

ART DESK

CONTEMPORARY ARTS, PERFORMANCE, AND THOUGHT



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A R T D E S K

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Marc Maron



▲
JOSE DÁVILA, *Untitled* (2016)
San Andrés stone volumes, rock, metal beams
photo by ALEX MARKS

A FEW SUMMER DAYS

WELCOME TO THE SIXTH EDITION OF ARTDESK, where you will meet perhaps the most important woman in contemporary art today—Sheena Wagstaff. She and I first met upon her arrival from London, where she had been chief curator of the Tate Modern. Since taking her place in New York as chairman of the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Sheena has taken the Met in bold new directions. If you happen to be in New York this summer, be sure to drop by to see the latest rooftop exhibition: Cornelia Parker's *PsychoBarn*. Intellectually, it is fascinating, but it's also a great photo op for your Facebook and Instagram efforts. Why not?

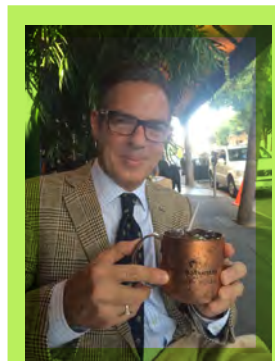
You'll also meet Damian Woetzel who has built the Vail International Dance Festival into something extraordinary. If you're ever looking for a respite from the heat and humidity of home, Vail—with its sunny days and cool nights—is the perfect place. Damian and his wife, Heather Watts, have guided and built the dance festival to a point of critical acclaim and insider credibility. It is my understanding that the dance festival will host a short program in New York at the City Center this November. I predict standing ovations.

On a recent trip to San Francisco to meet friends at the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Louisa McCune and I took time off to see *Beach Blanket Babylon*. If you haven't seen it, please do. It's a zany musical review that has been running non-stop since 1974. I first experienced it in 1982 when I was in college in California. I went with my father, and we haven't stopped laughing since. It is just as fresh and exciting today as it was then. The show is described as "a constant cascade of show stoppers" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Afterward, we stopped by a local watering hole and enjoyed a couple of Moscow Mules, which were so delicious that we wanted to share the recipe with you.

As it relates to the future, we have decided to expand and change ArtDesk. In studying our finances, economics, audience, and mission, we have discovered that we can easily grow the magazine to four issues rather than two—with a much improved online presence—by simply going from a magazine format to a broadsheet format. Certainly, one of the most respected names in the art world, *The Art Newspaper*, is printed monthly in broadsheet format. Our first trial run at this will be called *ArtDesk Conversations*, created as a supplement to this issue. After that, ArtDesk will continue to provide provocative art world coverage four times a year, and perhaps best of all, free to readers.

On a more serious note, in the contemporary thought department, we learn a bit about "passing the buck" in the context of a proposed constitutional amendment (State Question 777) that voters in Oklahoma will consider on the November ballot. While it seems harmless, it's actually one of those issues that *if you're not mad as hell about, you probably don't know what's going on*. Visit kirkpatrickfoundation.com for a non partisan analysis. Know before you vote.

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER.



CHRISTIAN KEESEE



BY EMPLOYING SIMPLE MATERIALS
AND PRECARIOUS ASSEMBLAGE,
JOSE DÁVILA'S WORK IS LITERALLY
A DELICATE BALANCE OF
STRENGTH AND INGENUITY.

MEGALYTH

Keep it simple, or, at least, make it look that way. A tall, rectangular, concrete column appears to have been cut into 1/3 and 2/3 proportions, an oval stone has been placed between the two column pieces, and the assemblage has been tied together and stabilized by a red ratchet strap which has been pulled taut. The strap holds the three elements in a tight balance that projects both a sense of stability and fragility. The slightest slackening of the strap will result in the collapse of the piece.

The described sculpture was created by artist Jose Dávila and is part of a series titled *Joint Effort*, exhibiting now at Marfa Contemporary in a show called *The Elephant and the Feather*. Each piece in the series explores what Dávila calls “the universal struggle of humanity against gravity.” His works create a palpable sense of tension, yet the struggle depicted here is an elegant one; the materials he uses have hard and sleek surfaces and familiar shapes—circles, ovals, rectangles, and squares. His materials include both the ancient and the modern: sets of smoked glass or slabs of marble appear in his pieces in the same size and condition in which he found them. The colorful ratchet straps can be found in a variety of hardware stores. It is through Dávila’s artistic vision that these ordinary items and familiar shapes combine to create unique and powerful statements.

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, where he still lives and works, Dávila is a rising star on the international art scene. His work is displayed on a global stage that includes galleries and exhibitions in Great Britain, Spain, Germany, Denmark, and numerous sites in the United States.

He has received support from the Andy Warhol Foundation and in 2017 will participate in a major collaborative effort called *Pacific Standard Time*, guided and funded by the Getty Foundation. Presenting exhibitions and other art installations at several southern California venues, the Getty project is organized around the relationship between the Los Angeles art scene and its Latin American roots. Prior to this, several examples of Dávila’s work, all drawn from the *Joint Effort* series, are on display at Marfa Contemporary. One of those works, a large outdoor piece, was created specifically for the Marfa, Texas, exhibition.

Joint Effort (Detail)

◀ San Andrés stone volumes, boulder, and ratchet strap (2015)

by MICHAEL DUTY



▲
JOSE DÁVILA, Exhibition view of *Untitled (Zimbabwe)*
Zimbabwe marble, commercial ratchet straps, and eye bolts (2014)
Courtesy of the artist and Galería OMR, Mexico City



Although Dávila has worked as an artist for two decades, he studied architecture in college and worked for an architectural firm prior to graduating. His decision to enter architectural school was driven more by the fact that it was affordable and nearby than a desire to pursue architecture as a career.

Although he turned away from it as a profession, he says he is still drawn to working with materials associated with building and construction. In an interview with *Kopenhagen Magasin*, he says, “I use very basic materials. Marble, stone, concrete, and glass. But all of them have huge significance. The stone for example, it is, literally and figuratively, the raw material of civilization. Marble was for centuries the medium for sculpture creation... while concrete and glass are the predilect materials of modernism and contemporary architecture.”

Curator Natalie Roncone spent a year collaborating with Dávila to select the pieces that comprise the exhibition in Marfa. She first met him while researching the work of another Guadalupe artist who happened to be a friend of Dávila. Roncone and Dávila considered several facets of his work before deciding on which pieces to include. In describing Dávila and his work, Roncone says, “I have come to know him as a unique mind, as someone who is that rare novelty: a contemporary artist who revels in the direct experience of art, unpolluted by academia or the marketplace.”

Dávila spoke of the collaborative process of working with a curator on the development of an exhibition, saying, “It’s a very interesting process in which an external view gets into the intimacy of your own work, so often you discover together different ways to approach and exhibit the work.”

All of the pieces in the exhibition express Dávila’s fascination with gravity. All display a precarious balance: concrete forms are split and joined with round or oval stones that rely solely on the tautness of the ratchet straps to remain in place. Large, smoked glass plates are tied to concrete forms or lean outwardly from a wall. While the tightly pulled straps convey a sense of stability, the pieces also verge on catastrophe—stone and concrete could topple in a moment, the glass could crack and shatter. Visitors to the exhibition will enter a world that is caught between two states—balance and collapse.

Roncone described the viewer’s role to his exhibitions in this manner: “I hope visitors will experience firsthand the humanistic quality of the work and the immense physicality of the pieces. Together, they establish this incredible amphitheater in which the presence of the visitor is vital as it creates an ongoing dialogue between past and present.” ✕

Jose Dávila’s The Elephant and the Feather will be on view at Marfa Contemporary through September.



Joint Effort
San Andrés stone volumes, boulder,
and ratchet strap (2015)

Joint Effort ▶
San Andrés stone volumes, smoked glass, and
ratchet strap (2015), Marfa Contemporary,
photo by ALEX MARKS



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SUMMER 2016

THE
NECESSITIES



WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO READ,
AND WHAT'S HAPPENING WHERE.

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FULCRUM



Soloist Milena Garcia and principal Julio Concepcion will perform in the Oklahoma City Ballet's 45th anniversary season, which includes classic works by George Balanchine and Agnes de Mille.

photograph by
SHEVAUN WILLIAMS

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

JEREMIAH DAVIS BRINGS HIS TALENTS TO OKLAHOMA CITY

Jeremiah Davis in the gallery at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center



When *Time Out New York* reviewed *Empire Travel Agency*, a production co-created by Jeremiah Davis, the publication called the immersive theatre experience “a marvel of coordinated inventiveness.” The phrase could have easily been a qualification for Davis’s new position: artistic director of Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center.

As artistic director, the Oklahoma native is tasked with overseeing programming for OCAC, working with Marfa Contemporary (located in Marfa, Texas), developing relationships with artists, companies, and agencies, and finding new ways to expand the arts community in Oklahoma.

A background in theatre is excellent training for this kind of job. Some of Davis’s career highlights include work on *Tuck Everlasting* and *Queen of the Night*, as well as the aforementioned *Empire Travel Agency*. What all theatre has in common, though, is the necessity of



A rendering of the upcoming Oklahoma Contemporary gallery space

collaboration; it’s an incredibly group-focused form that requires mutual respect and cooperation among diverse types and talents.

“Growing up in Oklahoma, I participated in theatre and I had a great interest in the arts, so much so that I went to Bennington College in Vermont to study performing arts,” says Davis. “I never imagined I would be able to make my home in Oklahoma, though, not with a career in the arts.”

While at Bennington, Davis did study theatre, but he also studied history, political science, and philosophy—fields that helped him recognize a common theme in his curiosity. This interaction and investigation of the human condition led to dramaturgy. “I was fascinated with human behavior and human interaction,” he says. “The process is collaborative; you have to be able to work with many different fields.” After a two-year stint teaching literature, composition, drama, and social sciences in Istanbul, Turkey, he headed for Columbia University where he earned a Master of Fine Arts in dramaturgy.

A course titled “Models of Dramatic Structure” does not sound

like the beginning of a love story, but in this class at Columbia is where Davis met his wife, Annie Holt, PhD. She was a student at the time, too, and the couple married in 2014. Holt was a lecturer at Columbia with a terminal degree in humanities when Davis applied for the OCAC position. “We had visited Oklahoma a few times, so she was familiar with the state,” he says. “She was on board from the beginning, even though it meant leaving Columbia.”

Oklahoma has always been important to Davis. Tulsa, where his mother still lives, holds memories of childhood. Yet, the state has changed dramatically since he left for Vermont, and that is even truer of Oklahoma City. “We have an amazing opportunity here,” he says. “People think about big arts cities like New York or Los Angeles as developing a ton of talent, but the truth is much of that talent comes from somewhere else.”

Davis hopes to harness that talent to help the community discover its own unique identity. “We want to tap into what has been going on—the state’s own voice, its own flavor—without being afraid of introducing change.”

“PEOPLE THINK ABOUT BIG ARTS CITIES LIKE NEW YORK OR LOS ANGELES AS DEVELOPING A TON OF TALENT, BUT THE TRUTH IS MUCH OF THAT TALENT COMES FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE.”

by GREG HORTON

photograph by CARY HOLTON, rendering by ELLIOTT + ASSOCIATES

THE MOUNT DEWEY TRAIL

Inner peace at 8,500 feet

by KELLY ROGERS

What was once a horse-traveled trail has been repaired and redesigned with a modern yogi twist. The Mount Dewey Trail, stretching up the peaks of Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, climbs one mile of lush forestry and adventurous hiking territory to an elevation of 8,459 feet. Although hiking might intimidate the rookie trailblazer, the Historic Green Mountain Falls Foundation has set out to motivate trail and nature enthusiasts alike to consider meditation as part of their journey.

Since the trail's official opening last summer, HGMFF architect Dick Bratton and Green Mountain Falls Trails Committee members have thoughtfully planned and chosen the perfect spot for nature watching and reflection. The Spiritual Platform, opening along the Mount Dewey Trail this summer, will offer hikers a resting place surrounded by natural beauty. Outfitted with a community bench as well as floor space designated for yoga mats, the Spiritual Platform is a space for meditation, spiritual reflection, and quiet relaxation.

Facing the southeast, the platform's view sets a frame for the sunrise and provides an overlook of the town whose buildings meander through the valley. Because the platform is only one quarter of a mile into the trail, Bratton says ambitious morning yogis can start their day enlightened and still get to work on time.

"Below their feet lies the entirety of Green Mountain Falls," Bratton says, "including Ute Pass Valley, the cliffs, and ramparts of the trail. I envision this space to have many uses." Yoga, meditation, relaxation, and perhaps even a small wedding are just a few that come to mind, he says.

TRAILHEAD » 38° 56' 17" N 105° 01' 10" W

SUMMIT » 38° 56' 29" N 105° 01' 30" W

greenmountainfalls.org



photography by AARON COLUSSI

Book Report

Our reading list includes meditations on the English weather and the works of Gerhard Richter—also our favorites that we've been paging through on these sunny summer days.

WEATHERLAND

Alexandra Harris
Thames & Hudson \$40

When Skies Are Grey

Stretch a metaphor too far and it becomes an allegory, at which point the multi-layered poetry of the metaphor becomes the literary equivalent of a game of “find the hidden objects.” In writing *Weatherland*, award-winning author and professor of literature Alexandra Harris manages to avoid metaphor abuse while tracing the relationship between artist and weather in English literature.

Harris's command of English literature is on full display throughout the ambitious project—she's a senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool, so this is no surprise—but so is her ability to write about the ways weather affects us and our art. Taking her cue from Shakespeare in one instance, Harris recreates a conversation between Hamlet and Polonius that resonates in all of us who have ever engaged our joy of imposing order on imaginary information.

In this scene Polonius and Hamlet discuss whether or not a cloud looks more like a weasel's back or a whale—not exactly an important moment in an otherwise bleak tragedy. From

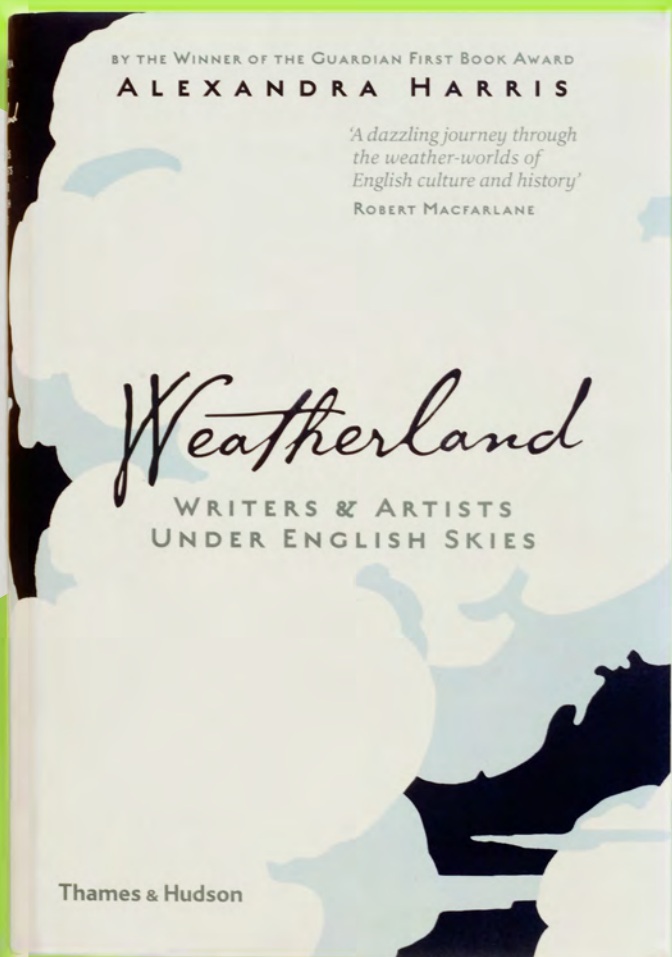
this, though, Harris makes one of the many remarkable insights that makes *Weatherland* so fascinating.

“Shakespeare acknowledges that we make the weather up,” she writes, “and studies the ways in which we do so. Our minds recoil from blankness, which is why it is hard to watch the clouds for a few minutes and ‘not’ see creatures.”

Every child knows this is true, if not why. From the Arthurian cycles to Milton's epic, from the poetry of Hughes through the “postcards of

another life” of D. H. Lawrence, and at many other points along the way, Harris traces the way we describe the weather because those descriptions become our metaphors: sunny, gloomy, cloudy, cold, bitter—a lexicon that is as much about ourselves as it is the weather we inhabit.

The 2017 National Weather Center Biennale at the University of Oklahoma is accepting submissions until October 1, 2016. For more information, visit ou.edu/content/nwcbiennale or curators@nwcbiennale.org





THE FLORAL GHOST

Susan Orlean and Philip Taaffe
Planthouse, Inc., \$22

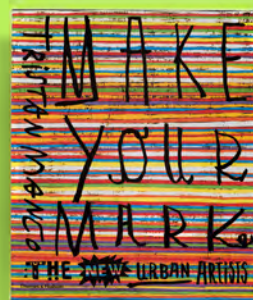
In an elegant coupling of the botanical and the poetic, bestselling author Susan Orlean and painter Philip Taaffe combine their arts to create an organic storytelling moment inspired by New York City's dwindling flower district.



