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An Exhibition on  
the Centenary of the  
1913 Armory Show

Andrianna Campbell  
and Daniel S. Palmer

**ABRONSARTS**CENTER  
HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT

February 17-April 7, 2013  
Abrons Art Center  
The Henry Street Settlement  
466 Grand Street  
New York, New York 10002



Luther W. Brady  
Art Gallery

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC

September 11-December 20, 2013  
Luther W. Brady Art Gallery  
The George Washington University  
805 21st Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20052

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# INTRODUCTION

HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT is honored to have hosted *DECENTER: An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show*, at our Abrons Arts Center. While *DECENTER* highlights the diversity and expansiveness of the 1913 show’s legacy, the exhibition also celebrates Henry Street Settlement’s past, present and future as a pioneering art institution.

The Armory Show was pivotal in the Settlement’s full embrace of the arts. In 1963, Henry Street sponsored the 50th anniversary exhibition of the show, which explored its historic significance through a partial recreation at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute in Utica, New

York. The event, one of the first to make the vital connection of philanthropy to the art world, was the creative vision of Margaret Carlton (Mrs. Winslow Carlton) and Alice Kaplan (Mrs. Jacob Kaplan). It was on this occasion that we announced our commitment to build a new cultural center, today known as the Abrons Arts Center. Henry Street continues our arts legacy through the annual Art Show at the Park Avenue Armory in partnership with the Arts Dealers Association of America, the first of multiple art fairs inspired by the original Armory Show.

To this day, the Settlement’s Abrons Arts Center supports the creation and presentation of bold, multidisciplinary

work and remains a dynamic home where artists can experiment with all art forms. The 27 emerging and internationally recognized contemporary artists featured in *DECENTER* are a true testament to our history of innovation. We are deeply grateful to the curators Andrianna Campbell and Daniel S. Palmer, Visual Director at the Abrons Arts Center Jonathan Durham, and the participating artists for mounting this groundbreaking exhibition at Henry Street.

*David Garza*  
*Executive Director*  
*Henry Street Settlement*

“DECENTER” IS DEFINED AS: To cause to lose or shift from an established center of focus.

The Art Show in the Park Avenue Armory sets a standard amongst the world’s ever-proliferating international art fairs. It was at the 2013 Art Show, organized by the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA) to benefit Henry Street Settlement, that I learned of the existence of a contemporary and complementary exhibition, *DECENTER: An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show*. It was originally shown in the Abrons Arts Center, Henry Street Settlement from February to April 2013.

Presenting *DECENTER* here at the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery enables the

gallery to offer an exciting and original statement to complement the New York Historical Society’s exhibitions, and should appeal strongly to GW students who have embraced the digital world in their artistic practice and social media. We have thus initiated a highly innovative dialogue and collaboration with New York curators. The Luther W. Brady Art Gallery has raised its capability of borrowing artwork for exhibition from other academic institutions and museums and has staged exhibitions of the work of internationally renowned artists.

Modified to fit the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery’s space and augmented with work by DC area artists, this adaptation is guest curated by Andrianna Campbell and Dan-

iel S. Palmer, to whom we are indebted. We hope this thought-provoking evocation of times past and present will further generate outreach for GW’s arts initiatives.

While the Armory Show took place in New York, its hundredth anniversary is being celebrated all over the country. We are proud to commemorate this great art historical legacy. I would like to acknowledge David Garza, Executive Director, Henry Street Settlement for making an introduction to *DECENTER*. We are grateful to Clarice Smith for her generosity in supporting this exhibition.

*Lenore D. Miller*  
*Director, University Art Galleries*  
*and Chief Curator*

DIGITAL ART IN  
THE MODERN AGE  
ROBERT BRENNAN

Rococo, rococo, rococo, rococo.  
Rococo, rococo, rococo, rococo.  
—Arcade Fire

IF YOU WOULD HAVE ASKED visitors to the Armory Show in 1913 what “modern art” was, there’s a good chance they would have described what we today call *art nouveau*. This was only the latest in a long succession of styles in European art called modern in their time, from Gothic to Renaissance and Rococo. Not that *every* style was born modern, as if by default: many fashioned themselves as torch-bearers of classical antiquity. And since the path laid down by the ancients was broad enough to encompass much variety and innovation, the moderns who managed to stray from it usually did so in recurrent, established ways, either as allies of new science or champions of fleeting pleasure. The modernity of this or that art could thus last a very long time—long enough that it should not surprise us to find the art of the Armory Show still, 100 years later, called modern. It took Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution to displace the modernity of the Rococo. What would it take for us to displace Picasso’s?

Many are convinced that our epoch will go down in history as the digital age. It is clear, moreover, that this conviction has accompanied a radical depletion of our ability to hope for the future. Today’s realists look forward to a world where smartphones adjust thermostats; its dreamers, to one where languages are learned at the click of a button. In the 1950s my father’s P.E. classes were offered under the pretext that hobbies would be more important once automation had abolished labor and inaugurated a universal leisure society.

The rationale of those P.E. classes would have been as familiar to Courbet, Signac, Duchamp, and Léger as it is for

eign to us now. Some would say we’re the wiser for it. But far too often we forget that our inability to think like moderns doesn’t mean the problems that occupied them have simply gone away. Are we not still, amidst the Great Recession, coping with the consequences of automation? Is the health care crisis not still essentially a problem of distributing the fruits of rapid technological development? Is climate change not yet another unforeseen consequence of industrialization that leaves those who trust the scientists little choice but to commit to an even more radical program of transformation?

There is no question that digital technology has the potential to move us beyond the service economy. It remains to be seen, however, whether that transformation will entail anything more than a reshuffling of employees from counters to distribution centers and delivery routes. Could digital art offer such a society more than palliatives for boredom? Just as it didn’t take long for our 20<sup>th</sup> century modernists to grow tired of making armchairs for weary businessmen, neither do many artists of the digital age rest content designing screensavers. Nor should we be discouraged by those who, measuring the initial results of our efforts against such vague ambitions, deem them boring or superficial. Indeed, as it occurred to Hegel in his meditations on the twilight of the Rococo, “the superficiality and boredom that pervade the existing order, the vague sense of an unknown, are harbingers that something else is in store.”\* ■

\* Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Suhrkamp, 1970), 18: “...der Leichtsinne wie die Langeweile, die im Bestehenden einreißen, die unbestimmte Ahnung eines Unbekannten sind Vorboten, daß etwas anderes im Anzuge ist.”

RETHINKING DECENTER  
DANIEL S.PALMER



Jessica Eaton, *CFAAL 140*, 2013. Photograph: 40 x 32" and John Newman, *Headturners Prop and Kiss Greyed Stripes*, 2008. Cast bronze, acrylic paint on acqua resin, wood putty, Japanese paper, papier-mache, foamcore, armature wire: 22½ x 8 x 5".

NINETY-NINE YEARS after Marcel Duchamp caused an uproar with his *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, a poster designed by the master sat tucked away in a utility closet at Henry Street Settlement’s Abrons Arts Center. This reinterpretation of his famous painting quietly touted the “50th Anniversary of the Famous International Armory Show 1913, Re-created in the original armory, Lexington Avenue and 25th Street, New York for the benefit of the Henry Street Settlement, April 6-28, 1963,” but the organization had no plans to honor their own important anniversary. When Andrianna Campbell and I came to Abrons as independent curators with a very different exhibition idea, we were completely unaware of the connection that this community-based, inter-disciplinary arts center had to the landmark exhibition

and its historiography. As the two of us worked to develop an exhibition together, and continued our studies (we were both doctoral students at the time), we were thrilled to discover that Abrons had in fact been created with funds raised by Milton Brown’s groundbreaking work on the Armory Show and its fiftieth anniversary celebration. This realization eventually led to our *Decenter* exhibition, and after some more digging, we found the framed poster that (perhaps to be provocative) Duchamp had signed twice.

We knew that we had to mark the centenary of the 1913 Armory Show on the Lower East Side, and have been thrilled to continue this celebration at George Washington University’s Luther W. Brady Art Gallery, but at both venues we wanted to avoid simply creating a show

that drew explicit parallels between 1913 and 2013 or came across as a history lesson. Instead, we took the anniversary as an opportunity to analyze the changes in perception that have been brought on by the technologies of our digital age by assembling contemporary artworks that speak to “the legacy of Cubism in the hundred years since the Armory Show’s radical display of modern art, and especially, how (it has) become relevant today.” Our hope was that by bringing together a diverse group of artists working across different media and styles, including some that utilize a vernacular of fragmentation, nonlinearity, simultaneity, and decenteredness, we could address the ways that the early modernist artworks shown in the 1913 Armory Show have inspired contemporary artists. We also





David Kennedy Cutler, *Weight Forever*, 2013. Inkjet on aluminum, wood, steel: 15 x 6'. Courtesy the artist and Derek Eller Gallery.

hoped to highlight how many of these artists have adapted the innovations of the historical avant-garde to respond to the revolutionary changes brought on by the digital technologies that have permeated nearly all facets of contemporary life. Our attention to these realities played an important role in how we thought about the project and tried to fundamentally rethink the very notion of an exhibition. We believe that this has important implications for digital art and tried to engage these issues in the web-based portion of our exhibition, as Andrianna will discuss more thoroughly in her essay.

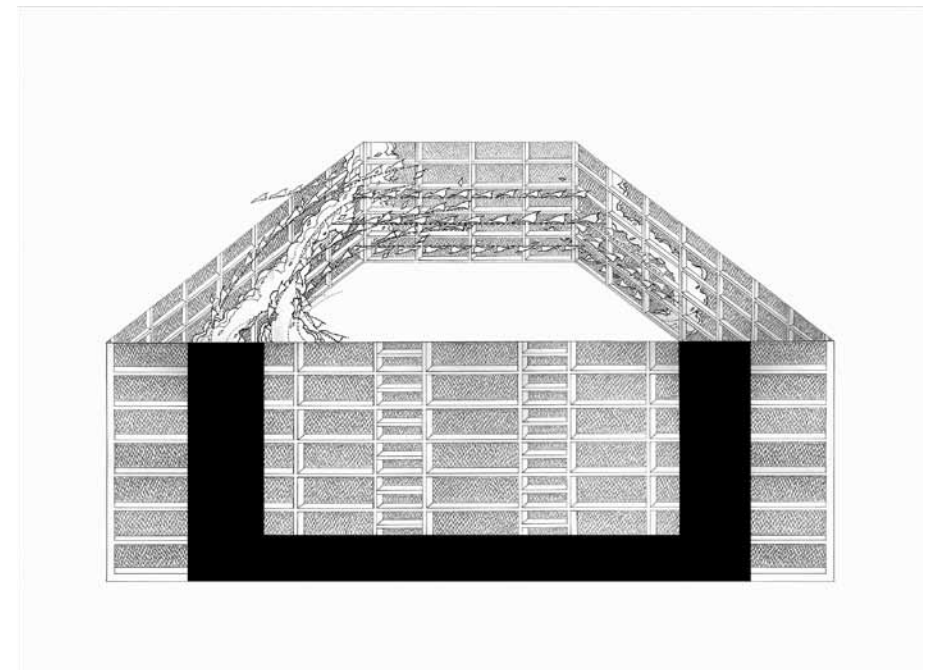
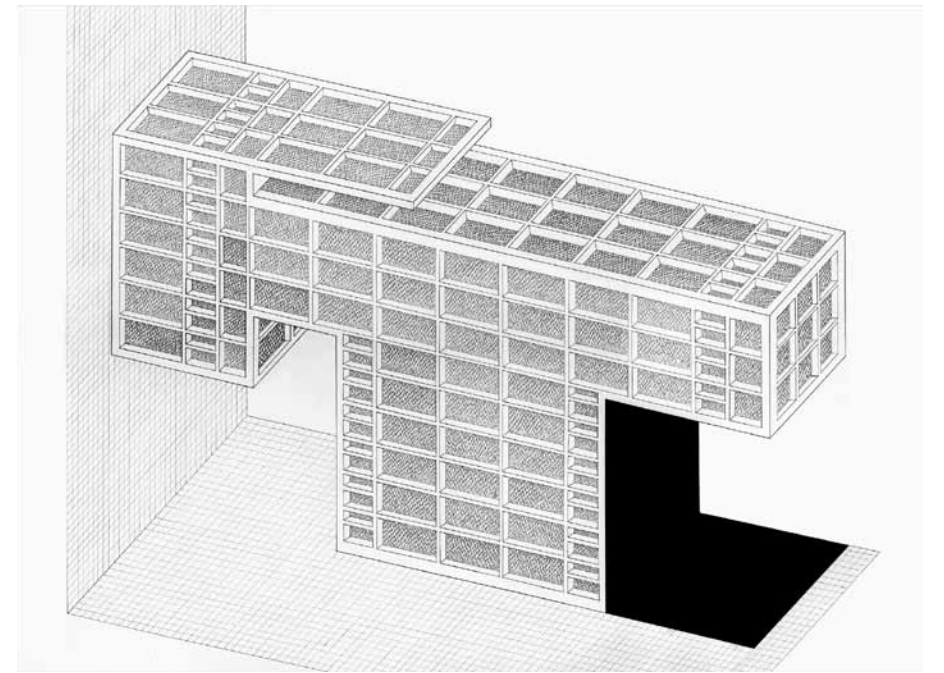
The architecture of the Abrons gallery is remarkably different from that of the historic exhibition, but this difference highlighted some of the changes that have occurred since 1913. Abrons's concrete building had been lauded by architectural critics like Ada Louise Huxtable when it first opened because of how it and other Brutalist structures negotiate the legacy and shortcomings of early 20th century modernism. Many of the best examples exhibit what Kenneth Frampton has termed "Critical Regionalism," in that when thoughtfully and properly designed (as in Louis I. Kahn's poetic masterpieces), these structures use humble human-scale and richly tactile elements to correct the harsh coldness, totalizing master-narratives, and other problematic deficiencies of modernism without verging into postmodernist superficiality.

The principle tenets of modernism seem to resonate again with many contemporary artists who have surpassed feelings of skepticism or indifference by recovering a determined sense of purpose in their art. They re-affirm art's power by directly addressing the issues of the times, and by aligning themselves with the deeply political efforts of many early 20th century artists, who generally did so through abstraction. Kahn's concrete forms are as much about post-war existentialism as light, materials, and space, and so too have many contemporary artists found tactful ways to comment on important contemporary issues by adapting modernism to the changing conditions of modern life, rather than abandoning it. In our show, a pair of *Unit Object* drawings by Seher Shah make a statement about complexity and contradiction similar to mid-century architecture by combining ambiguous forms of imaginatively gridded building elements with non-western motifs to produce fantastically hybrid utopian structures. Along the same lines, N. Dash's *Commuter* series works, which

have been endlessly folded and rubbed by the artist's hands and blackened by graphite, visually convey a haptic sense of contact and tactility that honestly expresses process in a composition that evokes fragmented, Rayonist dynamism. David Gilbert's photograph *The Giraffe* is the result of the artist's unique studio practice where he combines fabrics, paper, string, and other highly empathetic objects to produce staggeringly beautiful and subtly lit characterized compositions. The intimate scale of the print in our exhibition encourages direct experience so that the viewer can retrace the construction of his ephemeral creation. Backdrop, tape, and clamps all reveal his process, and in doing so, exemplify "modernism with a human face" to offer warmth and wit as a corrective to art with a hard edge as much as to the estrangement of human contact and the constant bombardment of data that we experience online.

However much the exposed concrete of the Abrons building has meaningful ideological implications, we still had to deal with the fact that our Lower East Side venue lacked a unified gallery space. The impossibility of assembling a cohesive white-box gallery show in fact turned into an additional boon, as it allowed us to shake-up the traditional, hierarchical art-viewing experience by creating a more engaging installation. Accordingly, we took this as a metaphor for the social landscape of our present era. We hoped that by scattering artworks throughout the building as well as an online venue, and quite literally "decentering" the show, we could activate our viewers by creating intimate moments. We have tried to achieve this at the Brady gallery by isolating works in an attempt to heighten each visitor's engagement. Ideally, as the decenteredness of the internet and social media have allowed us access to friends in remote places but also augmented the meaning of our face-to-face interaction, we hoped that our exhibition's decentered installation would engage visitors and create a connection that helped them reflect on the highly complex operations addressed by each artist.

