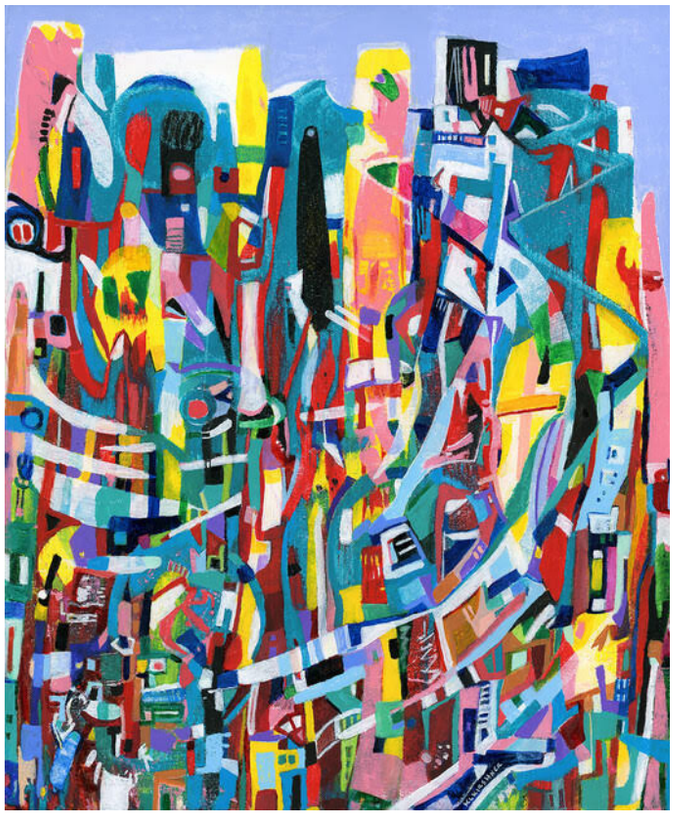
Kirshner says she is her worst critic. "I tweak my paintings to death," she says. "This process helps me to resolve issues and have useful insights." She has been inspired by the early work of Philip Guston, especially his Abstract Expressionist works of the 1950s and the surrealist style of Juan Miró. Kirshner has also been strongly influenced by Wassily Kandinsky, one of the pioneers of abstraction in western art. Like these early Abstract Expressionist painters, Kirshner's luminescent colors express her innermost feelings.

In viewing Kirshner's paintings, don't look for recognizable motifs. Hers is not narrative work, although after concentrating on each painting as if it was a Buddhist mandala, you might recognize a bird or some religious Jewish imagery. "I deliberately choose difficulties as a challenge," says Kirshner adding that "the more impossible it seems, the better."

In her studio on Long Island, Kirshner says she is so absorbed in her paintings that "the rest of the world disappears." She admits to falling into a meditative state where "time is non-existent."

Kirshner came from a family surrounded by art and culture. Her mother, Betty B. Kirshner (1929-2015), was a nationally awarded humanist expressionist who exhibited in both solo and group shows across the country. Kirshner always knew she was an artist, but her path to painting full-time was circuitous. As a young woman she was admired and awarded for her intricate pen and ink compositions, even in high school in a gifted art program. She studied at the Arts Students League, Vassar College, and various art schools in England. In those post college years Kirshner was more interested in graphics than painting. "I didn't do art, but was always doodling, elaborate black-and-white pen and ink drawings."

Kirshner stepped away from professional life as an artist for at least 25 years and went back to it just before her mother died. "I should have become a full-time artist much sooner, but I chose instead to pursue a more profitable path as a marketing professional and out of financial necessity, at times as an educator." After 2016, Kirshner says she threw herself into art, winning national awards and having her first gallery solo show.



"The Mission," 2022, 24" x 20", acrylic on canvas

"As I became better known and started to receive awards for my work, I was once advised to switch from abstract to landscapes and more figurative work like my mother," she says, "I would not let anyone tell me what I should or shouldn't paint."

Shaped by the moment and responsive only to her personal lexicon, Kirshner's beguiling abstracts exude a ferocious energy. Imbued with sunlight, her dynamic paintings have an honored place among contemporary abstract expressionists.

Kirshner has received numerous prestigious awards. Her works are featured in private collections both in this country and abroad. *G&S*

For more information:
www.karenkirshner.com;
George Billis Gallery 212-645-2621.

With Lyric Brush: John Chumley's Valley

by A. Nicholas Powers
Curator of Collections, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

"Fort Colvin," 1974, egg tempera on panel. 40½" x 47½". Courtesy of a private collection. Photo by Lauren Fleming.

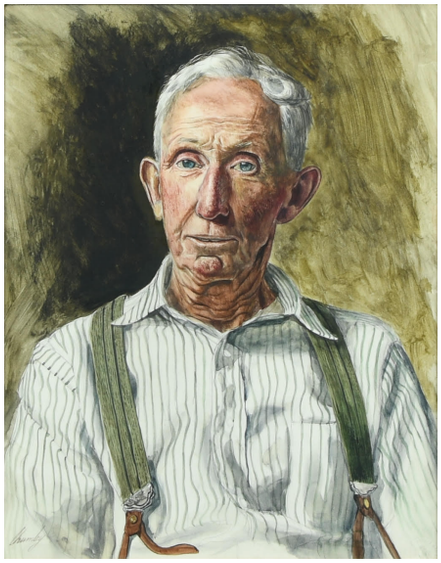
With Lyric Brush: John Chumley's Valley was recently featured at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester, Virginia. One of the most talented artists to live and paint in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, John Chumley offers intimate glimpses into the rural ways of life and landscapes of the Old Dominion. *With Lyric Brush* was the first major retrospective of Chumley's art since his early death from colon cancer in 1984 at the age of 56. The exhibition brought together more than forty of the over 500 documented paintings, drawings, and other objects completed by Chumley over a relatively short span of several decades.

While Chumley has become inextricably linked with the Shenandoah Valley through his art, he was not in fact a native Virginian. Chumley was born in Minnesota in 1928. Within a year of his birth, Chumley's family moved to the mountains of East Tennessee near Knoxville. As a young man, Chumley cultivated both an interest in art and a promising football career. After a knee injury sidelined his football aspirations, he enrolled at the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida, in the 1950s. There he met fellow artist and his future wife, Bettye Roberts.

At the outbreak of the Korean Conflict, Chumley joined the United States Air Force as an artist-illustrator and was stationed in Tokyo, Japan. While not included in the MSV exhibition, several Chumley watercolors depicting the postwar island nation's reconstruction survive in the artist's wider oeuvre. Following his term of service, Chumley returned to Florida, where he spent a short time studying at a private school before using GI Bill funds to apply for admission to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia.

Chumley's three-year course of study at PAFA was the most formative of his life. Walter Stuempfig, a Philadelphia-born and well-connected art instructor at the school, pushed Chumley in the direction of realism in an era when abstract expressionism was ascendant. Chumley also enrolled in a series of master classes and critiques taught by realist painter Andrew Wyeth, from whom Chumley adapted his distinctive palette of earth tones and natural colors.

As early as his time at PAFA, Chumley was already eyeing Virginia's Shenandoah Valley as a potential future home and outdoor studio. The artist first encountered the region while travelling between East Tennessee, Philadelphia, and New York, in the years before the construction of Virginia's portion of Interstate-81 and the commercial development that accompanied it. By the early 1960s, Chumley, wife



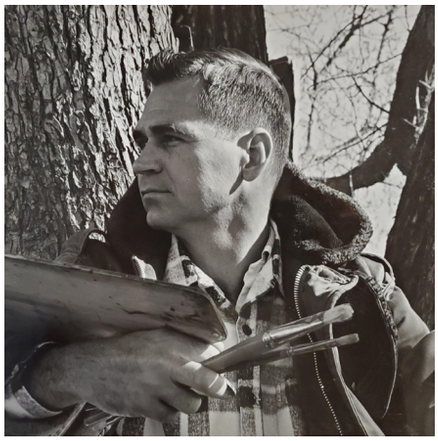
"Mister Shipe," 1965, watercolor on paper, 14" x 11". Courtesy of Judith E. Belchic-Martin. Photo by Lauren Fleming.

