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Austin

Nina Katchadourian

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART
200 East Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
March 12–June 11

In 2012, Nina Katchadourian's 2011 series "Lavatory Self-Portraits in the Flemish Style," consisting of pictures styled after sober Northern Renaissance paintings and shot inside airplane bathrooms—including headdresses fashioned from toilet-seat covers—went viral. The artist's wit and resourcefulness are clearly infectious, as confirmed by this midcareer survey comprising hundreds of photographs among other two-dimensional works, all organized by project, as well as several videos and sound pieces. "Sorted Books," 1993–, features dozens of photographs of book spines and covers arranged to spell out phrases, such as "What Is Art? Close Observation" in *What Is Art?*, 1996/2008. "Seat Assignments," 2010–, involves pictures made in-flight and often in-seat: *Prince Charming*, 2015, shows a curling trail of white powder (sugar?) sprinkled atop a magazine advertisement. The ethereal gesture connects the ad's two male pilots, evoking more than collegial intimacy between the pair.



Nina Katchadourian, *The Recarcassing Ceremony*, 2016, single-channel video, color, sound, 24 minutes 24 seconds. Installation view.

But Katchadourian, a former student of Allan Kaprow's, is skilled at making much more than humorous connections, evidenced by two videos in the show both involving family. *Accent Elimination*, 2005, features the California-raised artist, her Finnish-born ethnic Swede mother, and her Turkish-born, Lebanon-raised ethnic Armenian father laboring to eliminate or acquire the inflection of their origins. Even more absorbing is the video *The Recarcassing Ceremony*, 2016, which tells the story of the Katchadourians through a game the artist and her brother invented while summering on a Finnish island. Through interviews, archival audiotapes, photographs, and reenactments, we learn the comic depths of their childhood endeavor, where clans were invented and embodied in Playmobile figurines who, like them, went boating, hiking, and more. Yet when the family discusses bringing lost clansman "back to life" or the filial dynamics that ended the pastime, the artist's commitment to rigorous play reveals its roots, and very serious utility.

— Kate Green

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Boston

Tommy Hartung

ROSE ART MUSEUM
415 South Street, MS 069, Brandeis University
February 17–June 11

Tommy Hartung is one of a number of artists—including Huma Bhabha, Ry Rocklen, and Allyson Vieira—who assemble scavenged materials to make sculpture that evokes ancient civilizations. Hartung sets himself apart largely through his use of video and animation. The centerpiece of this compact overview, which also includes a selection of sculptures resembling African or Phoenician statues and a series of dreamlike Polaroid photographs, is the twelve-minute video *King Solomon's Mines*, 2017. The video is the second installment in a three-part series inspired by Solomon, the biblical figure of vast wealth who serves as a perfect foil for the artist, who is fascinated by religion, epic tales, and the insurmountable gulf separating the rich from the poor.



Tommy Hartung, *King Solomon's Mines*, 2017, HD video, color, sound, 16 minutes 13 seconds.

Although it doesn't quite reach the level of Hartung's astonishing masterpiece, *THE BIBLE*, 2014, this video has the same hypnotic energy and arresting imagery, such as a recurring figure in a turban who has, where his face should be, a moving image featuring white fluffy clouds in a blue sky. Also memorable is footage of a van traveling through the desert, kicking up a trail of dust in its wake as a crowd of riders cling to the roof and sides, and a clip from a commercial for a Land Rover, showing it as a rotating, gleaming object of desire. The title of the video is borrowed from that of an 1885 book by H. Rider Haggard, which is set in a fictionalized realm in Africa. Hartung, ever-sensitive and thoughtful, strikes a delicate balance between critiquing cultural tourism as exploitative and patronizing, and himself exploiting images of the Sahara (specifically the Tibesti Mountains in Chad) for its harshly sublime landscape. Using videos from a French tourist company, he taps into a history of the Sahara as a route for those seeking capital or imperialist gain, used by both adventure-hungry tourists and human traffickers.

— Claire Barliant

Berlin

Paolo Chiasera
Kapwani Kiwanga
Shirana Shahbazi
Jasmin Werner
Win McCarthy
Adrian Piper

Milan

Santiago Sierra
Pino Pascali
Miroslaw Balka

Rome

Athena Papadopoulos

Naples

Thomas Hirschhorn
Louise Bourgeois
Shadi Harouni

Bern

Tilo Steireif

Innsbruck

Sonia Leimer

Salzburg

Walter Pichler

Vienna

Eduard Angeli

Barcelona

Akram Zaatari

Madrid

Elena Alonso

Shanghai

Zhou Li
Lu Song

Tokyo

Agatha Gothe-Snape

Beirut

"Meeting Points 8: Both
Sides of the Curtain"
Maha Maamoun

Dubai

"Artist Run New York:
The Seventies"