To anchor these dispersed artworks, we placed David Kennedy Cutler's *Weight Forever* in Abrons's open-air amphitheater, around which the rest of the building is organized, but which has rarely been used for performances or installations in recent years. This fifteen-foot tall steel outdoor public sculpture covered by fractured CD-ROM and oil-slick imagery served as a perfect beacon because of its monumentality and dra-



Top: Seher Shah, *Unit Object (court)*, 2012. Graphite and gouache on paper: 22 x 30".  
Bottom: Seher Shah, *Unit Object (auto-block)*, 2013. Graphite and gouache on paper: 22 x 30".  
Courtesy the artist.

matic spotlighting. It punctuated arrivals and departures, while also offering a tower-like marker to navigate the space. Like Barthes' description of the Eiffel Tower: "with it we all comprise a shifting figure of which it is the steady center: the Tower is friendly." Similarly, Ulrike Mohr's *Black Holes* cut through the arabesque curve of the gallery to further fragment the space while simultaneously drawing in shadow, and Franklin Evans's painting installation *bluenudedissent* interjected into another of the building's interstitial spaces. His immensely de-

tailed work tied together multiple floors, corridors, and galleries in a totalizing way that collapsed private and public, as well as historical and contemporary by intermixing references to Matisse and Duchamp's iconic offerings in the 1913 exhibition with images of other artists from *Decenter's* roster he gathered from the internet. Each of these interventions invert the 1913 Armory Show's scheme of endless rows of paintings hung on burlap by articulating the dramatic shifts that have occurred in exhibition-making during the last hundred years, but also in



such a way that made it appear as if the building had been specifically designed and destined for each of these artworks, which address their time as much as it did the crises of years past.

While these examples and other striking artworks boldly punctuated the show, their more minute details also rewarded deeper inspection. In this way, we hoped to create an environment that cultivated close-reading in order to address the complexities of perception in our era. While technology enables us to see more at a faster rate, this is often at the sacrifice of genuine engagement. We chose numerous artworks for our show because of the way that they frustrate superficial interpretation, or to put it more positively, that they offer magnificent rewards to those who take time to unlock their minutiae. Paintings by young consummate masters of technique like Amy Feldman, Douglas Melini, and Andrew Kuo demonstrate the possibilities available to traditional media in this era. These artists each use paint in such a way that allows them to achieve complicated optical effects with a presence unattainable by even the highest resolution computer monitors or digital prints. Specifically, Feldman’s seemingly informal, yet thoughtfully composed grey *4 Likes* explores figure-ground relationships with a process that belies its complexity. The painting resists a stable reading but rather oscillates between surface, the iconography of social media, and pure geometry. Similarly, paintings by Melini and Kuo, which have an added forcefulness in digital reproduction due to their bright color and compositional acrobatics, convey even more information when seen in person. Their rhythm and flow are heightened by drips and visible brushstrokes—the remaining traces of a laborious process—as well as a perceived three-dimensionality that Melini achieves by juxtaposition and physical overlap, and which Kuo helps reveal and decode in the diagrams and legends included at the bottom of his panels.

These themes carried over into photographic works in the show as well. Jessica Eaton and Barbara Kasten each use the possibilities afforded by the camera to create striking images that frustrate any simple reception. They play complicated tricks with mirrors, filters, color, and more, all while achieving an extremely contemporary, almost seemingly digital feel (in Kasten’s case, far before this look had become prevalent). Although created in a rather un-advanced plywood material, the technological process Michael DeLucia used to construct



Amy Feldman, *4 Likes*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas: 72 x 88". Courtesy the artist and Blackston Gallery.

his powerful sculpture *Glint* produces a visual oscillation created by opposing grooves that approach pixelation to make it look as if it were photoshopped into the room. Similarly, Ethan Greenbaum and John Houck complicate the striking beauty of their artworks with *trompe l'oeil* processes that make full use of digital technologies as tools to wrestle with the seeming etherality of the internet age. Greenbaum scans and manipulates construction materials, and Houck uses computer programs to produce infinitesimally complex “aggregate” grid patterns of color. Each of their works presents its own moment of elucidation to reveal its magic and also its cultural relevance—Greenbaum’s digital layering is further complicated by the physical layering of sheets of acrylic panel leaned against the wall, and upon close inspection, the veracity of Houck’s array of folds and shadows unravels to reveal his process.

Each of these examples channel *the digital* as a mode of perception that artists, and the culture at large must encounter because of significant societal shifts. Many of these works embrace the diagonal lines, fragmented planes, and other elements that recall the vernacular of Cubism, but their most significant

aspects deal with the weight of (art) history and the massive changes that we’ve undergone in the past decades. Three final works address this still by offering a challenge to optical reception, and in doing so, showing how traditional modes of experience have expanded. Cory Arcangel’s *Airport* is an open IEEE 802.11 wireless network that can only be perceived with a Wi-Fi-enabled device, and Douglas Coupland’s *Imagine a Car Crash.....* and *Hey Boy, Hey Girl, Superstar DJ* are colorfully pixelated QR-code paintings firmly within the legacy of modernist abstraction, but which offer additional textual information embedded by the writer-artist when they are scanned with the appropriate software. Each of these artworks and many others throughout both exhibitions suggest more than a new aesthetic or style, but rather an evolved relationship between viewer and artwork. While some require digital devices to be perceived, or awareness of digital processes to be understood, they do not in any sense deny the power of art. Instead, these artworks offer insights that fully invest the viewer in the conceptual complexities of our present moment, as was hopefully the case for the entirety of our lovingly crafted exhibitions. ■

John Houck, *Untitled #155, 809,999 combinations of a 2x2 grid, 30 colors*, 2013. Creased archival pigment print: 60 x 40". Collection of Mr. Greg Silpe. Courtesy the artist and On Stellar Rays.



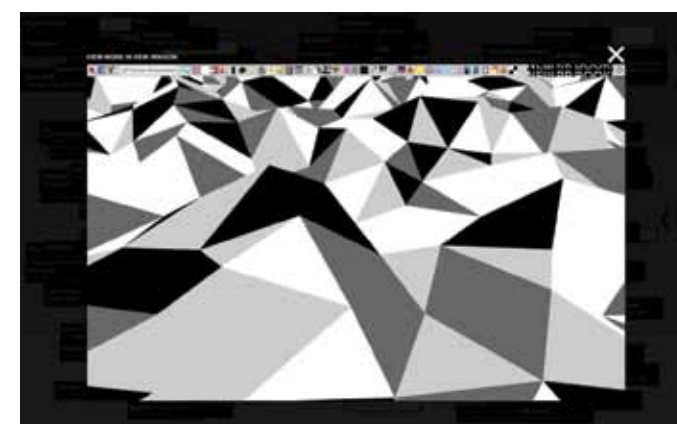




Michael DeLucia, *Glint*, 2012. Enamel and plywood: 96 x 48 x 48". Courtesy the artist and Eleven Rivington.

## DECENTER: VISUALIZING THE CLOUD

### ANDRIANNA CAMPBELL



Clockwise, from top left: Tony Cokes, *Evil.12: Fear, Spectra & Fake Emotions*, 2009. Brenna Murphy, *Latticescanr*, 2012. Rafaël Rozendaal, *http://www.fromthedarkpast.com*, 2009. James Bridle, *Rorschmap*, 2013.

#### *De-cent, Descent, Dissent*

THE MONUMENTS that made Manhattan's cityscape into an epitome of the modern industrial city still stand. Even the glass behemoths that surround us now were, in their basic form, foreseeable to the forward thinkers 100 years ago.<sup>1</sup> Today, one of the most extensive changes is the construction of support systems for the World Wide Web, which were initially built over a quarter century ago and remain unseen; an infrastructure of interconnected nodes stretches over a million miles in the United States alone.<sup>2</sup> This tangible support framework for the Internet, for cloud storage and for our numerous data computation systems and devices, remains invisible and sublimely unfathomable.<sup>3</sup>

In the arts, it has been difficult to pinpoint the formal influence that digital mediation has had on primarily techno-

logically independent media like painting and sculpture.<sup>4</sup> Leading scholars in the field such as Claire Bishop and David Joselit either posit that the digital impact on art production has been eschewed by artists, resulting in a nostalgia for outmoded technology or, in the latter's case, foregrounds a "network aesthetics" that considers the distribution of these works as central to their narrative.<sup>5</sup> Our interaction with the digital is primarily through screens and visualization technologies; the impact on art ought to have a more direct manifestation. *DECENTER* evolved out of a desire to locate a visible structure at work in art praxis, as well as to evolve a curatorial model that embraces the digital network.

What does this visual structure look like? Digital technologies manifest

certain structural tendencies that at their most basic gravitate towards a geometrically and informationally reductive visual language, and on the other hand, at their most advanced, produce hyper-real, mimetically fluid forms.<sup>6</sup> The formal qualities of the former emulate early advances in modernist abstraction; the latter forces us to consider certain modes of figuration as genuine heirs to modernism's legacy. The concern of this essay and of the *DECENTER* exhibition is an atemporal consideration of the formal affinities between abstract works displayed in the 1913 Armory Show and contemporary abstract works engaged with digital technologies in order to expose the visible and conceptual marks of what has been a radical if largely under-the-surface visual revolution.<sup>7</sup>



## WHY CONSIDER MODERNISM NOW?

Henry Street Settlement’s Abrons Arts Center, where our exhibit was first held, was built as a testament to the continued production and display of modern art, which their president, Winslow Carlton saw as beginning in the United States with the 1913 Armory Show.<sup>8</sup> Funds raised for the construction of the Abrons Arts Center came from a 1963 reconstitution of the original Armory Show organized by Milton Wolf Brown and Marcel Duchamp.<sup>9</sup> Because of the rich historical legacy of the Abrons Arts Center, the impetus to re-examine the 1913 exhibit developed naturally. All over the country, exhibitions celebrating the advent of abstraction and the anniversary of the 1913 Armory Show opened,<sup>10</sup> and in all cases, a re-consideration of modern art seemed imperative. For the purposes of this show, modernism centers on that 1913 moment.<sup>11</sup> Features of modern art involve medium specificity, self-reflexivity, and often an engagement with the broader socio-cultural issues of modernity.<sup>12</sup>

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, vast technological upheavals changed the structure of visual information.<sup>13</sup> Gertrude Stein famously labeled the First World War as the first Cubist war,<sup>14</sup> presumably referring to the

patchwork view of the landscape from an airplane. As John Welchman has found, WWI pilots were shown copies of Cubist paintings in their war manuals to explain what the landscape would look like from the sky.<sup>15</sup> Today, in a directly analogous project, Omer Fast explores the view from a plane without a cockpit, captured by drones 5,000 feet above ground. Other artists such as Trevor Paglen, James Bridle, and Yoshi Sodeoka use digital technologies to reveal secret government sites and to map and interrogate our surveillance culture.

In 1913, the world was on the cusp of its first international, technologically advanced war. At home, socio-political tumult interrupted capitalist production, with events such as the workers’ strike in Paterson, NJ.<sup>16</sup> In many ways, the scale of these technological shifts in labor, production, and individual perceptual experience parallel those that have accompanied the rise of digital technologies, our visual understanding of several long wars, and the exaggerated immaterial relationship of labor/property to value in the Western world.<sup>17</sup> In both periods, technological expansion was bound up with dramatic social and political turmoil, and it was the new technology, in turn, that framed our understanding of both.

## TOWARD A DECENTERED LAOCOON

Although the majority of the abstract works in this exhibition fall outside of the Greenbergian conception of abstraction, there are many that in fact make use of his principles: progressive interrogation of the boundaries of the digital medium and its interaction with others. One manifestation of this is a tendency towards a pared down aesthetic exposing digital code—a binary of zeros and ones.<sup>18</sup> But I suggest that this, which I call “pixelation,” is only one of three trajectories evident in a broader formal dynamic. The other I call digital space, or a “new space,” that blends physical and virtual; and the third trajectory is the archive, which presents an unprecedented potential for information access. Each has a distinct presence in the exhibition.

This stylistic and conceptual tendency revels in the use of pixelation as an aesthetic mode akin to pointillism. For instance, in Gabriel Orozco’s particle painting series, the artist photographs flora. He then filters the photographs through a pixelation program, transfers them to canvas, and uses Q-tips to paint each dot to emulate a larger than ratio pixel. John Houck’s background in programming inspired him to create software, which combines a few dozen



Franklin Evans, *Bluenudesdissent*, 2013. Site-specific installation.

Gregor Hildebrandt, *Kalkaeiffer Pierrot (Pierrot Lunaire, Schoenberg)*, 2011. Cassette tape on canvas: 97 x 60". Courtesy the artist. Ulrike Mohr, *Black Holes*, 2012–2013. Carbon.



colors into almost a million combinations in his photographs.<sup>19</sup> He calls these works aggregates. Ethan Greenbaum’s photographs of marble veneer samples are blown-up, and when printed on the scale of the body, they become a cloud field of floating color. Butt Johnson’s *The Curse of Knowledge* resembles a blue monochrome, which on closer inspection reveals a field of lines made in areas where the artist does not draw. In many ways, *The Curse of Knowledge* alludes to the techniques of Henri Matisse, but also to the Adobe Photoshop drawing program where it is second nature to mask layers. Michael Delucia made sketches for his sculpture *Glint* in AutoCAD and fabricated it with a digital router. The tension created by its rejection of any biomorphic reality in its shape and the oscillating patterns of pixelation on its vulnerable plywood surface makes it look as if it were pasted into the exhibition space. Douglas Coupland’s *Imagine a Car Crash* is a large scale, fully functional QR code. Its rectangular forms refer to the work of Piet Mondrian, but its rectangular

blocks of primary color also *are* a kind of technology, the perfect emblem of the information age.

The notion of “new space,” which has been theorized about digitally mediated art, echoes Yves-Alan Bois’ description of Cubist space, which he has described as the “disassociation of volume from mass...through abrupt visual discontinuities.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore Bois interprets the works of Picasso and Braque as mingling the intangible space of art with “real” space.<sup>21</sup> These immaterial volumetric explorations resemble the space created by digital mediation, a fusion/confusion of the physical and virtual in demarcating boundaries. In the early days of virtual theory, the virtual was seen as a possible outer space to escape our bodies, our polluted world and even perhaps our mortality.<sup>22</sup> Yet, now we are faced with a digital world that remains tethered to our own. Our phones are considered extensions of our bodies. This new space is not another world, but rather a commixture of the tangible and the intangible.<sup>23</sup>

The interplay between these two dimensions is evident in Cory Arcangel’s *Hello World*, a sculpture created using a 3D printer. The work exists both in code and in space, making the creation accessible to anyone who has the technology to print their own version. Travess Smalley’s *Compositions in Clay* works are flatbed scans of clay modeled on the scanner bed. Formally, they allude to collage and highlight the tactility of clay because of imprinted fingerprints. John Newman’s *Collections and Corrections with Vermillion* adopts the form of scientific models from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and show how parallel planes do not intersect in space. David Gilbert constructs elaborate deskilled paper sculptures, which are then photographed like a model. The fact that the paper sculptures of Cubism were in many ways the “principal rupture” leading the way for sculpture in the twentieth century made the inclusion of this work even more fitting.<sup>24</sup> Sara VanDerBeek’s totems were made specifically for this exhibition and were sourced from an archive of scanned Cubist engravings that Duchamp-Villon showed in the 1913 Armory Show. The sculpture is modular like Constantin Brancusi’s standing forms, but in its installation echoes Cubist sculpture. The piece alludes to Cubist innovations in fusing two-dimensional and three-dimensional form in sculpture, and also is culled from a digital archive which accentuates this play with space.<sup>25</sup>

So many artists working today maintain an archive of their process.<sup>26</sup> Andrew Kuo’s *If I Could Re-do Tuesday* explores a mundane Christmas Day first recounted on Tumblr. Gregor Hildebrandt’s black monochrome made from cassette tapes of Arnold Schönberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* references early experiments with abstraction by Schönberg and Kandinsky, but also a soon inaccessible archive: the outdated technology of the cassette tape. Similarly, Corin Hewitt’s buried inkjet prints become blurred watercolor-like paintings. Lisa Ruyter’s *Arthur Rothstein “Dry and Parched Earth in the Badlands of South Dakota”* was sourced from the Library of Congress’ online archive. In 1936, Rothstein’s image sparked a public discussion about the indexicality of the photographic medium; this issue resonates with our concerns of the source and veritability of the digital image. David Kennedy Cutler’s *Weight Forever* is a monumental sculpture, which is also a print of CD data onto aluminum again alluding to





David Gilbert, *The Giraffe*, 2012. Archival pigment print: 22 x 17". Courtesy the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery.



Gabriel Orozco, *Red Flower Shadow*, 2011. Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas: 23 5/8" x 31 1/2". Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY.

the information age. Franklin Evans' *Bluenudesdissent* was an installation work made onsite. Evans used the Internet to source images of the artists in the exhibition and paired them with artists from the 1913 exhibit. He also fused the two most controversial pieces from the 1913 exhibit: Matisse's *Blue Nude* and Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase No.2*. Blue nudes of women and men were pasted onto the gallery floors transitioning the upper gallery to the lower one. The work, reproductions of photographs and paintings, upsets the conventional display of the female nude dominated by the male gaze, but is also a socio-cultural observation of our often voyeuristic interactions online.

