



site95

Journal

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site95 is a non-profit alternative organization established to present exhibitions for emerging and established artists in temporary urban locations. Drawing upon available space in major cities, site95 will present over five projects per year, each extending up to two months. The impermanent sites create a platform for artists and curators to present innovative ideas in different contexts and allow viewers to experience new work not native to their location. Exhibitions will offer openings, educational talks and tours, screenings, and performances. site95 will feature the online monthly journal with contributions by writers, curators, and artists.

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Cover Image

Sylvia Sleigh
The Turkish Bath, 1973
Oil on canvas
Image: 76 x 102 x 2in, Framed: 80 x 105 x 5in
Photograph ©2012 courtesy of The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago

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From the Editor

I was fortunate to work with Sylvia Sleigh on her 2007 exhibition at I-20 Gallery. She was 91 at the time and still completing paintings of male nudes. Being familiar with her work from Art History books, I was thrilled to collaborate with her. Sleigh was an incredibly sharp woman who told fantastic stories about her peers such as Alice Neel and her husband, critic and curator Lawrence Alloway. She was a great artist who painted in a seemingly traditional manner but used subtleties to express sexual freedom and women's rights.

Sleigh's work is the starting point and connecting link in this issue. Throughout history we have looked to nude painting and portraiture as a means of communicating ideas and messages. Harvey uses and examines this idea in her "Nudist Museum" recently presented at Dodge Gallery in the Lower East Side. Susan Bee discusses the influence of women's groups (including her own involvement in A.I.R. Gallery) and how her own process of making portraiture is used to convey specific meanings. Debora Warner's excerpt from her book "A Sweeter Stride" discusses her memories of Sleigh and its connection with her own personal experiences of being a woman artist in New York in the 1990s.

Brooklyn-based artists Krystosek and Keshtkar contribute their thoughts and ideas on making abstract and representational work. Krystosek's artist project focuses on where and how a particular work is created while Keshtkar discusses the challenges of painting representational images. Lastly, in thinking of how we view work historically and now, Naomi Asselin interviews Todd Wahnish, the creator of a new interactive viewing gallery.

My great thanks to everyone involved in this issue: Ellen Harvey, Kris Scheifele, Yasamin Keshtkar, Jolynn Krystosek, Debora Warner, Susan Bee, Margeaux Walter, Mike Schreiber, the organizers of Kulturpark, Antoine Lefebvre, Todd Wahnish, Naomi Asselin, Becky Nahom, Janet Kim, Douglas John, Sara Maria Salamone, Jen Soosaar, Tyler Lafreniere, and Sylvia Sleigh.

More to come,
Meaghan



Ellen Harvey, *Nudist Museum* (detail of installation), 2010, Oil on gesso board, thrift-shop frames, magazine pages, Dimensions variable, photo credit: Etienne Frossard

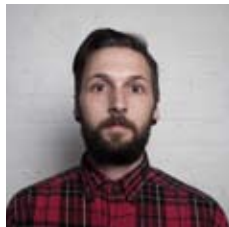
Editorial Staff



Meaghan Kent is the Director and Chief Curator of site95. Kent was a gallery director, for the past ten years she has worked in galleries including Casey Kaplan, Andrea Rosen Gallery, and I-20, managing the careers of internationally emerging and established artists and coordinating exhibitions locally and worldwide. Prior to her move to New York, Kent completed her MA in art history at George Washington University, Washington DC and her BA at the College of Santa Fe, New Mexico. During this time, she worked as a professional intern and assistant at several institutions, including, The Phillips Collection, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, *Art in America* magazine, and SITE Santa Fe. She has written and curated independently, most recently creating “Dead in August,” a Brooklyn based project that presented exhibitions, screenings, and performances. Originally from Northern Virginia, Kent is based in Brooklyn, New York. photo credit: Cary Whittier



Sara Maria Salamone has always had a keen interest in art. After completing her BA in Photography from Hampshire College, she became avidly involved in the art scene in Albany, by joining the Board of Directors for the Upstate Artist Guild and becoming Photo Editor for *Upstate Magazine*. Salamone began expressing interest in curating and produced a handful of exhibitions and most recently crafted a successful group show entitled “Beatus Abjectus,” at Space Womb Gallery in Long Island City, NY, in 2009. She was awarded an Honorable Mention by Ariel Shanburg in the 29th Photography Regional of the Capital Region and a Dean’s Scholarship, awarded on merit, to Parsons the New School for Design, New York. Salamone will be receiving her MFA in Photography and Related Media from the New School for Design in New York City this August. Salamone originates from Albany, NY and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. photo credit: Jessica Yatrofsky



Tyler Lafreniere was born and raised in the town of Camden, Maine. From a young age he expressed his greatest love for sculpture, drawing, art and creating badass design. Since childhood, Lafreniere has continued through on the path to mastery. Stopping at Hampshire College in Massachusetts and Goldsmiths, University of London to study fine art and design, Tyler refined his skills working with various artists, printmakers, and design shops including Fire Haus Studios and The Chopping Block. Lafreniere’s most recent achievement has been the extremely well received art zine *Gypsé Eyes*, now well into its 5th issue. Lafreniere currently resides in the Brooklyn, NY where he continues to work as an artist and freelance designer with his own company Kids With Tools.



Jennifer Soosaar is a scientist whose published works include articles and textbook chapters. She delights in helping people understand concepts outside of their knowledge comfort zone, especially those of artists and scientists who are creating new ways of understanding or relating to the world. Jennifer has a Ph.D. from Yale and is currently from Philadelphia (via Texas, Virginia, Michigan, Connecticut, Bermuda and Ireland).

Contributors



Naomi Asselin was born and raised in the heart of Minnesota. She made her way to Brooklyn two years ago after obtaining her BFA in painting, drawing, printmaking, and Art History at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her passions include baking tasty treats, working at her local coffee shop to make ends meet, gardening, and biking around Prospect Park. Ms. Asselin’s ultimate goal is to be apart of a wonderful program that educates children about the arts.



Susan Bee is a painter, editor, teacher, and book artist, living in New York City. She has had six solo shows at A.I.R. Gallery, and has published many artist’s books. Bee is the co-editor with Mira Schor of “M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artist’s Writings, Theory, and Criticism,” published by Duke University Press in 2000. She is also the coeditor of M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online. She has a BA from Barnard College and a MA in Art from Hunter College. Her artwork is in many public and private collections including the Getty Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Yale University, New York Public Library, and Harvard University Library. Her work has been reviewed in *Art in America*, *Art News*, *The Forward*, *The New York Times*, *Art Papers*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*. She teaches at the School of Visual Arts and the University of Pennsylvania. Bee is represented by Accola Griefen Gallery and A.I.R. Gallery in New York.



