ANGELA DUFRESNE

Press Pack

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ANGELA DUFRESNE

Angela Dufresne's paintings exuberantly weave imagery, narrative, paint and visceral pleasure. Delivered with absurdity, affection and feminist vibrato, Dufresne presents figurative articulations that feverously emerge out of the paint. Humorous, giddy, vulnerable, non-heroic, perverse, her figures revel in their destabilized relationship to their environments. Deft in techniques of revision, erasure, overlay and addition, Dufresne deploys empathy and humor with equal parts skill and sensitivity in a commitment to painting's ability to present, transgress and reconfigure experience and representation.

Angela Dufresne (b. 1969) was born in Olathe, KS. Solo exhibitions of paintings by Dufresne have been presented at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO; and at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at the State University of New York, New Paltz. Her work has also been featured in exhibitions at MoMAPS1, New York, NY; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME; RISD Museum, Providence, RI; National Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY; Leslie-Lohman Museum, New York, NY; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY; Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH; Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; and Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA, among others. The artist is the recipient of numerous awards including the Civitella Ranieri Fellowship; Guggenheim Fellowship; Siena Art Institute Residency; Yaddo Residency; Purchase Award, National Academy of Arts and Letters; Headlands Center for the Arts Resident and Jerome Foundation Fellowship. Dufresne lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

ANGELA DUFRESNE

BORN 1969, Hartford, CT
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION

1998 MFA | Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

1991 BA | Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 *Angela Dufresne: Angela Dufresne as William E. Jones' Painting Bottom*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Angela Dufresne: Long and Short Shots, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY

2019 *Just My Type: Angela Dufresne*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY, New Paltz, NY

2018 *Angela Dufresne: Making a Scene*, Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO

2016 *Pleasure Tips*, Steven Harvey Gallery, New York, NY

2014 *Let's Stay Together*, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY

2013 *Paintings*, John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY
Cinema Covers, Common Street Arts, Waterbury, ME

2012 *My Only Child and Other Lunacy*, KH Modern Art, Berlin, Germany
Parlors and Pastorals, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Parlors and Pastorals, CRG Gallery, New York, NY
Celluloid Covers, Macalester College Gallery, St Paul, MN

2009 *Enlightenment Covers*, Kinkead Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA
Modern Times 1, Monya Rowe Gallery, NY

2008 *Modern Times 2*, CRG Gallery, NY
Floating Weeds, Galleria Glance, Turin, Italy
Twilight of Mice and Men, Kinkead Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA

2007 *Next: An Invitational Art Fair of Emerging Art: Chicago*, IL, Monya Rowe, NY
New Prints, Aurobora Press, San Francisco, CA

2006 *Code Unknown*, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Angela Dufresne, Hammer Projects, Hammer Museum Los Angeles, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 *OMNISCIENT: Queer Documentation in an Image Culture*, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY

2020 *Transitional Positions*, A Virtual Exhibition Curated by Eric Fischl, Galerie St. Etienne
American Women, The Infinite Journey, La Patinoire Royale - Galerie Valérie Bach, Brussels, Belgium
Visionary New England, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA

2018 Portland Biennial, Portland Museum of Art, Portland ME

2017 *American Genre*, curated by Michelle Grabner, Institute of Contemporary Art at MECA, Maine College of Art, Portland, ME
Stranger than Paradise, curated by Dominique Molon, RISD Museum, Providence, RI
Look Twice, Zurcher Studio, New York, NY
Self Portraiture, Able Baker Gallery, Portland, ME
Found, Curated by Avram Finkelstein, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY
50 by 50 by 50, Temple University 50th Anniversary in Rome, Temple University, Rome
Two in Room, Angela Dufresne and Rosemary Beck, curated by Eric Sutphin, Spring Break Fair, New York, NY

2016 *Mentors*, CFHILL, curated by Rick Herron, Stockholm, Sweden
Living Dangerously, Nicola Tyson and Angela Dufresne, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH
On the Stump, Proto Gallery, curated by Zack Seeger, Hoboken, NJ
Goulding the Lolly, curated by Brian Bellott, Gavin Brown Enterprise, New York, NY
STAGES, curated by Matt Bollinger, Zurcher Galllery, New York, NY
Between You and I, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA

2015 *Drawings*, Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York, NY
Recent Acquisitions, Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI
Suburban: Sixteen Years, Mount Airy Contemporary, Mount Airy, PA
The Uncanny Figure, curated by Lilly Wei, Dorsky Gallery, Long Island City, NY
Working Women Artists, Colby-Sawyer College, New London, NH
Improvised Showboat, New York, NY
Four Walls Slide and Film Club, Fischer Landau Center, Long Island City, NY
Touch, Project 722, Brooklyn, NY
Vermont Studio School Teaching Retrospect, New York, NY

2014 *Wrath of Nature*, Wave Hill Center, New York, NY

Angela Dufresne, Magalie Guerin, The Suburban, Chicago, IL
Queer Fellows, curated by Hunter O'Hanian, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA
Vintage Violence, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
2013 Armory Show, CRG Gallery, New York, NY
Come Like Shadows, curated by David Cohen, Zurcher Studio, New York, NY
Fever Dreams, Geoff Chadsey and Angela Dufresne RISD Painting Dept. Gallery, Providence, RI
Draw Gym, organized by Brian Belott, 247365, New York, NY
Inaugural Group Show, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Angela Dufresne Special Selection, John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY
Being Paul Schraeder, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Negative Joy Video Screening, Roxbury Abbey, Roxbury, NY
Faculty Biennial, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
The Triumph of Human Painting, curated by Kathy Bradford Bull and Ram Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2012
Kemper at the Crossroads, Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO
Red Herring, Fjord Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Beasts of Revelation, DC Moore Gallery, Mew York, NY
Intermural, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, PA
Angela Dufresne and Rico Gatson, Barbara Walters Gallery, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY

2011
Invitational Exhibition, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY
The Question of Drawing, Oqunquit Musem, Oqunquit, ME
ShapeShifters, curated by Laurel Sparks, 443 P A S, New York, NY

2010
*Vivid,*curated by Janet Phelps, Shreoder Ramero Gallery, NY
Painting Coast to Coast, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
In A Violet Distance, curated by David Humphrey, Galerei Zucher, NY

2009
Chained to a Creature of a Different Kingdom, David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL
Next Wave Artists, curated by Dan Cameron, BAM, NY
The Summer Show, CRG Gallery, NY
First Look: An Exhibition of Emerging Artists From Los Angeles Galleries, curated by Simon Watson and Craig Hensala of Scenic, House of Campari, Los Angeles, CA
Forth Estate Editions, Rhode Island School of Design Memorial Hall Gallery, Providence, RI
Painting the Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture, Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA
Master of Reality, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Form and Story: Narration in Recent Painting, University of Richmond Museums, Richmond, VA

2008
I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl, Asia Song Society, New York, NY

The Guys We Would Fuck, curated by Nayland Blake, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Places, Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York, NY
Get up off our Knees, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Pulse New York Art Fair, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Painting the Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Aldrich, CT (traveling exhibition)
Painting The Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture, Yale Gallery for Art and Architecture, New Haven, CT

2007
Imitation of Life, Kinkead Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA
Group Show, curated by Leigh Ledare, Neiman Gallery, Columbia University, New York, NY
The Fluid Field: Abstraction and Reference, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA, curated by Dona Nelson
Horizons, curated by David Humphrey, The Elizabeth Foundation, NY
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Galleria Glance, Turin, Italy
Art Moscow Art Fair, Galleria Glance, Moscow, Russia
Endangered Wasteland, CRG Gallery, New York, NY
*M*A*S*H*, curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud and Amy Smith-Stewart, The Helena, New York, NY

2006
Salon Nouveau, curated by Jasper Sharp, Engholm Engelhorn Galerie, Vienna, Austria
Psycho Ideology, Roebling Hall, New York, NY
Year 06 Art Fair, London, U.K. with Monya Rowe Gallery
Unless, Miller Block, Boston, MA
How I Finally Accepted Fate, curated by Jason Murison, Elizabeth Foundation, New York, NY
Before, Zero Station, Portland, ME

2005
Jack, curated by Geoffrey Young, Roberts + Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
Spectrum, Lelong Gallery, New York
NYFresh Paint, Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY
Something is Somewhere, curated by Anat Ebgi and Monya Rowe, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Le Papier, Gescheidle, Chicago, IL
Radical Vauderville, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA
Greater New York 2005, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, NY

2004
Parakeet Film Salon 2005, Brooklyn, NY
Miracle on Franklin Street, GV/AS, Brooklyn, NY
I've Met Someone Else, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York, NY
Open Zone Video Screening, Ocularis Projects, Brooklyn, NY
2003-04 FAWC Fellows, Cape Cod Museum of Fine Arts, MA

2003
2003-04 FAWC Fellows, Ethan Cohen Gallery, New York, NY

Open Zone Video Screening, Ocularis Projects, Brooklyn, NY
The FAWC Fellows 03/04, The Hudson D. Walker Gallery, Provincetown, MA
Summer's Eve, GV-AS Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Slight of Hand, The Selena Gallery, Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY

2002 *Cooking with Cookie von Mueller*, video screening at Green St. Gallery, Boston, MA
FAWC Fellows, The Provincetown Art Association, Provincetown, MA
2002-03 Fellows Exhibit, The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA
Thought Bubble, Hofstra University, Long Island, NY

2001 *Our Spring Collection*, The Harlem Flophouse, New York, NY
Artpact, The Harlem Flophouse, New York, NY
Collabratory, Gail Gates Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2000 *Grrls*, Untitled Space, New Haven, CT
Angela Dufresne, Off-Ramp Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

1999 Fine Arts Works Center Invitational, Provincetown, MA

1998 *Angela Dufresne*, Temple University Rome, Rome, Italy

1996 *Trace*, with Sono Osato, The Dead Space Gallery, Portland, ME

1995 *The New Degenerate Show*, The Lab, San Francisco, CA
Angela Dufresne, Gallery Rebelloso, Minneapolis, MN
Recent Works, The Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
The Five Jerome Artists, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN

CURATED EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Like*, Rhode Island School of Design Painting Gallery, Providence, RI

2013 *Negative Joy*, Video Screening, Roxbury Abbey, Roxbury, NY

2012 *Negative Joy*, 443 PAS, New York, NY

2010 *F**kheads: Portraiture for the Silicon Enlightenment*, Kinkead Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA

2009 *F**kheads: Portraiture for the Silicon Enlightenment*, SCA Contemporary, Albuquerque, NM

2007 *Open Video Series*, CRG Gallery, NY

2006 *Available (A Still Life Show)*, curated by Angela Dufresne and Monya Rowe, Monya Rowe Gallery, NY

1995-96 *The Dead Space Gallery*, Director, Portland, ME

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2018 Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, Umbria, Italia

2016 Guggenheim Fellow

2015 Faculty Development Grant, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI Resident, The Siena Art Institute, Siena, Italy

2014 Robert Turner Theatrical and Performance Design Project Grant for Teaching, RISD

2013 Yaddo Residency, Saratoga Springs, NY

2011 Purchase Award, National Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

2003 Second Year Fellow, The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA

2002 Fellow, The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA

1997 University Wide Fellowship, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

1996 Teaching Fellowship Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

1993 Resident, Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA

1992 The Jerome Foundation Fellowship, Minneapolis, MN

WRITINGS

2015 "Artist Farewell to Gallerist," *Hyperallergic*
"Irony or Sincerity, Give Me a Third Pill?," *Art 21*

2014 "Gentileschi's Beheading, Two Times," *Painters on Painting*

ACADEMIC POSITIONS & APPOINTMENTS

2017 Faculty, Skowhegan School of Painting, Skowhegan, MA
Chief Critic, Rhode Island School of Design, EHP Rome

Visiting Artist/Lecture, Carnage Mellon, Pittsburgh, PA
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI

2016
Anderson Ranch, Workshop, Snowmass Village, CO
Visiting Artist/Lecture, City College, New York, NY
Summer Workshop Teacher, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA
Visiting Artist/Lecture, FIAR, Fire Island, NY
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Blossom Art, Kent State University, Kent, OH
Visiting Artist Critic, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

2015
Forth Wall Panel, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Drawing Workshop, Chautauqua Artist Residency, Chautauqua NY
Artist in Residence, Siena Art Institute Siena, Italy
Summer Workshop Teacher, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA
Visiting Artist/Lecture, New York Studio School, New York, NY
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Mason Gross Center, Rutgers University, NJ
Visiting Artist/Critic, Vermont Studio School, Johnson, VT
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Yale University, New Haven, CT

2014
Visiting Artist/Lecture, The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Honorary Alumni Lecturer, Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO
Summer Workshop Teacher, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA

2013
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Columbia University, New York, NY
Visiting Artist/Lecture, Brown University, Providence, RI
Visiting Artist/Critic, Vermont Studio School, Johnson, VT
Visiting Artist/Lecture Art Institute Boston, Boston, MA
Visiting Artist/Lecture University of California, Berkeley, CA
Visiting Artist/Lecture Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Visiting Artist/Lecture State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, NY
Visiting Artist/Lecture Montclair State University, NJ

2012
Core Critic, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Assistant Professor, RISD, Providence, RI
Summer Course, Ox-Bow, Saugatuck, MI

2011
Part-time Faculty, Sarah Lawrence College, NY
Visiting Artist/Critic. Boston Museum School, Boston MA
Visiting Artist/Critic, Vermont Studio School, Johnson, VT
Part-time Faculty, Sarah Lawrence College, NY
Mentor, Mass College of Art, MA
Visiting Artist/Critic, Ox-Bow, Saugatuck, MI
Part-time Faculty, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

2009
Visiting Artist Lecturer, SVA, New York, NY
Visiting Artist Lecturer, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA

Visiting Artist Lecturer, Mills College, Oakland, CA

2008 Part-time Faculty, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Mentor, Art Institute of Boston, MA
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Provincetown, MA
Part-time Faculty, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

2007 Visiting Artist Lecturer, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, MA
Part-time Faculty, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

2006 Visiting Artist Lecturer, University of California, Davis, CA
Part-time Faculty, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Bard College, NY
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

2005 Part-time Faculty, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Rhode Island School of Design,Providence, RI
Visiting Artist Lecturer, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

2004 Visiting Artist Lecturer, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018 Yau, John. *"Upending* Conventions with Figurative Painting," *Hyperallergic*, July 22

