



onestar press lori waxman 60 wrd/min art critic

*Are you  
an artist?  
Do you  
need a  
review?*



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The “60 wrd/min art critic” is available.  
Reviews are free of charge, and are written here on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays between the hours of 1 and 6 p.m.

Lori Waxman will spend 25 minutes looking at submitted work and writing a 200-word review. Thoughtful responses are guaranteed. Completed reviews will be published in the Hessische/NiedersächsischeAllgemeine (HNA) weekly, and will remain on view here throughout DOCUMENTA (13).

**Sind Sie Künstler?  
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Besprechung Ihrer Arbeit?**

Die „60 wrd/min art critic“ ist jetzt verfügbar. Besprechungen sind kostenlos und werden montags, mittwochs und samstags zwischen 13 und 18 Uhr hier geschriben.

Lori Waxman wird sich die eingegangene Arbeit 25 Minuten lang ansehen und eine Kritik von 100 Wörtern verlassen. Aufmerksamkeit im Rückwärtsgehen werden garantiert. Die ferngesteuerten Besprechungen werden wochentlich in der Hessen/Niedersächsischen Allgemeinen (HNA) veröffentlicht und während der DOCUMENTA (13) hier vor Ort ausgestellt.

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To schedule an appointment, please speak with the receptionist or email [critic@60wrdmin.org](mailto:critic@60wrdmin.org)



**60 wrd/min  
art critic**

**LORI WAXMAN**

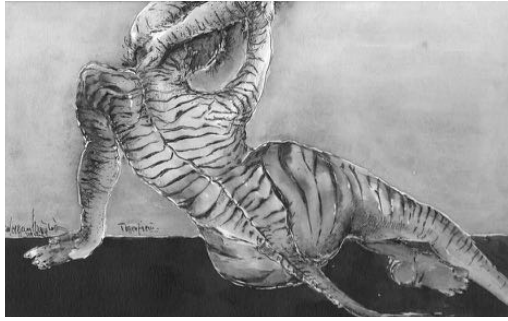


# June



**001 • Claudia Arndt** Collage is widely considered a modernist practice, but modernism has so often defined itself as a masculine mode. Collage, however, is not, and this can be felt and seen in the work and person of Claudia Arndt. Polychrome in person, with patterned bags that seem handcrafted from beloved scraps of this and that, clothed in leopard and turquoise felt wraps, her work is equally pieced together but decidedly monochrome. But it is as lovingly united, even more delicately so. “Remember Grandmother’s Armchair,” an installation in progress since 1999, takes its inspiration from Arndt’s grandmother, who taught her the women’s crafts of sewing and quilting that she has repurposed—or, rather, de-purposed—to make a series of soft, two-dimensional textiles that weave fleeting images of the past into kind yet smart winks at the present. A stitched portrait of her elder, appearing as glamorous as women did in the 1920s and 30s, bears close looking: loose, loopy threads arch one eyebrow, while tight ones trace an elegant line from the other and down the lady’s nose. Ultimately, though, it must function as part of a larger, stronger whole, able to continuously expand and contract, and to do so with great suppleness. That is collage. And it is feminism, too. 6/6/12 2:25 PM





**002 • Wolfgang Meyerhoff** Watercolor is a perfect medium for the hobbyist. Challenging but ultimately manageable, at its best it is capable of the shimmeriest skin tones and the most translucent of skies. What, then, to paint? Wolfgang Meyerhoff, who has been at it since he was fifteen years old, which is by now an impressively long time, portrays a range of sub-

jects, from landscapes to tropical animals to Mesoamerican artifacts. Some of these are painted from life studies, others from photographs. He also pictures nudes, women and the occasional male, and this is where things start to get interesting—and strange. Meyerhoff creates creatures at once human and animal, exotic yet familiar, seductive but grotesquely so. A tiger-woman embraces herself, naked but for a body striped with black, her torso wide and strong like an animal's. Another poses as an odalisque, her spine ending in a stiff, striated tail. With her back turned, her face remains a mystery, and one has to wonder—when she smiles, will she bear fangs? Watercolor may be for the hobbyist, but that doesn't mean it must be gentle or clichéd. Watercolor, as Meyerhoff reveals in his more outré pictures, can bite. 6/6/12 3:00 PM

**003 • Chris Bierl** When art is made from art materials, little thought is given to them other than as the medium of transformation. The artist-magician turns acrylic paint into a bowl of fruit, marble into a nude woman. But what of art made from materials that are not so much transformed but re-presented, materials that must keep their origins and meanings rather than pretend they have none? Chris Bierl is not an artist-magician but a materials-artist, who takes the raw stuff of tar and milk, wax and fire, and meticulously resituates and represents them so that their political histories, personal associations, literary histories and sensorial existence fill the gallery. Looking is not the only thing you can do in a gallery, nor is thinking. You must also smell, taste through smelling and remember through touch. This is one of the ways that mysterious artworks are solved, dissolved, resolved, and sometimes even made solvent. In “Organic Matter Biosphere,” an enigmatic installation about the existence of crude oil, paradoxically made of some of the rawest stuff of life, Bierl alludes to this in a “Dinglish” text that concludes with oil profits buying up contemporary art. As they do. And that leaves the bitter smell of tar caught in one's throat. 6/6/12 3:40 PM



**004 • Gagaisten (spokesperson: Emil Oswald)** Before there was Lady Gaga, there was Gaga the Cherry. You may not have heard of her, nor, if you saw her, would you likely recognize her. For Gaga the Cherry looks exactly like a duck. And not just any duck, but that most familiar and beloved kind of duck, a toy rubber ducky. In the town of Witzzenhausen, Gaga the Cherry is arguably more famous than Lady Gaga. Certainly she has had more of an impact on the local art scene, where she has managed to involve a broad section of the citizenry in debates about public art and representation. She first came into being in 1996, when a group of anonymous artists created her in protest against a series of banal sculptures of a cherry—a realistic cherry—that had been sited along a local bike path, in celebration of the town's main product. But must a cherry look like a cherry? The duck sculpture was installed under dark and remained in place for a year, until it was destroyed. So beloved was it by then, however, that it was replaced, stolen again, found by kindergartners, kept by them, bought from them, replaced, damaged, and so on and so forth. Parades, poems and a large collection of money became part of the story too. And like all good stories, it must have a moral and a happy ending. Here they are one and the same: public art can be provocative *and* popular. The End. 6/6/12 4:17 PM



**005 • Bärbel Ahrberg** Photographs often need the company of other photographs, or at least of words, in order for viewers to make sense of them. One exception to this rule is a photograph made in the style of a portrait, whether it is a portrait of a person, a thing, or a place. Bärbel Ahrberg made a picture of this kind in 1974. Or rather, a photograph that she took in 1974 today appears as a deeply sympathetic, attentively detailed portrait of not only the elderly shopkeeper who is its ostensible subject, but also the small store that he runs, the time and place in which he ran it, and even the way that photographs looked back then. The shop appears to be in England, given the candy on display—Cadbury Fruit & Nut bars, Quality Street bonbons. The packaging is of yesteryear, all serif fonts. So much has aged here since 1974—the elderly man, who stands hand to chest with almost embarrassing sincerity, and who most likely has long since died; the shop, which probably closed or became something unrecognizable many times over; the photogra-



pher, who we don't see but who convinced this man to pose for her, and many others, too; and the photograph itself. For all that photographs capture moments in time, they don't quite freeze it. It isn't clear if the shop is really so dusty, or if the brown and yellow are an effect of the photograph's own ageing process. Photographs grow old too. 6/6/12 4:55 PM



### 006 • Daniel Geibel

War is a familiar subject in art history. Once it was the great subject of history painters, at the very top of the hierarchy of art subjects. Today it is not so. Not only has painting veered far from the representational, war has veered far from the representational itself. Enter a seemingly simple, exuberant acrylic-and-air-brush picture of a missile by Daniel Geibel. Zooming against an iridescent blue sky, the rocket blasts with golden flashes of speed,

so fast they shade to green at its fluted tail. A checkered detail gives flair and the festive, competitive thrill of a race car rally. War is fun! But wait—which way is the projectile flying? Turn the canvas one way and the attack is on. Turn it the other way, and the attack is coming. And what of that small red cross, daubed like an afterthought in the corner? Could peace be on the way? This seems unlikely, alas. A cross painted with a few slashes of red looks like the mark of bloody fingers, too pathetic to be of any use against a glowing, glittery rocket. War must be fun, it seems. It must. 6/6/12 5:18 PM

**007 • Stefan Bast** Male bodies are hard and paternal. Female bodies are soft and maternal. Popular culture tells us this, but real bodies often do not. In a pair of photographs made using his own curvy body, Stefan Bast challenges this assumption with gentle, oddly heartbreaking humor. A self-portrait reveals the artist nude from the waist up, looking reflectively down at the cowbell that hangs between two breasts he's made for himself with pinched-up hands. To call a woman a cow is to insult her, but what does it mean for a man to moo with sensitivity? Another shows Bast from the waist down, with a blue garment pulled up to expose daintily joined, hairy knees, a Polaroid of a round sausage on a lace doily held against his lap. A sausage is as cliché and vulgar a body surrogate as any, but which gender of body parts does a round sausage connote? The ambiguity feels tender, the revelation brave, the means of doing so unexpected but also earthy and familiar, queerness gone regional and very, very real.



6/6/12 5:54 PM

**008 • Bert Praxenthaler** Do artworks suffer? Can they sustain insults? The dual practices of Bert Praxenthaler, an artist who is also an art restorer working in Afghanistan with UNESCO, seems to suggest that they do. In his day job, Praxenthaler cares for the Bamiyan Buddhas, which were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. Alongside this painstaking work, he has created a series called the “Mujaheddin Prints,” which make a found artwork out of defamation. Near the Eastern Buddha, Praxenthaler photographed a beauty of a cave, tall and arcaded, blackened by hundreds of years of cooking fires. In the early 1990s it was covered from floor to ceiling by dirty shoe and boot prints. He deduced that they had been left by Arab mujahideen, or guerilla fighters, since they predated the Taliban's rise to power, but also because the dirt under one's shoes is an Arabic slur, not a Persian one. The resulting photographs are dark and ghostly, a symphony of injury and misunderstanding. “Egg I,” a carved wooden sculpture with all the fragility and finish of porcelain, looks as if riddled by bullet wounds, elegant on the outside but raw and gutted within. Does the cave feel pain, does the photograph, does the sculpture of the egg? Perhaps. But ultimately, it is we viewers who must ache as we gaze on them. 6/9/12 1:59 PM



### 009 • Tanja Küchle

How do we know what a thing is worth? Even something so straightforward as a dollar bill changes its value when a celebrity signs it. Tanja Küchle tests out the limits of this situation in a photograph titled “The Day Baselitz Signed Me.” Baselitz is, of course, Georg Baselitz, iconic German painter of upside-down figures, canvases collected by museums and sold

for great sums at auction. Tanja Küchle is a young journalist and aspiring musician, who writes freelance and has sold one artwork in her life, for 300 Euros while she was a student at art school. So what happens when Tanja Küchle has her arm signed and dated by the famous artist, during an autograph session in Bad Homburg? Does she suddenly become worth more as a person? Since people ought not to be bought and sold, Küchle instead took a picture of herself in her bathroom mirror, complete with budget frame and kitschy flowered tiles. Is the photograph worth more than any other photograph she might take and exhibit? Certainly the signature displays great flair, and Küchle displays great hair, but aesthetics are arguably irrelevant here. So what is it worth, finally, and who's to say? With art it's always incredibly hard to know, and no one should ever take a dollar amount as the final word. 6/9/12 2:27 PM



**O10 • Tim Pickartz und Stephan Hilpert** “Issue” is the name of a limited-edition artist magazine produced by Tim Pickartz and Stephan Hilpert. The name plays two ways, since each installment is both an issue and an issue about an issue. The fifth volume centers on “ZER//STOERUNG,” which means “destruction” and “interruption.” But the most compelling work in the magazine is

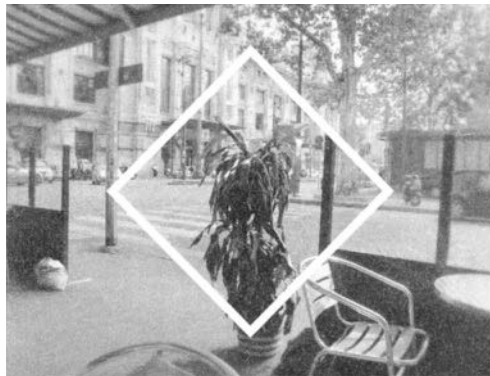


not the art that represents this concept directly but rather that which pairs it with construction. Miriam Schröder juxtaposes photographs of World War II wreckage with current ones of bulldozers clearing some of that old wreckage to make way for new structures. Andrea Nolte reproduces iridescent X-rays of her skull, where a tumor was found and then successfully removed. Rebecca Schmied documents the deconstruction of a slouchy old armchair, resulting in a

pile of junk, a bare bones chair, and some knowledge gained about the structure and materiality of a common piece of furniture. The knockout centerpiece by Lisa Grimm cuts a shape out of the page and tapes it back in, repositioned so that something new and unexpected emerges, hopefully but not always something stronger and even, dare I say, better. 6/9/12 3:04 PM

**O11 • Norbert Bayer**

“Know More” is the name of an artist book by Norbert Bayer. Know What? No More? It reads like a Surrealist novel minus the text, which is to say it does not read like a novel exactly but like a mysterious fictionalization of life, or like an unveiling of the wondrous qualities that life actually has—if you are able to access them. A series of photographs present an odd succession of images that compel one



to string them together in a sort of rhyme: plant fronds, feathered metallic ground, the edge of nothingness, the edge of a cornice, a battered coffee table, the people at the party...plants in a window, plants in a market...a curtain curled up with its shadow, two bananas spooning, a pair of shoes with their tongues hanging out. From beginning to end, each image is framed in Masonic mystery by a diamond that seems to zero in on something. But on what? And why? It’s a game Bayer has played himself, and each viewer must play it in turn, uniquely. It will never end the same way twice. 6/9/12 3:52 PM

**O12 • ArtNetLab (Narvika Boycon, Eva Lucija Kozak, Gorazd Krnc, Dominik Mahnic, Vanja Mervic, Ales Vaupotic)**

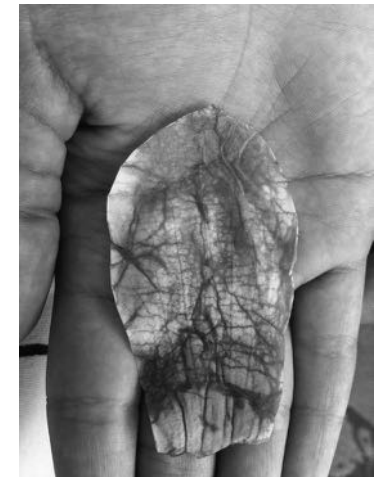
If you have a smart phone with you at DOCUMENTA (13), you may be aware of the presence of a series of emblematic artworks by the Slovenian artist group ArtNet-Lab. If you don’t have such a device, borrow one. With the help of an app called Layar, which adds a second “enhanced” layer on top of the real one we normally see, the group have intervened in the official space of the exhibition with “Atlas, 5.12.2011.” Point your Android at the Friedricianum or a bush in the Auepark and you will see not only that building or that bush but also picture-and-text combinations critiquing virtual socialization, the glitz of the art world and more. Leav-



ing aside the effectiveness of the individual emblems—because I don’t have a smart phone, and the one I borrowed was not working so well—what most excites here are the ways in which these artists have opened up new possibilities for guerilla art generally. Has anyone told d13 artistic director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev yet? 6/9/12 4:36 PM

**O13 • Sandra Tramudana** Sometimes, perhaps more often than we acknowledge, the explicit subject of an artwork is of less interest than other subjects it may contain or revelations it might make. Sandra Tramudana produces naïf portraits, inventive purses, skilled architectural sketches, erotic doodles, cardboard abstractions, surreal digital photographs and much, much more.

Some of these are of interest in and of themselves—especially a delicate magnolia petal traced with the lines of a hand—but mostly they function as a whole that testifies to the casual, creative productiveness of a personality with genuine enthusiasm for life and the things and art and people and buildings that fill it. What to do with so much eager small stuff takes a person of a certain generation to answer, and with ease: a tumblr blog, an iPhone with thousands of pictures and, even, a good old-fashioned paper notebook. 6/9/12 5:07 PM



**014 • Helen Sear** Birds and young women have long been paired. It isn't hard to understand why—high voices, elegance, fragility and coquettishness typify both in the popular imagination. They are brought together again in "Sight-lines," a series of thrilling little photographs by Helen Sear of art students. A bird tchotchke, hand-painted in the Far East by a cheap labor force, obscures the face of each girl. Behind them lies a meticulously gessoed background, painted not so cheaply by the artist herself. Multiple subjects are at stake here—the tensions between uniqueness and mass production, the concept of a viewpoint, the comparison of one chick to another. But most marvelous of all is the unexpected formal intermingling of girl and bird that happens in nearly every picture, as tail and arm, breast and cheek meld into a single silhouette. Crested hairdos are shared, shirt patterns and markings are exchanged, and sometimes, just sometimes, bird and girl become an uncannily still, eerily graceful, totally singular entity. 6/9/12 5:44 PM



**015 • Elke Greis** We tend to prefer things that are whole, that are perfect, that are polished, colorful and certain. Elke Greis does not make such things. Her modest sculptures join scrap wood and paper with bits of drawings and fragments of somber script, some of it vehemently scratched away. The palette is neutral and wan, the handwork self-effacing. Destruction hovers gently but is ultimately resisted, and this is the work's great and humble strength. Greis's materials are ugly, forgotten scraps, of no use to anyone anymore. She has cut up her own drawings. Even the words she herself writes down end up crossed out, rejected. And yet, brought together with the utmost singularity and delicacy, they form unique entities of simple beauty and complex possibility. 6/11/12 2:02 PM



**016 • Regula Rickert** Glass bottles hold milk and juice. They are shiny and useful. They also hold alcohol and break when dropped or thrown, transforming into dangerous shards. Asked to exhibit her artwork at the TRA.FO gallery in Lutherpark, a neighborhood known for its population of drug addicts

and alcoholics, Regula Rickert decided that her usual medium of solo studio painting was inadequate and chose instead to work in glass, live in the gallery, and with the help of the local occupants. Cheap alcohol bottles were collected and washed collaboratively, then smashed by the artist into fragments to be used in various sculptures, including two small spheres, one clear, one green. In the process, Rickert discovered the humanity of these people, and they her. It's a revelation metaphorically present in the sculptures themselves, whose sharp edges come together chaotically to create luminous objects that one wants desperately to touch but is always told not to. We ought to all have special gloves like Rickert does. 6/11/12 2:42 PM

**017 • Anonymous (submitted by Werner Fritsch)**

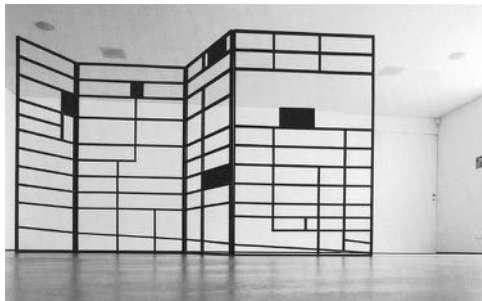
Ten years ago Werner Fritsch bought a painting in a market in Haiti. He bought it because he liked it, and because he was struck by the colorful cheeriness of the depicted scene, which shows dark villagers in a verdant world of waterfalls and grass huts and palm trees, and which stood in stark contrast to the poor living conditions he had witnessed in the country, even in pre-earthquake times. The paradox of happy art amid impoverishment might be explained by the nature of tourism, the desire of most tourists to consume a palatable image of the place they are visiting, and the concomitant response of local businessmen and artisans to create that image for sale. It might also be explained by the fact that money does not equal happiness and vice-versa. One can also just look at the painting itself, which is both a typical touristic image in this sense and also something a bit stranger, with its abstract blue square that becomes a hut; the multi-breasted torsos that pass for hanging coconuts; and especially the swirling blue and brown lines that have no representational logic at all. Most things reveal some surprise if one looks closely enough. 6/11/12 3:06 PM



**018 • Megan Evans** What would it be, to be a bee? Are they a miraculously symbiotic work force or an army of drones serving an omnipotent master? I know art history, not apiary science—from this distance they have always seemed painfully caught between these two opposing descriptions. Megan Evans makes art out of bees; in the case of her exhibition “Requiem,” hundreds of dead bees found in an abandoned house. She assembles them in numbingly endless grids in which the bees appear not exactly dead but frightfully inert, mindlessly ordered and aglow with eerily golden light. Photographs and a video present the dead from various angles; a large-scale pastel drawing portrays a single living bee, greedily covered in pollen. Colony Collapse Disorder hovers everywhere, without having been spoken directly. A companion piece films a stunning school of koi through luminescent ripples of water. The haunting musical score by Biddy Connor hints at the deadly takeover of Australian waters by the koi’s close kin, the carp. Foreign agents destroying the environment while we watch helplessly—there’s no honey here. 6/11/12 4:37 PM

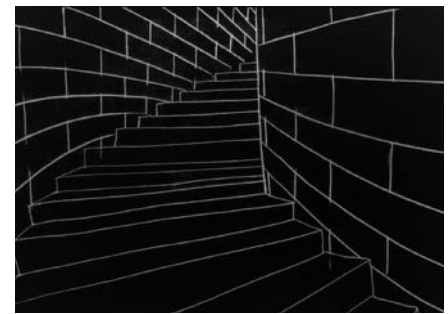


**019 • Caroline Bayer** How much can a black and white grid mean? Piet Mondrian’s primary-colored matrixes were pure abstractions as much as they were also the branches of trees and maps of city streets. Peter Halley’s neon networks connoted electrical circuits and prison architecture. But black and white, just black and white, what then? Monochrome grids of all sorts are the stuff of Caroline Bayer’s “CITYGRID.” They are the dots and dashes of adding machines, the webs of computer boards, the rectangles of real estate maps. The largest work in the series, a room divider made of black lacquered wood, runs from floor to ceiling in four hinged parts, a lattice of horizontal and vertical lines interrupted by the occasional diagonal segment and solid black rectangle. If this is, as the series title suggests, a grid of a city, it is notable in particular for how empty a city it is. This is a choice: the divider is an open lattice, revealing everything that surrounds it on all sides. And yet there is no one there, in the artist’s documentation. The room, and thus the city, is soulless. 6/11/12 5:07 PM



## 020 • Stephen Wichuk

Animation is one of the most laborious art forms—and one of the least acknowledged, both as art and as labor. Stephen Wichuk, a young Canadian artist, makes supremely charming short videos that animate the laboriousness of animation. The pieces cite directly, eclectically and affectionately from the medium’s history, with references including “Felix the Cat,” “Sesame Street” and Ub Iwerk’s “Comicolor” series of the 1930s. In thinking about labor and animation, the first workers that come to mind are the animators, who slave over cel after cel after cel, obliged to draw each hair on every chinny-chin-chin. But in Wichuk’s short, looping films, another labor becomes evident: the labor of the characters themselves, like the chef who must fall over and over again down an endless set of stairs, always carrying too many pies. Like Old Mother Hubbard, stuck rubbing and scrubbing, rubbing and scrubbing the King’s laundry, until her hands must be bare to the bone. And still she must scrub on. Did Mr. Disney give Mickey and Minnie a vacation? Did the Warner Brothers let the coyote recover after any of his falls? On one hand these are silly questions, gags like those the cartoons were always full of. On the other, they also acknowledge all kinds of hidden labor. Perhaps animators have long tried to tell us this story. 6/11/12 5:37 PM



**021 • Albrecht Letz** Is there such a thing as pure abstraction? The word abstract denotes abstraction from, in the way that Mondrian abstracted his grids from observations of the natural and urban world. There’s no need to know this, however, and in fact it can get in the way of the kind of free, intense looking that good abstractions encourage. Albrecht Letz makes good abstractions. Densely worked grounds of acrylic and lacquer puzzle like the surface of a distant planet, seen up close for the first time. How did this happen? Is the color a veneer or does it run deep? Answers to such musings are not forthcoming, nor need they be, but a certain specificity and force is generated by the white lines Letz paints overtop these pockmarked expanses. Straight or curved, they suggest signs of the real world, abstracted in predetermined ways: directional vectors, road markings, architectural structures. Jackson Pollock attempted something similar when he cut shapes into a few of his canvases, interrupting and overdetermining the wild, tense overallness of his famous drips. That didn’t work very well, and Pollock



never did it again, thankfully. But Letz’s lines work wonders, and hopefully he will continue to place these and other contrasting marks in potent juxtaposition with his absorbing grounds. 6/13/12 1:47 PM



### 022 • Klaus Stawinski

Klaus Stawinski takes very banal snapshots of equally banal subjects: a display of violins, a brick corridor, a cornfield, a lamppost, a bridge over the Fulda. These are not good pictures and they do not need to be, because Stawinski is not at all interested in them for their photographic qualities. He calls himself a “digital painter” and has developed a means of transforming these images into surreal versions of the real world. He works without a computer, using only the settings on his digital camera in order to perform manipulations of color and contrast. The

results might be called enhanced reality, and certainly they imply an eager, psychedelic, painterly vision. Why painterly and not photographic? Although Stawinski explains his choice of terminology in terms of the work’s effect, noting that it looks painted, another hypothesis suggests itself. A photographer represents the world as it exists on the other side of the lens, whereas a painter represents the world as it exists within him or herself. There’s nothing but amorphous paint on the end of a paintbrush, unless the painter chooses to do something with it. And that, ultimately, is what Klaus Stawinski does, when he turns a grey street near the Kassel train station into a mysterious avenue planted with trees of the most iridescent purple. 6/13/12 2:24 PM

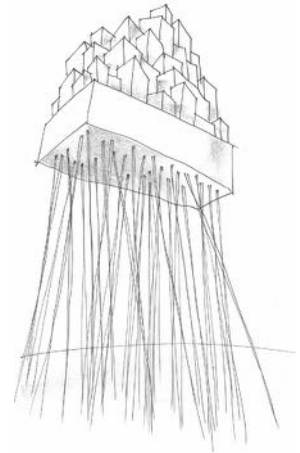
**023 • Leona (Angelika Loewe)** Every day for one year, Leona puckered up and kissed a small white canvas. Underneath the red, pink or peach marks left by her lipstick, she inscribed the date and location. She also took a picture of her gesture. What does it mean to perform the same act every day for an entire year? Most of us do many things daily: we get up, brush our teeth, eat our meals, sleep. There is nothing special about any of this, unless we decide to make it so. Nor is there anything permanent about any of this, unless we decide to make it so. Since at least the 1960s, however, artists have decided that the stuff of quotidian life is indeed worth memorializing. On Kawara has announced the time he wakes up, the date, even the very fact of his being alive. Other artists have taken pictures of the sky or the things they eat. Leona, for her part, seems to be marking something quite different, something sticky and even messy, something emotional and sexy. Who are these kisses for? Are they for art? Are they for herself? Are they for the viewer? Sometimes they seem flirtatious, sometimes loving, sometimes just merely polite. And yet, they go on for 365 days, without fail, without deviation. That, perhaps, reveals dedication most of all.

6/13/12 2:57 PM



**024 • Wolfgang Loewe** What would it be like to live on a concrete platform, full to the point of collapse with building stacked above building, the whole teetering precariously atop a rickety scaffolding of sticks? In his architectural sketches, Wolfgang Loewe maintains that indeed we already do live this way, in a society made unstable by its lack of values. He suggests this sculpturally as well, leaving concrete cubes to balance ominously but also magically at the apex of dozens of tree branches. There is critique here but also the possibility for a better life, in the sense that artists and social scientists have intended it since the notion of psychogeography was first defined in the mid-20th century. We are deeply influenced by our physical surroundings, by the function and style of the built environment, the obligations and suggestions of urban planning. Lousy design makes for a lousy world, but better design might make for a better life. Loewe envisions this in a final sculpture, where small people stand joyously atop a concrete plinth that flies through the air, trailing unfettered branches behind. Alas, the sculpture remains unfinished, its presentation so far impossible...but at least not unimagined.

6/13/12 4:02 PM

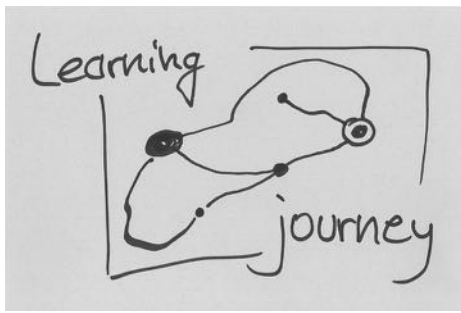


**025 • Judith Schmidt** A lot can happen over the course of an artist’s life, over the course of the life of her work. Rarely do we have the luxury of observing these changes as they picture themselves on paper and canvas, except in the form of retrospective exhibitions. All too often, such shows edit out surprises and dead ends, and in any case only the most famous artists receive them. But any honest, thoughtful practitioner will make work as various as life itself can’t help but be lived, and Judith Schmidt is one such artist. Thirty years ago she applied simple, raw marks to paper. Eventually these accumulated until the picture grew thick with them, a solid black mass. Object shapes appeared as negative space, then haunting figures. Eventually moving, mysterious creatures reared their sentient

but featureless bodies. Today, realistic eyes and lips float on rosy, ethereal surfaces above phrases that reference popular culture—Al Capone, Marcel Proust. All of these developments can be matched with parallel ones in the recent history of art, from conceptual drawing to feminist practices to appropriation techniques. But a unique personal history exists here too, one not part of the history books but inseparably part of the work itself.

6/13/12 4:29 PM





**026 • Ludwig Möller** In the land of Joseph Beuys, everyone is an artist and social sculpture is everywhere. Ludwig Möller, a lecturer at the University of Kassel, is a believer in this way of learning and an astute practitioner of it. His “Moving School,” which debuted as a prototype called the Changemaker Camp last October, begins again this August in Kassel

and projects a journey to London, Amsterdam, Paris and further on. Impossible to say how it will play out, what it will mean, what will be learned and what will be made. Certainly the intentions are laudable. Secondary and university education are indeed stuck in the 19th century, and Möller’s evolving, flexible curriculum appeals in contrast. In his school, which aims to have applications for the worlds of business, education and the social, learning centers on laughter, creativity, cooperation, collectivity, curiosity and courage. This sounds, in the very best way possible, like the program at any truly good preschool. Germany, after all, is not just the birthplace of Joseph Beuys but also of kindergarten. Creative learning ought not stop at age five. Beuys knew that, Ludwig Möller knows it, and we can too. 6/13/12 5:05 PM

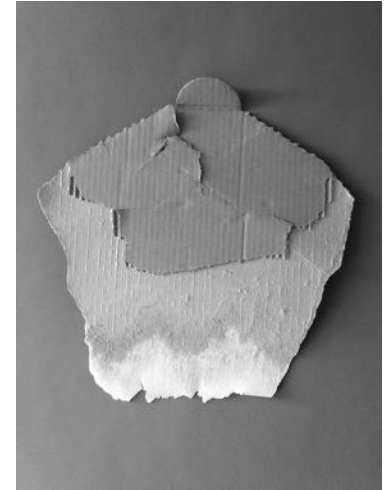
**027 • Carsten Crone Caroc** REVIEW FAILED FOR REASONS OF UNREPRODUCEABILITY AND MISUNDERSTANDING. 6/13/12 5:46 PM



**028 • Jac Splinter** “My friend went to Chernobyl and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.” What kind of a friend would buy such a tacky souvenir, and what kind of a friend would actually deign to wear it? But wait—though similar shirts provide tasteless evidence of a pathetic search for the pseudo-exotic, this bright red number is a little bit different. For one, it was made in a limited edition of 25 by artist Jac Splinter. For two, you can’t keep it, but must photograph yourself wearing it, return the photo to Splinter for yearly exhibition on April 26, and then pass the shirt along to the next person. For three, the writing is in Russian and most people won’t be able to read it. For four, those who do understand will be shocked by the implication that Chernobyl, site of one of the worst disasters in the history of mankind, has become a tourist site a quarter century after the nuclear explosion that poisoned the world. For five, the words glow in the dark, hinting at radioactivity. What’s next? In a global culture where the news cycle lasts five minutes and no rock has been left unturned, no land left dark, disaster tourism may in fact be the next big thing. How far is a visit to post-Tsunami beaches in Thailand or Japan from hikes through threatened rainforests in Brazil or up immense peaks to see the glaciers before they disappear entirely? “My friend went to Kilimanjaro and all I got was this lousy T-shirt” might be the next in a series that unfortunately promises no end. 6/16/12 1:55 PM



**029 • Julie Bernattz** Give a child a gift and watch what happens. Most prefer the packaging to the toy wrapped inside. It isn’t that dolls and blocks aren’t fun, but that boxes and wrapping are there to be torn, open and closed, balled up and thrown. No one is going to tell you not to destroy a piece of die-cut cardboard. Julie Bernattz, an artist who trained as a printmaker, works with the materials she has at hand. As the mother of a young girl, she has an endless supply of My Little Pony and Lalaloopsy containers that have been ripped open by eager hands. Arranged against a hot pink ground, some of these scraps reveal totally unexpected interest. Simple cardboard shapes prove most compelling. The printed sides are faerie lands empty of their inhabitants, like when Cory Arcangel removed Mario from the Super Mario Bros. video game. The backsides are raw abstractions, recalling Robert Rauschenberg’s cardboard reliefs. It’s trash but it also isn’t. In a land increasingly filled with garbage that we can just barely manage to recycle, Bernattz’s approach may become a necessary one, practically and ethically, as well as aesthetically. If you can’t toss it, look at it again, rethink it, and see if you can’t find something worthwhile there. 6/16/12 2:37 PM



**030 • Isolde Rotzinger** The subjects of Isolde Rotzinger’s paintings and sculptures are not quite what one might expect of an amateur artist who took up the chisel and brush late in life. There are no placid bowls of fruit or rolling country landscapes here. Instead, Rotzinger has tackled American sex scandals and football stadium riots. Her depiction of a sheep’s skull in a muted palette of brown and beige oils takes a vanitas object seriously enough to paint it with great precision and lightly enough to title it, “Once Upon a Time I was a Majorcan Sheep.” That she found and kept the cluster of bones while on a cycling holiday might be considered an extension of the work as well. Her carving of the Hebrew alphabet in a vertical slab of stone, sited in her own garden, haunts like a tombstone, one which could spell out the name of any one of the six million Jews murdered nearly to extinction. It’s a frightfully weighty topic for any artist to confront, but Rotzinger, thankfully, appears fearless. 6/16/12 3:10 PM

.....  
Lori Waxman rezensiert auf  
Kunst von jedermann. Etab-  
Hobbymaler - sie alle können  
rache Werke in Waxmans  
Aussicht vorbeibringen. Alle  
auf [www.mydocumenta.de](http://www.mydocumenta.de)  
gedruckten HNA. (vbs)  
itic@60wradmin.org

## Preisgabe

### Bast aus Kassel

er auf die Kuhglocke herab,  
die ihm zwischen den beiden  
Brüsten hängt, die er mit sei-  
nen Händen formt. Nennt  
man eine Frau eine Kuh, dann  
beleidigt man sie, doch was  
bedeutet es für einen emp-  
findsamen Mann zu muhen?