Jolynn Krystosek is a Brooklyn-based artist who works in a variety of materials creating works with an enticing mix of allusions to painting, sculpture, and decorative form. She received her BFA from San Francisco State University in San Francisco, California and her MFA from Hunter College in New York, NY. She has exhibited throughout the United States including solo exhibitions at Lux Art Institute, Philadelphia Art Alliance, Lucas Schoormans Gallery, and The Horticultural Society of New York. Her work has recently been exhibited at Casey Kaplan, Racine Art Museum, and the Islip Art Museum. Jolynn’s work has received mentioned in publications including: *Surface Magazine*, *NY Arts Magazine*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *the North County Times*, *The Shepard Express*, and *KPBS*.
jolynnkrystosek.com



Kris Scheifele is an artist and writer based in New York. She received an MFA from Pratt Institute and a BFA and BA from Cornell University. She also attended Skowhegan and was a 2009 Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Grant recipient. Her artwork has been exhibited at CUE Art Foundation, PS122 Gallery, 92Y Tribeca, and Janet Kurnatowski.
krisscheifele.com



Debora Warner is multi-media artist who has had an international career spanning two decades and several continents exhibiting in venues such as the Swiss Institute in New York and the Frankfurt Kunsthalle Schirn in Germany. In addition to her art practice, Debora has evolved into a dedicated runner and triathlete over the past 5 years and recently qualified for the NYC Marathon. Equating the rigorous demands of artistic production to athletics, she shares the story of this transformation while reflecting on the pioneering female artists who have radically altered the landscape of contemporary art with her debut novel, *A Sweeter Stride*.
deborawarner.com



**Interview with Ellen Harvey
by Meaghan Kent
4.2012**

Ellen Harvey's recent exhibition of the "The Nudist Museum Gift Shop" at Dodge Gallery in the Lower East Side was a multi-layered examination of the nude and its ever-changing role in the history of art. By making copies in oil and reusing current mass media, she created a site-specific installation that challenged our perceptions of the classic and contemporary nude while at the same time touching upon our desires of collecting. Upon meeting Harvey in her studio, I was particularly taken by her incredibly thoughtful process in making exhibitions. She is able to move from space to space and re-install work with entirely new strategies and, despite having challenges along the way, is able to keep with her initial concepts and vision.

Meaghan Kent: "The Nudist Museum" was based on 54 copies in oils of every nude in the Miami Bass Museum's collection. How did this project come about?

Ellen Harvey: I've always been interested in clichés of art production of painting in particular. I love playing with people's expectations for

an "art" experience, it is a great way to explore what art is for. For example, I've done a lot of work with the landscape, the portrait, the self-portrait, etc.. but I had never done anything about the nude despite the fact that it's one of the most popular expectations for art, especially outside of the art world. So when Silvia Cubina from the Bass Museum asked me if I'd like to do a project with them, I thought, perfect, Nudes in Miami. It seemed an obvious choice. And when I found out that the Bass Museum had a historical collection, I immediately asked them if they could let me know how many nudes they had. Fortunately it was only 54. I could never have done this project with the Met, for example...

MK: Why did you select nude portraiture in particular? And how long did it take to make the copies?

EH: I think art is all about desire. I think that's one of the reasons that art is so segregated from real life in our society; desire is dangerous. So we create a special social space to contain desire that is both all-permissive and totally non-threatening because it's so powerless. The nude is particularly interesting in this context because it conflates sexual desire with the larger desires that art attempts (and in evitably fails) to fulfill. I think that's one of the reasons that art world

Nudist Museum (installation view), 2010, Oil on gessoboard, thrift-shop frames, magazine pages, Dimensions variable, photo credit: Etienne Frossard



outsiders often expect nudity in art.

The copies took many months to make. They're painted free-hand in oils based on the documentation sent to me by the Bass Museum. The images were cropped to accentuate the nudes and everything that was not nude was painted in grisaille, in black and white, with the painting spilling out onto the thrift-store frames in which the paintings were framed. The idea was to make it obvious that this was not just a found collection of nudes, that it was an artificial construct.

MK: The work was recently re-installed at Dodge Gallery in the Lower East Side, how did this new installation change the project? Was it more or less challenging in Miami than in the Lower East Side space?

EH: There were some limitations in Miami due to recent construction so I was excited to be able to install the Nudist Museum at Dodge Gallery as one unified installation exactly as I had intended. I hung the paintings over pasted-on images of contemporary mass media print nudes - from pornography, fitness and fashion magazines, etc.. to create a dialog between the art historical nude and present-day nudity. What was interesting was how much more varied the art historical

Nudist Museum Gift Shop (detail of installation at Dodge Gallery), 2012, Oil on wood panels, paint, Dimensions variable, wood shelving, photo credit: Etienne Frossard



EH: The first time, at the Turner Contemporary for which it was originally commissioned, "Arcadia" functioned in a very site-specific manner. It was all about Margate, the somewhat down-at-heel seaside resort where the new Turner Contemporary was opening, and about Turner's own megalomaniac ambition and his fascination with Margate as a particularly beautiful natural site. The piece was a replica of Turner's Gallery with all his paintings replaced by a hand-engraved rear-illuminated mirrored panorama of contemporary Margate done in the style of engravings of Turner's time. Visitors came to Margate to see the new Turner Gallery and then entered into the original Turner Gallery and were confronted by a drawing in light of Margate reinserted into the aesthetics of Turner's time.

Outside of that context, it becomes a piece that is much more about our longing for a sublime natural experience that we then destroy: essentially turning "Arcadia" into an amusement arcade. The "ARCADIA" sign on the outside and the fun-house mirrors on the inside reference the arcade while the engravings of Margate vividly display what happens when people flock to a beautiful place and then completely wreck it. I've built a completely new open framework for the piece for the exhibition at Locks Gallery which will be titled "Arcade/Arcadia" so that the dichotomy will be much more visible than in the original presentation.

MK: Have you noticed differences in the reception to your work in these different cities and environments?

EH: A lot of my work is originally site-specific or situation-specific but then travels which impacts the meaning of the piece. When a piece is made for a particular place, it generally engages very directly with that place and audience. Outside of the original context the pieces start to be about the underlying questions that motivated me so the work functions much more abstractly.

MK: You were included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. What were some of the challenges you had to face in installing your piece in an exhibition with over 80 artists?

EH: I had a bit of trouble fitting my piece into my allotted space so I ended up installing it differently than I had originally intended but overall the experience was fantastic. It was fun being part of such a big group of artists and working with Shamim Momim and Henriette Huldish was great. They were very supportive and committed and I thought they came up with a great narrative for that Biennial.

MK: And the current Whitney Biennial is remarkably smaller with just over 50 artists. What are your thoughts on the different



approach with this year's contribution?

EH: It's nice that the Biennial is different each year, think how dull it would be if it were always the same. I enjoyed this year's curatorial choices and presentation. It was interestingly anti-spectacular which I liked because while I love spectacle, I think it's important not to limit art production to artists who can afford to create the big fancy things. There were a lot of fascinatingly humble things in this Biennial.

MK: You have mentioned that your process has a lot to do with conceptual ideas with a craft output. Is the outcome usually in line with what you originally envisioned?

EH: I'm generally motivated by a question or a situation that I want to explore and I spend a great deal of time trying to think of the best knife-through-the-heart way to communicate what it is that I'm thinking about. While I don't rule out any medium, I often find using traditional media or techniques allows me to very directly access the viewer's expectations, it's a kind of short-hand. People think they're getting one experience and then it's up to me to surprise them, to seduce them into thinking. It's also a good way to get people to stop and look at something. We are social creatures. If someone has obviously taken a lot of time to make something, people tend to check it out

just to see what it's all about. Of course, I also just enjoy making things myself.

MK: The "history of art" is an integral part of your work, how did this process initially come together? Were there any particular artist(s) that motivated you in this direction?

EH: Being an artist is an odd thing. Making art is an unusual occupation. You work but you have no guarantee that you'll get paid for your work or that your work will be valued by anyone else. It doesn't make much sense to people outside of the art world. So I'm interested in how this state of affairs came to be and why this social category exists. And part of that interest is in how it was historically produced.

Art is both continuous and discontinuous. There are ways in which what I do is very much linked to the medieval altarpiece painter and ways in which it's utterly different: economically, socially, emotionally. I've also always loved art since I was a child, starting with the Flemish primitives. They were so ambitious in what they were trying to do.

MK: Are there any artists that you are looking at now? Historical or contemporary?