2017 Zeng, Cindy. "Stranger Than Paradise' explores art through history RISD Museum brings together 14 pieces exploring relationship between man, nature," *The Brown Daily Herald*, September 11
Henry, Joseph. "Queering Queer Abstraction," *The Brooklyn Rail*, October 5
Cotter, Holland. "Art Once Shunned, Now Celebrated in 'Found: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction'" (review), *The New York Times*, August 23
Vartanian, Hrag. "The Messy, DIY Aesthetic of the Spring/Break Art Show," *Hyperallergic*, March 27
Bailey, Amy Louise. "How Feminist Artists Are Staging Their Own Protests With Paint," *Harper's Bazaar*, February 6

2016 Litt, Steven. "Artists Dufresne and Tyson Reimagine the Body in Terrific Show at Cleveland Institute of Art," *Cleveland.com*, November 17
Saltz, Jerry. "Goulding the Lolly at Gavin Brown," (review), *New York Magazine*, July
Wolkoff, Julia. "Goulding the Lolly," *Art In America*, July
Pobric, Pol. "Goulding the Lolly," *Village Voice*, July
Yau, John. "An Ivory Tower Artist: Joe Bradley's Recent Paintings, Sculptures, and Drawings," *Hyperallergic,* April 24

Yau, John. "Angela Dufresne Has a Big Heart," *Hyperallergic*, April 20
Denzer, Laura, "The Other Side at Monya Rowe Gallery," *Painting is Dead*, March 1
Lesser, Casey. "15 New York Group Shows You Need to See This July," *Artsy.net*, June

2015 Yerman, Marcia G. "Wrath—Force of Nature at Wave Hill," *Huffington Post*, September 2

2014 Moyer, Carrie. Review, *Art in America*, November
Yau, John. "What the Heck is Going on in Angela Dufresne's New Paintings?" *Hyperalleric*, September 28
10th Season Launch, *Art Critical*, September 26 (review panel, Nagel, Spears, Storr)
Baker, R.C. "Darkness on the Edge of Downtown," *Village Voice*, June 18
Baker, R.C. "Monya Rowe's "Vintage Violence": Every Year's a Good One for Pain and Death," *Village Voice*, June 18
"Angela Dufresne on Gentileschi's 'Beheading'- Two Times," *Painters on Painting*, January 31

2013 Interview with Bradley Rubenstein, *ArtSlant*, October
Heinrich, Will. "Inaugural Group Exhibition," *New York Observer*, September 30
"What Our Critics Are Anticipating This Fall," *New York Magazine*, August 26
Saltz, Jerry. *Five Art Picks*, *New York Magazine*, September

2012 Schwartz, Howard. "Angela Dufresne's 'Bastard Portraits'," *Examiner.com*, October 18
Halle, Howard. "Ten Painting Shows You Should See," *Time Out New York*, Sept 24
Valdez, Aldrin. "Editor's Choice: Parlors and Pastorals," *ArtSlant*, September 19
Zevitas, Steven. "Twelve Must-See Painting Shows: September 2012," *Huffington Post*, September 10
Johnson, Ken. "Art in Review: Beasts of Revelation," *The New York Times*, July 20
Stopa, Jason. "In Conversation: Nicola Tyson Interviews Angela Dufresne," *New York Arts Magazin*e, February 18
Palin, Adam. "The Art of Business Education," *The Financial Times (U.K.)*, January 30
Kimball, Whitney. "Not For Sale: Angela Dufresne," *New American Paintings*, January 17
Brown, Liz. *Screen Shots*. *Paris Review*

2011 Review, *Dossier Journal*, Fall
Smith, Roberta. "Vivid: Female Currents in Painting," *The New York Times*, January 21

2010 Black, Ezrha Jean. "Angela Dufresne: Enlightenment Covers" (review), *Artillery Magazine*, Vol 5 Issue 1, Sep/Oct
Editors, *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 320 No. 1920, May

2009 Back in the Gay, "Artists Reinterpret Cover's From OUT's Archives," *OUT*, No. 186, August

2008 Smith, Roberta. "Chelsea: Chockablock With Encyclopedic Range," *The New York Times*, November 14

Brooks, Kimberly. "Artist Angela Dufresne on Recreating History," *Huffington Post*, May 24
Daniel, Jayanthi. "Paintings," *New York Sun*, May 5

2007 Newhall, Edith. "Paintings and Sculptures Pick Up Gallery's Vibe," *Philadelphia Inquirer,* October 12
"Horizon," *The New Yorker*, July 23
"Painting," *New York Sun*, July 13
"Secret Languages," *New York Sun*, February 22

2006 Gray, Emma. "L.A. Confidential," *Artnet*, October 12
Brooks, Amara. "Must See Art: 'Angela Dufresne at Hammer Museum Projects,'" *LA Weekly*, August 11
"Angela Dufresne," *Economist.com*, August
Johnson, Ken. "How I Finally Accepted Fate," *The New York Times*, July 14
Gel, Aaron. "Rowe's Gallery," *Elle*, Volume XXI, Number. 5 No. 245, January
Arning, Bill. *New American Paintings*, juried publication, No. 62

2005 "New York Contemporary Art Scene," *Contemporary Art (China),* December
McQuaid, Cate. "Angela Dufresne: Love Streams," *The Boston Globe*, Nov 17
"Critics Picks: Gay and Lesbian, 'Postcards from the Edge,'" *Time Out New York*, October 13
Conner, Justin. "Angela Dufresne: Introducing an artist who wants everyone to live in a masterpiece," *Interview*, September
Cotter, Holland. "Fanciful to Figurative to Wryly Inscrutable," *The New York Times*, July 8
Marshall, Robert "Something is Somewhere," *The New York Press*, Summer Art Guide Volume 18, #21, May 25
McQuaid, Cate. "Examining Our Obsessions," *The Boston Globe*, February 27

2004 Woods, Anne. "Forging New Identities," *Provincetown Banner*, January

2002 Writer's Pick, editors, *Arts Magazine*, October
Finch, Charlie. "From Harlem to MoMA," *Artnet*, January
Desautels, Gerry. "What's Hot, What's Not," *Bay Windows*, January

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Juan, Puerto Rico
Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS
The Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANGELA DUFRESNE

Angela Dufresne as William E. Jones's Painting Bottom

January 23 – February 27, 2021

Opening Reception
Saturday, January 23 from 12 to 6 pm
**By appointment*

M+B is pleased to present our first solo exhibition with Angela Dufresne titled *Angela Dufresne as William E Jones' Painting Bottom*. The exhibition features recent paintings Dufresne made in collaboration with the Los Angeles based artist and writer William E. Jones and will be on view from January 23 through February 27, 2021, with an opening reception on Saturday, January 23 from noon to 6 pm.

Dufresne's paintings are expressions of our lived experiences, "the stuff of the world, in dialogue with media, cultural production, and history as performance." In her first Los Angeles exhibition in nine years, Dufresne will present paintings from an ongoing collaborative series born out of her close friendship and confidence with William E. Jones. This exhibition is a portrait of their conversation, of the unabashedly intellectual and queer bonds between Dufresne and Jones.

This series began well before the Covid crisis (the first works were made in the summer of 2017), but really took shape with the explosion of correspondence between the artists during isolation. What began as an irreverent conversation against moralizing, normalizing social trends turned into a perverse and hilarious space of refuge during the pandemic. Dufresne pounced on Jones' ideas, following the richness and courage of his wit, and the expanse of his knowledge with her instincts and passion.

Dufresne and Jones met in the summer of 2017, where they were both faculty at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. The two immediately sparked an irreverent, theory-laced, film-infused conversation. Early on, Dufresne invited Jones to pose for a portrait in her studio (*William E Jones or "Why should I care about this?"*, 2017). The conversation sparked from there and has since been maintained by dozens of daily text messages, emails, FaceTime calls, and less clandestine forms such as Jones' commissioned essay for Dufresne's Kemper Museum exhibition catalog, *Making a Scene*. Both have since appeared in each other's work in various forms. Their dialog is based on a call and response that is indicative of the decision-making process for all the works included in this exhibition.

Dufresne and Jones' friendship thrives on inappropriate humor, lack of fear around representation and robust urges. Both are devoted fans of *The Fall*, Bill Nelson, Gena Rowlands as muse par excellence,

Ulrike Ottinger, Chantel Ackerman, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Michel Foucault. The artists share a disdain for the normalizing politeness that proliferates over social media and news sources and are critical of this era's aesthetic and moral policing that has significantly rendered most gay culture into a neutered, normalized marketing block. This ongoing body of work is a reminder that artists aren't moralists or nun-priests—sometimes they are whores who love wildly in the mess, the muck and the spooge of the economic terrors of this capitalist hell we're stuck in.

Many of Dufresne's works reference canonical history painting, but upend the narratives that have dominated the genre. The space and figuration in these tableaux vibrate with atomistic energy—constantly in motion, in process, in dynamic transformation. Works such as *Dolly Parton and Lord Byron*, *Stalin's Vagina*, *Neonbible*, *Sea Creature Sex Creature* and *Someone Eating the Head of an Asshole* are created with references generated by Jones and expanded upon by Dufresne. The artists enacted an absurdist process of commissioning works. As the series grew, Jones would send Dufresne written titles, Dufresne inquired when needed regarding Jones' sources and researched his subjects extensively. Dufresne would then generate drawings, after which she and Jones went through an unceremonious process of approving the compositions and later agreed upon when and if the works were complete. As of now there are over 25 works in the series that represent the range of subjects and attitudes Dufresne and Jones have taken on thus far.

Angela Dufresne (b. 1969) was born in Olathe, KS. Solo exhibitions of paintings by Dufresne have been presented at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO; and at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at the State University of New York, New Paltz. Her work has also been featured in exhibitions at MoMAPS1, New York, NY; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA; Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME; RISD Museum, Providence, RI; National Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY; Leslie-Lohman Museum, New York, NY; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY; Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH; Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; and Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA, among others. The artist is the recipient of numerous awards including the Civitella Ranieri Fellowship; Guggenheim Fellowship; Siena Art Institute Residency; Yaddo Residency; Purchase Award, National Academy of Arts and Letters; Headlands Center for the Arts Resident and Jerome Foundation Fellowship. Dufresne lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Location:	**M+B**, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	*Angela Dufresne: Angela Dufresne as William E. Jones' Painting Bottom*
Exhibition Dates:	January 23 – February 27, 2021
Opening Reception:	Saturday, January 23, 2021, 12 – 6 pm by appointment
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, by appointment

For inquiries, please contact info@mbart.com.

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M+B

The Boston Globe

An exploration of ‘the geography of spirit’; a Boston-based crime thriller

By Nina MacLaughlin Globe Correspondent,Updated November 12, 2020, 2:22 p.m

Visionary New England

A gleam of white ghosts itself across a deep blue, stars captured over two hours with a camera placed on artist Caleb Charland’s chest as he lay on his back on the ground. Swaths of the deep mossy green—the forest color that most seems to glow—surround a glimmer of a figure in dusky sunset pink and blue, running or dancing or splashing through the woods in Angela Dufresne’s painting “Child of Nature.” Copper pennies constellate across a prison blanket in Sam Durant’s “Dream Map, Ursa Minor.” Michael Madore’s ink-and-watercolor drawings, bring fairy tales to mind, magic mountains, protector gardens. Candice Lin’s chthonic installations involve burnt sugar, dead mushrooms, dead silkworms, urine, porcelain casts of faces, feet. Such are some of the images that make up “Visionary New England” (MIT), a catalogue accompanying an exhibit by the same name currently on view at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln through March, 2021. The contemporary artists explore and investigate New England’s rich and complicated tradition of “alternative belief systems, world building, and visionary enterprise,” according to Sarah Montross’s thoughtful introduction. The lush reproductions are contextualized by a series of illuminating essays, resulting in a provocative, multidimensional, and in moments, trippy experience of the region’s relationship with seeing beyond.

ANGELA DUFRESNE: MAKING A SCENE

KEMPER MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

FOREWORD

The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art is proud to present *Angela Dufresne: Making a Scene*, a major museum exhibition comprising more than thirty paintings and video works spanning nearly a decade. This exhibition offers an impressive overview of the range of historical painting and film influences in Dufresne's work and illuminates her unique and refreshing methods of reworking and rewriting these histories.

Dufresne's critical eye brings the past into the present by revisiting influential European and American visual culture from the seventeenth century to today. Her mash-ups of historical painting, which she has explored since 1999, and the deep connections to film and cinema that she has pursued since 2002 have played major roles in her practice. The entwined relationship of these genres infuses Dufresne's works and, as she expresses, "expose[s] issues of class, sensuality, neurosis, perversion, fear, [and] love, self-consciously but without inhibition." Dufresne's gathering and recycling of historical narratives are an apt visualization of the need to understand the past, its effects, and the modes in which we engage the present and pursue the future.

The exhibition continues the Kemper Museum's history of supporting the work of mid-career artists through exhibitions, scholarship, and acquisitions. Two significant paintings by Dufresne are part of the Museum's Permanent Collection: *The lost fishing village of Diderot, Boucher, and Lorraine or the movie set of pioneer legacy* (2009; cat 30) was a gift of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, in 2011, and strengthens the national significance of Dufresne's work. In 2014, the Museum acquired *Bocklindastadt with Condos and Transit* (2012; cat. 29) as a gift of the artist in honor of the Kemper Museum's twentieth anniversary—a generous outcome of the Museum's longstanding commitment to its artists. Dufresne's work was also featured in the group exhibition *Be Inspired!* at Kemper at the Crossroads in 2012–13. This catalogue, published in conjunction with *Angela Dufresne: Making a Scene*, includes full-color images of works in the exhibition and new scholarship on Dufresne's work with essays by Erin Dziedzic, the Kemper Museum's director of curatorial affairs; Melissa Ragona, associate professor of visual culture and critical theory at Carnegie Mellon University; and artist, writer, and filmmaker William E. Jones.

Cat. 30. Angela Dufresne, *The lost fishing village of Diderot, Boucher, and Lorraine or the movie set of pioneer legacy*, 2009

The Kemper Museum builds its exhibition program and scholarship from the marriage of two philosophical principles: the care and interpretation of the Permanent Collection, a conceptual bridge between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; and a recognition of and expounding upon a dialogue with the history of the gesture—painted, drawn, captured, and sculptural; monumental and sweeping or concentrated and intimate; dripped, poured, carved, or built. What better way to acknowledge these longstanding visioning principles than with an exhibition of Dufresne's expansive and expressive paintings that are filled with a gestural energy that transcends time and place.

The Kemper Museum is grateful to have had the opportunity to continue to work closely with Angela Dufresne on this major museum exhibition and catalogue and is pleased to unite so many important works in Kansas City, a former home to Dufresne and a crosswalk distance from her alma mater, the Kansas City Art Institute. Her powerful paintings and dynamic video works voice honesty, vision, and personal expression in the immediacy of her narratives and have the unique ability to inform us about ourselves and others through historical reflections delivered in a truly contemporary tone.