MAPPLETHORPE FLORA: THE COMPLETE FLOWERS

Mark Holborn
Phaidon, \$175

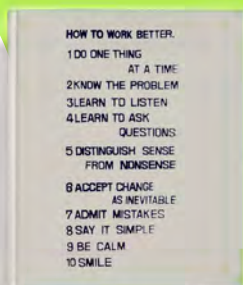
Robert Mapplethorpe's journey through photography began in 1970, when this iconic twentieth-century artist fixated on the flower as his subject for more than fifteen years. This period of his career is captured in this stunning collection.



MAKE YOUR MARK: THE NEW URBAN ARTISTS

Tristan Manco
Thames & Hudson, \$45

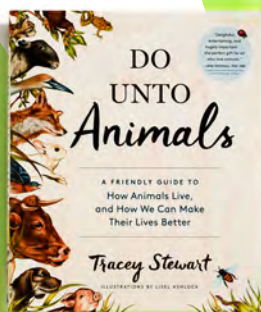
A leading writer on street art, Tristan Manco explores the work of thirty-five urban artists advancing a non-traditional genre: mark-making. Diverse mediums—from figurative painting to tattoo art—speak to Manco's curatorial eye for the traditional and avant-garde.



HOW TO WORK BETTER

Peter Fischli and David Weiss
Guggenheim, \$52

Swiss artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss compile photographs to reflect on film, sculpture, and multimedia installations from 1979 to 2012. Essays, notes on process, and featured interview excerpts are all a testament to the artists' pivotal contributions to contemporary art and thought.



DO UNTO ANIMALS: A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO HOW ANIMALS LIVE, AND HOW WE CAN MAKE THEIR LIVES BETTER

Tracey Stewart
Artisan, \$19.95

Animal advocate Tracey Stewart teaches us to live with the animals in our lives, from our furry companions to backyard critters. *Do Unto Animals* is a thoughtful "how to" for giving back to nature.



ARTISTS II

Jason Schmidt
Steidl, \$70

The second part of Jason Schmidt's photographic documentation of the art world today, *Artists II* chronicles 166 artists, including John Baldessari, Ai Weiwei, and Cindy Sherman—often in the midst of their work and demonstrating the arc of the contemporary art movement.

GERHARD RICHTER
PANORAMA: A RETROSPECTIVE
EXPANDED EDITION

*Edited by Nicholas Serota, Mark Godfrey. Text by Achim Borchardt-Hume, Dorothée Brill, Rachel Haidu, Christine Mehring, Camille Morineau
 D.A.P./Tate \$65*

How Soon Is Now

One of the difficulties of assessing the career and contributions of a living artist is that said artist is still alive to answer questions. Nicholas Serota's interview of Gerhard Richter that opens *Gerhard Richter: Panorama* is appropriately titled "I Have Nothing to Say and I'm Saying It." Serota, director of Tate galleries, is co-editor with Mark Godfrey of this collection of essays and works by Richter. He asks the artist the purpose of art.

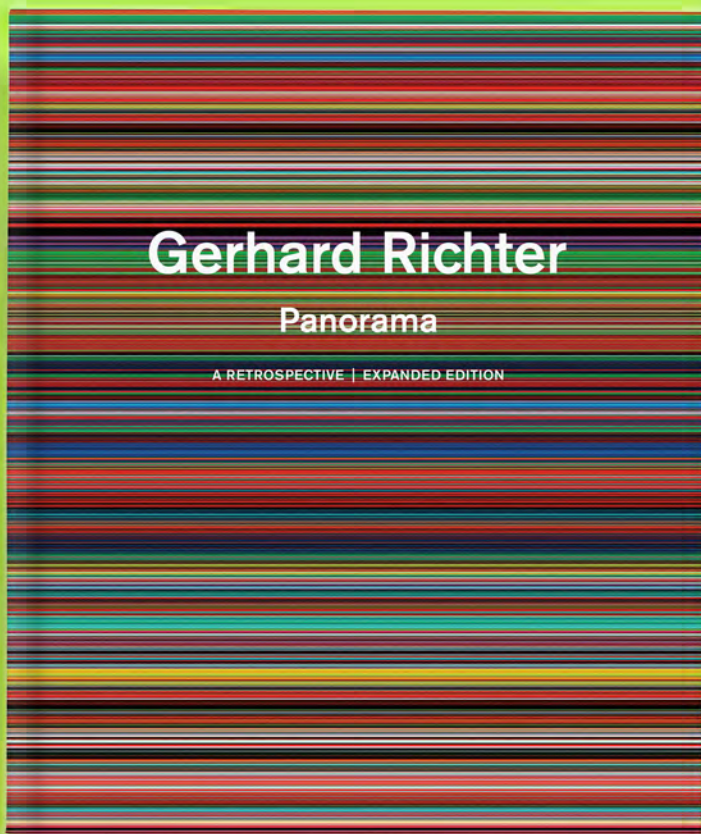
"For surviving this world. One of many, many...like bread, like love," Richter says.

The answer could be tongue-in-cheek or deeply sincere. Richter, after all, is a pioneer in European art post-World War II, and his body of work contains arresting imagery of war and desolation. But his is not the post-WWII cynicism of the European philosophers. Instead, Richter uses image and abstraction in mediums as diverse as glass installations, painting, and photography to offer meditations on the world and the objects and people who fill it.

This refusal to be limited by medium expresses Richter's remarkable imagination as well as his diverse way of seeing. As Godfrey writes in his essay "Damaged Landscapes," "...we see in all these...Richter's refusal to treat abstraction and image-based painting as two completely separate tendencies or practices."

In fact, they are not separate. Abstractions rely on imagery to make them plain and vice versa. Richter illustrates this well in *Stroke*, a twenty-meter painting that appears to be a simple abstract painting of a line; however, the subject of the painting is based on a photograph of a single brushstroke. By combining mediums in this inter-referential way, Richter asks viewers to move between perspectives, to see the world, even as we survive it, in diverse ways.

The essays in the collection highlight different foci in Richter's corpus, including periods, shapes, colors, and subjects. Like Richter's work, the editors have collected a variety of lenses by which to view the artist and his art.



NICHE MARKETS

These independent bookstores have gone up against the big-box booksellers and lived to tell the tale, showing us all that bigger isn't always better.

- 1 **MARFA BOOK COMPANY** just opened their new location at the Hotel St. George. 105 S Highland Ave., Marfa, TX
- 2 **BOOKPEOPLE** is open 364 days each year in the heart of downtown Austin. 603 N. Lamar, Austin, TX
- 3 **FULL CIRCLE BOOKS** is the largest independent bookstore in Oklahoma, boasting more than sixty thousand titles. 50 Penn Place, Oklahoma City, OK
- 4 **TATTERED COVER** is a Denver institution hosting four hundred visiting authors, illustrators, and public figures each year. 2526 East Colfax Ave., Denver, CO
- 5 **PRINTED MATTER** is not only a bookstore but a nonprofit organization dedicated to artists publishing their works. 231 11th Ave., New York City
- 6 **ARCANA: BOOKS ON THE ARTS** stocks more than 100,000 titles on photography, art, design, architecture, fashion, cinema and music. 8675 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA

Quartz Mountain Magic

THE OKLAHOMA SUMMER ARTS INSTITUTE CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE.

AS A 16-YEAR-OLD WHO TOOK PICTURES to process his parents' divorce, the successful photographer and filmmaker Troy Word met Richard Avedon in the late 1970s while attending the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain State Park in Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

The iconic fashion and portrait photographer's visit became a pivotal moment in Word's life. "To be in the presence of somebody like that was just extraordinary," he says. Word returns periodically from New York to teach at OSAI, which celebrates its fortieth anniversary this year. "I owe so much to the institute," he says.

This intensive two-week residential academy, in which students are selected through a statewide audition process, has become nationally renowned. "We're cutting funding for the arts in the public schools, and [this program]

ensures that the most talented students in the state have the highest caliber of arts education available," says Julie Cohen, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain.

The Oklahoma Arts Institute is a nonprofit that administers OSAI. Students chosen to attend receive full scholarships worth more than \$2,500. "Every student who is accepted can come regardless of financial ability," Cohen says, herself an alumna of the program, in photography.

Envisioned by then-governor David Boren, OSAI was founded in 1977. Akin to Michigan's Interlochen Center for the Arts, the inaugural three-day pilot program was led by then-executive director Mary Frates. Faculty included prima ballerina Maria Tallchief as well as 1980 Caldecott winner and 2006 U.S. poet laureate, Donald Hall.



"For the first time in their lives, they are treated like stars, and it changes these kids forever."

In 1978, OSAI moved to southwestern Oklahoma, expanded to two weeks, and now serves nearly three hundred students annually in a vast array of disciplines such as acting, dance, music, creative writing, and film. Now, the faculty is a blend of local arts educators, working creatives, and some of the most notable artists in the country—actress Jane Alexander, Pulitzer-Prize winner N. Scott Momaday, and painter Robert Zakanitch, to name a few.

Students work at their craft six hours each day while taking in peer performances by night, all in the seclusion of the Wichita Mountains and nearby Lake Altus-Lugert. "They always talk about this Quartz Mountain magic that happens, and it's very true," says Allen Percy Galeana, nineteen, an OSAI choral music alumnus who is now studying opera at the University of Southern California. "It's such a unique environment."

When small-town students, alone in their artistic pursuits, are suddenly thrust into a supportive, engaging



environment, the results are inspiring, says poet George Bilgere, a regular OSAI faculty member. “For the first time in their lives, they are treated like stars, [and] it changes these kids forever.”

OSAI has launched a campaign in its anniversary year to increase its endowment from \$6 million to \$10 million. Funds are also being raised to build a film and video pavilion on the state-owned Quartz Mountain campus, and administrators are working to re-connect with other alumni, Cohen says.

During this summer’s program, in June, OSAI will bring back successful alumni as guest artists, including Word, actress Megan Mullally, and actor and filmmaker Tim Blake Nelson. Other faculty will include poet Richard Blanco, who read at President Obama’s second inauguration in 2013, and Native American musician Timothy Long. “We’ve developed an incredible faculty,” Cohen says, “but it’s the students, too, who are just exceptional.”

OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: Poet George Bilgere and OSAI students in front of the Quartz Mountain Lodge; the Quartz Mountain Resort in the Wichita Mountains hosts OSAI

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE: The OSAI orchestra program; painter Robert Zakanitch provides guidance to a student; the OSAI ballet program



ROLE CALL

Empowering artists to do justice to the reproductive rights movement in “red states”

WHAT ROLE CAN ARTISTS PLAY in reproductive justice? The 6th annual Take Root Conference: Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Justice looked at the role of artists, activists, academics, students, and interested citizens in helping secure reproductive justice in so-called red states. Hosted by the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Social Justice, an initiative of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, Take Root focused on issues related to reproductive justice, intimate partner violence, racial justice, youth programs, fundraising, and many other factors that inhibit or contribute to justice.

Among the presenters were practitioners, activists, storytellers and artists. Grace Franklin, an Oklahoma City artist and co-founder of OKC Artists for Justice—an organization formed in response to the Daniel Holtzclaw case, the police officer who raped women on Oklahoma City’s east side—encouraged participants that creativity can extend to activism.

“Artists can make tangible change,” Franklin says. “What you create can change minds and hearts. What good is creativity if you don’t use it when and where it’s needed?”

In a similar vein, Mwende “FreeQuency” Katwiwa, a slam poet and program assistant for Women With a Vision in New Orleans, read an original piece inspired by her work with women inmates at Orleans Parish Prison. Calling the demographic “often overlooked” when reproductive justice is addressed, Katwiwa says much of the work they do in Orleans Parish is based on “trauma-informed storytelling.”

The Kirkpatrick Family Fund, a sponsor of the Take Root Conference, provides leadership and support for central Oklahoma’s comprehensive campaign to reduce teen pregnancy. The issue was addressed in two distinct break-out sessions: Teen Pregnancy Prevention & Teen Empowerment, and Askable Adults, a session that teaches adults how to “respectfully interact with adolescents when talking about sexual health.”



New Marfa Lights

Robert Irwin takes his shadow play to the high desert

ROBERT IRWIN CAPTURES LIGHT, manipulating rays and shadows through innovative installations. A trailblazer of the L.A.-based “Light and Space” movement, Irwin has developed a body of work that continually responds to the viewer and environment in what he calls a “conditional” role of the arts.

In 1970, Irwin declared this shift in artistic direction, focusing on space and perception and creating art best experienced through direct interaction—much like the work of other “California Minimalists” James Turrell and Larry Bell. Taking fundamentals rooted in viewer experience, Irwin has now created a permanent, site-specific installation for the Chinati Foundation, offering a major new facet to the Marfa museum.

Opening in July 2016, *Untitled (Four Walls)* features the only freestanding structure designed by Irwin—a large, U-shaped arrangement of concrete walls and window sequences, both stopping and guiding the rays of a shifting sun. After fourteen years in development, this new addition to the Chinati’s permanent collection places Irwin’s work in a significant context, surrounded by his peers, including John Chamberlain, Dan Flavin, and Donald Judd, the museum’s founder.

About his inspiration—West Texas—Irwin told the *New York Times*, “I used to come out here all the time, to this part of Texas, and I’d ask myself, ‘Why make something here?’ But then you know the minute you turn off I-10 and start driving this way, the sky changes. It’s amazing. Every day is like a new event. The sky is everything.”

▲
by KELLY ROGERS

The Robert Irwin Project at the Chinati Foundation
1 Cavalry Row, Marfa, Texas | chinati.org

photo courtesy of THE CHINATI FOUNDATION

Good Pointe

The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo finds an unlikely home in the plains of Norman, Oklahoma

by JULIA SZABO

Most dance aficionados would kill for a chance to time-travel to Paris in the spring of 1909, when the Ballets Russes had just exploded on the scene. The Russian group brought such immortals to the stage as Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky. Behind the scenes were yet more titanic talents: impresario Serge Diaghilev, choreographer Michel Fokine, and designer Léon Bakst. And filling the air was a new kind of music—the eternally contemporary compositions of Igor Stravinsky.

In the ensuing decades, the company underwent many administrative changes, eventually morphing into the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, all the while adding more names to its roster of creative demigods: George Balanchine, Léonide Massine, and Coco Chanel, to name a few. One thing remained constant: the thrill generated by this troupe was always electric, for performers and spectators alike. Viewers of the enchanting 2005 Zeitgeist Films documentary *Ballets Russes* get a generous jolt of that charge, and anyone still hungry for more may visit a world-class resource—the Ballets Russes Archive at the University of Oklahoma School of Dance.

The archive, established in 2007, was conceived when former Ballet Russe dancers Miguel Terekhov and Yvonne Chouteau, husband-and-wife founders

of the Oklahoma City Ballet and the OU School of Dance, saw the film at a screening. “The documentary was the impetus for the creation of the archive,” says Mary Margaret Holt, dean of the OU School of Dance. The university is currently in the process of digitizing the archive to make it accessible online. Ballets Russes filmmakers Daniel Geller and Dayna Goldfine add, “With this project, Mary Margaret has created something that’s outstanding and singular.”

The archive recently acquired designer Alexander Golovin’s original costumes from the 1910 premiere of *The Firebird*. “We were delighted to secure those costumes,” Holt says. “There are four pieces...all four have the Diaghilev stamp on the inside, and the name of the dancer who first wore the costume.”

“(The archive provides) information for historians and scholars on an international level,” Holt explains. The archive, she insists, must enable a very young researcher: the first grader with ballerina dreams. This is Holt’s top priority because once upon a time, in the pre-Internet era, she was that first grader. “Growing up in Austin, Texas, the Ballet Russe was the first professional company I ever saw. I was six,” she recalls. “It was a wonderful miracle to be able to see them.”

Currently, the archive is arranging an exhibition at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman, Oklahoma. The exhibition will be shown in conjunction with the production of *The Firebird* at the OU School of Dance—a production dedicated to the memory of Chouteau who passed away in January at the age of 86.



PHOTOGRAPH OF YVONNE CHOUTEAU AND MIGUEL TEREKHOV (IN DRAG AS THE HEADMISTRESS) IN THE BALLET GRADUATION BALL

COVER OF A STRAVINSKY SCORE OF THE FIREBIRD



1



2



3

PRINCESS COSTUME FROM THE 1910 PRODUCTION OF *THE FIREBIRD*, ACQUIRED LAST FALL BY THE ARCHIVE

1 Head piece

2 Vest and Dress

3 Cape and Dress

Happenings

SUMMER 2016

*Opening night (2015)*

SEATTLE ART FAIR

CenturyLink Field
Event Center,
Seattle, WA

Aug. 4 – 7

The Seattle Art Fair returns August 4 – 7, 2016, to CenturyLink Field Event Center for its second celebration of art and culture in the Pacific Northwest. The inaugural event in 2015 included citywide installations, onsite projects, public programming, and artist conversations. This year, more than sixty of the world's top local, regional, and national galleries are anticipated to participate. In a collaboration of Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Inc. and Art Market Productions, the fair is produced with the eclectic culture of the Pacific Northwest in mind.

"The inaugural Seattle Art Fair was an ambitious endeavor and saw incredible support from the Seattle community and art world at large," says Mary Ann Prior, director of art collections at Vulcan Inc. "We're extremely committed to increasing the impact art has on the city, the region, and beyond, and the Seattle Art Fair is just one way we are working to achieve this goal."