Arcadia (exterior view of installation at the Turner Contemporary), 2011, Wood shack, aluminum sign, light bulbs, 34 hand-engraved plexi-glas mirrors, light boxes, Dimensions variable, photo credit: Jan Baracz

Arcadia (interior view of installation at the Turner Contemporary), 2011, Wood shack, aluminum sign, light bulbs, 34 hand-engraved plexi-glas mirrors, light boxes, Dimensions variable, photo credit: Amit Nachumi



Ellen Harvey was born in the United Kingdom and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program and took part in the PS1 National Studio Program. She has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and internationally and was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. Recent solo exhibitions include "The Nudist Museum Gift Shop" at Dodge Gallery, New York, "The Nudist Museum" at the Bass Museum, Miami Beach, FL, "Picturesque Pictures" at Galerie Gebruder Lehmann in Berlin, Germany, "Empty Collections" at Galerie Meessen de Clercq, Brussels, Belgium, "Ruins are More Beautiful" at the Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Poland, "Mirror" at the Pennsylvania Academy and "A Whitney for the Whitney" at "Philip Morris" at the Whitney Museum at Altria. She has completed projects for both the New York and Chicago Transit Authorities, most recently including a mosaic for the new Metro-North Yankee Stadium Station and is currently working on commissions for the Federal Government's Art in Architecture program, New York's Percent for Art, among others. Her book, "The New York Beautification Project," was published by Gregory Miller in 2005 and "Ellen Harvey: Mirror" was published by the Pennsylvania Academy in 2006. A monograph "Ellen Harvey: The Museum of Failure" will be published by Gregory Miller in 2013. Her exhibition "Arcade/Arcadia" opens at Locks Gallery in Philadelphia on June 1.

EH: I look at everyone and everything. Especially artists whose work is very different from mine. I'd have to write a book to include everyone.

MK: You have also mentioned your interest in the idea of desire and failure in the artistic process. What do you strive for in your own creative output?

EH: I think failure is what links art to life. In both cases, people dream of the extraordinary, desire transcendence, but inevitably fail. We are all limited creatures. Art is that failure made manifest. It's the one place where it's good to be incoherent, good to be contradictory, good to be non-linear. A good artwork is a failed piece of communication that is all the richer for that failure.



Interview with Yasamin Keshtkar
by Kris Scheifele
4.2012

On the occasion of her participation in a group abstraction show at Dean Project (May 2012), I got caught up with what has been going on with Yasamin Keshtkar's work. Her subject matter, above all, is painting itself, which she questions with relentless dexterity.

Kris Scheifele: I see a shift in your work in the past year or so. How would you characterize some of the changes?

Yasamin Keshtkar: I realized that my work was being classified as pop art/about pop culture/"for babies," which horrified and motivated me to shift to something more legitimate. As abstractly as I was looking at the representational imagery included in my paintings, it took me a while to understand that other people saw the paintings through a narrower perspective and categorized my work very differently from what I wanted to express. Perhaps because of my reluctance to fully commit to a specific genre of painting, I end up passionately hating much of my previous work as well as myself for the time I spent making it. The work is supposed to be about my stupid brain, not pop culture! When it's representational, people tend not to see it as being about a translation of the brain through paint, but about specifics. So I focused on abstract painting for about a year, and

now I'm trying to make a painting that is neither abstract nor representational, but I'm not feeling hopeful about this goal.

KS: Aren't all paintings abstract at the end of the day? Don't they all represent something, even if it's nothingness?

If it's a translation of your brain we're talking about, your shattered fabric patterns interwoven with dematerializing figures have transitioned into a different kind of digital modality: the pop-up window hovering in space, which for me reads as as the computer desktop. You often capture an eerie simplicity. When images of pop stars appear, they seem like placeholders, as good as any other image.

YK: Well, I think when it comes down to it, painting is part of the economy where the distinction between abstraction and representation matters, so I can't stop being bothered by this.

And yeah, these are undeniably related to print design. Which is not something I want to associate with my work or discuss, but I can't deny its significance. There are so many templates that are part of our digital interactions, although I barely realized this until I started making zines and hanging out at Staples a lot. Painting seems like one of the things unsusceptible to this, but that's something I feel I can contribute to if I'm going to do it. And I keep trying to paint because I enjoy it very much. It's





decidedly unique from design. I guess I'm fucking it over! [laughs]

KS: Fucking over painting?

YK: Well, I see other people doing it too! But painting is so open-ended that perhaps painting is impossible to fuck over.

KS: Let's talk about your use of text. Sometimes it has scatological qualities and other times it might be in a serif font, and it's always a little hard to read.

YK: Yeah, I'm going to stop with the text. Alicia Gibson does it better.

KS: [Laughs] How so?

YK: Her paintings involve text in a more structural way. Her text is more informative and beautiful because it takes on the idiosyncrasies of handwriting.

KS: I relate your text to logos and subtitles, surface things that go by quickly or are obscured in the everyday blur. I think writing "Mark Jacobs" with paint applied like it's poop on a stick is incredibly funny. Is humor something you're going for?

YK: I think it's important to have an open mind about the places where humor can exist, especially in painting. The percentage of humorous

Left: *Untitled*, 2012, Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 24 x 20in
Right: *The Towel*, 2011, Oil on canvas, 39 x 39in



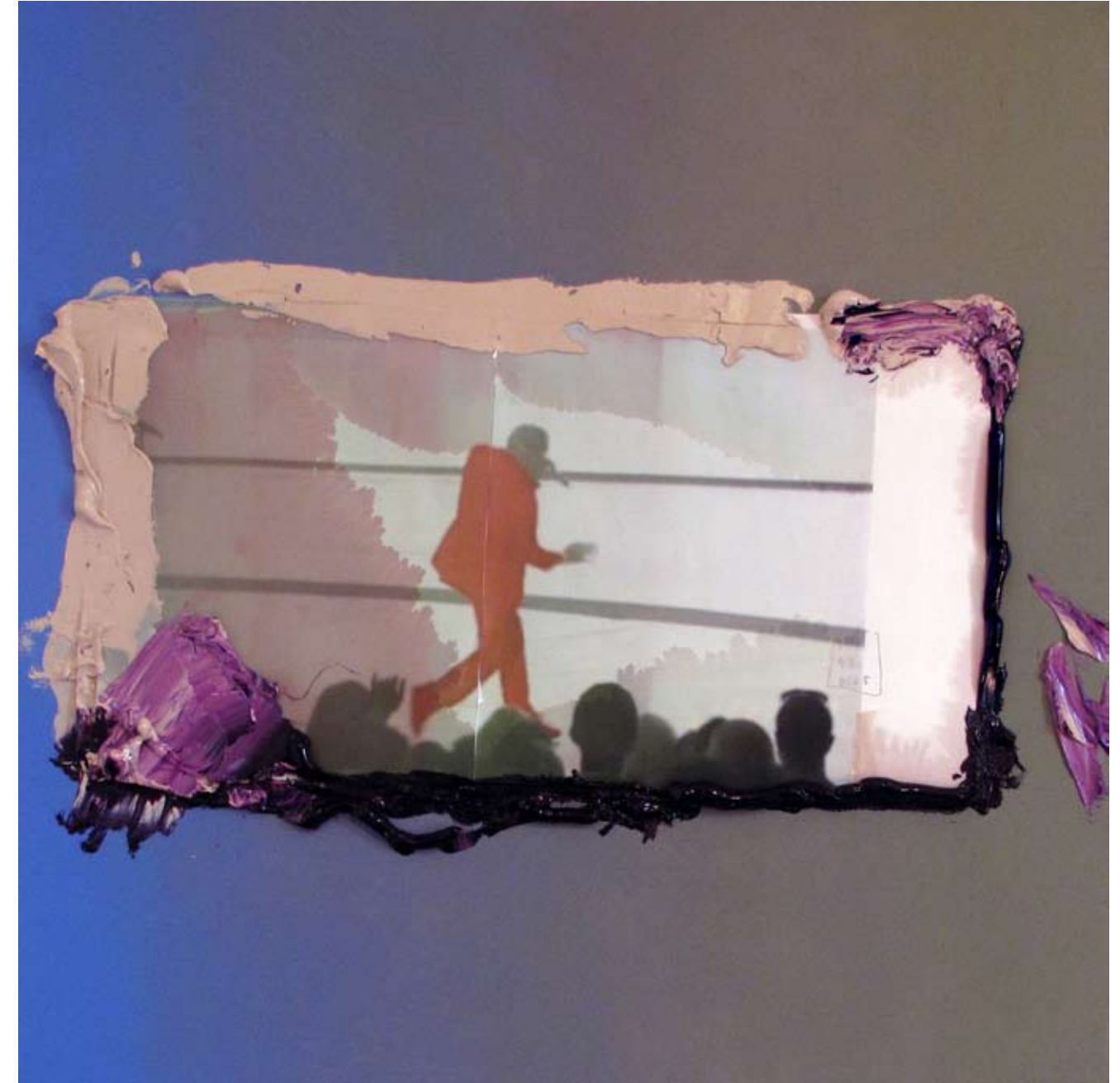
paintings should be analogous to the percentage of humorous commercials.