Ein anderes Foto zeigt Bast  
von der Hüfte abwärts. Ein  
blaues Kleidungsstück ist  
hochgerafft und gibt den Blick  
auf seine beiden anmutigen  
haarigen Knie frei. Eine Pola-  
roidaufnahme einer runden  
Wurst auf einem Spitzendeck-  
chen hängt vor seinem Schoß.

Eine Wurst als  
Surrogat eines  
männlichen Kör-

# Eine Ente als Kirsche

**Lori Waxmans Kunstkritik:** Gagaisten - vertreten mit Emil Oswald (Witzenha

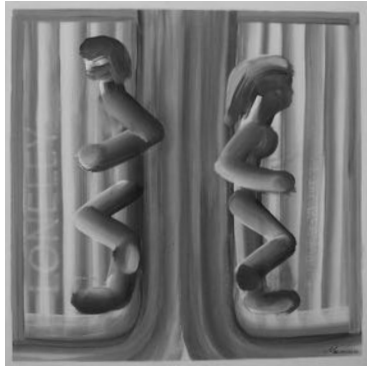
**E**he es Lady Gaga gab, gab  
es Gaga die Kirsche. Viel-  
leicht haben Sie nie von  
ihr gehört oder, falls Sie sie ge-  
sehen haben, haben Sie sie  
wahrscheinlich nicht erkannt.  
Denn Gaga die Kirsche sieht  
aus wie eine Ente. Nicht wie ir-  
gendeine Ente, sondern wie  
die allgemein bekannte und  
beliebte Gummiente.

In der Stadt Witzenhausen  
ist Gaga die Kirsche ohne  
Zweifel berühmter als Lady  
Gaga. Auf alle Fälle hat sie auf  
die dortige Kunstszene mehr  
Einfluss, hat sie es doch ge-  
schafft, weite Teile der Bürger-  
schaft in eine Debatte über  
Kunst im öffentlichen Raum  
und ihre Repräsentation zu  
verwickeln.

1996 erblickte sie das Licht  
der Welt, als eine Gruppe ano-  
nymer Künstler sie aus Protest  
gegen eine Reihe banaler  
Skulpturen erschuf, die als  
Kirschen - realistische Kir-  
schen - einen örtlichen Rad-  
weg säumten. Sie sollten für  
das wichtigste Produkt ste-  
hen, welches in dieser Stadt  
vertrieben und verarbeitet  
wird.



**031 • Manfred Ossysek** A trilogy painted by Manfred Ossysek appears deceptively simple. On three modest square boards of equal size, a man and a woman, not much thicker or more complex than stick figures, present a story of falling in love. First comes loneliness, then hope, then affection. The people are apart, they approach, they embrace. Their colors change from blue to green to red. So far, so good, so straightforward. But does blue always indicate loneliness? Blue is also the color of calm, and being alone can be a far more serene state than being coupled. Does green always connote hope? Green is also the color of jealousy, an emotion triggered by romantic desire. Red, the color of the heart and of Valentine's Day, also signals anger, the flow of blood. Apart from the couple, the bi-color canvases contain only the most basic background elements, but even these reveal more than they seem to at first glance. Vertical blue brushstrokes in the first picture rain down with sadness. Angled green ones in the second shimmer with rays of possibility. Vertical red ones in the third pulse with passion. Ossysek offers not just a narrative depiction of inter-personal relationships but a formal one, told through color and line. Imagine what he could do with the rainbow. 6/16/12 3:57 PM



**032 • Jutta Kröner** What does it feel like to float up in the air, a kilometer or even two above the town and hills where you live, the sun on your face and the wind in your hair? Birds do it all the time, but most of us just stand on the ground and gaze longingly at them in flight. Not Jutta Kröner. The Kasselerin has been up in a hot air balloon not once but three times, an experience magnificent enough to her that she chose to memorialize it in an ambitious oil painting, one whose composition admits the machinery of the vehicle, the comforting presence of another human companion (her husband), and the stunning expanse of the world below, lit by the pretty glow of a rainbow sky. Meaningful adventures have long been commemorated by painters, but what's notable here is that the exploit was undertaken by the artist herself. So it comes as somewhat of a surprise to find that the canvas doesn't convey this direct experience, being not expressionistic but faithfully representational. In that sense, Kröner's painting doesn't capture the feeling of going up in a hot air balloon so much as it stands as a reminder of it. One exception might be the odd perspective of the land that lies just beneath the flying couple, the ground stretched out in a way that suggests unfamiliar movement and speed. Is that what it's like up there in the sky? You'd have to ask a bird—or go up in a balloon yourself. 6/16/12 4:23 PM



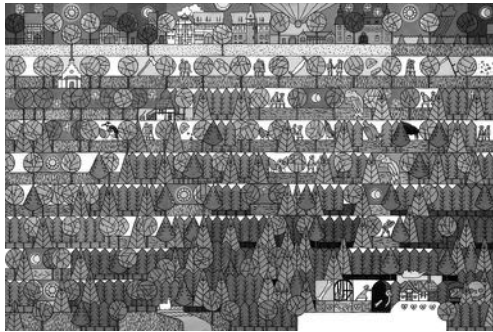
**033 • Susanne Nickel** A handkerchief is used to wipe up bodily spills with care and elegance, or so it seems today when such delicate materials have fallen out of use, replaced by the cheapest, thinnest tissue paper. One might be most graciously offered to a stranger, still, as Susanne Nickel has done in her artist book "Eine Geschichte." The stranger is the late Romanian poet Aglaja Veteranji, who wrote the eponymous poem, and whose hard, depressed life certainly warranted a kind offer from an appreciative spirit. Nickel transcribes Veteranji's poem, which tells the agonizingly spare story of a woman, a man, a table and an eye, onto three clean, lacy flea market hankies. Alongside Veteranji's words are Nickel's drawings of internal organs, tidily painted in white and blood red, as if already cleaned up. The words and lettering are basic, the handkerchiefs pretty but plain, the body parts detailed and fleshy but sanitary. And yet, the story is not at all so neat and simple as its presentation pretends. Stories rarely are. 6/16/12 4:54 PM



**034 • Patricia Andrade** What does a happy relationship look like? Patricia Andrade asked dozens of acquaintances to describe their personal vision for her. The results vary from the holistic to the Hallmark, and they are uniquely easy to visualize. So Andrade did not bother to do so, recording them only in words. What she pictured instead, with baroque elaborateness, is the very opposite. So what does a sadistic affair resemble?

With the help of two dancers and an elaborate mise-en-scène, Andrade staged the passionate, grotesque courtship of a sexy, charred couple over tea and pig's hearts in the Garden of, well, Hades. They flirt and kiss, but she also struggles and goes scarily vacuous, the face of a woman about to be raped. In Part II, the same couple struggle side by side in an airless white non-space, bound in red cords, desperately attempting to control one another, engaged in some cruel game gone wrong. Part III surprises with its sarcastic and almost cliché cuteness, as Andrade presents two alienated, rich children-as-adults at either end of a dining table, haughtily eating McDonald's. Taken as a whole, "Love at Last Sight" suggests that as individuals we know what happiness looks like. But Andrade also warns us of the need to recognize its opposite, and to fight its easy seduction. 6/16/12 5:39 PM

**035 • Markus Lefrançois** In the land of the Brothers Grimm, Gretel uses all the force she can muster to push that nasty old witch into a fiery oven. Walt Disney never arrived to work his sugary-sweet magic on the fairy tales of old, and it shows. Consider children's book illustrator Markus Lefrançois' tale of "Sleeping Beauty."



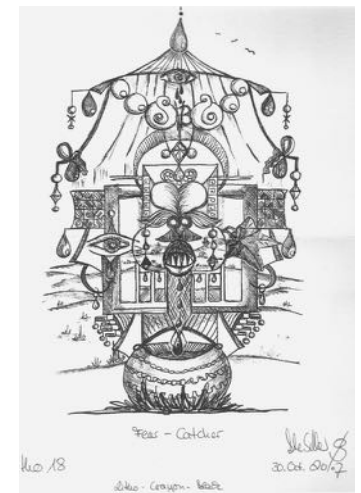
In the United States, the somnolent princess must be coiffed with a blonde bouffant and dressed in a shimmery pastel gown. Every girl wants to be her. In Lefrançois' telling, "princess" is the least interesting element, the book brimming instead with convincingly Medieval visages, charmingly schematized forests and ingenious castle cutaways. The endpapers invent a graphic legend out of roses and skulls, moons and daggers.

Taking advantage of the Grimms' silence on the ethnicity of the princes who visit the sleeping lady from far away lands, Lefrançois scripts them as eerie samurai, not just knights in shining armor. With sophisticated illustrational strategies that recall Egyptian hieroglyphs in their horizontality, others the kind of ironic emblems sampled by contemporary graphic designers, Lefrançois can picture stories as complexly as the Brothers Grimm first wrote them down. Take that, you lousy witch. 6/18/12 2:11 PM

**036 • Christina Baumann** The edge between naiveté and knowingness, simplicity and depth, lucidity and chaos can be surprisingly thin and paradoxically dense. The Surrealists were not the only ones who recognized this, in their appreciation of the art of children and of the insane, and in their invention of techniques such as automatic drawing. Artist Christina Baumann echoes these interests in her own drawings, which work hard at looking easy, and feel easy in their hardness. "Caroline M. and all her belongings" depicts a woman, her arms full, in oil stick, crayon, pencil and wax. The subject grins, and her smile and eyes are both kind and creepy. She is black, black, black. Not a millimeter of paper shows through, the drawing having been deliberately over-worked, like a child's crayon-over-crayon drawing, and of course not at all like that. Caroline M., whoever she is, threatens to disappear in the layers of waxy substance that are supposed to illustrate her but instead begin a process of consumption. Children don't draw like this, but adults who recognize the impossibility of straightforward representation do. 6/18/12 2:39 PM



**037 • Beate Scheller** What might be called the hippy realism of a traveller animates Beate Scheller's prints. A fairy tale village crawls with ivy but seems too perfect to be true. A woodland scene has a grinning mushroom and what could be one of the Seven Dwarves. A fish shimmers with swirls and baubles beyond the possibility of even the most wondrous scales. A window opens up on a vista of lake, mountain and possible pirate ship. Eyes hover everywhere, decoratively. A few trippy images can even be viewed from multiple directions. Scheller's pictures have the casual intensity of doodles, but being lithographs they counter this with a paradoxical permanence, the commitment of stone. Bound together in accordion fold books, a continuity is suggested from one print to another but not made literally manifest. Given the dense, worked bits that repeat forms and themes from one work to another, a new project might be to actually make these connections literally visible. 6/18/12 3:13 PM

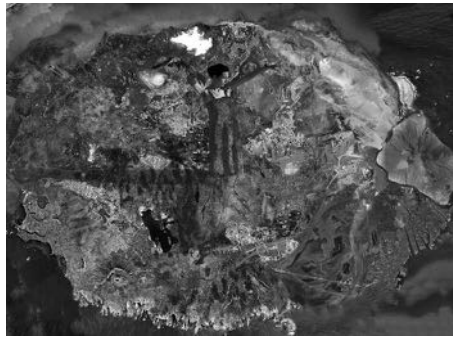


**038 • Werner Wulf** Tall and sun-burned, with a head and beard of thick white hair, Werner Wulf looks the part of the godly pilgrim but worships instead at the secular altar of art. He undertook the 125-kilometer journey from Witzhausen to Fulda on foot, pulling behind him a cart containing sculptures for demonstrating the principle of dualism: individual tools tested left and right, up and down, life and death, war and peace. He displayed his

props at stops every 10 kilometers along the way, and when he arrived in Fulda, set them up in the main square, surrounded by an enormous chalk circle with segments for each of the world's main religions and their geographical origins. A game was proposed, in which participants tried to reach an ephemeral center of the universe. The authorities were not pleased, and Wulf was sent on his way, his undoing of religion undone. But anyone who met him over the course of the four days he managed to exhibit in Fulda would have noted that his cart also functioned as a home—even the mightiest dualities eventually must give way to the more basic needs of shelter and nourishment. Wulf, at least, appears self-sustaining. 6/18/12 4:14 PM



**039 • Regina Frank** Data accumulates everywhere in everything, but precious little of it is understood or recorded. This is by no means simply the X's and O's of the Internet, though it is that too. Data lodges in the pearls hand-sewn on a dress by a woman in Indonesia paid just 20 cents an hour. It illuminates a solar-powered string of lights. It feeds the mysterious organic growth of mushrooms. It determines the geographical pattern of recent global disasters. Regina Frank takes this information and wears it on her sleeve, or rather on her entire body and beyond, in the shape of immense circular dresses that spread out around her sculptural torso, active with the labor of stitching, transcribing, brushing, eating or kneading, depending on the performance. None of this data is unknown or inaccessible, but amid the escalating onslaught of political, ethical, geological and climatological information that comprises our universe, it becomes increasingly difficult to remember just how real and present are its effects. Draped on her own insistently present body, Regina Frank's dresses make this palpably visible. 6/18/12 5:15 PM



**040 • Sofia Frank de Morais Barreira** The art of children has long been prized among the avant-garde for its supposedly radical freedom and beautiful naiveté, because children are believed to be unfettered by the tradition of representational accuracy, by the fact that an apple must be round and red, that a face must have two eyes, two ears, one mouth and one nose, and all in the right space.



This is hogwash. Consider the artwork of Sofia Frank de Morais Barreira, the four-year-old daughter of a conceptual performance artist. In one vibrant crayon sketch, palm trees sway in the breeze, an orange hut in their shade, a lush hilly landscape in the background. In another, a bright yellow fish swims in the wet blue sea. An odd composition of horizontal black lines and a little red house turns out to be a reproduction of a taxi receipt. A stunning pencil sketch gathers together a mass of dark scribbles that change direction and intensity to form a bird and cloud. One of Sofia's most abstract pictures, of wavy red and blue stripes, is the result of a firm task given to her mother, to fill in the lines with precise coloring. None of these pieces are the product of wild imagination unbound by the reality of the world. They are

the result of a young person continuously figuring out the world as she encounters it, tries it on and tests it out. With, admittedly, great color sense, sweet composition and a very willing maternal collaborator. 6/18/12 5:40 PM



**041 • Yon Hille** Animals are often portrayed anthropocentrically by those who understand them as meaningfully sentient beings, closer to human than beast. This can be cute or it can be critical. In Yon Hille's meticulously drawn portraits of primates, the effect is profound and uncanny, even when the creature

is an adorable little simian with big brown eyes and a soft, fuzzy beard. Recognition trumps appeal, fear and even curiosity, as viewer relates to subject in more than just a theoretical and evolutionary sense. In "Maybe—Is That Me?" a shaggy orange monkey with long, elegant arms ending in extended, capable fingers gazes at her own reflection in a pool of water. At her back, tall golden grasses wave in the breeze. The colored pencils that Hille exclusively uses sketch each bodily hair, each blade of grass, as if it were of individual importance. Can the monkey identify her own reflection? Hard to know; with her face hidden in shadow, her eyes appear closed. Such self-recognition is key to higher consciousness. But central to what might be called ethical consciousness is not just an individual creature's self-recognition but the word play indicated by Hille's title: "me" could mean the artist or the viewer. Maybe that monkey is us. 6/20/12 1:58 PM

**042 • Doris Gutermuth** In the early 1800s, the Brothers Grimm compiled their groundbreaking anthology of fairy tales. It has since been published and republished, written out in nasty and nice versions, illustrated in every style of picture book, animated and filmed. Is there anything left to do with these stories of morality, mirth and mayhem? Indeed there is. Doris Gutermuth has made it her life's work to create pictographic series that tell each of the 211 narratives, from "Frau Holle" to "The Bremen Town Musicians." The pictures look less like traditional children's book illustrations than road signs; simple figures appear in triangles, surrounded by ultramarine blue, and move through their storylines at a brisk pace. Every scene takes place on a roadway, because mobility is central to narrative progress here. Gutermuth's ability to distill a story into its most potent moments surprises, and her graphic inventiveness thrills. You might think you know these tales already, and in fact you do need to know them in order to follow along with the pictograms, but that's half the pleasure. The best stories can be told and retold endlessly, and should. 6/20/12 2:39 PM



**043 • Nina Ansari** What would it look and feel like to be bombed? The glamour and sexiness of a nightclub is not the first thing that comes to mind, but it is what many of the images in Nina Ansari's photo series "War, the Carrier of Meaning" conjure. Dark and glittery, filled with distressed young people minimally dressed in tight black clothing, the photographs also evoke the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's "Infinity Rooms" and a gritty, bare bones fashion shoot. Two distinctly eerie images contradict these glib impressions, however, and



achieve the effect intended by Ansari, who was herself deeply marked by a bombing endured when she was four years old and still living with her family in Iran. In them, bodies tumble over other bodies in shadowy desperation; stark light illuminates moments of pained humanity. To make the series, Ansari constructed a room, punctured the walls, and photographed people inside. All of this took place in the dark, and she snapped her camera blind,

triggering a dozen flashbulbs outside the room with each click. To do this, she needed to learn to focus her camera with her hands, not her eyes, a process she mastered—as must a soldier, who puts together his gun in the dark of night, and often shoots based on instinct rather than sight. 6/20/12 3:39 PM

**044 • Jens Thumser** In one of the most horrifying images of the twentieth century, American photojournalist Eddie Adams framed a Vietnamese general executing a Viet Cong officer right at the moment that the former's bullet made contact with the latter's head. Artist Jens Thumser appropriates this famous photograph in a puzzle-picture titled "Nguyen vs. Schiffer," in which the supermodel Claudia Schiffer takes the place of the man at the end of the gun. Most people will recognize the source images here—the Adams is one of the most celebrated war photographs ever taken, and Schiffer is one of the most famous models ever airbrushed into perfection—but far more will know the name of the sexy woman than the marauding man. Was this the case in 1968, when Adams shot the Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph? Was Twiggy as recognizable as the horror of war? Probably not, but well on her way. On her way, that is, to the state of things today, when photographic manipulation of the kind that Thumser utilizes—Photoshop, etc.—is so prevalent that we dare not trust what we see in the newspaper. At least today, however, we know better than to believe that an image reveals a single truth. Adams' photograph seemed to at the time, but in fact it unbalanced public perception in favor of the Viet Cong—and he's lamented its notoriety ever since. 6/20/12 4:13 PM



**045 • Martin Nielaba** Imagine a cross between Gerhard Richter and the Futurists, add in some proprietary lacquer techniques, and you might come somewhere within a few miles of the glossy paintings of Martin Nielaba. Never mind the Futurist obsession with technology or Richter's archival compulsion, however—this is about movement and abstraction. Nielaba is a wizard with a

brush, creating mesmerizingly deft monochromatic compositions whose complexity is so at one with their totality that he's coined the term "fractal abstraction" to describe them. Their interest, ultimately, stems from paradox: Though entirely handmade, they read as photographic. Though they look deeply textured, their surface resolves into a seamlessly flat expanse. Though occasionally a form like a horse appears in their midst, they care not a whit for the principles of illustration but only for those of motion. But then, Richter can't really be said to care for most of the subjects that he depicts either. You have to see well beyond the surface to understand contemporary pictures. 6/20/12 4:42 PM

**046 • Scott Douglas** In Scott Douglas's photographic series "No Exit," young people haunt shadowy homes, industrial sheds, derelict attics and strange fields. Their bodies are mostly solid but their faces give away their spectral nature. Blurred, masklike or even totally disappeared, Douglas achieves their eerie effect by shooting moving subjects at slow camera speed. You could do this with Photoshop or by accident, but he gets his pictures intentionally. The results land somewhere in between Ralph Eugene Meatyard's deeply odd portraits of family and friends in Halloween masks from the 1950s and 60s; contemporary Australian photographer Bill Henson's risqué images of teenagers in the dark; and "Nightmare on Elm Street," part whatever. The references keep going, if you're willing to follow, down the path of Gothic teen fashion and the cult of Vampire fiction, and many other places as well. That, in the end, might be the real threat of "No Exit"—no exit from popular and artistic reference points. Now that's frightening.

6/20/12 5:14 PM



#### 047 • Dan Meththananda

What is Dan Meththananda? Who is not so difficult, since he presents himself as the genial, articulate, intelligent young man that he seems in fact to be. What is an entirely different story, or many stories, some so wildly conceptual they sound as if they must have been fictionalized by the writer Kevin Wilson, who recently published “The Family Fang” about a married couple who named their children A



and B and used them to extraordinary success in very believable works of performance art. After earning degrees in Mathematics and Behavioral Economics from two very good universities, Meththananda entered and left a French business school as a work of art, based on Warhol’s notion that “Good business is the best art.” He then entered a French art school by making himself up as a white man, because he is in fact very brown and was told by an artist friend that his ethnic identity was what determined his artwork as “art.” The circuitously fascinating stories continue on, and questions of fakery versus performance, amateur versus professional, genius versus idiot savant, art versus life abound. If Samuel Beckett were still around, he might have written Meththananda’s autobiography before Meththananda himself could do it. 6/20/12 6:00 PM



#### 048 • Andreas L. Berg

The first image in Andreas L. Berg’s photographic series “Lethe” shows a young man leaning casually on the wall of a public restroom, urinals to the right, toilet to the rear, headphones around his neck, wine glass in his hand. An atypical site for a portrait, it forms an odd beginning to the story Berg tells of a river known in Greek mythology to make

those who drank from it forget. There is much to forget during any lifetime, but Lethe helped those on their way to the underworld leave behind their earthly existence, easing the passage toward death. Is this young man, then, about to meet his end? And the other protagonists in Berg’s series as well—the rakish woman in the mausoleum, the beautiful one in the bath, the lonely one at a table in a field? We are all always going to die, though some of us sooner than others, and some of us with more consciousness of it than others. This, perhaps, is something else we try to forget, whilst we are still alive. It’s unclear what these souls hold in their long-stemmed glasses, but one hopes, for their sake, that it’s white wine. That, at least, might help them forget—though perhaps not as thoroughly as would the waters of the Lethe. 6/30/12 1:55 PM



#### 049 • Rose-Marie Bohle

Rose-Marie Bohle is not afraid of her own shadow. On the contrary, it has for the past seven years acted as a kind of muse, one that conveniently follows her everywhere and, like any good muse, shifts shape and texture, revealing and hiding her many moods. Photographed against a ground of thick, wavy seaweed, the shadow grows hirsute, a mythological green monster arisen out of the depths of the Bretagne sea. Reflected in a pool in front of the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, it glows with a turquoise aura reminiscent of spirit photography. Cast

on stone, Bohle’s shadow juts out sharply; on the rough bark of trees it deforms grotesquely. Cropped against undulating sand, it wrinkles; against a red and white wall, it abstracts. Finally, with the shadow’s entire body visible against the dried ground of an autumnal countryside, it gets up and walks away. 6/30/12 2:25 PM

**050 • Eberhard Heinemann** If Georges Seurat had lived in Kassel instead of Paris, would he have invented Pointillism? More than 100 years after the painter first put dot after dot after dot on canvas, Eberhard Heinemann, an octogenarian Kasselite, has taken history into his own hands. For the past two years he has painted meticulous pictures of local landmarks with a palette and style heavily indebted to the French painter. The effect is charming and surprising. Lavender rooftops and mint green foliage inject a perfumy Parisian liveliness to a grey, industrial city, making good on the promise of the Orangerie’s sunny yellow façade. (Did the bombs wipe out all the color in Kassel except for this one Baroque building, which in any case was rebuilt?) Pointillist pictures, by nature, compel the viewer to look closely at every tiny speck on the canvas. Heinemann’s paintings merit such attention but could reward it even more, by hewing still closer to Seurat’s own technique. The Neo-Impressionist, who died young in 1891, marked every square inch of the canvas, including the white spaces and beyond. Then he framed them with painted wood, as if even the edge of the canvas couldn’t contain those dots. They spread far and wide—now all the way to central Germany. 6/30/12 2:58 PM



**051 • Odey Curbelo Urquijo** In what world does a double rainbow arch up, a trifacta of white, green and purple, rising from the chartreuse fronds of an underwater garden? Where does the forest melt away into a hazy fog of ocher, underneath an ultramarine night sky? Odey Curbelo is a painter of such landscapes, which is to say that he is also a creator of scenes that do not quite exist, though they also almost do. Previously he crafted more traditional seascapes and countrysides, places that came together under brush and oil paint—and held



together. But that was art history, past tense, while these newer works are contemporaneous with a world that has little need for realistic painting. The planet, meanwhile, dissolves not unlike Curbelo's pale seascapes and cavernous country lanes, canvases thinly covered with oil then mottled and washed away by water and rags. Gorgeously deformed, they present a Mannerism for today, when the looming end of a climatological era claims a parallel style in art.

6/30/12 4:00 PM

**052 • Anna Sommerer** Anna Sommerer's jewelry may not quite allow you to wear your heart on your sleeve, but they do make it possible to wear an apple or a cassette tape around your neck or on your chest. Under the name ponyhut, the young designer crafts amiable brooches and pendants in shapes that feel nostalgic in a distinctly contemporary way, but otherwise make an eccentric collection.

Her stemmed apples, apple cores and audiocassettes are pieced together from two layers of MDF board or laser-cut fruit boxes. The former bear a grey uniformity and could be mistaken for company logos, as if Macintosh had got into the music business long before anyone had ever heard of an iPod. The latter charm with the bright colors, schematic foliage and cheap printing of commercial food bins. Off-register never looked so good. Most endearing of all, perhaps, are the wormholes dug through each and every apple. Normally a most unappetizing surprise, here they do double duty as pendant holes.

6/30/12 4:35 PM



**053 • Liesbeth van Woerden**

There's nothing surprising about a female body being flattened, cut up and put on display. This is what advertising culture does daily in magazines and on television; it is what medical culture does daily in hospital imaging centers. Rarely, however, is this process acknowledged as wittily and directly as in Liesbeth van Woerden's "Torso." The artist photographed an unabashedly regular woman's body from neck to hips,

printed it up a bit larger than life, divided it into 80 postcards and distributed these in a public place. Having chosen the body fragment that most appealed, each participant was then photographed holding a nipple, elbow crease or straggle of pubic hair. The results vary from sentimental to gender bending, from formalist to absurd. A man grows an aureole, a droopy cleavage lines up with a shadow on the ground. Van Woerden then asked participants to address and mail the cards back to her gallery, where they were reassembled on a postcard rack into a 360-degree composite. Perhaps the biggest surprise of all is not that all the cards made it back so that the woman could be made (somewhat) whole again, but that the post office delivered them all at once, in a stack tied together with a rubber band. At what point did they realize they had a body on their hands? Did they put it together themselves, in between sorting the mail? How did they know they had all the pieces and it was time to dispatch the courier? 6/30/12 5:31 PM

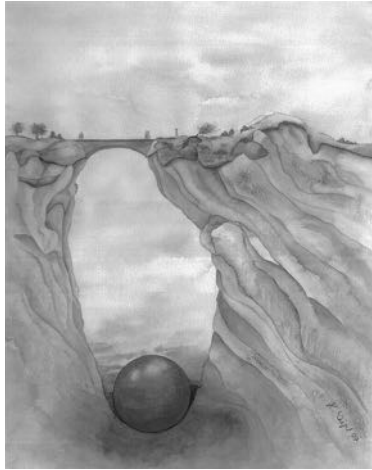
# July



**054 • André Schwiede** Cameras mostly capture reality as it exists. The photographer looks through the viewfinder, focuses, snaps, and later edits and maybe prints. That's not all that cameras—or photographers—can do with reality, of course. Once upon a time, magic altered reality in the depths of the darkroom. Now it happens on the computer screen, courtesy Photoshop and other imaging software. André Schwiede does this with the dozens of views he captures of Kassel each week, be it streetlights in the Auepark or an office building in Mitte. Under his digital wand, bushes acidify with the hottest of yellow, cobblestones drip blood red, light burns brilliant magenta sparks. A functionalist façade divides and pixelates, mottled in mossy greens and burnt umbers, speckled by a splash of robin's egg blue. But having gone this far from the drabness of the commonplace, why not go further? Turn Schwiede's business facility on its side and a seven-story building grows skyward, the open windows ominous, the colors frightful. Do the same with his view of a park lane at night, and the psychedelic gives way to the medical, a CAT scan with a glowing orb at its center. Benign or malignant, you decide. It's certainly contemporary.

7/2/12 1:58 PM





**055 • Heidrun Wiegert** Heidrun Wiegert has practiced her watercolor skills on numerous subjects that might appeal to the typical hobbyist: seashells, clusters of fruit, beautiful flowers, rural sunsets and sailboats afloat in placid waters. On occasion, however, she takes the liberty of combining them into compositions that grow in interest as they grow in oddness. In one, rocky cliffs rise up from the ocean to reveal not just a romantic little village on one shelf but a booming metropolis on a second and a (relatively) gargantuan three-mast ship on a third. In another, a scraggly tree stump arches up like a rainbow over a pristine alpine landscape, a ship stranded happily in its branches, tremendous dragon flowers bloom on others. In what might be her most

intriguing picture, Wiegert buries a perfect orange-red sphere deep down in a luminous crevice under a small land bridge. Tiny couples stroll above, unaware that the earth lies prisoner beneath their feet. The sky glows a perfectly pleasant pastel and all seems well. Even the most romantic watercolor can be made richer, and truly more real, with the addition of magic. 7/2/12 2:28 PM

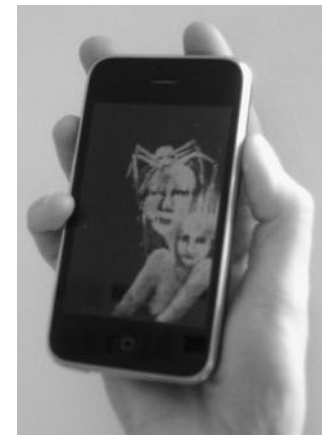
**056 • Alfred Hohmann** Behind a mask, anyone can be someone else. But who would you want to be? Somebody fierce, beautiful or brave? Masks possess infinite possibilities, not only because they can be formed in endless variety but also because they hide real faces—and real people—behind their forms. A dozen papier-mâché masks created by Alfred Hohmann over the past 25 years do this, but the results are not quite the fantasy one might expect. Made alongside prisoners in workshops he ran as a probation officer, the masks present sad visages, damaged and wretched, painful in their power. The eyes and mouth of one collapse in cavernous black holes. The jagged orifices of another run with the thickest, sorriest of mucus. A third, “The Gladiator,” hides under a ragged veil and sees through the narrowest of punctures. Is this what it’s like behind prison walls? Wearing these sculptures is a lesson in projection and absorption. A fourth example, marked with black and green striations, and set in the crook of a vibrantly scrawled branch, lends its wearer a more welcome sensation—the promise of magical release, if not on this plane of existence, then at least in another.