After Effect

Ballroom Marfa / Marfa, TX

EXHIBITION

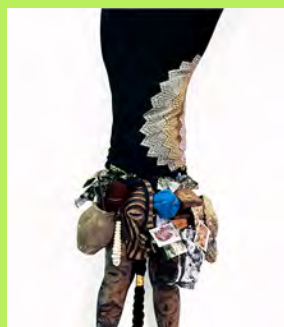
This group exhibition will feature works from Dan Colen, Loie Hollowell, Emil Bisttram, Raymond Jonson, Agnes Pelton, Florence Miller Pierce, Stuart Walker, Oskar Fischinger, and Arturo Bandini. With such a diverse group of artists, the exhibition functions as a melting pot for transformative contemporary works in a West Texas setting. Through Aug. 21
ballroommarfa.org

Carried Weight

Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts / Wilmington, DE

EXHIBITION

'Will I still carry water when I'm a dead woman' was a 2011 performance on the streets of Lagos; a subsequent 2013 performance in the same location built on the earlier iteration. Both works featured veiled women carrying kegs of water through the streets. *Carried Weight*, a natural progression from the earlier works with visual artist Wura-Natasha Ogunji as their common thread, explores similar themes of basic needs and the role of women in a larger societal context. Through July 17.
thedcca.org



MachineHistories

Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson / Tucson, AZ

EXHIBITION

A collaborative effort between Steven Joyner and Jason Pilarski, with contributions by Wen Han and Ryan Oenning, *MachineHistories* is an exploration of building techniques applied to machinery, software, and more traditional building materials. Intentional embedding of "error"—tool marks on a finished product, for instance—are characteristic of finished works from this group; such touches lend a conscious sense of history and sentimentality to each piece. June 18 - Sept. 25
moca-tucson.org

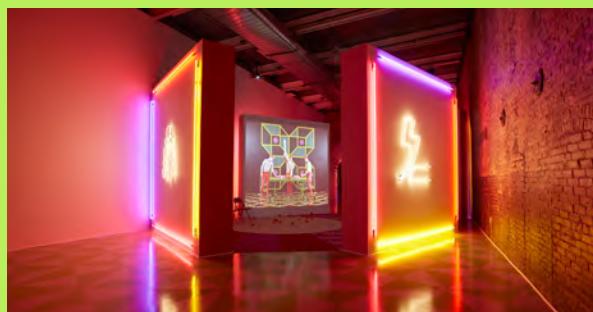


Marilyn Minter: Pretty/Dirty

Orange County Museum of Art / Newport Beach, CA

EXHIBITION

Featuring more than twenty-five paintings created between 1976 and 2015, three video works, and several photographs, this exhibition is an in-depth exploration of Minter's artistic repertoire from past to present. Rich, sensuous imagery explores consumerism and greed, sexuality, and lust. Previously seen in Houston and Denver, *Pretty/Dirty* will make its mark in Orange County before continuing on to Brooklyn. Through July 10
ocma.net



Alex Da Corte: Free Roses

Mass MoCA / North Adams, MA

EXHIBITION

Free Roses includes selected pieces of Da Corte's work from the last decade as well as a new installation that promises to engulf its viewers in familiar fashion. Inspired by the artist's suburban upbringing, Da Corte's films and mise-en-scène center around domestic objects such as groceries, an IKEA chair, and shampoo bottles. From these familiar access points, viewers are transported to otherworldly, dream-like scenes that will occupy Mass MoCA's second-floor galleries. Through Jan. 2017
massmoca.org

Leslie Hewitt: Collective Stance

SculptureCenter / Long Island City, NY

EXHIBITION

This multimedia installation, inspired by Civil Rights-era photographs, presents a collaborative between sculptor Leslie Hewitt and cinematographer Bradford Young. *Untitled (Structures)* includes a series of silent vignettes, pursuing Hewitt's continued exploration of the politics of positive and negative and her reflection on the nature of history through archival photography. Through Aug. 1
sculpture-center.org

EDMUND ALLEYN: IN MY STUDIO, I AM MANY

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal / Montréal, QC

Through Sept. 25

The first retrospective of Alleyn's work since his death in 2004, this event will showcase pieces from all-Canadian museums. Paintings, drawings, films, and technical pieces—including works not previously shown—are included, representing each period of the artist's career from the late 1950s to the early 2000s. macm.org

Mondrian au coucher, acrylic on canvas, and oil on Plexiglass
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



IRVING PENN: BEYOND BEAUTY

Dallas Museum of Art /
Dallas, TX

Through Aug. 14

Irving Penn's photography retrospective is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in an eclectic collection of the artist's many bodies of work. Alongside the fashion photography for which he is best known, view his not-so-well-known but equally praised pieces studying everyday objects, including frozen foods and a bedside lamp. www.dma.org

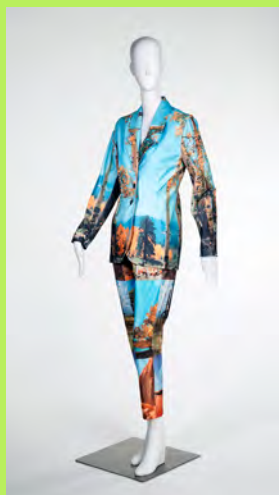
Girl Behind Bottle (Jean Patchett), 1949, IRVING PENN.
Smithsonian American Art Museum and The Irving Penn Foundation



**All of Everything:
Todd Oldham**
Rhode Island School of Design
Museum / Providence, RI

EXHIBITION

A recent donation from the Todd Oldham Studio archives brings more than sixty ensembles from the 1990s runway to Providence. Recently discovered video footage brings a dynamic element to this exhibition, while original artwork facilitates a multi-dimensional understanding of the artist's work for viewers. Through Sept. 11 rismuseum.org



**Allied Works Architecture:
Case Work: Studies in Form,
Space, & Construction**
Portland Art Museum /
Portland, OR

EXHIBITION

This immersive installation is the first comprehensive exhibition of the drawings and sculptures of Allied Works Architecture. In balance with the more technical building models and renderings of industry architectural work, these artistic creations are on view in Portland before embarking upon an international tour. Through Sept. 4 portlandartmuseum.org

**Nalini Malani: In Search
of Vanished Blood**
The Institute of Contemporary
Art Boston / Boston, MA

EXHIBITION

Nalini Malani's signature multimedia installation projects imagery rich in culture, emotion, and purpose. Acclaimed as India's foremost video and installation artist, Malani's works tell of her experience as a refugee, feminist, and visionary of the global community. June 29 - Oct. 16 icaboston.org

Duchamp to Pop
Norton Simon Museum /
Pasadena, CA

EXHIBITION

Two exhibitions from the later portion of Marcel Duchamp's career meet at the Norton Simon Museum. This assembly of work illustrates the artist's influence on pop art in the 1960s and beyond. Duchamp's double showing is set in one of the country's finest private art collections, including some 12,000 objects and a lush sculpture garden. Through Aug. 29 nortonsimon.org

We & Them & Me
Contemporary Art Museum
Raleigh / Raleigh, NC

EXHIBITION

Brooklyn-based performance artist Martine Gutierrez uses multimedia outlets to document her eclectic mix of imagined roles in an investigation of identity—both personal and collective. Her work sparks dialogue surrounding the social constructs of gender and race. July 3 - Aug. 21 camraleigh.com



BEN WEINER

Mark Moore Gallery /
Culver City, CA

*June 25 -
Aug. 20*

Weiner renders magnified consumer products—pearls and jewels, hair gel and deodorant—into paintings that are alternately hyper-realistic and entirely abstract. Exploring consumer body culture, *Textures of You* displays a narrative of preservation and mortality. markmooregallery.com

Gel Monochrome #1, 2016, BEN WEINER
Photograph courtesy of the MARK MOORE GALLERY



Martin Creed

Park Avenue Armory /
New York, NY

EXHIBITION

British artist Martin Creed, a 2001 Turner Prize winner, brings works spanning all media—painting, music, dance, theater, film, and fashion included—to New York this summer in his largest U.S. installation ever. The historic Park Avenue Armory serves as the setting for Creed's light, minimalist style, which pushes directly against our culture's visually saturated and choice-laden way of life.

Through Aug. 7
armoryonpark.org

Witness

Museum of Contemporary Art
Chicago / Chicago, IL

GROUP EXHIBITION

In photographs drawn largely from MCA's collection, *Witness* questions the role of the photographer in their responsibility to observe, record, and reflect. These works highlight and even stage encounters between the various people involved in a photograph (both artist and subject), with pieces by Dawoud Bey, Christian Boltanski, Carrie Mae Weems, and more.

July 2 - Feb. 19, 2017
mcachicago.org

Chris Larson: Land Speed Record

Walker Art Center /
Minneapolis, MN

INSTALLATION

Inspired by the contents of the burned down house belonging to Grant Hart of iconic punk band Hüsker Dü, Chris Larson's latest video installation considers what happens when these objects are relocated from Hart's home to his warehouse studio. By taking these possessions—car parts, musical instruments, and clothing—from their original context and enclosures, a new, unique narrative is created. Through Jan. 8, 2017
walkerart.org

Frank Stella: A Retrospective

The Modern / Fort Worth, TX

EXHIBITION

This retrospective celebrates the career of one of America's most important living artists, minimalist Frank Stella. Showcasing work from the mid-1950s to present, more than 100 paintings, reliefs, sculptures, maquettes, and drawings are featured. Alongside his popular work, viewers can see lesser-known pieces from collections around the world. Through Sept. 18
themodern.org



MONA HATOUM

Tate Modern /
London, UK

Through
Aug. 21

This summer, the first major survey of Hatoum's work hits London at the Tate Modern. In this solo exhibition, her photographs, objects, and installations explore themes of isolation, alienation, and industrialization. Spanning thirty-five years and a variety of mediums, Hatoum's work was short-listed for the Turner Prize in 1995. tate.org.uk

Cellules (detail), MONA HATOUM
Photograph by SÉBASTIEN NORMAND



JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO & PEDRO PAIVA: CAPSULE 05

Haus der Kunst /
Munich, DE

Through Sept. 18

Portuguese duo Gusmão and Paiva present new works in this venue's capsule series exhibition. Recorded on 16mm film, scenes from everyday life and processes of nature are filtered through poetic and philosophical lenses, resulting in mysterious and arresting moments in motion. hausderkunst.de/en/

Tortoise and Parrot, 2011, JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO AND PEDRO PAIVA
Photograph courtesy of the artists

The BUCK STOPS here!

A PASS- THE- BUCK PRIMER

Oklahomans are debating a constitutional amendment that would take final authority over the state's agriculture industry away from voters and hand it to the courts. Here, we look at shirking responsibility's most famous idiom.

FRED CANFIL WAS U.S. MARSHAL for the Western District of Missouri in 1945 when he visited the Southwest Reformatory, a federal prison in El Reno, Oklahoma. In the office of the warden, L. Clark Schilder, Canfil found an interesting piece of art: a narrow walnut base housing an upright glass panel painted solid brown except for four stenciled words—two in cursive, and two in bold, block capitals. Canfil admired the piece, and asked if the warden could have one made for a friend of his, a fellow Missourian.

Warden Schilder got on it, and ordered Buford Tressider, head of the Reformatory's paint shop, to put one together, with help from the prison's carpentry staff. Schilder sent the finished piece to Washington, D.C., to the office of Canfil's friend, President Harry Truman, who put the piece on his desk, and in speeches and public appearances made

regular reference to the words on the glass: THE BUCK STOPS HERE.

This phrase originated in the rough-and-tumble forms of poker made popular on the Mississippi riverboats and gold-rush boomtowns of mid-nineteenth-century America, places where healthy fears and quick wits were necessary for survival, and where a person could make or lose a fortune in a single hand, with no one to blame but themselves if they bet wrong, or mistook a straight flush for a bluff.

A "buck" was a knife with a buckhorn handle, used to signify whose turn it was to deal. "Ante and pass the buck," says Scotty Briggs in Mark Twain's *Roughing It* (1872), one of the earliest known appearances of the phrase.

Over time, "passing the buck" evolved to mean "dodging responsibility." In the August 12, 1888, edition of the *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, a pro-Democratic editorial responded to a chide by the Republican-leaning *Express* that the Democrats had no one strong enough to run against the GOP nominee for president, James G. Blaine.

"On that point, to employ a phrase familiar at the card table, we 'ante and pass the buck,'" the *Herald* responded ironically, going on to make it clear the Democrats did indeed lack a candidate who could match Blaine—for crookedness.

A more familiar usage of the phrase appeared in the April 20, 1899, edition of the *San Francisco Call*, in a story with the headline AUDITOR WELLS IS WILLING TO PASS THE BUCK. The story of Auditor Wells is byzantine, involving a lawsuit against the Board of Education, illegal demands for money by local teachers, and Wells's request for modification of a court order that conflicted with his official duties.

"That a modification would allow Auditor Wells to drag himself from the tangle there can be no question," said the

Call, "but it looks that 'the buck would pass up to the Treasurer' in event of [such] a modification."

A similar headline, in the *Honolulu Republican* of February 15, 1901, read, "Maui Judge 'Passes the Buck' to the Local Judiciary." The story told of a criminal complaint lodged by a sailor against his first officer, who assaulted him with a bar of iron while their vessel stood docked in the harbor of Kahului. The buck-passing judge, sitting at Wailuku, refused to hear the case, and referred the sailor to the Honolulu city court.

These twin traditions in American politics—the Trumanesque, "buck stops here" strain, and the Auditor Wells-esque, "can't somebody else do it?" strain—are in combat this year in Oklahoma, in the debate over State Question 777. On the one side are those who want to keep responsibility for agriculture where it's always been—in the hands of Oklahoma's voters and legislators. On the other side are those—including most of the state's current Legislature—who'd prefer to pass that responsibility over to the courts.

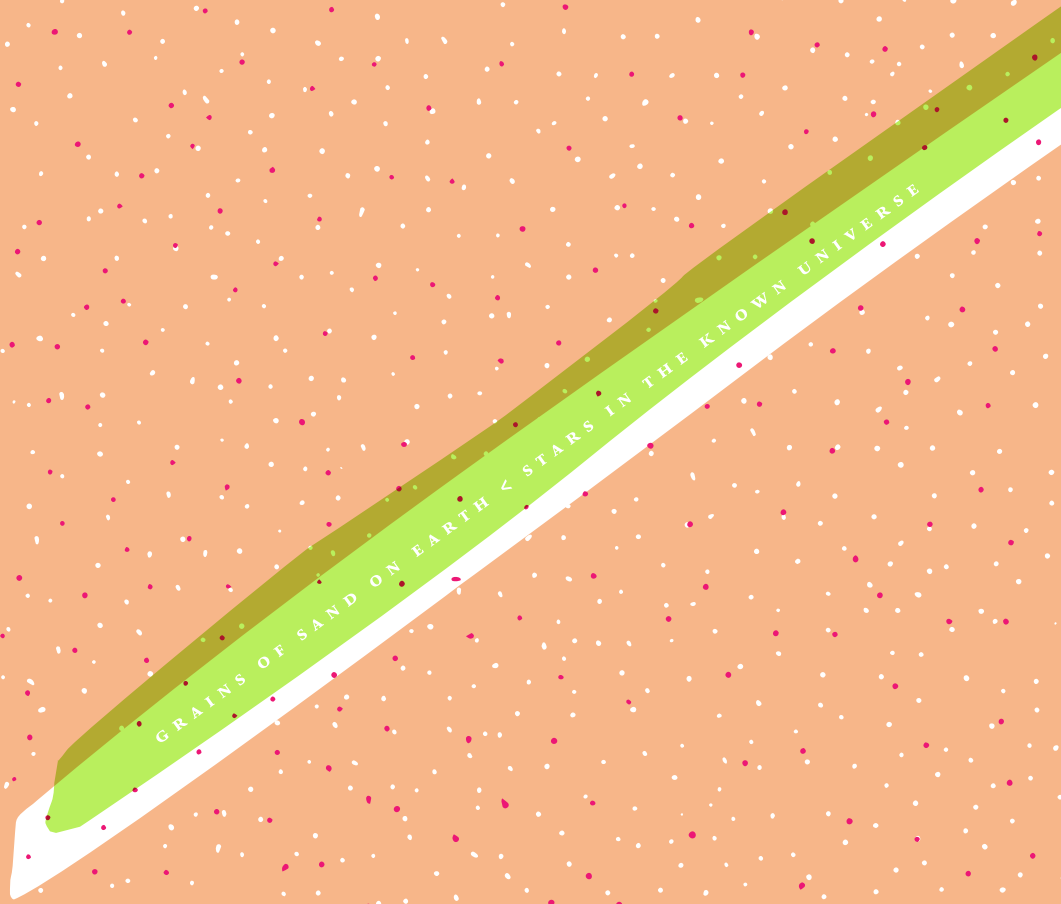
This idea calls to mind the words of the late Mike Synar, congressman from Oklahoma: "If you don't want to fight fires, don't be a firefighter."

Brian Ted Jones is director of education for Kirkpatrick Foundation.

WHAT State Question 777, a proposed amendment to the Oklahoma Constitution that would end voter control of Oklahoma's agriculture industry.