Mary Kemper Wolf
Chairman, Board of Trustees, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

ANGELA DUFRESNE
MAKING A SCENE

Erin Dziedzic

I think everybody starts out by seeing a few works of art and wanting to do something like them. You want to understand what you see, what is there, and you try to make a picture out of it. Later you realize that you can't represent reality at all—that what you make represents nothing but itself, and therefore is itself reality. —Gerhard Richter[1]

Practitioners of the arts have for generations been inspired to translate past histories into the present as ways of honoring, memorializing, or criticizing their impact. Their efforts have resulted in an array of explorations in literature, theater, painting, and cinema as modes of addressing cultural influences. Such is the example of Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde's symbolist drama *Salomé* (1891), which (while itself a retelling of a biblical story) sparked centuries' worth of creative adaptations that have evolved the narrative through the guise of multiple lived realities.[2] Rather than representing reality, as Gerhard Richter describes, a picture of something is a form of working through ideas about that something; the reality is ultimately the representation itself. Painter Angela Dufresne filters her influences, ideas, passions, and personal perspective through cinema into painting, arriving at scenes replete with a myriad of references. She endows a painting with a kaleidoscope of marks and imagery that emerge and submerge between foreground and background; she blurs the edges of figures, objects, and action, while sustaining a remarkably succinct

readability in the simultaneous scenes that move around the picture plane. The settings, historical story lines, and array of subjects she employs align with a montage sensibility in which different imagery from carefully selected moments in visual culture coalesce. Dufresne's paintings and videos provide a constant link to motion, motion picture, and scene. They remark on the immediacy of today, engaging with the chaotic, sensual, reflective, and changing aspects of how we got here. By acknowledging points of representation in our past, she critically and openly discusses this era and generation.

Dufresne is a voracious reader, an avid film aficionado, and a researcher, her interests ranging from art and art history to aesthetics, nature, allegory, landscape, society, empathy, performance, queer discourse, and feminism. Lived experience plays a vital role in the development of her imagery, particularly the impact of coming out as gay to her family in suburban Kansas in the 1980s. Additionally, Dufresne has spent time in areas of the world that have influenced her artistic practice—from Rome, where she was chief critic at the Rhode Island School of Design's European Honors Program, to Maine, where she was a 2017 faculty artist at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She has established her own unique cocktail of influences across media and time while finding kinship with painters in varied styles: Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), Catherine Murphy (b. 1946), Carrie Moyer (b. 1960), Alice Neel (1900–1984), and Joan Mitchell (1925–1992). She cultivated the marriage of painting and video in her practice with encouragement from her professors at the Kansas City Art Institute: Canadian interdisciplinary artist Wendy Geller (b. 1957) and longtime Kansas City–based painter Lester Goldman (1942–2005). Dufresne draws on cinema—techniques in theatrical framing and the actor's rigor—to engage the possibility of empathy in painting without sloping into sentimentality. It is precisely this combination of intellect, action, and emotion that makes Dufresne's paintings feel like they are happening right in front of us.

For this exhibition, the Kemper Museum presents a first-time major focus on the myriad ways in which Dufresne's paintings from the past decade, including significant works from The School of Gena Rowlands, her dialogue with the philosophies and structures of film. In a single image Dufresne looks back to bygone histories and is critical of their social impact in the present moment—as she states, "I can't imagine a contemporary witnessing of the present without historical reflection"—and simultaneously stages a platform for considering actions and adaptations in the future.[3] She began reworking or re-scripting history into her paintings in 1999, after visiting the Palace of Versailles in France. During her visit, the overwhelming weight of monarchal authority and the nuances of capitalism—John D. Rockefeller's philanthropy and patronage sustained the restoration necessary to maintain the site—triggered her to further question the given accounts of history and who was dictating them and to open her practice to depicting her own modulation of events.[4] Thus began her nearly two-decades-long critical discourse on re-scripting historical painting: its framework, intentions, and interpretation.

RE-SCRIPTING

Dufresne's experience at Versailles led her to create paintings like *The Bruno S Island Acting School and the S House, Paris, France* (2006; fig. 1), which enacts a "renovation of the Louvre" socially, culturally, and architecturally. By reconfiguring the site of the famous palace turned museum, she creates an "improvised alteration" of the given, perceived, and revised narrative of its history. Envisioned from an aerial perspective, the painting's composition depicts the palace structure, the surrounding Tuileries Gardens, and the Seine River. The monochromatic brick red color of the paint gives the image a sepiatone warmth that is almost photographic. Surface areas where Dufresne has lightly feathered her brushstrokes provide a moving-image quality similar to Gerhard Richter's Buildings and Townscapes from the 1960s that mimic the blurred view of landscape and structure from inside a moving car. This treatment also aligns with Dufresne's title reference to the enigmatic street musician turned lead actor in postwar German director Werner Herzog's films: Bruno Schleinstein (1932–2010), more familiarly known as Bruno S.

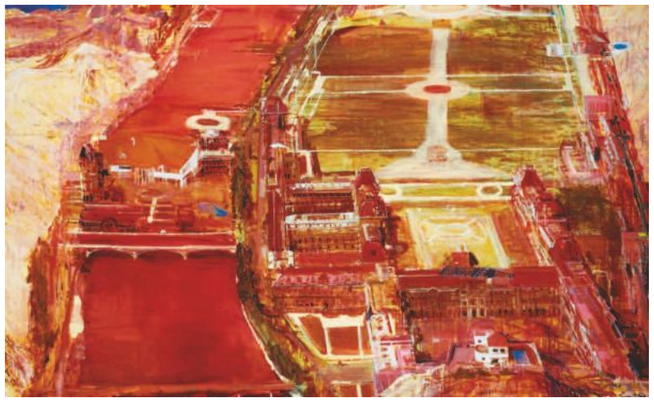


Figure 1. Angela Dufresne, *The Bruno S Island Acting School and the S House, Paris, France*, 2006, oil on canvas, 60 x 108 inches. Collection of Lora B. Hersh, New Jersey

As Dufresne contemplates the way in which societal structures—the space around us—form our viewing experiences of art, she enacts Bruno S. in her title, a figure who had suffered much in his life, as someone we can connect with, empathize with, and

learn from, as we move through the structure of the painting and of our own lives. As students of Bruno S., we are encouraged to look "more freshly and profoundly at the human condition."[5] The way in which Dufresne engages space in her painting supersedes any narrative, as she notes: "The formalities of theatrical framing can provoke empathy or detachment without context. … I want to throw empathy on the table as a possibility for painting, push aside detachment, and see where things can get messy without getting stupid or sentimental."[6] Dufresne's mode of structuring the image alters the architecture and grounds of the Louvre. By titling the work after a troubled yet innovative actor, she denotes the "weaving of man and nature into strange and poetic fables," something Herzog was known for.[7]

One of the most remarkable features of Dufresne's work is her ability to give equitable agency to the setting, figures, and objects in her pictures—none is prioritized over the other. She is making a scene, defined as a place, an incident, representation, sequence, and display of emotion as both active and static, played out in our real lives. Her painted scenes are as complex, emotive, and temporal as would be in a film. In a broader scope, Dufresne's choice to continue within the legacy of painting, an aesthetic phenomenon that forms questions and bonds with film, puts her in the realm of what curator Douglas Fogle describes as "a new generation of descendants" who transcend media in the way critic Howard Halle notes as "a way of organizing the world that represents neither truth nor fiction exclusively but rather a little of both" and "whether an artist uses a brush or a camera to achieve that goal scarcely matters."[8]

Unbound by conventional definitions of media—recalling cinema as a medium of Dufresne's paintings—she also engages in scenes explored through short video works. Dufresne offers the classical themes of historical painting (landscape, genre, figure, still-life) in moving-image scenes illuminated by lyrics and songs from pop culture references. In Dufresne's video *The Man That Got Away, Everywhere All the Time* (2010; cat. 31) she upends the song "The Man That Got Away" sung by Judy Garland in the 1954 movie *A Star is Born*. The only similarity to the scene where Garland performs this number alone in a nightclub is Dufresne's singular presence in her cover of the song. She can even be seen accompanying herself in a couple of the melodies. The only way to really understand the lyrics and the reenactment of something in a different time and place, and to be alone, as the lyrics suggest, is to simply do it yourself. Dufresne deliberately places herself at the center of scenes that are stitched together in which she operates heavy machinery in the woods, walks down a shady path with her dog, cooks without pants in the kitchen, lies in bed reading, wildly rides a lawn mower, and more. She does these prescribed "masculine" things while being completely uninhibited as she's belting out her off-key version of the classic song. Artist Mike Kelley (1954–2012) described his paintings as "willful perversions" of his artistic training as they engage systems of normalcy in order to transgress them.[9] And he wrote about getting beyond the surface of the painting to an underlying truth in his 1995 essay "Goin' Home, Goin' Home." Dufresne's videos also use conventions in their fullest forms (man in nature, the ruler of his home, and man's best friend)—accompanied by "The Man that Got Away"'s lyrics of abandonment—to deliver a message of how unnatural, grotesque, perverse, and eventually humorous these societal structures really are. These videos take time to ingest: the parody of her enacting in landscape scenes upends the course of popular media representations. Historic landscape scenes like those in Europe would often provide a sense of the country's current climate (torqued trees, swells of water on the cusp of destroying farmland may have indicated tumultuous times while cheery fête galantes or outdoor party gatherings for the upper class were whimsical and free from any perceived hardships on the surface) but these were often one-dimensional and from a perspective and position of higher economic viewership. She needed to get in there—into the landscape—in order to reposition and inscribe it as a diffused concept and to move forward with recognizing its allegorical complexity. Also, by inscribing Ira Gershwin's lyrics in "The Man that Got Away" with a visual of a fierce, independent, knowledgeable, strong, and capable lesbian in the landscape and working on the house, Dufresne's "cover" of the song as a video, influenced by the canon of painting becomes a willful perversion of past conventions and an allegory for the revision of these defunct notions for the future.

PAINTING AND FILM

There has always been a cinematic connection in Dufresne's work, as she explains: "Film has turned my eye onto the choreography of life, and thus has reinvigorated figurative painting for me because it actually represents abstractions."[10] Film firstly has its roots in theater, staging, and performance, with early European painting serving as static kin. Allegory painting, with its ability to form narrative, idea, and metaphor, is a logical starting point to analyze Dufresne's attraction to film as her aesthetic investigations align with the long tradition of allegorical art. The late art historian Linda Nochlin noted that this genre was used particularly as a device in

Figure 2. Gustave Courbet, *The Artist's Studio: An Allegory*, 1854–55, oil on canvas, 142 x 235¾ inches. Musée D'Orsay, RF2257

painting to "call forth a construction of meaning based on the ambiguous clues provided by the artist."[11] In line with Nochlin's feminist replay of Gustave Courbet's "interpretive seductions" in *The Artist's Studio: An Allegory* (1854–55; fig. 2), Dufresne's large-scale painting *The Real Allegory of My Artistic and Moral Life* (2014; cat. 23) "offers her own queer feminist challenge to art historical interpretations."[12]

In her cover of Courbet's *The Painter's Studio*, Dufresne references the painter's studio of nineteenth-century Europe; groups of figures inhabit an open space where the main action taking place is an artist painting—a scene as staged theater. Courbet's focal point is a trio of central figures: the artist painting; a nude woman behind him—perhaps a muse but not his subject—looking admiringly at his work; and an attentive young boy, perhaps a metaphor for the future vision of the artist remaining strong in the next generation. Dufresne's composition shows several paintings being made simultaneously and all by nude figures placed throughout the space. Forming a not-so-precise triangular composition, Dufresne references, breaks apart, and challenges the golden ratio, a compositional format used by Renaissance artists for the most accurate and pleasing proportions. She, like Courbet, also alludes to the Italian Renaissance masterwork *The School of Athens* (1509–11; fig. 3) in which Raphael portrayed the school of philosophy as an allegory. Likenesses are ambiguous, and meaning is imbedded in their presence, status, and

interactions. These references to markers of the historical canon are acknowledged and toppled by Dufresne's painting, and she, like Courbet, situates herself at the center of it all.

The central portrait in Dufresne's *The Real Allegory* is of the artist herself. She is nude, and behind her is the only clothed female figure in the room, who is viewing the painting the artist is making of a figure with a dubious look on her face and a dismissive hand gesture. A few half-man, half-animal figures relax, dance, and play music in the space; individuals—some models, some not—lounge about; and a television and a laptop both glow with images of Truman Capote's interview on the Dick Cavett Show from 1980. Her inclusion of Capote's image intentionally creates a direct link to a time period in the 1980s and to a well-known queer film icon. By referencing a famous figure who for many years was forced to repress his queer identity in Hollywood, Dufresne inserts a broader narrative into the allegory of her artistic and moral life. A friend revealed to her that the likeness she chose was from a late interview with Capote—the screenwriter and actor died in 1984, four years later—which was one of the first and only times Capote appeared to express himself as an openly gay man on television. Dufresne's honest depictions of lived experience draw allegory away from the canon of historical portraiture, giving pride of place to those who have been fortunate to shed the cloak of character, and to those who haven't, to ultimately have the chance to play themselves in the theater of life.

Figure 3. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, 1509–11, fresco, 200 x 300 inches. Governorate of Vatican City State–Directorate of the Vatican Museums

Dufresne's figural representations confront the gendered divisions of Courbet's scene. Specific patrons and friends and/or enemies were included in Courbet's painting to offer a sense of societal hierarchy, a function of this style of painting handed down to him from the Renaissance. Dufresne's figures challenge that narrative: "Though the original paintings might have been radical, they are in serious need of invasion from the present … They need to collaborate with us in order for us to perceive them, to observe how they have trained us to see, and conceive of our world."[13] In many cases the figures in Dufresne's painting have both male and female genitals and some are hybrid human and animal figures. By reframing her painter's studio scene as a genderless, speciesless, and open space, through a queer gaze she decompartmentalizes these images so one can feel at any moment comfortable and empowered, like Capote, to be oneself.