7/2/12 3:04 PM



pile of giant frankfurters, crispy schnitzels, pale pork chops, squishy liverwurst, browned blutwurst, and more. Nauseating crunches and gurgles of mastication punctuated the repeated phrase, which refers literally to stuff you eat (German pork) and metaphorically to a person you’d want to avoid (a German pig). The video gourmand alternately maintained composure, played with its food, sweated off its makeup and vomited. The effect was neither subtle nor pleasant, nor was it intended as such. An advertisement for dOCUMENTA (13), or its many food vendors and their organic bratwürsts, this was not. Gluttony is a sin, and penance isn’t pretty. Luckily for the rest of us, Many People are willing to play Jesus, and in a monkey suit at that. 7/2/12 4:12 PM

**058 • Marijke Vissia** Once upon a time, the world was populated by creatures, part man, part beast. One might walk upright like a human on two legs but hear, see, smell and eat from the head of an antelope. Another might dress in a dapper suit of finest turquoise pinstripes but wear a cat’s whiskered visage above its natty lapels. Where have these mythological beings gone, now that the dark forests of the oldest fairy tales have been cut down? Rediscovered by Marijke Vissia, they have found a safe, new and utterly contemporary home in her broken iPhone. Vissia first sketched them new lives in acrylic on black paper, then scanned them into her device, where they now glower out from a dark screen in hellish shades of orange. Here live a spider-mother and child, a sickly nymph, a pointy-eared goblin and many peculiar other beasts, lovingly cared for by Vissia and carried everywhere by her. Viewing them with a familiar swipe of the finger is easy enough but also feels importantly wrong, an acknowledgement of just how diminished those ancient mysteries have in contemporary times become. It is, as well, a vivid display of what’s replaced them. 7/2/12 4:47 PM



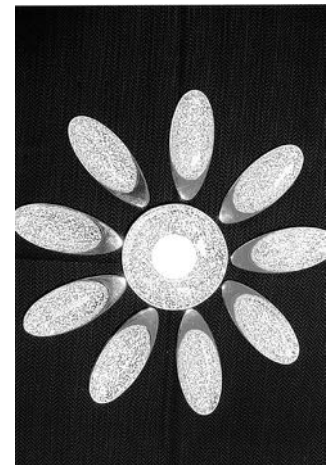
**059 • Bele Kreiss** If you thought that a chicken-woman would be someone to avoid, you'd be wrong. Bele Kreiss's "Hühnerfrauen," as she calls them, are some of the freest, most fabulous women around. With fiery cockscomb hairdos, vibrantly patterned dresses, lipstick-red beaks and nonstop energy, they counterbalance the sober maleness of Kreiss's professional world. The artist works as an engineer, a field in which less than ten percent of the practitioners are women. Equilibrium is her stock-in-trade. Most of her chicken-women have been depicted in oil paintings, created in the midst of a group of like-minded women artists who have been meeting and making art together for fifteen years, but a few of the Hühnerfrauen have also taken three-dimensional form. A splendid recent one arose, in fact, from concrete. And though she stands in leopard-print stilettoes, with a chicken at her feet and a flashy green and purple racer-back tank dress just barely covering her svelte body, she couldn't be more solidly built. 7/2/12 5:17 PM



**060 • Kathryn Ashill** At two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, the 24th of July 2011, Kathryn Ashill tied dozens of rainbow-colored balloons to her arms and jumped out of an old tree in Cathays Cemetery, in Cardiff, the capital city of Wales. Hers was a memorial jump—perhaps the first action of its kind—for a fourteen-year old girl named Louisa Maud Evans, popularly known as Balloon Girl, who drowned 115 years prior after attempting a daring feat of aeronautics involving a hot-air balloon and a parachute. Balloon Girl's ascent and descent were part of the local Maritime and Industrial Exhibition, meant to attract a crowd through the irresistible combination of youthful bravery and high technology. Ashill's performance, by contrast, was knowing in its pretend innocence, modest in its choice of a three-meter-high branch, and transparent in its use of a ladder to climb up and

a mattress to land on safely. (The best of her performance documentation makes these safety implements clear.) Ashill's handmade sailor costume recalled Balloon Girl's but also Sailor Moon's, minus any crotch shots whatsoever. The tone was purely Victorian. But the honesty about how children's ideas of fantasy and fearlessness can conflict—sometimes fatally—with those of adults was all Ashill's own. 7/2/12 5:58 PM

**061 • Else Blaufuss** Is it rude to read at the table? My grandmother always insisted this was so, and comic books were banished during dinner, along with novels and newspapers. If only my brothers and I had known about Else Blaufuss's dishware and tea services, we'd have been able to pull one over on grandma. Blaufuss, who taught stenography for over twenty years, has since 1990 been transcribing complete works of German literature onto fine porcelain, using the shortest of shorthand and the finest of liquid gold. Text is matched to site with great wit—Wilhelm Busch's tales of Max & Moritz's nasty pranks could not look more elegant on an octagonal plate; Eugen Roth's poem about a ruined tea date appears on a sugar substitute dispenser; a pair of earrings contains an entire Mozart aria. Echoing the tactic of 1960s conceptual artists, Blaufuss offers collectors a certificate with the poem or story written out in long-hand; this is necessary even for those who can read shorthand, since Blaufuss takes what might be called "decorative liberties" with her patterning. What else to do with a skill like hers in an age of digital recording devices, computer voice-recognition software and other dictation technology? As artists as diverse as André Breton, Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Rirkrit Tiravanija have long known, when something stops being useful or falls out of fashion, it finally becomes available for the production of fine art. 7/4/12 1:57 PM



**062 • Jörg Doering** Why paint? Why pick up brush and watercolor and oil in this day of point-and-shoot cameras, when a dozen pictures can be made as easily as one? The paintings of Jörg Doering offer one possible answer, a personal but ultimately universal one: love. Not love for painting, though that of course must exist as well, but love for certain subjects. For many years Doering walked



through the countryside with a traveling watercolor set and heavy paper on his back, ready to pull out his kit whenever a certain scene struck him. The lively results—especially a forest daubed with ultramarine and marigold—recall the mottled landscapes of Cézanne and the vibrant ones of the Fauves. But hill and dale stand not a chance against the lure of young grandchildren, and Doering's subjects grew young and cute and even a little bit cheeky.

An oil portrait of Adele, aged three years, captures the mesmerizing intensity of a toddler, as well as this particular girl's soft unruly hair and big brown eyes. Now, how about some paintings of the children frolicking outdoors? 7/4/12 2:31 PM

**063 • Helmut Laurentius** The subjects of Helmut Laurentius's hazy paintings recede and advance, cluster and disperse. Make no mistake, however. These are not realistic paintings by any means, but pulsing, abstract compositions of marginal colors and odd shapes formed with scrawled brushstrokes. Laurentius terms his style "emotional seismography," and art for him is in part a channel for feelings that accumulate during his work as an art therapist for handicapped, autistic and epileptic children and teenagers. In one modest canvas, part of a series, a layer of flesh-colored paint rests patchily over a blue ground; scratches in the surface trace veins but also scars; red dashes could be fingernails or blood. A simple pastel drawing centers on a source of light, but horizontal lines—bars on a window, literal or metaphorical—stand in its way. A rectangular canvas brimming with darkly vibrant forms indicates total saturation, and the difficulty, even the impossibility, of ever sorting it all out. Making sense of things, after all, isn't exactly what painting does. Not quite, not almost, but something.

7/4/12 3:10 PM



**064 • Christiane Hamacher** The anointed saints of today's digital revolution include Steve Jobs, the smart phone and the microchip. If Christiane Hamacher's icons were ironic, these might be some of the subjects she would have chosen to portray in her finely wrought miniatures of egg-tempera and gold leaf on wood. But Hamacher is not an ironist and her project is meant to counteract the unstoppable, pixelated hyper-speed of today with the slow painting of slow subjects in a slow style. To date she has completed five golden pictures, of a mallard duck, a brown hare, a ladybug, a robin perched on a branch, and a snail stretched halfway out of its shell.

All of these modest creatures are local to Hamacher's hometown of Kassel, and each sits with uncanny self-possession on its luminous ground. Or tries to—gold leaf overtakes bunny fur a tad too much, and bunny shrinks, trapped in its own background. But the ladybug must be the most elevated of its kind, and the duck, oh the duck. One wouldn't even dare offer it a piece of fresh bread, never mind an old crust. With wings pointed together like hands clasped behind a back, eyes aglow and staring intently forward, one webbed foot ahead of the other, this waterbird deserves all the quiet contemplation its religious, anthropocentric treatment suggests.

7/4/12 4:04 PM



**065 • Robert Eikam** The history of modern art is full of grids, from Jean Arp and Annie Albers to Piet Mondrian, from Paul Klee all the way forward to Peter Halley. Often this history is understood as a history of pure abstraction, but this is a misunderstanding, and a 2008 canvas by Robert Eikam offers a lesson

in how grids relate both to reality and to picture making. Some three dozen squares and rectangles arrange themselves in an irregular pattern, medium next to large, small within smaller. Violet abuts teal, navy edges on the palest of yellow, other underlays taupe. Some shapes and colors separate via sharp pencil lines or thick, sketchy strokes, others through negative space or color contrast. This may sound uniquely formal, the stuff of pure abstraction, and it is in part, but it is also how maps are arranged.

And Eikam's painting is not just an elegant arrangement of geometric shapes and pastel colors and fine lines, but also a view from above, of garden plots and small buildings, of roads and fences, and even, perhaps, the life that pulses in between.

7/4/12 4:32 PM



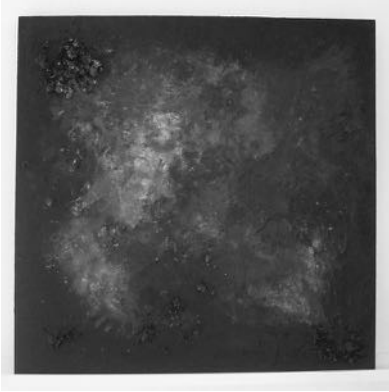
**066 • Pallavi M.D.** Art critics do many things. They pass judgments, give historical context, translate vanguard concepts into layperson terminology, even wax poetic. Rarely do they attempt what might be described as a synesthetic practice, where one mode of expression is given shape in another. That, however, is exactly what this art critic feels compelled to do, having witnessed a performance of classical Indian music by Pallavi M.D., called "Discovering the raga of the space that I will be singing in." Given the sculptural suggestiveness of the title, this art critic feels comfortable proceeding as such, and not in the mode that might be expected from an art critic writing about synesthesia, which ought to bring up the work of Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian avant-gardist who believed that music translated into color and vice-versa. I believe this too, but Pallavi M.D.'s singing did not induce a rainbow vision for me, rather it produced a series of marks, a graph that began with white space, then the lightest of dots, then a series of dashes, a rolling wave. Suddenly, a burst of lines that shattered everything. Then short verticals, one after the other, then the dashes, the dots, the white space. For a drawing like that, I could offer a conventional critique. But for a startling performance like Pallavi M.D.'s, I can provide only an imaginary work of visual art in return.

7/4/12 5:06 PM





**067 • Marianne Dittrich** Imagine five aimless youths and one nonprofessional counselor standing around a small table on which a canvas has been laid. Paint and brush in hand, they go at the canvas without any plan, one dripping paint here, another adding glitter there, a third tossing dried rose blooms everywhere. Green meets yellow meets blue, and the whole gets muddied in a layer of black. It sounds like a mess, and it is—and this is both absolutely fine and uniquely honest. It might even be useful. The painting and another like it are the vision of Marianne Dittrich, a curious twenty-something Kasselite who believes in experiencing many things firsthand. They are most appealing laid out horizontally, when their position recalls their making, and they come alive with the imagined memory of young people who have far worse things to do than paint a picture doing just that, painting a picture. The Process Art movement taught us that the work that goes into making an artwork can be even more important than the final result. This lesson can be easy to forget when looking at painting, but it bears remembering, especially when those who did the making did it for reasons other than aesthetic experimentation or representational accuracy or art historical commentary. 7/4/12 5:37 PM



**068 • Martina Stuber**

In his 1966 film “Blow-Up,” Michelangelo Antonioni follows the obsessive undertakings of a photographer who believes that by enlarging and enlarging a photograph he will solve a mystery. He doesn’t, of course, because closeness doesn’t necessarily equal knowledge. Martina Stuber explores something similar in her microscopic views of tropical plants. Her photographs of palms and agave are shot at such close range

that the subjects lose their identity as flora and become something far more ambiguous, even misleading. The spiny ribs of a cactus crystallize into dark, icy rivers; five thick, dewy cactus stems join like the crease where fleshy thigh meets round belly; the pale fronds of a palm tree part like scraggly grey hair revealing raw skin underneath. The bodily connotations of flowers are nothing new, but rarely are they so unsettling. Stuber, unlike most photographers who use a zoom lens, does not believe that the nearer one gets to a subject, the nearer one gets to some truth. On the contrary, getting too close can mean a total breakdown of communication and understanding. And even vision—witness the pixelation of tree bark and cactus stem, if you can identify them. 7/7/12 2:12 PM

**069 • Yongho Moon** One theory about dreams is that they are the resting body’s time for processing the sensations and experiences of an active day. What, then, takes place between dreams? Yongho Moon envisions it as a series of nightmarish trailers for an unsettling life, from start to finish. In the short video “Between Dreams,” the head of a young South Korean man undergoes a series of mildly violent transformations: first painted black and white, it is then multiplied and divided, bruised and beaten, garishly made-up and, finally, aged to a dusty, wrinkled state. Life happens so fast to this person that he fails to respond in any way, always maintaining the same deadpan expression. Things just happen to him. And still, if the soundtrack is any indication, his heart continues to beat—even as the whiplash of electrocution whirrs its startling buzz. 7/7/12 2:40 PM

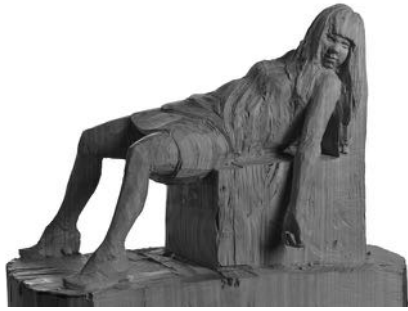


**070 • Frank Rossbach** An old photograph of an empty floral-patterned dinner plate, arranged with fork and knife, lies torn in pieces on a linoleum floor and is rephotographed, its pieces put back together again like a simple puzzle. A red rose, a silver ring, a stopwatch and a photograph of a woman in a bathing suit stand frozen in a block of ice, slowly being melted by a man who holds a lighter. Frank Rossbach presents these two images as contemporary allegories, one political, one personal. The first, titled “Nu is putt,” which means “Now it’s broken” in childish German, stands as a sign for the continuing disaster that is the world food situation, which is to say the world hunger situation, which is to say the situation in which there is in fact enough food to feed the world’s citizens, except that it is



so poorly distributed as to prove fatal to millions. The second image is titled “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” a term for therapeutically working through the past, in this case a romantic relationship gone sour. Allegories succeed to the extent that viewers can puzzle out their meanings, and so they must tread a fine line between obviousness and subtlety. In past centuries, artists and writers could depend on common religious, mythological or cultural knowledge. In Rossbach’s compositions we have global disaster and psychoanalysis to go on, and that’s not, alas, so far from the truth.

7/7/12 3:14 PM



### 071 • Anna-Katharina Henning

At first it seems that the young women carved by Anna-Katharina Henning have grown naturally into their nubile forms. But these wooden sculptures are as deeply incised, as heavily chiseled as is the very category of teenage girl, a state of being that didn't exist before it was invented in the 20th century, just as the idea of childhood was itself theorized into being in the 18th. A girl doesn't just sprawl out on a chair, skirt open, legs akimbo,

head turned druggedly to the side. She gets drunk, or stoned, or even Ruffied. A girl doesn't just stand looking down at her smart phone, legs in contrapposto. She wears the position self-consciously and checks her device under social pressure. Buffeted by marketing, movies, fashion, social networking, drug culture and even the legal system, girls-of-a-certain-age are a certain way, though they are hopefully also in part utterly themselves. This, perhaps, may be why Henning chose to leave her linden sculptures in a state of finish just short of smooth. Handle these girls carefully, or you might get a splinter. 7/7/12 3:57 PM

**072 • Stefan Pollmächer** Stefan Pollmächer's "Torso" is a modest sculpture of a woman in flight, caught mid-jump in an elegant dance. Stefan Pollmächer's "Torso" is a fragment of a body, its head and limbs lost, its corpse contorted in anguish. Stefan Pollmächer's "Torso" is a knob of wood, the root of an agave plant found on a walk through the Tuscan countryside. A small found object mounted on a metal rod in a block of marble, "Torso" is all of these things and many more besides. The root's texture ripples like a draped gown and clatters like metal armor. But mostly, its rough, abbreviated figural form recalls the sculptural ruins of so many cultures over so many centuries. So many mythological creatures and religious deities blown up and burned, broken and looted, traded and sold. Here, at least, with the help of Stefan Pollmächer, one has found new life, and the original plant won't miss it. 7/7/12 4:24 PM



### 073 • Christopher Porcarelli

When someone is using a musical instrument, we say that they are playing it. That doesn't necessarily mean that they are being playful with their flute or guitar, however. Christopher Porcarelli aims to change this situation by designing experimental acoustical objects that necessitate playful interaction in order to generate sound. The sculptures are uniquely odd and restrained, like what might happen if the structures in a children's playground got together with a minimalist sculptor and produced some noisy offspring. And like both those parental figures, they entreat and reward curiosity and interaction. Step here, push there, shake here, wobble there—chimes and rattles and cymbals clang in response. Multiple users can even figure out, experientially, how to create certain sounds and even tunes intentionally. A funerary dirge these will not produce, but frankly, there's enough sad music out there in the world already.

7/7/12 4:57 PM



**074 • Vid Jeraj** Vid Jeraj's Croatian name sounds in English like a play on the abbreviation of disc jockey—DJ. This is a fortuitous coincidence for a forensically inclined journalist-cum-saxophonist-cum-scholar-cum-radio host, who produces multiplatform performances that attempt to synthesize the connections Jeraj has discovered between European and American jazz music with the major works of literature and poetry of the 20th century. He calls his hypothesis "Dzezologija," which loosely translates as Jazzology, and believes it links Charlie "Bird" Parker and William S. Burroughs, Julio Cortazar, Toni Morrison and his kin with Milan Kundera, among others. Rather than present these discoveries the classical

way, Jeraj goes all intertextuality, just like his subjects, intercutting lecture with recorded music, live sax, audience participation and the sticking up of Post-it notes. This is part of his larger point—the way that a piano trio works may not be so far from Freud's id, ego and superego, as Mingus himself put it in his autobiography. And just as jazz has infiltrated spaces far and wide, so too has Jeraj, whose hybrid practice gets him gigs at the library, the jazz festival and the art exhibition, too. 7/7/12 5:47 PM

**075 • Christina Grenzebach** Fragments of navy blue and warm red array themselves haphazardly across the page of a newspaper in an untitled print by Christina Grenzebach. These layers upon layers of triangles and parallelograms do not illustrate the words that lie underneath them, nor do they form a picture in and of themselves. What they do instead, together with other works in the



same series, is demonstrate one of the founding principles of communication, namely the relationship of language to speech act. Language is a limited system made up of a finite number of symbols. Speech is what happens when an individual person appropriates that system, transforming it into a unique act of signification. With one chiseled block of wood and some paint as her system, Grenzebach is able to create an endless number of artworks, on newspaper pages, large sheets of colored paper and small pieces of plain paper. Each is differently transformed by the act of printing, although the printing block remains

the same in each instance. But ink changes, layering alters, and the hand of the maker herself—a trained graphic designer, who ought to know about going beyond the limits of sign systems—can't help but act uniquely every time.

7/9/12 1:43 PM

**076 • Doris Baum** Is there anyone in our crowded, commercial, hyper-networked cities who possesses a spirit of utter goodness? Once, if mainstream Christian religion is to be believed, there was Mother Mary, and there were saints, too. In her meticulous, painterly oil portraits of disabled women, Doris Baum may have located the place of purity today. One woman, hand to heart and an angelic smile on her face, sits astride the golden throne of her wheelchair, a ring of bright stars arrayed around her head. A woman with Down Syndrome, robed in a royal blue gown and blazing with an aura prettier than the setting sun, accepts a shimmering tiara from a flock of birds. Baum quotes Old Master and religious rhetoric in all their seriousness, but shares a sense of humor and play with her human subjects. A triptych of an old woman in a gold halo makes this clear, as the halo slips from crown to nose to neck. As Baum paints it, the woman is doing all she can to stifle a wicked giggle. 7/9/12

2:31 PM



**077 • Ruth Müller** Every time a large black or red sphere appears in the center of a white canvas, Robert Motherwell comes to my mind, as does the Japanese flag. This is neither good nor bad, but rather one of the ways that painting works today, at least on an art historically trained eye. In between Christmas 2008 and New Year's Day 2009, Ruth Miller created a bold square picture with just this echo, though for her the circle stands as an allegory for the world turning from one year to the next. Another between-the-years picture deploys the wide black brushstrokes of a Franz Kline with similar

intent, adding in the tall silhouette of a genderless person, who gazes with great fortitude at the expressionistic scrawls. Miller's personal twist on Abstract Expressionism, which also includes the addition of painted photographs and collaged paper, feels like a re-interpretation of a historically macho American practice. What, they seem to ask, if Pollock and company had been a little less sure of themselves and a little more open to stories and scraps? What if they had been 75-year-old women? 7/9/12 3:05 PM

**078 • Ernst Iben** On a street in Venice, the façade of a palazzo glimmers with red, blue, green and yellow windows. The building next door pulses marigold. An armless mannequin dangles in a glass coffin, suspended from a turquoise, aqua and navy blue sky. A skull lies on the cobblestone street. In an age of constant digital manipulation, it's natural enough to assume that this picture was constructed entirely in Photoshop, but Ernst Iben shot it with a camera and did nothing more than heighten and alter the colors. (After, of course, finding it all in a window glass.) In

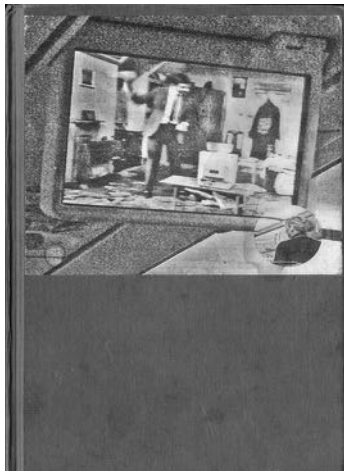


some pictures Iben goes further, using other digital effects, but in the more restrained of his works he recalls and updates the Surrealist practice of photographers like Eugène Atget. Using nothing more than a camera and a good set of walking feet, Atget was able to find and photograph the marvelous in everyday life. Iben, like Atget before him, makes fantastical use of shop window reflections and the busyness of city centers. But the home can be a place of marvels too, as Iben reveals in a short video of his living room, which also functions as a dining room, art studio, band rehearsal space and cabinet of curiosities for his collection of eyeglasses, colored bottles, camera equipment, string instruments and more. In this one small space, like on the Venice street, all kinds of objects and colors collide, and life is the richer for it. 7/9/12 4:11 PM

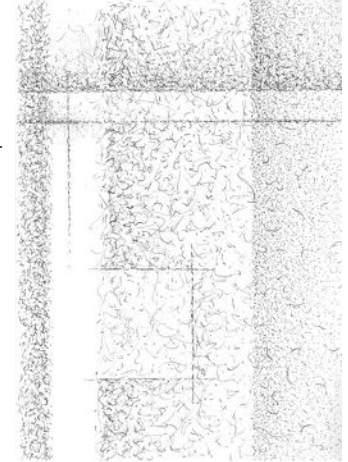
**079 • Jeffrey Doering** Take one former high school science teacher, add a masters of fine arts degree, and what do you get? The equation is a simple one—just two elements—but the result is a rather unique opportunity for exploring some of the physical properties of the universe through inventive, participatory public sculpture. Jeffrey Doering, who taught math, science and Shakespeare in Los Angeles and Sweden before deciding to pursue an arts degree focusing on iron and steel in public space, has set himself up to be a crackerjack creator of science museum exhibits. His recent “Strange Attractors #1” demonstrates the principle of chaos. Participants climb a stairwell, push on an enormous pendulum, and watch while it swings for five or so minutes. Every swing is different since every push is different, however minutely. Doering jazzes this up with a ring of bright blue argon gas and some nifty mirror work, bringing the art museum and the science museum together—again. Remember, in his former life Doering also taught Shakespeare, and in the Elizabethan era art and science had not yet been become the separate institutions that they are today. 7/9/12 4:40 PM



**080 • Nguyen Duc Huy Nam** Nguyen Duc Huy Nam is a young Canadian artist who lives in Berlin and keeps a simple journal, bound in grey paper. He keeps it regularly enough that a new, always grey volume comes into being roughly every six months. Inside, Nguyen details his preoccupations. They are notably familiar: buy groceries, attend meetings, do studio chores. These lists are occasionally interspersed with more seemingly creative endeavors, like café sketches and philosophical musings on his art practice as a painter. Hand-drawn maps appear frequently. The word “wedding” jumps off a few pages—he is getting married soon. “To be honest, this doesn’t sound so interesting,” reads page three of the journal, but that’s just Nguyen second-guessing himself. It actually isn’t true of the journal as a whole, or the rare situation of being given someone’s private journal to look at. Well, sort of. People’s everyday lives are actually quite boring when you get down to the details, and the revelation of this as the fact of a young artist’s life is a divulgence of great honesty. Movies and books too often dramatize the lives of artists, pretending that only the most eccentric, romantic personages can produce art. It’s a lie. Most have day jobs and families, and they buy groceries and cook dinner and clean house and have doctor’s appointments just like the rest of the world. Perhaps more artists ought to share their journals, and bore us a bit, and then show us just how astonishing can be the work that is produced out of such so-called normal lives. 7/9/12 5:22 PM



**081 • Roland Timmig** Roland Timmig creates dense, geometric watercolor paintings whose hard-edged, interlocking shapes recall those of Piet Mondrian and Peter Halley; in a muted but festive palette reminiscent of Paul Klee; and with a molecular structure that is all his own. Watercolor paintings aren’t usually discussed in such terms, but the minute, repetitive marks that Timmig uses to build up his pictures suggest such scientific terminology. This dense layering demands close, careful looking for full appreciation, and it is easier to recognize in his ink sketches. Here, pen dots and squiggles accumulate across blank paper to form just about anything, from the all-over hairiness of handmade paper to the weave of a tartan textile and even the shadowy lines of a face. The history of picture making is really a history of mark making, no matter the landscape, portrait or abstract painting that is the end result. Pointillism taught us this. Impressionism taught us this. And Roland Timmig teaches us this as well. 7/9/12 5:50 PM

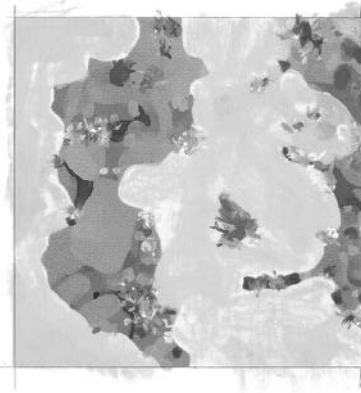


**082 • Yvonne Quittkat** In Yvonne Quittkat’s watercolor and acrylic paintings, common elements join together to illustrate particular allegorical messages. A hand represents mankind, twisting scarves signal the unknown, glass spheres denote never-ending knowledge, trees are nature. Titles indicate the way in which Quittkat intends these symbols to function, and mostly they do. Hand, sphere, scarves and tree compose a barren, magical landscape about the need to pass on



knowledge. But the hand’s blue tint colors it more otherworldly than human, and the sphere it holds could be the crystal ball of a fortune-teller, swathed in twisting scarlet scarves. This may not be quite the kind of knowledge transfer Quittkat envisions. A second picture, “Quo Vadis,” finds a bare, bent tree growing atop a cluster of tall rectangles, a human hand reaching from one toward the robotic arm of another. A story of industrialization gone somewhat awry, the painting succeeds in the places where it becomes truly painterly. Allegory is important, but so is the medium in which it is communicated. When robot arm and human arm

share the same grey palette, when rectangles stand as tall as skyscrapers but give their façades over to the play of watercolor, meaning and medium are one. 7/11/12 1:55 PM



**083 • Reiner Kupfer** In Reiner Kupfer's gorgeous aerial view of a densely planted flower garden, pale pink rose bushes edge on sky blue pools of placid water, while clusters of mint and sage attract magenta birds with bright orange beaks. Or maybe Kupfer's vibrant, hazy composition offers a mesmerizing close-up of the floral print on a woman's dress. Or perhaps it is a sketch of something else entirely. No matter. Kupfer applied gouache and pastel to a small piece of square paper, scanned it into a computer and printed it out, and the result is an oddly attractive composition that doesn't quite know if it is hand-

made or machine made, if it is pattern or representation, if it is illusionistic or abstract. A landscape gardener could use it for inspiration as easily as a tapestry designer, and somehow it owes as much to Impressionism as to Pop Art and Paint-by-numbers. Eventually Kupfer plans to repaint the work at the scale of two by two meters. What will happen then remains to be seen, but it ought to be.

7/11/12 2:25 PM

**084 • Gudrun Finis** Fashion models, Native American Indians, ancient kings, everyday dancers, and men in traditional Arab dress populate Gudrun Finis's works on paper. Various made with pencil, wax, oil stick, image transfer and collage, these busy compositions treat their millennia of subjects not exactly all the same, but not with systematic difference either. Brightly jeweled colors decorate some, earthy neutrals others, and still more get a combination of both. Ironically, the most substantive moments happen in the least substantial places, where Finis transfers found images incompletely, allowing them to float in and out of visibility, subject to the vagaries of time, history, art and even the news cycle. That, at least, is how a cluster of Persian Gulf men appear, just barely there in black ringed headdresses, standing near other men dressed in business suits, their whereabouts unknowable because Finis has mostly left them out. A painted ground of off white and browns suggests a sandstorm as much as the most banal of boardrooms.

7/11/12 3:02 PM



**085 • Winfried Olischläger** How to communicate the essence of a landscape? Must a picture include as many details as possible, as accurately as possible? Should it give an overall sense of the geographic situation or aim for a picturesque composition? Ought the specificity of foliage be noted with brush or with collage? In two very different types of drawings, Winfried Olischläger attends to these questions. The first is a numbered sketch, done with graphite and water-



color pencil on paper. A wall, grasses and trees populate the foreground, a small village the middle, a mountain range the rear. Three leaves pasted to the page testify to the naturalistic intentions of the image and suggest that it was drawn on site. That's all fine, but you won't feel any particular need to visit this place. It may be precise, but that doesn't make it extraordinary. In fact it keeps it ordinary. Olischläger's jazzy digital images of similar countryside vistas, by contrast, sing with the most extraordinary of melodies. Trees riot in fiery red and bold blue. Hillside dazzle in violet and teal. The wind stirs bushes into whorls of olive, mixing purple with green. A meandering orange path leads from here to there, and that is the path to follow.

7/11/12 4:07 PM

**086 • Sissel Tolaas** It is a cliché to refer to the smell of money, but like most clichés, that particular one is rarely taken literally. But why not? Sissel Tolaas suggests doing as much in a perfume she made as an art multiple in 2004. The scent is titled "his name was EYNOM," and though Eynom might sound like a mysteriously appealing Norwegian man, he is really just money spelled backward. But what does this man smell like? Is he particularly male? Does he reek of money or its opposite? To find out open up your wallet, take out the bills and coins, lift them up to your nose, and have a whiff. A fifty Euro note gives off a musty odor, while a handful of Euro cents possess a tinny aroma. Tolaas's simple tester tube, depressed onto a nearby wrist, actually smells of paradox: fresh but harsh, piney but chemical. It could work on a man or a woman, but might not really appeal to either. That isn't quite the opposite of money, but neither is it so far.

7/11/12 4:32 PM







**087 • Sylvain Bourdoux** Once upon another time in art history, nudes were presented in the guise of mythological figures and that made them okay. A naked prostitute was a big no-no, but a naked Athena was just fine, thank you and your libido very much. Exotic ladies in a harem were kind of all right, too. History paintings were the best, but portraits of important people were also plenty important. In his smooth, blocky painting of a naked black man in an empty library about to lace up his winged running shoe, which perches on a Louis-the-whatever bench, Sylvain Bourdoux might be skewering and updating this history. I

write “might be” because he does not wish to divulge the title, wanting to know if his allegorical composition communicates without words. Fair enough. What it conveys is something about how athletes have become the celebrated personages of today, and how much more of a chance a black man has of becoming important if he takes the form of an athlete. And how much the mind is ignored in favor of the body in this scenario, regardless of the quality of the mind. There might also be something here about locker-room politics, and the unspoken homoeroticism of sports. The man’s penis hangs dead center in the picture, after all. So, Sylvain, what do you say? What’s it called? 7/11/12 5:11 PM

**088 • DOE Projekts** What does justice look like when it is actually working? There is the justice that takes place in a functioning court system, like the official one that in Kassel is located on Frankfurter Strasse in the Amtsgericht. And then there is a kind of justice that is much more difficult to locate and to practice, the kind that might be able to make some sense of apartheid or the AIDS crisis as it has overtaken lives and livelihoods in South Africa. Both these kinds of justices find themselves at work in the same space right now, in the form of “just us at work,” an unlikely art collaboration between DOE Projekts of Chicago (Deborah Adams Doering) and Keiskamma Art Project of Hamburg, South Africa (Veronica Betani, Cebo Mvubu). Every Monday to Friday, from 10 am to 5 pm, the collaborators sit like regular office workers at their desks in the Amtsgericht lobby, doing their work. Although their tables curve and they work with needlepoint and thread, the work they do is as slow and cooperative as conventional justice is when it works. It is also as creative, necessitating the invention of new systems and ways of communicating. It is fully transparent and open to discussion. And though the results, in this case a series of individual tapestries, are each worthy of consideration, they are just barely displayed. There is always, always, more work to be done.