The political implications of digital form are clear, and unlikely to be marginalized in the way early scholars obfuscated the political imperatives of early abstraction: work that is made using digital tools can be dispersed using the technology itself and therefore minimizes the importance of cultural gatekeepers.<sup>27</sup> But as a primary venue of mainstream political discourse, it is also uniquely positioned to explore political content. Tony Cokes' *Evil.12: Fear, Spectra & Fake Emotions* is a colorful text and type examination of the war in Iraq. Liz Magic Laser's *The Digital Face* references the choreographed movements of politicians, which she locates as beginning during the presidency of George Herbert Walker

Bush and continuing to the presidency of Barack Obama. Andrea Geyer culls from the archives of the Museum of Modern Art the names of the 50 women who exhibited works in the 1913 Armory Show, but are not frequently discussed in the literature. Because the Internet is most often used to repost already available information, Googling the majority of these women generates feeble results. Geyer also orchestrated a performance, in which she reprinted Gertrude Stein's *Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia* and handed out 100 free copies at the two exhibition openings in New York and Washington DC.<sup>28</sup> The novel is digitally scanned, printed, wrapped in historic wallpaper and features a hand-drawn graph of women instrumental to the establishment of modern art in the United States. The work is an archival replica of another piece, but also addresses the pertinent issues of scanning and reproducing copyrighted material in the digital era.

#### DECENTERARMORY.COM: RETHINKING THE CURATORIAL MODEL

When we began organizing this exhibit, we knew that in order to fully engage with the digital realm, we had to have an online and offline exhibition. We also speculated that an online network of artists would structurally resemble Alfred Barr Jr.'s diagram of modern art and William

Cheswick's Internet Mapping Project. We wanted to accentuate those connections by encouraging exhibiting artists to invite other artists from all over the world to participate: in the digital age, diagrams like Barr's can generate themselves. Hosting an online platform also meant that we could stage a truly international show. In conversation, artists who work on the web expressed reservations about placing computers in the gallery. This made sense, because this "new space" was not one you encountered sitting in a gallery, but rather at home on your laptop, on your smartphone, or tablet. The ubiquity of these devices means that an online exhibition can hardly be considered any more restrictive in socio-economic terms than a physical one.

The explosion of interest in the online website resulted in thousands of submissions. When the exhibit traveled to the Luther Brady Art Gallery at George Washington University, we were happy to include artists who we met through our open source curatorial model. It was our way of decentering curatorial bias and centers of artistic practice.

#### CONCLUSION

In the case of Cubism and other early abstract movements, formal simplification coincided with technological shifts in communication, travel, and even warfare. Cubism developed alongside these changes, and came to be used as a visual language to explain them. The greatest difference between analogical changes and digital ones is the visibility of the structure of the former and not of the latter. Obsolete materiality remains part of our lives from old cars to rabbit-ear TVs. The World Wide Web looks nothing like it did in 1990 and not even like it did 5 years ago. The old is replaced, deleted, or made incompatible by innovation.

For the viewer, that means that "the look" of the digital is relentlessly changing, adapting, and re-inserting itself into our visual scope. This ephemerality obscures its visual impact, but does not make it invisible. By analyzing formal affinities between the digital and the modern, I hoped to portray the co-evolution of modernism and technical advances as a model for visualizing the impact of digitization on the way we see and therefore on contemporary art. After all, akin to the experiences of pilots in World War I, we need to develop a language to understand our changed visual landscape in order to see beyond the cloud cover. ■



1. This essay evolved out of numerous conversations with scholars, writers, artists, and thinkers, who acknowledge that the maelstrom of the digital has permeated every aspect of life in the Western world and beyond. I begun this essay in Mexico City and am now finishing it in India where many working class people (i.e., rickshaw drivers) sport smart phones. However, issues of connectivity still plague many developing countries where frequent power outages or low Wi-Fi capabilities make it difficult for the average person to manage large digital files at home.

2. See a recent mapping project from GeoTel Communications, which are working with Columbia University and MIT to map the Internet.

3. Recent mapping efforts from GeoTel Communications only account for the millions of miles of major pathways.

4. The fall 2011 issue of *October*, “Digital Art,” dealt primarily with film, video and photography; all three are areas where technological advances change the “look” of their product. Photography and digital video were important components of our exhibition, but we wanted to include painting and sculpture in a consideration of the digital.

5. I am thinking here of Claire Bishop’s controversial article, “Digital Divide,” in the September 2012 issue of *Artforum*, in which she announces the “subterranean presence” of the digital revolution was helpful for the formation of this essay. Other scholars such as Rainer Usselmann call the digital revolution a “dud.” See “The Dilemma of New Media Art: Cybernetic Serendipity at the ICA London,” *Leonardo* 36 (2003): 389. Curatorial projects like Rhizome, Triple Canopy, and e-publications such as *Hyperallergic* are devoted to these issues. David Joselit, *After Art* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 43.

6. Art made using digital technology is meant to define art that has been conceived, processed or fabricated using digital technologies in the post-1989 period. It certainly encompasses terms such as computer-generated graphic art, and even at times new media art. It does not account for earlier terms such as Cybernetic art, which could be used to categorize works from as early as 1956.

7. The impact of digitization in the musical and literary arts has been tremendous. Whereas art made with digital tools has been under-discussed. This is notable because similar arguments for the impact of media on content and style are central to art history—for instance the shift from tempera to oil in the Renaissance has been fodder for generations of scholars.

8. The 1913 Armory Show officially was known as the First International Exhibition of Modern Art in America (New York, 1913). Carlton’s letter is reproduced in this catalogue as well as the 1963 one.

9. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibit was held at the Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute. See Daniel Palmer’s essay and Charles Duncan’s reflection on the impact of 1963 exhibit.

10. I am thinking of the Museum of Modern Art’s *Inventing Abstraction*, Montclair Art Museum’s *The New Spirit: American Art in the Armory Show, 1913*, the NY Historical Society’s *The Armory Show at 100: Modern Art and Revolution*, and the Phillips Collection’s *History in the Making 100 Years After the Armory Show*.

11. The majority of the abstract works in the 1913 exhibit were not completely non-objective. Many featured the figure, wild use of color, and modern subject matters. In addition, besides Kandinsky, the Russian avant-garde was not represented. Only Analytic Cubist examples were shown from Picasso and Braque, who also rejected the idea of complete abstraction. In Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* and Francis Picabia’s *Procession in Seville*, there is simultaneity and movement. For a reminiscence of the 1913 show by Duchamp, see *Toutfait*. “Marcel Duchamp: Armory Show Lecture, 1963” [http://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue\\_5/news/miller/miller1.htm](http://www.toutfait.com/issues/volume2/issue_5/news/miller/miller1.htm) (accessed November 12, 2012).

12. These could be societal ills, a utopian or spiritual vision.

13. Technology is defined in the broader sense so tools, machines scientific innovation, but also information systems. By 1913, the airplane, automobile, photography, non-Euclidean mathematics, Semiotics, telegraphy, gramophone, trans-continental and trans-Atlantic travel et al were

part of the cultural sphere. See Leah Dickerman, “Inventing Abstraction,” in *Inventing Abstraction, 1919-1925* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 29.

14. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (New York: Dover Publications, 1984), 20 Kindle. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 213-214 n. 7. Paraphrased in Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 7 and 288.

15. John Welchman, “Here there and otherwise,” *Artforum International* (September 1988): 18.

16. Of course, on a larger scale the 1917 Russian Revolution.

17. This is not a technological determinist argument postulating that technological innovations encouraged formal innovations in art on a one-on-one basis. Rather that they expose new visual languages from which artists can adapt, adopt or disavow. As Martin Heidegger wrote, too often technological arguments focus so much on the instrumental function of tools and their affect on form that we lose track of the “essence” of technology. For instance, state of the art digital users and tools function as instruments most professionally when they are recreating or improving upon the “real” as seen in a survey of the plethora of Hollywood blockbusters from *300* to *Star Trek*. The sophistication of digital tools means that these real/hyperreal environments are the ideal for general audiences; however the simplified look of the Internet aesthetic in contemporary art does not always make full use of these advanced tools. The essence of technology then is not solely in its instrumentation.

18. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001): 69. As Manovich notes, by the 1990s, digital photography was capable of capturing more detail than light based photography. For our purposes then, pixelation is an aesthetic choice made by artists in order to foreground the relationship to technology.

19. I found Julian Stallabrass’ discussion of the sublimity of data useful. See ‘A Conversation with Trevor Paglen’, *October* 138 (Fall 2011): 3–14.

20. Lauren Cornell’s *Free* exhibition at the New Museum, October 20, 2010-January 23, 2011 was based on this merging of the physical and virtual space. Also, David Kennedy Cutler’s “The Sky Inside” *CUSP-Ryan Wallace* (New York: Morgan Lehman Gallery), 2012. Yves-Alan Bois, “Kahnweiler’s Lesson,” *Representations* 18 (Spring 1987): 44.

21. Ibid, 41.

22. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Post-Human* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 12.

23. Cornell’s exhibition *Free*, 2010 was admirably one of the first to investigate artwork that was made by digital means, but did not exist solely online.

24. Bois, “Kahnweiler’s Lesson,” 44.

25. This intersection can lead to what viewers see as “flatness” in contemporary work. This move towards flatness is nothing new for abstract art; however, allowing a machine to create an all-over surface does seem to give more of an even distribution of emphasis to foreground and background.

26. The archive is of particular importance to Bishop’s discussion of the impact of the digital on changes in perception. See “Digital Divide,” 438-440. She references Hal Foster’s explorations of the archival impulse as well as his focus on material archive as opposed to the “technological” one epitomized by the Internet. See “An Archival Impulse,” *October* 110 (Autumn 2004): 3-5.

27. See Seth Price, “Dispersion” <http://www.distributedhistory.com/Dispersion2008.pdf>. (Accessed October 4, 2013).

28. Mabel Dodge distributed *Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia* at the 1913 Armory show. The pamphlet was also reprinted in the June 1913 issue of *Camera Work*, 3-5. Dodge’s article “Speculations” included a often reprinted description of Gertrude Stein, “In a large studio in Paris, hung with paintings by Renoir, Matisse, and Picasso, Gertrude Stein is doing with words what Picasso is doing with paint,” 6.

## NICHOLAS O'BRIEN INTERVIEWS

CORY ARCANGEL, MICHAEL BELL-SMITH, JAMES BRIDLE, DOUGLAS COUPLAND, JESSICA EATON, MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ, SARA LUDY, YOSHI SODEOKA, SARA VANDERBEEK, AND LETHA WILSON

TO SAY THAT there is “something happening” in the arts right now would be a bit of an understatement. Certainly, a new alteration has been in the works arguably since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, or at least since Y2K. With the wall coming down, international conversations of contemporary art started to disseminate across obsolete geographic borders. That marked shift also sparked new channels of communication to stretch to more international audiences. Around this time is when the infrastructure of contemporary telecommunications started sustaining a more dominant role in reshaping our perspectives on culture, media, and art. It would be a mistake to say that these shifts are without precedent, or else occurring in some kind of completely unique cultural vacuum. In fact, precedents like early video art, conceptual art, performance, Fluxus, and experiments with analog synthesis are all the more pressing as the dominance of network technology engulfs more and more of our immediate attention. In short, being able to look back seems to be an essential part of looking ahead.

It is in this spirit that Andrianna Campbell and Daniel S. Palmer’s *Decenter* exhibition takes its cues and posits a vision

for contemporary exhibition. This project uses the 100-year anniversary of the Armory Exhibition in 1913 as a starting point to reflect on the ways in which art has both radically changed and strikingly remained the same. Although much has changed since the introduction of Modernism to American audiences a century ago, central themes remain for today’s artists. These topics revolve around how artists attempt to respond, react, and rethink the contemporary technologies of their time. Where Duchamp and the Futurists tackled the surmounting mechanization of movement and vision, artists like Cory Arcangel and Sara Ludy address the ways in which the digital has altered our senses and selves.

The similarities run deeper than the surface concerns of the artists of the avant-garde and the problems that face contemporary makers. It is in the very core of the mounting of the Armory of 1913 where a resonant chord continues to reverberate into the eardrums of today. The early exhibition took place thanks to the efforts of *The Association of American Painters and Sculptors*, a group of young artists that took it upon themselves to do their own fundraising, organizing and publishing. This retrospective DIY/

DIT mentality that spurred the introduction of the avant-garde to American audiences remains incredibly relevant in today’s contemporary artist-run apartment galleries and online exhibition spaces. The counter-cultural inspiration that moved the artists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century certainly holds true to the spirit for many within our current time. This spirit then not only pervades the work, but also the infrastructure that emerged to support the voice of these respective generations.

Putting technological innovation aside, one can argue that the material, the conventions, or the subjects of western art have not changed drastically during the past 100 years. However our *approach* to the concerns, devices, and culture of our time has a much more measurable and impactful discrepancy worthy of further scrutiny. It is in the disparity between the past and the present that we begin to see the clear importance of the art of our time. To imagine, for instance, that we could begin to broach the subject of identity and the figure, as the Dadaists did, via a platform capable to reaching millions of individuals simultaneously—and that this process could happen in real time, no less—is, in and of itself, a remarkable change from 1913.



It could be argued that despondency, in a sense, is the lifeblood that runs through the work of the 1913 Armory show into the veins of the *Decenter* exhibition. It is in the unrealized horizon of a future void of current discord where the avant-garde appears to perpetually rest. In response, the project of Modernism aims to bring the unconscious into material form as a means to make that discord physical. One can draw parallels between this original pursuit and the desire of today’s artists working online to make physical their digital creations.

The motivation behind the desire of artists to make physical the virtual, varies between Modernism’s pursuit of the unconscious and our current moment’s investment in the not-yet-conscious—a borrowed term from José Muñoz to describe a performed state of futurity. The pursuit of this translation of the not-yet-conscious into the physical is an attempt at redeeming the potential that technology has promised for a better tomorrow. The false promise of digital technology lies in its purposefully naïve and manipulative faith in a coming utopia brought on by our collective “plugging in and switching on.” But the work within this exhibition—and the exhibition of 1913—takes this naivety as a point of departure to discuss the how, in the face of a failed techno-utopia, we can still create hope. In other words, it is *because* of the troublesome impossibility for potentially emerging out of technological inequity that artists continue to explore what this technology can offer as an alternative to the status quo. With this in mind, we can consider works within the *Decenter* exhibition, both online and off, as heeding the call of an everlasting trail blazing into the ways in which technology can continue to shape and influence culture.

Where some artists, like Manuel Fernandez, focus on an emergent aesthetic of stock footage and Photoshop transparency patterns to signify some kind of eminent transience, other artists, like Letha Wilson, reflect on how that aesthetic coming from the screen can inform and complicate what we’ve traditionally considered to be analog. Although this pairing has aesthetic difference, the underlying conceptual interests remain quite close in that both are attempting to critique how the digital has reformatted notions of the natural. Similarly, Michael Bell-Smith uses the homogenous imagery of Residence Inn interiors pulled offline to discuss varying economies of images and temporary-space, while Yoshi



Douglas Coupland, *Pipe*, 2012. Digital image  
Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery.

Sodoeka uses maps, videos, and other online imagery to talk about a specific location from his childhood home. Again, where both artists output might have immense difference, an underlying interest—in this pairing, negotiations of space and its representation through online media—begins to develop a network of interests that create a parallel.

These similarities in modern technological times are the central issue that underlies Campbell and Palmer’s project. In this way, *Decenter* situates itself as an exhibition creating a network of convivial affinity. This affinity respects varying approaches, but also allows for shared interests to echo throughout a wide casting web. It is through this creative exploration of positive association that breathes life into a network often considered exclusive, insular, or opaque. *Decenter* undoes some of that tension by not only showing diversity but also showing commonality.

In the following interviews, I ask artists about the ways in which this exhibition reflects on the shared sentiments between 1913 and now, as well as critically questioning artists about the tools they use to make their work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I found many artists show a marked reservation against the devices and platforms that their work is born and bred. This resistance, though similar to the sentiments sparked by the 1913 Armory, sheds light on a unique moment currently underway within con-

temporary arts and its ongoing relationship with technology.