Bettye, and their four children moved to Vaucluse, an early 1800s brick house in southern Frederick County in the Lower Shenandoah Valley. The Vaucluse farm would serve variously as home, brick-and-mortar studio, and as a subject until Chumley's death.

Many artists painting the Shenandoah Valley, even into the twentieth century, visited the region on short excursions to observe scenic wonders like the Natural Bridge and the confluence of waters at Harpers Ferry before moving on to other idyllic locales. By contrast, like his contemporary Andrew Wyeth in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, Chumley cemented his relationship with the Shenandoah Valley region by integrating himself into its communities and ways of life. His paintings and drawings exhibit an understanding of the importance of space and place, an appreciation and celebration of everyday life in rural Virginia. Aiding him in capturing the ethos of the Valley was his keenly-developed eye for composition and color and his deep technical mastery of challenging mediums like watercolor and egg tempera.

Egg tempera, an ancient medium combining dry pigments, egg yolk, and water, was particularly suited to Chumley's representations of the Valley's natural and built landscape. An excellent example is *Fort Colvin*, completed in the winter of 1974 after a series of preparatory watercolors. Also known as Colvill's Fort, the structure, along the Opequon Creek in Frederick County, is a remarkable and rare survivor of a vernacular architectural form brought by Ulster Scots to the Shenandoah Valley in the mid-eighteenth century. Chumley emphasizes the house's singular nature—today hemmed in by a housing development—by allowing it to occupy the majority of the image. Careful layering of tempera creates an attractive contrast between the luminescent, almost glistening snow and the deepening shadows cast by trees both seen and unseen. In Chumley's composition, a pot of geraniums in the far-left window (an unofficial artist's signature) and smoke trailing in a Brownian motion from the center chimney hints at over two centuries of continuous habitation at the site.

At only fourteen by eleven inches, the watercolor *Mister Shipe* is simultaneously one of Chumley's most diminutive and evocative images of his Valley neighbors, many of whom were weathered "old time" farmers. Born in Shenandoah County—the heart of the Shenandoah Valley—William Franklin Shipe Sr. (1887–1974) was the postmaster of Middletown, the small community near which the Chumley family lived. Shipe was also a master of lore and keeper of local history who likely introduced Chumley to some of the picturesque farmsteads, venerable old buildings, and scenic vistas that later inspired the artist's brush. The postmaster's portrait is unusual in Chumley's body of work in that the subject engages directly with the viewer rather than appearing in a three-quarter pose. Shipe's wizened face belies his inquisitive and penetrative gaze; perhaps, with the barest hint of a smile, Shipe is judging if the viewer is worthy of the knowledge he has stewarded over decades. *Mister Shipe* is indicative of the quiet dignity that Chumley lent to many of his rural subjects.



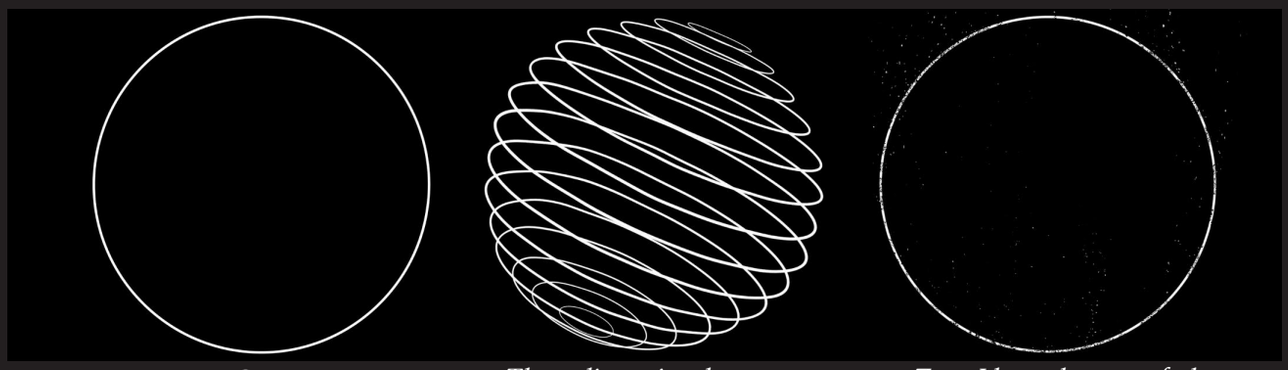
Artist John Chumley (1928–1984). Image courtesy of the Chumley Family.

While "With Lyric Brush: John Chumley's Valley" has closed, the goal of documenting John Chumley's decades of artistic output continues. G&S

Those with Chumley paintings and/or drawings are invited to contact npowers@themsv.org. For additional information and interviews go to themsv.org/events/with-lyric-brush-john-chumleys-valley/

Square the Circle—a film by Hanna Hovitie
The Self, A Sense of Place, Better Living through Geometry

by Woody Sempliner



Space *Three-dimensional space* *Zero, I know how you feel*

It is a good and wholesome exercise to measure one's self in relation to the universe. Not only is it virtuous to keep the universe in mind, if only to maintain perspective on the size of one's own issues, but to acknowledge one's inescapable relationship to it.

In her film, *Square the Circle*, Hanna Hovitie reveals elements of her personality as they reflect or react to mathematical, geometric and physical phenomena — to name a few: the concept of zero; the efficiency and perfection of a sphere; the possibility that the universe is infinite; the concept of time as it relates to space and light. But *Square the Circle* is a film, thank goodness, a finite, linear, physical thing, artfully crafted, funny and beautiful.

In trying to characterize this film, two things from the misty past come to mind: a novel and a piece of jewelry. The novel is Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*, written entirely in the second person. The piece of jewelry was a signet ring, in which was set an Australian Black Opal, arguably the most entrancing gemstone on this imperfectly spherical planet. Like McInerney's book, Hovitie's film is built around a syntactic anomaly. McInerney's now famous choice of the pronoun 'you' in the place of 'I' is analogous to the circular framing of Hovitie's film, which is not simply a porthole-shaped matte though which the viewer is looking at a normal horizontal image; it starts out that way but then evolves into a phantasmagoria of circular and spherical imagery that is layered and warped in ways that inspire new respect for the electronic medium, the computer and the 360 camera. As to the Australian Black Opal, if you've ever seen one of these stones you will recall their stunning vividness of color. They are not milky as are ordinary Opals but iridescent like a peacock feather only with reds and yellows as well that flash as you move them. To gaze into one of these gems up close is to succumb to the illusion that one is looking into something fathomless, a deep chasm flashing with light that seems to come from within. I reference this specific stone in order to resist re-using the adjectives 'gem-like' and 'crystalline,' which so aptly describe the best examples of art/film — short, concise, visually intense. By possessing all these qualities and being circular in shape *Square the Circle* redoubles this temptation. So, from a purely visual perspective, think crystal ball, the iris of a sorcerer's eye or the gem stone mentioned above.

Square the Circle is not, however, a purely visual piece of art. It begins textually with a quote: "Surely you'll find your place." — Mom

Thereafter, via her own on-screen image and a smooth, near musical voice over Hovitie, listed in the credits as "Tittö" (Girl), guides the viewer on a self reflective quest for 'place,' not a geographical place but places that may be found in two or three-dimensional space, or four-dimensional space-time — a particularly vexing locale that may exist in time and space — within the limits of the universe, of course, if such limits can be said to exist. At once grand and belittling, a place like this requires some cerebral assembly, which Hovitie accomplishes with grace, humor and geometric symbolism.

She posits the existence, or lack thereof, of zero-dimensional space as represented by zero, the "mark for an empty space," and further ruminates:

"Zero is a paradox.
Zero equals nothing implies
that nothing is something after all.
Zero, I know how you feel."