WHEN SQ777 is on the ballot November 8, 2016

GET THE FACTS kirkpatrickfoundation.com



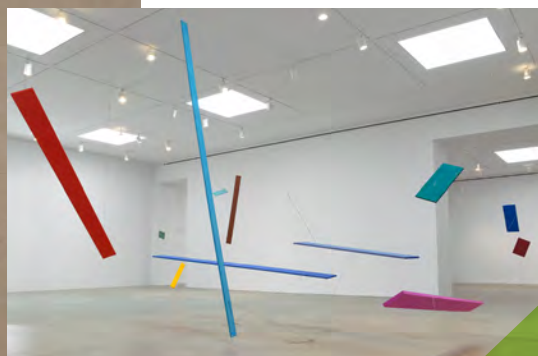


IN SUSPENSE



Installation view,
Joel Shapiro,
Nasher Sculpture Center,
Dallas, 2016
photo by KEVIN TODORA

Installation view,
Joel Shapiro: New Work,
Pace Gallery, New York, 2010



CALL IT A HANG TEN. With a variety of elements that appear to float in mid-air, Joel Shapiro's new site-specific sculpture will fill an entire gallery of the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas. The acclaimed contemporary sculptor's remarkable self-titled exhibition opened in May and continues through August 21, 2016. In it, Shapiro suspends brightly-colored wooden forms in a variety of shapes and sizes, a configuration that lets visitors experience the work in an unusual manner, by walking through the piece rather than around it. Explaining his approach, Shapiro says, "I was not interested in doing what I knew. I wanted to push the dimensions, doing something quite different than what people expected."

by MICHAEL DUTY

A New York City native, Shapiro, seventy-four, spent two years with the Peace Corps in India, an experience that he says opened his eyes to the possibility of being an artist. Soon after returning to the United States, he explored different sculptural forms. He has continued to look for new ways to express his vision with each period of his artistic career building upon the last. His current work, he says, is a “synthesis” of the past and present.

Shapiro and Jeremy Strick, director of the Nasher Sculpture Center, had informally discussed the creation of a new commission for the Dallas museum, but it was a chance meeting on the streets of New York that began the project in earnest. During that fortuitous encounter, Strick asked Shapiro if he would like to create a new work for the Nasher within the next year or so.

The Nasher Sculpture Center, opened in 2003 in the Dallas Arts District by founders Raymond and Patsy Nasher, features many of Shapiro’s sculptures on permanent display. Although Shapiro had visited the Nasher on numerous occasions, it was on a trip to Dallas in the spring of 2015 that he reacquainted himself with the building—designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect, Renzo Piano—that would soon host his new work.

Shapiro says the space itself was a key element in conceptualizing the new artwork, described as both “balletic” and “severe.” He also says, “It’s not a retrospective, so I had the opportunity to let my sense of the space influence the work.”

Over the course of a year, Shapiro carefully worked out the details of this installation and

the relationship between the various forms that compose the sculpture. He says he thinks about the ways in which the perception of the sculpture will change as the visitor walks through the space, adding that his own perceptions change as he works on each new sculpture and that “thoughts develop as you work, discourse occurs as you work.” During this phase, change is inevitable.

“You think you know how things will turn out, but you don’t know for sure,” he says.

That lack of certainty as to how the work will evolve produces both excitement and anxiety, but above all the process is challenging, and Shapiro embraces that reality. “I am always eager to work,” he says. “I am someone who wants to be challenged by the work.”

In a highly successful career that has spanned four decades, Shapiro has repeatedly met the challenge of creating sculpture that pushes beyond tradition and convention in museum collections throughout the world. As this new exhibition confirms, his work is in high demand. As an artist, he does not lament the passing of time, in fact, he thinks artists get better as they age.

“[Older artists] may not have the fire they had when they were young, but they certainly know a lot more,” Shapiro says. New work, he adds, builds upon the older work and “expanding your work is always a little gift.”

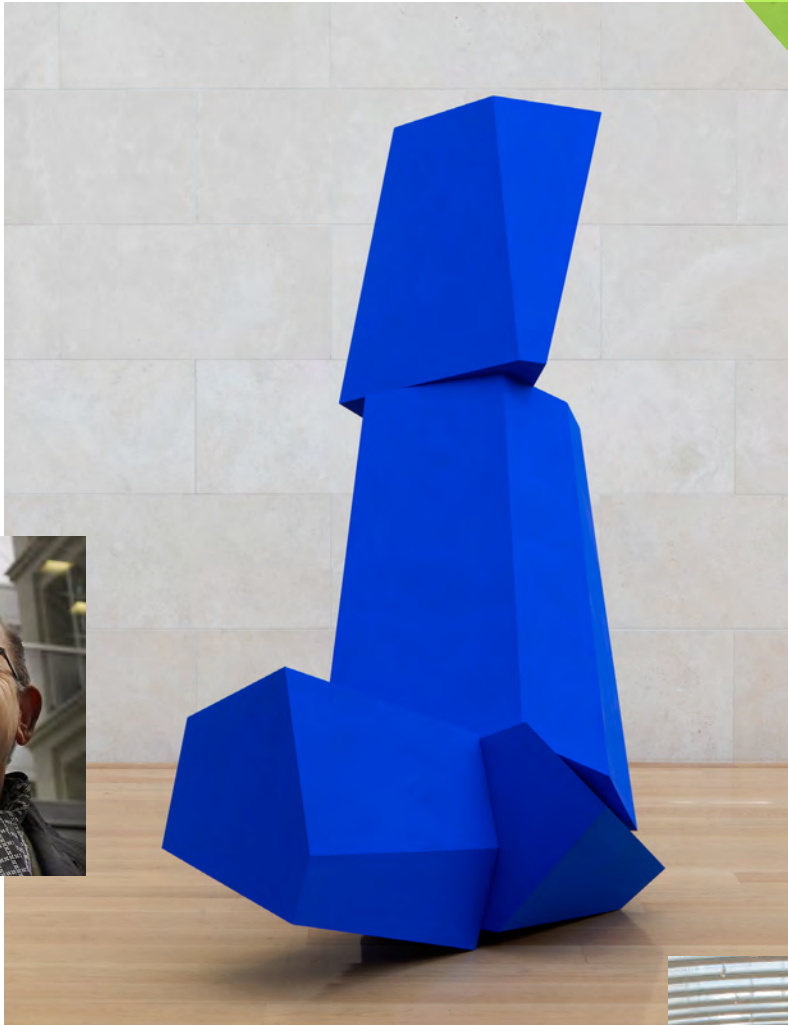
Visitors to the new installation at the Nasher will receive the gift of first-hand experience, as well as a new vision created by an artist who continues to work at the very highest level. x



Joel Shapiro
Museum Ludwig, 2011

Really Blue (after all)
Wood and casein, 2016
Nasher Sculpture Center
photo by KEVIN TODORA

JOEL SHAPIRO in London
photo by ADRIAN DENNIS/
AFP/Getty Images



JOEL SHAPIRO's recent
model of the new
installation at the
Nasher Gallery

20 Elements
Wood and casein, 2004-05
Nasher Sculpture Center
photo by KEVIN TODORA



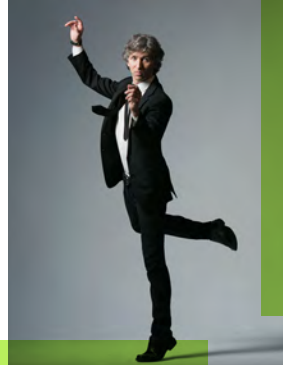
Public Works:
A Talk With
DAMIAN
WOETZEL,
Dancer/Diplomat

DAMIAN WOETZEL is dedicating the next phase of his career to be a champion for the arts. Our *ArtDesk* dance editor speaks with him about Chinese lessons during childhood, the New York City Ballet, and now, his future footsteps.

Interview by LARRY KEIGWIN *Edited by* TOM NAWROCKI

Photography by ERIN BAIANO





LARRY KEIGWIN:
Welcome, Damian, to ArtDesk and our Studio series of dancer interviews. First, where did you grow up and what was your introduction to dance?

DAMIAN WOETZEL:
I grew up outside of Boston in Newton, Massachusetts. My father was a professor and my mother worked at UNICEF. I was introduced to a lot of different things along with my brother, and among them, turns out, was ballet. There were some music lessons, some

language lessons, and lots of different kinds of things in the pursuit of what was termed a classical education. One of the things we had was Chinese language lessons because my father grew up in China. At a certain point I looked at my brother and I said, "I am not taking any more Chinese." And he looked at me and said, "I am not taking any more ballet."

And that was it. I became a ballet dancer and he became a scholar in East Asian studies and has been in China forever now.

How old were you when you moved to New York?

DW: I moved to L.A. from Boston when I was fifteen, and I finished high school there, and graduated from Hollywood High School. Then I danced with the Los Angeles Ballet and came to New York for the first time as a professional dancer with them. The next year, I came to New York and went to the School of American Ballet.

At that point I had kind of thrown my lot in the idea that I wanted to be in New York City Ballet, for the Balanchine repertory, but also because Jerry Robbins was there. I thought, *this is where I want to work*—with a living genius on the level of Jerome Robbins.

The core repertory is Balanchine, and that was and remains my primary allegiance when I think of the work that is seminal. Jerry, as a presence and also in the work, is hugely influential for me. I think that was the tipping point for me to go to City Ballet, not ABT.

Having the opportunity to work with him from the beginning of my career, right off the bat, made all the difference. So much of what I think about when I coach dancers or work on anything comes from the lessons I managed to get from Jerry. Not just what he taught me about his own ballets, but the corrections and thoughts he gave me about Mr. Balanchine's ballet. He would come back after a performance of Tchaikovsky's *Pas de Deux* or *Prodigal Son*, or *Symphony in C*, and he'd have such incredible things to say, from his sense of theatre as well as just simply the incredible genius that he was. Those were the notes that mattered.



How many years were you a principal dancer?

DW: I came to New York in '84, at the end of the year. I joined City Ballet in May of '85, so I spent about five months at the school, and then I danced in the corps de ballet for a few years. Jerry put me in good parts very quickly, and then I managed to slowly start doing Balanchine leads and works by other choreographers. I was promoted in early 1989 to soloist, and then about two months later I was promoted to principal. Four years in, I'm a principal dancer and living the dream. And I continued for about twenty years as a principal.



As I grew more confident in my role at New York City Ballet and then the world as a dancer, I would guest all over the place and dance with different people, and I was always hungry for more. Among the things I got involved with was a program for young leaders that was developed for the U.S. and China by the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.

Essentially I was the guy from the arts to this inaugural class of young leaders. At one of those meetings, I got in the van, and I sat next to one of the other young leaders of that year, who was a young state senator from Arizona named Gabrielle Giffords.

We started talking, and Gabby said to me, "what are you going to do when you stop dancing?" I said, well, I would love to go get a formal education, because I finished high school and that was it. But I would like to have a chance to do a larger variety of things like what we're



doing. She said, "There's this mid-career program at Harvard, a master in public administration, and I think you should look into that." And I looked at her and I said, "Well you know, I didn't go to college, I can't get a master's degree." And she said, "It's mid-career, everyone's been out of school for a long time anyway. I really think you should look into it." I went back home, and I remember sitting at my computer and going to look it up, trying to



figure it out. I was like—it's the Kennedy School, is that even Harvard?

[The program] was all about what public service could be, in terms of the politics or government, and I pictured myself, again, as the artist person in that equation. They allowed me to divide my time into two fall semesters so that I could keep dancing in New York. And I graduated in 2007 with a master in public administration.

After I got back and danced another season I thought, OK, let's do this next year. So I set my retirement date and graduated again, as it were, in June of 2008, from City Ballet.



What are you engaged in now?

DW: I'm happily living multiple lives. There's the Vail International Dance Festival—it's my tenth year as director there. Since 2011, I've been the director of the Aspen Institute's Arts Program based out of New York and D.C., and wherever else the arts can be put to work, as it were.

I do programs involving the ways that the arts can be a more beneficial part of society, from education to diplomacy, and through that vehicle I've gotten a lot of different opportunities to involve the thinking that I developed at the Kennedy School.

I'm privileged to have been appointed by the President to his Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in 2009. Through that I've been able to do work on national education, creating what's called the Turnaround Arts Program, which uses the arts as a tool to turn around failing schools.

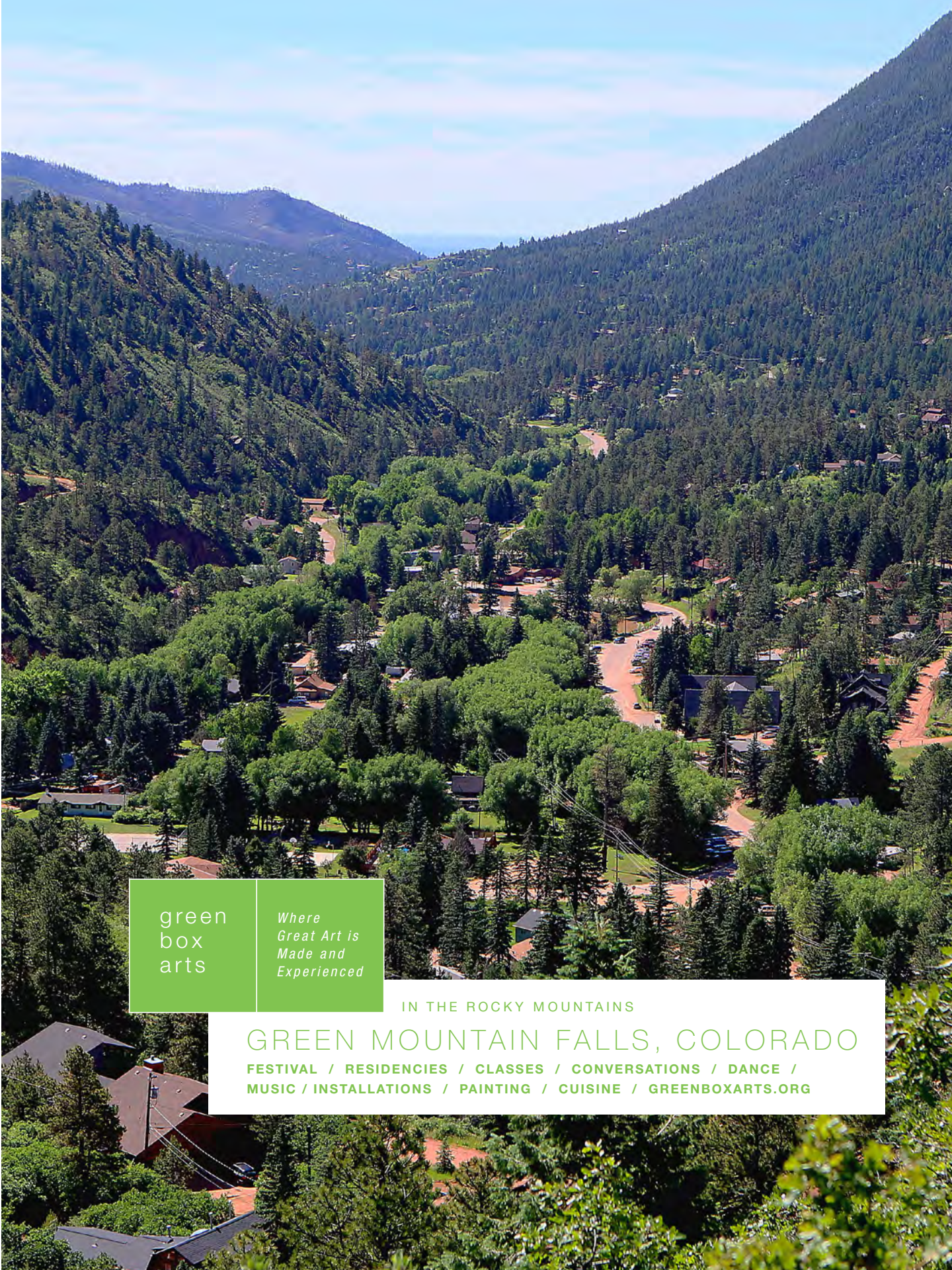
And over the last few years I've done quite a lot of curating. Right now I'm about to do a project with Wynton Marsalis, Lil Buck, and Jared Grimes. I've got a series at the Kennedy Center called *Demo*, which is a theatre of ideas where I take an idea and build a performance around it.



That's amazing. You're always cooking up something!

DW: You know, I'm excited to do more. I've recently created something through the Aspen Institute called the Creative Youth Alliance, which is building a network of young artist leaders. I'm always looking for ways to have a next step.

DAMIAN WOETZEL is director of the Aspen Institute Arts Program, which, under his leadership, aims to further the value of the arts in society, focusing on education, social justice, economics, and diplomacy. Woetzel was a principal dancer at New York City Ballet from 1989 until his retirement from the stage in 2008. At NYCB, he danced virtually the entire leading male dancer repertory and had works created for him by Jerome Robbins and Twyla Tharp, among others.



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STICK FIGURES

For more than thirty years, **Patrick Dougherty** has managed to do the impossible—make nature bend to his will. Extreme discipline collides with a healthy dose of improvisation to create soaring sapling towers that have been showcased across the world. This summer, Dougherty brings his site-specific sensibilities to Green Mountain Falls, Colorado.

by TOM NAWROCKI



PATRICK DOUGHERTY'S sculptures are possibly the most site-specific art in the world. It's not just that his works utilize saplings and sticks from the environment in which his sculptures are built. It's that Dougherty doesn't even know what he's going to build until he spends time in the locale for one of his works. He lets the setting dictate the work.