While Nochlin's analysis of Courbet's iconic work through a feminist lens proffers a discourse that unpacks the allegory in the scene, Dufresne's "cover" or new version of the historical painting further opens history to social investigations in the present, acknowledging queer space, and including personal overtones. Dufresne notes, "the palimpsest of historic theaters as they articulate into architecture, ideas of nature, or technology, of bodies, is everywhere" and is central to the dialogue among painting, film, and performance in her work.[14] As she scrapes away the façades of historical representation, Dufresne is not afraid to enter into a contemporary dialogue with social history. In fact, she interprets the themes, gestures, and messaging in historical painting through what she calls "covers"—used in the musical sense of new interpretations of known and established standards. From the early twentieth century, stage and film adaptations have revisited famous literary stories and painted depictions such as Wilde's tragedy *Salomé* or his philosophical novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, or John Singer Sargent's late-nineteenth-century painted portrait of Madame X. Such covers reveal our own social histories, and Dufresne expresses great interest in the value of rearticulating visual culture, noting that "all language [written, oral, visual] is piracy, all gestures are mimetic echoes, and yet each embodiment bares autonomous fruits."[15]

THE SCHOOL OF GENA ROWLANDS

Gena Rowlands (b. 1930) is an iconic film actor influential since the mid-twentieth century. Dufresne greatly admires for her abilities to turn our attention away from an inherent value in authoritarian power and give agency to the characters she portrays as projections of her own life, her own social fabric.[16] Like Capote's shedding of character to reveal a truth on television, Rowlands plays characters that transcend film, characters that are as connected to the actor as the actor is to the character.[17] Dufresne is drawn to that and depicts her subjects through this lens of Rowlands—as life lived—as social exchange between people "without paranoia, [without] petty fear, [or] pointless power mongering, ridicule or sexually repressive ideological constrictions."[18]

While seeming utopian, Dufresne—"who defines her personal vision of feminism as being a 'vulnerable, open, porous human being,' and called trans-theory an opportunity to 'stop basing our models on power'"—does not disregard suffering in her work but "redefine[s] the idea of gender away from the industrialist capitalist point of view."[19] In her many paintings of Rowlands in this exhibition, Dufresne presents the real-life allegory of her invention: Dufresne's depictions of her own social fabric—friends, her dog—and Gena's presence to liberate proscribed narratives of who we are and how we live. In French philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin's *Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future*, he ruminates on complex thought that established paradigms and truths that "imprison knowledge" and have created a "cultural imprinting" that inscribes conformism.[20] Dufresne's acknowledgment of her feminist utopia scenes as empathetic, playful, sensual, painful, and open addresses the complexity in her recollections of past imagery and portrays the need to collapse power structures.

Figure 4. John Cassavetes, *A Woman Under the Influence*, 1974, USA, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 155 minutes. Directed by John Cassavetes, produced by Faces Distribution Corporation. Pictured: Gena Rowlands

Dufresne's School of Gena Rowlands includes depictions of Rowlands from pointed films from the 1970s, combined with a range of historical and contemporary figures, scenes, and settings. Rowlands's character Mabel from John Cassavetes's 1974 film *A Woman Under the Influence* (see fig. 4) is a portrayal of the double standard: men and woman can do exactly the same things—drink, and be stressed, aggressive, desperate, brutally honest, and eccentric—yet women are deemed to be "crazy" while men are accepted for their non-conformist actions. In Dufresne's *Gena 4-Wheeling Class in Session* (2016; cat. 12), Mabel is the central figure between two jeeps in a flooded forest with several other figures on and inside the vehicles. We presume from the title that Rowlands is here to instruct her students in a course on four-wheel driving. The figure seated on the bumper of the jeep to the right is a friend of Dufresne's who has the same faraway look on his face as Rowlands. The electric energy flowing through this painting is seen in the figure's hand gestures. Like Mabel's thumbs-ups and widespread fingers gestured throughout *A Woman Under the Influence*, the hands of each of the figures are exaggerated: some are holding cigarettes; the young individual on the bumper precariously grasps an open book; and the small figure without pants in the foreground with Rowlands has hands torqued in tension, hands that don't seem to match their facial features. Perhaps these are the same six children—three of Mabel's and three from a neighbor's family—who never had a chance to have the backyard party Mabel planned because a raging fight broke out between their fathers, whose judgment and perceptions

escalated the scene into complete mayhem. What began in the film as a man's reflection on his wife's unconventional personality revealed his own aggressive behavior. In *Gena 4-Wheeling Class in Session*, Mabel is the allegory; she is out of the house, free from the confines of her suburban oppression and what Morin might refer to as false rationality, and able to express herself as she wishes.[21]

Dufresne references another important Cassavetes film, *Opening Night* (1977; see fig. 5), a portrait of an artist as a middle-aged woman, in which Rowlands plays Broadway actress Myrtle Gordon, who faces her own age and career transitions in her latest play. In Dufresne's *Opening night keynote lecture or why we should all be thinking about portrait as an artist as a middle aged woman* (2017; cat. 3), she employs Rowlands to get to the salient point of acknowledging but not falling victim to our past. The cinematic-scale projected image in Dufresne's muted purple-toned palette (similar to tinted celluloid film), is from a scene where Myrtle is confronted by the younger version of herself that appears throughout the film. Dufresne makes the audience visible through gestural lines that suggest they are as fleeting and ghostly as Myrtle's apparition of her younger self. Dufresne is also present in the painting as Italian stage and film actress Anna Magnani (1908–1973) giving a lecture in front of the projected Rowlands/Myrtle. Dufresne places herself among these strong female media figures attesting to the longevity and appreciation of their artistic careers and conjuring her own "analytic investigations of portraiture across the categories of 'middle-aged' and 'woman,' as Melissa Ragona aptly notes in her essay in this catalogue.[22]

Figure 5. John Cassavetes, *Opening Night*, 1977, USA, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 144 minutes. Directed by John Cassavetes, produced by Faces Distribution Corporation. Pictured: Gena Rowlands, Zohra Lampert

In her recent works, Dufresne applies aqueous washes of paint to great stylistic effect, which collapse ground and draw further attention to the motion, montage, and ultimately the blurred lines between the conventions of painting and cinema. Rowlands and Dufresne at the center—both the real Rowlands/Dufresne and their character personas—indicates the feminist refusal to be bound by a framework like those impressed upon in historical representations. It is imperative to building a social fabric where these cultural imprints, as Morin describes, can be replaced by potentialities like that inscribed by Dufresne in her paintings and video works. Like Rowlands who "give[s] form to the complexity of survival for women" through the lens of her cinematic oeuvre, Dufresne provides ways of engaging and being critical of historical narratives—both in painting and cinema—by queering the canon, imbuing self-representation, and engaging the nuances of contemporary narrative.[23]

Notes

1. Gerhard Richter, *Gerhard Richter: Text: Writings, Interviews and Letters 1961–2007* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), 59.
2. Depictions of Salome like the one by French painter Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) in *The Apparition* (ca. 1876), showing her sensual dance for Herod and winning the head of John the Baptist, no doubt influenced Wilde's play. A version of this work is also referenced in William E. Jones's essay in this catalogue (fig. 22); Dufresne makes a painting of Jones as the severed head of John the Baptist (fig. 17). Wilde's original play was written in French in 1891, published in French in 1893, and translated into English in 1894 by Lord Alfred Douglas. A silent film directed by Charles Bryant debuted in 1923 and is thought to be one of the first art films to appear in the United States. In his 1988 film *Salome's Last Dance*, British film director Ken Russell combined Wilde's play structure with a new framing narrative in which all of the characters were either prostitutes or their clients. Many more adaptations present a range of artistic, social, and cultural perspectives.
3. Angela Dufresne, email with the author, April 11, 2018.
4. Kimberly Brooks, "Artist Angela Dufresne on Recreating History," *Huffington Post: The Blog*, June 1, 2008, updated December 6, 2017. www.huffingtonpost.com/kimberly-brooks/artist-angela-dufresne-on_b_103272.html, accessed April 14, 2018.
5. Richard Eder, "A New Visionary in German Films," *New York Times*, July 10, 1977.
6. Bradley Rubenstein, "Precarious Space: Angela Dufresne," *Culture Catch*, February 27, 2014. www.culturecatch.com/art/angela-dufresne-interview, accessed April 28, 2018.
7. Richard Eder, "A New Visionary in German Films," *New York Times*, July 10, 1977.
8. Douglas Fogle, "The Trouble with Painting," in *Painting at the Edge of the World* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2001), 18.
9. Mike Kelley, "Goin' Home, Goin' Home," in *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 79.
10. Dufresne, email with the author, April 11, 2018.
11. Linda Nochlin, "Introduction," in *Courbet* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 6.
12. Nochlin, "Introduction," 13.
13. Dufresne, email with the author, April 11, 2018.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Jennifer Samet, "'Vulnerability Could Be the New Stoic': Paintings by Allison Schulnik," *Hyperallergic*, October 1, 2016. Samet references her interview with Dufresne, "Beer with a Painter: Angela Dufresne," *Hyperallergic*, December 5, 2015.
20. Edgar Morin, "Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future," trans. Nidra Poller (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1999), 9–10.
21. Morin, "Seven Complex Lessons," 18.
22. Melissa Ragona, "Blink, Cut, Surrender: Angela Dufresne's Poltergeist," 27.
23. Dufresne, email with the author, April 11, 2018.

BLINK, CUT, SURRENDER: ANGELA DUFRESNE'S POLTERGEIST

Melissa Ragona

Look at that lamp [across the room]. … Now look at me. Look back at the lamp. Now look at me. Do you see what you did? [the second time]. You blinked. Those are cuts. After the first time you know that there's no reason to pan from me to the lamp, because you know what's in between. Your mind cuts [the scene]. You behold the lamp. And you behold me. —John Huston[1]

SCAPES/SKINS

"They're here." —Carol Anne in *Poltergeist*[2]

Electrical currents stream across the landscape paintings of Angela Dufresne—each work is charged with phantom energy, the kind that conflates objects and people, as well as virtual and natural worlds. The kind in which static, normally well-behaved glasses of milk explode in one's hand. The kind in which a chair, of its own volition, begins dragging itself, loudly, across the floor. Dufresne borrows from influences as disparate as classical pastoral scapes, like those of Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), John Constable (1776–1837), Jean-François Millet (1814–1875), and Thomas Cole (1801–1848); the operatic, mythical paintings of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770); the American regional works of Grant Wood (1891–1942) and Reginald Marsh (1898–1954); the sprawling, dysfunctional, class-determined rural wastelands of film director Terrence Malick (b. 1943); the consumer-laden sets of Jean-Luc Godard (b. 1930); and

especially, the psychological terra of John Cassavetes's filmic worlds (1929–1989). Her range is sweeping and while her earlier paintings focused on a more singular, satirical twist or "cover" of one of these masters, such as *Filed Egg-Occupy Bierstadt* (2011), in her most recent works she performs complex mash-ups within one

Figure 6. Giambattista Tiepolo, *The Banquet of Cleopatra*, 1743–44, oil on canvas, 98½ x 140½ inches. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 1933 (103-4)

sprawling work, encouraging the viewer to travel across its expansive surface in order to comprehend the phantasmagoric dimensions of her reach. For instance, in *Lessons on the Canonical* (2016; cat. 14) she brings together references from Tiepolo's painting *The Banquet of Cleopatra* (1743-44; fig. 6) and Giovanni Battista Piranesi's engraving *Veduta del Ponte Salario (View of the Salario Bridge)* (1754–60), together with Cassavetes' film *Faces* (1968). Dufresne uses the lavish settings of both Tiepolo and Piranesi in order to stage a grand moment of imaginary gender trouble—invoking the former loggia or open air architectural structures used by Tiepolo, and the dramatic Roman ruins represented by Piranesi, characterized by sweeping arches, glorious, but decaying bridges, and sensuous bodies of water. Addressing the power struggles between men and women, both works give the upper hand to the female protagonists. In Tiepolo's version, Cleopatra trumps Anthony in a competition for the most lavish dinner by dropping a pearl that

dissolves in a glass of wine to be offered up to guests (Dufresne references this meal-as-tournament directly in *Banquet Concerto with Head* [2012]). Dufresne's Gena Rowlands upstages her director and husband, Cassavetes, as he struggles in the far-right corner of the painting, seemingly overpowered by an enormous, aggressive dog. *Faces* depicts a deteriorating relationship between a middle-aged couple played by the actors John Marley and Lynn Carlin. Rowlands is cast as an aging call girl whom Marley, at first, attempts to rule. However, because of her open, free, and unpredictable behavior, she is the one who finally wields the most power. Libidinal electricity released by Rowlands and Seymour Cassel (who plays the young, hunky swinger, Chet), poses a threat to, as well as an escape hatch from, conventional heteronormative marriage. Likewise, in Dufresne's lush fresco-like work, eroticism has no boundaries. Naked men embrace each other underwater; a nude, gender unspecific couple jumps with abandon off the grand arches into the water below; seemingly hundreds of half-clothed or fully naked men, women, children, and hybrid beasts romp with abandon in and out of each other's sensual circuits. Dufresne's royal Rowlands landscape—proudly announced in bold print on the façade of the stone arch of the bridge—could be anywhere, chimerical as it is: half psychedelic, cinematic dream-scape; half grandiose, Roman architectonics.

As W. J. T. Mitchell has made so powerfully clear, landscape is a verb, not a noun.[3] Closer to the way cinema functions than photography, painting, or printmaking—landscape is constantly in motion, in process, in dynamic transformation.[4] Equipped with this knowledge, Dufresne makes her scapes shimmer and move—incessantly. It is only in the structure of real-time viewing, or with each blink of the eye—which, for most of us, literally occurs every 300 to 400 million seconds—that allows one to keep up with the vertigo of her topography. One cannot take in all the action at once—thus the "long shot" must be coupled with numerous close-ups, pans across the canvas, jump cuts, wipes. Viewers, to borrow from John Huston, are put in the position of the eye, as if Dufresne's filmic painting is unwinding behind one's eyes, as if the eyes themselves are projecting the scene.[5] Little gems suddenly shoot to the surface: a tiny figure walking a dog behind a pop-up movie screen or billboard, illustrating an extravagant Italian villa like those featured in Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard* (1963). Or, the sudden appearance of a James Ensor–like mask, with scary horns and a grimace, tucked away in between the otherwise seemingly happy, innocent faces of children. The demonic is laced throughout the sugar of light and gaiety, of color and sound, of play and prance. Erotic body parts, like so many

prosthetic devices, pepper the canvas: fiery nipples; flying phalluses; muscular buttocks; exposed, sometimes non-gender specific genitals; beckoning eyes and hands. But, we glimpse them as if through a zoetrope, flickering past us in phases of motion as we travel across the projection screen of Dufresne's quixotic mind.