At one point we find the Tittö character standing on a tiny planet-like orb. She protrudes actually, like Saint-Exupéry's petit prince. It is winter. She shares the little planet with some high rise apartment buildings, also protruding. The voice over, in translation, proceeds as

Self

Self in Summer

The Long View (Iridology)

Winter Again

I'm Not Sure

follows:

"The circle is a set of points in a plane
that are equidistant from a given point.
The center of the circle.
It looks like a line, but isn't.
It's a set of points side by side,
that form an entity together.
There are so many points
that the points probably don't
even realize they form a circle.
A man passes by carrying a
shopping bag. He asks:
'What are you doing here?'
She answers:
'I'm not sure.' "
So it goes.

At present, *Square the Circle* is making the rounds at various film festivals and may be viewable by accessing those festivals. As of this writing the film is programmed at: FICBUEU Bueu International Film Festival 2023 (Spain) - International Competition; Helsinki International Film Festival Love & Anarchy 2023 (Finland) - Cut to the Chase Competition. *G&S*

www.hannahovitie.info/square-the-circle
email: hannahovitie@gmail.com

A Painter's New Path

by Anne Rudder

"Here Comes The Sun," 2023, 22"x 28", acrylic on plastic

Dellamarie Parrilli takes courageous chances as she travels new creative trails, making three dimensional paintings without the use of computer reproduction or preliminary drawings, the fresh works stemming from her mining of emotions from the deep well of her life's tough experiences. Her artwork could illustrate the great, late singer/songwriter John Prine's lyrics that 'livin' is just a hard way to go,' Parrilli honors our eyes with her rough-cut visual jewels sparking our intuitive responses to her incandescent heart.

After an autoimmune disease dashed her original dream of becoming a stage performer, she was forced to take an alternative career path as a result, after permanently losing her singing voice. She transcended this serious setback by picking up brush and palette knife and without training or knowledge of painters, began creating dynamic abstract expressionist canvases intimating works by de Kooning, Pollock and other giants of this explosive artistic genre. Now, painting could link her unvarnished feelings with the public as she makes bold statements of survival, intuitively moving bright colors across the picture planes, taking viewers on forceful visual imaginative journeys.

Her current pieces involve applying paint with brush and palette knife, scraping and building on strata of plastic and canvas in impasto and wash techniques, pouring pigment and stroking calligraphic marks on the surfaces for a distinctive painterliness. Her hand and arm are her means of realizing the works as she paints mesmerizing, layered images on surfaces, results devoid of any mechanical interventions. We view raw and ambiguous visuals ending any illusions of emotional stasis we may have had before seeing the new work.

Her art-making techniques are significant because Parrilli's new painting process is directly related to the numerous layers of media in the pieces, the brushed forms imbued with primal physicality that we respond to deeply. 3D printed artwork alters our conventional view of the world around us, and resultant pieces can be sculptural but constrained by the uniformity of the mechanical means of production.

In contrast, Parrilli's 3D pieces

"Walk Me Through This World," 2023, 22" x 28", acrylic on plastic

eschew machine-driven images and consequently, her artistic results are honest and personal involvements in the creative process. A two-dimensional picture becomes a 3D immersive viewing experience where we are nearly part of the piece, directly facing it without use of augmented reality devices or AI. Our viewing is not a perfunctory glance while scrolling down a screen; instead, we confront what is really before our eyes, taking in the work on the level of feeling rather than as entertainment, technology not surpassing art's intrinsic wonderful value.

Black calligraphic marks are Parrilli's autobiographical tropes, symbols of self-actualization while she cleverly employs her use of apt titles for her robust visuals. The painting *Shattering Glass Ceilings* is one way she integrates formidable emotional energies where dark quick dashes balance with primary-colored pigments, conveying her serious creative motivations for artmaking.

Use of black gestures take a solemn turn in three red, white, and black pieces, *The Day the Music Died*, *Self Portrait* and *Self Portrait-Final Performance* where Parrilli tackles her feelings about losing her voice as a performer. The self-portraits have ghostly auras to their white abstract countenances diverging with the intense black and red agitated brushstrokes underscoring Parrilli's tragic loss of her trained vocal creative outlet.

Elatedly, she counters the pessimism of these self-portraits in *Here Comes the Sun*, dispelling her sorry brume with painted images of emotional relief. The lone yellow sunlit circle at the center of the composition testifies to her victory over hard times, the bright abstract disc an optimistic burst of yellow in a painting where saturated reds and blues otherwise prevail.

Walk Me Through This World can also be viewed as the artist's emotional release from negativity. Here, calligraphic marks are lightly and evenly drawn amid a lush verdancy, the renderings, traces of green subtle footprints near bold impasto rivers of white, while leafy washed pinks juxtapose in the composition; the translucent forms overlaying milky white grounds, immerse us in the piece as swimmers dive into a luxe chromatic sea.

These novel works convey Dellamarie Parrilli's indubitable self-knowledge in fresh ways as her three-dimensional visuals are vehicles for a spirited soul, acquainting us anew with pieces of innovative sensibilities graced by this noteworthy painter's brush. *G&S*

Parrilli.com

Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. v. Goldsmith and other Shenanigans, from an Artist's Perspective

by David Cenedella

The recent Supreme Court case, *Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. v. Goldsmith*, held that the Andy Warhol Foundation ("AWF") did not meet the "fair use" requirements of 17 U.S.C §107, and therefore violated the copyright protections afforded to Lynn Goldsmith under 17 U.S.C §106, when it licensed "Orange Prince" to Conde Nast for $10,000.

This decision elicited a plethora of commentary from the art community, which seems to have developed an interest in statutory interpretation almost overnight. Legal analysis certainly has an allure, and it is possible that one or two fine arts majors regretted never taking a law class in school after this case was published—after all, many lawyers, perhaps including Justice Kagan, will confidently provide an in-depth art analysis to anyone who asks, or sometimes even to those who do not ask.

However, it is also possible that the myriad of opinions on the ramifications of the AWF case, ostensibly centered on a legal interpretation of the relevant statute, are actually purely artistic interpretations couched, often inelegantly, in legalese. The AWF case brings up many interesting and important issues; both legal and artistic. The artistic issues are probably better, and more completely fleshed out through a strictly artistic analysis.

For anyone still interested in the legal issues, I suggest reading the actual opinion. It's not that long, it's quite well written, the analysis is top-notch, and the alternative is to have legal information filtered to you through the mind of an art-history major trying to make it as a journalist.

From an artistic standpoint, the crux of the AWF case is whether Andy Warhol transformed Lynn

A black and white portrait photograph of Prince taken in 1981 by Lynn Goldsmith.

Goldsmith's photograph in such a way that it could be called art (his art). In other words, is what Andy Warhol produced actually art? This is probably the question that draws the attention, and possibly the ire, of the art world; it's the reason why so many people take an interest in this case.

The legal answer to this question requires statutory interpretation, including analysis of precedential case law, and it is doubtful too many people not in law school care enough to take on such an endeavor. The artistic answer to this question on the other hand, requires an exploration of the personal and fundamental question of "what is art?" and perhaps a visit back to the early 1960's when Warhol first used "objects" not created by him. There are many people in the art world who are very willing, with feathers ruffled, indignant opinions and possibly a lot at stake financially, to care enough to take on that question.

It was in the early 1960's when Warhol's original practice, or sin, depending on your point of view, of using objects he did not himself create, as his art, began, *Campbell's Soup Cans* and *Brillo Boxes* being two of his most famous pieces. It was at this point a novelty, and it was at this point that the art world had the opportunity to decide whether these "objects" were being transformed into art.

It is apparent from recent commentary that a not insignificant mass believes that artistic, and legal, challenge to the status of Warhol as an artist (in respect to certain pieces) is a modern invention; that the AWF case created new theories for this purpose. This however is not the case. Any theories challenging the status of Warhol's productions as art, presented in the AWF case, should be thought of as resurrected rather than created.