7/11/12 6:02 PM



**089 • Henriette Herbst** Over the course of 25 paintings and 14 photographs and almost 10 years, Henriette Herbst traces a path from then to now. She calls it “a journey to now.here,” and it begins in dark, wounded canvases that use thick, expressionist brushwork to create tortured spaces where distressed figures hide. When they try to speak, their harsh, questioning words just barely cut through the surface. And then something changes. Fast forward from there—then to now—here. Colors intensify, black and grey contrast with neon orange, hot pink and mint green. Surrealist scenarios of the kind

Dorothea Tanning might have painted if she had been born in a post-industrial era emerge. Melancholy solitude opens up to blue sky and polychromatic factories, where tiny little black figures undertake daring—or desperate—adventures on tightropes and in bubbles that end badly. Companion photographs, shot through an iPhone hipstamatic filter, give a surprisingly romantic view of power lines and highways, plus some odd headshots of wild animals. It’s a long, strange trip that doesn’t trod expected steps, but then, neither does life. Making sense of it doesn’t need to actually make sense. 7/14/12 1:59 PM

**090 • Alice Torossian** Water will save your life, but it can also kill you. As supple as it is strong, as nourishing as it is destructive, it provides a powerful metaphor in difficult times. In four midsize acrylic pictures, Alice Torossian doesn’t depict water so much as perform it with a paintbrush. The largest of her “Wasserbilder” shudders under the crash of an enormous frontal splash of white and pale turquoise. Another is deluged in the foam and spray of a total whiteout, flecked with fragments of refuse. Two more—the best of the group—swell and

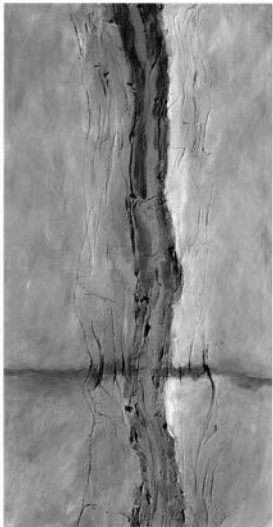
crash with the multihued blues and greens of rough waves. Drowning under all these layers of water—and paint—bits of lettering and spots of pictures rise and ebb. These are the remnants of the pharmacy advertisement boards Torossian used in place of canvas, and the effect is not the additive one of collage but something more destructive, akin to erasure and fatal submersion. But after the flood usually comes some form of calm, whether a calm achieved from the violent acts of water or of painting only the artist can know. 7/14/12 2:32 PM



**091 • Lona Rothe-Jokisch** It has become common to refer to the work contemporary artists do as a “practice.” But long before process art and performance and various other modes of making brought attention to the fact that there is more to life than an end product, Zen Buddhist monks evolved a multi-disciplinary practice-based art form called Sho-do. Calligraphy, as we know it, remains a rich tradition today. Lona Rothe-Jokisch does not speak Japanese, but this hardly matters since the medium is not primarily about language but rather a potent combination of poetry, painting, meditation and even dance. A student of Kazuaki Tanahashi, she has practiced the swift, slow strokes of the ink brush for over a decade, and has lately created a banner of multicultural significance. It reads “Stadt im Wandel,” which means Transition Town, an international citizens movement that recently gained a Kassel chapter. Written in Japanese characters in a style evolved over millennia, by a German psychotherapist for an international movement focused on cultivating the inner self in order to improve the outer world—what could be more unexpected, or more perfect? Perfect, that is, in the sense of Wabi-sabi, that other Japanese aesthetic tradition, which recognizes perfection only in the imperfect. 7/14/12 3:12 PM



**092 • Miriam Hartmann-Roesch** The epic modernist struggle between the figurative and the non-figurative plays itself out in Miriam Hartmann-Roesch's oil paintings alongside that other fundamental crusade, the one recounted as the founding story of Christianity. Which is the more resonant expression of suffering, of humanity, of life itself? Is it a muted wash of color that clusters and thickens into a pulsing vertical core of fiery orange rimmed in blistering black? Or is it blaze of red, yellow and black from which emerges the vision of a white man, boldly outlined, his hand raised to show a bloody stigmata on his palm? Hartmann-Roesch, who is as deft with an abstract brush as with a figurative one, began with the former but ended with the latter, having concluded that a vivid stripe was not enough to communicate a specific message. In this she is both right and wrong, according to history—art history as well as religious history. Barnett Newman's “zips” have been interpreted to symbolize everything from the birth of the world to man himself to nothing at all. Precise in their message they are not. But then, neither is religious imagery, if the wars of Biblical interpretation are to be heeded. 7/14/12 4:03 PM



**093 • Peter Rudolph** One plus one equals two, and Victorian endpapers plus Roy Lichtenstein splatters equal Peter Rudolph's “Fantasiebilder.” This is both true and not entirely so. The first is the content of a tattoo inscribed on the artist's left bicep, but it indicates something both more complex and more simple than usual. The same might be said for Rudolph's paintings, which he makes using tools of his own invention. Those generated by dragging blobs of color across a board using a wavy blade result in gorgeous, all-over explosions of marvelously graduated rainbows. Those produced by pushing paint in a circle with a pivoted palette knife resemble blinding discs in motion. The paintings feel fast, as if peacocks were running or record players turning. Artists usually spend immense amounts of time generating work that seems speedy, but the novelty of Rudolph's paintings might be that his tools necessitate an unexpected directness. In order to have the effect that they do, Rudolph must paint them in less than 15 minutes flat. Though you can't even begin to guess how he paints them, unless he describes the tools to you, they are, in fact, exactly as fast as they seem. 7/14/12 4:39 PM



**094 • Marcel Prins** If Duchamp had been a bit more generous with his not insubstantial sense of humor, his ready-mades might have looked a bit more like those of Marcel Prins. If Brancusi had had a sense of humor at all, then his totemic combinations of raw materials and potent shapes might have as well. The Dutch artist Prins assembles whale bones, wood bits, walking sticks, wire baskets and empty wine cases into sculptures that look and act like naughty descendants of the modern masters. In that, they come by their witty sense of play and excellent sense of form honestly. Prins appreciates a perfect wooden ostrich egg as seriously as anyone, but he has the contemporary gumption to balance it not atop a marble plinth but instead on a shaky stack of oddly shaped timber. As for his sculpture of a cow that has run out of milk, it might just be one of the more inventive uses of a cut-up broomstick, wood floor slats, a chair back, a metal coffee table base and a little stool. Picasso's bicycle seat bull would have given it a second look. 7/14/12 5:14 PM





### 095 • Laura Link

Bodies are really kind of gross, when you get right down to it. Skin dries out and cracks, fingernails thicken with fungus, mouths blister, blood coagulates, mucus runs. How to paint this in a celebratory, personal, honest and contemporary fashion? Laura Link does so by using canvases stretched into the special shapes of round and oval tondos; by applying shimmering gold leaf as freely as smelly toothpaste and crackly rabbit-skin glue; by picturing a giant toe alongside grotesquely large almond cookies and a kitschy pink flamingo. Are these immense icons or weird fetishes? Perhaps they are a bit of both. Link's *piece de résistance*, after all, is a painting hung on the ceiling à la Sistine Chapel, only here the heavens are created from the fleshiest of disembodied colors, and the whole is decorated with rays formed from lollipop sticks and catheter tubes. A church for the body this is—in all its pleasure and pain. 7/14/12 5:50 PM



096 • Steffen Töppler “Tween pop star” is a phrase that strikes fear into the heart of many a parent. Music videos and celebrity culture are presumed to have nothing but ill effects on the easily influenced stage of development that is girls between the ages of ten and twelve.

And yet, “Nur ein Wort,” a video that features four tween girls singing their hearts out against the backdrop of their hometown, could not be more charming, witty or, ultimately, age-appropriate. Produced by Steffen Töppler, a teacher at the Freie Schule Kassel where the girls are students, the video placed sixth in Schoolo-



vision, a primary-school version of Eurovision that is in its fourth year. Marie, Rahel, Lotte and Leonie beam sincerely at the camera while tooling around Kassel on Konrad bikes, bopping at the Ottoneum, the Bergpark Wilhelmshöhe and the Rathaus. The girls visit past and present Documenta sites, but art plays even more of a role here than the mobile phone camera reveals. The girls take a lesson from Conceptual art and use text as a prop, visualizing song verses with a cartoonish “OH!” cushion and handwritten signs held up against the local “Ich-Denkmal” public sculpture. Even Joseph Beuys has a part, as one of the thinkers upon whose ideas the Freie Schule was founded twenty years ago. His democratic, participatory notions may go some ways toward explaining the extraordinary guilelessness of “Nur ein Wort,” which forms so much of the video’s appeal: the students of the school created it themselves. 7/16/12 2:02 PM

097 • Malte Stiehl Urban signage, bricks and tiles, the side of a barn, or a pot of geraniums on a window grate are subjects as banal as anything quotidian can be, which is to say that they are also as extraordinary as anything quotidian can be.

They’re not new to art, at least not since Walker Evans made them the object of his photographs way back when, but they’re what we’ve got. What we’ve also got, as Malte Stiehl evinces in his life-size oil paintings, is a barrier between them and us:

metal fences that grid our cities up into squares and rectangles. Stiehl paints the grids first and fills them in second, square by square. Seeing this materialized in thick oil on canvas, its modernist thrust becomes clear. The grids of Piet Mondrian and Annie Albers are there, but especially those of Agnes Martin. Stiehl’s gold and grey view of three bicycle railings is what the late Minimalist might have painted if she’d stayed in the city instead of escaping it for the deserts of New Mexico. 7/16/12 2:41 PM

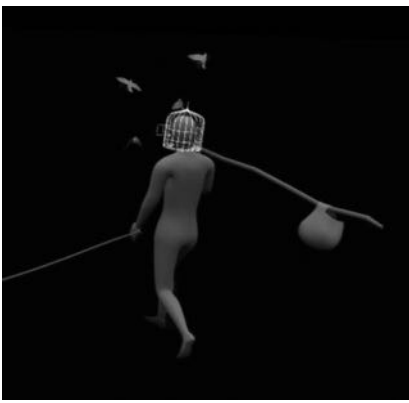


098 • Halina Langmann-Wierzbowska The femme fatale is a familiar and ancient archetype. There was once Jezebel and Salome, and now there’s Nikita and Catwoman. She’s been written, drawn, filmed and cartooned, but mostly by men and for men. Enter the seductive, mysterious women of Halina Langmann-Wierzbowska’s paintings. A redhead bares her voluptuous body, half-gowned in a sultry red dress, her long hair partly plaited, partly down. Her unnervingly symmetrical face stares from the midline of the canvas, eyes too big to ignore. Poppies surround her, as if in warning. Another poppy-woman, painted with black lines that recall Egon Schiele’s inky Salome, gazes gaunt and gorgeous, her body that unbearable combination of ultra-thin and buxom. She’s dressed in a little black number that’s painfully see-through.

Finally, Langmann-Wierzbowska presents Coco Chanel, a femme fatale for femmes. The First Lady of Ballsiness wears pearls heavy with paint and an expression that’s flirty, hard and sure. Her red lips let just the faintest little smile out, while holding tight on a cigarette. But where’s the smoke?

7/16/12 3:16 PM





### 099 • Bernhard Kaeser

Philosophy rarely comes in the form of a sexless cartoon mannequin, but surprise can be an effective part of delivery. Bernhard Kaeser presents a three-minute video starring a featureless human—whether one or many, it's hard to tell—carrying a hot pink hobo stick, who lives in a world of dismal illusion. Under alien domination, the poor sap walks in circles, tied to a stake by a leash. On his head is a

birdcage, and the blue birds circling his head seem unfriendly, to say the least. That's a nod to Surrealism, not Walt Disney. The fellow wears a path into the earth, six feet deep, and eventually drowns in a sea of red. Funny stuff this ain't, but cartoons have been serious since long before Art Spiegelman drew Nazis as cats and Jews as mice. That, however, was about history. Set in an empty land with blank people, Kaeser's is a fatalist view of the past but also the present and the future. No wonder it runs on a loop. 7/16/12 4:04 PM

**100 • Jess and Ben** Participatory art does not have the longest history, but it does deserve respect. Public artists like Suzanne Lacey and Krzysztof Wodiczko have spent decades building a sincere means of working with individual populations to make artworks of great depth and challenge, that can be as welcoming as they are confrontational. Jess and Ben, the hosts of the teen television show *Kika Live*, each created a work of participatory art for the purpose of this review. The presentation makes a comedy of serious art, but is nevertheless worthy of critical consideration. Nearly everything is, in the end. Witness *Madonna Studies*. Anyway, Jess's "Mach das Leben bunt," which means "Make life colorful," consists of her and passersby splattering a long roll of paper with a rainbow of paint. The finished product looks not unlike a cross between Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio's "Industrial Painting" and *Sesame Street*, but it has none of the criticality of the former and none of the genuineness of the latter. For "Freudomenta," Ben dressed up in a painting suit and put himself at the disposal of Documenta visitors, who could decorate him using any of the supplies in his suitcase—ribbons, duct tape, markers. They did this and more, adding materials of their own courtesy of a coffee spill on his arm, dirt on his head, and a bike tire tread on his rear. What's of interest here is the aggressiveness of the acts, and the fact that Ben insists they were done while he was wearing the suit. He also says that the "Freu" in "Freudomenta" means happiness, but if that isn't a Freudian slip, you'll have to hit me on the head with it next time. Please. 7/16/12 4:40 PM



**101 • Marion Winter** A cross between Matisse and Cézanne could go many ways. Jazzy, blocky landscapes...voluptuous, ashen women...or, alternately, the landscape-women that are the subject of Marion Winter's acrylic paintings. The



palette and beauty are Matisse's, the sketchy, fragmented landscapes are Cézanne's, but the combination is Winter's own. Sometimes the scenery is imagined, and sometimes the women. Sometimes the scenery is known, and sometimes the women. It might be post-disaster Fukushima or post-reunification Rügen, the murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkowskaja or an unknown paternal great-grandmother. Or something completely invented, though imaginations are known to concoct what they do out of what they already know. And they know much more than we are consciously aware of, through exposure

to art and literature, the nightly news, and the lives of friends and family. Marion Winter's imagination knows enough to be able to paint moving portraits of despondent women, their eyes dark, who live in a land she's never even visited.

7/16/12 5:17 PM

**102 • Ulrike Lemke** The hair on our heads is dead, but it is also a living part of our bodies. It doesn't hurt to have it cut, but we often cry anyway. Samson wasn't the only one who feared losing his power along with his locks. Most of the rest of us do too, whether we're young girls trying to grow long, silky hair like our dolls or older ones trying to decide what it means to go grey. Ulrike Lemke knows this and more. A hairdresser for thirty years, she has for the past five collected the clippings of her day job and assembled them in small wooden vitrines. The process and materials are simple enough, but the effect could not be more loaded. Identity, aging, health and beauty rule our lives, and here they are, bundled into boxes like reliquaries. Some are twisted neatly, like balls of yarn, while others are crammed in, pressed up against the glass. Human yarn was a marketable product of the Holocaust; full heads of hair fall from chemotherapy patients. Flowing golden locks attached to pretty faces sell shampoo, but these locks aren't flowing anymore. 7/16/12 5:43 PM



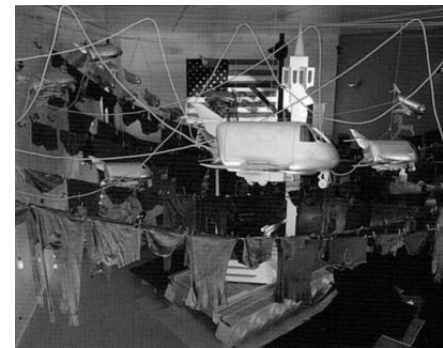
**103 • Helga Schade** Neon perspex may be one of the more underappreciated materials out there, though fortunately not by Helga Schade. After many experiments in color and form and line, the artist decided to use a blow dryer on strips of plastic 2.7 x 0.2 meters long. Neon yellow twisted like this, electric blue coiled like that, and red, amber, hot pink, peach and plain each took on their own unique version of frozen curving motion. Bright and abstract, the sculptures look at first like a flashback to the 1980s—but one that’s absorbed the lessons of site-specificity and relational aesthetics, a combination that could not be more of the moment. Transparent by nature, the perspex takes on its surroundings, becoming one with the gravel or wood underneath it, the trees or people behind it. Open by nature, Schade invites viewers to rearrange the forms, as if they were building blocks. Grouped in a large cluster, they tangle even overwhelmingly. In small groups and even individually, they’re unexpectedly bewitching, stained glass windows gone out all night to the disco, dancing alone and in pairs.

7/18/12 1:59 PM



**105 • Christine Müller**

A square ink drawing by Christine Müller, daubed with amber and azure oil pastel, bears the title “It is chicken, it is eggs.” This is not a direction my own thinking would have gone, were I to have looked at the picture free of its influence. Chicken and eggs are about the order of existence, but on some level they are also about mothers and children, and since the shape at the top of Müller’s drawing vaguely resembles a playground slide, I suppose that’s one place to follow the title. But titles can also be ignored at the viewer’s discretion, and sometimes that’s a risk worth taking. The maybe-slide could also be a figure, its eyes downcast, its long striped scarf dragging behind. Having found one figure, more begin to emerge. The largest stretches and leaps, arms flung out, body sketched in watery grey. Another raises arms up and out, lifts a leg, and seems about to spin. The most colorful one leans and pivots. This is all a fiction, of course, but as a fiction it suggests a dance on paper and in that perhaps a unique mode of choreography: find compelling but vague drawing, interpret with body, enjoy. 7/18/12 3:53 PM



**106 • Dragan Lovrinovic**

Artists can make sense of the world by either maximalizing it or minimizing it, by making chaos an unbearable whirlwind or by reducing it down to a single butterfly. In “Remember Death,” Dragan Lovrinovic does our Post-9/11 world one better, deluging viewers with a jungly, horrifying assemblage of all the parts of this history and then some, and all in the space of one room. War is everywhere, of course. The vilest of Internet images

decorate a small gallery, and those who can bear to look closely will find an unexpected intermingling of children’s culture and war culture. Bert meets Osama, Ronald McDonald gets a Hitler moustache, and everyone gets a big, fat penis. If that isn’t childish, who knows what is. The theme carries over into sculptural form, with candy-colored grenades, Barbie airplanes-turned-bombers, and a tank-cum-minaret, built out of thin wood like an oversize toy model. A generation of kids on all sides have grown up under siege, but worse, a cabal of men, George W. Bush among them, took the world as their playground, and didn’t play nice. Death may be the simplest fact to remember in all of this. 7/18/12 4:41 PM

**104 • Jacob Garbe** What does it take to tell a compelling story today? Renowned young novelists like Jonathan Safran Foer and Nicolle Krauss weave their narratives from multiple points of view, at multiple points in time, in multiple voices. To follow along, the reader must be a practiced multitasker, who can text and talk and walk and chew gum at the same time. My grandmother, who has been reading books for 80 years, can’t hack it. She would capitulate on first sight of Jacob Garbe’s “From Closed Rooms, Soft Whispers,” a story told through digital collages, text projections, interactive reality software and a mechanical wooden cabinet with six drawers that open to reveal various objects and bits of text, but only after being knocked six times. And that’s okay, because this story isn’t for her. The tale of R., G. and B., three childhood friends now in their early 20s,

is for people of that age and younger. They will recognize the soul-searching, the yearning, the sweetness and the aimlessness of the individual characters; their big, bold takes on life; their combination of innocence and experience. And they will know how to read a postmodern story like this, by holding together many small stories at once, and by using devices and bodies as one. 7/18/12 3:09 PM



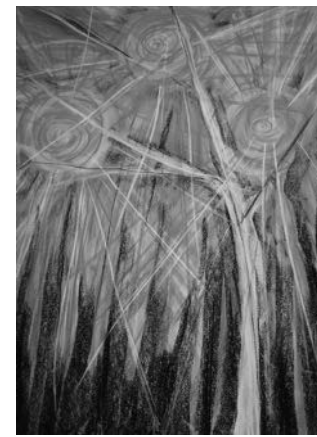
**107 • Gerhild van Rooij** A mangled plastic orange utility fence, a shredded plastic bag caught on a chain link fence, a threadbare patch of silk wall-paper, a lipstick kiss on a piece of paper, and the sliver of a face peaking through a veil—these elements make an eccentric bunch. They are each the subject of an artwork by Gerhild van Rooij, but they are perhaps not as unconnected as they may first seem. A designer who works with graphics and in the theater, van Rooij has an affection for the tiny, forgotten detail and the way light can catch it and make it visible. Her most striking image is the orange fence, whose flexible grid wavers delicately, a graphic design found on the street. But ultimately it may be silence that quietly links these works together: the silence of a closed mouth, of the face behind a mask, of the barriers that stand mutely in our paths. 7/18/12 5:15 PM



**108 • Wilfried Krien** Everybody and their brother-in-law have posted a cute picture of their dog on the Internet. The one Wilfried Krien found happened to have a particularly doleful expression, perhaps because the rubber chicken held in its paw was dead. Rubber chickens are like that. Krien took this photo, which is of no interest on its own, and paired it with the sound of a dog barking and the text of a poem he wrote. “Fleisch” is a brutal consideration of lust and longing, with all the tension between human body and edible body that the word implies. The combination of photograph, text and sound is an ongoing interest of Krien’s and the subject of an extensive website he created called “Brain Train.” More than any individual works here, what’s worth noting is the openness of Krien’s experimentation, which proceeds in various formats. In the aforementioned section, Krien pairs found Internet photographs with poems and sounds to create dissonance.



In another, he arranges artwork of his own creation, poems and sound, for harmony. And in a third, viewers select numbered images, texts and sounds, a process almost Cageian in its embrace of randomness. If it succeeds in making the dullest of pictures interesting—including a large number of mountain bikes—then Krien will have achieved a rare feat, along with his participants. 7/18/12 5:55 PM



**109 • Sybille Mende-Michel** Generating a picture from a series of words is a less obvious task than it might seem, given the plethora of illustrated books available for purchase in most bookshops. Or rather, it can range from the simple to the complex, depending on the intentions of the artist, as well as her choice of text. Sybille Mende-Michel, who works with watercolors, acrylic, oil, pastel and paper collage, selected poems by Bertolt Brecht, Reiner Kunze, Paul Celan and others. But how to translate something as open to interpretation as a poem into line, color, texture and form? The

possibilities range from the metaphoric to the literal and many places in between, as they do with the reading of poetry, which is never composed in just one register. Mende-Michel chose to accompany certain poems with realistic renderings of their own place settings and scenes, and while these relate the mood and vision of the verses, the most inspiring of her pictures find her working less as a literal translator and more as a spirited interpreter. This is the case with her companion pieces to Celan’s “Speak, You Also” and his “Threadsuns.” Here modernist poem meets modernist picture, in substance and style. The rays of the three suns in Mende-Michel’s pastel shine light, like hope, down into the grey-black depths—as in the poem, but also in their own way, too. 7/21/12 2:06 PM

**110 • Hans-Joachim Bauer** Hans-Joachim Bauer, a land artist who lives in Homburg but has traveled to Iceland, Patagonia and soon the Antarctic, has seen global warming and done something about it. In “La Conferencia de Clima,” he and a team lassoed a small iceberg with great difficulty and used a motorboat to tow it one kilometer closer to the Serrano Glacier in O’Higgins National Park, from which it had broken loose. In “Klimakonferenz 2.0,” he exerted immense effort on a stationary bicycle to try and get away from the melting Jökullarlon Glacier behind him. The absolute inadequacy of these exertions is comic but only in the darkest sense, standing in as they do for what Bauer sees as humankind’s utter incapacity to do much to halt the progress of climate change. That almost no one can actually see these acts of art as they happen seems fitting, considering that 90 percent of the world’s glaciers are melting as you read this, and you aren’t seeing it out your living room window. Almost no one sees it—except, that is, for the melting glaciers themselves, a few scientists and indigenous populations, and the occasional endangered species. Let’s hope they like contemporary art, though it will surely be as small a comfort as Bauer believes most anti-warming efforts to be. 7/21/12 2:50 PM



**III • Frank** A three-part canvas recently created by Frank is so thick the paint is still wet. Streaks of blue and white cover a black ground. Eleven red hearts form a circle, with two more at the center, for a total of thirteen. Except they aren't meant to be hearts but strawberries, strawberries that can vote. Well, a strawberry with the vote ought to have a heart, if it's going to make a sound decision. The idea comes from an interview with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, the artistic director of DOCUMENTA (13), although she didn't really mean that fruit—and dogs, too, for that matter—ought to be granted rights, but rather than there is much for people to learn from all kinds of species. Some of the artists in her exhibition believe this too, hence the local organic food kiosk by And...And...And.... Frank, who works as a photo portraitist, reveals his own enthusiasm for this inter-species idea not just via a canvas whose feisty, bold gestures communicate enthusiasm, but also through the presentation of a half-eaten basket of ripe raspberries from said kiosk to the critic herself. 7/21/12 3:25 PM



**II2 • Sergiu Matis (with Nefeli Skarmea & Ladislav Zajac)**

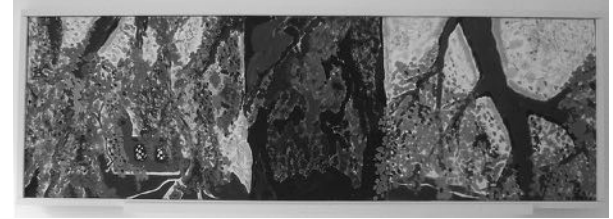
In "Doom Room," choreographer Sergiu Matis attempts to turn a one-hour dance performance inside out and backwards. The dancers Nefeli Skarmea and Matis himself oblige, sometimes literally. Off-stage behavior appears on, and one dancer meanders by the wall whilst the other stretches in the middle of the floor. The ground on which the dancers dance rises up in the air by 20 centimeters, but

since it can't really, they jump and fall, jump and fall, until they can't jump anymore. Props are used wrongly, so a simple folding chair becomes a mask and then a porthole to be stepped through. The frontal mode of traditional theater is turned around, and the dancers not only present their backs to the audience but Skarmea reverses her clothes and tops it off with a mask on the back of her head. The effect could not be more awkward, even for her capable body. A less capable body, however, could not manage to pull off such awkwardness. It's a climactic moment and also a representative one in terms of avant-garde work with the body and with process. The audience is moved but exhausted and confused, having been presented with a series of deliberate failures over the course of an hour. They don't know quite what they've seen—but one day they might. 7/21/12 4:07 PM



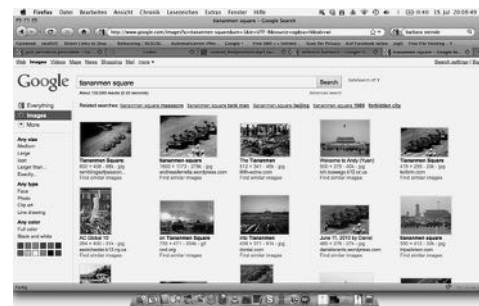
**II3 • Oliver Parzany**

Over 20 years ago, when Oliver Parzany was still in high school, he covered a panoramic canvas with shades of aqua, flax and aubergine, picturing a verdant landscape of overhanging tree boughs, hazy blue sky and an old church in the background. He gave up painting soon after, but his parents treasure the picture still. And well they should. Anything a beloved child has produced is a thing of worth, and all the more so when that thing is not only beautiful in and of itself but a thing that reveals beauty in the world. Parzany's painting is such a thing. The tree's rich purple trunk fills the center of the canvas and the flowering branches nearly obscure the view, as if the painter had stood underneath an immense old tree and depicted the world from inside its damp, magical, protected space. But artworks age and change as they do, and now, 20 years on, the painting has also become another kind of thing, a bittersweet one, containing unfulfilled potential, the seeds of what might have been. 7/21/12 4:32 PM



**II4 • Manuel Washausen**

Anything can be made cheaply in China, or at least almost anything. Manuel Washausen is currently testing the limits of this global manufacturing paradigm by colliding it with state censorship. Having contracted with a German company, an image of Washausen's design is being hand-painted by an anonymous Chinese artist for the discounted price of 180 Euros, shipping included. A Western artist outsourcing the production of his artwork is not new, but what is new here is the content of that artwork: a screen shot of Washausen's computer showing a Google search on the topic "tiananmen square,"



plus tabs on the Palestinian curator Jack Persekian, something called "Laden" (which given the political nature of the desktop, suggests Bin Laden), and more that I don't recognize and am not able to Google right now. The brazenness of Washausen's gesture has nothing to do with issues of originality and reproduction, but rather with the fact that political situations like those surrounding

Tiananmen or, more recently, Ai Wei Wei, are presented in a radically different fashion by Google China. What will register in the mind of the Chinese maker who paints the picture for hire? Will the picture itself register some of this difference? And, ultimately, will the picture ever really make it out of China and on to Germany, where it is due to be exhibited in September, having made it through every level of censorship, from the personal to the corporate to the governmental?

7/21/12 5:15 PM



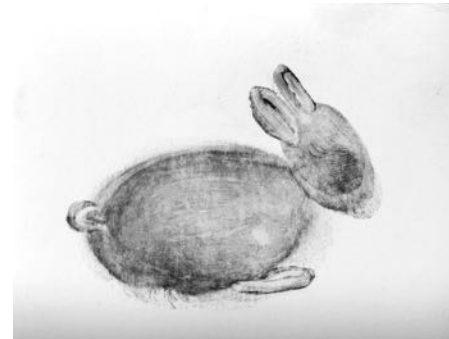
**II5 • Frauke Frech/Living Room** During the TransEuropa Festival 2012, five artists took up residence in a house in Hildesheim for six weeks. Frauke Frech, Miguel Bonneville, Gunnur Martinsdottir, Edvinas Grin and Vaida Brazuinaite had not made work together before, but after moving in they became a collective called Living Room. What resulted was a cross between reality television and relational aesthetics, “Big Brother” meets Rirkrit Tiravanija. For “Prologue,” they opened their garden for five hours but did not let visitors into the house, where they went about their regular business. For “Dinner,” five participants were chosen based on their answers to three questions and invited over for dinner. In both cases, the frustrated audience eventually took matters into their own hands. When the temperature in the garden dropped uncomfortably low, and people needed a drink or a toilet break, signs were written and held up against the window, and the artists acquiesced. When the dinner proved too commonplace, the guests caused an uproar and demanded more. The artists, interested in working with the audience and in testing the flexibility of the human as a material, must have been pleased. What, by contrast, would they have done if no one had shown up, or if the visitors had just left? 7/21/12 5:57 PM



**II6 • Dietmar Hensch** When an artist paints a landscape, who is the real artist—nature, who created the flowers and fields, the mountains and sky? Or is it the painter, who captures something of the countryside’s essence in a different medium? The third in a generation of landscape artists, Dietmar Hensch has evolved a radically direct practice that positions nature as the artist, both of the environment and of its representation. A sheet of paper covered in watercolor and left out in the rain becomes a picture of a wet day in the countryside, and also the literal remains and effects of such a day. In this way, frost paints frost and sun paints sun. But nature cannot be considered the sole author of these works, each of which is as time-based, process-oriented and unique as is she herself. Half the credit at least must go to her patient collaborator, and to his paradoxically self-effacing and conceptually bold methods. That, of course, is none other than Hensch himself. 7/23/12 1:56 PM



**II7 • Nora von der Decken** Nora von der Decken’s “Rabbit 7 or 6” looks like a simple if blurry drawing of a bunny. And it is that, fluffy tail, pointy ears and all. But it is also the kind of magical picture that behaves a bit like the thing it represents. Rabbits, for all that they are small, cute creatures beloved by children, are also mysterious beings. They appear and disappear at will, hopping in and out of the bushes when least expected. They’re not here, then they’re here, then they’re



gone again. Von der Decken’s “Rabbit 7 or 6,” for all that it’s a still image, has had a parallel life. The artist used a colorless oil bar to make imperceptible thumbprints on a piece of paper, added details using a Q-tip, and then, with a dusting of pastel powder, brought it into visibility. The lack of focus is because the bunny is about to run off again. They’re like that, bunnies. It takes a mischievous artist to get one on a page, even for a second. 7/23/12 2:29 PM

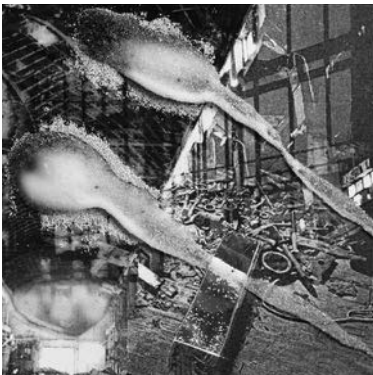
**II8 • Gisela Kirsch-Thürmer** Tsunamis, banking crises, deforestation, gentrification, tornadoes, bombings—the subjects of Gisela Kirsch-Thürmer’s paintings read like a disaster list of current events, which in fact they are. Such dismal topics suggest an equally dark palette, but in fact many of Kirsch-Thürmer’s canvases glimmer with sunny jewel tones. Their compositions ought to be burdened with the weight of the world, but instead ample angles and abundant overlays suggest hope in the midst of chaos. Admittedly, the application of paint could be denser, to carry the weight of the artist’s substantial convictions, but the pictures would do well as illustrations for essays on any of these contemporary situations. Yet they are able to hold their own as well, on account of the symbiosis that exists here between intention and message, but also because of the unfortunate familiarity of global plight. 7/23/12 3:09 PM



**119 • Rose Marie Gnausch** For two days in 2009, some eight hundred elephants gathered together on the border between Greek Cyprus and Turkish Cyprus to make an unusual stand for peace. Over the next two years, other large groups of elephants have paraded through the Brandenburg Gates in Berlin, assembled in the town of Oswiecim, and been in other sites besides. They are not real elephants, of course, but stuffed toys, papier mâché sculptures, scarves, paintings and other representations donated by local children and adults, artists and laypeople, at the request of Rose Marie Gnausch, who has single-handedly decided to change the symbolism of the largest living land animal from luck and wealth to peace. As a socio-political initiative, her gesture could not be more disarming. What border guard or city official could refuse something as genial as a toy elephant? At the level of the symbolism itself, it is more challenging than it at first seems. Though they are some of the oldest and wisest animals on the planet, elephants have over the past few hundred years seen their lives greatly diminished by human development. As an intelligent, sensitive matriarchy with long memories, their way of life would be the most profound of models, were it not nearly extinct. We owe them peace, more than they owe it to us. 7/23/12 4:07 PM



**120 • Willem Hamers** The global relocation over the past half century of most manufacturing industries from North America and Europe to East Asia has resulted in massive layoffs and a rethinking of labor. It has also left factories empty and machines unused. This situation forms the impetus for a series of mixed-media works on paper by Willem Hamers titled “Decline of Industrialization.” Modest, almost precious in scale, the forty-nine collages are as regular in their square size as something mechanically produced by one of these machines that no longer has a blue-collar person running it. Against the photographic backdrop of endlessly ruined industrial spaces, Hamers produces variations using materials such as acrylic binder, sand, foil and fragments of film. The effect is of further ruination, but one that implicates bodies in its unique, handmade quality. Most notable, however, is the unromanticism of these collages. Artists and real-estate developers alike see industrial ruins as potential lofts and restaurants and ateliers. Those won’t be built here.