**Can you talk about the visual links you are making between your work and the concepts that drive the *DECENTER* exhibition?**

CA: The piece in the show is a good example of what I would call a software kinetic sculpture. A few years ago, I had a Blackberry, and it had Shazam—one of these programs that allows you to listen to music and tell you what it is. I hardly ever used it except in real emergencies when I had to know what the music was. So I had only Shazamed 7 or 8 tracks in the many years of having this phone. For *DECENTER*, I downloaded all those tracks; I put them together; then I uploaded them to the Internet as a mix to share. I tried it on all these different services and kept getting those copyright errors. SoundCloud wouldn’t let me upload it. YouTube would let me upload it but wouldn’t let people play it. So in the end, I decided these copyright errors were maybe more interesting than the mix. So, I left it. So, the mix is online, but can’t be listened to. It’s a real-time performance demonstrating all of these automatic intellectual property systems that companies run. It has copyright violations from 9 different huge international corporations. It is a representation of how these systems operate. . . It is also probably worth

mentioning that in the future the only way people are going to know about this piece is this conversation.

MF: I think digital practice can be seen as a very important aspect of contemporary art practice. The first Armory show was influenced by technological advancements, and this theme connects to the modern age, shaping formal aspects and conceptual thinking derived from it.

SVB: When starting a project, I often begin with image-based research, either by taking the images myself or using archival material. For this piece, I asked Andrianna and Daniel to send me archival images from their research of the original Armory show for inspiration. The sculpture I designed is informed by images from the original Armory exhibition and is created of concentric patterns that have come out of a consideration of a larger continuum of forms, eternal patterns shared amongst many different cultures and times. The simple patterns found in ancient forms are not that different from the baseline pixel formations of a digital image. I think material, space, process and form are more resonant in this time of pervasive digital awareness.

SL: My process is similar to that of Cubists in how I combine various perspectives of a space to create a new perspective of that space. The architecture in *Transom* is of a business complex in Leesburg, Virginia called Market Station. It is made of several uprooted historical barns and gristmills from the area that were combined to form a new complex for businesses in the 1980’s. My mom owned a hair salon there for 13 years. I went back a couple of years ago to photograph the new complex and found a door that led me

to a part of the architecture that I had never been. I came across several stories of empty floors and was immediately caught in this space where everything was familiar from my previous experiences of the architecture, but the structure was entirely different. After taking roughly 200 photographs, I narrowed down a selection of about 7 varying perspectives to create a time based perspective and space portrait of the architecture.

MBS: My work in the show, *Piano and Violin Variations*, is a web-based collection of images of hotel interiors. While the photos were taken all over North America (mostly by travelers reviewing their rooms for travel sites), the same two photos hang on the wall of each room: a close-up of a violin and a close-up of a piano. This situation illustrates the strange overlapping systems within which images operate today. In this case, there’s the “real space” system, the fact that these images actually exist on the walls of hotel rooms all across North America. There’s a semiotic/class system, with the photos of the piano and violin selected for their connotations of sophistication, or “Art.” And there’s the system of commercial digital image circulation, by which I was able to track down (and purchase) the original stock images used in all of these hotels. Our day-to-day lives require that we sort through an increasing number of these different systems of meaning as we encounter images and other media. In many ways, the work is a response to that condition and the anxiety it brings.

For me, this project was about the intersection of three systems: first, the semiotic/class system, with photos of a piano and violin representing sophistication; next, the system of commercial digital image circulation,

by which I was able to track down and purchase the original stock images which were used in the hotels; thirdly, the “real space” system you bring up, the fact that these images exist on the walls of hotel rooms all across North America.

DC: The 1913 Armory Show foregrounded the massive collective trauma, which was created in the western mind by the introduction of radio and other modes of mass communication. In 1913, people were unlearning ancient ways of experiencing time and space and replacing them with then-mysterious new ways of interpreting distance, time, individuality, mass culture, the picture plane and . . . well, just about everything we associate with the twentieth century. In 2013, we’ve collectively experienced a similar collective trauma of perception. In a tiny amount of time we’ve absorbed search engines, the Internet, personal computing, smartphones and . . . well, just about everything we associate with the twenty-first century.

LW: I started working on video pieces in grad school at Hunter. In those video pieces it was important to layer images in the software for the final result . . . The work is about the distance between interior and exterior. The photograph transports you between one world and another. In this video, the gallery walk and the canyon walk floats between those two worlds.

YS: *[#46 — 35.23N 139.30E [FAC 3097] E5150xx]* is sort of like a fiction about espionage and conspiracies. One of the key elements in this scenario is that digital transmission technology has always existed since the 70’s, and they’ve been secretly trying to experiment with it in a very unsuspected location, which is Totsuka, Japan in this case.

Letha Wilson, *Double Buffalo Western (Transcriptions of Walks in Buffalo onto the Wilderness and Vice Versa)*, 2009. Digital video.





JE: I am not an academic. While I have read a bit and am familiar with some of the works in the 1913 Armory exhibition, it would be wholly dishonest of me to start trying to postulate the types of connections you are asking about. From my own mind, all things like this seem slightly arbitrary to me. I feel like if you look for connections between any two things you could start to make them should you chose. Or you could connect through disconnect, even.

JB: *Rorschmap* is a project, which both emphasizes the strangeness and criticizes the lack of imagination in contemporary digital maps - and by extension, much of contemporary technology. Digital maps are not like traditional maps; they are animations, they are alive, they are in constant flux. But they are also presented as classically as possible: as flat planes, as definitions rather than approximations, as facts rather than visualizations, as truth rather than merely as one way of seeing. *Rorschmap* attempts to disrupt this illusion, exposing the way in which this viewpoint is constructed, and opening it up to other forms of expression. All technologies open up new ways of experiencing the world, from oil paint in tubes to lines of code in distant servers, but they are also easily reduced to simplistic, reductive and controllable metaphors. It is one of the jobs of art to fracture that top-down view.

**What similarities do you find between your work and the methods of Cubists exhibited in Armory?**

DC: Flattening. Definitely a flattening. We've taken cutting and pasting and abstraction to profoundly new levels in which time and space is reduced to a glyph, and yet we don't bat an eye.

MBS: I'm not sure about methodology, but Picasso was working with Cubist representations of violins and pianos (the "subject" of my work for the show) a hundred years ago. Those objects had a different meaning in the early 20th century, but there's something enduring about what they can represent. In addition, the photographs on the walls in my piece act as surrogates for the idea of high art. In that respect, they're a weird by-product of the early modernists' legacy.

SVB: I have always had an interest in the simultaneity of Cubism, its sense

of presenting multiple moments at once more so then the formal qualities of the work.

YS: I honestly didn't think too much about that! As I understood the scope of the show, I figured that presenting an artwork, as one of the artists, who represent the newer generation, would be significant enough. As an artist who is influenced by Cubism, I think that my piece embodies a similar spirit and ideas that Cubism presented.

**The *DECENTER* exhibition and projects commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Armory show, and in turn the centennial of a “New Spirit” of Modernism coming to the United States. Do you think that there is a similar movement or momentum that is happening around current digital and new media practices that *DECENTER* encapsulates?**

SL: Yes. I find that the most relevant and exciting works today are the result of how digital technologies and online social dynamics are informing the artist's practice.

DC: One thing I've noticed is the way people go online and visit gallery sites and inhale hundreds of artists in one go, sweeping through rosters and sucking the information in like nicotine. Everyone is aware of everything now, and 'being first' no longer feels like it's enough to justify lionization of one artist over another. Also (and we all know this) online culture has stripped the vernissage of its potency as a moment and, from what I see, and from what gallerists tell me, people are simply no longer going into physical galleries as much. Museums, on the other hand, seem to be doing well... possibly because they promise their attendees a larger core dump of information.

CA: Well, I guess I would have to back up and say what excites me in the real world. Art tends to follow what is going on in the real world. It is like that thing that happens today. When you are walking down the sidewalk and you are behind someone, who is walking a little slow and you are like "what is going on?"...Finally, you realize it is just because they are on their phone texting. That happens all the time now and to me that is really a kind of real life marker that we have entered some other territory now. They are like Zombie

walkers. To me the most interesting thing about what is going on is that people are just in front of their screens all day. It tends to be everybody...my aunt, my mother, myself. It is all my friends. And each group of friends has a different social network that they like. So, all these types of things have been introduced into life. That is what is of interest to me. Remember when people used to warn you about sitting too close to the TV or watching too much TV? People thought it was going to ruin people. But now it is as if the TVs are out in the real world and people are watching while walking, or in the subway, or in the car. So, it is like the TVs have taken over, but it is not TVs, it is the computer.

LW: There are actual objects in the physical exhibition so in discussing the digital realm, the exhibition focuses on the way these digital formats, techniques, tools, processes and thinking have inserted themselves into the work of many artists. There ends up being a conversation among the works.

JB: The New Aesthetic is illustrative of deeper changes in cognition and experience produced by networked technologies - with the emphasis on the "networked" part. That paradigm shift - and understanding if it has occurred or is occurring - is the business of the New Aesthetic. If we recognize that understanding the world and ourselves is always an unfinished project, we must always look to "the new" to find different ways of seeing and understanding. But at the same time, that "newness" is often an illusion: the tools and techniques for seeing exist already, we just need to have them brought to our attention, to see them from a different angle. In this way, perhaps, certain digital artworks and the Internet function exactly as Cubism and the Armory Show did in 1913.

MF: The digital revolution has brought the most significant historical shift since the industrial revolution. The European avant-garde art of the early 20th century was strongly influenced by the social changes that were derived from the advancement of technology and inclusion and standardization of machines in war, work and daily life.

You can see examples of direct influence of technological progress in movements such as Impressionism that reacted to the emergence of photography.

Foreground: Sara VanDerBeek, *XXIV*, 2013. Plaster: 88 x 8 x 6". Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures. Background: Andrew Kuo. *If I Could Redo Tuesday*, 2013. Acrylic and carbon transfer on panel and paper, 51 x 38". Courtesy the artist and Marlborough Gallery.



Since the early 21st century, one starts to see a consolidation of digital life at all levels which has profoundly transformed society, changing traditional notions of space and time. These conditions have enabled the ampliation of traditional notions of what we understand as art, expanding into almost every field. I think the historical moment we are living has certainly many similarities with the first Armory Show.

**How do you undertake the installation of your work outside of a digital networked environment (like a browser)? Is it important for your work to exist outside of that context? Are there specific material concerns that happen in that process? Does one always have to default to standards presented by the traditional art world?**

JB: My work appears in a wide variety of formats: as websites, as books, as essays, as physical installations, as images both digital and framed on a wall. This is entirely dependant on the work, and the format, which seems at the time to suit it best. But it is always, hopefully by design, capable of being returned to the network, to being shared, distributed, re-enacted. These are the operations which the work ultimately has to address if it is concerned with network technologies: the ability to move seamlessly across networks, while interrogating those seams, and the transformations that occur in the work as it negotiates the politics and processes of different media. My work has only recently been of interest to the 'traditional' art world: it's not my background and it's not my primary concern.

MBS: There's a lot angles one could take in talking about the distinction between working online and in traditional art contexts: economics, audience, access, agency, etc. I'll pick a basic one: the idea of self-publishing. Most work online is self-published, neither validated nor vetted by an external entity (gallery, curator, publisher, etc) before reaching its viewership. It's a simple fact, but I think it's worth reminding ourselves of periodically. It makes for a unique set of potentials. Online work can be more liberated, more out there, more likely to hit an untapped audience or vein of genius. But it's also more apt to be terrible, uneven, and desperate. Some artists deal with this freedom through an abundance of work, throwing things at the wall to see what sticks, hoping



the hits overshadow the misses. I tend to work in the opposite way: slowly and deliberately. Maybe it seems a bit old-fashioned, but it’s about marrying newer ideas and approaches with a more traditional set of values around what I care about in art. I don’t want to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

DC: Well, online presentation does lead to the raping and pillaging of gallery sites by image-crazed browsers. We’ve all done it. The hyperavailability of images creates an expectation of more, more, more, now, now, now, free, free, free. A show now has to do something, anything, to make the visitor experience different from an online experience.

**Do you find any resonance with the political and social implications that were taken up during the work of artists represented in the 1913 Armory?**

MF: More than political, I find implications in breaking the barriers between social classes and the democratization of the social in general. The artist status is democratized today. Everyone with a computer can make works and give them visibility on the Internet.

YS: Some people in digital art community may be politically motivated in a direct way more so than I am. I flirt with that sometimes in a passive way like the one I did with ASCII BUSH. But maybe that could be also seen as a joke against political art and I kind of like it that way. It’s up to how people want to interpret it. I’m mainly a visual artist, and my main goal is to make challenging visual art. And it just happens to be that politics can be an inspiration for some visual work I make, sometimes something else.

**Within digital networks there is a desire to often fetishize how connected we are—regardless of how often we utilize or mobilize on that connectivity. Do you find your work to reflect on the ways in which we fool ourselves with the notion of constant tele-presence? How can we remain radical in the arts when our tools are supplied to us by corporations that often cannibalize culture for the sake of profit? Is it important to stay radical like the Cubists and Futurists of the 1913 Armory?**

JB: It’s always important to stay radical, and I think the ways in which digital tools are tightly controlled and constructed by corporations and the people who built

them are of deep concern. But that in itself can be radicalized through a greater understanding and literacy in these technologies: they can be mastered, and turned to our own uses.

CA: In a way, there is still this reaction that says, “Wow! Look at what this can do,” but it is very massaged now by powerful forces that have entered into the arena. Google is a perfect example of a company that sells us “Wow! Look at what we can do” but it is so perfectly polished. It is now somehow combined with advertising and fashion. It doesn’t appear the way technology used to appear. It is more seamlessly intergrated into life because it is more part of that commercial capitalist river. It is still around so we don’t notice it, as much anymore... It is enough to say this is what is going on.

**We are living in a time of drastic change, which is bringing about tremendous progress, as well as deep and troubling shared dilemmas. We enjoy much of what the virtual world provides yet often are fighting against its continual presence within our lives—its distractions, its sense of alienation—it feels unsustainable yet exciting- we are part of an ever-growing yet fragile structure. How far can and do we want to take it? With all of this tension, the actual becomes even more significant.**

SVB: I am interested in how various technologies especially mobile media, Photoshop and the Internet are changing the way we consider photography, images, and communication. So much of our digital interface is about documentation and sharing and the quality of documentation is changing the way we understand art. The theatrical and dramatic images of 20th century art books with their strong light, shadow, and saturated blacks of the duotone print process are giving way to flat, bright images created with the Internet in mind. I think the Internet is engendering a more sophisticated, educated viewer and creator of images, but I also think it is making it harder to distinguish imagery and to keep someone’s attention within an actual space. I am interested in bridging both and using technology to expand my practice but I make work considering much more the actual object as it rests in a space, and the significance of viewing it in person. The context of the room in which it is being shown, the unique qualities of

a photographic print as it exists as an object first and as information second, I think that is where I struggle to find a way to appreciate and engage with technology that I feel is effective. The way in which we get and engage with media has changed dramatically and for the better, but it seems to me the greatest impact the Internet has is as a living, dynamic and ever changing archive, and working with it as a point of capture, organization, and communication is when it is most effective.

MF: I identify with two approaches. I don’t believe in the autonomy of an artist to create works from nothing, I believe in a collective progress, therefore, it is true that working online shaped the works I do, and I think that this elements of screen space influence my work too. I’m interested in how we perceive the reality framed by a device screen and the way that an artwork is distributed and received by an audience that views most of the exhibitions on smartphone or tablet screens. I am also interested in blurring the boundaries between digital and reality because we live in a time when both are the same reality. Many of my works can be read in this sense, especially “Text to speech” makes direct reference to it in a quote from William Gibson that says “One of the things our grandchildren will find quaintest about us is that we distinguish the digital from the real” but this sentence was from the 1984 *Neuromancer* book.

**I feel as though the networking of pieces and makers presented in the online exhibition of DECENTER speaks to a sense of community surrounding art made and distributed online. Do you consider that network, or any sense of peership with other makers, when creating works to be primarily presented online? Do you think that this networked sensibility does something to the work itself?**

SL: When I create a new work, I only consider the network for publishing strategies. I don’t consider others when making the work itself.

JE: There is a huge difference in how we are all connected, specifically the time-space aspects of how you could connect then versus now, but underlying in both cases is technology. In 1913, you could get on a train. Today, you can just log on. In 2013 you can do a lot more without putting on pants. ■

# THE STORY OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMORY SHOW<sup>1</sup>

## CHARLES H. DUNCAN

THE STORY OF the fiftieth anniversary of the Armory Show begins not in New York City, Chicago, or Boston, but in central New York State, in the city of Utica. Located in the rugged Adirondack foothills celebrated by James Fenimore Cooper, Utica became an art center during the 1830s with the founding of the Utica Art Association, which brought exhibitions to the city and nurtured a number of artists early in their careers, including Arthur B. Davies. In 1935, descendants of industrialist Alfred Munson founded the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, and their Victorian-era Italianate mansion, Fountain Elms, became Utica’s first art museum. It was here that in 1961 Joseph S. Trovato, assistant to Museum of Art director Edward Dwight, set out to restage the historic Armory Show as a comprehensive exhibition. Trovato’s inspiration for this enormous undertaking was Edward Wales Root, a collector and teacher of art appreciation who had almost single-handedly transformed Utica into an important regional center for modern art.