One person who did not view Andy Warhol as an artist as far back as 1964 is James Harvey; the person who designed the Brillo box while working at a Madison Avenue design company. James Harvey was an abstract-expressionist artist, at night after he punched out of his day job at the design company. Unbeknownst to Mr. Harvey, Andy Warhol copied the Brillo Box exactly, after viewing the box in a grocery store and being "overcome with envy and a sense of beauty." Mr. Harvey, as reported by *Time Magazine*, only learned that Warhol was selling an exact copy of the Brillo Box when, by chance, he attended a gallery selling them in New York in 1964. Mr. Harvey who toyed with the idea of suing Warhol, died an untimely death in 1965 at the age of 36. On his death bed, he refused to acknowledge that his Brillo Box was a work of art. Moreover, he further refused to admit that Warhol's *Brillo Box* was a work of art. To him, Warhol's box was, at best, an example of excellent design work, and at worst, nothing short of a

defilement of the sanctity of art.

Mr. Harvey is of course not entitled to the final word on Warhol as an artist just because Warhol used his design. However, it would have been interesting to see the legal outcome of such a case. The current AWF case leaves the question of whether Warhol's Brillo Box is art, undecided. (At least that is my reading of the opinion – and if you are not convinced you do not have to take my word for it, you can read it for yourself).

That a Supreme Court case leaves what many people hold to be a truth—that Andy Warhol pieces are art—undecided, is quite a statement in and of itself. But again, it is not a new creation. In the 1960's, the idea of Warhol's pieces being classified as art, or even as "his," was very much in contention. Even today, art museums, such as MOMA and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which house Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* and *Campbell's Soup Cans*, respectively, each acknowledge that whether these pieces are in fact art, is a fundamental question and not a certainty. (Each museum's description of these pieces, highlights the uncertainty of their status as art). Given that these are prestigious art museums displaying these pieces, one may infer that, at least from the museum's perspective, the answer is yes. However, these museums pose these questions for a reason; and it's not because the answer is obvious.

Due to the financial aspect of Warhol (a lot of wealthy people have a lot of money invested in his productions) it is probably safe to assume that those with a vested financial interest will be quite protective of Warhol's status as an original artist. (It seems likely that this was in fact the intention of the Andy Warhol Foundation, which actually sued Lynn Goldsmith for a declaratory judgment upon

Andy Warhol created 16 works based on Lynn Goldsmith's photograph:14 silk-screen prints and two pencil drawings. The works are collectively known as the Prince Series.

hearing of her belief of copyright infringement. They could have easily paid her the $10,000 or settled out of court instead). They likely will not engage in a fair discussion of whether Warhol's pieces are in fact art. This is probably also true of journalists and art historians who have written extensively of Warhol, but never broached the question of whether his "art" is in fact art in the first place.

Ultimately it is for the viewer to consider, based on history, and more importantly their own sensibilities, whether Warhol's creations are art. Perhaps Andy Warhol's greatest contribution to the art world will end up being the fundamental question his work forces every viewer to grapple with: What is art? *G&S*

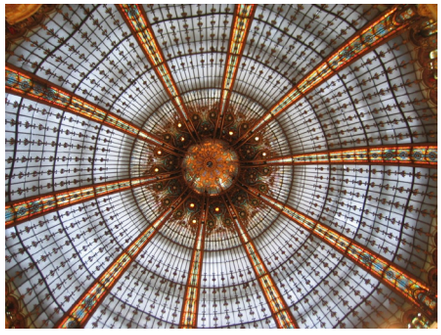
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES Syllabus ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, INC. v. GOLDSMITH ET AL. CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT No. 21–869. Argued October 12, 2022—Decided May 18, 2023

Paris:
Les Galeries Lafayette

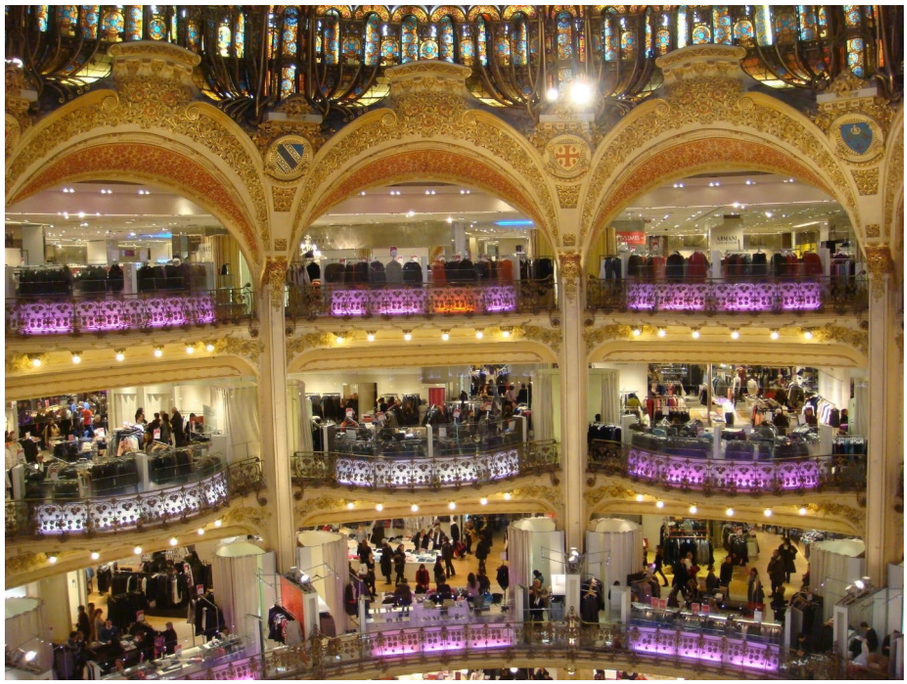
by Norman A. Ross

These days when I am shopping I often find myself in a windowless dungeon, two stories or more under new buildings recently built on Columbus Avenue near where I live in Manhattan. There's a Target, a T.J. Maxx, a Burlington Coat Factory, and the lower level of a Whole Foods. Elsewhere it might be a street-level Home Depot, a Lowe's or similar—none of which has windows. Often there is no escape from loud music. My daughter with an MBA in Marketing tells me that the strategy is to help customers forget they are shopping so the victims—you and I—will continue shopping and buy more than we need. In contrast, each time I visit Les Galeries Lafayette in Paris, I am overwhelmed by its beauty, and each time I look forward to returning.

In 1894, Théophile Bader and his cousin, Alphonse Kahn, opened a fashion store in a small haberdasher's shop at the corner of rue La Fayette and the Chaussée d'Antin. In 1896, the company purchased the building. In 1905, they acquired several additional buildings on boulevard Haussmann. They commissioned the architect Georges Chedanne to design the store in the main building, where a 141-foot high Neo-Byzantine glass and steel dome and Art Nouveau staircases were installed in 1912. The result is breathtaking.



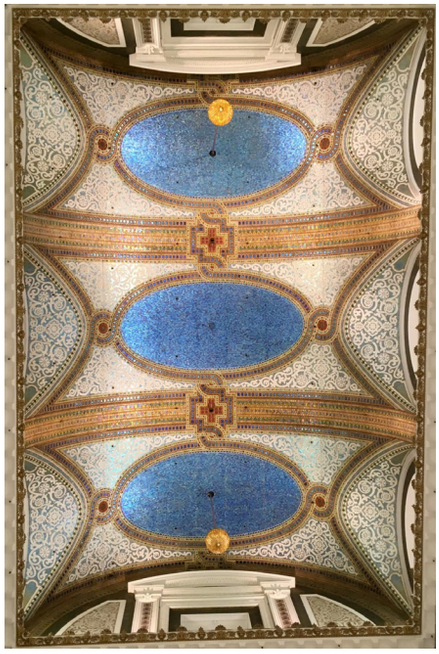
The Dome in Les Galeries Lafayette (detail)



Les Galeries Lafayette

The main building of the Galeries is just behind the Opéra Garnier—the original Paris opera house that was Hitler's favorite Paris building—an imposing edifice in the heart of the Right Bank. Juxtaposing photos of the facade of the Garnier and the interior of the Galeries easily leads me to imagine that they are one and the same building. Unless you are familiar with the Galeries' interior you would not imagine the dome is in a department store. The views looking up, down or across the central apse easily take one's mind off the shopping tasks at hand, especially when the Christmas decorations are abundant. But shop you will as you linger to enjoy the beauty and as you partake in the splendor around you and the exquisite French clothing and accessories.