KS: "The seriousness of painting!" [laughs]. Ok, you're going to have a drink with two favorite painters, one past, one present. Who are they?

YK: Past: one of the cave painters of Lascaux. Present: Daniel Heidkamp. He's funny and I like talking about painting with him. Or Jonathan Meese, that would be fun. There are too many present favorite painters I want to have a drink with. What a tough question!

KS: Meese I get, but Heidkamp is surprising since he's about direct observation and you consistently fixate on mediated imagery. Maybe that's the ultimate abstraction these days seeing things with your own eyes. That's one thing with your work, a lot is lost looking at it as a digital image. You're using that photorealistic technique now that looks like you glued a photo to a canvas, but then in one instance you do paste a photo onto a canvas. It's like your fabric patterns, sometimes they're painted and other times they are actual fabric. Reality is on pretty shaky ground.

YK: I guess it is. It's a confusing, scary, impossible thing to even try to relate to as an individual. That's why images from TV or advertising, or mass media in general, are subjects I keep going back to. It's easier for me and I try to make up for it by spending a lot of time realizing the images in paint in a standardized way. The standardization itself allows for a lot of interpretation. The alternative is like a caricature or something. I don't want that kind of reading.



Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Yasamin Keshtkar attended the University of Michigan and Tulane University, where she received a BFA in Fine Arts in 2006. She completed her MFA in 2008 from the Pratt Institute. Throughout her academics she has been awarded the Mary CS Neil and Class of 1914 awards from Newcomb College at Tulane, the Pratt Circle award for excellence in her field, and the Dedalus Foundation Grant in 2008, among others. She has shown in NYC at the Henry Street Settlement, Dean Project, Kravets Wehby Gallery and Volume Black Gallery; and in Stockholm at Lars Bohman Gallery. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Sealed Down, 2011, Oil and paper on canvas, 26 x 26in

Artist Project

Untitled, 2012
Jolynn Krystosek



This “Untitled” work is the first from a series of sculptures, pairing stone blocks and slabs with cut silhouettes of seaweed in thick industrial felt. The forms of cut felt grew from my earlier paper cut-outs, which are composed of layers of cut forms of intricate botanical silhouettes that create an overgrown and entangled density. With a ghostly white-on-white palette, they hang from the wall casting shadows on themselves, which create a delicate and ephemeral atmosphere. For the seaweed forms, I was looking for a more malleable material that could maintain a definite shape while it easily twists, curls, and folds over on its self. I found the matte black felt absorbs light, which flattens and abstracts its own forms as it overlaps. In stark contrast, much of the stone I use is translucent and glows when light passes through.





Untitled, 2012, Cut felt and marble, 10 x 24 x 53in



Untitled, 2012, Cut felt and marble, 10 x 24 x 53in

Writings



Excerpt from “A Sweeter Stride” by Debora Warner

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Cecily Brown was not the only female painter who expressed her affinity for the male physique with carefully rendered members. We also have Ellen Altfest who created an outrageous version of Courbet’s “The Origin of the World,” and organized a group exhibition simply called “Men,” her piece, “The Penis,” providing an anchor for the rest of the works. According to the press release, the work is an intimate study of a male model that emerged from Altfest’s interest in the female artist’s gaze. This gave critics a great deal to consider:

“Schwabsky writes that this gaze ‘neither humanizes nor dehumanizes her motif. But her disinterestedness does not exclude love, since what she loves about her motif is neither its meaning nor its use but its perceptibility.’”

About thirty years before both of these women painted their way into the pages of art history books, a British born first-generation feminist, Sylvia Sleigh, for whom the reversal of gender was the most honest way to challenge the status quo executed her version of Ingres’s, “The Turkish Bath,” featuring her naked husband, the critic, Lawrence Alloway. The painting depicts six pale nude men, four exposed penises, one hairy butt, two Afros, and a Kilim. They’re all just hanging out looking cool and aloof, as if they had unconsciously been stripped of their clothing, while one serenades the bunch with his guitar. The piece unfortunately is not as iconic as it would seem, currently residing in the collection of the Smart Museum at the University of Chicago, however it may be considered Ms. Sleigh’s most important work.

The artist was interviewed about the piece at the opening of “WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution,” at The Museum of Contemporary Art in LA three years ago, where the painting resurfaced, permitting yet another rewrite of art history. How does an artist discuss one’s largely unnoticed work after almost half a century later?

Ahead of her time, time finally caught up to her, and she joked about the men looking like naked jaybirds. Whatever her intention was, it’s as clear to me now as it was for her then and that’s what matters in art. Time is often a friend to art as absence is a friend to love. The episodes between channel our reflection toward the truth and allow us to see clearly.

Jack Rivas, *Soho*, c. late 1990s

Sylvia Sleigh passed away late last year at the age of 94, leaving behind stacks of vintage *Playgirl* magazines, two cats, a whimsical collection of costume jewelry, and a body of work that is has yet to find its place in the cannon. Critics and curators remain somewhat bewildered by her legacy. Five years before her death, the critic Ken Johnson wrote:

“Sylvia Sleigh, 89, is best known for her valiant effort in the 1970’s to institute a new genre of feminist painting by changing the gender of the traditional odalisque. Whether because of her limitations as a painter or some deeper sociocultural resistance, the idea never took hold. Today her flatfootedly realist pictures of young, beautiful, extravagantly long-haired nude men in states of voluptuous relaxation remain fascinating artifacts of their time. Like other things about the 70’s, they are embarrassing, unintentionally comical and oddly creepy, yet they remain somehow touching in their quixotic ambition to establish a new humanely erotic tradition for the heterosexual female gaze.”

I attended Ms. Sleigh’s estate sale at her townhouse on 20th Street in Chelsea with my friend Elizabeth. We sifted through the pornography first, and then the jewelry and the accumulations of a life lived well. I spotted the textured vest she wore to the opening in LA and noticed how petite the items of clothing were. The house had been left to her caretaker, the host and actress, who made reference to Sylvia’s trip to Egypt several times throughout the afternoon as well as her long grey tresses that she refused to cut. My friend and I examined the laborious replication of the prints on the garments worn by the figures in the painting on the living room wall. The models looked oddly familiar, vacantly gazing out from the strangeness of a decade of economic and political crisis, possibly having made an appearance in other works by Ms. Sleigh from that period. Underneath the buttoned blouses, bell-bottomed jeans and oversize spectacles, they looked free and loose, like swingers who just returned from an orgy. We made our way over to the champagne punch in the kitchen near the garden as her cats chased birds out back. Just as we were about to leave someone came downstairs holding a porcelain Jesus. “How much is this?” he asked. “How much does Jesus go for these days?” the bubbly actress shouted out.