Like his contemporaries Lillie P. Bliss, Albert C. Barnes, Walter Arensberg, and John Quinn, Root was a groundbreaking collector of modern art and both lender to, and purchaser from, the original Armory Show. Root was raised in a cul-

tured environment in New York City and Washington, D.C., that emphasized the importance of the visual arts. His father, Elihu Root, Sr., was Theodore Roosevelt’s secretary of state, a senator from New York, and a founder of the American Federation of Arts. As a child Edward Root summered in Clinton, New York, eight miles southwest of Utica, and later was graduated from Hamilton College in 1905. Early in life Root pursued a career as a journalist in New York City, where he formed enduring personal bonds with leading artists and galleries and developed into an astute and passionate collector of contemporary American art. Root believed it was his duty to support the work of Americans, and he acquired directly from artists many paintings and drawings soon after they were created. A notable example is his purchase from the Armory Show of Maurice Prendergast’s *Landscape with Figures* of 1912, an acquisition encouraged by Root’s friend George Luks.

Root’s association with the Munson-Williams-Proctor began in 1938 as he neared retirement from Hamilton College, where he taught from 1920 to 1940.<sup>2</sup> The timing for the young institute was fortuitous. As a consultant, Root developed the museum’s collection of American and European modernism; as a

generous lender from his own collection, he cultivated among the citizens of Utica an appreciation for twentieth-century art. In 1949 Root made his first gift to the institute: *Vermont Landscape* of 1944 by Luigi Lucioni. Over the next seven years the collector donated hundreds of works of art, and at his death late in 1956, Root’s bequest to the institute was comprised of 227 American modernist paintings and drawings, including signature works by Charles Burchfield, Edward Hopper, Reginald Marsh, Arshile Gorky, Theodoros Stamos, Mark Rothko, and Jackson Pollock.

In 1954, as Root was settling the terms of his bequest, the board of trustees of the Munson-Williams-Proctor embarked on a campaign for a new Museum of Art building, as the Fountain Elms structure was too small and aesthetically unsuited to showcase his collection. Historian Henry Russell Hitchcock was contracted to help select an architect, and the following year the commission was awarded to Philip Johnson, who had just completed a twelve-year tenure as director of the Museum of Modern Art’s department of architecture and design. When the new Munson-Williams-Proctor Museum of Art opened in October 1960 with three floors of simple but elegant galleries proportioned for the display of modern art, Utica proudly became home to the first in a series of renowned art museums designed by Johnson in the International Style.<sup>3</sup> Reviews of the museum in popular and architectural publications offered approving headlines: “The Perfect, Professional Museum” and “Utica Museum Ranks with Finest Anywhere.”<sup>4</sup> Appropriately, the first exhibition staged in its galleries was “The Edward Wales Root Bequest.”

Buoyed by the rising stature of the institute, Trovato and his staff embarked on the task of securing loans for “1913 Armory Show Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition.” Their charge was daunting, as the original exhibition included over 1,300 works, many of which had been retitled since the original show or were imprecisely listed in the catalogues for the original three venues. An exciting discovery in the library of the Art Institute of Chicago of installation photographs from the Chicago exhibition increased the number of visually documented works to a total of eighty, but still, only a single watercolor by John Marin was found with an intact label from the original Armory Show.<sup>5</sup> Appeals through the *New York Times* and other periodicals helped enormously in locating works in private





collections. Puvis de Chavannes’ *Femme Nue*, for example, was brought forward with great fanfare by owners author-director Ranald MacDougall and his wife Nanette Fabray. By the opening of the anniversary exhibition in February 1963, Trovato and his team had reunited 325 works, many from foreign collections.

Preparations for the Utica exhibition catalyzed advances in scholarship on the Amory Show. In 1938 Walt Kuhn, secretary of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors (AAPS), had published the pocket-sized *The Story of the Armory Show*, yet was coy for the rest of his life about possible extant records of the association. Entreaties from Utica on behalf of the fiftieth-anniversary exhibition spurred his daughter, Brenda Kuhn, to turn over to the Archives of American Art a substantial portion of the Walt Kuhn papers, giving scholars access to important official correspondence and records of transactions of the AAPS. Combined with the papers of treasurer Elmer MacRae, which had been discovered in 1958, and sales ledgers lent by Nikifora Iliapolous, the widow of Armory Show organizer Walter Pach, these primary sources gave a more complete picture of the historic exhibition and became the basis for the definitive history of the exhibition, Milton W. Brown’s *The Story of the Armory Show*, published in May 1963.<sup>6</sup>

The well-publicized search for works of art brought forth a proposal from the Henry Street Settlement, a social services and arts organization on New York City’s Lower East Side, for a benefit showing of the Utica exhibition at the original location in New York City. With the help of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue in New York City was secured for the anniversary, and the institute and settlement combined efforts to publish in 1963 a catalogue with an introduction by Brown.

Prominent figures in the arts community took an active role in the anniversary celebrations. Marcel Duchamp, whose *Nude Descending a Staircase [No. 2]* had been the most notorious work of art in the 1913 show, contributed recollections to the anniversary exhibition catalogue, as did Charles Sheeler, Stuart Davis, William Zorach, Alexander Archipenko, and others whose works had been shown in the original exhibition.<sup>7</sup> Working closely with Trovato, Duchamp helped locate works of art, provided suggestions for the design of the catalogue, and designed a commemorative poster to benefit the Henry Street Settlement.<sup>8</sup> *Art in America*,



Charles Collingwood and Marcel Duchamp at the Armory Show 50th Anniversary exhibition, 1963. Papers relating to the 1913 Armory Show 50th Anniversary Exhibition, Archives of American Art.

also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 1963, published a special Armory Show issue, with a preview of the exhibition by Trovato and essays by John Canaday, Carl Zigrosser, Beaumont Newhall, William Carlos Williams, and Lloyd Goodrich. Governor Rockefeller, then considering a run for president, contributed “Back to the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory,” an article which praised the meteoric rise of the arts in the United States, stating “America has now emerged as a generator of creative forces in painting and sculpture, and the performing arts as well. Vague feelings of cultural inferiority . . . have now faded and properly so because our talent in the arts is great.”<sup>9</sup>

On 16 February 1963 artists, private lenders, museum directors, and representatives of the Henry Street Settlement gathered in Utica for a gala preview and dinner for the anniversary exhibition.<sup>10</sup> The next evening, 1,800 art enthusiasts crowded into the new Munson-Williams-Proctor Museum of Art to view Trovato’s much-anticipated recreation of the historic event. Like most in attendance, Marcel Duchamp, who had not seen the original show, experienced for the first time something approaching the full context of the Armory Show. That evening he delivered to a standing-room audience a slide lecture about the contributions of many of the Armory Show’s most prominent artists and, like Rockefeller, addressed America’s rising status in the international cultural sphere:

*As you all know, the Armory Show was opened on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1913, fifty years ago, to the day. As a result*

*of this event, it is rewarding to realize that, in these last fifty years, the United States has collected, in its private collections and its museums, probably the greatest examples of modern art in the world today.*<sup>11</sup>

Over the course of the next six weeks the institute hosted reminiscences by Brenda Kuhn, illustrated lectures by Brown and Goodrich, “Music of 1913” piano recitals, and a symposium moderated by museum director Dwight. By all accounts, events at the Munson-Williams-Proctor were a success, and national wire services reported that “thousands of central New York art lovers wandering . . . through a Utica museum offer evidence that American art appreciation is coming of age.”<sup>12</sup>

The gala opening of the exhibition at the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory on 6 April 1963 drew 2,000 socialites, politicians, and international art figures. In the spirit of the original exhibition, selected works of art were available for purchase (Paul Cézanne’s *Portrait of Madame Cézanne* was offered at \$210,000; Sheeler’s *Red Tulips* was offered by the artist for \$1,500), and duplicate postcards and ephemera from MacRae’s papers were sold for the benefit of the Henry Street Settlement.<sup>13</sup> A special historical section of archival materials—photographs, letters, and memorabilia—was designed and installed by photographer Herbert Matter, with the Archives of American Art lending selections from its newly acquired Walt Kuhn papers. During a three-week run, approximately 75,000 visitors attended the Manhattan exhibi-

tion, a number that rivaled attendance at the original Armory Show and matched the popularity of the anniversary exhibition in Utica, where 40,000 visitors from a community of 100,000 paid homage to America’s most famous art event.<sup>14</sup>

Popular press accounts of the anniversary exhibition were overwhelmingly positive, and several writers astutely noted that hindsight allowed organizers to select only the highest quality works for the condensed restaging. Numerous newspaper and magazine reviews recalled the controversies that rocked New York and Chicago in 1913, although most did not venture any historical analysis. Reviewers in two New York papers attempted to situate the Armory Show in the present: Emily Genauer drew a parallel between the Space Age understanding of the “space-time continuum” and Cubism, and John Canaday pinpointed the events of 1913 as the culprit behind a current “pernicious . . . Madison Avenue technique in art merchandising.”<sup>15</sup> Of the several serious attempts to engage the general public on the visual polemics of the 1913 Armory Show, the most effective was a CBS television Eyewitness broadcast of conversations with Duchamp and Sir Kenneth Clark which were recorded in the galleries of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Museum of Art.<sup>16</sup>

Substantive reviews were offered by Harold Rosenberg and Frank Anderson Trapp. For Rosenberg, writing in the *New Yorker*, the Armory Show “was the Great Event in the history of American Art education, rather than in the history of American art.” Because of it, the critic contended, modern art became a cause in the United States. “The vanguard” was now an agenda in American art-making. Thus, the fiftieth-anniversary exhibition, Rosenberg concluded, commemorated the “march of the principle of novelty.”<sup>17</sup> Writing in *Art Journal*, Trapp posited that the original Armory Show “for the general public and for most of the press, was an entertaining but ephemeral event.”<sup>18</sup> Rather than a wholesale conversion of the masses, it had confirmed for a small number of visionary artists and collectors a direction that had already been established, and their embrace of the European avant-garde had cleared the path for the widespread institutional support of modernism in America. While Trapp cited Edward Wales Root, his analysis largely discounted the contributions of early advocates of American modernism.

Rosenberg, Trapp, and other New York City critics, however, failed to consider the tremendous impact that

the Armory Show had beyond major American metropolitan centers. Without question, the original Armory Show had set a new course for American artists, collectors, dealers, museums, and the public. New York School painters commanded international attention, modern art had become integral to academic and museum programs throughout the United States, and major public works projects across the country embraced modernist agendas. Nowhere was the latter better observed than in Rockefeller’s ambitious Empire State Plaza government and arts complex, constructed in Albany during the 1960s. In Utica, the Munson-Williams-Proctor stood in 1963 as a temple of modernism for the city, as well as a progressive cultural anchor for the entire Mohawk Valley. Ultimately, the evolution of the Institute exemplified how regional art centers had embraced fifty years of sweeping cultural advances since the original Armory Show, and the anniversary exhibition staged there celebrated its successful marriage of modernist American art and architecture.

For general visitors unconcerned by these broad cultural issues, the centerpiece of the “Armory Show Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition” was Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase [No. 2]*, which, as it had in 1913, ubiquitously appeared in publicity about the show. At age seventy-five and preparing for his first major American retrospective to be held in Pasadena the coming fall, Duchamp cordially stepped into the popular spotlight as the most prominent face of the Armory Show. His achievements, finally acknowledged by the general public, the painter-turned-professional-chess player reflected on the mixed blessing that the *Nude Descending a Staircase [No. 2]* . . . held for him for the last fifty years: “It’s a curious thing that, at least as a picture, it really beat me, in that I disappeared for forty years because people talked about the painting . . . but they never named me. I was completely obscured, or completely discarded—by my own painting—as an entity! . . . It’s only in the last ten years or so that I have reappeared again on the surface, and I’m more important than the painting (laughs).”<sup>19</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. This essay is reprinted with permission of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The piece was commissioned by the *Archives of American Art Journal* for its Armory Show issue (volume 51, numbers 3-4), which appeared in 2013
2. A complete assessment of the relationship between Edward W. Root and the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute appears in Mary E. Murray, Paul D. Schweizer, and

Michael D. Somple, *Auspicious Vision: Edward Wales Root and American Modernism* (Utica, N.Y.: Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, 2008).

3. Mary E. Murray, *Look For Beauty: Philip Johnson and Art Museum Design* (Utica, N.Y.: Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, 2010). Johnson followed the Utica commission with related designs for the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, in 1961, and the Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in 1963.

4. “The Perfect, Professional Museum,” *Architectural Forum* (December 1960), 90–95; Edward Cowley, “Utica Museum Ranks with Finest Anywhere,” *Upstate Living, Sunday Times-Union* (Albany, N.Y.), 15 October 1960, E-6.

5. Geoffrey T. Hellman, “Armory Show,” *The Talk of the Town, New Yorker*, 30 March 1963, 35.

6. See Laurette E. McCarthy’s piece, “Armory Show: New Perspectives and Recent Rediscoveries,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 51, 3–4, pages 22–35, for a more complete account of Brown’s book. The Walt Kuhn, Kuhn Family Papers, and Armory Show Records and the Walter Pach Papers are now housed at the Archives of American Art (hereafter AAA); the Elmer Livingston MacRae Papers are housed at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.

7. The first letter to Duchamp, from Joseph S. Trovato, is dated 25 July 1962. 1913 Armory Show Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition Records, AAA, (hereafter Fiftieth Anniversary Records).

8. See Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* 3rd ed. (New York: Delano Greenridge Editions; 1997), 828. Standard posters were priced at \$1.50; signed limited-edition posters \$25.00.

9. Nelson A. Rockefeller, “Back to the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory,” *Art in America* no.1 (1963), 56–59.

10. Among dignitaries invited, but unable to attend, was Governor Rockefeller, who sent a telegram of congratulations to William C. Murray dated 14 February 1963, president of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute. (Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute Archives, 4.4, Exhibitions, F 313).

11. Marcel Duchamp, lecture at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, 17 February 1963. Sound recording, AAA.

12. H. E. Whittemore, “Utica’s Art Exhibition is National News,” *Utica Press*, 22 February 1963.

13. Sanka Knox, “Sale Will Be Held at Armory Show,” *New York Times*, 25 April 1963.

14. Frank Anderson Trapp, “The Armory Show: A Review,” *Art Journal* 23, no. 1 (Autumn 1963), 7.

15. Emily Genauer, “Echoes in an Old Armory,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1963. John Canaday, “1913 Armory Show is Back for Anniversary” *New York Times*, 5 April 1963. Following an in-depth assessment of the original Armory Show, Genauer continued, “[A] lot has happened since then. We’ve been atomized. Today we identify not with the whole man but the fragmented one. . . . Space and time are what Duchamp’s walking nude is about. . . . Inside of us it’s a normal condition to feel shattered. It’s our being shattered that makes us feel one with the world.” Canaday, after recalling the events and reception of the original Armory Show, assessed the fiftieth anniversary exhibition as partly a “nostalgic lark.” He concluded with “This country learned the power the *succès de scandale* can wield on the buying public.”

16. “The Art Show that Shocked America,” telecast on the CBS television documentary show Eyewitness. Charles Collingwood interviewed Sir Kenneth Clark and Marcel Duchamp about the importance of the original exhibition, negative reviews in the press, huge attendance figures, and the impact on modern art.

17. Harold Rosenberg, “The Armory Show: Revolution Reenacted,” *New Yorker*, 6 April 1963, 106.

18. Trapp, “Armory Show Review,” 4.

19. Marcel Duchamp, interview conducted by Milton W. Brown, 1963. Originally broadcast on the Martha Deane Radio Show, 1963. Fiftieth Anniversary Records (AAA).



Art at the Henry Street Settlement is a familiar story—as old as the settlement itself. But it is a story constantly renewed, constantly refreshed, constantly developing. Its theme is simple: Every individual human being, and every human community, needs the fulfillment of creative contact with the arts.

With this as the goal, Henry Street's programs of music, dance, drama and the visual arts reach out to every part of the settlement's neighborhood—to the young and the old; to the talented, to those with talents buried, to those with no talents but appreciation; to those with problems, for whom the arts are therapeutic; to those with a career as their aim; to those who come in casually, unmotivated. For all of these, Henry Street's creative arts programs mean something for their personal lives.

