

New American Paintings

JURIED EXHIBITIONS-IN-PRINT

81



Juror's Comments

George Kinghorn

Director & Curator, University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME



From time to time the theoretical statement, “painting is dead” rears its ugly head. When I hear this declaration being tossed around by curators and art critics, I either laugh quietly or roll my eyes in frustration. After all, the demise of painting claim has resurfaced at various intervals since the mid-1800s. The reality of course, is that throughout the

rhetoric artists have and will continue to paint. The works in this edition of *New American Paintings* attest to the fact that painting is alive and well—or perhaps, some may claim that it is just enjoying one of its nine lives. For the moment, let’s throw out painting’s on-going defensive stance and enjoy the works of these featured artists who are advancing and redefining contemporary painting.

It was a distinct pleasure to serve as juror for *New American Paintings*’ Mid-Atlantic edition. Opportunities such as these are most rewarding in that I am provided a glimpse into the wide array of creative approaches being explored by a cross-section of skilled artists. The chance to get to know artists working in a region of which I have limited previous exposure is also gratifying. The process of jurying exhibitions often introduces me to new perspectives and offers a few unexpected surprises that provide fuel for future curatorial projects. Given the amount of quality submissions, it was indeed a daunting task to select the forty artists featured herein.

My initial approach to reviewing the submissions began with the following: identify works that exhibit technical proficiency in the chosen

media; look for cohesiveness among the examples submitted; and choose works that demonstrate innovation in regard to content, subject matter, and conceptual concerns. I also set out to include works that represented a diversity of styles, subject matter, and approaches. Another factor was how these works related to my experiences of viewing and interacting with contemporary art over the years and, more importantly, did the paintings speak to me enough to want to see more. Ultimately, the final selections reflect my own personal taste and biases.

Above all, these artists’ works reflect the pluralistic nature of painting today and underscore the notion that anything goes and everything is possible. Represented are realist interpretations of still-life and the figure, compositions with roots in Abstract Expressionism, and works that explore enigmatic narratives, environmental messages, and the psychological landscape.

“the demise of painting claim has resurfaced since the mid-1800s”

Expanding on the traditions of abstraction are artists such as Paul Behnke, Brett Davis, and Anthony Vega. Each employs gestural brush-

strokes, expressive paint drips and dynamic palettes that range from rosy-pinks to cool blue hues. The works of Robert Goodman, Rebecca Rutstein, and Arden Bendler Browning, share a subtle common strand in their adept layering of forms, incorporation of linear structures that resemble netting or industrial fencing, and a frenetic energy created by bold, curvilinear elements.

There are also a number of artists who explore the interaction of figures in interior/exterior settings. The works of Nathaniel Rogers, Aliza Lelah, and Cheryl Hochberg address psychological space and the complexity of relationships. Working in an even more realist manner are Alex Roulette and Zachary Thornton, each of whom depict night scenes that are voyeuristic and imbued with psychological tension.

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b 1958, Pittsburgh, PA

Education

MFA, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

BFA, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

Professional Experience

2004- Associate Professor, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ

1993-04 Associate Professor, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

Selected Exhibitions

2009 Strohl Art Center, Chautauqua, NY

2008 *Projects Gallery, Philadelphia, PA*

2007 Bridge Art Fair, Chicago, IL

2006 *Gallerie X, Istanbul, Turkey*

2005 *Alsager Gallery, Manchester, England*

Solvay Gallery, Krakow, Poland

Florence Biennial, Florence, Italy

2002 *Stephen Gang Gallery, New York, NY*

2000 *Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI*

Urban Institute of Contemporary Art, Grand Rapids, MI

Cedar Rapids Museum, Cedar Rapids, IA

1999 *Conlon/Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe, NM*

Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN

Awards

2005 Hungarian Residency, Hajduboszormeny, Hungary

2004 Hungarian Multi-Cultural Residency, Budapest, Hungary

2003 US Embassy Award, Szeged, Hungary

1996 Commission, Popejoy Center for the Arts, Albuquerque, NM

1985 Pennsylvania Council on the Artist Grant, Philadelphia, PA

Represented by

Projects Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will. Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

—Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*

Like a fairy tale, my work suspends belief in the ordinary to spin hair into gold—in the past, to create installations that flirted with traditional notions of beauty and femininity, and at present, to play within the confines of a frame. Abstract and seductive images appear frozen in time.

I employ highly animated colors as settings for meandering shadows and fairy-tale magic. Layers of hand-cut, frosted mylar become petal-like openings that conceal and reveal the hybrid narratives that lie beneath. What appear to be bold expressionistic strokes of color are, in reality, recycled spots of paint taken from original mixing palettes. Shielded from total exposure, pre-determined, precisely-painted flowers appropriated from paint-by-number kits create patterns of do-it-yourself beauty. In lieu of creating environments where disparate elements compete for stature, I cultivate visual tensions within one pictorial playing field, where issues of abstraction and representation intersect.