Buenos Aires

Hugo Aveta

f t g+ r p e PERMALINK COMMENTS PRINT

Buffalo

"Mabel Dodge Luhan & Company: American Moderns and the West"

BURCHFIELD PENNEY ART CENTER
1300 Elmwood Avenue
March 10–May 28

THE ALBUQUERQUE MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY
2000 Mountain Rd NW
October 29–January 22

THE HARWOOD MUSEUM OF ART
238 Ledoux Street
May 22–September 11

The community of artists and writers revolving around salonière Mabel Dodge Luhan's compound in Taos, New Mexico, in the early twentieth century provides the fulcrum for this sprawling exhibition. Works by well-known artists, such as Paul Strand, Ansel Adams, Marsden Hartley, and John Marin, occupy space alongside pieces by more obscure figures, including Rebecca "Beck" Salsbury James, Dorothy Brett, and Agnes Pelton. Many artists and writers traveled to Taos at the behest of Luhan, a prolific writer herself. Her fourth husband, Taos Pueblo Indian Antonio Lujan, opened the community to artists and writers, thus fostering a creative exchange between modernist and native traditions.

A highlight of the exhibition is an upstairs gallery where Pueblo artist Awa Tsireh's watercolors and Brett's vivid paintings depict native dances. The exhibition repeatedly refers to Luhan's own complicated relationship with New Mexico's multicultural heritage; her relocation to Taos was partly motivated by what she believed was a need to "save" the Pueblo culture endangered from American encroachment. Luhan's exhibition of "primitive" (her term) devotional objects as modern art in a New York exhibition in 1919 likewise points to Luhan's—as well as many modernist artists' and audiences'—difficulty accepting the art of non-Anglo cultures on its own terms. A striking visual example of this complex dynamic between modernism and Hispanic art is on view in another gallery, in which Luhan's own *Hispano santos*, which she donated to the Harwood after she was criticized for her treatment of the paintings in a 1925 essay she wrote, appear with Hartley's own riff on a santo. The juxtaposition underscores the ways in which modernist artists often appropriated other cultures' works, emptying them of original meaning yet creating new meaning as well.

— *Chelsea Weathers*



Awa Tsireh, *Untitled (Corn Dance)*, 1922–26, watercolor and pencil on paper, 22 1/2 × 34".

f t g+ r p e PERMALINK COMMENTS PRINT

Chicago

Zhang Peili

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
111 South Michigan Avenue
March 31–July 9

Zhang Peili's first US museum solo exhibition, "Record. Repeat.," is an intense, grim encounter with China's propaganda-media machine. Although Zhang has worked in painting, mail art, and kinetic installation over four decades, this focused survey of twelve major works from 1988 to 2012 makes a strong case for Zhang as not only China's first video artist, as he is honorably known, but also as one of China's most poignant critics of broadcast and surveillance technology. Similar to an investigator or a painter, he tends to set a single scene per video channel: hands repeatedly breaking and repairing a mirror; a news anchor reading the dictionary; the drawing of blood; a street in Hangzhou. Through serial imagery on six, eight, twelve, and twenty-eight screens, the durational works—some as long as three hours—quietly dehumanize their subjects. For instance, Zhang's well-known *Documents of Hygiene No. 3*, 1991, depicts the artist repeatedly bathing a chicken in soapy water nearly to the point of cruelty, a sustained metaphor for China's public hygiene campaign distributed that same year. Zhang's critiques of the propaganda apparatus developed in quick response to the media itself, as Pi Li's excellent and necessary catalogue essay details. Pi further remarks that, as a video artist, Zhang intentionally distanced himself from the 1990s art-market boom and therefore stayed truly avant-garde in his medium and his message. Zhang's pioneering moving-image works, but also his mid-'90s manifesto against nationalism and his founding of the new media art department at the China Art Academy, reveals the artist as an agent of social change, not just a critic of socialist realism.

— *Jason Fomberg*



View of "Zhang Peili," 2017.

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NEWS DIARY FILM

Newest Entries

Charlie Fox on Bruce LaBruce's *The Misandrists*
Nick Pinkerton on the 19th Maryland Film Festival
Amy Taubin on *Burden*
Andrew Hultkrans on Laura Poitras's *Risk*
Howard Hampton on Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko*
Tony Pipolo on new digital films by Ernie

Denver

“Mi Tierra: Contemporary Artists Explore Place”

DENVER ART MUSEUM
100 West 14th Avenue Pkwy
February 19–October 22

The show's thirteen artists inhabit a dual space straddling the US–Mexico border: All either split their time between the two countries or have immigrated from one side to the other. Asked to engage with the idea of home, the artists present simultaneously personal and political works; issues of identity, social justice, and history all coalesce in this multifaceted and complex exhibition.