7/23/12 4:42 PM



**121 • Joshua Goss** Joshua Goss makes objects out of metal and plastic that resemble hard-edged modernist sculptures and models of International and Prairie Style architecture. A series of five flattened triangles, horizontally bisected with vivid red stripes, cascades like a three-dimensional Frank Stella. Dozens of rectangular tiles, stacked in sprawling clusters, range

elegantly like Frank Lloyd Wright’s Falling Water house. Goss is not concerned with anything as recent as modernism, however, but rather with the kind of ancient geological processes that cause mountains to rise and strata to form and faults to open up in the earth. As an artistic analog, he subjects layers of iron and steel to pressure, cutting, heating and slicing, and sometimes juxtaposes them with colored plastic or clear Plexiglas. The precise results are as unpredictable as those of their geological inspiration. So why the modernist echoes? Stella was after something fundamental and provable with his stripe paintings, and Wright sought the essential—that’s not so far from nature after all. 7/23/12 5:22 PM

**122 • Anna Volmer** The same work done every day, the same people seen every day, the same places visited every day, can easily become a dreary, grey blur. Giving it all up and joining the circus works for some, but others, like Anna Volmer, must devise more practical methods for enlivenment. Here are two: take photographs of colleagues and local sites, put them through the computer, and transform them into segmented, vibrantly colored versions of themselves. The



resulting pictures suggest stained glass windows of the quotidian. Volmer’s second method is to paint small, luminous canvases with many dabs of oil paint, generating impressionistic abstractions that are sometimes dreamy, sometimes witty. Many hours must be spent to produce these works, but they can be done in the interstices of time and space of a regular life, and they can remake any part of that life, recognizable or abstract, human or divine.

7/23/12 5:52 PM



**123 • Jutta Gottschalt** The Surrealists were some of the first artists to recognize the potential of the outmoded, as they wandered through the arcades and flea markets of Paris, drawn by the magnetic power of slipper-spoons and ladies' gloves. The cycle of consumerism has only gotten faster since then, and more and more objects and spaces have fallen out of use. Some of these have been lucky enough to find new life in Jutta Gottschalt's multi-year project "Ein – Farb – Räume." But what to do with pickling jars and African masks, buttons and sea-shells, old stockings and stuffed toys? Gottschalt, who has a knack for creating a gentle sense of order out of potential chaos, chose color as her organizing principle, revealing along the way the endless shades of each color. Rooms of white things filled a shop that once sold coal. Black and white objects—stuffed dogs, soccer balls and, provocatively, many examples of printed, stamped and handwritten text—took over the interior of a framework house. Red stuff occupied an old SPD headquarters. Soon green goods will stock a former One World shop. Eventually Gottschalt hopes to recreate an entire house as a rainbow of rooms, and given the speed at which we throw away belongings and move on to the next objects of desire, she's certain to have plenty of material to work with.



7/25/12 2:03 PM



**124 • Carola Lee** Art can be many things. It records history or provokes; it captures a feeling or an action; it serves as a memorial or a moment of beauty. Often this is done with a viewer in mind, less for the artist than for the reception of the artwork. But some art is made for the maker, to help the maker move from one state of being to another. So what kind of art helps the most? The work of Carola Lee offers many options. Focused pencil portraits of her children and friends

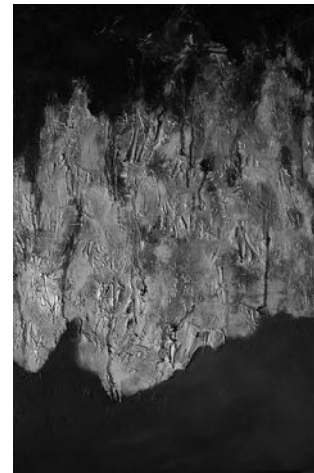
fill Lee's portfolio alongside those of celebrities like President Barack Obama, Michael Jackson and the new princess of Monaco. A stone carving, deeply worked, offers the back of a disconsolate figure, curled into himself and his own stone. Among this selection, a watercolor painting of a field stands out. The hues appear in three even horizontal bands: blue sky, gold wheat, green grass. No people appear to disturb the quiet of nature, where everything rustles in the gentle breeze of a perfect summer day. It's not an unusual view but it's a deeply calming one, as it must have been for Lee to paint, but also as it is for anyone to see.

7/25/12 2:37 PM

**125 • Violandra (Melanie Lemke)** Life can be exceedingly dull if you look at it from a straight perspective, all hard edges and brown hair, practical clothing and plain food. Melanie Lemke, who makes artwork under the name Violandra, offers a different vision. Under her paintbrush, the world goes bio-morphic and colorful, full of embracing figures whose bodies curve with the space around them. People become as sexy as their parts, strapped into blue high heels and tight black pants. Faces turn mysterious, masked with occult markings. Through her camera lens, pretty girls grow lavender hair and blue elf ears. Even vegan food presents itself deliciously, arrayed in sunbursts and covered in swirls of sauce. What is this universe of visual delights, so erotic and strange? Call it queer, call it alternative, but recognize that it is available to anyone who desires it enough. All it takes is an open mind, and maybe a little bit of face paint or fishnet.



7/25/12 3:09 PM



**126 • Marie-Pascale Devignon-Tripp**

Marie-Pascale Devignon-Tripp is a painter of many themes. Four pictures present four unrelated subjects: the burst of an explosion, the women's work of harvesting rice, the sinuous gestures of a Hindu temple sculpture, the romantic muck of melancholia. And yet, it is as if the very same palette has somehow travelled from canvas to canvas, applying ultramarine and indigo, apple green and eggplant, even shimmery gold, to each scene. There's a lesson here, about how an artist can use like materials to create unlike things. But there's another, too, suggested by the inevitable compare-and-contrast one can't help but make between such things. In three of Devignon-Tripp's paintings, color sits and drips and hangs on textures that the artist built up on the canvas surface out of modeling paste and a kind of moldable paper. In two of these paintings, gold paint shimmers among the other colors. The pictures come alive here—crying, dancing, exploding. Only the rice, which could have glistened in the bright sun, goes unharvested.

7/25/12 4:03 PM

**127 • Heidrun Katzenberger** In the 1950s, artists took palette knives thick with oil paint and applied them expressionistically to canvas, sure that their mark making would record painterly act and existentialist angst. Most stuck with radical abstraction, but some eventually strayed toward the figurative. Six decades and many artistic revolutions later, Heidrun Katzenberger can fill



the bottom of a large canvas with expressionistic scrapes and smears; the middle with the turrets and walls of the Wilhemshöhe Bergpark castle; and the top with wispy whirls and streaks. The bottom, of course, is also the castle's grounds, overgrown with long grasses and refreshed by a watery pond. The top is a windswept autumn sky. By contrast, the castle is also cluster of black and taupe brushwork. It's a way of painting not unlike having your cake and eating it too, and it perfectly fits Katzenberger's dreamy vision of this local landmark. 7/25/12 4:33 PM

**128 • Miro Ruff** Political portraits traditionally convey their subjects as figures of great power and solidity. Miro Ruff's etching of Yulia Tymoshenko, who was the Prime Minister of Ukraine from 2007 to 2010, does not do this. In "J.T.," as the small picture is called, the simply sketched face of a woman appears and disappears behind a surface of black and rose blotches. The fine lines of her hair, eyebrows and lashes, the dark shadow in her cheeks, pale against the mildewy spread of saturated ink. Ruff achieved this effect by printing the etching of Tymoshenko's visage without wiping off all the ink of previous pressings. It's a haunting, if fitting, portrayal of a woman who, having come to power during the Orange Revolution, has been falsely imprisoned by her successor under a fabricated scandal involving gas pricing. One hopes she will emerge soon, from behind the stain. 7/25/12 5:03 PM



**129 • Nuria-Berenike Paz** From a small golden picture gazes a young man, wide eyes green, full lips red, chiseled cheeks pink. He is utterly beautiful, and he must have been told so a hundred times. But in Nuria-Berenike Paz's small, meticulous painting of him, he floats above the vanity or coyness that such attractiveness can sometimes induce in a person. Sensuous and flecked with splashes and spots and drips of gold, he is part Klimt figurine. (He could even be more so.) With his head encircled by a faint halo, his tank top aglow, and his eyes cast down and to the side, he is part Russian icon.

But of what is he a saint? Of an ethereal comeliness, certainly, but the spiritual connotations of this type of portraiture suggest that he is pure in some way that is connected to that very exquisiteness. Does the painter worship him? Should we? Certainly someone is bound to, given his prettiness. Hopefully it will not induce a fall from grace. 7/25/12 5:29 PM

### 130 • Iris Endisch

The couple bend toward each other, the man's arm encircling the woman's waist, a whisper or a kiss about to be exchanged. Through the glass doors behind them, the lights of the party glow bright, the festive noises nearly audible. This intimate scene could have come from any romance movie or novel, except that it is a photograph of a statue taken at night



by Iris Endisch. We live surrounded by statues, of past heroes and mythic figures, most of them moldering and forgotten. With echoes of Pygmalion, Endisch uses her camera to bring them to life—like the stone angel who, captured against the lit interior of a restaurant, becomes the picture of a young man who's been locked out. Aphrodite metamorphosed ivory into flesh, whereas Endisch utilizes only light and contrast and color. Other scenes, of the Wilhemshöhe Schlosspark in autumn and shopping streets at night, reveal similar strategies but without the transformative effect of the statue photographs, where Endisch performs a magic more earthly but no less dramatic than Aphrodite's. 7/28/12 1:52 PM

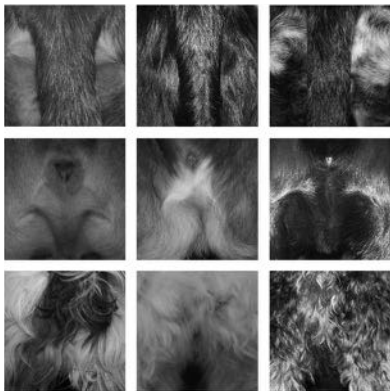
**131 • Sigrid-Anne Reuss** When John Cage defined art as purposeless play, he did not have the work of Sigrid-Anne Reuss in mind nor anything like it. But his idea finds a new resonance here, amid Reuss's painted ceramics, scarves and lamps.



The artist covers objects in every shade of every color, in spirals and dots, waves and stripes, and forms that don't yet have a name. The larger the object, the more space given to the free forms that fill it. The smaller the object, the denser its ornament, as if Reuss had decided to distribute decoration democratically, regardless of size. Together object and decor form an unexpectedly harmonious whole, the clashing of hues and patterns cancelled out by the good-

ness of plenty and the willingness to get along. The objects vibrate with pure glee but serve quotidian roles: mugs hold coffee, shakers distribute salt, lamps light bedsides, scarves cover necks and even heads that have lost their hair. Always there are more and more tasks to complete—how much the better with cheerful, generous companions like these. 7/28/12 2:35 PM

**132 • Sobo (Nadine Sobolewski)** Pictures of dogs are usually cute. Nadine Sobolewski's are not. For "9 Hunde," the artist arranged nine photographs of doggie behinds in a perfect square, tails on top, buttholes in the middle, fluffy rears on the bottom. Her perverse sense of order fits with the sociological-cum-aesthetic cant of the project, which in one sense is a study of attraction versus repulsion. Sobolewski scented each photograph with a different human perfume, from HUGO to Davidoff, and thus enticed viewers to stick their faces right up close to the most private parts of a dog in order to get a good whiff. People became like dogs, smelling each other's asses as a mating ritual, or just to find out more



about the unfamiliar creature on the sidewalk. The gulf between a dog's rear end and a human being's wrist or neck, however, suggests an experiment in the transformative ability of fragrance. Can a flowery or spicy musk render its wearer that much more appealing? Only those who had a chance to sniff Sobolewski's dogs would know.

7/28/12 3:50 PM



**133 • Ute Reeh** My young daughter spends a lot of time on my body, lying on it, embraced by it, hanging on to it. Adults do not often have the comfort and pleasure of this physical relationship, and even less rarely in a public place. The sculptures of Ute Reeh provide an exception. Her cantilevered bench could be a giant tongue or the crook of an enormous arm. Her soft, multi-pronged sofa resembles a cupped

hand with too many fingers or an upside-down jellyfish. Her stools seem a cluster of disembodied breasts or bellybuttons. Ranging in shades from pink to beige, the sculptures are bodies made for other bodies to do with as they please, to sit and talk, to lie down and stare at the trees, to curl up and fall asleep; to feel safe, relaxed and open to wonder. Needless to say, Reeh calls them "Therapeutical" sculptures. They ought to be prescribed. 7/28/12 4:24 PM

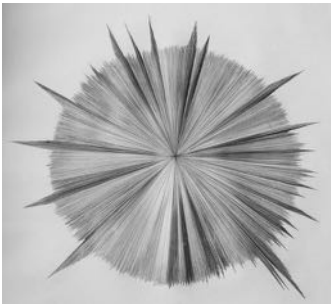
**134 • Margarete Schwaiger** Doctors began prescribing art as a treatment for psychological disturbances in the 1940s. What makes it so healing a process? And what makes some of that art so compelling that it has long been the object of radical collectors, the Surrealists among them? As good a place to look as any is the oeuvre of Margarete Schwaiger, who began painting 50 years ago in response to a childhood of abuse and continued through a lifetime of psychiatric care and the eventual estrangement of her family. A windswept seaside dating to her teenage years bears a heaviness at meaningful odds with its picturesque scenery. A floral still life blooms, perfumes and withers all at once. A swirling green and yellow abstraction renders chaos everywhere, in all of its density. Some 600 paintings later, Schwaiger says the artistic medicine cured her, and that she continues to paint more than ever before. All that, and it works on viewers of her paintings, too. 7/28/12 5:07 PM



**135 • SSB (Sabrina Soyer and Sacha Béraud)** Homes are built and homes are destroyed. This can refer to a physical structure, a house with a roof and a kitchen and a front door, or it can signify the human structure that through its habitation makes a house into a home. Both meanings of the word are relevant to a recent sculpture by the duo SSB, which echoes the work of Gordon Matta-Clark. Titled “Le Regroupement Familial,” referring to the juridical process whereby families separated by emigration are reunited, it consists of a photograph of a house in Los Angeles that sits next to a construction pit. Printed large and cut up into fifty equal pieces, the black and white photograph was reassembled on a wooden structure like the pieces in a puzzle. A darkly playful gesture, it suggests the way individual families were pawns in the real estate game that led to the American housing crisis. The back of the sculpture reveals a small, still projection of the artists’ own home, with the original photograph being printed in their comfy living room-cum-darkroom. The sculpture itself, built of 2x4s and with a pitched side, looks like part of a gabled roof. Whether of a house under construction or demolition it’s hard to know—an ambiguity that alludes to the fragility of home. 7/28/12 5:59 PM



**136 • Birgit Schübelin** Artists are good at thinking and great at feeling but lousy at sports. It’s a cliché, but at least it explains the lack of art concerned with representing the physiological in action. Enter Birgit Schübelin, on her road bike, having recently completed a cycling marathon. The artist wears a polar training computer around her rib cage in order to measure her heartbeat during activities ranging from sleeping to watching a dance performance to cycling up a mountain. This data forms the basis for starburst pencil drawings whose radius corresponds to beats per minute and whose repetitive mark making is an exercise in itself. The largest are as tall as Schübelin; in their immensity, they burst with a force analogous to the amount of energy exerted by the body in the corresponding activity. The drawings could have been horizontally plotted like a graph but instead are round, mixing the measurable with the immeasurable, creating a representation of the body that is at once based in hard data and, like all art, its ineffable interpretation. 7/30/12 2:00 PM



**137 • Bärbel Lenz-Horn** A streaked, clumpy monochromatic oil painting would seem to have nothing at all to do with a brushy, windy watercolor of an East German landscape. Except, that is, for the fact that they were painted by the same person. Bärbel Lenz-Horn’s “Weiss” could be creamy toothpaste or cake frosting



applied to a canvas, it could be the most freely applied wall plaster ever. Striations run vertically and horizontally only to be smoothed over, each swipe of the palette knife leaving a ridge or glob of excess paint. Her Güstrow landscape, by contrast, applies blue

and grey and white, green and brown and orange, here and there, until the picturesque view of a forested lake appears. But however dissimilar, the paintings have more than just their maker in common. An exploration of color and texture explains at least part of how they came into existence. The other part, much more critical, has to do with aesthetic openness, with a willingness and an ability to see the world in such radically different ways. 7/30/12 2:30 PM

**138 • Alexandra Maria Grossmann** Alexandra Maria Grossman has painted a delicate forest scene, verdant and moist, sunlight falling gently through the canopy overhead. She has also pictured the Twin Towers on fire, a starving Sudanese child, Mother Theresa, a threatening thunderstorm and a frothy green tsunami. She has drawn family and friends, loving portraits of her two daughters, inquisitive ones of herself, and dark ones of her husband, with whom she has complex relations. In Grossman’s hands, pencil, watercolor and acrylic serve to depict the beautiful and the horrible, the personal and the political. In its breadth of subjects, her art attempts to register the entirety of the world—even, surprisingly, the fantastical. After painting apartheid in South Africa, it helps to have a few graceful fairies around. 7/30/12 3:01 PM



### 139 • Helene Babka v. Gostomski

Helene Babka v. Gostomski is a painter of big, boldly colored, forcefully brushed canvases. These convey hazy scenes that could be glimpsed through the rain-splattered windows of a fast-moving car. Or through the squinting eyes of a person taking in a view too bright or too windy to handle with fully open lids. "Suffocating in Yellow" features every shade of it plus blue and orange, green and brown besides. The colors come in patches, overlaid with jagged scrawls. It does not feel particularly smothering, but that likely depends on the viewer's relationship to the dominant hue. "Forest Clearing" is indubitably what it claims to be, with its palette of leafy greens and cool shadows, calm blues and flowery yellows. Trees stand, grasses spread, a pond sits and the sky floats overhead. But Babka v. Gostomski has also applied some blue amid the trees, and crimson too. Are they fire, mirage? It's possible, but absolute identification is besides the point in canvases such as these, rich as they are in ambiguity. 7/30/12 3:55 PM



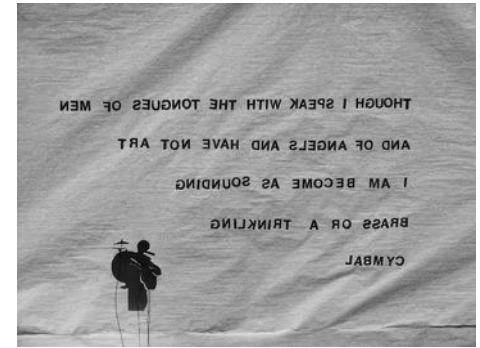
**140 • Ina Schoof and Ana Baumgart** Somewhere in the Saharan desert, two young women ride on the backs of motorbikes driven by dark Moroccan men. This is not the picture of romantic freewheeling exotic experience that it sounds. The bikes travel round and round a tight circle, at the center of which tumbles and

twists a large white net, part fishing device, part children's crawling tube. The women, who knotted the net themselves, drag it around between them. They are Ina Schoof and Ana Baumgart, and in "I guess you don't know me 05," they spent eleven days in an endless expanse of sand doing something not at all like the site-specific land art of past desert-

bound artists. Their gestures look whimsical at first, but eventually the crackling audio of the two-channel video presentation becomes impossible to ignore, its buzzing more ominous than the mere drone of an engine. The light absurdity of their game darkens with each distortion of the net. In a vast landscape of sand and not much else, mirage transforms the inanimate into the animate, the playful into the sinister, a net into something tortured and left to ruin. 7/30/12 4:30 PM



**141 • Martin Dege** Certain visitors to the Critical Art Ensemble hut at the back of the Hauptbahnhof last week found themselves staring at a blank, papered window. The patient were eventually rewarded with a glimmer of something, a small light that illuminated a brief text and a figurine, one bit at a time, over and over again. The show came courtesy of Martin Dege's "One-Man Band, Song of Songs and Shadow Play," though the text was a riff on Corinthians 13 and the puppet was a montage of the artist's face and a multi-instrument kit. Part Plato's cave and part minimalist children's theater, the effect was of something being revealed through shadows, something both serious and absurd, secretive but important. What was it? Only those who were curious enough to enter the hut where Dege made magic happen with cut paper and a hand-held spotlight would know. 7/30/12 5:07 PM



**142 • Fritz Laszlo Weber** Ten sheets of white paper hang from the double-height ceiling of a narrow gallery. Some are so long they remain half rolled up on the floor. Surely the thousands and thousands of words printed on them in 12-pt Monaco font are important. These are scrolls after all, the bearers in times past of royal decrees. Are these the pronouncement of our kings now? They are not. Fritz Laszlo Weber printed them out verbatim from the End-User License Agreements of major software programs. Now, perhaps, is your chance to finally read the actual terms of the legal agreement you signed when you clicked "Accept" while installing the latest version of Adobe Acrobat. Alas, no, you didn't read it then and you won't read it now, not least because the only way to present such an interminable amount of legalese is by suspending it from floor to ceiling, and still running out of room. Weber himself, who works as a computer programmer, quit reading before he'd gotten all the way through the EULAs for Skype, Google Chrome, Apple iTunes and the seven others represented here. Back in the 70s an artist would have persevered and called it an endurance piece, but back then, calls were made on telephones, research was done in libraries, and music was played on an 8-track. Nothing was this endless and this frustrating except radical performance art. 7/30/12 5:38 PM

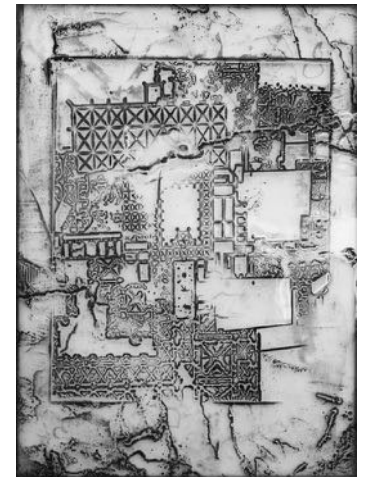


# August



**143 • Wolfgang Nickel** Stained glass windows have decorated churches since medieval times, telling stories and setting moods through the joining together of different pieces of colored glass. Wolfgang Nickel practices a relatively new technique wherein paint is applied to layers of glass and then fused to it in a special kiln. The effect entirely reinvents the tradition, creating a singular element in which ethereal designs seem to have grown organically. Nickel goes even further, borrowing from church blueprints in the patterns embedded in “Ways of Contemplation” and “Paradise is Everywhere,” as if a fusion had occurred not just in the glass but between the glass and its architectural context. Fragmented and layered, the motifs have none of the weight and permanence expected of the oldest of institutional structures. They are burned and faded, they are fragile, they are ruins. A church would have to be extraordinary brave and honest to hang these windows on its walls.

8/1/12 2:02 PM





**144 • Werner Jahn** Look all you want for the person in Werner Jahn's "Split Figure," but you won't find her. The tall, rectangular oil painting features gentle curves that suggest a female form, but turn the painting on its side and they become equally suggestive of a rolling landscape. Neither is definitively present; the human desire to locate something recognizable just makes them so. What is palpable are the colors red and blue, and the purple that they make when they come together, though exactly where that intersection lies is poignantly ambiguous. Jahn is something of a master of subtle gradation, generating slight shifts in hue that in turn cause the canvas to swell and to contract. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, to learn that he works as a chemist, though a philosopher

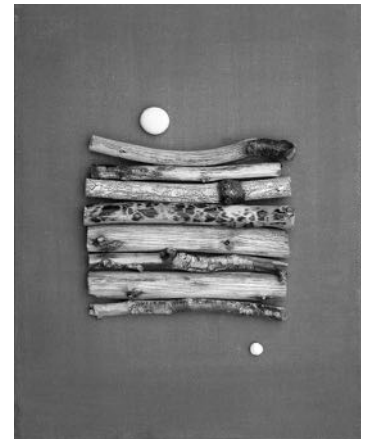
or a medical doctor would be equally fitting professions. The painting resonates with a sense of ontology, of the beginning of life, of the moment of creation—not so much of a human being as of a work of art. 8/1/12 2:26 PM

**145 • Anna Kwiatkowski** A photograph is not a painting. A painting is not a photograph. Neither is a person. That said, it can be interesting to compare all three. This is possible to do with the work of Anna Kwiatkowski, who for the past decade has been taking pictures of family and friends, as well as people met on the street. In the last year she has also begun to paint portraits, specifically of her young daughter. And then there is the girl herself, dressed in a summer dress and standing shyly in front of me. Each of these is in one way or another a creation of the artist, although it is also her attempt to allow the character of another person to show itself candidly. Issues of pixelation and bashfulness aside, it is the paintings that contain the most potency, the most texture, the most expression. They hold the viewer's gaze, staring back with clear, unclouded eyes. Even the strokes of taupe and teal paint that partially obscure the face in one canvas cannot contain the force of the girl inside. 8/1/12 3:00 PM



**146 • Sarah Jones** Sarah Jones is the name of an artist. "Sarah Jones" is also the name of an artwork. This was not always so. Once the artist known as Sarah Jones had a slightly different name, which was given to her and which she prefers to keep to herself. The one that she has chosen on her own, and which she willingly gives out is, curiously, one of the most common names that a girl from England could choose. There goes the cliché of originality that the avant-garde birthed. But the avant-garde is nevertheless extremely relevant here, since it was Duchamp who decided, with his invention of the ready-made, that intention and naming and context are what make an artwork an artwork. Duchamp's bottle rack is an artwork but other bottle racks are not, unless someone else decides that they are and presents them as such. "Sarah Jones" is an artwork but that does not mean that all of the other Sarah Joneses, or their names, or the concept of their names, are also artworks. Which is too bad, because it would make England a hell of a lot more interesting. 8/1/12 3:50 PM

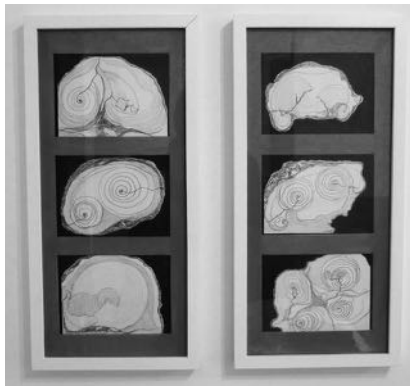
**147 • Christa Müller** Some people find a piece of driftwood and throw it back out to sea. Others recognize in it an appealing shape and take it home, putting it on a shelf alongside big, shiny shells. Christa Müller has an appreciation for the flotsam and jetsam of life that differs from these two more common approaches. Her practice of creative reuse, which owes a bit to Joseph Cornell and a bit to Jan Svankmeyer, extends from driftwood to metal hangers, and it is anything but precious. File shavings become the fish in a dried pod boat; sliced and colored mildewed wood grows like fruit on a vine. Titles are suggestive and witty, if sometimes too cute. Stacked pine needles, painted and split plywood, clustered sticks and dabbled stones are reimagined and recomposed from their former lives, which had all but ended, into new ones, which they could not have imagined in their wildest dreams. Fortunately for them, Christa Müller could. 8/1/12 4:30 PM



**148 • Diane Bingel** Photographs of animals typically fall into one of three categories: cute, heroic or scientifically accurate. A lion can be depicted in any of these ways, as can a squirrel. Diane Bingel's series of pictures shot in the Tierpark in East Berlin feature lions and squirrels, as well as bears, elephants and other creatures. Sometimes one or the other of them looks cute, heroic or scientifically accurate, but the best of Bingel's photographs do neither. A leopard stares out plaintively from behind a cage, the wire mesh a draftsman's grid over its face. Two longhorn cattle stare passively off in opposite directions, their bodies surrealistically forming a singular unit, horizontal bars generating the landscape behind them. In images like these, Bingel creates a new category of animal representation, one part aesthetics, one part ethics. Nothing could be more appropriate for photographing at the zoo. 8/1/12 5:07 PM



**149 • Ingrid Siebrecht-Lehmann** Four years ago, Ingrid Siebrecht-Lehmann found a small cutting of a tree while hiking in the Austrian woods. Contorted and curled in, it evidenced a damage sustained and an effort at healing. One end of the log did not move her but the other did, enough to generate a large body of drawings and paintings. Two things are remarkable here. The first is the kind of images that Siebrecht-Lehmann composed based on this inspiration. A square, deep blue painting with orange and green elements, some of them collaged from a dried palette, recalls the sectional of a brain. An acrylic study on paper could be of a fetus in the womb. A series of small drawings imagines the tree as if it had been sliced from one end to the other, picturing its internal structure. A piece of wood becomes a sentient body with organs, capable of producing life. The second thing to note is how Siebrecht-Lehmann, in creating new work out of something damaged, operated along the same restorative, generative principle as the log which so inspired her in the first place. 8/1/12 5:40 PM



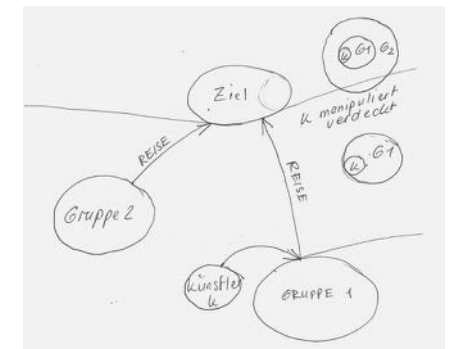
**150 • Ruth Höner and Elis Piehl**

Wire mesh has come a long way since medieval knights went into battle dressed in chain mail. High-tech versions are used to build sink faucets, microphones, space shuttles and postmodern buildings from Doha to Cologne to Oklahoma City. And now, thanks to Ruth Höner and Elis Piehl, it has found its way back to the body. For the past year, the two women have been fashioning clothing and accessories by hand using this most improbable material. A fine weave of stainless steel, overlaid by black lace, generates an elegant, high-colored vest appropriate for a tea party in outer space. A similarly fine copper mesh, appliquéd with peacock feathers, creates a handbag that would be equally welcome at such a gathering. The application of wire mesh for couture is not at all obvious. Touching oxidizes the purer copper textiles. Scrunching leaves imprints. Bending breaks wires. This is not uninteresting, just impractical. But Höner and Piehl are working experimentally here, creating something that is part architecture and part shield, both machined and bespoke. In a move familiar within avant-garde practice, they regress to progress, dressing like knights for today, armored against boredom and synthetic fabrics. 8/4/12 2:02 PM



**151 • Philipp Scholz**

Philipp Scholz presents a simple diagram. Two groups travel toward the same goal. Group one includes an incognito actor; group two does not. Upon reaching their goal, group one will have been affected in some way by this actor, and will in turn affect group two. The correct question to ask is not if this is art. Tino Sehgal has already answered that question many times over, and plus it is probably the most boring question one can ask of anything that calls itself art. Things that don't call themselves art are another story entirely. The correct question to ask is many questions of a journalistic nature, questions whose answers will impact the ultimate form of Scholz's embryonic artwork. Who, what, where, when and how? None of this is indicated in the diagram, and without knowing these details there is no way to speculate about the specific nature of the artwork. What Scholz does reveal through his arrows and circles, however, is a belief in the ability of a single person to intentionally and covertly impact many others, both directly and indirectly. 8/4/12 2:34 PM





**152 • Andrea Hild** Personal histories captured in old photographs can seem set in stone, but they are not. Sepia fades along with memories, and family albums find themselves for sale at flea markets, where they can be purchased by anyone. The lucky ones will end up in the hands of Andrea Hild, who will delicately lift their long-gone inhabitants onto tracing paper or etching plate, alongside others encountered in the photographs of Sally Mann and Lewis Carroll. Bowler-hatted men and little girls in party frocks will be right-side up or upside-down, doubled or tripled, given rabbit heads or beetle toppers. Nostalgia will be unavoidable but treated with the inventive freedom that comes from interest and respect, as opposed to tradition. Thread will be used to mark the ineffable: gun shots, butterfly flight patterns, a wound, a tightrope. Children will everywhere be fascinated, because fascination is perhaps the greatest element that the past can hold. At least for those, like Hild, who not only recognize it as part of the past but are able to engage with it in the present.

8/4/12 3:15 PM



**153 • Andreas Grede** Andreas Grede's "Very squary" is a large wooden letter "F" painted blue. At the top it is collaged with picture cards from a child's memory game of the 1950s, on the side with mobile phones whose screens show attractive young women mugging for the camera and exercising. Grede's "SKRIK!&SCREAM!" is a hastily painted reproduction of Edvard Munch's "The Scream," with three additions: the words "Special Offer Today," twelve U.S. dollars in cold hard cash, and a markdown sale sign from \$120,000,000 to \$1,200, denoting the record-breaking price recently paid for the original painting at auction. Despite appearances, these two works actually have a great deal in common. Those old memory cards depict a suburban house, a toy doll, a big sedan—visual symbols for a bygone postwar decade. The cellphone

and the Facebook "F" are the techno-social figures for today. "The Scream"—the original, that is—not only exists as an iconic artwork, but now stands as a sign for the vast gap between rich and poor, and for the grotesque overvaluation of artwork as a luxury good and financial investment. There remains, however, a great difference between the two works as well. With "Very squary" Grede is the respectful student of icons; with "SKRIK!&SCREAM!" he is an iconoclast, condemning the iconic painting along with everything it now seems to inextricably stand for.

