





Ann Goldstein

ANN GOLDSTEIN IS SENIOR CURATOR AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES, WHERE SHE IS CURRENTLY ORGANIZING THE FIRST AMERICAN RETROSPECTIVE OF THE WORK OF MARTIN KIPPENBERGER, OPENING OCTOBER 2006.

1 MICHAEL ASHER (ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO) For the Art Institute of Chicago's 73rd American Exhibition, in 1979, Asher relocated a twentieth-century bronze cast of Jean-Antoine Houdon's eighteenth-century statue of George Washington from the museum's exterior to the eighteenth-century galleries. Twenty-six years later, at the invitation of James Rondeau, with Anne Roemer as guest curator, Asher relocated it again, this time from the mayor's office back to the AIC's eighteenth-century galleries. By placing the work within its seemingly appropriate context, he has quietly shaken up the house. The statue is an institutional misfit: The museum is its custodian, but it is not in the collection; rooted in the eighteenth century, it is a twentieth-century copy. Rondeau has also reinstalled key works by Daniel Buren, John Knight, Harrie Derboven, Fred Sandback, and others which, like Asher's earlier project, were acquired or first exhibited during Roemer's tenure and are a tribute to the former curator's exceptional vision.

2 "MOMA IN HAMBURG" (KUNSTVEREIN HAMBURG) In 2004, crowds lined up to see "MOMA in Berlin" at the Neue Nationalgalerie. In 2005, Louise Lawler brought the new MOMA to Hamburg with just two images of its interior that were produced as posters shown on the gallery walls and throughout Hamburg. Lawler's posters played with the marketing campaign for Berlin, conflating advertising and art, and making what was visible inside and outside the institution almost exactly the same.

3 GAYLEN GERBER (DANIEL HUG GALLERY, LOS ANGELES) Gerber's "backdrop" painting was by far the largest work in this exhibition—a huge stretched canvas that occupied an entire wall—and yet it was almost invisible. Initially painted gray, then white to match the gallery walls, it served as the ground for a painting by Remy Zaugg, which was hung directly on top of it; together they comprise *Backdrop/Not Here, 1990–95*. With this piece, together with two of his "supports" for works by Adrian Schiess and B. Wurtz, Gerber challenged not only the hierarchy of figure and ground but the stakes of individual identity.

4 MATT MULLICAN, "LEARNING FROM THAT PERSON'S WORK" (MUSEUM LUDWIG, COLOGNE) Winding through Mullica's intimate labyrinth of suspended bodysuits

covered with works on paper, the spectator was immersed in the products of the artist's extraordinary performances done while under hypnosis. One was, walking amid the soft walls, arrested by videos of "that person" (the distinctive personality that appears during Mullican's trance state) engaged in the most mundane activities. Watching Mullican (or rather, that person) eat breakfast or slowly examine the entire contents of his studio was at once captivating and profoundly affecting.

5 ALBERT OEHLEN (THOMAS AMMANN FINE ART, ZÜRICH) This selection of Oehlen's abstract paintings and drawings since the late '80s was an important occasion to examine a core aspect of his practice. With fragments of figurative imagery embedded in the layered passages of paint, these works are just on the cusp of representation. Oehlen's paintings are not simply struggling with the problems and weight of their history, nor are they bound by its guiding principles. They are boldly and brilliantly unreflexive. And Oehlen's current exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, not only examines this facet of his output but offers a timely opportunity to reconsider the oeuvre of one of the most significant artists working today.

6 ISA GENZKEN (DAVID ZWIRNER, NEW YORK) Genzken's ongoing confrontation with the conflicting and fragmented states of reality—both physical and psychological—has been fundamental to her extraordinary and influential practice since the 1970s. For her first major solo exhibition in New York in several years, her uncanny assemblages combining old and new consumer goods constituted one of the most striking and compelling reflections on war, death, obsolescence, and ruin—in essence, on the fragility of contemporary culture.

7 JOHN BALDESSARI AND LAWRENCE WEINER IN LOS ANGELES While it was my misfortune to miss Baldessari's landmark two-museum retrospective in Vienna and Graz this year, he did save one of his best exhibitions for home. At Margo Leavin Gallery, he returned to the basics, piling a single, black-and-white photograph of a person's face with a single word, and their bold simplicity was absolutely stunning. Opening the same day at Regen Projects was new work by Weiner, whose ongoing engagement with

simultaneity and nonhierarchy has been at the core of one of the most significant and generative practices of our time. Two friends, two colleagues, two indelible figures—and both at the top of their game.