In *One-Way Mirror*, 2017, Jaime Carrejo projects two videos—one of the Mexican landscape shot from El Paso, and one of El Paso as seen from Mexico—on the acutely angled walls of a cavernous passageway. Bisecting the projections, a surface of tinted acrylic both obscures and reveals the scenes behind it, evoking the sense of limited access and desire inherent in the borderland experience. Some artists in “Mi Tierra” collaborated with Denver's immigrant population: Daniela Edburg's knitted Alpaca wool reproductions of local rocks, grasses, and lichen accompany photographs of Denver residents styled after Hans Holbein paintings, while Daisy Quezada combines porcelain castings of clothing—much of it worn by recent immigrants either during or after border crossings—with sound recordings of narrated migration experiences. Sometimes abstraction conveys notions of place and identity: In Xochi Solis's large-scale collages, solid colors and imagery from books and magazines together become a metaphor for lives formed by multiple national identities or environments. In Gabriel Dawe's *Plexus No. 36*, 2016, thousands of threads form a gossamer prism spanning an entire gallery wall. Inspired by the strict gender binaries governing Dawe's own boyhood in Mexico (he was not allowed to sew as a child), the work exuberantly celebrates transcending cultural limitations.

It's tempting to remark on the timeliness of a show featuring work that confronts issues surrounding immigration and identity during such a contentious period in United States history. But one should also note that the exhibited artists' practices predate the election—and these concerns have informed their work long before the rest of the country awoke (or were reawakened) to their importance.

— Chelsea Weathers



Jaime Carrejo, *One-Way Mirror*, 2017, two-channel HD video, tinted acrylic, paint, 5 minutes 38 seconds.

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Houston

“Between Land and Sea: Artists of the Coenties Slip”

THE MENIL COLLECTION
1533 Sul Ross Street
April 4–August 6

Coenties Slip is a tiny street in Lower Manhattan, situated halfway between Battery Park and the Brooklyn Bridge, and a few blocks southeast of Wall Street, abutting a park that connects it to the water's edge. It's hard to imagine a time when artists would have pursued that location “to seek a barer life, closer to reality, without all the things that clutter and fill our lives,” as Lenore Tawney once said. But in the 1950s and 1960s that is precisely what she, along with Agnes Martin, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Indiana, Jack Youngerman, and Chryssa, did. There they lived and worked in former sailmakers' lofts, inventing a new wave of abstraction that this tight exhibition, curated by Michelle White, highlights with elegance. The works' modest monumentality points to a shared aesthetic in which the powers of close looking distill the honest beauty of everyday phenomena.

White's curation makes an implicit argument for the importance of thinking about art history through the intimate social geographies of artistic micro-communities. Thoughtful juxtapositions electrify small details that build a conceptualized iconography of the pier, rooting the artists' abstractions to a specific place and time. There is the pleasing pattern of Indiana's *Ginkgo*, 1959, a small painting on wood panel inspired by the leaves of neighborhood trees, and Kelly's “tablets” that record compositional ideas derived from ships' sails and the arches of the Brooklyn Bridge. Particularly rewarding are Chryssa's terra-cotta slabs inspired by ancient Cycladic figures (made by artists who also lived between land and sea), as well as the conversation posited between works by Martin and Tawney. Tawney's open-weave textile piece *Seaweed*, 1961, is full of delicate joys. What we discover is that the grid has remarkable evocations beyond the construction of vision in Western art history; more immediately and materially, for these artists it suggests the loom, sail rigging, fishing nets, and city blocks, whose redevelopment pushed artists out of the neighborhood by the late '60s.



Lenore Tawney, *Seaweed*, 1961, linen, silk, 120 x 32". The Lenore Tawney Foundation, New York. © Lenore G. Tawney Foundation.

— Natilee Harren

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Waxahachie

Mark Todd

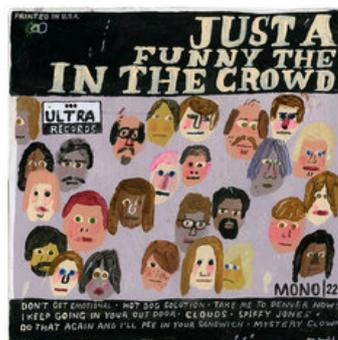
WEBB GALLERY
209-211 W. Franklin
April 9–June 2

For his solo exhibition “Don’t Go to Hell Without Saying Goodbye,” Mark Todd has tweaked the aching sentimentality of crooner ballads, as well as blues and American standards in the vein of Dean Martin, Bobby Rush, and Johnny Mercer to make humorous illustrated album covers. The results of Todd’s topsy-turvy wordplay with songs and band names seem nearly authentic but land just beyond the believable, wittily employing amalgams of lyrics to form titles you almost think you know.