8/4/12 3:58 PM



**154 • Michael Zimmer** There is a history of dance photography, but what Michael Zimmer practices here might better be described as dance *for* photography. "Traces in Time" captures an anonymous amateur performer making her way through sixteen movements of an impromptu ballet. Each gesture of her body marks the passing of time twice: once by imprinting itself in a floor covered in white flour and once by blurring itself in Zimmer's long exposures. Certain images do this with wit and grace, like a circular set of footprints that could be a clock, or a set of parallel striations that confuse backwards and forwards.

Others contain elements that at first seem distracting, like the dancer's nude torso or her French nail polish. But these personal, corporeal details foreshadow an unexpected finale, in which the performer's encounter with time turns erotic. Flour covers her body and face; time leaves its mark on her.

8/4/12 4:29 PM

**155 • Juliana Vaz** I once lived in a neighborhood with a dense population of ultra-Orthodox and Hassidic Jews. This was in Montreal, but from the looks of Juliana Vaz's video "All the Jewish People," it could as easily have been in Higienópolis, São Paulo. Men and boys with sidelocks, black hats, long coats and longer beards walk about the neighborhood in groups and alone, going about their business. They make no unnecessary contact with anyone who is not of their sect, certainly not with a young woman holding a video camera. Theirs is a universe existing in parallel with the contemporary urban one, there but also not there. Vaz's video wrestles with this paradoxical situation, studying these men



as they move obliviously past parked cars, colorful murals, endless green fences, lush potted vegetation—past Vaz herself. The soundtrack is an exhilarating score by the Hungarian composer Béla Kéler, one from another time, another place. The video ends abruptly and enigmatically, with a few bird chirps and a shot of a young Hassidic man in a closet-cum-window, looking bored. Vaz has not solved the mystery of her neighbors. Nor, of course, has she found all the Jewish people, as her title so ironically suggests.

8/4/12 5:02 PM

**156 • Simon Rosenthal** A painting can be many things. It can be a memorial of an event, a portrait of a person, a record of an act, an expressive gesture, a conceptual proposal, a narrative tale. A pair of modest oils by Simon Rosenthal is at least a few of these. As portraits of a person, they represent in great detail the subject's eyes, staring mournfully out from the canvases. As the record of an act, they document the application of garish colors over the subject's hair and face, his transformation into sad clown and mute mime. As expressive gestures, they testify to the aggressive nature of that act, but also how creation and destruction are not always mutually exclusive. As a conceptual proposal, they question what a portrait can be today, long after the era of portrait painting and photographic realism have passed, and within a consciousness of the self as mask. And as narrative tales, they recall all those eerie stories of people trapped in paintings. 8/4/12 5:45 PM

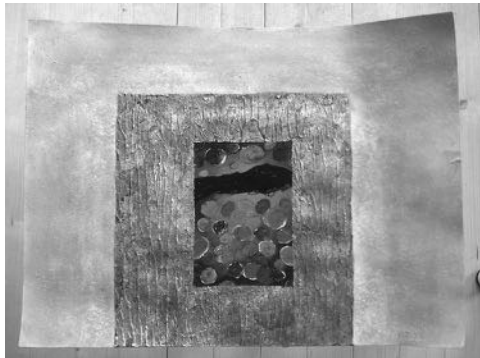


**157 • Ovidiu Murgociu** The Bauhaus artist Josef Albers made a life's work painting squares within squares. His were uniquely monochrome, however, and one wonders heretically once in a while what the results might have been if he'd been a little bit less of a purist. Ovidiu Murgociu offers an opportunity to envision

this experiment in a mixed-media work on paper. An iridescent blue square sits at the center bottom of a glaring orange rectangle. Mottled gold leaf transforms the blue, and it becomes the frame around a murky painting of a shadowy fish afloat amidst a sea of red-rimmed bubbles. The speckled, streaky orange then becomes a frame itself, around the gold, around the fish. Geometric play happens here, between rectangles that become frames that become

rectangles all over again; between the perfect symmetry of squares centered in rectangles and the perfect asymmetry of squares that rest at the bottom of rectangles. Formal play happens too, as textured monochromatic surface gives way to ridged gleaming golden one and then to dreamy, multihued underwater one.

8/6/12 1:56 PM



**158 • "Cat" Birgit Lessing**

On a tall, narrow base of wood, Birgit Lessing applied a mixture of burned paper, acrylic pigments, dust and oil. The artist, who signs her work "Cat," then molded this concoction into the remains of a person's head, with twin shadows behind it. The visceral relief works quickly. It repulses and saddens, and it comes almost as a solace to learn the title, "Nine Eleven," to have a real name given to the tragedy it exudes.

Additional works by Lessing continue in an apocalyptic vein, though without the pull of historical events to ground them. Some of these, like a heart pierced with nails and weighed down with chains, feel heavy-handed. Others, meanwhile, balance the darkness with fantastical visions of natural powers. A potent, purple explosion vividly conveys the force of a shaman, so intense that it cannot be contained on the canvas and spreads over onto the painted frame. 8/6/12 2:34 PM

**159 • Berthold W. Schmidt** Nothing is sorer than the sight of a single shoe, but Bertold Schmidt, having found a half dozen on the street, stuffed them with straw, placed them in holes cut into an old door, and called the whole thing "A Foot in the Door." This scrappy illustration of the familiar saying gets a twist from the straw stuffing, which is meant to connote the opportunistic transformation of straw into gold, but which also conjures scarecrows and other straw men. For "Inhibited," Schmidt mounted three rusty bicycle luggage racks on a dusty, broken wooden headboard, squashed a burlap sack between two, and another in the third, this last filled again with hay. Unlike "A Foot in the Door," "Inhibited"

seems to lack a direct connection to its title, but in its place stands mystery and formal interest, the poignancy of fullness versus emptiness, the strangeness of moving things come to rest, and the magic of discarded objects finding new life.

8/6/12 3:16 PM



**160 • Manfred “Mensch” Mayer** Joseph Beuys is invoked continuously in Germany in connection to the arts. This comes as a surprise to a North American art critic, for whom Beuys and the idea of social sculpture remain radical, outside the knowledge and comprehension of the general public. So much the better for



Germans, and especially those who live in the region of Hallertauer, where a local social sculpture group have been busy as bees, quite literally. Soziale Skulptur Hallertauer, to which Manfred “Mensch” Mayer belongs, has many projects on the go that aim to harmonize people, animals, culture and the economy. These include a new form of paper money, intended to replace the Euro in small local businesses; urban gardens, which have sprung up on official town sites, private property and

school grounds; and a symposium, which brought together many of Beuys’ disciples. What unites them all, and what differentiates them from other social sculpture projects, is bees. Bees decorate their money, determine which flowers are planted, and gave the name to their gathering. “Beuys and the Bees” they called it, and they meant it. The hive, the honey, the communal work constitute a model for social sculpture. And Beuys, of course, is the Queen. 8/6/12 4:08 PM

**161 • Martina Günther** At the center of a modest canvas by Martina Günther a woman whirls fiercely. Her scarlet skirts rise voluminously around her, alive with strokes of cadmium red, violet, pale blue and taupe. Her arms bend and open, pulling the world around with them, unmistakable in bright white shirt-sleeves. Her hands appear with just a few touches of fleshy paint. Her hair trails behind her, a thick, flickering mane of brown, maroon and gold. The background against which she dances blurs into a heady haze of lime, turquoise and char-treuse. Everything is in glorious, forceful movement here—except for the dancer’s head. Sharply outlined and attentively detailed, she is the eye of the storm, a stable nucleus from which energy emanates. She is also a very good likeness of the artist’s sister, who does not dance, and for whom the painting was a gift. Is it a portrait then, or an imaginary projection, or, most likely, something in between? Only the subject and the artist will know for sure; the rest of us can content ourselves with the rare treat of contemplating someone who is simultaneously in and out of control.



8/6/12 4:36 PM

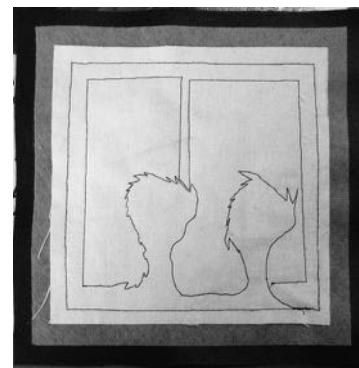
**162 • Cristina Stifanic**

It’s hard to imagine a novel picture of Venice. Even my father and I managed to take the same photograph of birds in the Plaza San Marco 25 years apart. It’s equally difficult to fathom an original take on the Hollywood stars of yesteryear, to see Humphrey Bogart without his handsome grimace or James Dean without his doomed allure.



Despite these odds, Cristina Stifanic has paired postage stamps of Hollywood luminaries with old postcards showing unremarkable views of Venice. The results are uneven, but in a few instances that old Hollywood magic happens, part mise-en-scène, part narrative suggestion. A 37-cent stamp of John Wayne looks like a giant movie poster on a high brick wall, surrounded by shuttered villas—Venice as ghost town. A 42-cent stamp of Bette Davis places her at the top of a grand, hazy set of stairs, about to descend in all her glory. And then there’s Audrey Hepburn, high up on the wall of a small courtyard, part movie poster, part religious vision. It certainly isn’t what the United States Postal Service had in mind when it designed these limited edition stamps. But then, Venice is a city built on water. Why should stamps only go on the back of a postcard? 8/6/12 5:09 PM

**163 • Jean Boskja Missler** In “Drawing with a Sewing Needle,” Jean Boskja Missler devised a novel means of drawing. He would perform thirteen times for two hours each, making sixteen small drawings at each sitting. The drawings



would be unconventional in that they would be done not with pencil and paper but needle, thread and cloth. Threads make excellent if jagged lines, and the situation allowed Missler to play with the traditional pedagogical exercise of making a picture without lifting the pencil. Only here, not only would the needle not be lifted, it would not even be moved. Missler would shift the cloth instead, drawing as if in reverse. This in and of itself puts an interesting conceptual twist on a traditional practice, and as well makes the point that drawing is in some sense labor. The surprise is that many of Missler’s embroideries are in fact fantastic little

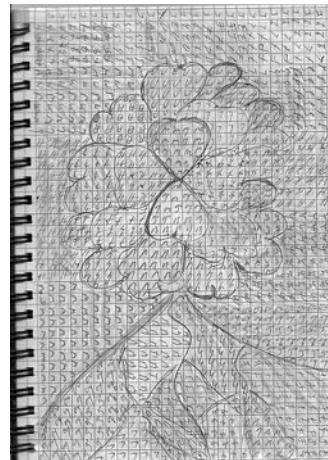
drawings, deft sketches of silhouettes against a window, a bird on a branch, a forceful gesture, and many more scenes less briefly articulated. 8/6/12 5:43 PM

**164 • Lydia Stumm** Things often happen without specific intention. Planning isn't everything, and coincidence and chance can make inspired accomplices. Consider, for instance, the pictures of Lydia Stumm. Stumm works without a brush, without a pencil, without any idea of what the end result of her process



might be. She grinds chalk pastels through the mesh of a small kitchen strainer, the kind used for pouring out a pot of tea, then rubs the colored silt into thick paper with her fingers. A soft, richly tinted texture results, finely speckled like a photograph shot with film and blown up a bit too large, so that it starts to fall apart. Eventually forms materialize, as if by magic, or at least the statistical magic that gives clouds shapes if you look at the sky long enough. These might be friendly blue-eyed dwarves, dressed in green jackets and pointy red hats, or an amber sailboat, afloat on a dark, placid sea at sunset. As unpredictably as they appear, however, they can also disappear, leaving a forest green and chartreuse landscape empty except for the golden road that forms its horizon. 8/8/12 2:04 PM

**165 • Azieb Weldemariam** The mandala, a geometric figure representing the universe according to Hindu or Buddhist symbolism, is one of the most recognizable of cosmological diagrams. Others exist as well, some expressing the tenets of a major world religion, some a religion of one. Azieb Weldemariam has filled a graph-paper notebook with intense drawings that fall into the latter category. Each square of each page is inscribed in ballpoint pen with a letter, some in roman type but most in Ge'ez, an ancient Semitic language which survives as the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Shapes are drawn around these symbols and filled in with colored pencil. Looking at these diagrams, a neophyte would be lost, but Weldemariam offers some clues to the tenets of her idiosyncratic faith, which locates itself in part at dOCUMENTA (13), where she works as a guard at the house of Chiara Fumai. Does this make Fumai a god or goddess? Certainly it makes one of artistic director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, whom Weldemariam represents as a powerful, floral figurine, a munificent ruler who welcomes all. 8/8/12 2:41 PM



**166 • E.L. Schumann** A city worker cleans an old street lamp, removing each pane of glass, brushing the dirt away with care. The windows of a church seen from the inside appear bright, the chapel dark, the gardens outside a haze of green that tint plain mullioned glass as brilliantly as stained glass. The view of a train seen through old glass at the railway station blurs and mottles into puddles of red, white, green, blue and brown. These photographic series by E. L. Schumann have in common an interest in mediated vision, mediated specifically by glass. But to see this and only this would be to make the mistake of looking single-mindedly at Schumann's work, missing her ability to find the things that most of us simply walk right past, things that are not extraordinary but nevertheless worthy of contemplation and curiosity. It would be

like ignoring the worker on the street, or failing to notice the way old windows are colored by what's behind them. 8/8/12 3:17 PM

**167 • Bettina Fährmann** There's no shame in painting multiple styles at once, despite what certain uptight art professors might think. Picasso did it, after all. And so too does Bettina Fährmann, offering four interpretations of a Rembrandt etching of an angel holding Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The first picture is the smallest, a tightly cropped gold and black impression of the two figures seen close up. They could be warriors engaged in combat, so obscured is their interaction. The second hews most closely to the original, but the inky, chalky black and white of Fährmann's scene renders the air doomed. A third introduces color and angles, harsh yellow triangulating everything ambiguously. In the fourth and final picture, the angel fills a dusty rose tableau with expressive black curves, and Jesus all but disappears into his embrace. Each style, each perspective, presents the story uniquely. Which one best suits this particular Biblical tale depends, as it always does with the Bible, on interpretation. 8/8/12 4:00 PM



## 168 • Ingeborg Frankenhauser

Fairy tales are not for children. Whatever could have made Walt Disney think they were appropriate vehicles for entertaining the young? Ingeborg Frankenhauser makes no such mistake in “Snow White’s Stepmother,” an alternative narration of “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves” from the evil stepmother’s point of view. In illustrations that range vastly in style, she follows the stepmother’s descent into jealousy and treachery, and ultimately self-destruction. This is about individual psychology, about how a person can turn animal, and how this transformation extinguishes civility and replaces it with utter beastliness. Frankenhauser’s illustrations sample every horror-friendly genre for its most gorgeous moments, borrowing from Japanese and hard rock airbrush, from gothic digital collage and Belgian expressionism. No grotesquerie is hidden in this story of one woman’s psychological undoing, and yet it couldn’t be more seductive. Try and sell that, Walt Disney.

8/8/12 4:39 PM



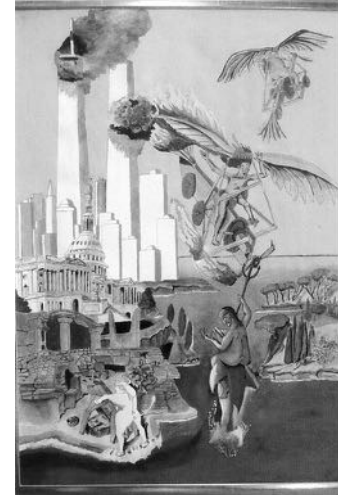
**169 • Ostap4enko (Vyacheslav Osynsky)** Artists have been using common materials to make art for some decades now, not in the sense of ready-mades but sculptures made out of cardboard boxes or paintings made from toothpaste. Too often this is done sloppily, but not by Vyacheslav Osynsky, who goes by the name Ostap4enko. Call him a virtuoso of tape. Ostap4enko can do anything you

can do with acrylic or spray paint, only he can do it better. Hard-edged abstraction, minimal painting, figurative realism, trompe l’oeil cartooning—with a palette of colored duct tape and a utility knife, he can create them all. He can even make the palette himself, a clever little sculptural take on the painter’s familiar slab of wood with colored blobs and brush. His, of course, is colored tape with knife. As with many practitioners who master their skill to the point of ease, Ostap4enko sometimes succumbs to slickness or one-liners, or to a kind of diffusion brought on by seeing no limits to his medium. Ought the same material be used by the same artist to make a lampshade, an abstract painting and a giant cartoon? At the very least, Ostap4enko proves that it can be done. 8/8/12 5:09 PM



**170 • Jürgen Bunzel** Every introductory art student must learn the basics of Greek and Egyptian mythology, to better understand the ancient cornerstones of Western art. What is never raised in those lecture halls is what, if anything, Poseidon or Sisyphus, Horus or Ibis have to do with the world as we live it today. Jürgen Bunzel has something to say to this silence. He says it with meticulously painted scenes that commingle then and now, the mythic and the modern. Like any intricate, allegorical tale, especially one based partly in dead cultures, a textual legend proves necessary for full communication. Bunzel provides one: he writes as he paints and paints as he writes. But even without such commentary there are moments of painful clarity. In a senior’s home, the Egyptian god of death vacuums up the words of a poem, right out of a book held open by a pathetically disheveled, bed-bound old man. A tableau about the war of the sexes includes separate men’s and women’s public bathrooms in caves at the top of a ruined Greek temple mount. Flying high above the isle of Manhattan, Icarus’ wings catch fire, not from the sun but from the burning Twin Towers. Hubris, it seems, is as alive and well now as it was then—and as disastrous.

8/8/12 5:46 PM



**171 • Mechthild-Veronika Burckhardt** When Mechthild-Veronika Burckhardt closes her eyes and puts pen to paper, curved lines run this way and that, overlapping, undulating. When she opens her eyes, these very same lines transform—with the help of a few dashes here and some color there—into the bodies of recognizable creatures. A duck and a swimmer move alongside one another. A seal and a woman embrace. A two-tone lady dances with a man half her height. These animals and people are almost uniquely gentle in their relations, except for those few drawings where sharp lines and hard angles appear. But mostly there are sheep and snails, human forms in motion, and, in the most peculiar—and extraordinary—of Burckhardt’s pictures, a nude torso whose organs and musculature seem to live both inside and outside of its body.

8/11/12 1:55 PM

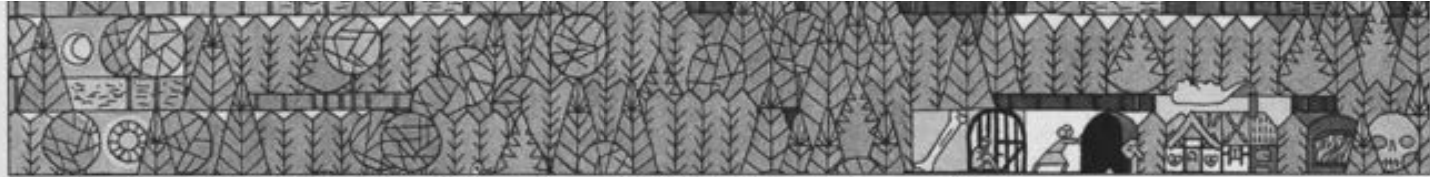


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2012, 14.24 Uhr



andlung einer Straße.



Anmutig schematisierte Wälder: Markus Lefrançois vermeidet die üblichen Muster von Illustrationen.

Fotos: nh

# Komplexe Erzählung

Lori Waxmans Kunstkritik: Buch-Illustrationen von Markus Lefrançois

VON LORI WAXMAN

Im Land der Brüder Grimm nimmt Gretel all ihre Kraft zusammen, um die gemeine alte Hexe in den Ofen zu befördern. Walt Disney war da nicht dabei, um seine zuckersüße Magie über die alten Märchen auszukippen, und das merkt man auch. Zum Beispiel bei der Geschichte „Sleeping Beauty“ des Kinderbuch-Illustrators Markus Lefrançois.

In den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika gibt es die schläfrige Prinzessin mit ihrem bauschigen Haar und gewandete in ein glänzendes pastellfarbenes Kleidchen. Jedes Mädchen möchte so sein wie sie. In Lefrançois' Arbeit interessiert die „Prinzessin“ am allerwenigsten. Stattdessen besticht das Buch durch überbordende, überzeugend dargestellte mit-

telalterliche Gesichter, anmutig schematisierte Wälder und raffinierte Schnittmodelle von Schlössern.

Der Buchvorsatz bietet eine grafische Legende mit Rosen und Totenköpfen, Monden

und Dolchen. Er nutzt den Vorteil, dass sich die Brüder Grimm über die Herkunft der Prinzen - welche die schlafende Dame aus fernen Ländern kommend aufsuchen - ausschweigen und macht aus ih-

nen schaurige Samurais, anstatt einfach auf Ritter in schimmernden Rüstungen zurückzugreifen.

*Nimm das, elende Hexe!*

Durch ausgeklügelte Strategien der Illustration, die durch ihre horizontale Anordnung an ägyptische Hieroglyphen erinnern und die ganz anders wirken als die üblicherweise gewählten ironischen Embleme, wie sie von den meisten Illustratoren verwendet werden, wird es Lefrançois möglich, die Geschichte ebenso komplex zu erzählen, wie sie ursprünglich von den Brüdern Grimm niedergeschrieben worden war.

Nimm das, elende Hexe!

18. Juni 2012, 14.11 Uhr

## Zur Person

Lori Waxman (36, geboren in Montreal) ist freie Kritikerin u. a. für die „Chicago Tribune“ und „Art Forum“. Sie lehrt am School of the Art Institute in Chicago. Sie hat in Montreal, Chicago, Lancaster und New York Kunstgeschichte studiert und an der New York University promoviert. Waxman hat auch Essays, Katalogbeiträge und Bücher veröffentlicht. Waxman ist mit dem Künstler Michael Rakowitz verheiratet und Mutter einer zweieinhalbjährigen Tochter. (vbs)



Alle Rezensionen von  
Lori Waxman auf  
[www.mydocumenta.de](http://www.mydocumenta.de)

**172 • Sibylle Jazra** Sibylle Jazra's assemblages look friendly at first, but they're not really. A wooden chair budding charmingly with trees would poke no matter where you sat. Spray-painted plexiglas silhouettes beam brightly then appear deeply wounded. Cute little birdhouses wear pseudo-barbed wire with their wee blinking lights and sit atop pipes like bombs, or exhaust. Opposition figures literally as well. Dead, painted Christmas trees point up and down on either side of an enormous swing; so too does the miniature chair forest. Jazra has built a world of pushing and pulling, attracting and repelling. Her sculptures say yes then no clearly enough, but one wishes they were able and willing to be a bit more generous, offering poetic phrases in place of so many untitled works. 8/11/12 2:43 PM



**173 • Holger Woithe** Holger Woithe is a friendly interventionist who uses kitschy goods with allegorical intentions. Against the backdrop of a past Documenta, he installed thirteen plastic polar bears throughout Kassel, each decorated with a different scheme. Bears are strong like Documenta is strong, says the artist, but polar bears are also nearing extinction, and they look goofy covered in graffiti. For the current Documenta, Woithe placed three paintings in a pharmacy window in surrealistic juxtaposition with real sausages, plastic Parma ham and tangles of string. It's a play on beginnings and ends, but also on real versus fake and silly eroticism. Woithe also built a sculpture in the Weinberg district with thirteen plastic crows lined up uncannily along two plastic tubes. The one red bird that faces the opposite direction stands for difference in the face of endless sameness. But crows aren't mindless birds. They're cunning, and way to smart to stand for such willful misrepresentation. 8/11/12 3:23 PM



**174 • Stefano de Bortoli** Stefano de Bortoli is a tremendously skilled draftsman. How easy it would be to get deliriously lost in the technical virtuosity of the worlds he fashions in astonishingly detailed pencil drawings on paper and acrylic paintings on ostrich eggs—easy, pleasurable and dangerous. For Bortoli is a moralist, concerned with global warming, genocide, refugees and the many other forms of trauma that affect our world. When he depicts an old ship beached on



a rocky shore, its picturesqueness is a ruse against the invisible deaths of those who were once on board. When he portrays a polar bear swimming in an endless sea on a cloudless day, the beauty of the scene nearly overshadows the fact that a sea without ice means death to an arctic creature. The textual components of Bortoli's "Pandora's Box," as he calls his crate full of painted eggs, are clumsy compared to the masterly eggs themselves. But this lapse just barely diminishes the painful, and all too real, confusion that Bortoli both depicts and evokes between the idyllic and the dystopian. 8/11/12 4:11 PM

**175 • DianaKahn** Art history is full of old, fragmented, precious materials. Given the immense resources that go into the preservation of cultural artifacts like Egyptian tomb paintings, Greek temple friezes, Buddhist sculptures and American Indian animal hides, it comes as a splendid surprise to discover DianaKahn's artwork. Although based on hieroglyphs and other ancient representational systems, DianaKahn's drawings are profoundly ephemeral. She works improvisationally and in nature, choosing her materials based on the season. Sketches in ink on snow, ice and water disappear in seconds, minutes, hours or days. Twigs, cracks, footprints, tire tracks and reflections vie for compositional attention with black brushwork depicting a Greek mother and child, the face of a Buddhist deity, an Egyptian ritual. A patch of snow holds a fragment of an image, like a shard of stone or a worn mural. And then it's gone, melted, washed away, back into the ground—except that now, a thousand years later, DianaKahn can use a camera to take photographs. 8/11/12 4:55 PM



**176 • Holger Gottschlich, Jan-Michael Dierk, Heiko Wulfange, Christian Frenking, Arne Schlittenhardt and Lars Schimmelpfennig**

Imagine a cross between the work of the American land artist Michael Heizer and a group of children building sandcastles and you will come close to an ephemeral sculpture constructed by a group of six men on a beach in the Netherlands.

“Cube” was built first in 2006 and again in 2012, this time bigger and better. It is the folly of Holger Gottschlich, Jan-Michael Dierk, Heiko Wulfange, Christian Frenking, Arne Schlittenhardt and Lars Schimmelpfennig. “Cube,” it ought to be said, is a cube only in name and force of imagination. That is to say, just the tip of the cube sticks out of the sand, like the prow of a ship wrecked long ago. It’s the only geometric thing for miles—but not for long.

As children learn, and Michael Heizer too, sand, wind and water do not like hard edges, and even the most ambitious sand construction will disintegrate eventually. “Cube” is long gone, at least that part of it that was visible.

8/11/12 5:29 PM



**177 • Tine Ullmann** If angels went to discos, they might look something like the divine beings represented in two of Tine Ullmann’s acrylic paintings. Brushed in carefree strokes of gold, ringed in swirls of purple spray paint, backed by pulsing strobes of turquoise, all that’s missing is a light-up dance floor. Even the mirrored disco ball hangs up high, albeit in deconstructed form, courtesy handfuls of shiny stones glued to the canvas.

Ullmann paints the figures without detail, without faces, but still they glow with all the fabulous bliss of heaven on earth. A third painting features a woman’s face, long-lashed and red-lipped, framed by feathery gold hair, glimmering with sprays of silver. Though not a self-portrait in name, the visage presents a fair likeness of the artist—and a plausible option for filling in one of the angel’s missing faces. 8/11/12 6:00 PM



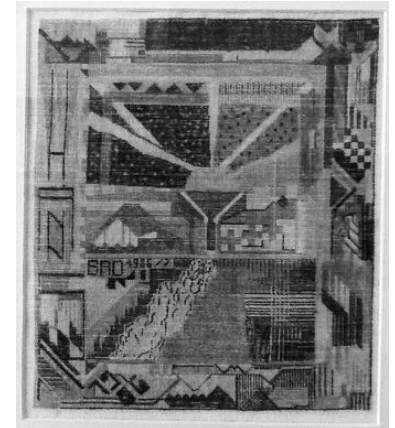
**178 • Hartwig Frisch** The warm orange-red birds in Hartwig Frisch’s “Helplessness” perch in solitude, lonely despite the flock, isolated by a pale, hazy aura. Black and orange brushstrokes cross-hatch the background, filling it with faint, unintelligible chatter. The mauve pine trees in his “Asian Forest” stand tall and thin, unbending in the gusts of wind and rain that sweep through their thicket. The sky glows a fierce, stunning pink, and the storm rages so powerfully that color itself blows away, settling on the picture’s painted frame. Frisch began painting five years ago on account of all the images and colors filling his head. Gentle and luminous, his visions appear so beautiful when painted large on paper that their liberation from his mind seems more an act of generosity toward viewers than release for himself. 8/13/12 1:55 PM



**179 • Bernd Beckenbauer**

We usually think of improvisation as something that happens fast, in a burst of uncontainable expression. Two needlework samplers by Bernd Beckenbauer counter this presumption. Each was hand-stitched over the course of a year, as Beckenbauer slowly threaded colorful cotton strands through each and every opening in modest pieces of fine linen. Proceeding without a plan, Beckenbauer sewed a millennium of motifs into one, mixing Bauhaus abstractions with American Indian designs, Art Deco patterns with a naïf crown of thorns. A mountain and sun conjure Japanese woodblock prints, while polka dots, stripes and checkers fill in the margins. The original artwork to which Beckenbauer’s needlepoints allude would have been made almost uniquely by men, so it comes as a welcome surprise to find a man sampling them in a form traditionally thought of as women’s work.

8/13/12 2:30 PM



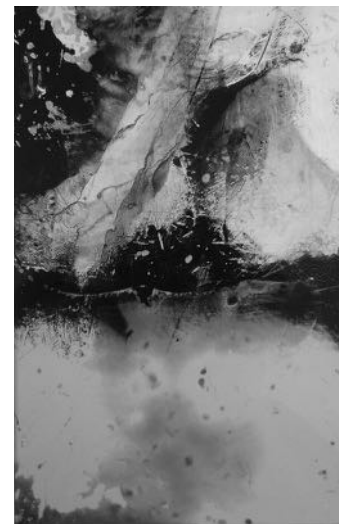


**180 • Isabell Ertl** In an age of social media and D.I.Y. culture, transparency is de rigueur. It is also almost always engrossing, and sometimes even useful. Isabell Ertl takes it as a guiding principle in “Kein Katalog,” a publication she edited with Lara Sielmann to document the founding and inaugural year of Salon e.V., a non-profit cultural space she established in the small city of Hildesheim in 2010. Some forty people have helped to create Salon e.V., and while anyone involved in cultural production will know firsthand that nothing gets done by one person alone, the multitude of voices that speak (or, at least, write emails) throughout the pages of “Kein Katalog” give credit where credit is due. Besides email correspondence, Ertl’s book also contains financial documents, official paperwork and essays, which acknowledge the many kinds of labor that go into exhibition and event making, much of it quotidian and administrative. And then, of course, there are invitations, photographs of picnics and performances, and the documentation of artwork, including some nifty looking chainsaw dinner plates and wee ceramic sculptures cleverly displayed under upside-down wineglasses. Because otherwise, why bother?



8/13/12 3:13 PM

**181 • Timo Lotz** The history of art is in part a history of genius, of the lone artist at work feverishly in his garret. This mythologizing understanding of the artist has become unpopular in recent times, but the work and life of abstract painter Timo Lotz propose a stirring new chapter. Lotz is the formidably talented creator of large, intensely marked, vividly colored canvases. He is also autistic. He used to paint only stripes, but now composes with a blocky ingenuity. He paints from left to right and will not leave the studio—Karl Bierda’s Atelier Amos—without finishing his work. This means covering the entire canvas and using up all of the vibrant colors he’s mixed himself, sometimes even on the reverse of the picture. The results are part Bauhaus color theory, minus the theory; part Abstract Expressionism, minus the existentialism; part Neo Expressionism, minus the grandiose symbols. That is to say, Lotz works with determination and inspiration but without pretension. And he can paint tremendously well. 8/13/12 4:03 PM



**182 • Jan Gegusch** Fifteen years ago, Jan Gegusch and a friend discovered a technique for sculpting color film using photo-developing chemicals. Gegusch has since evolved the process to include the addition of black ink, but other than that, and the fact that in the past decade and a half analog photography has become nearly extinct in the face of the digital revolution, not much else has changed. Which is to say that everything has changed. Gegusch now finds himself “sculpting” a medium that has become increasingly rare. And while the results have probably always been as mysteriously suggestive of underwater vistas, maps, glaciers and pictures of earth from space, they now

also possess a singular luster, a liquid density that fundamentally differentiates them from all digitally generated imagery. Film contains atoms not pixels. To create an image from film, something very real must have occurred, be it a person sitting in front of the camera or chemicals applied directly to celluloid. Gegusch’s otherworldly pictures really happened, somehow, somewhere. It’s the difference between GoogleEarth and earth. 8/13/12 4:40 PM

**183 • Diana Rothaug** Armed only with a black-and-white film camera and warm clothing, Diana Rothaug went exploring in the Kassel Bergpark the past few winters. What she discovered is nothing short of extraordinary: a diamond trove of jewels, a coastal geography seen from above the clouds, a slowly coursing spill of lava, a pair of carved tribal masks. In reality Rothaug found none of this, of course, only snow and ice and frigid water.