"I look for starting points," Dougherty explains. "As I struggle to understand the location, I might see a word or a title on the newsstand, the outline of a mountain range in the distance, or hear a turn of a phrase from a passer-by."

Each work reflects not just the vegetation of its setting but the mood as well, which is why the choice of site is so critical to each work—Saharan-style huts in Sarasota, Florida, a chain of circles in Denmark's Ticon Sculpture Park, Middle-Earth-style inhabitable tree trunks at Honolulu's Contemporary Art Museum. It is not until the locations are imprinted on Dougherty's mind that the works come to life—the swirling mountains

of saplings soon inseparable from the landscape that surrounds them.

"These are not line-by-line renderings, and during the building process I often have to read into these loose sketches, saying to myself: 'Oh, I must have meant this,'" Dougherty says. "One big advantage of working on-site, one line at a time, is the ability to adjust the scale of the work to the site. As I come to know the site and take its full measure, I constantly adjust the work to fit any new revelation."

The point is to create what Dougherty once called "structures that had reciprocity with their surroundings." He had the revelation at his home in North Carolina shortly after leaving his first career as a hospital administrator. He noticed that the saplings along his driveway had a tendency to entangle with each other when he cut them and piled them

together. He began to see them as lines he could draw with, reminiscent of hatch marks, and a new art form was born. Since his first work, *Maple Body Wrap*, was included in the North Carolina Biennial Artists' Exhibition in 1982, Dougherty has built more than 250 major works around the world.

As the work takes shape, Dougherty enlists local volunteers to aid in the construction. Each piece is built on a strict twenty-one day schedule—they have to be, given Dougherty's busy schedule of commissions. Fortunately, with a team of workers to collect the many thousands of sticks involved, Dougherty's works seem to come together easily.

"I am not the only person out there who likes a good sapling," Dougherty says. "Closet stick collectors started coming out of the woodwork. Before long I had volunteers of every ilk

*"As I come to know the site and take its full measure,
I constantly adjust the work to fit any new revelation."*



▲
PATRICK DOUGHERTY working in Vero Beach, Florida (2016)

photographs by SAM WOLFE



▲
Shindig (2015)
photograph by RON BLUNT





“As I struggle to understand the location, I might see a word or a title on the newsstand, the outline of a mountain range in the distance, or hear a turn of a phrase from a passer-by.”

◀ *Na Hale 'Eo Waiawi (2003)*
photograph by PAUL KODAMA

looking for a chance to indulge their basic building urges. Because of that extra energy and goodwill, I have been able to make larger works. It's also clear that it's harder to hate a sculpture if one of your neighbors has worked on it."

Dougherty is careful to maintain full control of the artistic content, though. "I am energized by the hubbub of the communal work, but I remain fully responsible for the outcome," he says. "It is my work and the volunteers are free to relax and just dig in. It might be a hippie and a businessman working with a grandmother and a high school senior, and for a short period of time, we, like a small indigenous band, work furiously on beauty and burnish our object until it shines in its location."

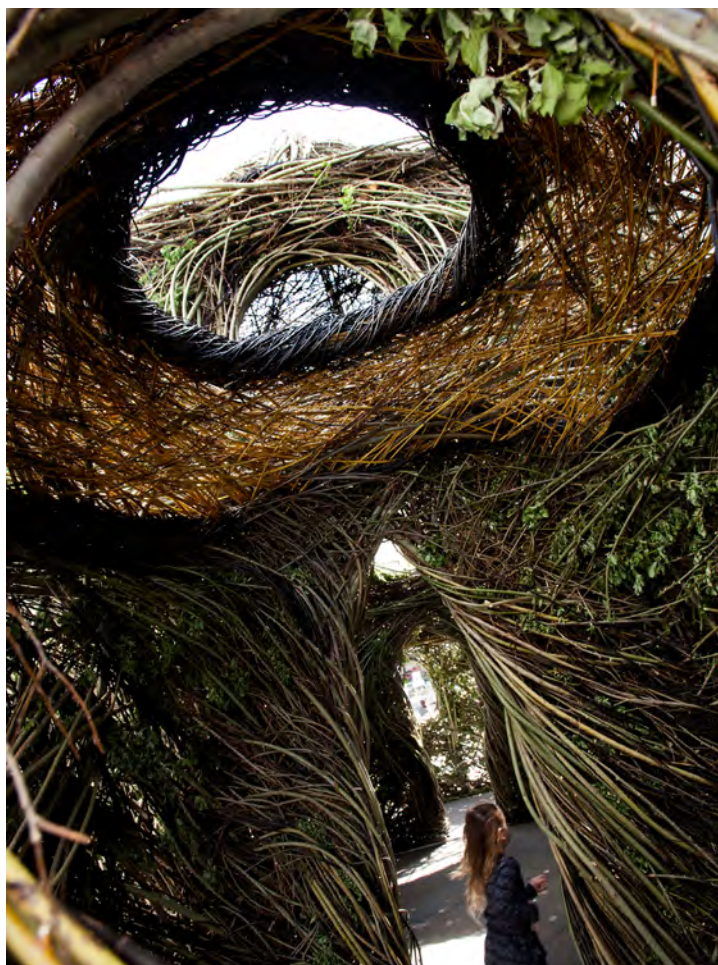
Because his sculptures are made with living materials, Dougherty's work is ephemeral. The sculptures tend to break down after a year or two, living on only in photographs. "With branches and saplings the line between trash and treasure is very thin, and the sculptures, like the sticks they are made from, begin to fade after two years," he says. "Often the public imagines that a work of art should be made to last. But I believe that a sculpture, like a good flowerbed, has its season."

By constructing works with a finite lifespan, Dougherty evokes themes of impermanence and life cycles. "To me, the fleeting lifespan of these objects adds urgency on one hand and a bittersweet pleasure on the other."

Now seventy, Dougherty shows no signs of slowing down. His 2016 is fully booked with commissions, from the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Gainesville, Georgia, to the cultural center devoted to Pippi Longstocking

author Astrid Lindgren in Vimmerby, Sweden. Although it's intensely physical work, Dougherty plans to create new pieces into 2018, with no plans to retire—yet.

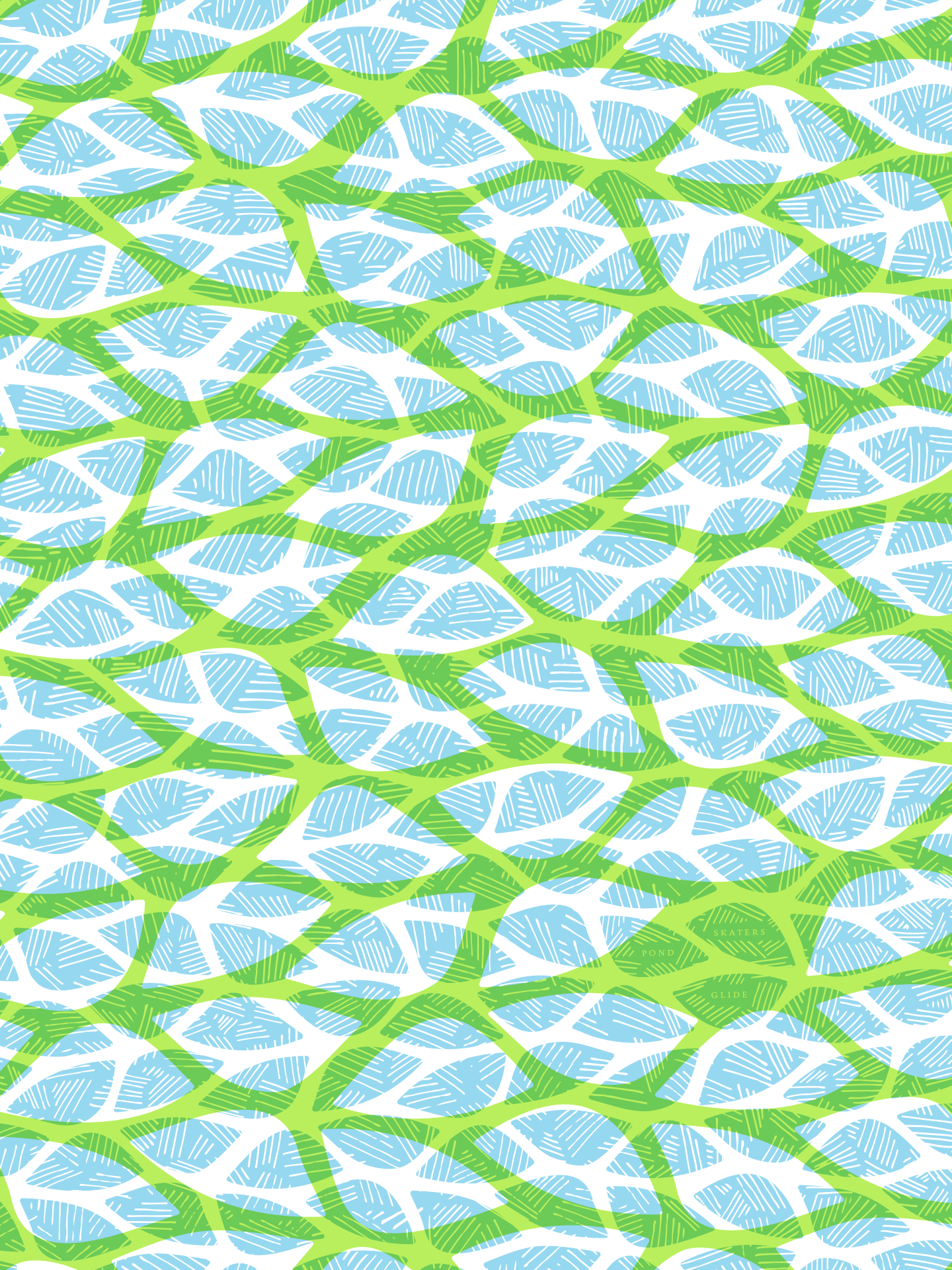
"I tell my friends that currently I can endure two pains at once: a pulled muscle in my back and a toothache, or a jammed finger and a flare up of tennis elbow," Dougherty says. "When I begin having to cope with three pains at once, retirement is just around the corner."



▲
Na Hale 'Eo Waiawi (2003)

photograph by PAUL KODAMA

Patrick Dougherty's Colorado installation will be on display for approximately two years, beginning with the 2016 Green Box Arts Festival, June 26 through July 4 in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado. Dougherty will also participate in our ArtDesk Conversations series on June 26. For more information, visit greenboxarts.org.



POND

SKATERS

GLIDE

M BKE



With high regard for the past,
The Met makes a play for
the future of contemporary art.

THE BREUER

by CAROL KINO

◀ The Met Breuer by night
photo by ED LEDERMAN



▲
Andy Warhol
Do It Yourself
(Violin)

Private collection
© 2015 The Andy
Warhol Foundation
for the Visual Arts,
Inc. / Artists Rights
Society (ARS),
New York, 1962

It's a brilliant winter day and Sheena Wagstaff, the chair of the modern and contemporary art department at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, is welcoming me into her office, a book-stacked aerie overlooking Central Park. We're here to discuss the moment when the museum will unveil its long-awaited contemporary program, to be housed in a Madison Avenue building designed by Marcel Breuer, which from 1966 until recently was the home of a different institution, the Whitney Museum of American Art.

I ask Wagstaff if she feels that in forming her department, which she was hired to do four years ago, and using the Breuer building as its flagship, she is coming up against ghosts. After all, contemporary art has always seemed an afterthought for the Metropolitan: before her arrival it was overseen for years by the same department that handled eighteenth-century painting. And the Breuer building, from the moment it opened, with a glittering ceremony attended by Jacqueline Kennedy, has always been linked to the Whitney and American art and the self-defining struggles of both. Of course, the Whitney reinvented itself last May by moving to a much larger space downtown.

Wagstaff, a cool and savvy Englishwoman who was previously chief curator of London's Tate Modern, has fielded such questions for months now, and she dispatches this one with efficiency and verve. "Actually it's the opposite," she says, then launches into an





◀ The Met Breuer
exterior
photo by ED LEDERMAN



impassioned discussion of Henry Geldzahler, the legendary curator who established the Met's first contemporary art department in 1967. "For a curator in those days, Geldzahler was incredibly unusual, because his life revolved around artists," she notes, pointing out that, as well as championing young, underknown artists—which Geldzahler famously did until his death in 1994—he'd also hung out with some of the hottest, participating in Claes Oldenburg's happenings and, as a habitu   of the Factory, even acting in an Andy Warhol film.

In 1969, Geldzahler put the Met on the downtown map with the show *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970*. Organized for the Met's centennial, it included work by Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others. "That was a brilliant vision to found this department and to build on," Wagstaff says.

This idyllic era of focusing on the art of "now" was brief—after Geldzahler left the museum in 1977, he was briefly succeeded by Thomas B. Hess, who championed the abstract expressionists.

William Lieberman, chairman of the modern art department until his death in 2005, snagged some great bequests, like the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, rich in twentieth century School of Paris paintings by Picasso, Matisse, and others; and the Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection of modern masterworks, by the likes of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Then came Gary Tinterow, now director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, who exhibited a penchant for monographic exhibitions of such giants as Francis Bacon and John Baldessari.

As for the Whitney's former home, however, "I can answer that easily," Wagstaff says, of its ghost potential: "None. The Whitney has taken all of its history downtown with it. We're not interring the body." Instead she prefers to view the iconic structure, which Breuer described as "an inverted pyramid," and she describes as "so full of texture, so full of color," as an artwork itself. Indeed, the building has been lovingly refurbished for the opening and its inaugural exhibition will deal with Breuer's work.

In the eyes of most New Yorkers and museum aficionados, however, the Whitney does leave a trail of spirits, most notably that of its founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, an heiress-artist who established it in 1914 in her Greenwich Village atelier as the Whitney Studio, aiming to provide a gathering spot for artists and to promote

“Our visitors have always been intrigued by the interconnected path they can travel at the Met—both cross-cultural and intergenerational, spanning over 5,000 years. To end that journey in the mid-twentieth century would be unfair to our audience.”

the cause of American art, then very much the struggling underdog. Whitney, who also collected, finally opened a museum in 1931, after ironically she'd offered her holdings to the Metropolitan and had been refused. Only after her death in 1942, with the rise of abstract expressionism and American pop, did her little institution and American art alike finally come into their own.

Because of the Whitney's origins as a studio club, still expressed in traditions like the Biennial and its engagement with ultra-contemporary work, it is still known as “the artists' museum.” And it is the spirit of that history, perhaps more than anything else, that the Met Breuer program seeks to continue. As Wagstaff puts it, “The Whitney leaves that tradition within the Breuer building of working with living artists.”

Indeed, rather than the updated, donor-friendly version of the Tinterow model that many had expected—major surveys of blue-chip demigods, like James Turrell and Cindy Sherman, or younger talents favored by A-list collectors, like Kehinde Wiley and Julie Mehretu—the Met Breuer's first solo survey, organized by Wagstaff herself, is focusing on a true artist's artist: the little-known Indian modernist Nasreen Mohamedi (see sidebar).

On view through September 4, *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible* seeks to address creativity in another fashion. A grand historical survey of more than 190 works spanning nearly six centuries, it uses work by the likes of Da Vinci, Rembrandt, Picasso, Alice Neel, the Brazilian neo-concretist Hélio Oiticica, and the New York contemporary sculptor Janine Antoni to link the Renaissance notion of *non finito*, an unfinished aesthetic, to modern-day conceptual concerns. Here, the catalog includes interviews with artists like Vija Celmins and Luc Tuymans, discussing

the moment of creative flux in the studio that might lead one to call a work complete—or not.

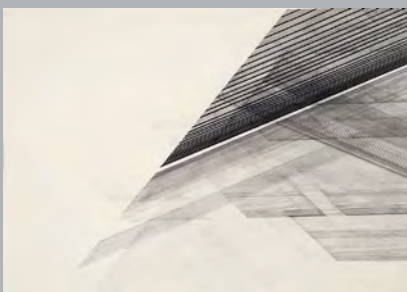
It's a compelling idea. And aesthetically, one of the show's most fascinating aspects was the degree to which unfinished work, whatever the era, can look radically contemporary—like a faceless portrait of an eighteenth-century Spanish duchess by German painter Anton Raphael Mengs that suggested a work by the surrealist Leonor Fini, or a fanciful Baldessari. Yet seen in the Breuer building—whose brashness and unorthodoxy one can't help associating with the expansive, forward-looking march of early American art—the exhibition made it clear that this museum would be charting a dramatically different course.

Wagstaff, speaking after the opening, says it was essential to establish the Met Breuer in this way because it lays important groundwork for future shows. “*Unfinished* starts in the Renaissance,” she says, with a 1437 drawing of a church by Jan van Eyck, and takes the audience through several important “hinges,” as she puts it, that shaped modern Western art history: the middle of the nineteenth century and the beginning and middle of the twentieth. “I hope that when visitors and artists return to the Breuer in the future they will remember that trajectory,” she says.

The show represents a new direction for the Met in another sense, too, because it was organized collaboratively by six different departments, including American art, European sculpture and decorative arts, conservation, and drawings and prints. “This is an experimental departure for us,” says one co-organizer, Andrea Bayer, of the European paintings department. Although it originated as two separate exhibitions, one looking at modern art, the other at Renaissance and baroque painting, the two were brought together—for the opening—as part of an increasing push at the Met to organize more cross-departmental exhibitions.