The emphasis on beauty in France dates back many centuries, and it permeates French life—not only in the arts, but also in clothing, food, architecture and la vie quotidienne. The human interest in decorations appears in ancient artifacts, whether the petroglyphs at Lascaux, the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, or ceramic oil lamps found



The Tiffany Dome in Macy's in Chicago

GUM on Red Square

throughout the ruins of the ancient world. In this context it is fully understandable that Bader & Kahn would put an emphasis on beauty when building their new department store during the age of Art Nouveau.

In the 1960s, young designers began launching their ready-to-wear lines at the store (as opposed to bespoke clothing). The first designer to become famous was Laura, in 1962. A little while later she became known as Sonia Rykiel, and later she designed the new interior of l'Hôtel Lutetia.

Rushing to see the Mona Lisa at the Louvre without taking in the other four da Vincis, as many tourists do, not to mention the two marble *Slaves* by Michelangelo and so many other extraordinary works of art, is similar, I think, to visiting Paris without pausing in front of the endless designer store windows or visiting Les Galeries Lafayette.

Other Department Stores

The interior of Le Bon Marché, across the Seine, is very attractive, but it wasn't always. For most of its life it was far more utilitarian, like Au Printemps, Marks & Spencer, Gimbels and most department stores. In contrast, Les Galeries Lafayette has been stunning for more than a century. However, it was not the first department store with a magnificent dome. Unveiled in 1907, the dome in Chicago's Macy's, formerly Marshall Field's, is the world's largest example of unbroken Tiffany favrile iridescent glass mosaic. Built under the personal supervision of Louis Comfort Tiffany, the dome is composed of more than 1.6 million pieces of colored glass, and to this day it is a significant tourist attraction in the heart of Chicago's Loop–in the third largest store in the world.

Another extraordinary department store, more famous for its facade and location than its interior, faces Lenin's Tomb across Red Square–GUM–*Gosudarstvenniy Universainiy Magazin* ("State Department Store"). It too is a major tourist draw, although not since Putin invaded Ukraine.

In 1940, as the Nazis were occupying the grand hotels of Paris, such as the Lutetia, George V and the Ritz, Les Galeries Lafayette underwent a process of "Aryanization"—the removal of its Jewish owners and their replacement by non-Jews. Bader and his partners, the store's administrators, and 129 Jewish employees, were forced to resign. Of course the owners were not compensated. Today Les Galeries Lafayette is the largest chain of department stores in Europe.

These stores are not museums, but Les Galeries Lafayette can fill a similar purpose if you're searching for art in Paris. Saks 5th Avenue in Manhattan and Harrods in London also have beautiful interiors "worth a detour," but Les Galeries is "worth a journey," as Michelin would say. Perhaps avoiding the modern box stores is one of the benefits of shopping online. Shopping in Paris though is a much more rewarding experience. *G&S*

Harrods in London

Photos by Norman A. Ross

Memory and Hope: the Art of Alexi Natchev

by Mary F. Holahan, Ph.D.

Hope and Memory have one daughter and her name is Art.
William Butler Yeats, 1902

The art of Alexi Natchev transports us through time and space. It introduces us to bereft victims of war's violence, an enigmatic woman in historic regalia, or a playful bird in a windswept sea, and reflects upon the past or expresses joy in the present. His spectrum of media encompasses painting, drawing, and complex print processes. But his wide-ranging images demonstrate more than visual imagination and technical skill. In each, he delves into the human condition, exploring emotions and states of mind.

Born and educated in Sofia, Bulgaria, Natchev graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts there, and later became a professor in its Drawing Department. Since coming to the US in 1990, he has illustrated 22 children's books with major American publishers. He has won several national and international awards and taught at Savannah College of Art and Design, University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. From 2007 to 2018, he was Illustration Area Coordinator at Delaware College of Art and Design in Wilmington, Delaware. His work is held in the National Art Gallery in Sofia, several city museums in Bulgaria, the Rare Book Collection at Princeton Library, and the Delaware Art Museum, as well as numerous private collections.

Natchev's family memories of World War I inspired his Remembrance prints. In the first, on the front page of a contemporaneous newspaper, we see a photo inset that highlights the faces of his grandmother and uniformed grandfather. Superimposed over the text are images of his grandmother holding a welcoming bouquet of flowers, and gazing uncertainly toward her husband upon his return from the battlefield. Burdened by a cane, battered by injury and exhaustion, and carrying his strung-together possessions, the conscript trudges ahead. There is an exploding black blotch in the lower right corner, which suggests blood, or a bursting shell.

"Remembrance I, World War I," 1984 Alexi Natchev (born 1951). Hand-pulled lithograph and etching, composition: 20½" x 16¼", sheet: 26" x 19¾" Delaware Art Museum, Acquisition Fund, 2013. © Alexi Natchev.

"Remembrance II, World War I", 1984 Alexi Natchev (born 1951). Hand-pulled lithograph and etching, composition: 18½" x 17¼", sheet: 26" x 19¾" Delaware Art Museum, Acquisition Fund, 2013. © Alexi Natchev.

In the second Remembrance, we again have the photo inset of a soldier and the image of an isolated fighter slumped in cave-like darkness. Ghostly combatants line up with military precision across the top of the front page and fragmented guns hover at the left. Natchev's grandfather wrote the postcard to his pregnant wife from the battlefront with a message of calm reassurance. The faces of the couple and the forlorn soldier are shadowed but not distorted, making their tragedy even more affecting. These survivors become every soldier and civilian unable to escape terror and starvation in the chaos of war, and more real than photographs from safer times.

In the Remembrance series, Natchev's multi-step process of drawing, printing, and photography enhances complex relationships of time, space, words, and images. Newspaper text is both background and foreground, filtering through and receding from the transparent figures. The seated soldier's feet and the walking soldier's cane and boots thrust into our space. The asymmetric and tilted portraits and postcard suggest the dream-like disorder of memory itself. While the expressive black smudges and inky areas near the three figures intensify an atmosphere of foreboding, they also make the prints seem like salvaged artefacts instead of contemporary works of art. Yet all the figures could be war victims of today.

In Tarot Card II, Natchev

"Tarot Card II," 2016. Mixed media and collage, 16" x 20". Collection of the artist. © Alexi Natchev

interprets historical memories. The Tarot (its etymology is uncertain) began in 15th century Italy as a deck of playing cards; it was not associated with fortune-telling until the 18th century. Artists commissioned by wealthy patrons painted pasteboard cards of about 6"x4" with royal and allegorical figures in elaborate period garments, and embellished by tooled, gilt backgrounds. To this influence, Natchev also brings an immersion in the "richly decorated pages of illuminated manuscripts, the world of fantastic creatures, mythical hybrids, and sea monsters, and the shimmering colors of the Unicorn Tapestries."

Tarot Card II also makes clear his observation that the medieval visual imagination is "very close to modern sensibility." A richly dressed and crowned woman gestures among swirls of gem-like color, abstract shapes, and decorative patterns, accompanied by a cloud of dragons and a unicorn. Although the imagery may allude to the medieval legend that only a young virgin could tame a unicorn—a folktale present in Christian and secular traditions—the scene conjures up a mysterious mood rather than a narrative. Natchev invites viewers to create their own stories as they not only "sense the distant past but also discover new beauty and meanings."