But the twelve tightly cropped and composed images that she made of this wintry landscape, called “In the Land of the Snow Queen,” register less as what they are than as figurative, narrative or abstract pictures, each evocation as random as the shapes discernable in clouds. Back in her studio, Rothaug digitalized and lightly colored the photographs. That is too bad. Part of the wonder of the series is that it is real, a collaboration between Rothaug and nature. Nothing more is needed. 8/13/12 5:17 PM

**184 • Ursula Rüffert** Ursula Rüffert's paintings could be taken for works of abstract expressionism. That would be a mistake. Her crusty, crackled canvas of ultramarine, red and yellow, plastered with matte white and shimmery gold, is

both humanist and conceptual, far closer in spirit to Cy Twombly than Willem de Kooning. There are words here, the most basic ones—"Ich" in one work, "Wort" in another—scratched and scribbled like desperate graffiti into the layers of paint and wax. But "Ich" does not retreat into the self; accompanied by plus signs, it moves with great effort toward the other, toward "Du" and "Wir." Having words is part of that movement, but it is never quite enough. So Rüffert makes more marks, brushes more colors, adds more layers. Success in the form of communication achieved would be unthinkable—too simple, too hubristic. In its place Rüffert offers something far more honest and challenging. 8/13/12 5:47 PM



**185 • Christoph Pfannkuch** We cannot change where we come from, nor can we alter our genetic coding, but we can do a lot with these backgrounds all the same. In this vein, Christoph Pfannkuch presents two seemingly unrelated projects that are twinned in their optimistic, creative approach to his own geographical and biological history. "Scholle" is a map of the small, idyllic Nazi-built village where Pfannkuch grew up,

stitched from pieces of an old Oriental rug his father threw out after he and Pfannkuch's mother divorced. The backside of the carpet indicates fields, in a play on the word "scholle," which means both homeland and turned soil.

"Mem" is a performance involving ornithology books and pictures of birds projected on the back of

Pfannkuch's prematurely balding head. All the men in his family lost their hair early on, and Pfannkuch decided to read a text on molting to accompany his own. Molting, the process in which birds shed their feathers to make way for new growth, marks an animal's life cycle. It is not a moment of discomfort, nor, decided Pfannkuch, need his be. Like all good lives, he accepts and transforms what has happened and what will happen. And like all good art, the personal ultimately retreats, replaced by something that can be both accepted and transformed by others. 8/15/12 2:13 PM



**186 • Walter Peter** Children live in another, parallel universe that sometimes overlaps but mostly conflicts with the adult world. In a series of large colorful paintings and high contrast pencil drawings made using digitally altered photographs of his two young daughters, Walter Peter envisions this realm of endless curiosity, rampant play and unmeasured time.

On this planet, when balls are dropped and roll, cause and effect is learned. When swings go higher and higher, excitement and risk are tested. How does this work? What does that do? How does it feel, taste,

smell? The world is fascinating to children, and children are fascinating to adults. That's partly why we have them. But children are also mischievous and careless. Any honest parent knows this, though few admit it. Peter does, in drawings whose unforgivingly dark pencils and blown-out details sketch the edge between children having fun and children being impish trolls. 8/15/12 2:47 PM



**187 • Anette C. Halm** A mermaid takes a dip in the famous Trevi fountain in Rome, paddles over to the waterfall and back, then beaches herself on the cobblestones in front of a crowd of tourists. A lone woman in a wedding dress strolls through Stuttgart, Salzburg and Berlin, along the Königsee, at a racetrack and a wine festival, approached by lone men whom she asks, "Will you marry me?" These two performances by Anette C. Halm feature the artist in a starring role, accompanied by a cast of onlookers, pedestrians, playboys, good Samaritans and policemen, all of them untrained actors in made-for-art melodramas. Romance is key here, the artist's desire for it and others' desires as well. Except in downtown Stuttgart, the people Halm encountered were mostly willing to oblige her fantasies and reveal their own. They courted her in her long, white dress—worn for some three hundred hours total, surely a record—and applauded her in her long

aqua tail. And then they fined her 160 Euros, because even the police couldn't avoid becoming players when Halm turned Rome into her personal stage.

8/15/12 3:34 PM



**188 • Seelenburg** Sometimes it seems that nothing has more meanings than something. Ad Reinhardt painted all black canvases, Bas Jan Ader disappeared, John Cage opened a piano for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, then closed it. Seelenburg, a “virtual monk” from Kassel, created an installation on YouTube that amounts to a 30-minute video of black screen and silent audio. “Nichts,” like most of the nothing artworks that preceded it, needs some explanation or context in order to be understood. This has always been a bit paradoxical, but whatever. Cage wanted his audience to pay attention to the sounds of life, not just formal music; Seelenburg wants his audience to stop giving their lives over to the total control of corporate and government interests via digital technology. There would be an irony to his doing this via the very same technology that he rails against if not for the last line of his manifesto, a declaration so to the point it might just go viral: “I agree to use Mobile Technology to be an eye and ear for injustice in the world, but not as a means of war.” Indeed. Ai Wei Wei would sign that in a heartbeat, and every young mobile phone user on the streets of Cairo, Damascus and Tripoli. 8/15/12 4:05 PM



**189 • Ilse Kern** At the center of a dense, verdant scene painted on silk by the late Ilse Kern, a woman’s head tilts back, her mouth slightly ajar. She is mother earth, a goddess, the sun her halo, the rainbow an extension of her eyelids. Lush flowers and foliage dress her, earthworms and rich red soil form her bed. Kern’s feminist vision pictures a time when women emerged as powerful symbols through organic, biological and natural means, though it must be noted that her blue and gold-tressed deity looks stunned, or maybe just utterly exhausted, by the cornucopia that surrounds her. She certainly doesn’t seem in charge, or at all content. In a second painting, even more flowery and fantastical than the first, Kern paints butterflies and flowers and birds at its center instead. Which is to say, no person—no woman—had to be in charge. And still the water flows, the plants flourish, and the sky shines blue. That, in the end, might be the more advanced feminist view. 8/15/12 4:39 PM



**190 • Ingrid Boguth** We are all going to die, that much is certain. It is true whether you believe in fate or chance, life after death or being six feet under and nothing more. Ingrid Boguth’s oil paintings deal with this incontrovertible, utterly central fact. They deal with it directly, unflinchingly and optimistically. In one, a whorled tree stands nearly leafless surrounded by an autumnal blanket of its dried foliage. A new branch, green against brown, begins to sprout, shooting off in another direction, away from death but inextricably linked to

it. In a second painting, the face of a woman—it’s not a self-portrait but resembles the artist—is split in half. The left is a bare skeleton, the right an attractive visage with spiky auburn hair and the hint of a smile. Mouths aligned, the skeleton seems to be smiling too, though it’s just the natural set of her teeth and jaw. The two halves form a whole that ought to be unsettling but isn’t, perhaps because the living and the dead seem so unperturbed by one another. Only the title suggests otherwise. “Life and Death – Happiness and Misery” it’s called, but neither side of this face expresses dismay, not the unfeeling skull nor the living, breathing woman who knows that no matter what, death will be her end someday. 8/15/12 5:06 PM

**191 • Ildikó Szász** Art is often accused of not doing enough. It doesn’t build sturdy houses or keep people warm, it doesn’t nourish or clothe, doesn’t solve problems or even propose very good solutions. So it comes as a surprise to learn that art has indeed saved a life. The art in question is a drawing by Ildikó Szász. Charming, colorful and schematic, its central character is a mole. The bit players are a caterpillar, butterfly and worm, plus the sun, two carrots and a lovely tall plant with blue flowers. The scene consists of a multistory grey house with pink trim and the house’s garden. Small handwritten phrases note that the mole is



blind and lives alone, details both true and intended to elicit sympathy. Others explain that he eats bugs that destroy plants, leaves vegetables alone and aerates the soil, attributes meant to evoke fondness. He is a good creature, this mole, and Szász does not want her friends to expel the one that has made its home in their beautiful garden. So she made them this picture. And it worked. If only this happened more often, perhaps more of us would take up watercolor and acrylic when we encounter problems. 8/15/12 5:31 PM

## 192 • Christian Saehrendt

A king and queen huddle together in the bottom left of a picture.

Dripping red roses tower above them. The sun smiles though the sky is black. It isn't clear who the royal couple might be, since despite the flowers, they can't be the King and Queen of Hearts from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

They look neither evil nor stupid enough. Thank goodness—it's a terrible combination. Instead, their faces reveal hues and expressions both subtler and more intense than might be expected of such schematic rendering. The linen itself looks battered, as if it might have been found and hastily tacked to a frame, though in fact it was painted as is by Christian Saehrendt. It also looks like a dark Donald Baechler canvas, or like something Francesco Clemente might have drafted if he'd been interested in classical children's fairy tales. Which is to say, Saehrendt's untitled work feels deeply neo-expressionist, so it comes as no surprise to learn that it was created in 1987. Others came after it, until Saehrendt stopped painting around 2000. If he'd continued, would he have been the next Neo Rauch? To do so would have meant, at the very least, going to art school in Leipzig in the 1990s instead of Hamburg in the 1980s. Random though not necessarily incidental facts like geography and decade can sometimes make the difference. 8/18/12 1:51 PM



**193 • Erika Janho** A woman lies prone in an ink sketch by Erika Janho, filling up the space of the picture plane with her body as it extends from her head to her hips. She is nude, with one arm raised, but this is no classical figure study. It is rather what might be called a free-hand anatomical drawing, a picture of the body's insides that proceeds with no pretensions toward medical correctness. Here there are lungs and maybe a liver, muscle sinews and a spinal column. But flesh is also braided and an

eyeball webbed, an enormous arm frayed with zebra stripes. No part of her torso or face remains unseen by the cruelly thorough examination, no centimeter of skin left untouched. But her belly and arm and nipples survive, and her crotch is intact enough to sport a whorled G-string, made of chain mail or public hair, it's unclear. This plus a "For Ever" bicep tattoo suggest that Janho's subject might not be a corpse on the dissection table after all but an illustrated woman with many stories to tell. The pattern that runs along her right side suggests as much too. Read it closely, very closely, and it begins to reveal itself as words: La femme flambée, Die Fatatal, Die Flambiertefrau, Blue Velvet. So much information written large on the body, yet so little understood. 8/18/12 2:36 PM



**194 • Ulrike Kulbarsch-v.B.** How to build a social sculpture? If you are Ulrike Kulbarsch-v.B., you will take a borrowed four-hundred-year-old holiday property and add 20 apple trees, raised flowerbeds, vegetable gardens fenced against the deer and wild pigs, and an extra bathroom. You will invite artists to come for a week or longer, to be in nature, work in peace and live communally. You will require each guest to have a plan of some sort (nearly any will do); to



reflect on the nature of community (in any form they choose); and to contribute one hour of "karma yoga" a day (a most beautiful conceptualization of household chores). You will do no advertising and sell nothing. And you will call it Projekt Forstgut Berlitzgrube. What it will all amount to will be decided each day by the plants that grow, the food that's cooked and shared, the woods that are walked through, the timber-frame shelter. The sculpture will be shaped by the people who arrive and live and sleep and read and talk and write and make music and draw and are quiet and do all the things that people do together and apart, when they have an inspiring and restful place in which to be. And that, indeed, is enough. 8/18/12 3:20 PM

## 195 • Noor Abed

In "Bio Video," Noor Abed faces the camera forever, shirt nicely buttoned up, suit jacket over top. With her training as a supermarket cashier and hotel receptionist, she is able to plaster a friendly smile to her face with remarkable stability, but nevertheless the video camera captures minute



shifts of real life that a still camera cannot. In "Where to?," Abed bicycles unceasingly, suspended a few inches above an immense lake in Norway, the water ebbing under her while she remains still. The audience laughs at the absurdity of her gesture. In "It is really loud over here," Abed lies in the desert and shifts her body around and around, digging a circle of its own making. In an as-yet-untitled piece, she dances on the empty concrete floors of a high-rise hotel that was never finished, a fabulously strange, tiny vision in a hard-edged ruin. There is much to say about each of these videos even if you don't know that Abed is a young artist from Ramallah, but knowing this renders each work also a metaphor for life in Palestine, where border guards make life-changing judgments every day based on the way a person looks, and where the question of where to go can be asked ironically. 8/18/12 4:07 PM



**196 • Rahim Bader-Nia** The relationship between modernism and mysticism has never been clear. Perhaps art scholars are afraid of God, perhaps Yves Klein just scared everyone off. But Rahim Bader-Nia proceeds boldly and beautifully, as much a master of ultramarine and other profound shades of blue as the late French avant-gardist himself. Although no one has ever really figured out how seriously to take Klein's esotericism, this is thankfully not the case with Bader-Nia. "The Origin of Aleph" presents the birth of the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, the holy letter from which all other letters were formed. Painted in oil on glass and paper, the sign glows like fire, or

fish scales afloat against a wavy sea. The ground could be a shroud or parchment, worn and creased with age and use. A second picture, "The Eye that Always Sees," meditates on god's all-seeing eye through a series of shapes painted in blue on blue on blue. Two orange dots do the seeing, symbolically and also literally, as they focus the viewer's eye on the mystical one. In Bader-Nia's compositions there is intensity but no fanaticism; his is a mysticism that, being based at least partly in pure color and form, remains open to everyone. 8/18/12 4:42 PM

**197 • Walter F. Binder** There are two kinds of Surrealism. In one, practiced most estimably by Salvador Dali, phantasmagorical landscapes are depicted in minute, realistic detail. In the other, practiced by the majority of Surrealists but especially Joan Miró, dreamlike experiences are induced in the viewer through abstract compositions. The reasons for this split have everything to do with André Breton and nothing at all to do with Walter F. Binder, and so much the better for Binder, because some 85 years after Breton wrote his manifesto, Binder can do whatever he damn well pleases. And what he does is paint dreamlike landscapes where cloudless blue skies and desert expanses give way to visions of almost figures and maybe ruins. He also fills a canvas with splotches and blurs of every color, leaving it up to the viewer to have his or her own vision. What you see there is up to you, or the particular trip you're on. Breton is turning in his grave, but it hardly matters anymore. Ours is no longer a world of manifestoes, and a lone painter like Binder can give and receive his visions freely. 8/18/12 5:10 PM



**198 • Mona Jasmin Auth** In "Mother," a painting by Mona Jasmin Auth, a chic woman with frizzy red hair sticks her head out the top of a large black boot. She wears a black fedora and a dark green fur scarf. The boot stands in a landscape that could have been painted by Hundertwasser, but the face is a closely observed representation of the artist's own mother. The mixing and borrowing of styles that Auth applies here is called postmodernism, and as a student of literature at university she would certainly know that term by now. But she might not have known it when she painted the picture in 2010, and she's even less likely



to have known it when she collaged a photograph of her outstretched hand to a small painting of the sky in 2006. That picture, "Reaching," appropriates Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel with a twist: here the human is Auth and God is absent. Appropriation, too, is a postmodernist technique, developed by artists beginning in the 1980s. The lesson of Auth's work is that these modes don't need to be taught, theoretically or otherwise, in order to be put into practice. They are the popular tactics of today, available and innately understood by the young people who grow up in contemporary culture. 8/18/12 5:35 PM

**199 • Uwe Reher** Dr. Uwe Reher is a painter of floral motifs and landscapes. These are not traditions that usually carry conceptual baggage, although anything picturesque necessarily involves itself in aesthetic history, intentionally or not. But Dr. Reher has titled his lush, impressionistic botanical painting "Tulips of Darwin," and although this is indeed the given name of the flowers in the picture, it is an unusual name that begets a certain line of questioning. Namely, what has been the evolution of these crimson blooms? Why have they survived to this day while others have not? And what can Dr. Reher's painting tell us about them? That their petals are immense and densely colored, in shades ranging from claret to magenta, from rose to pumpkin. That these hues so overwhelm the flowers that they tint their stems, staining chartreuse with hot pink, changing lime to marigold. Granted, an artist has no obligation toward scientific accuracy, and Dr. Reher's painting offers a visual impression rather than a factual observation. But sometimes that can be the more authentic one, especially, perhaps, in the case of tulips. Having been zealously bred and hybridized since the days of Dutch Tulip Mania, their particular qualities can hardly be considered natural, but rather the product of human subjectivity. 8/20/12 1:49 PM



## 200 • Charlotte Schütz

A nest is a home that a bird builds for itself and its young. It constructs this shelter out of whatever materials it can find in its environment, weaving wild pig and deer hair, moss and feathers together into a surprisingly dense, safe home. Those are the components of a blue titmouse nest, which



although crafted with the highest level of artistry certainly did not expect to find itself in an exhibition by Charlotte Schütz. But there it was in good company, set alongside roosts of Schütz's own design, crafted from shards of glass, used matchsticks, coffee stirrers, emergency phone numbers, rusty nails and barbed wire. Coffee sticks aside, what kind of creature could possibly find refuge in such materials? An egg covered in sand to look like a stone, a stone that looks like an egg, an egg covered with gold leaf—objects whose surfaces disguise their true identities. But what kind of sanctuary could they possibly hope for? We cannot always build our homes—or our lives—out of the most ideal materials. Some nests must be abandoned, but even the most injurious stuff can often provide a refuge.

8/20/12 2:37 PM

## 201 • Annemarie Finke

Three enormous orange bodies hang like daredevils from a turquoise tightrope against a forest of purple and green. Three plastic clothespins hang upside-down from an outdoor clothesline. Both of these sentences describe a modest acrylic painting by Annemarie Finke, a drippy, boldly colored sketch based on an ink and watercolor study, based on a photograph taken by a colleague. The subject is simple and quotidian enough, but the results fizz with wild coloration, of riotously awkward tonal combinations that make inanimate objects come alive. Alive to



the point of narration, in fact, as the clothespins take on personalities, two of them chatting together while a third hangs out alone. Personification can also be an effect of scale, and to this extent Finke's clothespins could be a study for or a painting of a Claes Oldeburg sculpture, as could her picture of two strawberries. Oldenburg has done a monumental sculpture of just this subject in Philadelphia, of course, and Finke's painting ingeniously illuminates how this kind of quotidian surrealism can develop. 8/20/12 3:08 PM



202 • Andreas Kloker How can a painting depict the lifetime of a man, from infancy to old age? How can a painting reproduce the haunting starvation and disappearance of a people? How can a painting emerge and recede, again and again? How can a painting be all these things and humble as well? The answer to these and other riddles is far simpler than might be expected, and is provided by Andreas Kloker. Kloker paints with water on a black board, using a rag, brush or his own fingers to manipulate this basic medium. Air and heat cause evaporation, while light makes visible. He calls this

process “elemental painting” because the materials involved are as raw as they come, but it also echoes a traditional Buddhist technique in which monks practice writing with brush and water on slate. They do this to learn calligraphy, but it additionally teaches a lesson about the temporality of this lifetime. As does Kloker's own painting practice, whose modesty belies its profoundness.

8/20/12 4:05 PM

203 • Pixel for President (Momo Riedmueller) Pixel for President is the tag name of Momo Riedmueller, a graffiti writer who works with the crew Painters with Attitude. Apart from tagging walls around Kassel, Pixel has also applied his graffiti aesthetic to a small canvas called “The Tree of Life” and, collaboratively, to a baseball cap. The cap, which sports two very snazzy tags, is evidently handmade and unique, and looks like something someone would wear if they wanted to be actively identified with street subculture. The painting, meanwhile, is a sketchy little number, full of doodles that drip, zigzag and spiral into a pair of bugged-out eyes. It's also full of empty space, not nearly worked over enough. Pixel explains that this is because it is unfinished, since he is still alive. Graffiti artists used to be known for working quickly, since the cops could show up at any time and often did, so it comes as a surprise to find one proceeding at such a slow pace, and on materials that could, ultimately, be sold. These two objects thus elucidate a recent chapter in the strange history of graffiti art, culminating in its current allure as urban lifestyle marker for sale at any price—but still of genuine appeal. 8/20/12 5:20 PM



**204 • Marie Koska** Michelangelo was said to have found his forms encased in stone, and to have helped them emerge. And though it is perhaps inadvisable to try to imitate a god, in this case Michelangelo set a fine example for any sculptor to follow. Marie Koska has proceeded accordingly, discovering birds and castles, letters and figures, even abstract concepts in modest pieces of sandstone. Who knew that sandstone, that pliable, familiar rock, came in such striking shades and patterns? Koska has made the best of it, working with both sensitivity and imagination, seeing a man's profile in the rough edge of a pale pink stone stubbled with grey, and a young bird in a feathery white one, dabbled with black. After carving a number of faces in different styles, all with their necessary parts in place, Koska dared to leave eyes, nose, ears and mouth behind. Trusting in roughness and waviness to connote hair, in smoothness to mean skin, her "Head of a Girl" asks modernist questions about the reduction of form and the abstraction of nature. These are good questions with no right answers, and they ought to provide Koska with many more ways to approach each piece of stone that she finds—and that, in some sense, finds her. 8/20/12 4:46 PM



**205 • Carola Petersen** Carola Petersen works in the tradition of Giacometti, sculpting solitary figures whose tender affect belies their crude rendering. She carved "Old" from the trunk of a cherry tree, using nothing more than a chainsaw and the stains of oil it left behind. The surface is rough, furrowed and splintery.



The figure is short, its neck thick, its hands and face and legs blunt objects. These details, or lack thereof, make a totem of old age, of shrunken, wrinkled bodies, arthritic joints, loose flesh, slow gait. The flat plane of the torso and a patch of dark wood just above the leg crease only barely indicate the person to be a man. He was coarsely made, but the paradox of Petersen's rough hewing is that it creates intense feelings of compassion in the viewer, compassion for this lonely, feeble old man who, without particular features of his own, could be any aged, diminished fellow. 8/20/12 5:48 PM

**206 • Iacopo Seri** Iacopo Seri does not make aggressive, noxious or otherwise unpleasant artwork. And yet, the materials for his projects and performances have included his own feces, other people's masturbatory fantasies, drunken conversations and sex. How he manages to transform such profane substances into genial and generous art echoes less the story of Midas than that of the Lettrist International, the young French hoodlums who had the genius to turn inebriated wandering into radical *dérives* in Paris in the early 1950s.



Seri, for his part, has transformed his daily shit into small, impressionistic paintings; presented six months of transcribed intoxicated talk as his masters of art dissertation; introduced the drinking of wine into a seminar on Deleuze and Guattari; and left a couple alone in a gallery on the eve of an exhibition, with the request that they make love. In these works, the elevation of quotidian and base actions moves toward unconventional revelation, indirect understanding and chance production. Think about that the next time you sit on the toilet or drink too much, and open your own mind. 8/22/12 2:02 PM

**207 • Marilu Klein** It is not easy to sit in a hospital waiting room for a long time, unsure of diagnosis, full of discomfort. In difficult moments like these, artwork like the drawings and paintings of Marilu Klein can offer solace. Klein calls her practice "Moving Art." It is a fitting title, given the affirmative, soothing vitality that colors and forms her intuitive pictures. They come alive with vibrant shades of blue, green and red; they blur with smooth motion; they suggest organic life, as snail shells, feathers and long stalks of grass. In these pictures, life is a positive force, one to move with and alongside, wherever it may lead. That ought not to suggest that life is beyond one's control. On the contrary, Klein's own experience, which includes leaving behind an unsatisfying profession to become an artist, informs her compositions. Life is always in motion, but it is a pulsing, breathing, flexible motion. Such sentiments do not only belong in hospitals, of course, though they can be profoundly helpful there. They belong everywhere, from morning to night, from home to everywhere out in the world. 8/22/12 2:40 PM



**208 • Wolfgang Kowar** Wolfgang Kowar makes art from slabs of found advertising posters, sometimes layered an inch thick. In this practice of *décollage* he is in good company, functioning in line with the Affichistes before him, including Jacques de la Villeglé and Raymond Hains. But like any worthwhile descendent, he does not imitate his elders so much as take their artistic DNA and add some of his own coding. Where the Affichistes tore posters straight off the walls of Paris streets, using them as is, Kowar cuts and alters, making no mistake about the diminished radicalness of raw found art in the past 60 years.



Instead, Kowar gets his material direct from the company that removes it from advertising columns in Hannover. He then slices the curved blocks down to size and begins a sculpting process, revealing different grains and strata, as if he were working with wood or stone instead of dense commercial detritus. The resulting reliefs are two-sided and engrossing, revealing words and colors, patterns and forms that exhibit a genuine archaeology of our urban, capitalist times. 8/22/12 3:10 PM

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**209 • Robert Bayer** Twelve years ago Robert Bayer constructed an artwork by stapling a piece of printed striped cloth to a stretcher, framing it with green painted sides, and dangling some two dozen small objects on fishing wire hung between the top and the bottom edges. He called it “Alles gleich?” which roughly translates as “All the same?” and which begs a couple of questions. First, are all paintings made from store-bought striped cloth engaged in institutional critique à la Daniel Buren? Second, is all found object art concerned with opening up aesthetic possibilities toward the quotidian or the chance find, as with Marcel Duchamp or Robert Rauschenberg? Third, are all shirt buttons created equal? The answer to the first two questions is no, although this may or may not be relevant to Bayer’s artwork. It’s hard to know without seeing more than one piece, since conceptual points are best made in context. The answer to the third is also no, but this matter is indeed settled by Bayer’s composition, which pits small ladybug

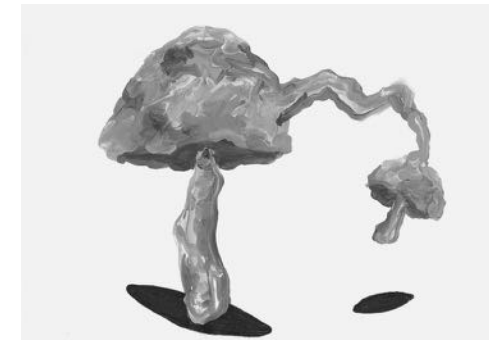


fasteners against enormous jeweled ones, and colorful square toggles against simple metallic ones. These things look different but all seem to be made of plastic, and suspended vertically as they are, they turn a striped canvas into a giant shirt-front. Daniel Buren would be pleased. 8/22/12 3:51 PM

**210 • Peter Mujakovic** The history of art is full of female nudes. Nudes based on male bodies, nudes painted to look like mythological figures, nudes sketched in nature as a paean to holistic living, nudes cubistically fractured. Peter Mujakovic paints nudes as well, svelte creatures of easy appeal set in narrative situations borrowed from “Penthouse.” Given the black and white tint of the canvases, and the modest size and natural shape of the displayed breasts, the magazines appear to have been vintage. Apart from that, neither the compositions nor the women manifest much challenge or interest. Mujakovic’s drawings of horses and Jesus, however, reveal a passionate, confident hand, an inventive use of pastel and deft, empathetic observation. Drafted in sensitive shades of beige and brown, his Jesus is sorrowful and exhausted, bruised soft lips beneath a harsh crown of thorns. Sketched bold, bright and loose, his horses don’t trot, they run wildly across their dark paper grounds. These subjects may not be as sexy as naked women, but then, dullness isn’t really very sexy anyway. Spirited, inventive rendering is, and that’s what Mujakovic has found here. 8/22/12 4:28 PM



**211 • Katrin Leitner-Peter** Katrin Leitner-Peter is not the first artist to reveal an interest in mushrooms, nor will she be the last. John Cage was a member in good standing of the Mycological Society of New York, and certainly the hallucinatory qualities of certain varieties have inspired creative visions for centuries. So what is the appeal for Leitner-Peter? Based on a copious number of acrylic sketches, her interest appears to be part scientific discovery, part wild projection. Drawing after drawing details a previously unknown species of hot pink and grey fungus that exhibits a stunning amount of variations: there are mushrooms with multiple heads and stalks; mushrooms that plug in to electric outlets; mushrooms that drip, drool, explode and disintegrate; mushrooms on fire; even mushrooms with babies appended to them. A smaller set of pictures speculates on the data stored in these domed fungi, in terms of biological history, energy potential and consciousness. Imaginative research or hallucinatory documentation? Either way, it’s all in a day’s work for an artist previously known as one of “The Flying Scientists.” 8/22/12 5:06 PM





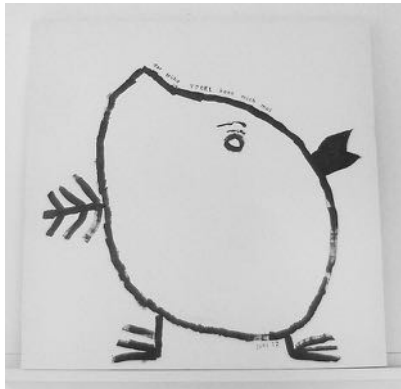


### 212 • Deborah Adams Doering

The composition of the world has been understood in terms of earth, fire, air and water; the periodical elements; and, most recently, the zeros and ones of computer programming. To most of us who are not programmers, this last option can seem strict and mechanical, not to mention opaque in the way of so much digital stuff. But not to Deborah Adams Doering, who reimagines zeros and ones as mutable signs

that are one and the same, the zero becoming a one as it moves and turns to the side, leaving a trace in between. Doering inscribes her system in paint on paper, in paint on photographs of friends, in doodles on pre-printed pamphlets, on photographs of people standing in front of Modernist artworks. Oftentimes she scans these documents, reworks them digitally, prints them, and then reworks them further by hand. It's a method that moves comfortably between the handmade and the mechanical-digital, humanizing the latter much the way her sign system does. Only through personification can a round zero stand up and slowly turn to the side, revealing that it is indeed a tall, skinny one. 8/22/12 5:37 PM

**213 • Charlotte Lohr** Charlotte Lohr is six years old. She has made her first canvas, and it is a picture of a red bird. The bird stands dead center in the middle of a large white expanse, filling it with its round body, pointy beak, tail feathers,



two feet and one eye. A phrase runs along the top of the chick's head. From this description, you might imagine a sweet blob of red paint and some cheery ditty, all squashed onto a wee canvas. You would be wrong. Lohr paints her 90 cm square composition with a bold, thoughtful line, and her sense of restraint appeals. The bird isn't colored in, and its schematic form feels original and cheeky. The caption, meanwhile, is not only stamped on in a nifty font, it's an impudent play on one of the most annoying of sayings: The early bird catches the worm. Instead, Lohr wrote: I don't give a shit about the early bird. This is surpris-

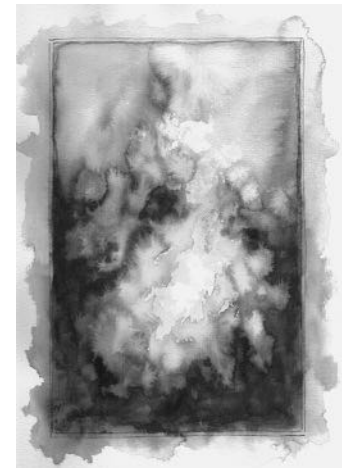
ing coming from a six year old, but also not. Children absorb and question everything in their environment, and the alternative maxim hangs in the Lohr family kitchen. So Lohr junior decided to interpret it and picture it. What's so novel is the witty minimalism of her illustration, a style any grown-up would be hard-pressed to follow. 8/25/12 2:00 PM

**214 • E. Dworok** Watercolor is a pleasant medium, a pretty means of achieving loose, lovely colors. But it can achieve harsher, stranger results, too, as it does in the hands of E. Dworok. Rather than apply water-based pigments to thick, heavy paper, as is typically done, Dworok has evolved a practice that employs polypropylene. Color sits on top of the picture rather than being absorbed into it, creating striking oily expanses that appear part aqueous, part gaseous. What truly excites, however, is that Dworok resists the urge to create benignly attractive



effects with this new technique, opting instead for unsettling political ones. This works best when he depicts situations like the nuclear meltdown in Fukushima, poisoning an entire landscape with bilious clouds of frightening origin. It's less successful with precise symbols, like a shoe held up as an insult during the Egyptian revolution. But considering the current world climate of natural and man-made disasters, Dworok ought not to lack for subjects that could use his glowering touch. 8/25/12 2:38 PM

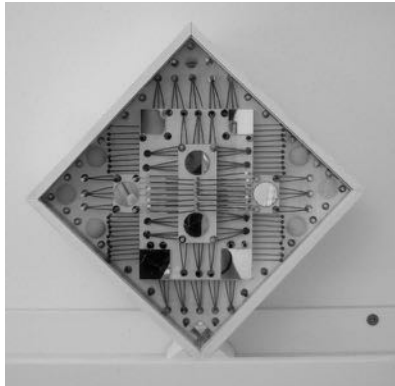
**215 • Michael R. Dyroff** What is it about watercolor, watercolor that bleeds and stains, running one color into the next, pooling darker at the edges? A modest series of studies by Michael R. Dyroff offers enough stunning pages of color-steeped mystery to propose some possible answers to these questions. Dyroff's precious, intimate paintings suggest no forms, abstract or otherwise, except perhaps the faintest suggestion of heat, light, air and water. (Though not earth, paradoxically, given the mineral base of so many pigments.) The medium appears to have once been alive, something that moved on its own, with and without the painter's helpful brush. This is not so with oil, which Dyroff also uses in his exploration of color. In truth, his project is not about watercolor but about color, and he investigates it in various ways, including through representational forms. But forests and skulls and figures will always distract from the hues that color them, whereas watercolor treated as just that and nothing else, watercolor used only to represent water and color, can offer an intense, unmediated experience of two of the most critical elements of our world. We could not live without water; it would be tragic to live without color. 8/25/12 3:16 PM



**216 • Angelika Oft-Roy** Bronze is a serious medium. For centuries it has given solid, permanent shape to monuments and memorials, to heroes and saints, rendering them perfectly smooth, shiny—and dead. Angelika Oft-Roy also sculpts in bronze, but her female figurines are nothing like these. Sprightly and contemporary, they stand just a foot tall, in frisky and awkward poses, or sprawled casually across the corner of a table. They wear natty high-heeled boots and comfy flip-flops, and sport swimming trunks, party frocks and chic coats. Despite the everyday details, however, Oft-Roy's ladies aren't exactly naturalistic. They're caricatures of the most endearing sort: a perfectly cute angel of a girl, who's also an actual angel, wings and all; an alter ego whose dress and accessories, including the heart she holds in her hand, are shells but whose body is real; a hollow woman whose fashionable clothes are the only solid thing about her. But though they are cartoons in the sense of exaggeration, they are also fundamentally lifelike in another way. Mottled and drippy, patchy with patina, cut and shaped in obvious ways, they bear all the traces of their laborious, hands-on making. 8/25/12 4:03 PM



**217 • Henner Richter** Art can be made out of abstract ideals or the cult of nature, personality worship or aesthetic experiment. It can also arise from quotidian objects and vocational skills. But though these last may be commonplace, they need not produce something mundane. Henner Richter proves this again and again, as he mines the stuff of a state surveyor's profession and a rich but aging life. Thus thousands of acupuncture needles come together with candy boxes and copper coils to form dizzying cosmologies. Hyperbolic boards are layered one over the other, then meticulously colored in, to create what might be the first topographical op art. There's more, of course: a holiday matchbook assemblage, a stamp vitrine, a curtain rod abstraction, tree root snakes, even a Documenta IX collage. Life produces a lot of odds and ends, bits and pieces. But it's up to us to decide if it is junk or art, and how to make it one thing or the other. Before he retired, Richter was a land surveyor, making order out of whatever lay before him. He continues to do so, proving that order is anything but ordinary. 8/25/12 4:42 PM



**218 • Yan Lei** Yan Lei's "Limited Art Project" looks like a cross between the French Salon and a museum warehouse. Paintings of every shape and size and color and style are hung on every available square inch of wall, from floor to ceiling, from the ceiling, and on sliding storage racks. There are 377 canvases in total, created by five assistants in Beijing, and over the course of DOCUMENTA (13) every single one of those pictures will be monochromatically recovered with car paint at the local Volkswagen factory and then rehung. Given the amount of black, white and beige on the streets, one could be forgiven for expecting a less fabulous spectrum. But orange, turquoise, lavender, forest green and every hue in between are fast covering up Madonna and Mao, tiger and skeleton. This has much to do with everything, with the pixelation of images, the erasure of tradition, the cachet of sacrilege, the transfer of energy, the promiscuity of style, and more besides. But because the pictures were first painted by hand in an artist's studio, then painted by machine in a factory, it seems that they also have a lot to do with originality versus reproduction, with human work versus automatic production. That may be so, but the canvases were daubed by assistants, and the car factory is run by people. In the end, it's the artist who will never touch a single one, except with his conceptual labor. 8/25/12 5:18 PM



**219 • KG Augenstern** The duo KG Augenstern, made up of Christiane Prehn and Wolfgang Meyer, recently sailed their houseboat from Berlin to Kassel, collecting a ten-liter jug of wind every hour of the journey, complete with details of location, temperature, humidity and air pressure, plus a photograph. During the recent heat wave, they released some of this fresh air into the Kassel environment, alongside a display of the jugs that migrated each day with air currents. Dockside at the Fulda, they put on a screening each night of a Berlin power plant smokestack, sited just so that it turned their boat into an old steam ship. Except it's not actually their boat, because their boat got stuck in Minden when hot weather lowered the depth of the river. This is not an uncommon occurrence—water is often kept in the Edersee on account of leisure activities, leading to problems for commercial shippers. And that's not to mention the controversy surrounding the Kassel locks, which are going to shut next year and isolate this stretch of the Fulda. It's hard to be funny or strange when water and air are at stake, so it's perhaps understandable that the field of ecological art is not usually known for its sense of humor, and even less for its surrealism. Fortunately for the rest of us, KG Augenstern have been on their boat for so long, no one told them. 8/25/12 6:03 PM

# September



**220 • Berthild Kroeschell** First, the story: In the village of Mardorf, in the 19th century, there lived a boy who dreamed of traveling the world. He made it as far as Kassel, some 30 km to the south, whereupon the speed of the carriages, incessant commerce of the stores, immensity of the houses, and inability to sleep in Friedrichsplatz caused him to head home. His return shout of “Hurra Mardorf, Deutscher Boden” was received with great irony, and the tale has been passed down by the generations. An illustrated version was recently produced by Mardorfer Berthild Kroeschell, in a naive style perfectly suited to an anecdote about a naive young man. Spiral-bound like a wall calendar (but without any days), the story functions on a loop, a narrative that will repeat itself again and again, as young people

with open minds dream the world and then confront it. In Kroeschell’s version, however, a new element appears. The tale is told not just in German but also in Turkish, Russian, Dutch and Polish, translated by four foreign-born inhabitants of present-day Mardorf. One wonders what they themselves think of such a tale.