Like Cassevetes, Dufresne does not distinguish between "movie" or "theater" or "natural" setting. In his film *Opening Night* (1977), Rowlands's character Myrtle Gordon, a major actress in the field, has her hair sprayed with a water bottle before entering the theater set, so that the illusion of being caught in the rain can be represented. After the faux "rain" and the play ends, a major "real" thunderstorm is raging outside—one Gordon must negotiate, as she struggles through her drenched crowd of fans, to enter her car. In transit, a young adoring but troubled fan grabs Gordon and repeatedly, obsessively proclaims her love. Shortly after, this troubled fan-girl is tragically struck by a car that has spun out of control in the storm. Gordon witnesses the accident and is devastated. A mirroring of storms—inside and out—points to Gordon's psychological state. She turns to hydrating herself with alcohol in order to drown out the pain of what she sees as her inevitable demise as an aging actress in a theater world that values youth. Cassavetes's hall-of-mirrors technique—in which he conflates acting and real life, as well as dramatic sets with banal, everyday street scenes (shooting from-the-hip, directly on site)—is a method Dufresne also employs in her paintings.

In her *No Longer the Hazardous Forest* (2018; cat. 18), we see multiple Gena Rowlands figures positioned in a forest that is bound together by streaks of seeming poltergeist light, racing down the top of the painting in charged, red, vertical, transparent panels. Cast as a baby nurse, Rowlands appears to the left, pushing an old-fashioned wooden wheelchair, perhaps the kind used in World War I, carrying a young boy afflicted by influenza (his hands are depicted as lobster-like claws, incapacitated, unable to "grasp" what is happening to him). Another nurse, armed with, perhaps, sexual toys (a dildo-like object hanging from her belt) rather than medical tools, looks voraciously, longingly at the seeming already-liberated polyvalent Rowlands—leaning seductively against a birch—topless, sporting a white mini skirt, flip flops, and a lit cigarette in her left hand. As Dufresne explains, this painting refers to three historical moments: one, in which the infamous Spanish Influenza of 1918 was attributed erroneously to Spain, when it actually made its first deadly appearance in Fort Riley, Kansas. The second period invoked here is from 1996 to 2006, when the forested site around the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, was considered "unsafe," since it was unkempt and unattended for many years for lack of state funds. It quickly became a popular gay cruising site, since the overgrown forest could conceal outdoor trysts. Dufresne's sardonic reference to its current state of being "no longer the hazardous forest" indicates its third, radically pruned and surveilled condition—it is now the proud site of many public LGBT celebrations, as well as other municipal holidays and events.

Figure 7. William Blinn, *A Question of Love*, 1978, USA, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 100 minutes. Directed by Jerry Thorpe, produced by Blinn/Thorpe Productions and Viacom Productions. Pictured: Gena Rowlands, Jane Alexander

The presence of Rowlands as a queer nurse in *No Longer the Hazardous Forest* also reminds us of her stellar role in the television drama *A Question of Love* (1978; see fig. 7) in which Linda Ray (Rowlands's role as a nurse) falls in love with Barbara, played by Jane Alexander, and must wage a custody battle in a homophobic justice system.[6] In step with all of this film and municipal history, Dufresne dramatizes the "no longer hazardous" queer woman in a graphic display of cunnilingus—a kind of inverted *Origin of the World* (à la Gustave Courbet), legs shooting straight up, rigid and open to receive the gift in process.[7] This "act" divides the canvas—similar to how the nude standing in front of a painted landscape in Courbet's *The Artist's Studio: An Allegory* (1854–55; fig. 2) divides the presence of and emphasizes the tension between upper and lower classes. But, here, Dufresne's divisions show the permeable worlds of cinematic and painterly representations, allowing movie time to dream into and transform "real" time.[8] A kind of temporal suspension occurs here, a sense of floating (literally underlined by the plethora of kayaks, canoes, and rafts) where bodies and trees, water and land, animals and humans become erotic equivalences—a symbiotic, charged landscape of skin, bark, fur, water, and air.

OBJECTS/CROWDS

> "Being comes inside a thing and being goes outside it. A thing is nothing other than the *difference* between being-inside [*l'être entré*] and being-outside [*l'être sorti*]." —Tristan Garcia[9]

Dufresne's paintings are filled with moments of objects and people intersecting and morphing so that their edges, their surfaces, their volumes, their densities, their

positions are constantly being reevaluated. Cars, dogs, chairs, boats, fishing rods, fish, movie screens, lights, musical instruments, food, books, and text merge with humans—commenting on each other in both sardonic and cognitive ways. For instance, when two figures are juxtaposed, such as in *Girl and Dog Courbet* (2011; cat. 24)—Dufresne's "cover" of Courbet's well known *Self-Portrait with a Black Dog* (1844)—the objects, human and dog bodies, simply become extensions of one another. Dufresne represents herself here, with her right arm disappearing into her dog Larry's torso. However, as her right leg is painted to appear as though it is passing, seamlessly, like a temporary merging of atoms through Larry's body—it actually comes out the other end of his dog-body as another kind of entity, dark, abnormally thin, alien-like as if it might not work as a thing to stand on anymore. This is an ecstatic, erotic painting in which all orifices share a charged emphasis: Dufresne's lips, both vaginal and oral, are fiery red, matching the redness of Larry's tongue and nether regions. The briar stick and book—that most viewers of Courbet's work have analyzed as romantic symbols of himself as an artist/dandy, a man, alone with his dog hiking, reading, dreaming—here begin to take on overtones both humorous (she has better things to do than read this book) and sadistic-playful (the stick seems to be more of a riding crop, rife with possibilities).

Figure 8. Carolee Schneemann, *Meat Joy*, 1964, chromo-genic print, 5 x 7 inches. Courtesy of Carolee Schneemann, Galerie Lelong & Co., and PPOW, New York

When we move from the portraits to the numerous crowd scenes that Dufresne depicts, objects begin to work almost in holographic ways. Image-Objects come in and out of view, seemingly produced from the interference patterns of coded light, rather than the architecture of light and shadow produced by oil paint. Objects have a secret life in a Dufresne work—often out of sight, lost in the crowd, until they are ready to emerge out of hiding, present-at-hand—like they do in *Carolee Schneemann Reading Club* (2017; cat. 10).[10] Indeed, the sensual mayhem depicted in this particular work pays homage to Schneemann's own earlier, signature performance-based work *Meat Joy* (1964; fig. 8), which also includes disparate objects that sometimes elude a viewer's immediate comprehension, passed around or used as active surface: raw fish, chicken, sausages, wet paint, transparent plastic, ropes, brushes, paper scraps. Dufresne's *Reading Club* includes reading with the body—hands on breasts, hands submerged inside other bodies, open-mouthed dogs ready to indulge. One might spot at least one "club" book upon first glance, laying on the ground, marked by a bright, red heart-shape and the name Schneemann written on its cover. But our eyes are constantly drawn upward, toward the blinding yellow light that binds everyone to one another—in particular, contemporary artists Brian Tolle, Nicola Tyson, and curator Bradford Nordeen. They seem to tremble in an orgiastic-like clump in which it is difficult to distinguish where one's leg begins and ends, or which arm belongs to which figure, or whose hands are touching and/or entering whom. Once this glorious entanglement is traced obsessively by the viewer (it brings such pleasure, one is drawn to repeat, repeat), there is a temporary calm in the eye of the paint storm—we see books carpeting the floor, half open, maybe a blue post-it note stuck to one, another titled *New Paltz* (Schneemann's home for many years), and unidentifiable others splayed open underneath the paws of multiple dogs. Other objects, formerly submerged, come into the light: a beer can, a little red flag, a chair, a birthday cake or candle-lantern, a tiny little cyclops.

Objects are also writ large in a Dufresne painting, such as the looming movie screens in *Opening night keynote lecture or why we should all be thinking about portrait as an artist as a middle aged woman* (2017; cat. 3), or the two enormous jeeps that flank Gena Rowlands and a child in *Gena 4-Wheeling Class in Session* (2016; cat. 12). In these instances, the screens function on multiple levels. First, as colossal structures that command a tremendous amount of authority, often determining the structure of the painting, as well as the gaze of the viewer, they command attention because of their scale as spectacle (films and cars belong equally to a society of the spectacle).[11] But, they also act as dictatorial hosts for humans. By giving Rowlands a *4-Wheeling Class* entourage in which to stage herself as mother, nurse, lesbian, actress, and general badass, the strength of her roles is amplified or tricked-out a hundred-fold. Likewise, in *Opening night keynote lecture*, Dufresne represents herself, the artist, as Anna Magnani giving a lecture in front of a massive cinematic projection of Rowlands in *Opening Night*, thus tripling her critical presence, highlighting her own analytic investigations of portraiture across the categories of "middle-aged" and "woman."[12]

However, as we have already seen, in Dufresne's painterly worlds, size doesn't always matter. An object's power of interpellation—how an object calls us out, names

Figure 9. Angela Dufresne, *Jaws the Prequel*, 2012, oil on canvas, 54 x 108 inches

us, shapes us—is even more important for Dufresne; it is what she meticulously maps out in much of her work. As Gertrude Stein famously quipped: "I am I because my little dog knows me." In a Dufresne work, objects are more than just transitional or relational devices for human subjects. They comment on and inform being itself—and shed light on their own autonomous existence within ontology. Dufresne underscores this: "I want to give objects a dignity beyond simply how 'we see them.'"[13]

On the flip side, crowds of people often become composite objects. Dufresne builds one object, much like a primitive computer processor might, to include several other of the same objects. The effect is highly abstract, but still includes the structures of those original objects, in this case, people. For example, in *Jaws the Prequel* (2012; fig. 9), Dufresne enacts a complex reversal of Steven Spielberg's horror-thriller film, *Jaws* (1975). Her approach is three-pronged, intoning *Jaws* and then pointing forward and backward in history. At first glance, we think: Wait, this isn't *Jaws* on the movie screen, but there is a shark attacking a boy and a boat of people attempting to rescue him. Indeed, Dufresne restages John Singleton Copley's painting, *Watson and the Shark* (1778; fig. 10) as a film projection. Copley's work depicts how a fourteen-year-old cabin boy, Brook Watson, while taking a quick, leisurely swim in the Havana Harbor in Cuba, is viciously attacked by a shark. Watson survived the attack and, in his adulthood, became a successful British merchant. After

Figure 10. John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark,* 1778, oil on canvas, 71 11⁄16 x 90 7⁄16 inches. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ferdinand Lammot Belin Fund. 1963.6.1

meeting Copley on a ship that sailed from Boston to England, Watson commissioned Copley to re-create the shark attack on his youthful body—with bravado and exaggerated flair—as an illustrious historical painting. Dufresne, in order to counteract what she refers to as the Copley-Watson bromance, interlaces the painting with a scene from Buster Keaton's silent film *The Playhouse* (1921). Keaton, who plays nine different characters in the film, is eventually chased into the audience by an angry, aggressive coworker, where he confronts a double of himself as a viewing audience member. Dufresne includes the latter moment in *Jaws the Prequel*, in which we see a disoriented, frightened-looking Keaton wearing his signature porkpie hat and proper vest, with his hands up, as if in a hold-up. Fast-forward to 2012, the year Dufresne painted this work, and we are reminded of when James Eagan Holmes walked into a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, at midnight and tear gassed and shot-up an unsuspecting audience watching *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012). Keaton reference aside for a moment, we can also imagine Holmes represented as the figure standing in the middle of the movie audience, parting the waves in a "sea of people" through Dufresne's masterful rendering of them as partial objects, becoming vapor, steam, and water. Their abstraction is eerie, pointing to their status as abject objects (bound as witnesses to the gruesome shark attack on the screen), existing somewhere in between the amniotic fluids of the oceanic and the once-living material of the body in peril.

Figure 11. John Cassavetes, *Gloria*, 1980, USA, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 123 minutes. Directed by John Cassavetes, produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation. Pictured: Gena Rowlands

Audiences or spectators as partially abstract entities also enter other Dufresne paintings, such as *Ticket Line* (2018; cat. 1), *Afternoon thunder cloud lecture for flaming creatures* (2018; cat. 21), and *The School of Gena Rowlands* (2016; cat. 11). In the latter, flames roar up out of a fire pit and consume the torsos of most of the audience who are listening to a transgendered Rowlands (she sports male genitalia under her skirt) lecture on Cassavetes's *Gloria* (1980; see fig. 11), in which she plays a lead role. They become a kind of bouquet of fire—flaming bodies turned on by the presence of Rowlands before them—gesticulating, teaching, and disciplining. Similarly, in *Afternoon thunder cloud lecture*, Rowlands seems to be giving another lecture, but this time on Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963) (she holds a poster announcing an upcoming screening of the film). Multivalent sexualities define the

audience, the doubling and tripling of genders abound as well as the intermixing of dogs, satyrs, and other exotic beings. Many of the figures are purposefully transparent, so that several bodies (including animals, furniture) are interlaced with others and thus can be read, at times, as one entity.