Recently Natchev created a wordless picture book for his young granddaughters. In *A Day at the Beach*, a little girl about five years old sits with a multi-colored umbrella and quilt in the bright yellow early morning sun with a beach ball on the sand next to her. She tosses the ball into the air and watches as it is blown out beyond her reach. Dejected, under darkening skies and increasing wind, she loses sight of the ball and struggles with her umbrella.

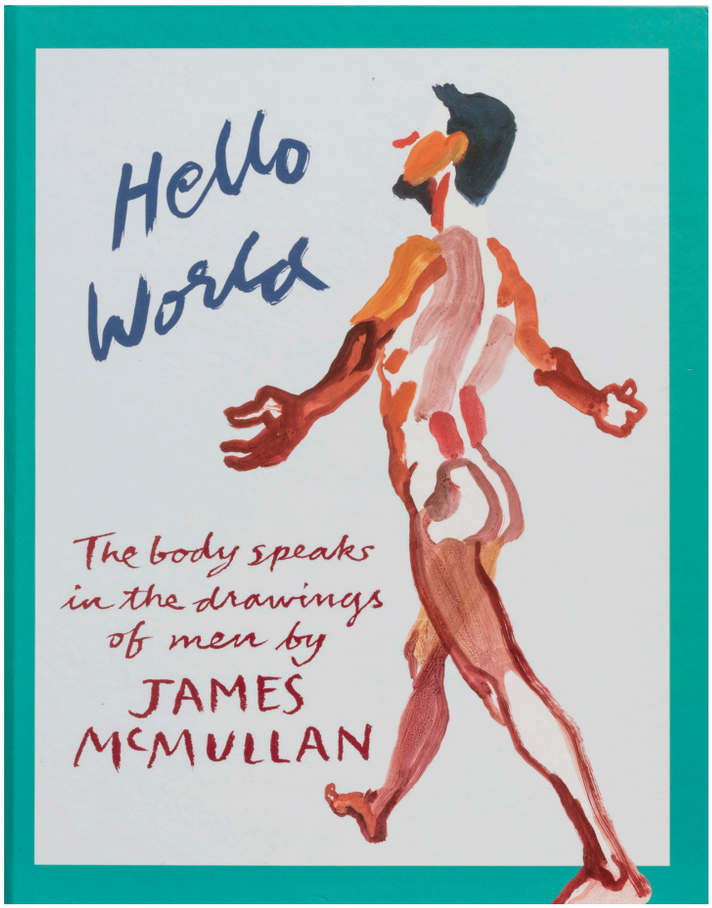
We follow the ball into a storm, where a playful dolphin bounces it to a perched pelican, who takes flight and drops it back to the amazed and delighted child. We see her shadow waving as the kindly pelican flies off over the becalmed sea. Natchev's watercolor and collage enrich each page with subtle and brilliant gradations of sunlight, beach, sky, and water as the day's weather changes. The girl's face and actions (and the animals') exhibit a range of emotions. The book is a science lesson wrapped in a story of adventure, joy, and gratitude.

"Pelican with a Ball," 2022. Watercolor and collage, 10" x 8". Illustration for "A Day at the Beach" by Alexi Natchev, IWonder Books, 2022. Collection of the artist. © Alexi Natchev

While Natchev's Remembrances honor his grandparents' memory, with *A Day at the Beach*, he has created a memory for two little girls—named Celeste and Marina after the sky and the sea—to take into the future. Today they enjoy an entrancing and light-hearted tale. Later they will remember and treasure the gift from a loving grandfather, an artist who knows—like Alice in Wonderland—that "it's a poor sort of memory that only works backward." *G&S*

www.alexinatchev.com

The Body In Motion



The Remarkable Drawings of James McMullan

by Bobbie Leigh

"HELLO WORLD: The body speaks in the drawings of men by James McMullan" is a tour-de-force. This renowned artist and illustrator enables you to see what he observes and at the same time, discern what his models are thinking.

McMullan's perceptions are penetrating. In the free-flowing, hand-written cursive which accompanies each drawing, he reveals two states of mind—his and that of the model. (There is no printed text in the entire book.) In one drawing he writes the model's thoughts in bright red ink: "OK. One more pose." In dark blue ink, McMullan tells us what he sees: "Generous pants and jacket contrast with an angular unforgiving head." In every drawing the artist evokes the psychological state of his model. "I use strokes, almost transparent, and white space to represent the poetry of the body," says this keen observer of inner feelings.

"Each tells a different story. I have no method...all the drawings are different, one from another," says McMullan. This is especially true of the cover art. The model walks away. We see his face in profile, revealing nothing. It is the model's open hands that tell a story. This could be a greeting to a warm, sunny beach morning or to a loved one he hasn't seen in years. It is happy, joyful, and as in all of the drawings in this remarkable book, the body is a cascade of unspoken movements and emotions. The hands and feet say it all.

McMullan has received wide acclaim for his more than 80 beloved posters for Lincoln Center and illustrations in many national magazines including *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, and *Vanity Fair*. His book is dedicated "...to all the men who inspired me with the creative energy of their bodies..." *G&S*

Available at amazon.com
and rizzolibookstore.com

SYML, Phases Tour, NYC

by D. T. Alexander

SYML with a supporting band of four, all entered the stage robed in flowing white garments. The quintet opened the night with a sobering rendition of "You and I." Just above a mutter, SYML made it known, 'I wanna feel something, I wanna feel something.' Later expanding, 'I want some good loving... want it to mean something.' The earnestly mellow duet featured additional vocals from Charlotte Lawrence and is off SYML's latest release and third full-length album, *The Day My Father Died*. The Phases tour, in support of the new record, was hosted in New York City by Racket, in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan on a cool, late-Spring night.

The opener was swiftly followed by the album's second single, "Believer." SYML purred, 'Hold me like no other/Embrace my brokenness,' before warning, 'Don't preach to me, a believer in a choir/ You're that hallelujah sweetness on my lips.' The track is a stand-alone masterpiece, but the live version made it even more so. The eager crowd was then transported "in a soft electric light" with the relentless, pulsing beat of "Chariot," the penultimate single from the new record. 'Wait up for me, chariot, chariot come carry me...', SYML pleaded into the audience.

The band then slowed the pace with "Lost Myself." The stage was flooded by incandescent lights each time the band delivered in unison, 'Breaking through the clouds/ Feels impossible now,' it was as if a midday sun had penetrated the dark room. Up until then, the sparsely crowded, 650 standing-room capacity venue had remained mostly dim.

SYML is the solo venture of 40-year-old Brian Fennell of former indie band, Barcelona. Pronounced "sim-mel," the moniker translates to "simple" in Welsh. Fennell has noted that the name acts as a reminder for him to "live life simply." It is also a tribute to Fennell's heritage. He was born to Welsh parents but raised by adoptive parents outside of Seattle, Washington. SYML released his eponymous debut album in May of 2019, via Nettwerk Records. The debut was followed by 2021's *Sacred Spaces*, a live album recorded at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle.

Performing a cover of John Hiatt's "Have a Little Faith in Me," was a pleasant departure from the artist's own body of work, while "Fear of the Water" brought the rapt audience back to SYML's familiar supply. From there, the band transitioned seamlessly

into "I Wanted to Leave" from the *Sacred Spaces* record. The song was featured as a sample by Lana Del Rey on the "Paris, Texas" track from her 2023 album, *Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd.*

"Howling," a favorite from the new record, was a thrilling performance. 'Keep me howling baby/ I'll be your beast, I'll be your dog... Lay me down low, I'm coming down slow,' with every offering of "low" and "slow" doubling as howls. On the drum-heavy reworking of "Meant to Stay Hid," the artist admits, 'if I wasn't so afraid, I'd shine a light up to space.'

You would be forgiven for losing track of time while getting lost in the artist's steady repertoire of hits. In no time, the 19-song set came to a close, but without the usual fanfare of an encore and noticeably absent any showing of the new record's title-track. The triad of songs that closed out the night were "The War," from their 2021 live album; the band's biggest hit to date, "Where's My Love;" and the final song from the new album, "Corduroy."