“From the beginning,” Bayer says, “Sheena wanted this to be about living artists, to move outside the institution into the artist's studio.” Another aim, says another co-organizer, Kelly Baum, a curator of postwar and contemporary art, is to “create an art-historical context for modern and contemporary art. It allows us to think about modern and contemporary art through the lens of history, but it allows us to think about history through the lens of modern and contemporary art.” It functions, she continues, “like a telescoping of history.”

Upcoming shows at the Met Breuer will also link the present with the past. In October, it will open the first retrospective of Kerry James Marshall, known for presenting from past and present-day African American life, inspired by old master paintings; he has referred to himself as a “history painter.” It will be accompanied by about forty works selected by Marshall from the museum's holdings: African tribal masks and oracle figures, Albrecht Dürer and Japanese Edo period prints, a photograph by Stan Douglas, and the Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres painting *Odalisque in Grisaille* (ca. 1824-34)—pieces that are all “touchstones for Kerry in his



▲
All works by NASREEN MOHAMEDI

Untitled (ca. 1970),
Gelatin silver print, Private Collection

Untitled (1960s),
Ink on paper, Estate of Nasreen
Mohamed / Courtesy of Talwar Gallery,
New York / New Delhi

Untitled (ca. 1975),
Ink and graphite on paper,
Sikander and Hydari Collection

Untitled (1969),
Collage and watercolor on paper,
Collection of Gayatri and Priyam Jhaveri

Nasreen Mohamedi

by CAROL KINO

Born in 1937 in Karachi and educated in London, Nasreen Mohamedi is one of the rare abstractionists—and female artists—to have emerged from post-independence India. She spent much of her career teaching there and died at fifty-three from a variant of Huntington's Disease. Her grid-and-line-based abstractions, made with ink and graphite, meticulously marked until the bitter end, have rarely been exhibited in this country and have only recently become known in Europe. Her photographs—closely cropped images of paving stones, Islamic buildings, and weavings stretched across looms—were never shown publicly in her short lifetime.

Mohamedi may not be the sort of headliner who creates a stir in the auction room, but she offers precisely the kind of creative and intellectual riches that are craved by artists and critics. I first heard about her work from the South African artist William Kentridge, who discovered the artist on his first trip to India in 2013. We were speaking for a column I used to write for *T magazine* about little-known artists that well-known artists find inspiring.

"Seeing Mohamedi's work was kind of a revelation," he said. "I was more familiar with the figurative Indian tradition. I hadn't expected to see work like that there at all...The purity of modernism gets a fantastic taint and impurity when it's made in the third world."

He also described her as "exceeding the cool of Agnes Martin" and added, "I think it's a sobering lesson for people to see her drawings and understand where Agnes Martin comes from,

rather than thinking of it the other way around."

The inaugural Met Breuer exhibition was organized by three institutions, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in New Delhi, as well as the Met. However, Met curator Sheena Wagstaff arranged this installation using the open grid of Breuer's concrete coffered ceiling to enhance the underlying rhythms of the work.

The drawings are displayed on pale gray walls aligned with the east-west axis of that grid, and the photographs on slightly darker walls aligned with the north-south. This underlines the serene sense of order Mohamedi must have struggled toward throughout her life, helping us follow the thread as her work morphs from brushy portraits and landscapes to finely inked drawings of fibers on a loom, and then into planes of lines that seem to levitate and crackle across the paper.

"Her work really speaks to this essentialist approach to art-making," says Wagstaff, "which really takes you back to that moment of putting a mark on paper, one of the most difficult things in the world to do."

The show was also filled with Mohamedi's diaries and notes. Walking through it, one sensed what many artists must grapple with as they fuse their own impulses with the global and local. The catalog quotes a diary entry from 1968:

1975—Grids to Labyrinths
Labyrinths, lines among lines—
A mesh
Difficult to destroy
Yet one must
Walk
Nothing more
Out of chaos, form—silence.

artistic life,” says Ian Alteveer, associate curator in the Modern and Contemporary Art department.

Although the exhibition will have two other venues—the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles—this will be the only one to present Marshall’s work in an art-historical context. “It’s something only we can do,” Alteveer says. “I see it as part of our grand tradition of great monographic retrospectives, but also as a manifestation of our really exciting new emphasis on contemporary art and its embroachment with art history.”

If you look a bit more closely, it’s clear that this sort of overlap isn’t only taking place at the Met Breuer; it is actually going on all over the museum. And it has been escalating since Wagstaff’s boss, Thomas Campbell, assumed his role as director in January 2009.

Campbell, formerly a curator in the department of European sculpture and decorative arts, had already exhibited a flair for bringing the past to life. After arriving at the Met from London’s Franses Tapestry Archive, he impressed everyone—critics and museum leadership alike—by organizing an exhibition of Renaissance tapestry in 2002 that turned out to be a huge hit.

When Campbell succeeded Philippe de Montebello, the French aristocrat who’d helmed the Met for thirty-one years without exhibiting much interest in contemporary art, he felt change was imperative. “I came into my directorship knowing that the Met must embrace the full sweep of art history, including the art of our own time,” he tells me in an email. “Our visitors have always been intrigued by the interconnected path they can travel at the Met—both cross-cultural and intergenerational, spanning over 5,000 years. To end that journey in the mid-twentieth century would be unfair to our audience.”

One early step was to transform the concerts and lectures department into a berth for performance art, helmed since 2011 by Limor Tomer, formerly an adjunct performing arts curator at the Whitney. When she was hired, Tomer recalls, Campbell asked her “‘to think about what role performance could play in a museum like the Met.’ He says all art was once new and contemporary.” Introducing performance into the galleries, they decided, would help bring them to life.

She began by staging two works involving the composer Tan Dun, best known for his Academy Award-winning score for the 2000 film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*: a performance that sent dancers through the American wing’s sculpture court and an abridged version of *The Peony Pavilion*, a 1598 Chinese play later re-imagined as an opera, performed in the Astor Chinese Garden Court. The same year, the experimental hip-hop artist D. J. Spooky That Subliminal Kid became the Met’s first performance artist-in-residence. The latest artist to hold that position is the composer Vijay Iyer, who performed in the Met Breuer’s lobby gallery throughout its opening month.

Other recent commissions have included *La Celestina*, a video installation by London’s ERRATICA opera company that put shadow

► The Met Breuer lobby
The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, 2016



▲ AUGUSTE RODIN, *The Hand of God*
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Edward D. Adams, 1908



▲
ALICE NEEL, *James Hunter Black Draftee*
COMMA Foundation, Belgium
© The Estate of Alice Neel, 1965

Sonic Blossom

by KELLY ROGERS

Among the eleven classically trained vocalists to perform for Lee Mingwei's *Sonic Blossom* (2015) was Tookah Sapper, an Oklahoma City native and Manhattan School of Music Master's degree candidate. In an exploration of intimate human connection, Lee's interactive installation brought the transformative gift of music to Metropolitan Museum of Art guests through Sapper's, and others—vocal musical talents.

"There was something visceral that people felt from the music and our voices," Sapper says. "When performing in a theater on a stage, there is a separation between the singer and the audience. Everything that I give in that kind of performance, I do not get back from the audience right away... In this setting however, everything that I gave to the person I was singing to, I got back immediately. Working with Lee Mingwei was an unforgettable experience... the love that he brings to this piece was felt by everyone of us who sang."



PABLO PICASSO, *Carafe and Candlestick*
The Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection © 2015 Estate of Pablo Picasso /
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

puppets in the Met's sixteenth century Spanish courtyard and Reid Farrington's *The Return*, featuring a motion-capture avatar based on Tullio Lombardo's fifteenth-century sculpture of Adam, which was shattered in 2002 and restored in 2014.

In October, the Met staged Lee Mingwei's *Sonic Blossom*, which involved singers performing Schubert lieder for individual visitors in the contemporary and Asian art galleries. It won rapturous reviews: James R. Oestreich, writing in the *New York Times*, called the performances "intense and powerful" and said he had been "moved to tears." For Lee, who'd created the work for the Mori Art Museum in Japan, having it staged at the Met was the fulfillment of a long-held fantasy. "It is my favorite museum to visit," Lee says. "I usually go there every other week and immerse myself—not in contemporary art, but in historical art, from European painting to African and East Asian artifacts. I find the most amazing surprises there. And I had often thought about what I would do if I were invited to do a project at the Met, as a contemporary artist."

The Met's other secret: some of its most devoted attendees are artists, who visit regularly for information and inspiration both. So while it has a range of public initiatives underway—like a planned modern and contemporary wing designed by the British architect David Chipperfield—some of its most interesting initiatives are subtler and quieter and directly address the way that living artists relate to the collection.

One of the most resonant is the Artist Project, a year-old web series that features artists talking about objects in the collection that have inspired them. Subtitled "What artists see when they look at the Met,"

it can be found at artistproject.metmuseum.org. Visit it, and you can see Kerry James Marshall analyzing that Ingres odalisque (he calls the grayscale image "ultra-modern" and "conceptual") or the French nouveau réaliste Jacques Villeglé, whose collages of multilayered, ripped posters presaged pop, speaking eloquently of his World War II boyhood discovery of Picasso and Braque. The Brooklyn street artist Swoon is equally moving on the subject of Honoré Daumier's *The Third-Class Carriage*, an unfinished oil painting (ca. 1862-64) that depicts an old woman, a sleeping boy and a nursing mother in a crowded railway car. She calls him a "relentless social observer" and says of the picture, "when I see this painting, it just strikes the flint. I try to walk in those footsteps."

Many speak of art in the collection that has been a source for their own work, like the conceptualist Nina Katchadourian, who deftly analyzes the fifteenth-century Flemish portraits that inspired her long-running cellphone project *Seat Assignment* (which began when she shot some selfies to entertain herself on a long flight, and suddenly had the urge to transform herself into a faux Hans Memling).

Others choose work they know little about, like Jeffrey Gibson, whose paintings and sculptures mix Native American tradition with modernist abstraction. Asked to participate in the project after he'd given a visitor tour of nineteenth-century American Western bronzes, Gibson (whose own background is Choctaw and Cherokee) chose slit gongs from the Vanuatu archipelago. But that's part of the Met's appeal, he says: "It's like wandering through a book. The experience of going there really has more influence over me than reading contemporary criticism or looking at contemporary art." When he was younger and unsure of his direction, "I would go there when I needed to feel I was in the lineage of the practice," Gibson says. "I used to walk through the Met and feel as though these were my heroes."

In the end, perhaps at least one gauge for the Met's contemporary program is what the collection means to artists and what artists mean to the Met. "There are many different reasons artists come here," Wagstaff says. "It's almost a barometer about where their interests lie, and what they can learn and what we can learn from them. That is definitely one of the main cues we'll be responding to." ■

Q/&/A

with Sheena Wagstaff

by CAROL KINO

The word “curator” seems to have been appropriated by every profession lately, from fashion design, to editing, to restaurants. What is unique about being a museum curator?

There’s a difference between what a curator does and what someone who just selects things does. An art curator has a number of different roles, and a curator in a museum

with a collection has an additional responsibility. In the old days, we were called a “museum keeper.” Our role was to understand, interpret, and research the objects we brought into the collection. Today, it is about bringing a lot of additional intelligences to bear on our selection.

For a contemporary curator, curating also involves working

with living artists, which requires another set of skills, whether it’s an intellectual partnership or just organizing a project. And all curators need to be multi-hatted, even more so now than twenty years ago. They have to work with donors and collectors. They have to know how the market works, to understand the forces that define art history. The best curators also find time to read and think, and to work with colleagues in the academy. Marrying all that with the ability to judge the actual experience and visual manifestation of art is all part of the curator’s role. So it is far more active and nuanced than a chef selecting a menu.

We’re living in an era where it’s tempting to pander to the audience by giving them what they want. Yet surely the best curators give the audience what they need to know. What do you feel the Met’s audience should know? What is your vision?

We have an enormous audience. In fact there are many, many audiences. We know there are artists, regular visitors, and professionals who

come here again and again for a particular kind of experience, and that experience is never the same from one visit to the next. This is because people come for a combination of experiences: enjoyment, learning, excitement, provocation—all of those good things.

What I hope we will do at the Breuer is to expand the modern and contemporary field, not just with exhibitions like *Unfinished*, which have a longer historical trajectory, but also through our more contemporary, more geographically expanded program.

I cannot tell you how many people have come up to me, absolutely fascinated, to ask about the Mohamedi show. There are many different reasons why this artist’s work has not been seen here, why it has not been ubiquitous in the contemporary art world. But to hear people say, “This is revelatory, thank you for bringing it to my attention”—it’s that reaction we want to engender. We want to be a still point in the city when so much is changing—yet at the same time, to expand its outlook.



◀ Sheena Wagstaff at the Met Breuer
photograph by FRANK VERONSKY (2016)

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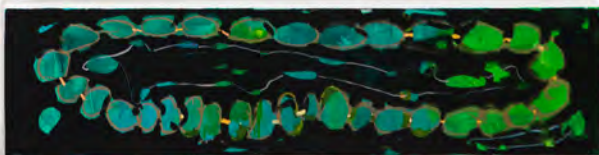
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COMPARTMENTALIZATION

SUMMER WHEAT AT OKLAHOMA CONTEMPORARY

*The Oklahoma-born artist, now living and working in New York City, returns to the Great Plains as Oklahoma Contemporary's artist-in-residence. Her new homecoming exhibition, **Pry the Lid Off**, examines 17th-century themes of women's work.*



JOHANNES VERMEER, *The Milkmaid*
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (c. 1660)

In Johannes Vermeer's iconic 17th-century painting *The Milkmaid*, a woman in a linen hat and draped blue apron leans forward as she pours a pitcher of milk. Her sleeves are pulled back as she guides the smooth liquid into a bowl, warm light filtering through a window on the left, leaving half of the woman's face in shadow. The room around her is plain, with some delicate Delft tiles accenting the wall in blue and white. Like much of Vermeer's work, this scene is one of domestic serenity, simultaneously quotidian and extraordinary through vibrant pigments in red, yellow, and blue. *The Milkmaid* is a lowly servant, yet she's also an enigmatic figure, drawing the viewer into her meditative world.

The painting, held by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, is one of the most familiar of the Dutch Golden Age of art. For New York-based artist Summer Wheat, it's also a portal into exploring femininity, domesticity, and the limits of paint as a medium. Imagining the spaces in the kitchen of *The Milkmaid* is an ongoing inspiration for her work, which involves sculptural painting and rich brushstrokes that emphasize texture, a contrast to Vermeer who captured his subjects with smooth realism. Wheat's *Pry the Lid Off* opened on February 25 at Oklahoma Contemporary in Oklahoma City. Through August 12, it will evolve as an immersive exploration into the world of *The Milkmaid* beyond the canvas edge.

"It's based on the storage compartments of *The Milkmaid*, so I'm thinking about it as different compartments of a treasure chest," Wheat says of her work. "It's not that I'm so attached to Vermeer or that painting in particular, it's more the way it's a symbol of a female servant. I'm interested in changing the perception of a female domestic worker."

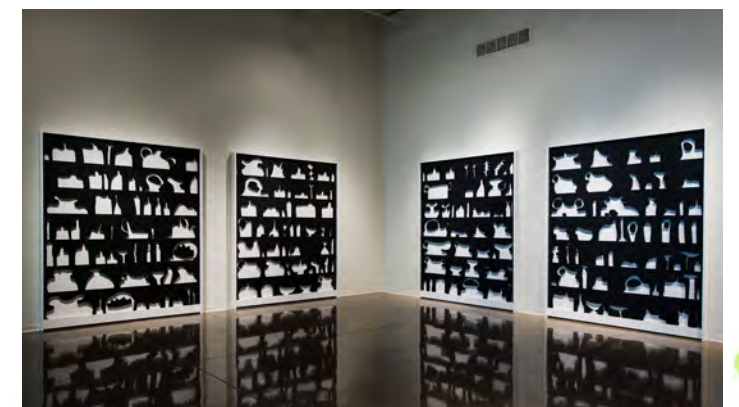
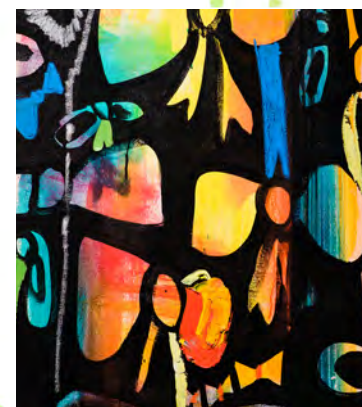


*"I'm interested in
recontextualizing paint in as
many different ways that I can"*





"It's like each exhibition is another chapter to this longer version of this bigger story"



▲
Rainbow Arcade (2015) | *Rainbow Arcade*, Detail
Valley of Life with Alligators (2015)
Bows (2015), Detail | *Inheritance* (2015)

Wheat was born and raised in Oklahoma City, but this is her first solo show in her home state. After studying for her BA at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond and her MFA at the Savannah College of Art and Design, she exhibited extensively on the East Coast, including the 2015 *Walk-In Pantry* at the Fridman Gallery in New York and a 2014 show at Pocket Utopia in Brooklyn, both of which drew inspiration from *The Milkmaid*. All of the work shown at Oklahoma Contemporary is new, using the space's multi-room design to build four installations, each focused on a distinct domestic space.