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Aside from being male, just about every single one of the men I’ve dated have had another thing in common; their disposability. This is probably why Internet dating is so appealing to me. Like previously worn designer clothes, the men online are recycled, formerly married, with or without children, slightly damaged, but not entirely lacking in potential to become my outfit if the week. I prefer some battle scars at this late stage of my dating career. However, I am trying to limit the baggage to a briefcase.

Last week I traded in CallMeDrLuvU for theatreguynyc. Next week, I’ll probably see one-more-time for dinner while I text flirt with funlovalicious. Twenty-nine year old Hotnyctraveler finally stopped calling me after several months of thoughtless postponing, canceling, and rescheduling dates with him, and I still haven’t written back to AuthenticGuyNYC after more than a week.

An unwillingness to settle may be a symptom of my current identity crisis, or could it suggest a paradigm shift in how we approach relationships. Is it the city? Would I be able to get away with this behavior anywhere else? I’m afraid to leave New York for this reason precisely because I don’t know who I would become. The prevailing downtown ethics of the permanent youth culture I’m swimming in suit me just fine. I don’t want to have to act normal. These polluted waters have supported my bad habits for over a decade. Why change at forty?

I actually compiled a list of all then men I wanted to date while I was in my last long-term relationship. There was Ironman, Rock Star, Gazillionaire, Designer, and Gallery Owner. The closer they were to an archetype of masculinity, the better. And I would refer to them as whatever label I decided to present to my inner circle. If I said I was meeting Ironman, my roommate Kelly knew whom I was referring to. Labeling my crushes was like the linguistic equivalent of Ms. Sleigh’s female gaze, resulting in a dehumanizing effect, which made moving on to the next stereotype that much easier.

I haven’t slowed down long enough to analyze my behavior or speculate on potential issues with intimacy, mechanisms for coping with loneliness or fear of rejection, but I’m okay with whatever psychological explanation is closest to resembling the truth. I spend enough time acting out this course of events, that any additional time spent talking about them would just be counter-productive. I choose not to know, and I honestly don’t think it would change me if I knew. When Liz Taylor was asked why she married so many men, she famously replied, “I don’t know, honey. It sure beats the hell out of me.” Ignorance is a license not to change.

Rather than make art about my exploits, like the audacious artist Tracy Emin, I’ve substituted these dating games and my recent devotion to the media spectacle for making art. It is my art for now, until I come up with some new work.

A tornado outbreak has swept across the country in the last two months making this the deadliest year on record in the U.S. since 1953. However, a series of riveting news events in the last week including the Royal Wedding and the dubious killing of Osama Bin Laden have refocused public attention away from tornadoes in Alabama to the searing image of hijacked planes cutting through that cloudless September sky above Manhattan.

Immediately following the tornado deaths in Alabama, *The New York Times* published a map of the high-risk metropolitan areas where Natural Disaster is most likely to occur. It's called "Where to Live to Avoid a Natural Disaster." The scale of hazards ranges from green to red, red representing the highest risk. Some of the information is based on historical data where actual storms such as twisters and hurricanes have occurred with additional predictable hazards to look out for such as earthquake, flooding, drought, hail, and other severe weather. Not a single red dot appears in the Northwestern region of the United States, with the majority of risk showing up in the southern states and up the coast. New York has neutral risk, but it should not be recommend as a place to avoid disaster. Disaster here has yet to manifest as extreme weather.

13

Personal disasters happen every day all over the world. Jobs, babies, houses, and people are lost; marriages and lives end. Dreams collide with fate until the reverberations are deafening.

Personally, I don't know where my disaster begins or ends. Was it the end of my first marriage? Was it the beginning of my second marriage? Was it the end of my second marriage? Perhaps it began in art school where I decided to drop out of existence. Maybe it began when I moved to New York. Maybe it will end if I leave New York.

My disaster hasn't been quite as theatrical as a hurricane, earthquake, or tornado. These are all too specific, with the damage being more concentrated. This disaster is more like a flood where you don't realize your feet are wet until the waters lay siege to the ground beneath your feet. Earthquakes are the equivalent of major or sudden change, like the loss of a loved one. It strikes a massive blow; you grieve for a time and then recover. Floods remain. The damage is enveloping.

I've always managed to find higher ground or swim to safety, but the flood lingers, taxing my endurance. Seventy-one percent of the earth is covered in water, and the sea is rising. Your options are to move to higher ground permanently, move inland, or prepare yourself physically for the invading ocean. The first two are objectionable when you live on an island 22.7 miles square.

I am almost certain this is why I decided to become an endurance athlete in my mid-thirties. I swam competitively in high school and started running when I moved to New York, so adding a bike to that was not a big stretch. Swim, bike, and run away from the deteriorating relationship, the pressures of an international art career, the accumulated years. It was a trifecta of storms. I knew if I removed one beam from the slanted house I occupied the whole thing would collapse in the gale. Isn't it best to toe the Buddhist line when you feel as though you're not quite living a lie but your truth has been hidden somewhere out of sight?

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be." Lao Tzu

I let the house fall, but I was still standing there with all my belongings.

I tried to turn my back on the unraveling state of things, the ninety-degree turns my career had taken by that point due to my affiliation with fussy art dealers as well as my fragmented persona socially and as an artist. I was not a sculptor, and I was. I was not a sound artist, and I was that too. I was not the ex-wife of Will Cotton, and I was. I was not the recent girlfriend of Leo Koenig, and I was. I was not about to be single at thirty-five, and I was. The current was shifting, so I adjusted my stroke.

As much as I prided myself on my adaptability, the only things I felt like I could control were how much I trained and what I ate. I saw specific measurable improvements in the pool and on the track. I set tangible goals and surpassed them. My body changed along with my attitude as I bonded with fellow endurance addicts. Six days a week I followed the training program designed for beginner triathletes, and having a predictable routine saved me from falling back into a whole range of debauchery.

My ex moved on to another relationship immediately, while I joined a ménage à trois. Feeling the oxygen in my body, the blood, muscle, and bone connected me to the divine. Every race drew me closer to the source. Endurance training complimented my studio practice. It was parallel in its singularity of purpose; in its rigor. According to the Christian doctrine of the trinity, God exists as three persons, the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost, but as one God. In the world of multi-sport, heaven is found in Hawaii, and your VO2 max is proof of your faith.

14

I haven't heard from Brian in almost a week, and I am starting to think about leaving town again, for good. Leave to where? That's always the question.

Unless I figure out how to spend the rest of my life in a bikini, I'll be the only grey haired woman below 14th Street in twenty years.

Brian has nothing to do with my unresolved quandary. He doesn't even live here. I still don't know if he's real anyway, so I'm not anticipating a future of fine dining and personal drivers. Those things don't matter to me under the circumstances. If it's still winter in May and your friends in California have more time for you (and for themselves) than your friends in New York, being driven to La Grenouille for fish cakes and pistachio soufflé simply does not address any of those apparent matters of physical discomfort and social disarray. On the contrary, more dinners uptown may compromise my bikini aspirations.

In a sense I've already left New York, or maybe my New York has left me?

The gritty Chinatown loft Will and I shared on Broadway has transformed itself into a luxury condominium. Gone are the derogatory racial slurs scratched into yellow enamel on the interior walls of the elevator along with our bright pink bathroom and our tree house sleeping lofts. The 24-hour party found a new home as well in the memory of our alcohol-soaked brains and our house DJ, who was a first-rate example of the effects of excessive LSD use, settled back in Cali with his new girl.