8 JEROEN DE RIJKE AND WILLEM DE ROOIJ, MANDARIN DUCKS I was unable to see it in Venice, but, knowing the work, I was disappointed not to see greater mention of de Rijke and de Rooij's extraordinary film in the *Biennale reviews*. A melodramatic construction of light and flesh and objects interacting in a stark interior, *Mandarin Ducks* is both visually ravishing and appalling. It is one of the most blunt and unforgettable representations of xenophobia and the insidious brutality that permeates people's treatment of each other.

9 MARTIN KIPPENBERGER IN NEW YORK Three concurrent gallery exhibitions each focused on an aspect of Martin Kippenberger's work: a remarkable gathering of the early "Dear Painter" series at Gagosian; a look at aspects of the "Metro Net" and "Museum of Modern Art Syros" projects at Nyehaus; and a heartfelt assembly of outstanding self-portraits at Lühring Augustine. Considered together, these independently organized exhibitions were a minisurvey of sorts, and reinforced my determination to foster a greater understanding of the complexity and contradictions of Kippenberger's production.

10 RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITIONS AND BOOKS Each a model of curatorial empathy with the artists and their work, the retrospective exhibitions of Stanley Broun (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Georg Herold (Kunstverein Hannover), George Herms (Santa Monica Museum of Art), Richard Tuttle (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), and Jeff Wall (Schaulager Basel) were truly inspiring. Finally, our library of artists' writings was greatly enhanced by the collected texts of Carl Andre, Andrea Fraser, and Lawrence Weiner; and in his *Alien Hybrid Creatures*, Michael Krebber has assembled a visual syllabus to talk about dandyism—and an index to his elusive practice. □



Robert Storr

AN ARTIST, CRITIC, AND CURATOR, ROBERT STORR RECENTLY ORGANIZED A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE ART OF ELIZABETH MURRAY CURRENTLY ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK. HE IS NOW AT WORK DIRECTING THE 2007 VENICE BIENNALE.

1 "ACCUMULATED VISION, BARRY LE VA" (INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, PHILADELPHIA) For me, the past year's most awe-inspiring, most revealing, and most beautifully executed exhibition was this miniretrospective organized by Ingrid Schaffner (who deserves her own high ranking on some roster for the string of exhibitions she has curated over the years). Le Va is one of those ground-and-wall-and-glass-breaking characters whose reputation had for too many years hung tenuously on grainy Artforum photos (nostalgically recycled by Matthew Teitz) and a few verbal generalizations. But the work itself is varied, complex, emotional, and visual. Alas, the pitiful state of current museum programming meant that this exhibition, initiated by a gifted curator and a small, risk-taking institution, couldn't find an additional venue or a larger audience. Shame on every big museum in every big city.

2 "SLIDESHOW" (BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART) Why didn't anybody think of devoting an exhibition to the slide as an art form before, especially now that Kodak has ceased producing the projectors and will soon curtail its film stock? Fortunately, Daria Alexander did have the idea and gathered together an impressive array of pieces by Marcel Broodthaers, James Melcher, Nan Goldin, Jack Smith, James Coleman, and many more. Full disclosure: I wrote an essay for the project, and in that spirit of advocacy (and my Le Va entry above) would like to use this occasion to ask the director of the Brooklyn Museum why his increasingly art-averse institution dropped "SlideShow" from its 2005 schedule, shortchanging the public out of one of the most innovative theme shows in recent memory.

3 JEFF WALL (SCHALLAGER, MÜNCHENSTEIN/BASEL) This exhibition took place in the fastness of Switzerland and was seen mostly by Basel locals and international art nomads. An elegantly designed catalogue raisonné accompanied, but the show itself—mounted in its one-of-a-kind contemporary art-storage-and-display facility—was a coolly taxonomic study of Wall's deceptively consistent photo-fictions. Highlighting the thematic and theatrical unevenness of Wall's output made his broader enterprise seem less critic-friendly and more the work of a shrewd but genuinely restless sensibility that encompasses still life, landscape, the grotesque, and faux documentary vignettes of alienation and "otherness." Presently photography is permitted the illusionistic naturalism denied genre

painting, and Wall is the point man for recuperation of lapsed prerogatives. The next step should be to investigate his inverted traditionalism and its remarkable appeal among the ostensibly antihistoricist theory crowd.

4 ROBERT SMITHTON (LOS ANGELES MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART) All credit goes to Eugenie Tsai (aided by Connie Butler) for having brought this long-standing project to completion. It eclipsed Robert Hobbs's less textured version of Smithton at the Whitney twenty-three years ago, and not only raises fascinating questions (most of them concerning Smithton's ambivalent, quasi-Pop eroticism and religiosity) but also leaves behind one indelibly romantic image: a skinny man/boy in a white shirt retracing on foot the umbilicus he wound into a lake that mirrors the sun like a flashing supernova.