For the community, there is pride in a great music school right in the neighborhood, in a renowned dance company and in one of the City's leading potteries. The Music School and the School of Drama and Dance enroll over 1,500 students and give regular performances to which audiences come from all over the City. At the Pottery, ceramicists and sculptors both work professionally and teach their skills to students of all ages. Well-known painters also give classes at the Settlement.

Through these art programs, people in the neighborhood are brought together irrespective of racial and cultural differences. Troubled youngsters can often be reached through paint or clay or a guitar. Girls and boys who might otherwise be going home to empty apartments or to afternoons and evenings of trouble-breeding idleness and boredom, find in sculpture, dance, painting or music an absorbing outlet.

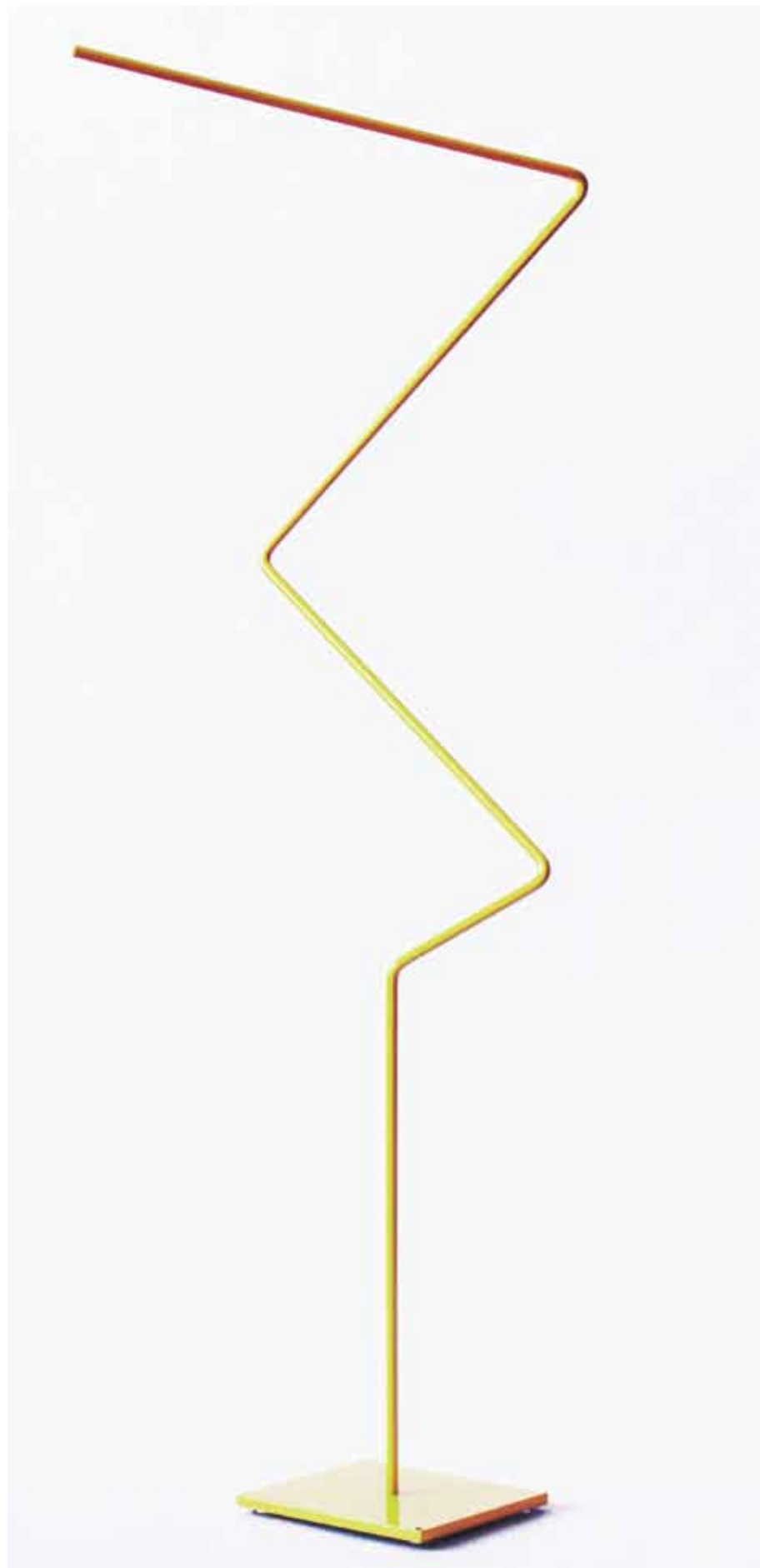
Today, the Henry Street Settlement is embarked on a major new step, the creation of an *Arts Center* for the neighborhood. The projected center, right in the heart of the Lower East Side community, would house in one building the Music School, Theater, Dance and Art schools, all in need of more space and better facilities. But besides these expanded facilities, the Center would bring new dimensions to the Settlement's long-time role: Here, in a lower income neighborhood, the cultural center would stand as symbol of the organic part art has come to play in this community through the work of the Henry Street Settlement.

It should be clear from this account that the Henry Street Settlement does not regard the arts as peripheral activities, but rather as a central element in the lives of people and a major force in shaping the character of the community. For these reasons, we are proud to have the privilege of participating in the re-enactment of one of the most significant events that have occurred in the arts in America—the 50th Anniversary Exhibition of the 1913 Armory show.

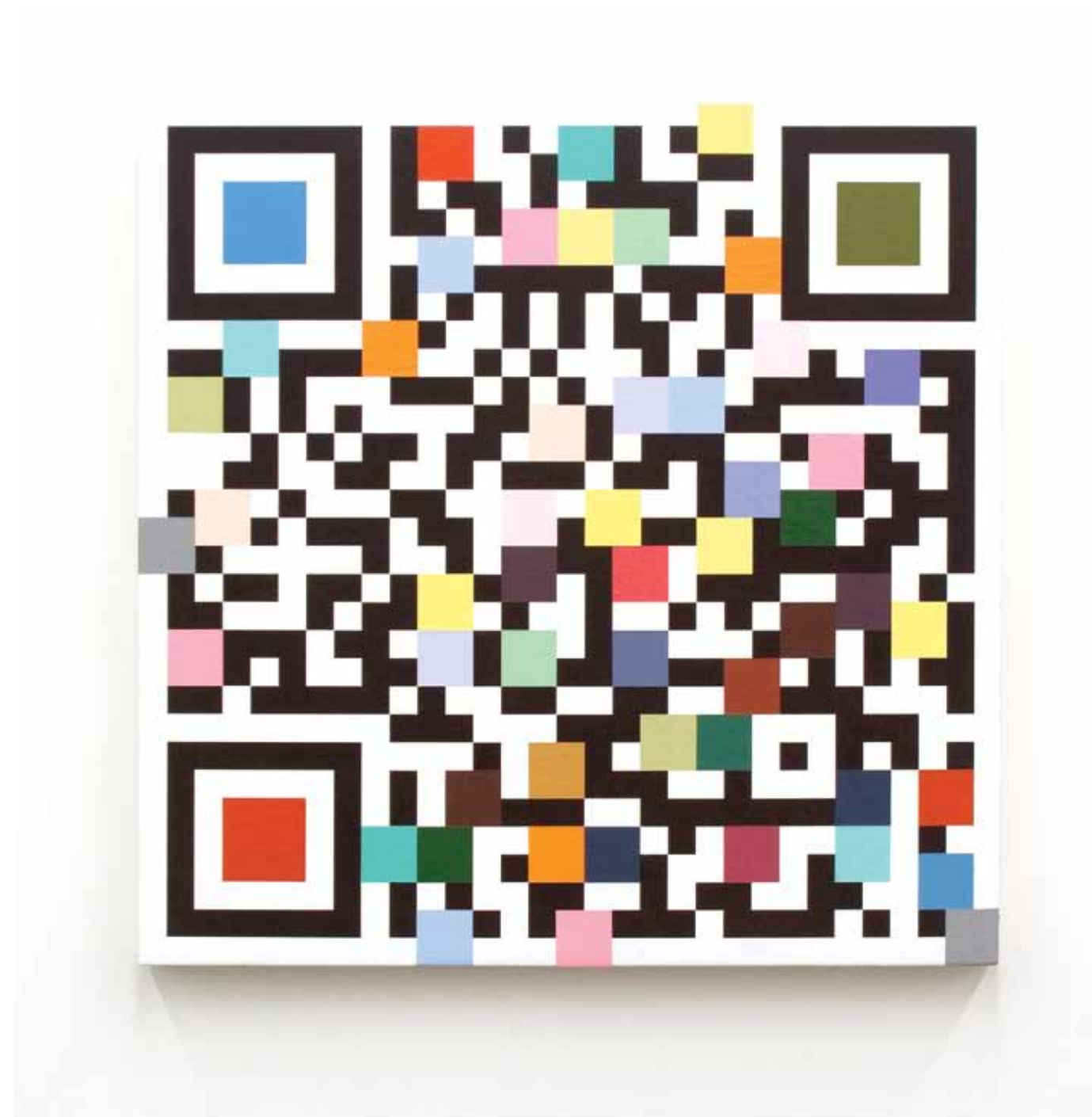
*Winslow Carlton*  
President of the  
Henry Street Settlement

## ARTWORKS





Cory Arcangel, *Hello World*, 2010. CNC bent stainless steel with powdercoating (yellow) and artist software, 30 x 10 x 10 inches, base: 4¼ x 5 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery, New York.



Douglas Coupland, *Hey Boy, Hey Girl, Superstar DJ*, 2012. Acrylic and latex on canvas, 36 x 36 inches. Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto.





David Kennedy Cutler, *Ties That Bind (2)*, 2013. Gesso, archival inkjet on aluminum, acrylic spray paint, archival varnish: 40 x 28½ x 14¾ inches Courtesy the artist and Derek Eller Gallery.



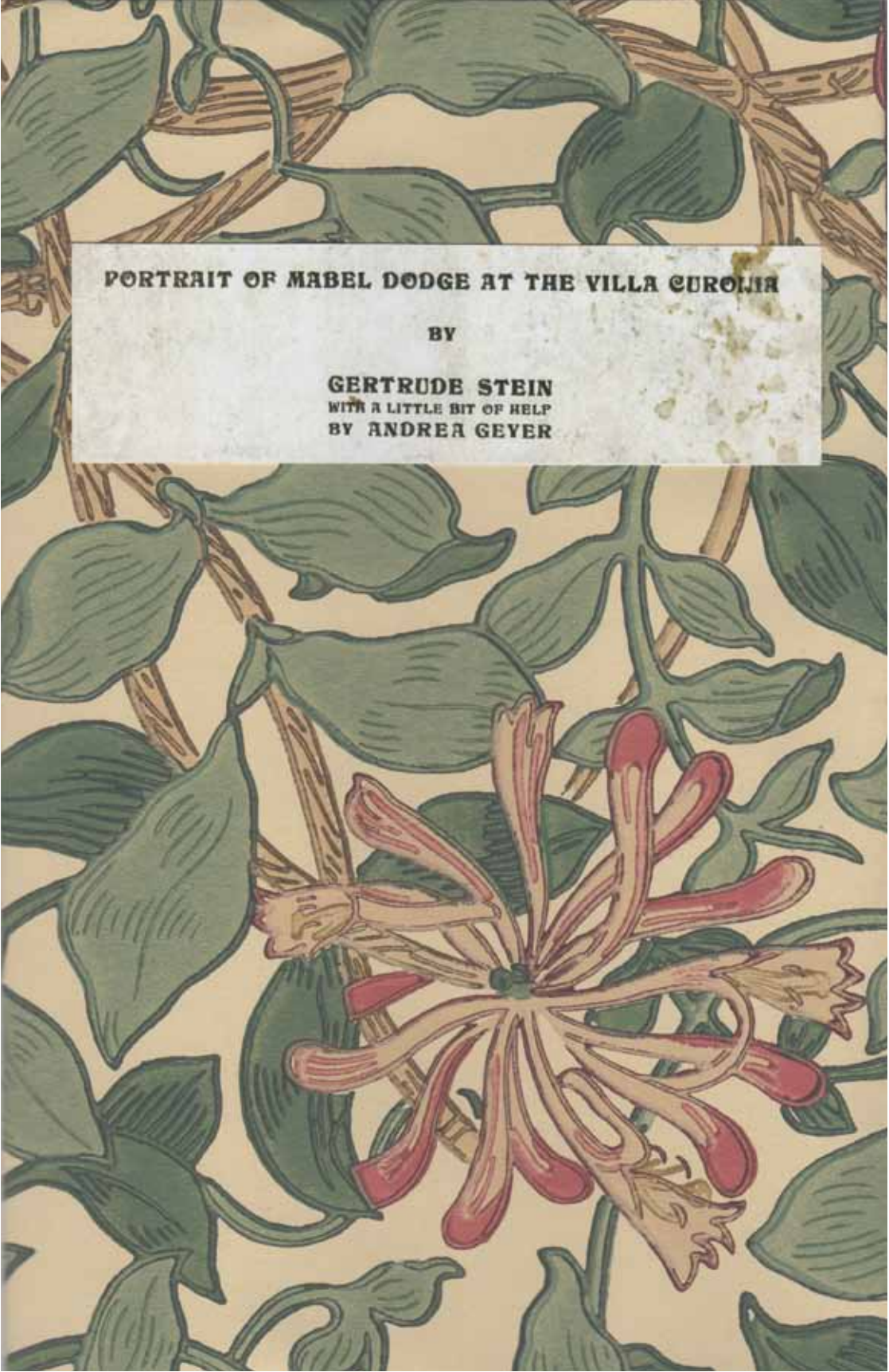
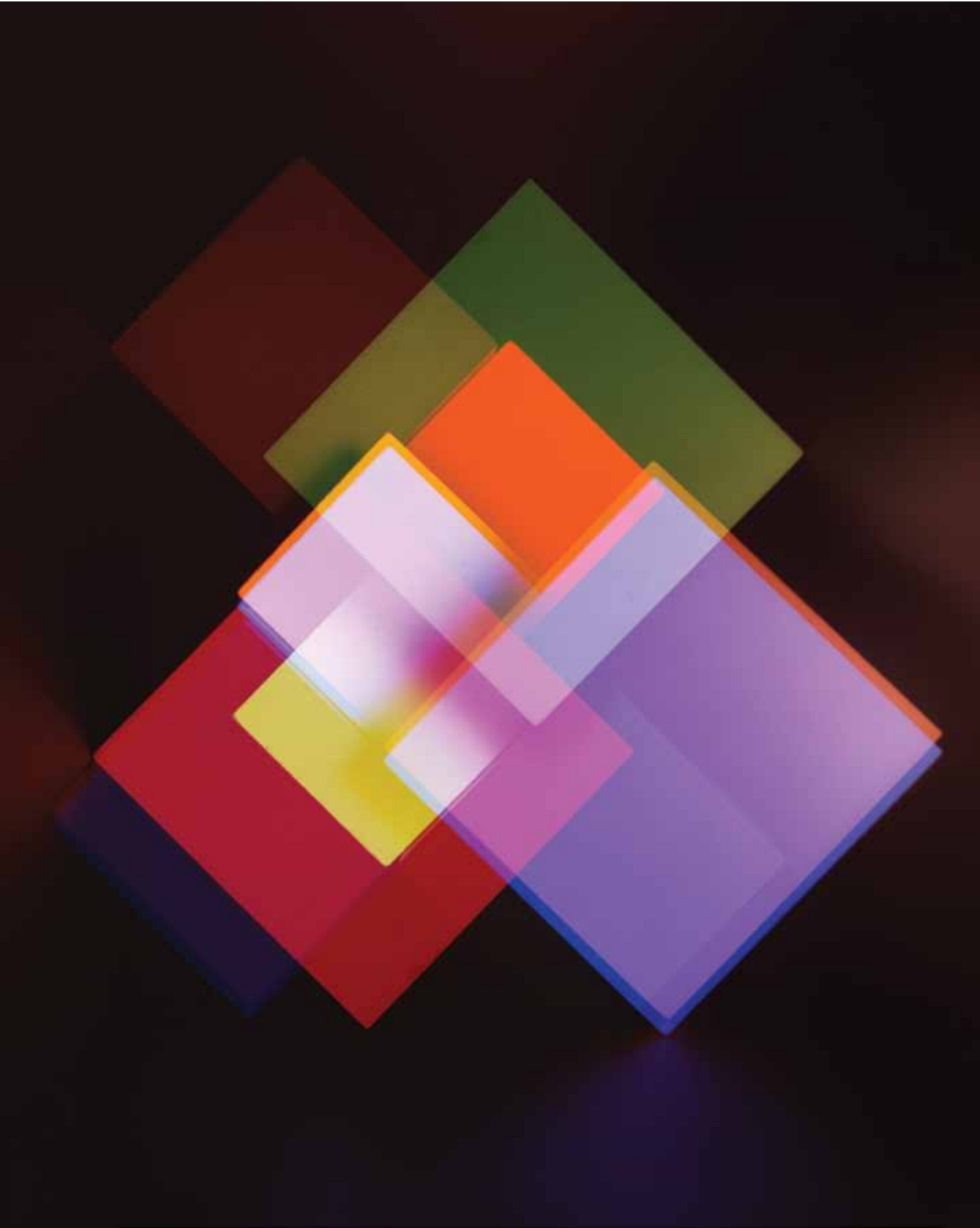
N. Dash, *Commuter. March I*, 2012. Graphite on paper, 20 x 29½ inches. Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York.