My partner and I eventually lost touch with the Latin drag queens that took us on as muses and fueled our penchant for decadence by injecting a glamorous dose of androgyny to our outings. In the eyes of the fabulous Jack and Alfonso, New York was an entirely different place, which allowed us to renew our vows with the city we loved while we thoroughly rewrote our own vows. Every Monday night, we took refuge from our failing marriage at a party in a basement of the meatpacking district embracing freedom above fidelity, and "fierceness" (in the words of our energetic new friends) before familiarity. Seeking to uncover our most authentic selves at the expense of our union, we set foot in caverns unknown to the casual rambler. The journey was our gift to each other, and our map was drafted with extreme care, as we believed true love is unconditional. Will and I remained the best of friends and lovers, but like vapor, the acquaintances we forged in the bathroom of Mary Lou's at 4:30am drifted into the backdrop of sunrises over the east river and feathery she-males.

My favorite second-hand clothing stores, Alice Underground and Canal Jeans, are also gone. Bloomingdale's now occupies the location of the latter. Unlike its European counterparts, the retail/club/restaurant landscape changes every three to six months or so in New York, and the ghosts of businesses past hover in the air out front. Some establishments have a longer shelf life, but eventually even the ones you foolishly thought had become institutions, turn their leases over from one day to the next. An explanation is rarely necessary, and this has the effect of leaving a bitter taste of betrayal on the neighborhood residents who not only tolerate but also support the entrepreneurial New Yorker. As much as you may have loved sifting through the bargain bins at Canal Jeans, the promise of something better on the way nourishes the state of craving we all substitute for contentment here.

"Maybe it's time to move off campus?" my friend Adam has suggested on more than one occasion, drawing a clear parallel to the youth-oriented lifestyle downtown. Two years earlier, Adam had become a victim of gentrification resistance in Bushwick, Brooklyn in a violent attack on the subway that fatefully altered his trajectory. He was beaten and left for dead on the subway platform a block away from his funky loft where we co-hosted several dinner parties. During his prolonged recovery on the West Coast, he made the decision to move back to his houseboat in Sausalito, get engaged to his girlfriend in San Francisco, and leave a particular type of career ambition behind.

With Adam's departure, yet another chapter had closed for me. The late 90's had given way to the early 2000's and the second marriage, and Adam stepped foot into my life as soon as I had officially become a single woman for the first time in my mid-thirties. We compared notes on the dating scene, our crazy bedroom antics, and contemplated the benefits of certain psychedelic adventures over fires in Montauk. We gossiped about our famous friends, attended only the best parties, and we swore we would never ever get married. We were living "the life" as they say, and an updated "adult" version of New York materialized before my eyes for a brief moment. When I say adult, I mean mature, and I mirrored this new New York by growing up a little bit more myself.

Suddenly my platonic friend was no longer there to scheme with me. He came back to town only to pack up his belongings and drive himself home to his sweetheart.

Every loss requires a different coping mechanism, and this time I immersed myself into my artwork and upcoming show. Like the retail shops, life doesn't offer explanations when people leave. You just can't get the goods there anymore, so try another shop sucker!

Fortunately or unfortunately my New York story has not come to such a violent conclusion or any conclusion for that matter. I'm still hanging on to this town and it's myriad of ghosts.



**Editorial for site95
by Susan Bee**

I have been involved with the feminist movement since the late 1960s to the present, when I have been teaching a course on Feminism and Art Criticism at the School of Visual Arts in the MFA program in Art Criticism and Writing. I also recently appeared on a panel at Parsons The New School for Design at a conference on “Art Practice, Activism, and Pedagogy: Some Feminist Views.”

My education in feminism began in the fall of 1969, when I went to Barnard College, an all-women’s college, where I studied with major feminist thinkers. My college years were set against the background of the student actions against the Vietnam War and the emergence of the black power and gay rights movements. In December 1970, I wrote a research paper on women artists in Barnard’s first seminar on women’s history. At that time, I could find no reference books, or for that matter just about any information, on the subject. All that was soon to change. A.I.R. Gallery was founded in 1972. Lucy Lippard’s crucial “From the Center, Feminist Essays on Women’s Art” was published in 1976, and the feminist collective and magazine, *Heresies*, was founded in 1977. From 1979 to 1980, I worked as an editor for *Women Artists News*, which had started in 1975.

In graduate school at Hunter in the 1970s, there were no women art teachers in the department. So I found myself going to the newly formed feminist galleries. I went to panels at A.I.R., which were organized by Nancy Spero and other artist members. And I listened to Ana Mendieta, Mary Beth Edelson, and others talk about their artwork.

I have been a member of A.I.R. Gallery since 1996. Before I started to show there, I showed at a commercial gallery, the Virginia Lust Gallery, which closed shortly after my first solo show there in 1992. A.I.R. was the first women’s cooperative gallery in the U.S. It is also an active and ongoing site of cultural and social resistance. In fact, my first appearance on a panel was on “Critics: A New Generation” at A.I.R. in 1982. Over the years, A.I.R. has served as an important launching pad for some of today’s well known women artists.

An interesting aspect of A.I.R. is that the women artists who have shown there are truly diverse, in terms of aesthetic approaches and content. Since joining the gallery, I have had six solo shows there. A.I.R. is currently celebrating its 40th anniversary. I remain convinced of the importance of this space as a site for resistance to the strictures of the commercial art structure and an alternative model for cooperation among women artists of different back-

Out the Window, 2011, Oil on linen, 16 x 20in



Sylvia Sleight, *A.I.R. Group Portrait*, 1977-78, Oil on canvas, 76 x 82in, courtesy of the estate of Sylvia Sleight



grounds and generations. In addition, since September 2011, I have been represented by a new commercial gallery in Chelsea, Accola Griefen Gallery.

Some people question the need for exclusively women's institutions like A.I.R. or the Brooklyn Museum Center for Feminist Art. Certainly, there is the danger of ghettoizing female artists or the damaging perception that women-only institutions are second-rate. But then, the decision to follow a feminist path in art has never been easy. Being political and announcing your difference is not the most unproblematic way to proceed in the art world. I think it's important that these spaces exist, even considering that some women artists have made significant inroads into the mainstream.

I also believe we have to address real differences between generational approaches and expectations and deal with issues of class, race, and sexuality in order to have a better, more forward-looking feminism. As Jessica Valenti has written: "We make a mistake in prematurely calling for unity... let's own the conflict and use it to make real progress."

For the past 26 years, from 1986 to the present, Mira Schor and I have published and co-edited *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*. The first issue of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G: A Journal of Contemporary Art Issues*, was published in December 1986. We published 20 print issues biannually over ten years. In 2000, "*M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artists' Writings, Theory, and Criticism*" was published by Duke University Press. In 2002 we began to publish *M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online* and have published five online issues. In 2007, we published issue #4, "A Feminist Forum."

M/E/A/N/I/N/G has been a collaboration between two artists, both painters with expanded interests in writing and politics, and an extended community of artists, art critics, historians, theorists, and poets, whom we sought to engage in discourse and to give a voice to. Over the years we felt we created a community of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*.

M/E/A/N/I/N/G was an act of opposition to the stances embodied in much of the theoretical positioning in the art magazines and artwork of the 1980s and 1990s. A central feature of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* was the creation of a space in which feminist issues could be explored but also in which men and women were given an opportunity to address issues of concern to them. This created a dialogue between the genders as well as establishing a zone for exploring further aesthetic, political, and practical issues. While we embraced feminist theory--we didn't endorse any single point of view. We have published writings on the visibility of women artists, sexuality and censorship, racism, artists as mothers, privacy issues, the problems of younger artists, and the rewards and difficulties of a lifelong career in art as well as many important essays, interviews, and book reviews.

Strange Love, 2011, Oil on linen, 14 x 18in



Our newest issue for our 25th year anniversary focused on public and private trauma, politics, Occupy Wall Street, as well as privacy issues in the digital age. This issue has 83 contributors and also available on Kindle. Over the years, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with interesting collaborators on many projects. These collaborations have been extremely enriching to me, expanding my sense of the possibilities for art, poetry, writing, politics, and community.