5 ISTANBUL BIENNIAL Organized by Vasil Kortun and Charles Esche, this biennial was a lesson in how to make the most of a physically stunning, culturally textured city and a small budget. It is impossible to cover everything, but special mention must go to Hala Elkoussy's haunting video of life on the outskirts of Cairo, *Peripheral Stories*, 2005; Dan Perjovschi's stream-of-bad-consciousness mural cartoons; and videast Hali Altindere's whimsical disruptions of everyday urban life, which include volleyball teams playing in the streets for the duration of a red traffic light and demonstrators carrying a banner through the crowds that reads DOWN WITH THE PEOPLE. Up with art that is wholly in the present imperfect tense.

6 JÖRG IMMENDORFF (NEUE NATIONALGALERIE, BERLIN) Perennial political Puck of the German art scene, Immendorff never succumbed to '80s temptations of premature Old Masterism—he's too scrappy for that—which makes his protean production and satumalian remodeling of Mies's modernist temple to art an invigorating anti-apotheosis, poignantly accented by his losing battle with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

7 MARTIN KIPPENBERGER Just as Immendorff keeps kicking up a fuss, Kippenberger did not go gently into the night either, and though not long gone he is due for an American retrospective, something we were reminded of by various shows in New York at Gagosian, Lühning Augustine, and the Nyehaus gallery (curated by scene-

maker Tim Nye). Boozey neo-Dada, Conceptualism on Ritalin, whatever Kippenberger was up to or down on, he was living and dying proof that—as he famously said—"You can't do dumb if you are dumb."

8 BRUCE NAUMAN Sneak peeks and missed chances: During intermittent visits to Nauman's studio I have been lucky to watch the gestation of several works that I was nevertheless unable to see in their final form. These include *One Hundred Fish Fountain*, 2006—just exhibited at Donald Young in Chicago, the piece actually consists of only ninety-seven fish cast in bronze, plus several fiber-glass heads unnervefully recycled from earlier works—as well as *Raw Materials*, whose cries and whispers filled the Tate's Turbine Hall through the beginning of 2005. This piece effectively shifted from sight to sound, silence to unsilence, turning the panoramic video semivoid of *Mapping the Studio* (*Fat Chance John Cage*), 2001, into a vast echo chamber that amplified the urgent intimacies first heard in Nauman's 1968 sound piece *Get Out of My Mind, Get Out of This Room*. The fact is that people can't leave, nor can the artist escape the cluttered work space from which a steady but wholly unpredictable flow of ideas just keeps on coming. (As to what's on Nauman's mind, belated thanks to Janet Kraynak for *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words* [MIT Press, 2003].)

9 KALUP LINZY Linzy has the stylish charm of Cao Calloway and the gleeful offensiveness of John Waters. "A star is born," wrote Holland Cotter in the *New York Times* when reviewing this performance artist and videast's wildy un-PC funk satire of a soap opera titled *All My Churn*, 2003, shown this year at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Surely there's more to come, but anyone who thinks racial and sexual lampoon is out of season need not attend.

10 VASCO ARAÚJO For me, the black-box discovery of Venice was Araújo's video *The Girl of the Golden West*, 2004, a riff on the eponymous '30s film (based on the same play as Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* [1910]). In the Spanish artist's retelling, the on-camera narrator—an African-American woman who worked at the Texas art school where Araújo was an artist-in-residence—talks a weary, exorcistic "blues" about Puccini's lyric vision of an America at war with Mexico, as we are now with other "others" elsewhere in the world. ()



John Kelsey

A NEW YORK-BASED ARTIST AND WRITER, JOHN KELSEY IS A MEMBER OF BERNADETTE CORPORATION AND CODIRECTOR OF REINA SPAULINGS, NEW YORK.

1 HURRICANE KATRINA Ask Stockhausen. As if timed for the opening of the Whitney's Robert Rauschenberg retrospective, this was arguably less a natural disaster than a case of Land art gone horribly wrong. An environmental and political tragedy of Spielbergian proportions, *Katrina* produced images of the sort of "naked life" we'd previously only identified with non-sites like Iraq. The crowded ghetto, the shooting of homeless looters, the police suicides, the forced evacuations, the superdomes filled with refugees—these are visions we can only try to erase. For some reason it was impossible not to imagine the hurricane as a terrorist act. And I guess it was—Made in USA.