N. Dash, *Commuter. March II*, 2012. Graphite on paper, 20 x 22 inches. Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York.



Jessica Eaton, *CFAAL 222*, 2011. Pigment print, 40 x 32 inches. Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.



Andrea Geyer, *Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Cironia by Gertrude Stein with a Little Help by Andrea Geyer*, 2013.

Pamphlets wrapped in historic wallpaper, distributed February 17 and September 25, 2013, 8 ½ x 5 ½ inches. Courtesy the artist.





Andrea Geyer, *Indelible*, 2013.  
9 of 50, Sumi ink on denril, 15 x 20  
inches. Courtesy the artist.

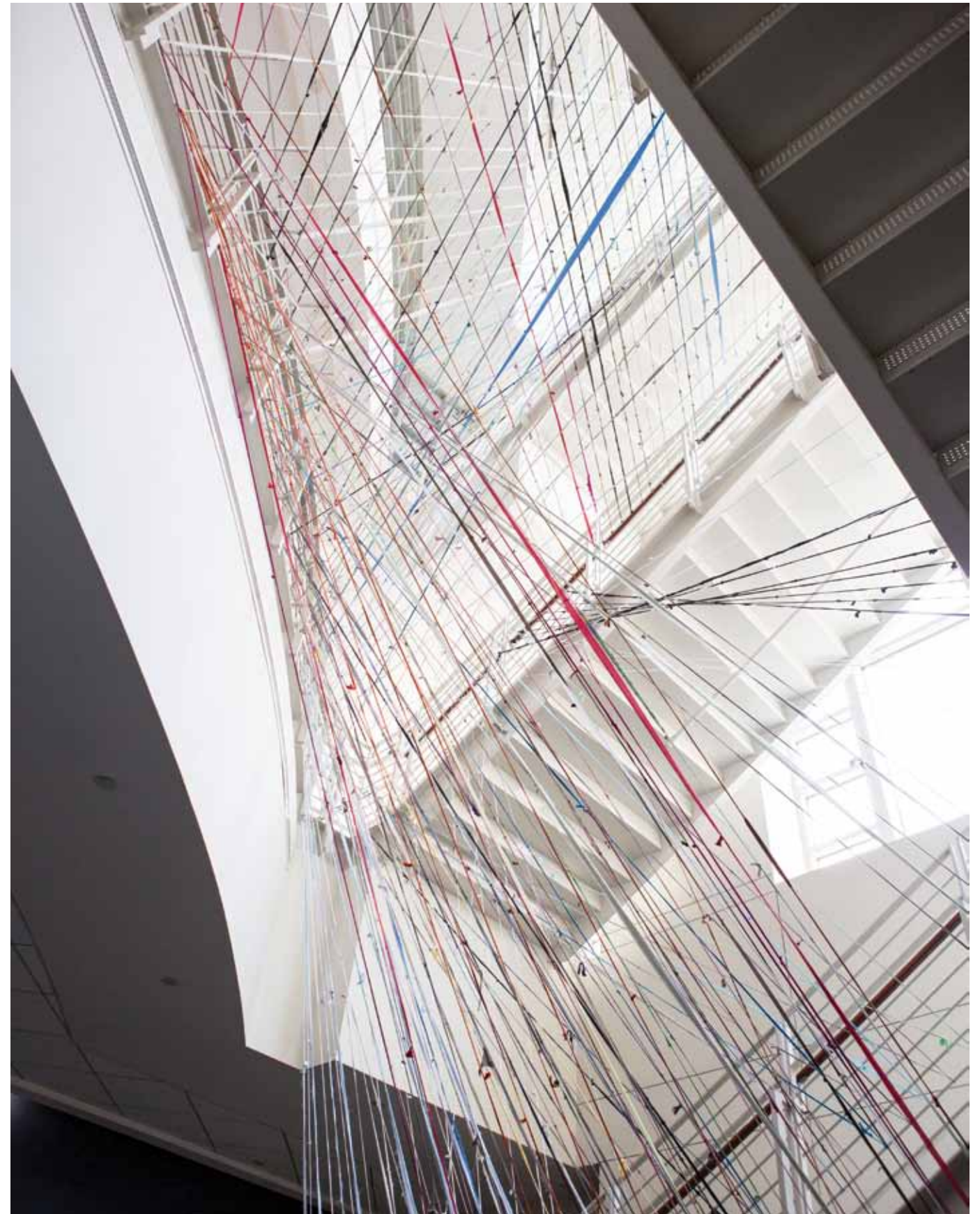
Corin Hewitt, *Recomposed Monochrome*  
(216, 115, 177), 2011. Digital pigment  
print, 34 x 26 inches. Courtesy of the  
artist and Laurel Gitlen, New York.







Ethan Greenbaum, *Veneerist*, 2012.  
Direct to substrate print on two acrylic  
panels, 96 x 48 inches. Courtesy the artist.



Victoria Greising, *Unnavigable Space*,  
2013. Site- specific installation of previ-  
ously used clothing and sheets. Courtesy  
the artist.



Butt Johnson. *The Curse of Knowledge*, 2012-2013. Crayon on incised Dieu Donne cotton paper, 40 x 28 inches. Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery.

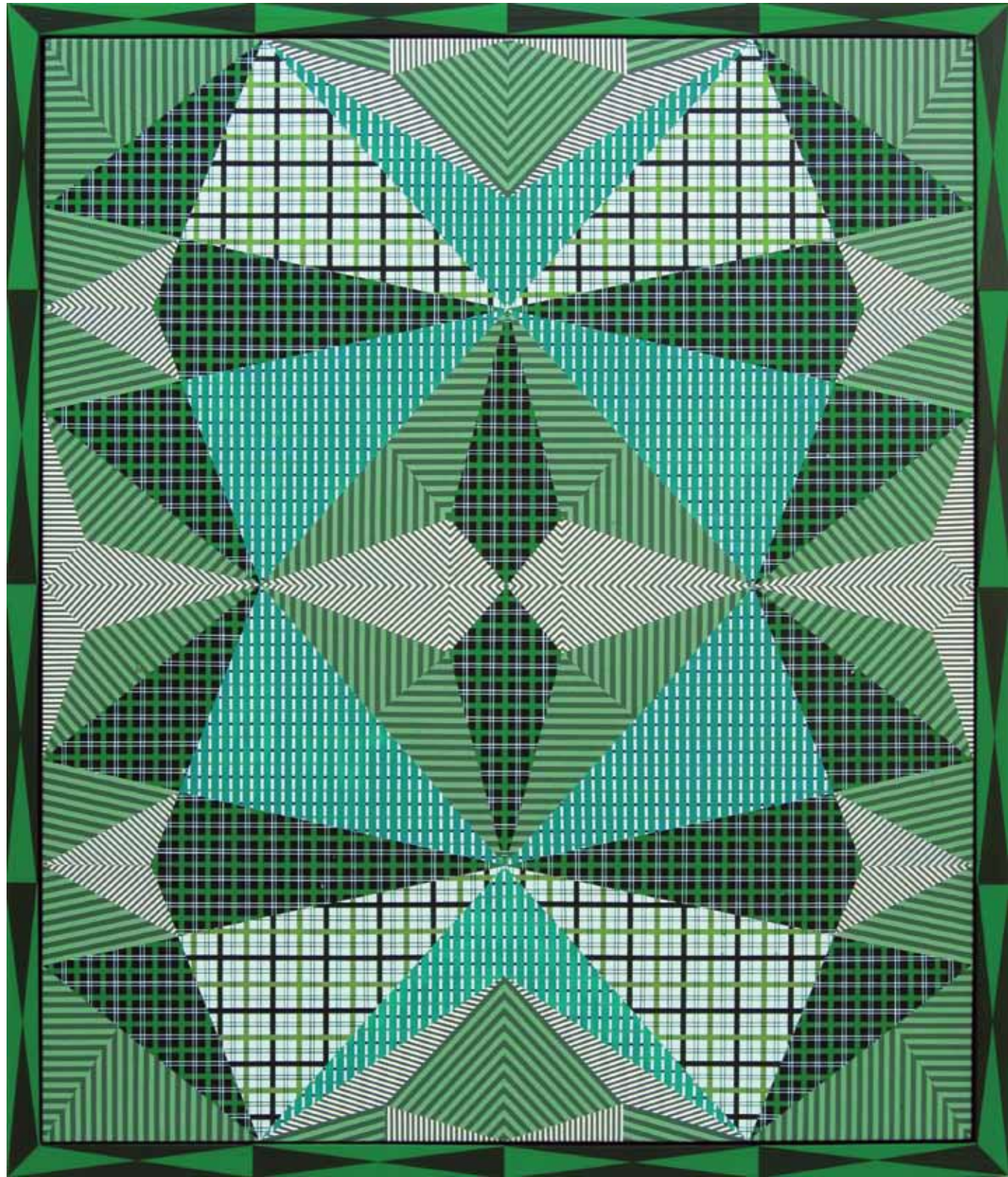


Barbara Kasten, *Construct PC IX*, 1982. Polaroid: 24 x 20 inches. Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery.



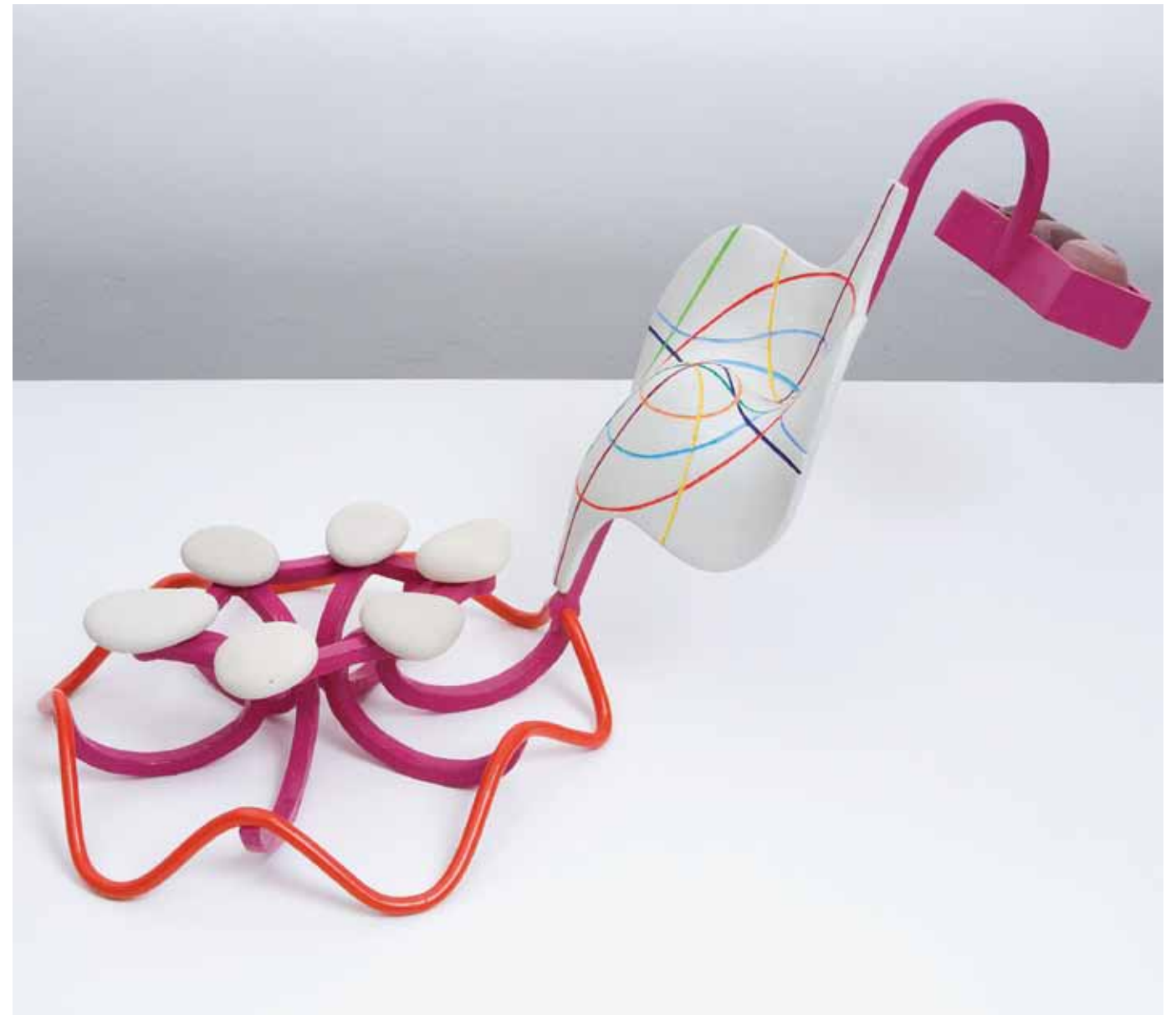






Douglas Melini, *Fragrant Portal*, 2011.  
Acrylic on canvas with hand-painted  
frame, 53 ½ x 45 ½ x 1 ¾ inches. Collection  
Geoffrey Young, Courtesy of Feature Inc.

John Newman, *Collections and  
Corrections with Vermillion*, 2011. Cast  
bronze, stones, wood, Japanese paper,  
wood putty, papier-mâché, acqua resin,  
acrylic and enamel paints, 13 ½ x 27 ½ x  
12 ½ inches. Courtesy the artist and Tibor  
de Nagy Gallery, NY.