The acrylic-on-wood LP covers are rendered in a scrappy, cartoonish style somewhere between *King of the Hill* and Raymond Pettibon, and, for all of their tongue-in-cheek vagaries, their compositions and palettes are skillfully nuanced. Tracks listed in the illustrations include “I Keep Going in Your Out Door” from the album *Just a Funny the in the Crowd*; “Everybody’s Something Sometime (But Not This Time)” on the album *Tender Trap*; and “You Are The Reason I Can’t Get a Job” by the Back Up’s (all works 2017).

Todd’s cannily chosen textual motifs act as phantom signifiers for songs never written and never heard that nonetheless act as nostalgic sound tracks for personal histories. Today the physical album is all but a corpse, picked apart by the digital epoch, with many songs discarded into the boneyard of iTunes. In this age’s art world—full of step-and-repeat backdrops and Instagram posts—Todd balances jocularly with affection for a less self-conscious bygone era, while his off-kilter versions of the endangered originals provide a consuming viewing experience reminiscent of the enjoyable hours many once spent flipping through vinyl in record stores.

— Darren Jones



Mark Todd, *Just a Funny the in the Crowd*, 2017, acrylic on wood, 12 1/2 x 12 1/2".

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Toronto

Jonah Samson

CLINT ROENISCH
190 Saint Helen's Avenue
May 6–June 3

In late 1944, the Surrealist writer André Breton arrived on the Atlantic coast of Canada. Haunted by the political and personal ravages of war, he wrote *Arcanum 17*, a strange, genre-bending meditation on the search for “light” along the paths of “poetry, liberty, and love.” The illumination he sought, Breton made clear, was feminine—an antidote to the toxic masculinity that had torn his world asunder.

The artist Jonah Samson recently moved east from Vancouver to Cape Breton Island, not far from the site of Breton’s Canadian sojourn. His newest exhibition of exactly repurposed found photographs, all depicting women, serves as an allegory for a world that contains hope yet remains full of distressing portents. The subject of *Untitled (Parakeet)* (all works 2017), seen in two images attached by joined frames, poses with her arm held elegantly aloft. Its curve is overlaid with parakeet feathers, perhaps a symbol of transcendence and freedom. Another doubled image, *Untitled (Bird Cage)*, is printed both positive and negative. These two components span a nearby corner and nudge the avian symbolism in another direction: A seated woman rests her chin on her hands; her face conveys annoyance at the birdcage she finds herself in.

Samson’s largest work gathers together thirty-nine black-and-white images of women crying, from a little girl with a picnic basket to an older woman wiping away tears at a protest. Lest we wonder who is implicated by these displays of emotion, departing the gallery brings one past *Every Exit Is an Entrance Somewhere Else*, in which an array of pointing fingers is directed at the viewer, and *Untitled (Mirror)*, in which, Samson might hope, we truly see ourselves.

— Brian Sholis



Jonah Samson, *Untitled (Parakeet)*, 2017, diptych of ink-jet prints with parakeet feathers, 10 x 17".

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Mexico City

Jorge Satorre

LABOR

Gral. F. Ramirez 5, Daniel Garza, Del. Miguel Hidalgo
April 21–June 29

In 1946, the Mexican architect Enrique del Moral bought the land where this gallery is located to build his own house and garden. Nearly sixty years later, the resultant iconic modernist building was modified, and in 2002 Fernando Romero built his own offices in the garden area. For his third solo exhibition here, Jorge Satorre takes up this history. He has opened up a gallery wall to connect the white cube with the garden. In front of the opened wall he dug a pit that exposes fragments of the former building's foundations. He has embossed the inner surface of this ditch with casted elements from the garden, such as leaves and flowers, as well as paw prints from the gallerist's dogs. The ornamentally decorated hole also served as a mold to produce a massive concrete sculpture, which is presented as the central work in the exhibition space. A rig that was used to bring in the sculpture remains in the installation, disclosing the cast's spatial transfer and connecting the two spaces and their contexts.



View of "Jorge Satorre: Moral Modern Subject, Decorating the Pit," 2017.

In addition, Satorre offers a series of pencil drawings. These suggest chronological episodes: from the proposal of the show to milestones of its production process, which all serve as a setting for the artist's own imagined theater, interweaving the real with the fictitious while creating Dionysian-like scenes of social interactions that seem to defy a purposeful and target-oriented task (for instance, workers are shown in a foundry while being absorbed in intimate, erotic intermezzi). Like in his previous works, Satorre traces the past by making visible multiple characters and narratives that are considered insignificant for their impact on the prevalent historiography.

— [Anna Goetz](#)

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Last Month's Picks

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