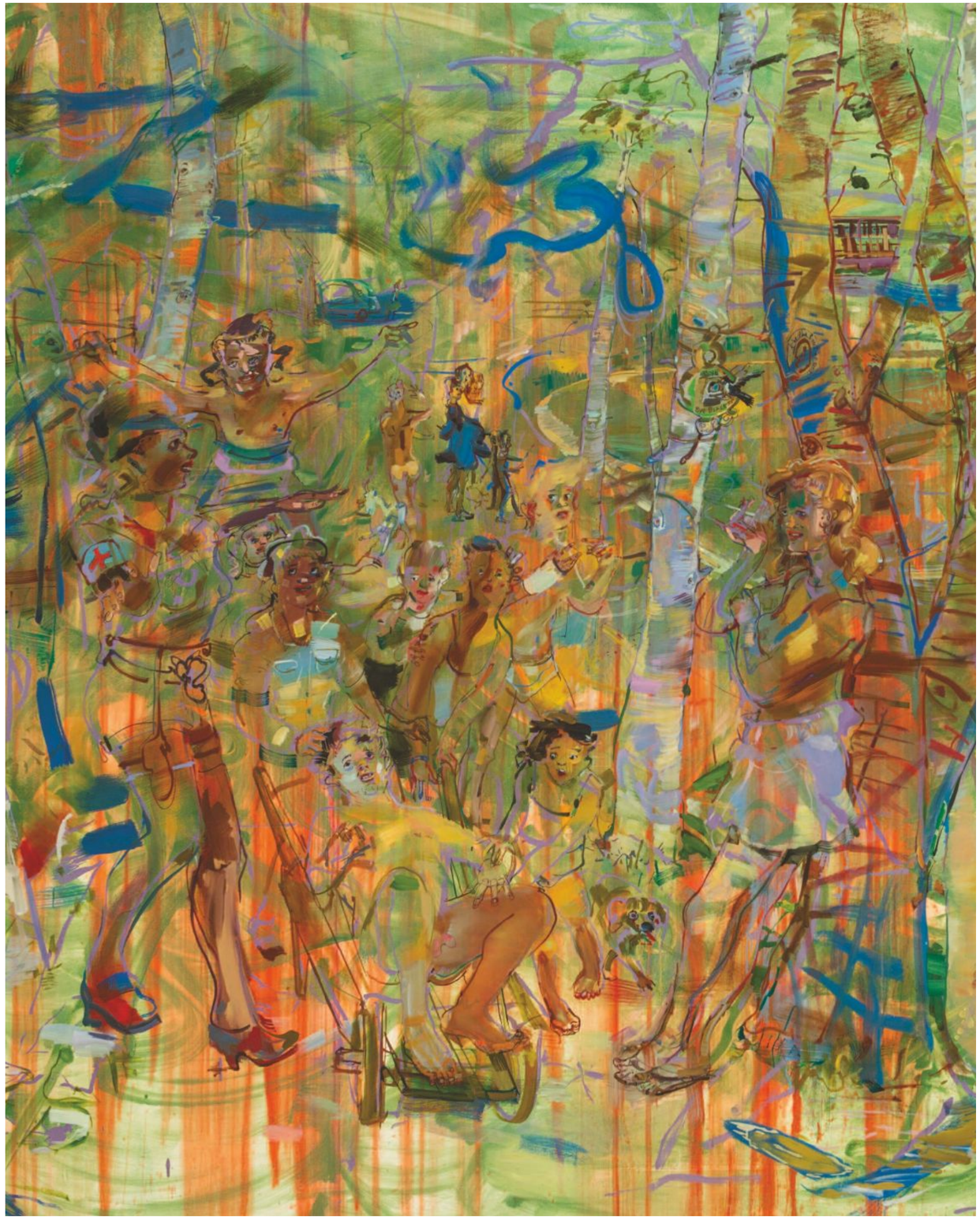
CODE/CODA

Dufresne, in a sense, moves from her early work which treated "movie sets" and cinematic tropes as critical, but isolated, objects of study for painting into vast, complex works in which larger questions about mediated systems come to the fore: What drives viewing impulses? Who are these mass audiences? How are they generated? What are the possible structures of desire and the politics of their representation, their precarity? Her most recent direction—constructing crowd-objects that almost become a kind of contested, fleshy landscape of their own—is reminiscent of some of the key muralist painters that she values, such as David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974), José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), Diego Rivera (1886–1957) with the influence of Frida Kahlo (1907–1954), Paul Cadmus (1904–1999), and Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000). While they vary in style, approach, content, and context, all have pursued rigorous investigations into how bodies and objects work together symbolically, politically, and aesthetically to forge critical discourses around race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and national/international identities. Dufresne mines these histories, pays homage to them, but forges a practice that is about both the "orchestration of seeing larger social situations"[14] and how one might glimpse the erotic energy of illicit, maybe even forbidden objects—in the blink of an eye.[15]

Notes

1. John Huston, interviewed by Louise Sweeney, *Christian Science Monitor*, August 11, 1973.
2. Heather O'Rourke played Carol Anne, the youngest child of the fictional suburban Orange County couple Steven and Diane Freeling, featured in Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist* (1982; written and produced by Steven Spielberg). In one of the earliest scenes in the film, Carol Anne is staring at the family television set as it signs off and transmits static and white noise. Suddenly, an ephemeral white hand reaches out toward her through the television screen and an earthquake violently shakes the house. After it all calms down, Carol Anne announces: "They're here." The poltergeists, or noisy ghosts, haunt the Freelings by exerting their powers through powerful, invisible forces, unexpectedly moving domestic objects violently across the scape of the house, as well as extracting the children (sucking them up) through portals such as the closet door or bedroom window.
3. W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1.
4. Ibid., 2.
5. See Huston, *Christian Science Monitor*, August 11, 1973.
6. *A Question of Love* (1978) was directed for television by Jerry Thorpe, written by William Blinn (*Brian's Song*, *Roots*) starring Gena Rowlands as Linda Ray Guettner, Jane Alexander as Barbara Moreland, Ned Beatty as Dwayne Stabler, and Clu Gulager as Mike Guettner, among other, minor, characters. It is based on a true, harrowing custody battle fought by Mary Jo Risher, a nurse and mother of two boys, in Dallas, Texas, in 1976. She had initially won a custody battle for both sons in 1971—because, at the time, she was considered heterosexual and Doug Risher had beaten her violently, repeatedly. But once she became a partner to—and moved in with—Ann Foreman, an assistant bank auditor, the custody case was challenged by her former husband, claiming that she was "not fit" to mother children as a lesbian. She lost the custody battle for her youngest, adopted son [the older one had moved in with his father] in 1974, as well as a second attempt, via an appeal a year later. The National Organization for Women raised a thousand dollars to support Mary Jo's case.
7. See Gustave Courbet, *L'Origine du monde (The Origin of the World)* (1866) housed in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France: www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/search/commentaire/commentaire_id/the-origin-of-the-world-3122.html, accessed May 31, 2018.
8. Dufresne also did her own "cover" of Courbet's *The Artist's Studio: An Allegory*, titled *The Real Allegory of My Artistic and Moral Life* (2014; cat. 23).
9. Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*, trans. Mark Allan Ohm and Jon Cogburn (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 11. Originally published as *Forme et objet: Un traité des choses* (Paris, France: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010).
10. In *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* (1927), Martin Heidegger introduces his concept of tool analysis, in which he describes two entities that further his larger ideas about ontology. One, he names *Vorhandenheit* or presence-at-hand. The other, he calls *Zuhandenheit* or readiness-to-hand. Present-at-hand implies a tool that is only revealed to us when it breaks, for example, when the head of a hammer flies off the handle in the middle of a repair. Otherwise we go on using it and in a sense take its usefulness for granted. The idea of a tool functioning properly and effectively defines what Heidegger means by ready-to-hand: it becomes inaccessible to us as part of the *being of equipment*, precisely because of how fully we have integrated in into our routine activities. In viewing a Dufresne painting, one is often confronted with an object suddenly appearing to us, because we are enjoying the ease with which color and movement lead our vision around the canvas, or the way many of her objects function smoothly in concert with the activities of her subjects. It isn't until some kind of blinding light (such as the one constructed by Dufresne in *Carolee Schneemann Reading Club*), or the inability to distinguish between the edges and volumes of things that we suddenly see anew, or experience what is, present-at-hand. See Graham Harman's "Technology, Objects, and Things in Heidegger," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010): 17–25.
11. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Black and Red, 1970). Originally published as *La Société du Spectacle* (Paris, France: Buchet-Chastel, 1967). Debord's notion of spectacle points to the conflation of lived experience and commodity culture in which advertisements for objects (including people) stand in for "real," direct social interaction.
12. Anna Magnani, like Gena Rowlands although from a different era, is an alter ego of Dufresne's. In a sense, she is the Italian, brunette, older sister to Rowlands. Both actresses rewrite conventional approaches to cinematic roles for women—shooting holes through the typical self-sacrificing, pious positions of "mother," extolling the strengths and virtues of "whores," laughing at the loyalty of "wives." See also Dufresne's *Unholy Trinity Anna Magnani from* L'amore *(segment "Il miracolo")* (2017; cat. 2).
13. Angela Dufresne, in conversation with the author, Brooklyn, New York, April 22, 2018.
14. Ibid.
15. The phrase "in the blink of an eye," as well as several other references to the "blink" as the "cut" or edit in film come from Walter Murch, *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing* (2nd edition) (West Hollywood, CA: Silman-James Press, 1992). In turn, in Michael Ondaatje, *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 64–65, Murch gives credit to film director John Huston for introducing him to this concept:

    > From my early editing experiences I became convinced that there was a connection between the patterns of a person's eye blinks and the patterns of their thoughts. That blinks are the equivalent of mental punctuation marks—commas, periods, semicolons, et cetera—separating and thus providing greater articulation to our thoughts. I owe the equation Cut = Blink to the director John Huston—he put forth the idea in an interview with Louise Sweeney in the early 1970s.



POLYMORPHOUS, NOT PERVERSE

William E. Jones

As a respite from the creeping puritanism and stereotypical thinking dominating American culture at the present moment, Angela Dufresne's paintings offer us a garden of earthly delights, an imaginary space populated by figures of ambiguous identity, performing a great variety of acts in unpredictable combinations. Her artistic practice answers in the negative a question filmmaker and provocateur Bruce LaBruce asks in his book *The Reluctant Pornographer* (1997): "Do you really want everybody … to be able to sum you up and dismiss you with a single epithet?"[1] LaBruce registers his discontent with America's mania for labeling, the zero degree of identity politics. Once labeled, a person can be dealt with and dismissed—"oh, you're one of those"—and effectively silenced. To speak with a unique voice that does not restate the obvious or descend to the level of cant may be the only way for an artist to survive when malevolent bullies intolerant of difference and dissent exercise political power.

A new era in culture began with the election of the forty-fifth President of the United States, a confidence man who shows contempt for everyone (except perhaps his daughter) because everyone is a potential mark, or victim, and anyone (including his most ardent supporters) can be betrayed. The Ugly American now reigns supreme. Despite the claims of soi-disant policy advisor Stephen Miller, practically on the nod as he asserted his boss's "political genius" on national television, most of us know that we have been conned. This whole sordid chapter of American history comes across as the punch line of a bad joke: the absolute rule of finance unrestrained by democracy, that is, the rule of gangsters.

"I know you all approve of mothers. I know you all have mothers. Me, I'm not a mother. I'm one of those sensations. I was always a broad. Can't stand the sight of milk." Gena Rowlands says these lines in her role as the title character of John Cassavetes's film *Gloria* (1980; see fig. 12), in a scene where she bargains for her life. The next-door neighbor of a couple murdered by petty gangsters, Gloria becomes the guardian of their young son. She announces at the outset that she dislikes kids, yet over the course of the film Gloria becomes an exemplary mother (after a fashion), the head of an ad hoc family. She shields her young charge from harm, and regardless of her misgivings, allows herself to feel affection for a preadolescent boy who protests with macho bravado that he is a man and will take care of himself. The pair can find safety a train ride away. Their problems are immediate and concrete; they'll be all right as long as they make it to Pittsburgh. Gloria is a woman who fled.

Figure 12. John Cassavetes, *Gloria*, 1980, USA, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 123 minutes. Directed by John Cassavetes, produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation. Pictured: Gena Rowlands, John Adames

Another woman who fled: Angela Dufresne left the country a few months before the election of 2016. She lived for a year in Rome, and there she found a few sympathetic souls to talk to and a break from the twenty-four-hour news cycle. Italians know a thing or two about corrupt fascists; some of them are old enough to remember Mussolini and Berlusconi. The former left Italy with the material ruins of war; the latter with the postmodern ruins of predatory neoliberalism. The Italians have a way of weathering crises with dignity and style, and this has a lot to do with their past. Political instability, dictatorships, corruption, and war—a whole legion of sorrows has befallen them—and yet within the chaos and strife, some people have found enough serenity to produce magnificent cultural artifacts, from Roman portrait sculptures to neorealist films.

The predicament in which Angela found herself was not like Gloria's, but more of a psychic malaise, a threat to life as an artist, and to sanity. She went to Rome looking for something, as most Americans do. Hers was a slightly crackpot quest; she wanted to find some trace of utopia. Utopia is any gap in the illusions of contemporary life, the domination of consumerist Christian capitalism, which subjects us to politics as media spectacle bought and sold by hyper-rich folks so sociopathic that they have become post-human. Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italy's great queer Catholic communist poet and filmmaker, predicted that the future of fascism would be realized in the United States.[2] We are living in the era when his prediction may be proven correct.

Pasolini believed in utopia. He saw it simultaneously in the past and in the future. As a communist, he was convinced, often against the evidence all around him, of the inevitability of proletarian revolution bringing about a new, more just social order. He also idealized the past and wished to save nostalgia from reactionary politics. He was nostalgic for the peasant bodies not yet ruined by consumerism and crammed into the slums of big cities. He saw in the unspoiled youths he loved the joys of sexuality before the imposition of heterosexual norms, a kind of chaotic paganism expressed in everyday life, despite the efforts of the church and state to impose a feeble normality. He made films about the world of peasants intermingling in pleasurable, raucous harmony, the so-called Trilogy of Life: *The Decameron* (1971), *The Canterbury Tales* (1972), and *Arabian Nights* (1974).

In June 1975, Pasolini wrote an essay denouncing the Trilogy of Life.[3] He admitted that he had been excessively hopeful and naïve about recapturing a utopian pre-capitalist past. There would be no escape from consumerist society and the ways it transforms the body: brash manners, competitive attitudes, petty crime, ugly clothes, and degraded, inexpressive speech. As far as Pasolini could tell, the enemy had won, and he made a parable to reflect his despair, the film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975; see fig. 13). Salò is the name of the fascist republic set up as a puppet state by the Nazis after the Allies invaded Italy; it was the last gasp of a doomed dictatorship, and all manner of horrors reigned. *The 120 Days of Sodom* (1785) is a vast manuscript by the Marquis de Sade, written in the Bastille before the French Revolution, but only published in the twentieth century due to its relentless obscenity. Was this ghastly film of sadistic rituals performed in a pristine modernist villa Pasolini's final word on the subject of political domination, or did he still nurture

Figure 13. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, 1975, Italy, France, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 117 minutes. Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, produced by Produzione Europee Associate (PEA) and Les Productions Artistes Associés. Pictured: Efisio Etzi, Rinaldo Missaglia

some hope for the future that he did not have an opportunity to express? We will never know; he was murdered under circumstances that have never been adequately explained before he was able to make another film.

The pagan utopia that Pasolini envisioned then rejected has never quite gone away. People find it for brief moments, during ancient rituals that were not completely Christianized, in tracts of unspoiled nature, among the poor whose ranks grow ever more numerous, and often, in works of art, which have the power to maintain impossible and delirious contradictions. During one of the innumerable tawdry political crises of late, and in an access of panic mixed with unrequited love, I thought I saw a flash of cockeyed utopianism in Gena Rowlands, the great mother of *Gloria*. Her selflessness wrapped in hardboiled cynicism made me wonder what it was like to worship the Great Mother, Magna Mater, earth goddess of the ancient Mediterranean world. Perhaps the members of her cult had an aspect of Gloria about them. Or perhaps I am drunk on cinephilia and should stop indulging a preposterous anachronism.