In my solo practice as a painter, I have recently been working on a series of oil paintings that are derived from film noirs and other movie stills. These primarily small paintings dramatize the relationships between male and female characters through the lens of the dark, violent American films of the 1940s and 1950s. I use paint and color to reinvigorate the original images. The paintings use a flattened and abstracted picture plane, as a starting area for uncanny narrative and figurative overlays that engage psychic dislocation. They also play with framing within the picture plane, using car windows, window frames, door frames, and prison bars as compositional devices.

Much of the over-the-top nature of the drama in this work is humorous. The paintings have sort of a cartoony feel to them and that's because the gestures are exaggerated. First of all, it is derived from something that is already a theatrical image, it's from a film, so already there's a distancing and the distancing keeps going from there because I'm working from black and whites and I'm introducing color. I want to create artworks that straddle the border between drama, melancholy, humor, so that all these different emotions get threaded into an image.

What I like about the film noir genre is the dangerous women and the desolate men and the complexity and sensuality of their relationships. These scenes take place in car interiors and other small domestic intimate spaces. Much of my focus is on the power relations involved in who has the steering wheel. In terms of feminist discourse, what interests me now is to paint men and women, and to paint them in different scenarios. The paintings confront, without resolving or sublimating, gender roles and power relationships.

M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online: writing.upenn.edu/pepc/meaning/

Artist website: epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bee/

Drive She Said, 2011, Oil on linen, 16 x 20in



4.9.12 Featured Artist: Margeaux Walter
Jin, 2011

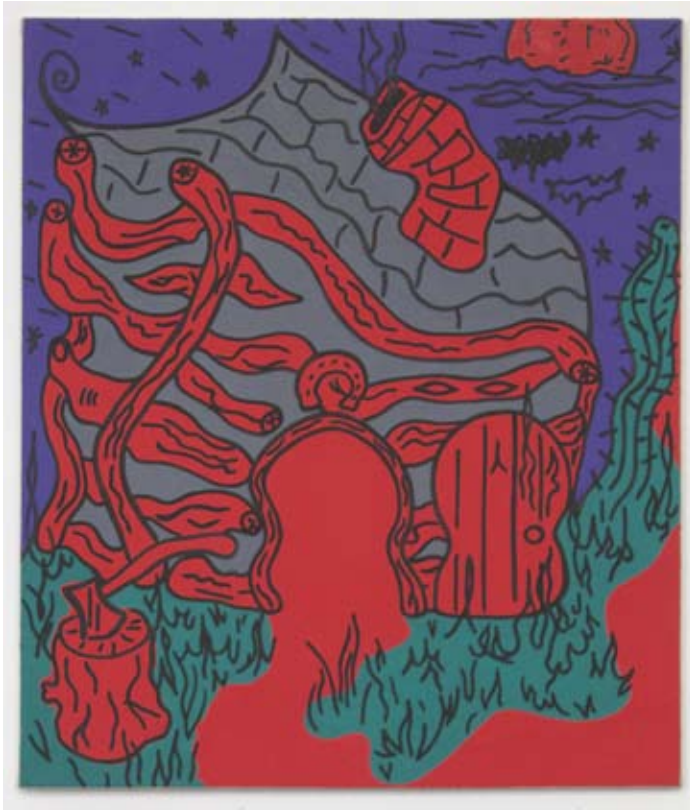
“Jin” was created in Beijing, China and was inspired by the transient nature of the architecture there. The government can demolish property at will to make room for the newer, more modern, sterile architecture shown in many of these images. The idea of home and ownership does not really exist. I am interested in how this phenomenon affects daily life. Each window reveals tidbits of humanity like grass sprouting in the cracks of a paved parking lot. There is a sharp contrast between the organic and inorganic, which is both exposed and masked by rapid modernization. This is the face of progress.

Margeaux Walter is a photographer and mixed-media artist born in Seattle, Washington, and now living in New York City. Walter is interested in human communication and relationships, and how they are changing alongside modernization. Through the use of layering, collaging, and manipulation her images explore everyday moments, interactions and gestures, and at the same time play with our perceptions of reality and fantasy.

Walter studied at the Maine Photographic Workshops and Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, where she received her BFA. Her work has been included in various shows around the country, including solo exhibitions at the Nohra Haime Gallery and Winston Wachter Fine Art in New York City. In 2009, the Magenta Foundation chose her as a top emerging photographer in the United States; she was awarded Juror’s Choice at the Butler Institute of American Art’s National Midyear Exhibition; and she was commissioned to create a large-scale outdoor installation for the Art Omi Fields Sculpture Park in Ghent, NY. In 2011, she was a resident artist at the Red Gate Residency in Beijing, China.

Artist website: margeauxwalter.com





4.16.12 Featured Artist: Mike Schreiber

Through painting I reevaluate the currency of images. I am fascinated with how they are assigned associative values and how within art contexts, meanings can be changed to communicate even the most obscure analogy. My work begins when I notice an image, object or scene that I personally identify with. I then work to complicate and reinvent my subject matter through metaphor and symbolic representation to illuminate particular details. Ultimately, my painting process and the visual codes I play with coax the familiar into less familiar territory.

Mike Schreiber lives and works in Bushwick, Brooklyn. He received an MFA in painting from Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and a BFA in painting from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2002. He has shown his work in New York City, Providence RI, and most recently, Sydney, AU.

Artist website: mikeschreiber.info



4.23.12 Featured Artist: Kulturpark Project

In the Treptower Park forest in East Berlin, along the Spreeriver, there is an abandoned amusement park. The park, originally called Kulturpark Planterwald, was built in 1969 by the GDR and was a rare site for Soviet amusement and attraction. After the fall of the wall, the park became the family-owned Spreepark and suffered challenges of access, attendance, and economy. In 2001, the park closed from capital collapse. Ever since, visitors have regularly traversed the fence to explore this jungle of broken thrill machines.

In June 2012, Kulturpark will explore the poetics and potential of these recent ruins, building upon the unique energy of Berlin's urban, social, cultural, and political landscapes. Kulturpark will: Investigate these lands as a site for cultural imagination, connect communities to explore possibilities for shared stories, memories, and ideas, instigate physical, social, and collaborative movement, model responsible forms for creative life and ecology for the 21st Century, and propose possibilities for the park as an evolving constellation of our shared past, presence, and future.

Kulturpark will welcome civilians from the local district, Berlin citizens seeking leisure attractions, and global audiences invested in contemporary art and design. International contemporary art audiences will visit the Treptower park and district, experiencing art and design as a tool for social action. Global historians, urban planners, cultural producers, and amusement park fans will experience this park as online archive and special destination. Educational activities will engage communities of architects, artists planners, designers, and university students in preserving Berlin's histories and modeling inventive futures. The dissemination of materials around this popular investigation will share Berlin's unique approach to environmental productions, layered histories, and living memories with audiences worldwide.

The project includes a creative camp from June 1-21, Kultur-Exchange from June 22-July 1, and a public opening from June 28-July 1.

Visionaries include: Antje Prust, Daniel Marguelis, Daniel Sieple, Das_Numen, David Button, Dinner Exchange Berlin, Elizabeth Mc Ternan & René Tettenborn, Erasmus Mundis, Hannah Dougherty, Heiko Pfeundt, Hither Yon, Jana Unmussig, Jay Cousins, Lorena Monsalve, Loukas Bartatilas, Lucinda Dayhew, Marc Bijl, Marcello Pisu & Esra Rotthoff, Michael Ruglio-Misurell & Marcus Owens, The Process Institute, Proto-studio, Raum Labor, Spar*K, Stefan Riebel, Stefan Roloff, and Yvonne Lee Schultz. The production team is Andrew Persoff, Chris Lineberry, Daniel Fishkin, David Button, Dieta Sixt, Juliet Hinely, Natalia Zuluaga, Paris Furst, and Simon Wind. The curatorial team is George Scheer, Stephanie Sherman, Anthony Spinello, and Agustina Woodgate.