"Each room is based on a different material relationship," she says, describing the exhibition as something of a "para-narrative," where there are relationships through story and metaphor—"the unveiling of the world behind this white wall"—as well as the exhibitions before it. "It's like each exhibition is another chapter to this longer version of this bigger story," Wheat says. One realm of *Pry the Lid Off* will concentrate on stained glass, another on dishes, a third on tapestries, and a fourth on clothing.

"Summer's wonderfully bold and tactile works are appealing on many levels," says Erin Oldfield, director of education and public programming at Oklahoma Contemporary. "Her Oklahoma roots are a big draw for our community. From an artistic standpoint, her vision and unique execution are not like anything we have shown in the past."

While all of Wheat's art is formed with paint, it takes on disparate forms in *Pry the Lid Off*: stained glass windows with vase patterns, cut-outs of dishes, pitchers, and cups in negative space, tapestries, and clothing that appear like fabric but are actually paint on canvas.

"I'm interested in recontextualizing paint in as many different ways that I can," Wheat says. "A lot of things that I'm doing are...to re-establish the perception of what the material is." Here, Wheat demonstrates major influence from seventeenth-century art, which explored similar territory. She's looking at the old and finding a correlation with what is contemporary.

"Visually, I'm really fascinated with that time period," she says. "I can't get enough of the fabric and lacework and tapestries. I'm also interested in making things that are a bit less orthodox. I find that the seventeenth-century and more medieval times, those kinds of references give my work a rooting in classicism. I dig into those parts of history, so there's a resonance of a really stable old idea within the work."

Wheat says she rediscovered a subtle Oklahoma influence on her art. For example, the stained glass window entrance to *Pry the Lid Off* is lit by the sky. "I definitely think of the sky when I think of Oklahoma," she explains, and it's echoed on her paint tapestries decorated with moons and stars. There's also the influence of the China cabinets her family has long owned in the assembly of *The Milkmaid*'s dishware. She acknowledged that a respect for arts and crafts comes from her initial studies in Oklahoma, where she was likely to pick up and study Native American art magazines. These magazines, featuring Navajo textiles, among other craftwork, inspired Wheat's sketches early in life; the textures and motifs continue to inspire her textiles, colors, and patterns.

"A lot of it is coming from my personal history, and if I were to blur my eyes and look back at my childhood, these were the main themes, and these were the things I thought of the most," she says.

Oklahoma Contemporary showcases the work of local artists regularly, and Wheat's work illustrates Oklahoma's distinct visual culture. In *Pry the Lid Off*, the broad-skied possibilities of open plains meet centuries of art history, expanding the classical beyond its two dimensional plane, and into an imaginative, three dimensional space.

"As we have grown as an institution, the scope of our exhibitions program has expanded to include regional, national, and international artists," Steve Boyd, exhibits manager, says. "But Oklahoma has its own tradition—producing artists who go on to gain national and international recognition—and when we can bring talent like Summer's back to her hometown, it's special for all of us involved."



Go Global, Live Local.

Oldenburg. Ruscha. Andoe. Holzer. Judd.



MEET + LEARN

about these and other **CREATORS** in
the dynamic world of contemporary
art and performance.

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A R T D E S K

Telluride

This former silver mining town is now home to a thriving arts community with year-round festivals, art walks, and a top-notch culinary scene.

by GREG HORTON





WHERE ART AND FILM HIT THE SLOPES

TELLURIDE IS BEST KNOWN for its annual film festival, but this county seat in southwestern Colorado is a year-round arts destination—as well as a hard-working arts community. Kate Jones, executive director of Telluride Arts, sums it up thus: “In Telluride, the arts district is the town.” All four corners have art offerings, and there are approximately twenty galleries in the town proper.

The galleries are open every first Thursday in the spring and summer for an art walk. Jones says the artists are in the galleries to talk about their work. “In addition to the artists’ availability, guests are usually offered wine tastings and plenty of snacks,” Jones says.

Telluride is one half of a dual community. A thirteen-minute, free gondola ride up the mountain takes you to Mountain Village, a European-like town with what Jones describes as a completely different vibe. Both communities are involved in the film festival—the Chuck Jones Cinema in Mountain Village is the largest venue—but the arts focus is most obvious at the foot of the mountain.



Arts education is also a year-round emphasis: the Ah Haa School for the Arts offers programs for adults and youth, including camps for young people. Classes range from demonstrations and instruction for beginners to master classes that feature experts in their medium.

Jones says that every venue is surrendered to film for the festival, but when the festival is not in town, the historic Sheridan Opera House, built in 1913, offers an excellent performance series that includes live music and touring acts. The local Telluride Theatre Company stages Shakespeare in the Park, traditional and contemporary drama, and original theatre.

One weekend each year, the town offers an art and architecture tour



that includes design teams, architects, artists, and chefs working together on design projects. Part home tour, part competition, the annual event features new and historic homes.

The shuttle from Montrose Airport to Telluride is a one-hour-and-fifteen-minute ride, and reservations are simple to secure. A free bus system called Galloping Goose makes a complete loop around the town.

In addition to visual and performing arts, Telluride has developed a solid culinary arts reputation. Eliza Gavin, *Top Chef* season 10 competitor, oversees the menu at 221 South Oak. Take the gondola up to Mountain Village, and enjoy an unbelievable view of the mountains from Allred’s Restaurant. The award-winning Telluride Brewing Company is a not-to-be-missed stop for beer geeks while in town.

Finally, the skiing and hiking in Telluride is well known—it's Colorado, after all—but the town is historically significant, too. The city was the first in North America to have alternating current transmitted over a long distance to power street lights. Hikers can walk right out of town and up to Bridal Veil Falls—the highest falls in the state (365 feet)—and discover the original power plant that made the electricity available to the town.

The Telluride arts community is thriving and abundant in immersive experiences both on and off the slopes. For skiers lifting the goggles off their balaclava, looking for contemporary art and artists—Telluride delivers.

FACTS

In June 1889, notorious American train robber **Butch Cassidy** robbed the San Miguel Valley Bank.

Population: 2,369

The town sits in a **box canyon** surrounded by steep **forested mountains** and cliffs.



FILM IN TELLURIDE

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER DAVID HOLBROOKE

by BRIAN HEARN

Beginning as a small film festival to celebrate mountain sports, mountain culture, and mountain issues, Telluride Mountainfilm has grown to become a champion of independent documentary film. Last year David Holbrooke, festival director for Telluride Mountainfilm, debuted his feature documentary film, *The Diplomat*. The film traces the extraordinary life and career of his late father, Richard Holbrooke. The elder Holbrooke's tremendous diplomatic achievement—securing peace between Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia—was released by HBO in December 2015 on the twentieth anniversary of the Dayton Accords.

How does being festival director of Telluride Mountainfilm inform your filmmaking practice?

It's a symbiotic relationship, and both inform each other. Having a network of supportive documentary filmmakers that I can call on is helpful. I'm a better filmmaker because of it.

What motivated you to make this film about your father?

The night before his memorial service in December 2010 a bunch of his staff got together to tell stories about him that I hadn't heard. Then at his service, sitting on stage at the John F. Kennedy Center with so many important leaders, I realized what a legacy he left behind. As a filmmaker I knew someone would make a film about him, and I wanted to tell that story to bring a unique perspective as his son.

How do you think *The Diplomat* will influence younger generations?

I hope it inspires a new generation of diplomats to live a life that is impactful. If you go into a classroom and ask what a soldier does, every hand will go up. If you ask what a diplomat does? Not so much. The film communicates why diplomacy matters and why we should care about it.

What were the biggest challenges for you in making the film?

Defining my role in the film. His story unfolded easily in three acts as a big American life. So I had to figure out: How do I tell this story? Am I the right voice? I had to find a sweet spot that was intimate, real, and moving. I saw an opportunity to explain American history in a different way, but also tell a universal story of a son trying to understand his father. Family histories really matter. They speak to who we are as Americans.

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 2 - 5, 2016

Telluride Film Festival has long been the go-to event for serious cinephiles in North America. In its forty-two-year history, it has managed a laid-back vibe with a world-class reputation for prestigious premieres. Serving as a critical bellwether for serious films, Telluride's discerning audiences serve as tastemakers for the many festivals in its wake. Its commitment to screening primarily North American premieres—typically announced just before the event—makes it a place for discovering exciting new talent and the latest work from veteran film artists. Legendary film critic Roger Ebert once said, "It's like Cannes died and went to heaven."

PREVIOUS—Mountainfilm patrons enjoy a screening at the **Base Camp Outdoor Theatre** (photo: Gus Gusciora)

1—The Preservation Hall Jazz Band plays at **The Sheridan Opera House** (photo: Scott S. Warren) **2**—**Gallery 81435**,

a contemporary art gallery with year round exhibitions

3—The artistic director of **Telluride Theatre**, Sasha Sullivan poses next to an installation during Telluride's

annual **Art + Architecture Weekend** **4**—**Telluride Arts**,

a nonprofit organization with a mission to sustain and

elevate the arts in Telluride **5**—Mountain vistas abound

by the windows of **Allred's Restaurant**, a Telluride

institution **6**—Revelers gathering during Telluride Arts'

First Thursdays evening art walk

Market Marfa

As the director of Marfa Contemporary gallery in Marfa, Texas, I have been fortunate to live for the past four years in a community driven by the arts and a cacophony of amazingly creative people. These objects comprise six of my very favorite things in Marfa. They are also crafted by six of my favorite people.

by NATALIE RONCONE

I SAM SCHONZEIT POSTCARDS

Sam Schonzeit is an artist, teacher, and architect in Marfa, Texas. The postcards are works of art that also have a function. Sam also has a subscription service where anyone signing up can receive "one unique postcard a month for a year." This type of correspondence art has roots in the postal art of the Japanese Gutai group, operating in the 1950s and 1960s.

\$10 at the Marfa Book Company 105 S. Highland Ave. in Marfa or samschonzeit.com

BUCK AND CAMP BOSWORTH
**“HEARTPINE HEARTS FOR
 YOUR POOHBEAR”**

The super cool and chic husband-and-wife team, Buck and Camp, are owners of the Wrong Gallery. Camp is an artist and they have an eclectic selection of both Camp's artwork and artisanal items in the Wrong Store. The hearts are my current favorite thing. Crafted by Camp, they are inspired by his wife. When they first started dating, Camp made one of these tiny hearts for Buck to carry about in her pocket. Sweet! They can be custom tailored with your own individual words.

\$25 in the Wrong Store at 110 W. Dallas St. and online at wrongmarfa.com

2



3

BUDDY KNIGHT
**HAND ENGRAVED SILVER NECKLACE
 AND EARRINGS SET**

Buddy Knight is a native Marfan and master welder. His unique pieces are welded in his Marfa studio at the end of a dirt road that runs along the railway track. I often visit him in his studio where he is simultaneously working on several pieces—spurs, stirrups, belt buckles, jewelry—he does it all! Pictured: \$155.

A wide selection of his work is available at Marfa Contemporary and the Hotel Paisano Gift Shop on 207 Highland St.



MEGHAN GERETY
**“MADE IN MARFA”
 SEEDBOMBS**

Meghan Gerety is an artist from Connecticut, living and working in Marfa. Her seedbombs are of the “throw and grow” variety, consisting of wildflower seeds that you can grow seasonally. These are a super gift idea and come in a beautiful muslin packaging.

\$8 at Marfa Contemporary

5



4



GONZALO LEBRIJA
LIMITED EDITION PRINT

Mexican artist Gonzalo Lebrija exhibited with Marfa Contemporary in 2015. As part of that exhibition he produced a number of limited edition ink prints, which are symptomatic of Gonzalo's minimalist style and stark aesthetic.

Price available upon request at Marfa Contemporary at 100 E San Antonio St.

6

THOMAS COLE BROWN
SODA FIRED POTTERY PIECES

I love the vibrant color and dripping technique that Thomas incorporates to make a functional item that is yet a beautiful work of art. Thomas Cole Brown is a functional ceramic artist, you can discover all of his amazing work at thomascolebrown.com.

Price available on request at Freda on 207 S Highland Ave or shop-freda.com



ART AND THE CRITIC'S SITUATION

by DONALD KUSPIT

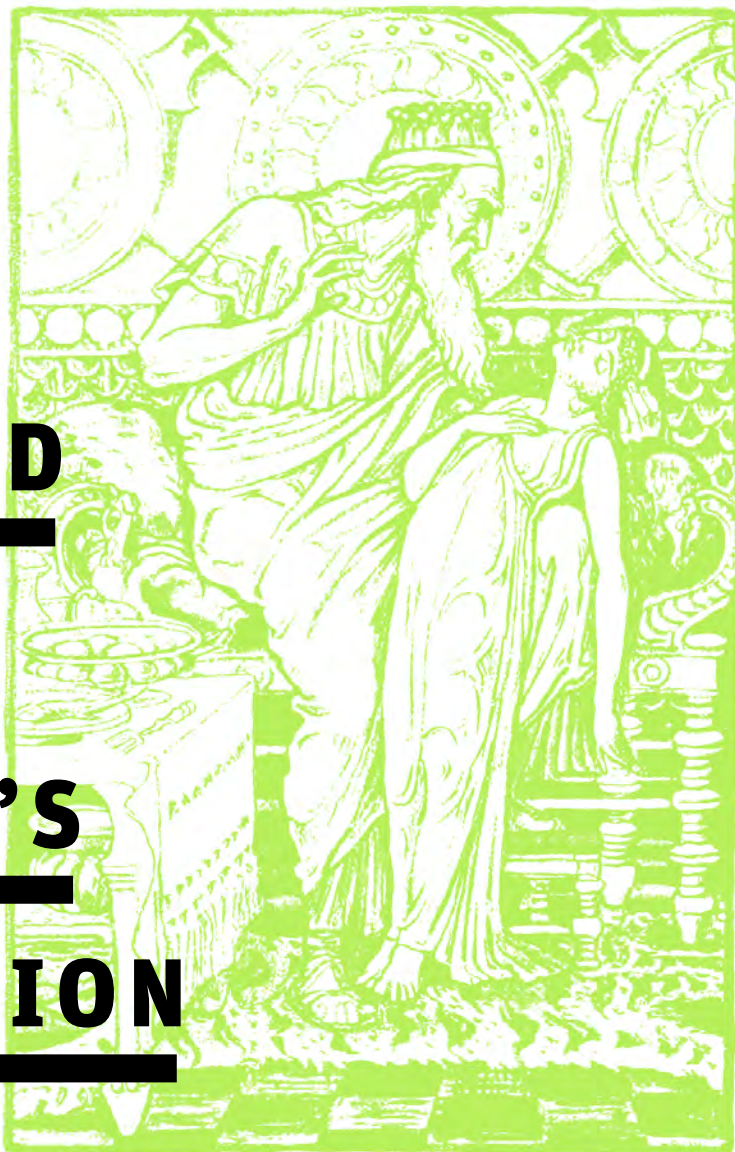
ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, it is hard to write art criticism, especially when it explores art in depth and reaches a large public. These days everyone has something to say about art; there is a communication glut just as there is an information glut. Reviews of particular artists must fit into a rather small Procrustean bed, and they are often geared toward galleries that feature these artists.

More extensive, interpretative, and evaluative treatments—explorations of an art in depth—are usually reserved

for trendy and thus automatically important artists, generally meaning those whose work sells for a great deal of money. In both cases, art criticism tends to become an advertisement for the artist—intellectual publicity. Not the most sensational kind of publicity, but it has its uses: intellectual cachet tends to outlast social cachet—at least the intellectual critic likes to think so.

One needs ideas to think about art—certainly to be able to interpret and evaluate it with critical acumen and, more broadly, in order to educate

one's sensibility, enabling one to attune to it responsibly. I get my ideas from philosophy, art history, and psychoanalysis. I have doctorates in philosophy and art history, and four years of training in psychoanalysis. No one can be a responsible art critic—let alone properly responsive to a work of art—without knowledge of the history of ideas, the history of art and culture, and some understanding of human psychology. I believe one cannot fully understand the wish to make art, and the effort involved in doing so, without



King Midas
with his
daughter
(1893)

by
WALTER
CRANE

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS ON THE VERGE OF BEING STAMPED OUT BY ECONOMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

understanding the fantasies and feelings, the cognitions and cultural assumptions, that inform it and one's response to it.

The contemporary critic is thus in a dubious position. His critical consciousness—the knowledge and sensitivity a critic can bring to bear on art—is constrained by the demands of the market, particularly if he would like to get a hearing from the powerful, often monied, people in the art world. These “super-rich,” as one petulant critic put it, equate artistic value with economic value.

Indeed, having great economic value automatically means a work has great artistic value—so much so that it lifts it out of art history into a privileged realm of its own. When a Modigliani painting of a nude fetched an auction price of \$170 million, the painting automatically became “major,” so outstanding that it seems to stand apart from—and look down on—other paintings. It has a built-in economic advantage when it comes to comparing it to other paintings.

We are in a situation not unlike that in which movies are “evaluated.” All we need to know about a movie is the profit it made upon opening. If the profit was substantial, it is a critical success; if it wasn't, it is a flop, and not worth the trouble of seeing. Are works of art that do not sell for millions flops? From a financial perspective, they are.