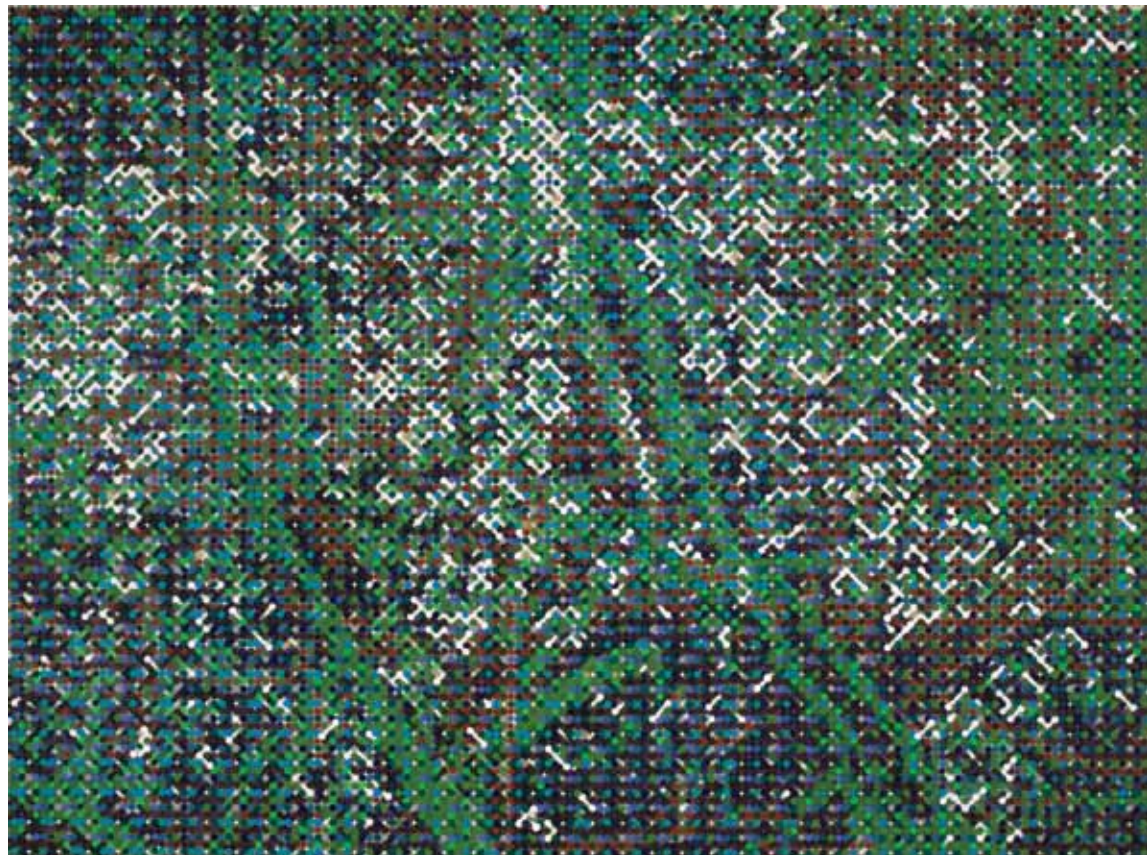






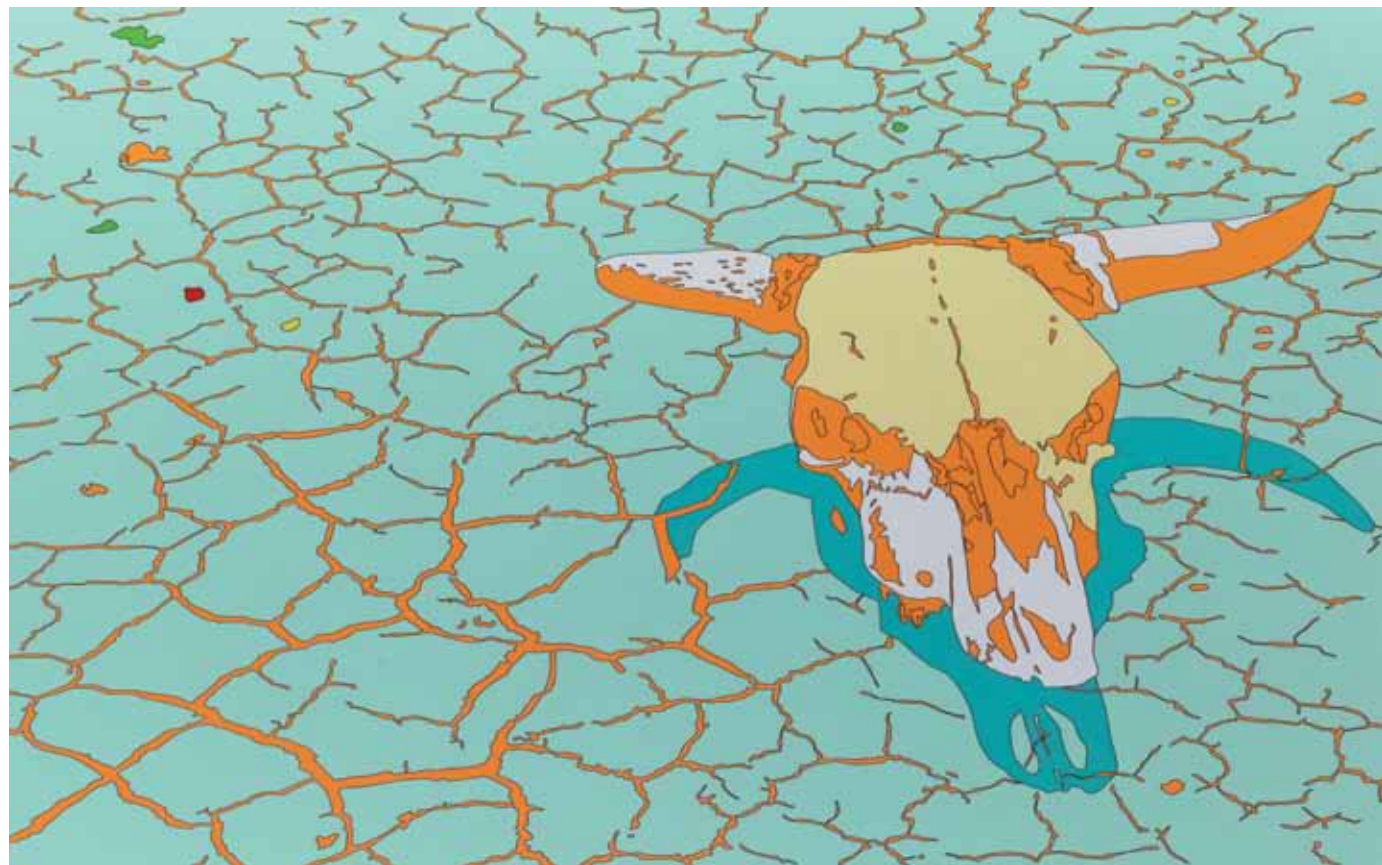
Above: Gabriel Orozco, *Fluttering Flowers*, 2011. Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY.

Below: Gabriel Orozco, *Green Web Drops*, 2011. Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY.



Ellington Robinson, *Spin*, 2011. Acrylic, collage, ink, and oil, 48 x 48 inches. Courtesy the artist and Project 4 Gallery.





Lisa Ruyter, *Arthur Rothstein "Dry and Parched Earth in the Badlands of South Dakota,"* 2009. Acrylic on canvas, 47 x 59 inches. Courtesy the artist and Connersmith.



Travess Smalley, *Composition in Clay #32,* 2013. Framed unique C-Print, 46 x 36 inches. Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures.





Sara VanDerBeek, *Baltimore Dancers  
Nine*, 2012. Digital C-print, 8 x 6 inches.  
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures.

Sara VanDerBeek, *Baltimore Dancers  
Ten*, 2012. Digital C-Print, 8 x 6 inches.  
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures.



# LIST OF WORKS-NY

1. Cory Arcangel

*Racks, Freaks, etc, etc*, 2012

.WAV sound file

Courtesy the artist
2. Cory Arcangel

*Airport*, 2011

Open IEEE 802.11 Wifi Network

Courtesy the artist
3. Tony Cokes

*Evil.12: Fear, Spectra & Fake Emotions*, 2009

Digital Video

Courtesy the artist
4. Douglas Coupland

*Imagine a Car Crash...*, 2011

Acrylic and latex on canvas: 72" x 72"

Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto
5. Douglas Coupland

*Pipe*, 2012

Digital image

Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto
6. David Kennedy Cutler

*Weight Forever*, 2013

Inkjet on aluminum, wood, steel: 15' x 6'

Courtesy the artist and Derek Eller
7. N. Dash

*Commuter. March I*, 2012

Graphite on paper: 20" x 29½"

Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York
8. N. Dash

*Commuter. March II*, 2012

Graphite on paper: 20" x 22"

Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York
9. Michael Delucia

*Glint*, 2012

Enamel and plywood: 96" x 48" x 48"

Courtesy the artist and Eleven Rivington
10. Jessica Eaton

*CFAAL 140*, 2013

Photograph: 40" x 32"

Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures Gallery
11. Franklin Evans

*Bluenudesdissent*, 2013

Site-specific installation

Courtesy the artist

12. Amy Feldman

*4 Likes*, 2012

Acrylic on canvas: 72" x 88"

Courtesy the artist and Blackston Gallery
13. Andrea Geyer

*Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia by Gertrude Stein With a Little Help by Andrea Geyer*, 2013

Pamphlets wrapped in historic wallpaper, distributed February 17th and April 7th: 8½" x 5½"

Courtesy the artist
14. Andrea Geyer

*Indelible*, 2013

9 of 50, Sumi ink on denril: 15" x 20"

Courtesy the artist
15. David Gilbert

*The Giraffe*, 2012

Archival pigment print: 22" x 17"

Courtesy the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery
16. Ethan Greenbaum

*Veneerist*, 2012

Direct to substrate print on two acrylic panels: 96" x 48"

Courtesy the artist
17. Gregor Hildebrandt

*Kalkweißer Pierrot (Pierrot Lunaire, Schönberg)*, 2011

Cassette tape on canvas: 97¼" x 60¼"

Collection of Peter Marino
18. Butt Johnson

*The Curse of Knowledge*, 2012-2013

Crayon on incised Dieu Donne cotton paper: 40" x 28"

Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery
19. John Houck

*Untitled #155, 809,999 combinations of a 2x2 grid, 30 colors*, 2013

Creased archival pigment print: 60" x 40"

Collection of Mr. Greg Silpe
20. John Houck

*1400 Iterations of Black Grid on a White Ground*, 2013

Digital video

Courtesy the artist
21. Barbara Kasten

*Construct PC IX*, 1982

Polaroid: 24" x 20"

Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery

22. Andrew Kuo

*If I Could Redo Tuesday*, 2013

Acrylic and carbon transfer on panel and paper: 51" x 38"

Courtesy the artist and Marlborough Gallery
23. Liz Magic Laser

*The Digital Face*, 2012

Video Installation: 10 minutes

Courtesy the artist
24. Douglas Melini

*Favorable Transformations*, 2012

Acrylic on canvas and wood: 71½" x 45½"

Collection of the late Buddy Bernstein and partner Ross Hanley, Birmingham, MI; courtesy of Feature inc., NY
25. Ulrike Mohr

*Black Holes*, 2012-2013

Carbon

Courtesy the artist
26. Brenna Murphy

*Latticescanr*, 2012

Website

Courtesy the artist
27. John Newman

*Headturners Prop and Kiss Greyed Stripes*, 2008

Cast bronze, acrylic paint on acqua resin, wood putty, Japanese paper, papier-mâche, foamcore, armature wire: 22½" x 8" x 5"

Collection of Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Learsy
28. John Newman

*Collections and Corrections with Vermillion*, 2011

Cast bronze, stones, wood, Japanese paper, wood putty, papier-mâché, acqua resin, acrylic and enamel paints: 13½" x 27½" x 12½"

Courtesy the artist and Tibor de Nagy Gallery, NY
29. Gabriel Orozco

*Red Flower Shadow*, 2011

Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas: 23⅞" x 31½"

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY

30. Gabriel Orozco

*Broken Red Flower*, 2011

Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas: 23⅞" x 31½"

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY
31. Gabriel Orozco

*Invariant Animation*, 2005

Digital Video

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman, NY
32. Rafaël Rozendaal

*http://www.fromthedarkpast.com*, 2009

Website

Courtesy the artist
33. Seher Shah

*Unit Object (court)*, 2012

Graphite and gouache on paper: 22" x 30"

Courtesy the artist
34. Seher Shah

*Unit Object (auto-block)*, 2013

Graphite and gouache on paper: 22" x 30"

Courtesy the artist
35. Travess Smalley

*Composition In Clay XXVI (Blue Teal White)*, 2013

Framed unique C-Print: 40" x 30"

Courtesy the artist
36. Travess Smalley

*Animated Optical Texture Pattern for Alexander Peveret*, 2011

Animated GIF

Courtesy the artist
37. Sara VanDerBeek

*XXIV*, 2013

Plaster: 88" x 8" x 6"

Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures
38. Sara VanDerBeek

*Baltimore Dancers Nine*, 2012

Digital C-print: 8" x 6"

Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures
39. Sara VanDerBeek

*Baltimore Dancers Ten*, 2012

Digital C-Print: 8" x 6"

Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures
1. Cory Arcangel

*Hello World*, 2012

CNC bent stainless steel with powder-coating (yellow) and artist software: 30" x 10" x 10", base: 4¼" x 5"

Courtesy of the artist and Team Gallery, New York
2. Cory Arcangel

*Racks, Freaks, etc, etc*, 2012

.WAV sound file

Courtesy the artist
3. James Bridle

*Rorschmap*, 2013

Website

Courtesy the artist
4. Tony Cokes

*Evil.12: Fear, Spectra & Fake Emotions*, 2009

Digital video

Courtesy the artist
5. Douglas Coupland

*Hey Boy, Hey Girl, Superstar DJ*, 2012

Acrylic and latex on canvas: 36" x 36"

Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto

6. Douglas Coupland

*Pipe*, 2012

Digital image

Courtesy the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto
7. David Kennedy Cutler

*Ties That Bind (2)*, 2013

Gesso, archival inkjet on aluminum, acrylic spray paint, archival varnish: 40" x 28½" x 14¾"

Courtesy the artist and Derek Eller
8. N. Dash

*Commuter. March I*, 2012

Graphite on paper: 20" x 29½"

Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York
9. N. Dash

*Commuter. March II*, 2012

Graphite on paper: 20" x 22"

Courtesy the artist and Untitled, New York
10. Jessica Eaton

*CFAAL 222*, 2013

Pigment Print: 40" x 32"

Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures Gallery
11. Andrea Geyer

*Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia by Gertrude Stein With a Little Help by Andrea Geyer*, 2013

Pamphlets wrapped in historic wallpaper, distributed September 25th: 8½" x 5½"

Courtesy the artist
12. Andrea Geyer

*Indelible*, 2013

9 of 50, Sumi ink on denril: 15" x 20"

Courtesy the artist
13. Ethan Greenbaum

*Veneerist*, 2012

Direct to substrate print on two acrylic panels: 96" x 48"

Courtesy the artist
14. Victoria Greising

*Unnavigable Space*, 2013

Site-specific installation of previously used clothing and sheets

Courtesy the artist
15. Travis Hallenbeck

*2^256*, 2012

Website: 512 x 512 pixels

Courtesy the artist

# LIST OF WORKS-DC



LIST OF WORKS-DC

**16.** Corin Hewitt  
*Recomposed Monochrome*  
(216, 115, 177), 2011  
Digital pigment print: 34" x 26"  
Courtesy of the artist and Laurel Gitlen,  
New York

**17.** John Houck  
*1400 Iterations of Black Grid*  
*on a White Ground*, 2013  
Digital video  
Courtesy the artist

**18.** Butt Johnson  
*The Curse of Knowledge*, 2012-2013  
Crayon on incised Dieu Donne cotton  
paper: 40" x 28"  
Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery

**19.** Barbara Kasten  
*Construct PC IX*, 1982  
Polaroid: 24" x 20"  
Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery

**20.** Andrew Kuo  
*If I Could Redo Tuesday*, 2013  
Acrylic and carbon transfer on  
panel and paper: 51" x 38"  
Courtesy the artist and Marlborough  
Gallery

**21.** Liz Magic Laser  
*The Digital Face*, 2012  
Performance and two-channel video, 10  
minutes, 2012. Featuring Alan Good and  
Cori Kresge as former President George  
H. W. Bush and President Barack Obama.  
Courtesy the artist

**22.** Douglas Melini  
*Fragrant Portal*, 2011  
Acrylic on canvas and wood:  
53½" x 45½" x 1¾"  
Collection Geoffrey Young; courtesy  
of Feature inc., NY

**23.** Brenna Murphy  
*Latticescanr*, 2012  
Website  
Courtesy the artist

**24.** John Newman  
*Collections and Corrections*  
*with Vermillion*, 2011  
Cast bronze, stones, wood, Japanese  
paper, wood putty, papier-mâché,  
acqua resin, acrylic and enamel paints:  
13½" x 27½" x 12½"  
Courtesy the artist and Tibor de Nagy  
Gallery, NY

**25.** Gabriel Orozco  
*Fluttering Flowers*, 2011  
Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas:  
23⅝" x 31½"  
Courtesy the artist and Marian  
Goodman, NY

**26.** Gabriel Orozco  
*Green Web Drops*, 2011  
Pigment ink and acrylic on canvas:  
23⅝" x 31½"  
Courtesy the artist and Marian  
Goodman, NY

**27.** Gabriel Orozco  
*Invariant Animation*, 2005  
Digital video  
Courtesy the artist and Marian  
Goodman, NY

**28.** Ellington Robinson  
*Spin*, 2011  
Acrylic, collage, ink, and oil:  
48" x 48"  
Courtesy the artist and  
Project 4 Gallery

**29.** Rafaël Rozendaal  
*http://www.fromthedarkpast.com*, 2009  
Website  
Courtesy the artist

**30.** Lisa Ruyter  
*Arthur Rothstein “Dry and Parched*  
*Earth in the Badlands of South*  
*Dakota,”* 2009  
Acrylic on canvas: 47" x 59"  
Courtesy the artist and Connersmith

**31.** Travess Smalley  
*Composition in Clay #32*, 2013  
Framed unique C-print: 46" x 33"  
Courtesy the artist and Higher Pictures

**32.** Travess Smalley  
*Animated Optical Texture Pattern*  
*for Alexander Peveret*, 2011  
Animated GIF  
Courtesy the artist

**33.** Sara VanDerBeek  
*XXIV*, 2013  
Wood: 88" x 8" x 6"  
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

**34.** Sara VanDerBeek  
*Baltimore Dancers Nine*, 2012  
Digital C-print: 8" x 6"  
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

**35.** Sara VanDerBeek  
*Baltimore Dancers Ten*, 2012  
Digital C-print: 8" x 6"  
Courtesy the artist and Metro Pictures

**36.** Letha Wilson  
*Double Buffalo Western (Transcriptions*  
*of Walks in Buffalo onto the Wilderness*  
*and Vice Versa)*, 2009  
Digital video  
Courtesy the artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All installation photographs of  
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Lyn Photography © 2013.

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