I met Angela Dufresne in Maine, at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, where we were both resident faculty members in 2017. I had serious reservations about this job: I hate summer in the country (especially mosquitos) and I suspected the atmosphere of the place would be only a little more pleasant than the Chinese Cultural Revolution (albeit without the deaths). In my darker moments I wondered if I had been exiled to the countryside for reeducation, but rather than an intellectual harvesting crops and cleaning latrines, I would be cast in the role of ersatz therapist for a multicultural bunch of privileged, solipsistic, thin-skinned brats—let's not forget, this is art school—surrounded by resentful white people just beyond the boundaries of the campus in an economically depressed land that time forgot. Would my foul mouth, tactless manner, and interest in hegemonic Western culture before 1970 get me into trouble? I shuddered to think.

Within hours of my arrival, I wandered into Angela's studio and felt what I call the Dufresne effect, somewhat akin to Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect—I couldn't tell whether I was enjoying myself or having an anxiety attack. During that first meeting, I heard Angela play guitar and sing Stevie Nicks songs, I saw her pull up her shirt to reveal her bra, and I looked at paintings that were, among other things, evidence of her worship of Gena Rowlands and her interest in what Freud called the polymorphous—desires that find outlets beyond normative sexual behaviors.

In the first painting I saw, *Gloria* (2016; cat. 4), Rowlands is caught mid-getaway wearing a vibrant purple jacket and skirt, holding a .22-caliber pistol in one hand and shielding a child with an alarmed look on his face with the other. Behind her is a Yellow Cab, and at the side of the vehicle lurks a horned devil with a cigarette in one of his limp-wristed hands, looking at Rowlands and bearing his teeth with unknown intentions.

Figure 15. Evan Jones, Peter O'Donnell, Jim Holdaway, *Modesty Blaise*, 1966, UK, 35mm film, color, mono sound, 119 minutes. Directed by Joseph Losey, produced by Modesty Blaise Ltd. and Twentieth Century Fox. Pictured: Monica Vitti

The School of Gena Rowlands (2016; cat. 11) shows Gena in front of a portable screen on which is projected another image from *Gloria*, a close up of the actress reflected in a mirror, bracing herself before she meets with a gangster. The title of the painting implies that Gena is teaching a lesson in film history to a group of young people around a campfire, which burns perilously close to the screen. Some appear rapt, while others stare at the fire. With one hand the "real" Gena brushes aside a stray hair or perhaps massages her temple to ease a headache—kids these days, will they ever pay attention to their elders?—as the other hand hikes up her skirt. This gesture reveals that the Gena who appears before the screen has male genitals, calling into question who the "real" Gena Rowlands could be in this painting. It brings to my mind "Got to Be Real" (1978) by Cheryl Lynn, a song much beloved of queers and queens of decades past. The title's phrase "school of" also implies imitation, in the art historical sense of a work that looks as if were painted by a great artist (and indeed may be taken for one), but which has actually been painted by a follower. Perhaps an imitation Gena (a drag queen) is telling the youths in the painting how to impersonate her more effectively. The mother of the House of Rowlands is schooling her children.

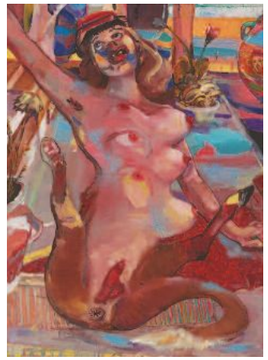


Figure 14. Angela Dufresne, *Robust Suckler*, 2016, oil on canvas, 48 x 32 inches

The most peculiar painting I saw in the studio that day was *Robust Suckler* (2016; fig. 14), a full figure portrait of a hybrid creature based not upon Gena Rowlands, but upon Italian actress Monica Vitti as she appears in Joseph Losey's film *Modesty Blaise* (1966; see fig. 15). She gazes upward in ecstasy with gap-toothed mouth gaping. She raises one arm to show a hairy armpit, while the other supports her on the floor of a

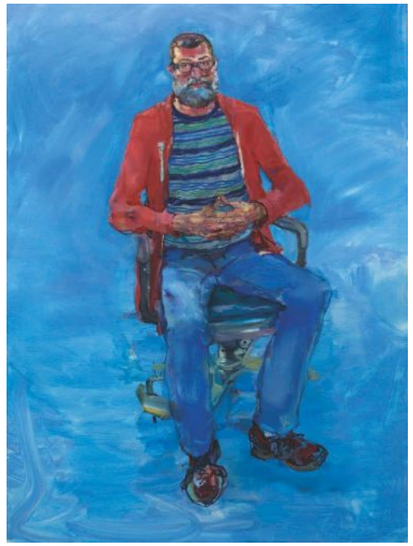


Figure 16. Angela Dufresne, *William E. Jones And Why Should I Care About This*, 2017, oil on canvas, 76 x 48 inches

domestic interior. Like the Artemis of Ephesus, she has many breasts—in her case, six—but her legs are those of a dog. There is also a tail, which helps to support her. The legs are held high in the air, so high that her asshole is in full view. She is clearly excited, because her lurid red penis is erect. As in *The School of Gena Rowlands*, I confidently called the central figure a "she" until I looked more closely and encountered male genitals and pronoun trouble.

With so much visual stimulation in the studio, I couldn't help but ask myself, "Who is this wild creature with whom I'll be spending a summer?" Despite whatever trepidation I felt, I immediately agreed to Angela's request that I sit for a portrait (2017; fig. 16). It was the first time anyone had ever asked me to do so, and I was flattered. Much to my relief, Angela did not require me to remain silent and sit still during the portrait sessions. The many hours of conversation we shared became so intense that we listened to little music during the sessions—a shame, because I only found out later that we are both fans of The Fall, the legendary English rock band led for forty years by Mark E. Smith (1957–2018). Angela told me that my talk and my movements—walking around the studio when my leg fell asleep, making emphatic gestures to drive home a point—would inform the painting, which became as much a study from memory as from life, a synthesis of impressions. Angela also talked quite a bit about what she was doing as she painted, something I welcomed but was unused to. She filled the large canvas quickly with thin layers of paint, often blending or revising with a nitrile-gloved hand. In a mere instant, it seemed, she captured the look on my face, a combination of curiosity and contempt. Contrary to conventional practice in portraiture, she finished the face first and organized the composition around it. Many changes came later to the background, to the rendering of my arms and torso, even to the color of my shirt, but the face did not change significantly; it was as though the entire painting was hanging from my cheekbones.

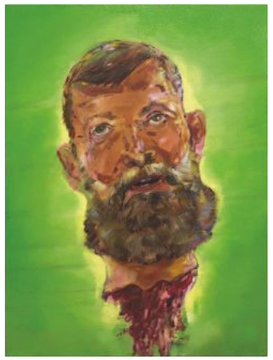


Figure 17. Angela Dufresne, *William E. Jones Beheaded*, 2017, oil on canvas, 20 x 14 inches

In the painting, the beard is a riot of impasto, somewhat less gray than my beard in real life. (I thank Angela for appeasing my sense of vanity.) This highly worked and dynamic part of the painting seems almost to take on a life of its own. When I saw the dense network of brushstrokes, I said, "I look like Chaim Soutine's rabbi," to which Angela responded, "You really look like my first therapist." She then recounted the story of falling in love with a woman as a teenager in Olathe, Kansas, where she grew up. This affair provoked the disapproval of her parents, who sent her to a therapist—like me, a bearded middle-aged man—to be "cured" of lesbianism. Fortunately, this man had professional ethics and immediately dismissed the notion of "fixing" Angela's sexuality. Instead, he encouraged her to pursue her art and move to New York, the city where she lives to this day. Seen in this way, the bearded man in Angela's painting is not only me but also a figure of knowing compassion. The contempt in his gaze is directed not at the painter (or by extension, the spectator), but at this common world of bigots, hypocrites, and people who just can't mind their own business. Alas, these days, the bearded man must ration his contempt, as Chateaubriand suggested, because there are so many deserving of it.

A second portrait, much smaller and more tightly painted, also came into being that summer (2017; fig. 17). By then I felt I knew Angela well enough that I could make suggestions. I was a bossy subject. To my surprise, she expressed no objections to being directed; indeed, she welcomed it (from me, at least). The inspiration for this new painting was our mutual enthusiasm for the 1967 film *Point Blank* (see fig. 18)

Figure 18. Alexander Jacobs, David Newhouse, Rafe Newhouse, *Point Blank*, 1967, USA. 35mm film, color, mono sound, 92 minutes. Directed by John Boorman, produced by Judd Bernard-Irwin Winkler, presented also by Metro-Goldwyn Mayer (MGM). Pictured: Sharon Acker

Figure 20. Angela Dufresne, *Tippy and Sharlett*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9 x 12 inches

directed by John Boorman from a screenplay by Alexander Jacobs, David Newhouse, and Rafe Newhouse, adapted from a novel by Donald E. Westlake. In the essay film *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003), Thom Andersen sums up its appeal: "For me, the highlight of the film is the astonishing tableaux of grotesque interior decoration schemes. It's enough to make you believe the seventies began in the mid-sixties."[4] Andersen reads Hollywood films (studio-made and independent) against the grain, as documents of their own circumstances of production and as symptoms of prevalent but unacknowledged social ills. He does this in contradistinction to the criticism found in such publications as the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*, which *Straight to Hell* editor Boyd McDonald dismissed as "plot crazed," concentrating on the least important aspect of films.[5]

Reading against the grain can serve as a springboard for fantasy when a film has little else to offer. I doubt either Angela or I could communicate the plot of *Point Blank* from memory. The reasons an actor enters an interior of breathtaking hideousness are beside the point to us. Like most queer people of our generation and older, we have acquired the habit of taking only what we want from conventional narrative films, because we have no particular investment in the formula to which most of them can be reduced: an Oedipal struggle resolving itself in heterosexual coupling.

Angela makes work from film images as freely as she interprets the films themselves. Her paintings and drawings do not attempt to be strict copies; characters are liberated from the narratives that confine them, combined with other figures from an eclectic range of sources, and made to do things that producers and film censors would never allow. In Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964), Monica Vitti does not get her ass eaten, as she does in Angela's drawing *Me and Monica Vitti* (2003; fig. 19). In Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964), Tippi Hedren does not take a break from robbing a safe to kiss a woman, as she does in the drawing of the scene Angela made forty years later (see fig. 20). In her drawings, these unscripted tableaux—corresponding to the fantasies of more than a few spectators, I am sure—unfold for us. Finally we can see what we wish to see.

Figure 19. Angela Dufresne, *Me and Monica Vitti*, 2003, graphite on paper, 9 x 12 inches

The image I wished to see in Angela's painting was that of a decapitated head (mine) floating in space like a ghost behind Lee Marvin as he walks quickly, heels clicking in rhythm, through a beautifully tiled corridor of the American Airlines terminal at Los Angeles International Airport in *Point Blank*. (This corridor also appears in the opening credits of Quentin Tarantino's 1997 film *Jackie Brown*.) In the finished painting, the tiled background has been transformed into a glowing acid-green ceiling, and Lee Marvin has disappeared entirely from the scene. The result resembles one of Richard Hawkins's most impressive works (and one I remember seeing when it was first exhibited), *disembodied zombie george green* (1997; fig. 21), a large-scale ink-jet print depicting the decapitated head of a male supermodel of the 1990s floating in front of a fuzzy pastel background, the non-space of the digital. Without entirely realizing it, I had encouraged Angela to make a copy of a work by one of my friends. But the chain of associations does not end there. Hawkins (b. 1961) was inspired by Gustave Moreau's *The Apparition* (ca. 1876; fig. 22), which visualizes

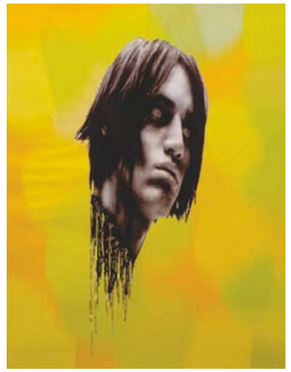


Figure 21. Richard Hawkins, *disembodied zombie george green*, 1997, inkjet print, 47 x 36 inches. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Purchase

the erotic fantasy of Salome after her dance for Herod and the decapitation of John the Baptist. The website of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard describes the painting, one of the gems of its collection: "Here the severed head, with a cascade of blood, stares from mid-air at the bejeweled and scantily clad princess, who points to her trophy."[6]

Angela's handling of paint owes more to Egon Shiele (1890–1918) than Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) or Richard Hawkins, and she herself describes the work as "*Point Blank* reimagined as a Sezessionstil castration scene," or something to that effect. Actually, I may be putting words in Angela's mouth; I can't be sure. At some point during the summer, it became difficult to tell the difference between what she said and what I said about painting. We would often finish each other's sentences in studio visits at Skowhegan, and I imagine participants sometimes felt as though they were witnessing an advanced case of folie à deux. Sharing a chain of references across media and historical time constitutes a major part of my interaction with Angela. We constantly indulge our mutual interest in preposterous anachronisms, although we have not yet resorted to reenacting pagan rituals.

Figure 22. Gustave Moreau, *The Apparition*, ca. 1876, oil on canvas, 56 x 40½ inches. Musée Gustave Moreau Inv. cat. 222

In a land where pagan rituals were enacted until recently by the peasantry—post-World War II Italy—a group of gangsters called the Christian Democrats maintained power at all costs. Their subtlest mandarin speaking the most incomprehensible language, Aldo Moro, attempted to effect a coalition with the Communist Party (perpetually out of power in parliament due to the manipulations of the U.S. government, the Mafia, and the Vatican) in a deal called the "historic compromise." As the negotiations inched toward completion, Moro was kidnapped and murdered by the Red Brigades, an extreme-left extra-parliamentary group—terrorists, in contemporary parlance. An impotent and hypocritical government let Moro die at the hands of his captors. Against his family's wishes, Moro received a state funeral with the Pope presiding on May 13, 1978.

Essayist and novelist Leonardo Sciascia subjected the cowardice and casuistry of the Christian Democrats (whose power evaporated completely almost overnight in 1994) to a dispassionate and thorough analysis in his book *The Moro Affair* (1978).

Sciascia begins his essay with the discovery of a glowworm in the countryside, a pleasant surprise; he and his friend Pier Paolo Pasolini had thought that they were extinct in Italy. A few years before, Pasolini had published a polemic advocating the prosecution of the government led by the Christian Democrats, whom he held responsible for this calamity. He saw in the extinction of the glowworms the problems of Italy in microcosm—reckless economic development, pollution, corruption, and a general degradation of everyday life—and he implied that a single glowworm is worth more than the careers of a thousand politicians.

The gangsters currently in power in the United States have not yet succeeded in eradicating the firefly, American relative of Europe's glowworm. I know this because I saw plenty of them in the woods of Maine, and when I did, I thought of Pasolini and Sciascia. The firefly's appearance was only one among many waves of insect life that burst forth that summer in Skowhegan, but it was unquestionably the most adorable, to use a word dear to Pasolini.