Artist website: kulturpark.org



Top: *Kulturpark*, 2010-2011, photo credit: Anthony Spinello
Bottom: *Kulturpark*, 2010-2011



4.30.12 Featured Artist: Antoine Lefebvre

The global culture we live in has deeply altered the perception of the world. New ideas of multiplicity, mobility and fluidity have challenged traditional notions of singularity, stability and identity. It is in that transitory space that my work exists, in between mobility and stability, infinity and limits, reality and virtuality. Through my work I question and examine existing assumptions about the space we live in and how we fit in it. For example: Is our identity bound to specific places, are there still territories left to discover on earth, and how do we move and navigate in the global world? My immigrant experience, my background as a geographer, snowboarder and rock climber as well as my daily practice of internet and computer programs have been essential influences in my art practice. All of these experiences have generated a new and specific set of spatial practices that have affected my perception of the world and how I make art. I see my work as playful and poetic “DIY” engineered sculptures, a reflection and an exploration of our ever transforming culture. Through them, I provide a space for reflexion and imagination that ultimately could expand our vision of the global space we live in.

Antoine Lefebvre was born in 1979 in France. He studied city planning and cinema in France before moving to the USA in 2007. In New York City he studied at Parsons the New School for Design where he received a MFA in Fine Arts in 2009. His work has been shown in different NY galleries and venues including, Eye Level, Envoy Gallery, The Kitchen, The Sculpture Space and the Pulse Contemporary Art Fair. He is currently an artist-in-residence at Artists Unlimited in Bielefeld Germany.

Artist website: lefebvreantoinestudio.com

Une Souris Verte, 2012, Powder coated aluminum, trash bin, water, 48 x 36 x 36in



Top: *Untitled*, 2012, Laminated wood, fake cat, aluminum, 84 x 60 x 48in
 Bottom: *Untitled* (detail), 2012, Laminated wood, fake cat, aluminum, 84 x 60 x 48in



Todd Wahnish on Aarting by Naomi Asselin 5.2012

Meet Todd Wahnish, artist, and entrepreneur with a dream. With the plethora of wonderful artists in New York, it is very easy for many to go unnoticed; it is Todd's hope to change all that with his new artist run startup Aarting. Aarting is a virtual gallery where all artists are encouraged to apply for exhibitions to gain more exposure. Anyone can log on, look at art, and chat about it with other viewers in real time! Aarting is still under the needle, but will be launching at the end of May, check out this interview with Todd for more information about how this amazing first ever New York virtual gallery will run.

Naomi Asselin: With the possibility to do nearly everything online, it's great to finally bring art to the masses via an interactive gallery. What do you foresee being your largest challenge/critiques with this website?

Todd Wahnish: I think the biggest challenge is that it's never been done before. There's really no guidepost for success so we can't really look to other people and see what they did right or wrong. It's great to be a part of the first team to plant the flag in the ground, but you really are completely alone.

NA: What inspired you to create this virtual gallery?

TW: Watching my friends struggle to survive has been the biggest inspiration. It drives me crazy to watch so much genuine talent get sidelined or be under appreciated. Many artists tend to not focus on the business side of things, so I think it's important for there to be a support system that backs them up and helps to push them forward

when they want it. The Aarting platform is something that can help artists build a life around what they create and can provide a visible track record of stats and sales. This not only helps artists make informed career decisions but also gives curators, galleries and institutions a way to measure the progress and growth of those they discover and represent. Success should be determined by the will of the artist not the whim of market trends and fads.

NA: What distinguishes your site from other interactive art websites like the VIP Art Fair and Artspace?

TW: The biggest differentiator is that Aarting is the only NYC art/tech startup founded by an artist with input from artists. We're intimately aware of what artists face when trying to carve out a career since we've been there ourselves. Also, Aarting recreates a real-time gallery environment. During an exhibition, you can see and talk to everyone who is attending. It's just like being there.

NA: How do you choose what to display? Is this just a virtual or does the gallery actually exist?

TW: Our team heavily curates the site. We go to a lot of studio visits, open studios, MFA shows and we talk to a lot of curators and galleries. Recommendations that come from other artists are important too. Aarting exhibitions are 100% virtual, though we're working with galleries and other institutions to tie in to physical events like preview nights, openings and as an additional avenue of exposure and support for real brick-and-mortar exhibitions.

NA: How often will exhibitions change?

TW: The exhibition lengths vary. We work with directly with the art-



ist/gallery to determine the best running time based on what is being exhibited. Some may run as short as a day while others may run as long as a full month.

NA: I wish I would have had this website around when I was studying art in University; what a great education tool, and a wonderful way to communicate with other art students around the globe. Do you plan on marketing it to schools/universities?

TW: Absolutely! We encourage all art schools and Universities to apply for exhibitions. It's incredibly important for artists to secure a future for themselves, so Aarting is a great place to promote a thesis show, a new body of work or just gain exposure.

NA: How many galleries will you be representing, and how did you begin that process of having them be apart of this website?

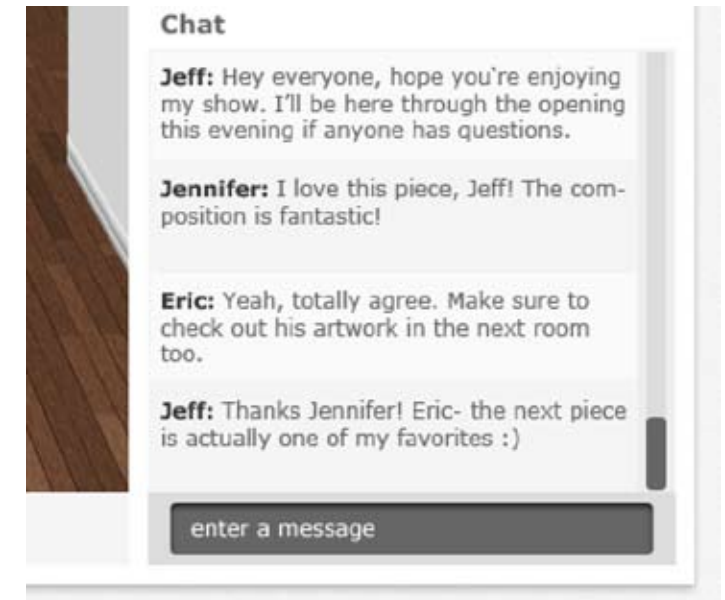
TW: We'll hopefully represent all of them! We started with galleries we met at recent art fairs.

NA: Do you receive a cut if someone actually purchases a piece?

TW: Yes we receive a commission, but only if we sell the work. There's no fee for creating and hosting an exhibition and while we don't publicly disclose pricing, we make sure that everyone is happy.

NA: Often when I see a piece of work online my only hesitation is how accurate (color, size, etc) it is. Will all these pieces be actual photos taken from inside its original gallery?

TW: Good photography is the key to selling anything online. Many of the works on Aarting will be photos provided by the gallery while



others will be provided by the artist's studio. High quality photos are a must.

NA: What would be your response if someone said to you, "It's great seeing art online but it takes away from the whole authentic gallery/museum experience. Do you think this will decrease actual museum/gallery attendance?"

TW: Actually I think the opposite will happen. In NYC, we sometimes take for granted that you can open up a magazine, read about a great show and then go visit it in person. I've heard stories of people in other cities who will open up hundreds of tabs on their Internet browser just so they can skim through all of the current shows. It's their primary way of finding out what's current. We're providing a space where people can come view the work in a real environment. You can attend the real show and engage with the artist and others, no matter where they are in the world.

NA: Would there be any way to communicate with the actual artist or gallery?

TW: Absolutely, it's one of the most fun aspects of the site!