9/10/12 1:54 PM

### 221 • PAO (Ottmar Alfred Paul)

Ottmar Alfred Paul, who signs his artwork with the single name Pao, is a painter of fiery, modernist abstractions and a sculptor of realistic nudes, primitivist figures and biomorphic shapes. In 2000, he carved "A Piece from an Apple Tree," a 60-cm-high form whittled from a single block of wood. It is a compellingly odd thing, suggesting and refuting anthropomorphism at every turn. Full of curves and holes, it ought to resolve organically or geometrically, but it does neither. Instead, Pao's sculpture recalls an espresso machine, a microscope, a treble clef. It is machinic, a term rarely used to describe modernist forms, but which should be as common among them as Isamu Noguchi's biomorphism or Naum Gabo's constructivism. Modernism, after all, idealizes itself, and what could be more logical for it to idealize than the forms produced and celebrated in its own era. 9/10/12 2:33 PM



**222 • Johannes Lührs** If Julian Schnabel were more modest and less of a narcissist he might have made paintings that looked a little bit like the canvases and collages of Johannes Lührs. Lührs may have just barely been born during the heyday of 1980s Neo-Expressionism, but he channels its spontaneous, urban gestures with a vibrant sincerity. Dozens of 40-cm-square canvases present scrawled, brushy, bold faces in every shade imaginable, as if Lührs had blown up details taken straight from a monumental work by Jean-Michel Basquiat. That some of these pictures are painted collaboratively renders them particularly contemporary, via the participatory ethos of today's art world, with its social experiments, relational projects and live painting events. Lührs seems to know this well enough. The series title is "Exlebiment III," a neologism of his own invention that combines the German words for experiment and living into one. 9/10/12 3:05 PM



**223 • Frauke Alina Becker** Frauke Alina Becker is a fashion design student. Given the bling and flash and trending of that world, it comes as a welcome surprise to explore Becker's sketchbook, which reveals sensitive exploration of the



body as a vulnerable, beautiful and dark site of damage, metamorphosis, projection and shifting identity. No wonder that the artistic references dropped throughout are to Hieronymus Bosch, Hans Bellmer and Matthew Barney. (All B's, just like Becker herself.) A prosthetic heart built out of plastic tubing resembles a nest of thorns, protective of the soul nestled inside. An immense hippo costume made out of giant wads of paper provides a dress for hiding and sheltering. A painting exploring space places a blind self-portrait of the artist inside an egg for protection against the needy world outside her shell. Fashion is mostly thought of as a means of presenting oneself to others, but Becker suggests something both more fundamental and more imaginative: that it can provide sanctuary and surreality. 9/10/12 4:07 PM

**224 • Rose Meissner** Rose Meissner professes to be a painter of pictures that have no particular religious bearing, but the canvases tell another story. They are indeed as awash in feelings of hope, belief, reliance and love as she intends them to be, but with a nod to Mondrian here and to Cubism there, her work might best be described as ecclesiastical modernism. A composition whose title translates as "Trust" nestles one figure comfortably against a larger one. Traced in ecstatic shades of ultramarine blue against a mottled ground of shimmery golds



and reds, the painting recalls traditional icons, though without the preciousness of that form's small scale. "Messenger" stands a featureless, triumphal figure at the center of a canvas filled with its flowing, outstretched wings. A vague halo etched into the thick, sunset-colored background confirms the angel's identity, regardless of the title's neutrality. A true messenger does not arrive quietly. 9/10/12 4:42 PM

## 225 • Maxie Fischer

Fatalism and melancholy suffuse a series of black-and-white photographs by Maxie Fischer, some shot in Iceland, others in her hometown. The seven pictures feature a rain-spattered window drawn with vertical shades; a home at the edge of a picturesque nowhere; a pile of bleached white bones, peacefully strewn in dry grass; the skull and horns of a small mammal, mounted on a varnished piece of wood; a piece of fox fur flung over a man's nude shoulder, its little paw still attached; a stag with a head of broad, striking antlers, abruptly cropped by the camera. These are dark images, eerily calm and commendably restrained in their employment of beauty and romanticism. Titled "Exits," they suggest a number of ways out, each bleaker and more real than the next. 9/10/12 5:11 PM



226 • Sven Krolczik Sven Krolczik used to be a figurative painter in a style often referred to as magical realism. Today he is a non-objective painter. Two untitled canvases bear this out. They contain not forms but colors—colors that sit still, colors that move, colors that merge with one another, colors that hold their own, colors that retreat into themselves and colors that gaze back. This seems at first to be magical, too, but upon further contemplation turns out to be utterly logical. That is indeed what colors do, given the chance by the painter to be themselves instead of trying to look like something that the painter wants to depict. Krolczik of necessity makes great use of black and white, as well as the canvas's plain gessoed ground, and he paints in oil. Together these factors make for tautological abstractions—paintings that reveal their own time and process, paintings that explain themselves. 9/10/12 5:40 PM



227 • Kim Engelen Kim Engelen is something of a bridge connoisseur, or maybe a bridge philosopher. For a few years now, she has been collecting photographs of herself, taken by passersby, on bridge structures around the world, from the Tower Bridge in London to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco to the Red Fort Bridge in Agra. These have been printed in a panoramic artist's book together



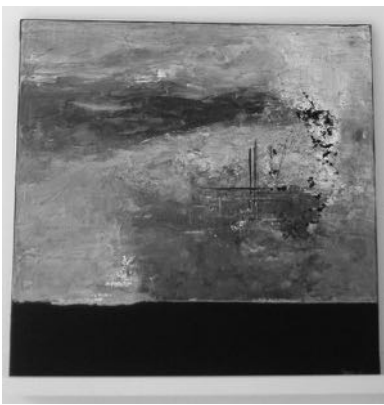
with a copious amount of text that Engelen generated weekly in the form of a blog. The writing ruminates on the process of making art; on bridges as physical structures for crossing over and jumping off and living under; on bridges as symbolic structures for transition and communication; and more broadly on issues of migration and tourism. Where the photographs of bridges themselves fit in proves the tricky thing, and Engelen seems to suspect this, as

she continues to question the formal and procedural aspects of her pictures, and even more so, as she devotes some two-thirds of her book to textual musing instead of photographic resolution. Ultimately, "Bridges" is as much about photography as it is about bridges—and how photography itself can fail to act as a bridge. 9/12/12 2:00 PM

228 • Anna C. Schmidt A brief history of artistically designed lamps would have to include Isamu Noguchi's paper-covered modernist orbs, Philippe Starck's many postmodern witticisms, and the cute metal cow head that stood by my bedside when I was a teenager. Anna C. Schmidt's "Funky Mary" glows somewhere in between them all. Originally just a floor lamp with a fussy wooden base and a cream silk shade trimmed in black velvet, the device was utterly transformed by Schmidt's addition of organza and chicken wire. The shade became a swishy ladies' skirt, complete with legs hanging below and a bustier-wearing torso above. Other



creations by Schmidt reimagine the lampshade with slightly less bawdiness but an equal understanding of its inherent possibilities. Magazine pages, hand-knit wool, painted fabric, and variously deconstructed and reconstructed found shades abound; light is used both in its presence and in its absence; even the metal frame that invisibly holds it all together becomes a striking element. A perfect reading light these are not—but then, with the advent of e-readers, we no longer really need lamps for lighting up the printed page. 9/12/12 2:40 PM



**229 • Marlis Kuhn** Marlis Kuhn paints abstract pictures that reward not just close looking but very, very close looking. By this I mean that the interested viewer ought to get so near to the surface of the canvas that she or he can notice the many concentric circles buried under fiery waves of red, green and orange paint in an untitled diptych. Or the craggy texture clustered under and just breaking through the grassy, windy sweep of another untitled composition.

(Here, Kuhn helps out the timid viewer, accentuating moments of perforation with dabs of midnight blue paint, inky but not quite black against the swirling landscape.) Such close looking can also disappoint, as when the layering of a third picture turns out to lack consistency, with translucent bands of red, yellow, blue and green applied in full but lightly, their juxtaposition producing striking effects irreconcilable with the relatively clunky addition of two thick gold ovals. What an irony, then, to step back from this last canvas and realize that one of the ovals is also an eye. 9/12/12 3:13 PM

**230 • Yi-Ping Hou** Yi-Ping Hou and I have been sipping oolong tea for 20 minutes, as part of an artwork she calls “Serve Tea.” Her set is delicate and she uses it with sureness. Her three-year-old son Jasper flits around, wondering if it’s time to pour yet, time to paint. Are young children compatible with “tea,” a centuries-old practice meant to take the participants out of the space and time of quotidian circumstances? We discuss this and decide they are not. This feels painful but true. Is the self-conscious nature imposed by my open, public performance space compatible with “tea,” a ritual whose mastery involves slowing down and relaxing into intimate, subtle communion? We discuss this and decide it is not either. Finally, we take the wet, open tea leaves, scatter them on thick white paper, and together with Jasper’s help, ink them down in black and a bit of red. (Hou took up printmaking when her pregnancy forced her to stop using oil paint.) Would one of the Japanese masters Okakura writes about in “The Book of Tea” recognize or even appreciate our interaction? If he was a true master, then yes, if only for the deep honesty, flexibility and generosity that Yi-Ping Hou’s “Serve Tea” brought out in us all. 9/12/12 4:06 PM



**231 • Claudia Pöhl** Claudia Pöhl is a painter of images that abound in mild surrealism, both intentionally and not. In one composition, two women perch in front of an immense frame, carefully cleaning the solar system suspended within its gilded edges. There’s some delight here in the double, maybe triple, play of a picture within a picture, which turns out not to be a picture at all, though of course it is also that too. And in the feminist witticism of women cleaning, always cleaning up after everyone, but at least cleaning something as grand as the planets! Two other canvases offer an odder kind of surrealism,



one art historical, the other site-specific. A painting of large, colorful stones on a beach imagines an artwork that already exists, by the Chicago conceptualist Tony Tasset, who has been painting real rocks in rainbow enamel for the past few years. An illustration of a bright blue wooden beach shack echoes the bright blue wooden hut in which this review is being written. Neither of these very real coincidences could possibly have been planned by the artist, but surrealism, as the Surrealists invented it—or at least named it—back in 1924, was meant to be an unexpected encounter with the marvelous in the middle of quotidian reality. It suffices to be open to its magnetism. 9/12/12 4:38 PM

**232 • Jana Alfery** Photocollage was invented by the Dadaists John Heartfield and Hannah Höch, who pasted together images cut from magazines and newspapers in order to graphically reveal the grotesque political and social situations surrounding the First World War. But photocollage can also do the exact opposite. Consider the work of Jana Alfery, who brings together found images, smoothing out the differences between them so that they cohere into a single picture with a unifying theme. Fine art photography books, fashion magazines, newspapers, specialized publications in geography, astronomy and botany all yield up their images to her scissors, and with a hefty dose of rearranging and some glue, they settle down into compositions on the subject of wetness, dryness, lips or the dream garden. Alfery reveals her list of sources upon inquiry—on their own, it can be difficult to gage exactly what the images once were, or where exactly they came from. High or low, commercial or intellectual, erotic or pornographic, decorative or purposeful? The confusion intrigues, and points to the state of the image today.

9/12/12 5:07 PM



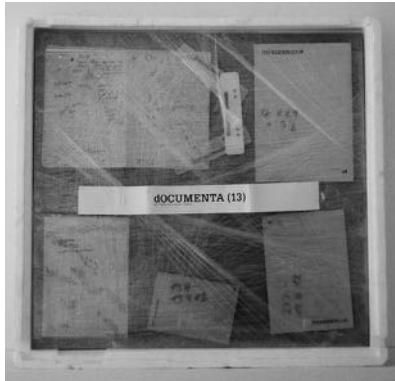
**233 • Edeltraud Merker** Why paint?

Photographs are far better at depicting specific people and places; words tell the clearest stories. But the compositions of Edeltraud Merker suggest other aims entirely, ones incompatible with these mediums. A modest watercolor completed over 30 years ago illustrates the first pair of shoes worn by the artist's baby daughter.

A photograph would have caught every detail; a bronze cast would have given a better sense of scale and dimensions; but Merker's painting reveals tender care, as she attends with her brush to each and every smudge covering the red, blue and white leather of her child's well-worn shoes. More recently, Merker has taken to painting large, moody canvases. An architectural scene meant to represent stillness can't, on account of colors that are too harsh and too thinly and hurriedly applied. But another, which portrays the cool noisiness of a waterfall well enough, deserves note for its repetitious, vertical, flowing application of oil paint. This indicates a meditative process, miming the feeling of losing oneself in the calm rush of a cascade. 9/12/12 5:42 PM



**234 • Tom Tiggemann** How do you intervene in dOCUMENTA (13), a citywide exhibition that is about the heterogeneity of creative practice, and which also, both paradoxically and of necessity, establishes certain limits? Some folks set up camp in front of the Fridericianum. Tom Tiggemann engaged in a number of subtler practices, often under the alias AWOC, which looks a lot like AWOL. He extended his official dTOURS into unofficial ones; organized spoken word events for refugees; kept copious notebooks; brought the entirety of this engagement to me for public review; and produced many more acts, claimed and unclaimed. Each of these gestures mirrors practices already curated into the exhibition proper: Walid Raad's tours, poetry readings at the Hauptbahnhof, Critical Art Ensemble's open house, René Gabri's virtuosic notebooks, the 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts publication series.

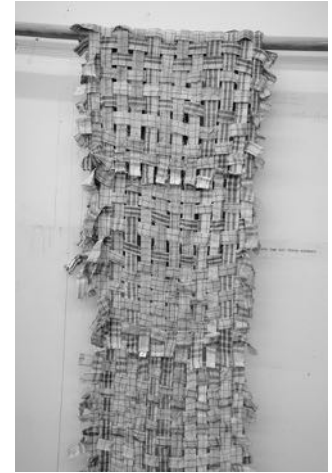


The difference between these official products and Tiggemann's interventionist ones is not the traditional one of quality nor the elitist one of exclusion; rather it is a question of privacy. Ultimately, Tiggemann decided that his notebooks, including a beautiful one on translucent paper, were not for open public exposition. This was not a possible choice for any participant in dOCUMENTA(13). 9/15/12 12:20 PM

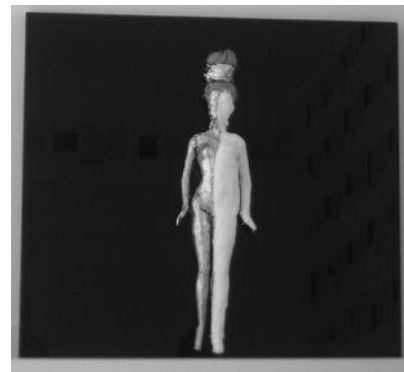
and Tiggemann's interventionist ones is not the traditional one of quality nor the elitist one of exclusion; rather it is a question of privacy. Ultimately, Tiggemann decided that his notebooks, including a beautiful one on translucent paper, were not for open public exposition. This was not a possible choice for any participant in dOCUMENTA(13). 9/15/12 12:20 PM

**235 • Sylvia Krüger** The compatibility of motherhood and art making is not a given, but it is excruciatingly important to raise as a possibility.

Sylvia Krüger, a weaver and the mother of a boy who will turn three next week, is currently working out her own answers to its complicated questions. This feels like more of a necessity than a choice, as it similarly was for feminist artists like Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Mary Kelly beginning in the 1970s. Krüger, like her predecessors, works with and in her domestic and quotidian environment: she shreds and re-weaves used dishtowels; embroiders nighttime musings into her pillow (when finally there is enough quiet to think adult thoughts); builds the image of a house as a kind of feminist portraiture; spins yarn on a record-player bobbin, marking the constant passage of time; carves found sticks into hundreds of spools; and even fashions conventional, fairy-tale like tapestries. It is not easy to raise a child, and it is even more difficult to do this while making art; Krüger reveals these tensions with great honesty when she cuts up an unsettlingly chaotic tapestry, allows the record player to spin endlessly, and leaves the angry wood chips of her whittling spread across the floor, with three kitchen knives nearby. Redemption comes when these gestures and materials join together to form works of art. 9/15/12 2:09 PM



**236 • Lilli-Marie Hornschu** Barbie is every feminist's nightmare, a situation that renders her impossible figure ripe for the kind of artistic intervention undertaken by Lilli-Marie Hornschu. It was not so long ago that Hornschu, who is twelve, played with Barbies. But there's nothing playful about this particular doll, which Hornschu has covered half in gold paint and half in plaster, and laid out like a specimen on a shiny black slab. So dissect her we will. The gold half indicates Barbie as both idealized and idolized, an unrealistic vision that many blindly aspire to and prostrate themselves before. The plaster half marks a different kind of body, a lumpy and thickset one, but also a damaged one, covered in a cast that suggests the possibility of healing. Will medical treatment help this woman to become as beautiful as Barbie? Fortunately, Hornschu has titled the sculpture "Inside Everybody Is as 'Perfect' as Barbie's Body," and those quotation marks around the word "Perfect" crucially confirm the sophistication and criticality of Hornschu's gesture. For there is nothing perfect about Barbie at all: the gold paint is cheap and chipped, both blinding and deafening. But it's equally hard to see or hear through a head covered in plaster bandages. She's a totally flawed model, seen from any angle. 9/15/12 2:47 PM



**237 • Anna Yema Ditzel** I love rainbows. Who doesn't? But most of us, myself included, would be too unsentimental, or too afraid of appearing sentimental, or naïve, or guileless, to actually paint a picture of one. For this, as for

many other images and acts of the simplest joy and beauty, we need a child. And here we have one: Anna Yema Ditzel, age five, who loves to paint not just the large canvas she presents here but also playthings, tables and walls. Apart from the general loveliness of rainbows, which Ditzel certainly captures, and the accompanying pleasantness of a big green field and a bright blue sky dappled with plump white clouds, what distinguishes her painting from other similar representations is three-fold. Ditzel gives the rainbow in question more than the usual number of colors and arranges them in a novel order. She portrays the sun with



not just yellow rays but also green ones. Finally, she signs her name without any restraint, using half the hues on her palette to write the letters A-N-N-A out twice, tall and energetic, as if they were horses running free across the grassy field of her imagination. 9/15/12 3:15 PM



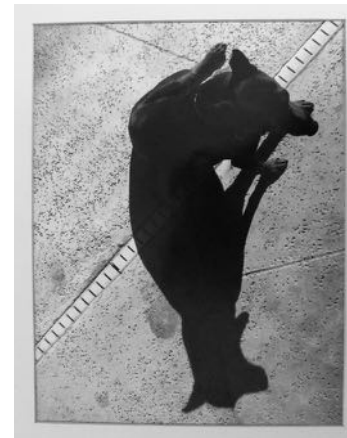
**238 • Jutta Schlier** Representations of the natural world are typically horizontal in orientation, because that's what you need for macrocosmic views of the landscape. Jutta Schlier's are vertical, and this feels innately tied to her microcosmic attention to the details of plant life, to the dew that gathers on a leaf, the roots that plunge into soil, the tiny angels who flit about between the fronds. A composition on this last subject seems to confirm the divine temperament of Schlier's paintings, whose shape combines with luminescent color to suggest stained glass church windows. The artist's unique method of painting—she uses water and rags to manipulate acrylic on wood, then finishes it off with pencil or fine brushwork—extends these readings. A surface is created whose layering and randomness echo the density and mottling of thick, colored glass, but also the complexity and beauty of biological life forms whose genesis and growth we only partly understand, and too rarely take the time to contemplate. 9/15/12 3:59 PM



Hagen's artistic production, even those images that seem to be unconnected to spirituality, like floral motifs. Certainly Beuys would have had it that way. And Mohammed, too. 9/15/12 4:30 PM

**239 • Maja Jutta Hagen** Maja Jutta Hagen is a proponent of the rapprochement between art and life, of the kind of open creative schooling popularized by Joseph Beuys, and of spiritual notions like chakras. She is also a painter of pointillist apple trees, pretty water lilies, a moody but vibrant abstraction she describes as "Islamic," a harsh, brushy landscape, and an effervescent rendering of Japanese cherry blossoms. Posing Hagen's belief structure alongside her artistic production raises questions of representation versus reality. Is her painting of the chakras a working through of energy, or is it simply a depiction? Likewise her portrayal of a kundalini dancer. This inquiry might fruitfully be extended to all of

**240 • Marianne Weichselbaumer** Most photographs work best in series. This is because a photograph typically does not tell a thousand words, notwithstanding the cliché. Sometimes, however, a single photograph can stand utterly on its own. Marianne Weichselbaumer's picture of her dog Brutus is one such image, despite the odds. (The odds being the above cliché, the fact that Weichselbaumer was eighteen when she took the photo and, perhaps most importantly, the fact that its subject is the family pet.) Two factors explain the photograph's success. First is the inherent magic of shadows, revealed here in the marvelous way that something small can become big. (Brutus, being a miniature pinscher, would fit in your shoulder bag, but not his shadow, with stretches nearly three times his length.) Second is the surprise of an image with no obvious orientation. Weichselbaumer achieves this by shooting her two-headed subject from above, creating an all-over composition with sidewalk vectors pointing in every direction. One plus two together equals an image puzzle, which the viewer is tasked to figure out, and which fortunately has no single right answer. 9/15/12 4:53 PM





**24 • Gabriele Luck** Gabriele Luck signs her collages “GLuck,” so it’s tempting to understand her vision of the world in terms of luck, which is the German translation of her fortuitous nomenclature. As it happens, this proves a reasonable approach to compositions that picture a small herd of elephants roaming a snowy plain, overseen by a lone lighthouse; an ancient solar system that includes a moon

covered in cannabis and one very happy astronaut; a lone black panther peering out of a hole in the desert; a pregnant mother earth and her barren planet; and a tumultuous montage of fighter jets, skulls, flooding, oil barrels and one picturesque landscape. The question, then, is whether or not Luck believes that our world has enough good fortune, i.e. luck, to survive the current state of climatological and political and humanitarian crises, as well as those to come. Collage, which she wields both intuitively and strategically—and with humor, too, thank goodness—is a perfect medium through which to pose such relevant but ultimately unanswerable questions. 9/15/12 5:33 PM



# Notes on Writing, Thoughts on Art

Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev

There is something insanely democratic in this project. Insane because it is based on a reversal of normative structures of comportment in the art world between artists and critics yet at the same time on a form of extreme spectacle and “performative agonism”<sup>1</sup> on the part of its creator Lori Waxman which is most typical of the virtuosic<sup>2</sup> sensibilities of that same art world. This insane reversal of normativity which appears to be normal seems more usual in dreams than in waking life. In dreams, things that are implausible occur as if normal.

Indeed, *normally*, art critics come to a thematic group exhibition or to a solo exhibition and they look at the exhibited artworks. Then they go home and think about them, select a few they particularly hate and some they particularly love, reflect on the curator’s premises for the exhibition as a whole, and on how the works were installed, and on whether the works help “us” (the silent, voiceless visitors) understand or clarify the subject of the exhibition. Then they write their review, promptly published on their blogs<sup>3</sup> or, if they are lucky and more renowned, in a physical art magazine or newspaper.

1. That means with a competitive sports-like attitude, and showing off too.
2. The notion of the virtuosic, performative subject of the age of immaterial labour, typically an “artistic” personality, is well described by Paolo Virno in *Grammar of Multitude*, 2004, where he analyses Glenn Gould as an example and prefiguration of the precarious, flexible, performative subject of our times.
3. I have never exactly understood the etymology of the word “blog,” but it does sound rather deformed, and they did not use the word in the 1950s, when the Internet was still a more or less secret matter of the military industry.

That's what poets Frank O'Hara or John Ashberry did for *Art News* in the 1950s, and that's what Jerry Salz or Roberta Smith still do nowadays, albeit without the poets' audacious flair and more "judgementally"—flaunting their appeal-less<sup>4</sup> power of influence over the flocks of uninitiated and ignorant readers.

Already on-going for some time<sup>5</sup> as an experimental writer's project, Lori Waxman's "performative art criticism"<sup>6</sup> was at first funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation.<sup>7</sup> I learned about it some years ago and decided to invite her to dOCUMENTA (13) to re-perform the project in Kassel, Germany over the summer of 2012. Thus it came about that, inside the office space of a little blue wooden pre-fab house on a road called Schoene Aussicht which overlooks the Baroque Auepark, Waxman welcomed artists to submit artworks for her review. To schedule a 25-minute appointment, all you needed to do was walk in and ask for an appointment or write an email to critic@60wradmin.org. In this writing project, Waxman thus performed her thinking and writing by looking at anybody's artwork that was submitted to her attention by any artist. She wrote an approximately 200-word piece of art criticism about it at a speed of 60 words per minute, or two appointments and reviews an hour which were promptly self-published by being posted in locations that were made available to her, including the HNA local German newspaper and the dOCUMENTA website. On the cusp between being a public program activity developed by the education department of a museum on the one hand, and being a participatory and performative artwork itself on the other, Waxman's project was therapeutic as well as surrealistic. By a simple, poetic and personal gesture of compassionate loving-kindness and equanimity, this project bypasses the curators, museum directors, gallerists, dealers and collector-board members' choices and selections, with all their insider-trading and avid greed,<sup>8</sup> and reconnects artists and art thinkers together by eliminat-

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4. I mean "without the possibility of appeal" in juridical terms. I would never insinuate the reviews have "no appeal," as in "are not seducing nor engrossing."

5. Since 2005, when Waxman initially developed the project as an expansion of her art criticism.

6. That means she does it in public, and you might say it itself is an artwork.

7. How pertinent indeed with Warhol's notion of "fifteen minutes of fame."

8. Please note that this is an exaggeration, written in a rhetorical mode. Not everybody is Doctor Evil. However, I believe an artist today is the most emblematic figure of identifiable social groups of producers of immaterial, cognitive labor. (Although most people would say that software producers and mathematicians in banks

ing all those mediators. As a form of art therapy,<sup>9</sup> it welcomes all those artists who feel rejected by the system, who quietly walk through the large group shows and international exhibitions of the "global age"<sup>10</sup> to learn about what's going on, to enjoy art and yet also, feeling tremendously rejected and offended by the whole thing, oscillating between an insidious sense of their own inadequacy because they were not invited to the show, and a sense of their own true merit and of the inadequacy of curators who overlook their artworks out of sheer ignorance and laziness<sup>11</sup> and thus forget to invite them to the show and the party.

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are.) We live in a world where the political challenges lie in how we can be emancipated from the strictures of what is often labeled "cognitive capitalism," a form of society where the symbolic order is the only order, and its exchanges produce the zeros—here more zeros, there less zeros—of the financial world. The financial world is the astrology of our times, or the visible, institutionalized part of a modern religion based on the belief in a God called "the economy." It is far from being a democratic system.

9. Art therapy means using artistic practice as a form of group psychological therapy, to heal neurotics and psychotics and schizophrenics and all other mentally-impaired persons by experimenting with and through art with them. It started after World War I in England and is related to play and to child psychology, and it reminds me of Melanie Klein, Augusto Boal, Donald Winnicott and his transitional objects idea, like a security blanket.

10. I believe the use of the term "global," widely used over the last ten years instead of older words like "international" or "universal," almost as a synonym for "modernization" and "westernization" of all parts of the world, has been subsumed by industry and politics as referring to the world becoming ever more interconnected by communications technologies, large corporations and the financial industries. It seems to have appeared in the 1960s, with the first satellite images of the planet, indeed looking like a "globe" from the sky, suggesting a new form of detached, third-person and powerful external large EYE, able to control what is being seen from the OUTSIDE. I prefer older more friendly words like "worldly," implying we are enmeshed in the "stuff" of the world, right brain as well as left, thickly in the intra-actions through which all makers of the world come to be and to matter.

11. The truth is in both analyses of the situation, and also somewhere in between. Furthermore, this curatorial overlooking is at times not caused by laziness but by sheer bad luck.

Beyond this general, systemic, playful and methodological turnaround of roles and positions, there is more. There always is. “Sometimes, perhaps more often than we acknowledge, the explicit subject of an artwork is of less interest than other subjects it may contain or revelations it might make,” Waxman writes in her review number 013 of Sandra Trasmudana’s artwork. Perhaps this is true also of her own project, which turns out to be a celebration of the storyteller, a singular self made up of the lives and works and stories of others.<sup>12</sup>

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12. When reading the impressive number of reviews, indeed, I am overwhelmed by her sense of compassion and marvel, by the different visions of what art might be, of what the world is, or might be, by the different personalities and materials, by how they are cared for or transformed in each case, and mostly by the personal and focused tone of Lori’s attention to each of them. Amidst the global flow of information, of posts and messages on the internet, of MMS’s and tweets, of collectively written knowledge banks like the Wiki world, full of repetitions and omissions, of SMS messages and phone calls interrupting other phone calls and conversations, I am always feeling a dismemberment, a falling apart. I lack a sense of a whole, of a self that can be provisionally held together somehow, for more than a few instants. All these artists’ generosity and trust in sharing with Lori their artworks and creations is gifted back by her openness, her looking and thinking and writing, and her “self,” sitting in her little office like a stone on a field, or a tree in a pasture, counting time, doing time, the time of a life made of many lives woven together.

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