With the exception of some of Racket's overzealous security staff, the night's main event proceeded smoothly. The venue's acoustics were well-suited for the band's intimate collection of songs, with the event space beautifully complimenting the soaring vocal affectations of SYML and the stylings of his equally impressive band. *G&S*

symlmusic.com

The Laboratory of the Future
18th Venice Architecture Biennale

by Stefania Carrozzini

One of the central themes of the 18th Architecture Biennale entitled "The Laboratory of the Future" is an approach to architecture as an expanded field of activity that encompasses both the material and non-material world: a space where ideas are as important as artifacts. This year the event has been curated by Lesley Lokko, the first African American woman awarded the role.

The emphasis is on the future, which generates quite a few questions, because looking too much into the future risks missing the present. The first question arises spontaneously: Are exhibitions of this magnitude still justified? It is not just about costs, or the need to be ecologically sound in terms of carbon emissions, but rather one wonders if such events serve to create a new awareness of the crucial issues of our time related to architecture and the environment.

Considering that this is not an art exhibition, even if the biennial draws its structure and format from its sister event, the Venice Biennale Arte, with which it alternates each year, the audience participation is rational rather than sensory and this is not insignificant. The Architecture Biennale is still using many of the traditional exhibition formats of models, graphics, videos and installations. The availability of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the use of systems such as the Metaverse would make immersive 3D environments more dynamic, no longer reliant just on a descriptive narrative, but allowing sensory involvement to experience the topics and processes of change as if from the inside of these new designs. This is important as the Architecture Biennale is not intended only for industry insiders but aims to find a common language to allow the public to reflect on the current scenario in which new technological systems should merge with aesthetics.

"The Laboratory of the Future" by Olalekan Jevifous

A Futuristic Travel Lounge Imagined in the Barotse Flood Plaines Zanbi

However, for the first time, the spotlight is on Africa and its diaspora, on the fluid and intertwined cultures of the people of

African origin that now embraces the world. The aim of Lokko is to spotlight previously under-represented countries with a focus on de-carbonization and de-colonization and less exploitation of the people and their countries. She explains that Africa is "the continent with the world's youngest population, the fastest urbanization, growing at a rate of four per cent per year, often at the expense of local ecosystems — so we are at the forefront of climate change, too." One of the African participants is the team of architects of the Koffi & Diabaté studio from the Ivory Coast, that combines indigenous knowledge with advanced modern technologies in a real-life case study centered on Ebrah, showcasing their vision on how to build the African city of tomorrow.

Amongst the many participating international countries, the Latvian Pavilion is worth visiting; being certainly one of the most photographed. The project used AI to reinterpret themes from past editions of the Venice Architecture Biennials, starting from 2000, and translates them into shelves of products in a pop-up supermarket.

The Uzbekistan Pavilion located at the Arsenale is a suggestive installation with anarchic charm, built in brick like a labyrinth. At the Giardini, the Nordic Countries Pavilion (covering Norway, Sweden, Finland) promotes indigenous Sámi architecture, design, traditional building skills and culture creating a space to welcome visitors and introduce them to the Sámi culture.

Who knows what the future will hold for us in terms of the development of knowledge and reality, but one thing is certain, we hope that architecture will be the bearer of a new spirit and sensitivity to human and aesthetic values. *G&S*

Open from Saturday, May 20 to Sunday, November 25, 2025 Venice.
labiennale.org/en/architecture/2023/18th-exhibition

Nordic Pavillion

Latvian Pavillion

Baldur's Gate 3: the Next Game of the Year

by Alex Hadley

The fantasy landscape is dark and moody with mythical beasts and warriors flying across the landscape. An elf-like creature is grimacing while a fat worm is wriggling into its eye. It looks realistic, perhaps hyper-realistic if you've ever spent any time in a hardened molten landscape dressed in silver armor being scrutinized by red-eyed demons. I'm playing a new video game on my computer. I feel my mom come up behind me, peer over my shoulder. I know the questions are about to start…(eye-roll emoji)

Baldur's Gate 3

Mom: What sort of video game is that?
Gamer: It's called *Baldur's Gate 3*. It's the latest e-game (electronic game) based on the Dungeons & Dragons board game that Dad used to play when he was a kid; a game in which you played as a character that you created, explored a mythical universe, collecting information and treasures, engaging in battles to solve problems. In this e-game version, people's brains are being infected with a parasite that can turn you into a mind flayer that gives you mysterious abilities. You can either resist it and allow the darkness to turn in on itself and defeat evil, or you can embrace power, corruption and perhaps become evil yourself. The ultimate climax of the game pits you against "The Absolute" the god of a goblin cult. Larian Studios the creator of this game promotes it as a "tale of fellowship and betrayal, sacrifice and survival and the lure of absolute power."

Mom: Is the game good?
Gamer: In my opinion it's the best game to come out in some time. Each character and storyline is dynamic and every main character tries to convince you to follow their story. The game is full of conflict with multiple "grey" characters; none are totally good nor totally bad. Each character has unique reasons for following their path and they are all charismatic enough to get you on their side no matter how good or evil they seem to be.

Mom: The artwork, the landscape and the characters are so detailed and fantastical. Does it make a difference to your game experience?
Gamer: It makes a huge difference. It pulls you into the story so much more when the visuals and landscapes are done well. This game has it all. It captures the grand scale of fantasy environments perfectly. It offers all the classic medieval cities, ancient underground crypts, beautiful elven forests and barren forests overrun by shadows. They seamlessly allow you to move from one vista to another with no-jarring environmental changes. The characters are really detailed, from the buckles and creases in their clothes, to their intricate armor and facial expressions.

Illithid tadpoles, parasites that embed themselves in the eye

Mom: What makes the scenery so special?
Gamer: There is a huge variety of different environments that you can explore, and each area is massive. The attention to detail in each environment is incredible. Remember the film *Lord of the Rings* and how impressive those cities and beautiful mountains looked? This game gives you that sort of experience

but it's 10-times better because you aren't just watching it, you're experiencing it yourself. You are living it and all its beauty is yours to explore.

Mom: What's the best part of this game?
Gamer: Apart from the intricate story and artwork, the greatest attraction of this game is the sheer number of choices you have. The whole game is yours to control. The only thing that you have to follow is the overarching story of the mystery meeting with "The Absolute" at the end of the game and the desire to remove a parasite from your body. The journey of how you get there, the things you do on the way are all in your hands and they greatly impact how the story unfolds. It could truly be that no two journeys you embark on in this game are ever the same.

Mom: So, the game developers and artists have had to create all these permutations of scenarios that you can experience.
Gamer: Yes, for games like this, replay ability is a valuable aspect and with this game, the sheer number of different kinds of characters you can play is outrageous. There are 12 separate types of characters. This refers to their fighting styles. Then each type can have anywhere between 3-9 sub-types. As you play the game and level up you can combine any of these types to make an almost unique character.

Mom: Do you know anything about the artist who illustrated the game?
Gamer: Games like this are created by teams of artists. In a big studio like Larian, different artists create different elements. Some design and create sprites which are the game elements such as characters, weapons, treasures and effects. Others create the backgrounds and environment. Some work in 2D while many these days work in 3D which allows the game to have the interactive feel. Animators make the characters feel real, with natural physical movements and facial emotions. There are also artists who just work on the special effects to give the players feedback on their character's movements, so for instance when you swing an axe, you get sparks flying and blood spattering. It's not about individuals. It's a team, everyone has their job, and they have to work together to make it happen.