2 RIOT THE BAR (BARD COLLEGE, ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NY) A sort of antimonument to the Stonewall riots of 1969, *RIOT THE BAR* was a nightly drinking party and chaotic program of music, dancing, bonfires, talks, games, etc., culminating in the bar being auctioned off and then promptly destroyed in a nearby field. This week-long collaboration between Bard summer MFA students and faculty was conceived and "choreographed" by performance artist Ei Arakawa, who was inspired by his memory of a failed gay pride march in Tokyo and subsequent encounter with the banality of official gay culture in New York. Nothing remains but the zine Arakawa assembled to document the event: "It took some years to realize that WE ARE EVERYWHERE. Aren't you tired of this motto? Yes, you are . . . welcome to RIOT THE BAR."

3 POOR THEATER The Wooster Group's *Poor Theater* appropriated, cunningly travestied, and thereby exorcized various demons that have long possessed its director, Jerzy Grotowski's legendary experimental theater in Poland, avant-garde choreographer William Forsythe, Max Ernst, and Hollywood westerns. Involving fewer pyrotechnics than usual, the Group accomplished its magic with little more than bodies and language. Absorbing and then suddenly discarding Grotowski's hard-core physical exercises, alternating between Polish and English, playing back the tape-recorded commen-

tary of a disappointed theater critic, launching into delirious danced monologues, and finally disappearing under the floorboards, *Poor Theater* was stripped-down for speed and as astonishing as anything Liz LeCompte and company have ever done.

4 THE READYMADE ARTIST How should we measure our distance from the avant-garde role models we learned about in school? How can we begin to treat the subjective whateverness of the contemporary artist? Coined by the Paris-based art collective Claire Fontaine, the term "readymade artist" seems perfectly adjusted to a situation where something like the "artist's life" no longer seems possible. No longer prophetic or revolutionary but professional and post-everything, we have no influence over the cultural apparatus that employs us, still less over its political function. Overexposed, inflated, instrumentalized beyond recognition, imposters in our own styles, miraculously outlasting our own purpose, as readymade artists we can begin to surpass our shared incompetence only by confronting the fact that contemporary art is no longer destined to act directly on reality.

5 MY LIFE IN CIA: A CHRONICLE OF 1973 (DALKEY ARCHIVE PRESS) Harry Mathews's new novel is based on true events from his life in Paris during the year 1973, when he joined the experimental literary group Oulipo and unwittingly earned a reputation as an undercover CIA agent. Rather than deny his "true" profession (his repeated denials only made others more suspicious), Mathews decided to assume this new identity and play it to the hilt. All authors are imposters anyway. Mathews reinvents the memoir and himself by applying the language games he invented (with fellow Oulipians Georges Perec and Raymond Queneau) both to his experience of everyday life and to its recollection. *My Life in CIA* is a manual for escaping bourgeois literature through bourgeois literature, an autobiographical thriller pecked with "evasive tactics," paranoia, fine wires, and false bottoms.

6 GALERIE MEERRETTICH (BERLIN) Artist Josef Strau curates this tiny glass "pavilion" (or giant vitrine) near Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin. It is always there and almost always closed (except for openings). I was there one night in June for a live rooftop performance: Paulina Olowaska and two friends used their bodies to spell out poems by Strau and others.

7 "JACQUELINE HUMPHRIES: BLACK LIGHT PAINTINGS" (NYEHALLS, NEW YORK) The most memorable painting show in New York this year was Humphries's tripped-out, daintily queasy exhibition of "Black Light Paintings" and painted light boxes. Her plugged-in works, literally heated up the darkened rooms, like ovens, and melted down the boundary between painterly abstraction and sweaty nightclub decor.

8 THE ACCIDENT OF ART (SEMIOTEXT(E)) The latest in a series of dialogues between Sylvère Lotringer and Paul Virilio that began with *Pure War* in 1983, *The Accident of Art* attempts to diagnose the crisis of aesthetics in the age of the cruise missile and the implant. Known for his extreme theories on speed and disappearance, Virilio claims that if contemporary art continues to deny the missing ground beneath its feet it will soon be past the point of producing anything worthwhile. Lotringer believes the crash has already happened, saying that art's proliferating market is nothing but camouflage for its own postmortem condition. Virilio replies that an accident is not the same as the end of art: There's still hope if art can live up to its own catastrophic destiny.

9 WAR OF THE WORLDS 9/11 revisited as multimillion-dollar B movie, embodied by unstoppable acting machine Tom Cruise.

10 COCAINE KATE
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