Critical consciousness is on the verge of being stamped out by economic consciousness. Certainly it

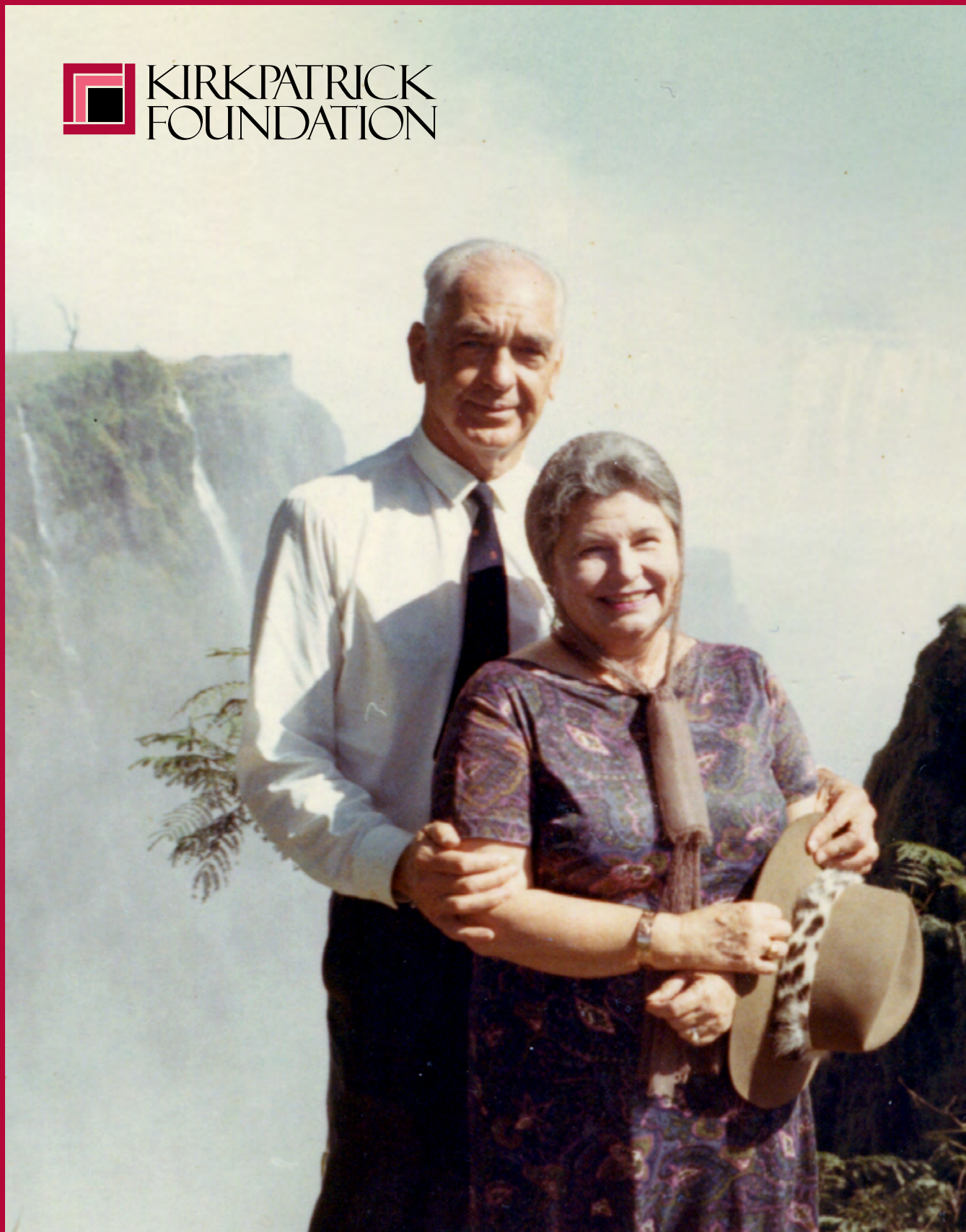
is being subsumed by it. Even more crucially, money value is determining art value. Indeed, art criticism cannot compete with “money criticism.” Financial journalist Felix Salmon wrote in the December 2015 issue of *The Atlantic*—“Were it not for Andy Warhol, the current multibillion-dollar market in contemporary art would barely exist. Last year, he broke a record for the highest annual sales of any artist... Yet in 1993, six years after he died, Warhol's reputation was such that when sixteen of his canvases came up for auction, only two sold: The erstwhile king of pop art was scorned by almost all self-respecting collectors. Warhol's recovery from that slump has no precedent in the history of art or commerce.”

There's not a word about the art historical significance of Warhol's art, nor about its social significance—nothing about its cultural meaning, let alone its emotional effect. Nor about his attitude to art, considering that he said he passed through it on the way to becoming a “business artist,” the art of making

money being the highest art for him, and as such more valuable than any work of art. Warhol was beyond criticism—it would be wasted on him—for criticism has different values than he does, which is why it is beside the point, if not yet dying out.

As the familiar saying goes, “we know the price of everything but the value of nothing.” The value that criticism gives to art—a sort of surplus value—is not regarded as highly as the value money gives to art. One recalls King Midas, who wished that everything he touched would turn into gold. The gods, in their ironical wisdom, granted his wish: he starved to death, for the food he touched turned to gold, making it inedible. If art is spiritual food for thought and emotional sustenance for life, then the Midas touch of “super-rich” collectors turns it into spiritless, lifeless gold. The Midas touch is self-defeating, for it devalues art by absurdly overvaluing it. ✕

DONALD KUSPIT, American art critic and art historian, is widely regarded for more than forty years of contributions to artistic criticism and literature, including exhibition reviews, books, articles, and catalogue essays. Guggenheim fellow and co-founder of the magazine *Art Criticism*, Kuspit remains one of the most distinguished art critics of our time, exploring the philosophical themes of art historiography.





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Founders John and Eleanor Kirkpatrick at
Victoria Falls, Zambia, in 1968, on an Oklahoma
City Zoological Society safari, a trip that helped
start the valuable DNA program that the
Oklahoma City Zoo participates in.

ArtSociety — Summer in Springtime



The **Spring Dinner**, held at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center in April 2016, is a fundraiser to ensure that exhibits and events remain free and open to the public. Revelers included **Richard and Glenna Tanenbaum, Kim Bruno, Teresa Rose Crook, Elaine Levy, Joan Gilmore, Stephen and Susan Prescott**, who enjoyed local springtime fare and mingled throughout the gallery space.

ArtSociety — Poetry in the Modern Age



“You can actually learn to have grace. And that’s heaven.”

—EILEEN MYLES, *INFERNO*



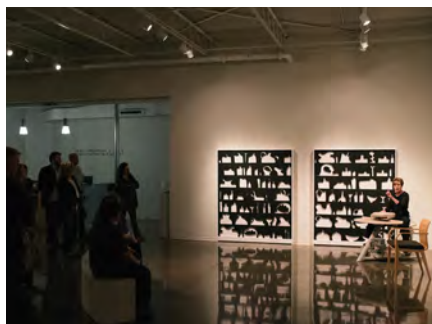
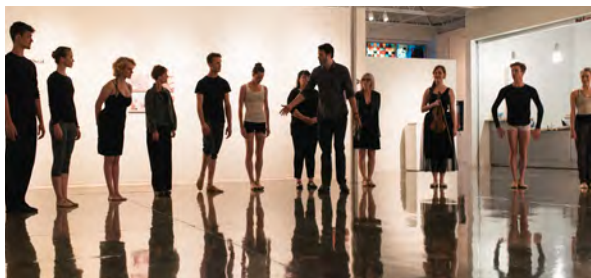
The **ArtDesk Conversations** series continued with a Q&A between poet and author **Eileen Myles** and *ArtDesk* editor-in-chief **Louisa McCune**. In front of a standing-room-only crowd at Marfa Contemporary, topics ranged from Myles’ 1992 presidential run, Boston accents, and readings from *I Must be Living Twice* (2015) and a forthcoming memoir, *After Glow* (2017).

ArtSociety — Total Immersion at OCAC



“How can I recreate her spaces as if she lived today?”

—SUMMER WHEAT ON *THE MILKMAID*



In conjunction with **Robert Mills** and the **Oklahoma City Ballet** and chaired by **Sandra Kirk**, **Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center** hosted an immersive performance experience in May based on the work of artist **Summer Wheat**'s two-dimensional exhibit, *Pry the Lid Off*. Art patrons at the sold-out event were able to *watch* the art come alive with performances and a guided tour.

ArtSociety — Jose Dávila at Marfa Contemporary



In May, **Jose Dávila** unveiled *The Elephant and the Feather* at Marfa Contemporary, a new exhibit curated by **Natalie Roncone**. The installation attracted locals, out-of-towners, collectors, fellow artists, and even actors **Kevin Bacon**, **Kyra Sedgwick**, and **Kathryn Hahn**, who are filming a TV pilot project in Marfa. A dinner in honor of the artist was held after the opening reception at **The Capri**.

ART DESK

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This issue of ArtDesk is dedicated to Winston Archer Mattingly, born May 6, 2016, to Molly Ambrose and Chad Mattingly; to Mr. Spencer James Kirkpatrick for his graduation from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama; and in memory of Aubrey McClendon.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Marc Maron

CONTRIBUTING
COMEDIAN

Marc Maron first began his career in broadcasting on the now defunct Air America. From the ashes of his former job at the media company, he began the podcast, *WTF with Marc Maron* at night—"We'd break into the studio with the help of the night tech and begin recording the podcast there," he told the *New Yorker* in 2014.

As the show evolved Maron has changed the media landscape. *WTF* has been downloaded more than 100 million times, and he's posted more than 700 episodes. His garage, The Cat Ranch, has been visited by numerous comedians, musicians, and journalists.

Because of his brilliant interviewing skills and natural ability to extract stories from even the most guarded of personalities, a usually forgotten area of northeast Los Angeles is now a stop on the press tour for anyone working in the entertainment industry today.

"I go on a sort of kindred-spirit bonding that pre-exists the interview, and just see what unfolds. I'm just looking for authentic engagement of some kind and usually, after an hour or more, you get that."

-Marc Maron

"Getting the chance to meet and photograph someone like Sheena Wagstaff in such a unique space makes my life the best."
-Frank Veronsky

Frank Veronsky

CONTRIBUTING
PHOTOGRAPHER

Frank Veronsky really likes to make portraits. Over his career of twenty-seven years he has photographed an eclectic array of personalities, executives, and celebrities, as well as countless outstanding unknowns. Veronsky says he is equally comfortable working in the grandest, or most despicable of locations, although he is partial to good catering. He aspires to utilize his creative vision, natural good looks, and wicked sense of humor, for his own gain, and the good of mankind, whenever possible.

"Photographing Sheena Wagstaff at the new Met Breuer building was just like any other day, except it was completely different. And that's what I love about my work—variety. It was great working with Sheena and her staff."

Christian Keese

PUBLISHER

Art collecting, the opera, photography, sailing, and caring for a menagerie of animals are among the many avocations of **Christian Keese**, co-founder and publisher of *ArtDesk*. Keese, who is chairman of Kirkpatrick Bank and Kirkpatrick Oil & Gas Company, is also the founder of the Brett Weston Archive, which he acquired in 1996, and is co-founder of Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center, where he serves as president. Keese is on the boards of American Ballet Theater, the Director's Circle of the Frick Collection, and the American Friends of the Tate. He divides his time between Oklahoma City, New York, and Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, where he will soon co-host the eighth year of the Green Box Arts Festival.

Alex Marks

CONTRIBUTING
PHOTOGRAPHER

Alex Marks is the go-to photographer for nearly every event in the west Texas town of Marfa. His photos have been published nationally—from the *New York Times* to *Big Bend Now*, and his clients include Ballroom Marfa, L.A. rock duo Best Coast, and Urban Outfitters. Born and raised in northern California, Marks moved to Marfa shortly after graduating from the University of California in Santa Cruz. His wife, Susannah, owns Marfa mainstay boutique FREDa; currently they are working on a second FREDa location in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"ArtDesk has been a wonderful partnership and a unique opportunity for us to exercise our affection for contemporary art and the beauty of print production."
-Gavin Wade

Gavin Wade

ART DIRECTOR

Gavin Wade is one of the three founders of Polygraph, a boutique multidisciplinary creative studio in the nation's capital. Polygraph's diverse portfolio includes identity design for local and national brands, product and packaging design, print publications, and book design.

Wade began his career in film production, but a long-term love affair with identity design and illustration lead him to launch Polygraph with his two partners and long-time friends, Lindsay and Jason Mannix.

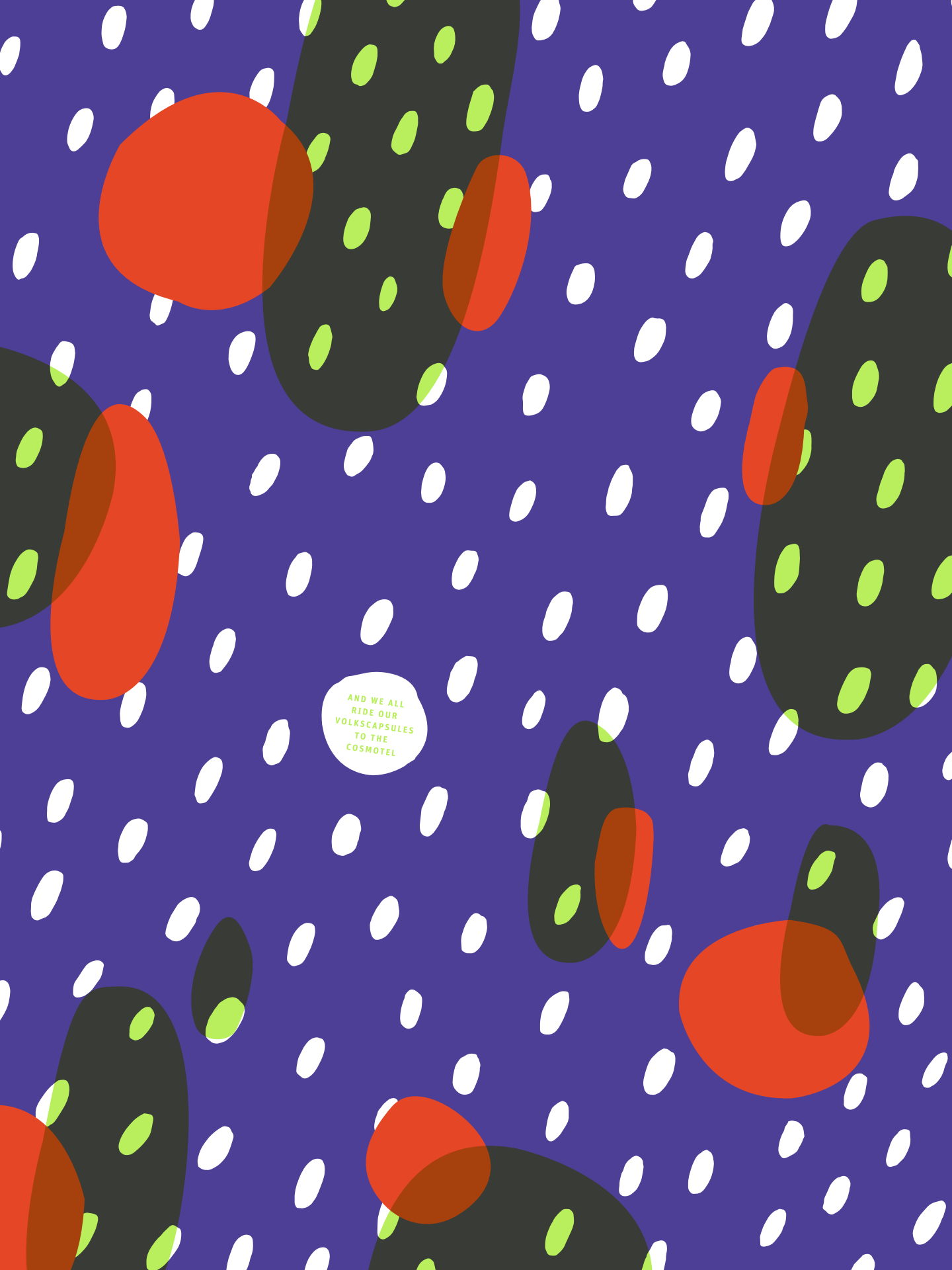
The discerning and innovative creator behind the *ArtDesk* brand and magazine design, Wade brings to life the shared vision of *ArtDesk* as its art director.



O N A I R

photo by MARC MARON

Many episodes of comedian Marc Maron's podcast, *WTF with Marc Maron*, begin with a guest meandering through the ephemera displayed on nearly every surface of his garage. Stacks of books, mountains of vinyl LPs, and dozens of trinkets (most of which are sent in from his devout fans) converge in this small space. Photos from Maron's past and his time as a comic on the road also line the walls—including an oft mentioned photo of Maron with his friend and personal hero, the late comedian Sam Kinison. Maron's garage, located in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles, serves as a kind of cozy sanctuary for the podcast host, his many cats, and the hundreds of guests he's hosted—including President Barack Obama, Will Ferrell, artists Harmony Korine and Shepard Fairey, and broadcasting greats Larry King and Ira Glass. —**Alana Salisbury**



AND WE ALL
RIDE OUR
VOLKSCAPSULES
TO THE
COSMOTEL

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WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE POWER OF ART
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