Mom: Is *Baldur's Gate 3* a success?
Gamer: It's already a huge success. It's probably going to be Game of the Year 2024 and win multiple categories. It's the best Dungeons and Dragons adaptation ever. It's really not a game I thought I would want to play until I gave it a try. All your decisions truly matter and have a huge impact on the story that you experience, combined with the incredible voice acting and the art. It's the most immersive game I've ever played. *G&S*

In game scenario

Exploring the wilderness

The city of Baldur's Gate

In the world currently, it is estimated that 3.09 billion people play video games. Baldur's Gate 3 was released on August 3rd 2023. As we go to print, the game has over 875,000 gamers playing at peak times.

baldursgate3.game
All images courtesy of Larian Studios

Editor's Spotlight

Artist
Rich Milo

Discovery of the New World

Broken Promises

Rich Milo creates iconic images, emblematic of the spirit of America. His intricate and neo-realistic images are all created freehand with air and hand brushes, applied in a series of thin glazes to achieve the amazing depth of realism. At a time when artificial intelligence and digital work proliferates, the value of authentic, original and hand drawn work is valued even more. Milo spends over 2000 hours on each piece of his large scale works on canvas, with great attention to detail. He is based in New York State. www.richmilo.com G&S

Instructions

Gallery&Studio

making the unknown known!

Will you support unknown artists by making a donation today ?

$21 introduces an artist to 10 new readers

$50 sponsors a writer

$240 or $20 monthly promotes a new artist

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Thank you!

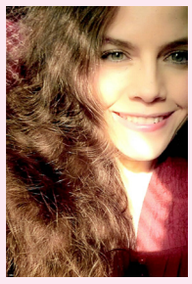
Help the Arts Flourish!

Pursuing Different Tracks

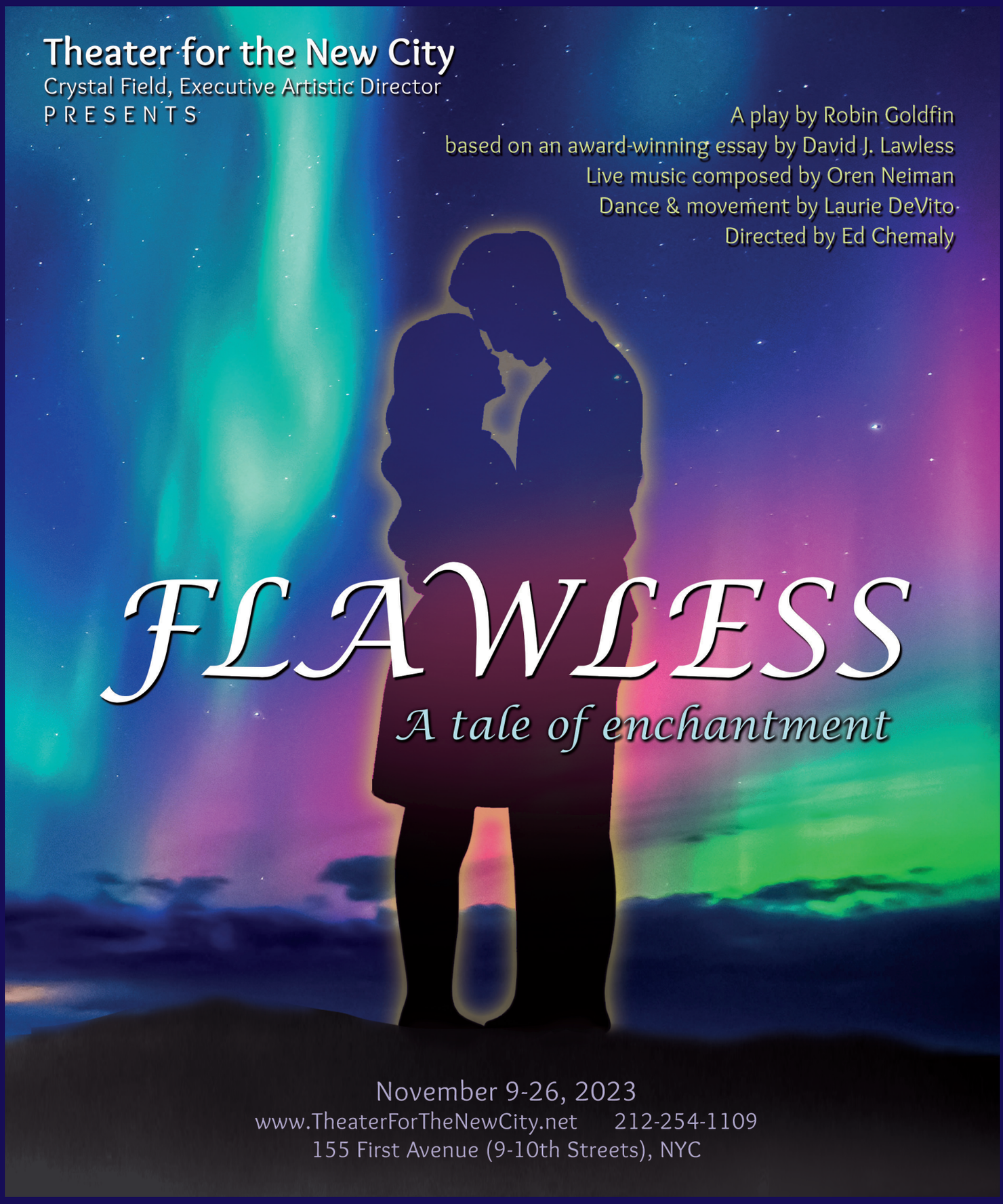
by Candice Daquin

A published writer advised;
"Don't write about yourself,
you sound like a teenager crying over spilt milk.
Write observations, things outside of you,
or poetry becomes selfish and inward,
and nobody wants to hear a person's thoughts anymore.
The formula, it's all in the formula.
You get it right, you have it, you sell it."
She's even in bookstores that don't have poetry sections
she's doing-poetry-on-tour,
inspiring fledgling poets, who
write about things outside themselves,
in neat obedient mixed-shake-formula.
Sometimes at night, when trains go by,
I think about what she said;
If I can see in the dark
I walk outside and look up at the sky,
bigger than me, a thing outside myself;
and next time I write;
"I saw the moon, it made me think of sadness. It made me
remember things inside myself and they rolled over like mice in a
wheel
straining for speed."
I think owing to this,
my books won't have pretty covers
won't move a generation
the moon will continue to reflect thoughts inside to without
and that's just how it is
when trains wake you at night
pursuing different tracks.

G&S



Candice Daquin is a French-born psychotherapist, writer and dancer living and working in America.



COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

May 20th, 1950

OPEN LETTER TO ROLAND L. REDMOND

President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dear Sir:

The undersigned painters reject the monster national exhibition to be held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art next December, and will not submit work to its jury.

The organization of the exhibition and the choice of jurors by Francis Henry Taylor and Robert Beverly Hale, the Metropolitan's Dirocter and the Associate Curator of American Art, does not warrant any hope that a just proportion of advanced art will be included.

We draw to the attention of those gentlemen the historical fact that, for roughly a hundred years, only advanced art has made any consequential contribution to civilization.

Mr Taylor on more than one occasion has publicly declared his contempt for modern painting; Mr. Hale, in accepting a jury notoriously hostile to advanced art, takes his place beside Mr. Taylor.

We believe that all the advanced artists of America will join us in our stand.

Jimmy Ernst	Ad Reinhardt
Adolph Gottlieb	Jackson Pollock
Robert Motherwell	Mark Rothko
William Baziotes	Bradley Walker Tomlin
Hans Hofmann	Willem de Kooning
Barnett Newman	Hedda Sterne
Clyfford Still	James Brooks
Richard Pousette-Dart	Weldon Kees
Theodoros Stamos	Fritz Bultman

The following sculptors support this stand.

Herbert Ferber	Seymour Lipton
David Smith	Peter Grippe
Ibram Lassaw	Theodore Roszak
Mary Callery	David Hare
Day Schnabel	Louise Bourgeois

Open letter to Roland L. Redmond, President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1950 May 20.
Hedda Sterne papers, 1939-1977. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
Reported on the front page of The New York Times on May 22nd 1950.