Regarding the human population at Skowhegan, I can say that my worst fears were not realized. Members of the faculty and administration felt real respect and affection for each other, and I think this good will extended to all of the participants. I also think that in 2017, the political situation in the United States became so hostile so quickly that by common consent and without explicit acknowledgment, everyone at the school behaved as though the election of 2016 had never happened. It turned out that rural Maine, with its reactionary newspapers and occasional Confederate flag publicly displayed, represented America's present, while the Skowhegan campus was the land that time forgot. Who or what will represent America's future is a question that remains to be decided. In the meantime, those of us with generous sensibilities can enjoy the reign of the polymorphous in Angela Dufresne's paintings.

Notes

1. Bruce LaBruce, *The Reluctant Pornographer* (Toronto: Gutter Press, 1997), 41.
2. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saint Paul: A Screenplay*, trans. Elizabeth A. Castelli (London: Verso, 2014).
3. Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Trilogy of Life Rejected" in *Lutheran Letters*, trans. Stuart Hood (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), 49–52.
4. Thom Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (Cinema Guild DVD, 2014).
5. Boyd McDonald, *Cruising the Movies: A Sexual Guide to "Oldies" on TV* (Los Angeles: Semiotext (e), 2015).
6. "From the Harvard Art Museums' collections: The Apparition." www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/299926, accessed May 1, 2018.

M+B

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

Queering Queer Abstraction

October 5, 2017
By Joseph Henry

Angela Dufresne, *The real Allegory of my artistic and moral life*, 2014, oil on canvas, 84 × 132 inches

In deploying the term "queer abstraction," Finkelstein cites a specific discourse around the mutual exchange of non-referential imagery and sexual and gender identities in order to intervene in it. This discourse has both galvanized discussions of modes usually considered hostile to identity politics, like Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, and prompted queer aesthetics to reconsider its preferred means of self-representation for a more nuanced conversation about form as such. Queer abstraction has also asked artists and critics to consider new strategies for the imaging of non-binary genders, and explored the political value of theoretical and aesthetic illegibility—contra liberal advocacy for the very visibility of queers.

Yet, these positions repeat some mistakes of past art history that cannot be entirely accommodated by progressive sexual and gender politics. In the same way that the Euro-American avant-garde of the pre- and interwar periods proposed a Universalist, transcendent understanding of form, so too have some defenders of queer abstraction seen in its non-referentiality a near-limitless capacity for figuring identity. This desire and its ambitions are important for their sense of political futurity, but they embody a partial reading of abstraction that can be truncated in its historical breadth, non-intersectional in its theory, and perhaps lax in its understanding of what abstraction signifies today. Although the works in FOUND may vary in their force and aesthetic complexity, their heterogeneity, even incoherence, requests a more nuanced reading of queer abstraction than has been presented recently.

Proponents of queer abstraction have understood it as a method to explore questions of embodiment, relationality, self-presentation, and materiality without resorting to an established, and perhaps reified, queer iconography. As the artist Gordon Hall put it, with some degree of fatigue, "Often, artwork is described as queer when it depicts LGBT subjects or figures, is produced by a self-identified LGBT person, or references gay culture through recognizable motifs, references, or aesthetics. I call this the glitter problem. Or the leather problem. Or the pink-yarn, 1970s-crafts, iconic-diva, glory-hole, pre-AIDS-sexuality, post-AIDS-sexuality, bodies and body-parts, blood-and-bodily-fluids problem." Taking Minimalism as a jumping-off point, Hall instead sees "sculpture as occupying a unique place to learn about and transform our experiences of the gendered body, not primarily because of what we see in the sculptures, but because of how they might enable us to see everything else." In such work, he argues, exists "renewed possibilities for theorizing nonnormatively gendered embodiments."

For Hall and other writers on the topic, such as Finkelstein and the art historian David Getsy, modes of abstraction refuse identifiable queer content in order to explore the expanded gender and sexual identities that open form allows. As Getsy writes:

Abstraction has been embraced for its oppositional and critical possibilities, for it is in abstraction that the dynamic potential of queer stances can be manifested without recourse to the representation of bodies. The human figure in representation is inescapably culturally marked. Abstraction is one tactic for refusing the power of this marking and for resisting the visual taxonomies through which people are recognized and regulated.[1]

For Getsy, the shift from iconography to abstraction signals a resistance to a contemporary assimilationist politics centered on legibility. If queerness can be too easily "read" on its surface, then it can homogenized, trivialized, and perhaps commodified:

Visualizations of sexuality have tended to focus almost exclusively on bodies and their couplings as recognizable signs of queer sensibilities. Such a privileging of images of erotic objects has the effect of caricaturing sexuality as sexual activity (even as something to be defended and celebrated) while replaying the regulatory compulsion to produce evidence of existence—to appear as lesbian, gay, bisexual, homosexual, or queer.[2]

Getsy treated queer abstraction as an historical problem in his Abstract Bodies: Sixties Sculpture in the Expanded Field of Gender (Yale, 2016)—a target of a quite negative review in The Brooklyn Rail[3]—and for that has emerged as a central critic on the issue. Yet the topic has been explicitly taken up by curators, art historians, and artists across generations and the country in exhibitions like Ashton Cooper's presentation of Loren Britton and Kerry Downey at the Knockdown Center in 2016 and in a 2014 panel convened by Julia Bryan-Wilson, Tirza True Latimer, and Harmony Hammond at the California College of the Arts. The artist Michael Buitron wrote on the topic as early as 2008 on his blog Leap into the Void, suggesting a less official circulation of "queer circulation" prior. The critic William J. Simmons, Getsy's interviewer in the above citations, has further proposed the term "queer formalism," a concept whose purview includes figurative aesthetics as well. In all of these formulations, queer art can patently take on the aesthetic without lapsing into a Greenbergian endorsement of art's autonomy.

With FOUND, Finkelstein has both insisted on the unique contributions of "queer abstraction" while scrambling its specificity in positioning it next to "queer archaeology." As he writes in the exhibition essay:

For the artists in this exhibition, detritus, the archival, and the supernatural are queer turf to be explored. So is mark-making and its erasure, mess-making, and charting the periphery. Thrift, cryptography, affect, and the limitlessness of abstraction are all queer, as are performance, metamorphosis, temporality, refusal, and the defining disposition of the late twentieth century [and] postmodernism… Queer artists have pulled up their stakes and moved on, prowling the sky, rocks, and trees of our material culture in search of more hospitable territory and the outlines of the queer commons ahead.[4]

On its surface, Redress (2015) by Lucas Michael refers to nothing specific. The sculpture consists of three neon bands shaped into an open rectangle with the lower line missing; the bands all emit a searing light red hue. Redress is meant to stand against a gallery wall where its luminescence grasps for the neutral tones of the white cube. Like its most immediate predecessor, the neon work of Dan Flavin, Redress seems to function as a formal exercise—a play between supporting architecture and imposed form, between saturated and neutral chromatic tones. But for those who viewed Michael's piece at the exhibition FOUND: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction, curated by Avram Finkelstein (of Gran Fury fame) at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art this past summer, its wall label illuminated a more immediate reference. The artist constructed Redressto follow the dimensions of a door at Commonwealth & Council, a gallery in Los Angeles. Moreover, the red light of the work recalls the red light of clubs, bars, and other nighttime dens. Redress creates a continuum of associations between geometric form and social life.

This play of universal shape and specific reference is noted in the title of the exhibition itself. In archaeology, one looks to recover past objects that might tell particular things about a given culture; abstraction discourages such a connection. Redress—if considered alongside the prosthesis of the wall text—aims for the archaeological precisely through the abstract. That said, other works go about it in reverse: Angela Dufresne's The Real Allegory of My Artistic and Moral Life apes on Courbet's The Artist's Studio (1854-55) to render a nearly orgiastic tableau of figures milling

around an atelier. Dufresne's smeary gestures confuse visible gender and race, figuring each character as a swirl of paint rather than a cohesive body. The specific model of Courbet's work becomes a means to occlude identification, to turn the scene of art-making into one of joyous illegibility.

As with most speculative citations of the word "queer," there is room for nearly anything and everything in Finkelstein's proposal. "The limitlessness of abstraction" is as queer as postmodernism, he argues; non-referential form and the simulacral economy of images are equally available for sexual and gender politics. Moreover, the "sky, rocks, and trees of our material culture" remain as equally available for repurposing as more theoretical notions of temporality and refusal. The tension between formal abstraction and the specific, recuperated image is never quite resolved in FOUND; non-referential work by Lucas Michael and Carrie Yamaoka populated the show alongside patently figurative work by artists such as Karen Heagle and Geoffrey Chadsey. Poetic abstraction even found a voice in Eve Fowler's THIS IS IT WITH IT AS IT IS (2012), which marketed the quizzical poetry of Gertrude Stein as street ad-cum-protest poster. While the categorical looseness of queer abstraction in FOUND is productive in its request to see how abstraction and archaeology might cohabitate, the political specificity of "queer" threatens to collapse. This struggle between an actual minoritarian program and a withdrawn aesthetic exploration marks the most frustrating aspect of queer abstraction.

In some ways, the conflict between queerness' capaciousness and its specificity is an old one. In the introduction to her 1993 essay collection Tendencies, Eve Sedgwick famously defined queer as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of one's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically." Yet, in the same breath that Sedgwick listed the variable self-descriptors that live under the sign of queer ("…masturbators, bulldaggers, divas, Snap! queens, butch bottoms…"), she warned against its overly labile application: "Given the historical and contemporary force of the prohibitions against every same-sex sexual expression, for anyone to disavow those meanings, or to displace them from the term's definitional center, would be to dematerialize any possibility of queer itself."

Twenty-plus years of sexual politics in this country might have dulled the intensity of Sedgwick's "every," but the term "queer" still slides in its definitional range from the nearly all-encompassing to the politically pointed. As Getsy notes, "Queer is no one thing—nor is it easily recognized… It is frustrating for some to deal with the fact that queer has no simple definition nor a readily available iconography, but it's important to keep it mobile, tactical, and immoderate." In FOUND, Finkelstein took this to the letter: as the wall text states for Alyse Ronayne's two untitled works from 2010, "Alyse Ronanye combines self-tanners, luminescent paint, and hand-selected confetti, creating abstract breadcrumb trails of parties gone by. These works are formal and casual at the same time, making something of nothing. Queer, in a word." Such an application of queer skirts the "mobile, tactical, and immoderate" and nearly falls into the domain of pure indistinction.

It is in this looseness that "queer" joins so well to "abstraction" for its practitioners; in its avoidance of rigidly legible representation, abstraction enables a free flow of self-fashioning. As Getsy remarks, "Abstraction makes sense as a vehicle for queer stances and politics because it is unforeclosed in its visualizations and open in the ways in which it posits relations." For Finkelstein, such inscrutability is even politically necessary as a non-surveilled zone in which queer expression might take root.

But in its capacity to escape the restrictions of the world and imagine a new social realm, queer abstraction recalls its forebears in the early twentieth-century, a historical connection that is practically absent in the literature on queer abstraction. "I have ripped through the blue lampshade of the constraints of color. I have come out into the white," Kasimir Malevich dreamily wrote of his Suprematist abstractions in a catalogue text from 1919. "I have overcome the lining of the colored sky, torn it down and into the bag thus formed, put color, tying it up with a knot. Swim in the white free abyss, infinity is before you." When considering the urge to escape in Malevich (and in figures like Kandinsky)—this drive to expand the self beyond societal borders—could one describe such a poetics as "Queer, in a word?" The affect of emancipation is perhaps crucial for any political aesthetic, but its users must discern the historical currents that determine any of its means of expression.

To this end, abstraction can never operate as value-free, neutral territory, as Malevich's benediction of whiteness as such might suggest. In November 2015, curators at Moscow's State Tretyakov Gallery discovered the words "battle of the negroes" in Russian within the painted layers of abstraction's historical endpoint, Malevich's Black Square (1915). The words, the curators gathered, most likely referenced an 1897 all-black artwork by the French humorist Alphonse Allais titled Negroes Fighting in a Cellar at Night. Such a connection need not damn abstraction tout court (although it could), but it should temper the enthusiasm by which abstraction can be joined to a queer project. Minimalism and other abstractions can be plundered for their value to a contemporary queer politics, but these historical idioms need to be deconstructed before they are recuperated. In his review of Getsy's Abstract Bodies, Jarrett Earnest casts similar doubt on the author's stated claim to "infect the canon" for its presumptuous revisionism. While all readings of art will be reshaped by present-day contingencies, it is an unequivocal mistake to think the discovery of queer sexuality in dominant art is also that work's redemption.

Getsy polemically opens a recent essay titled "Queer Relations" in ASAP/Journalwith, "There is nothing intrinsically queer about a form. Rather, queer capacities are engendered by activating relations—between forms, against an opposition or context, or (in this case of complex forms) among the internal dynamics of their components." As an ontological claim, it may be correct to argue that forms cannot carry an identity by themselves, but there is no form that is not always already understood as relational: Relations surround the scene of interpretive encounter from the onset. The blank Judd cube or lyrical Pollock canvas cannot be mapped onto the expansive self-articulation of queerness so easily. Political and historical codes have, however regrettably, "infected" the canon in advance.

As the artist Sheila Pepe noted in a roundtable following Ashton Cooper's Knockdown exhibition, abstraction carries a pre-loaded racial connotation insofar as it mostly greets an audience constructed by whiteness and its concomitant values. Finkelstein himself confesses a similar reading along the lines of class: "I am old enough to remember the phrase, 'I don't know much about art, but I know what I like.'" As he notes, "Most people don't understand at all what they are looking at when they are looking at abstraction. They feel very detached from it because it's not anthropomorphic; it does not relate to the body. It is not them, mirrored. I feel as though abstraction is locked into a death match with class, in this way." There is, along these lines, a distinct irony that queer abstraction has centered so overwhelmingly on the terms of sex and gender, when one of queerness's goals is precisely to understand how variables of race, ethnicity, and nationality must figure into any sexuality. Conspicuously missing in much of the discourse of queer abstraction is discussion of those projects that have tied race to questions around abstraction, whether they are philosopher Édouard Glissant's notion of the "right to opacity," or curator Adrienne Edwards's lauded Blackness in Abstraction exhibition at Pace Gallery last year.

Perhaps these elisions and assumptions have occurred due to an overly neat transition from queer iconography to queer abstraction. The perils of normativity and of the incorporation of queerness by systems like the state and the market demand critique, but legible images might have their own power. For in their recognizability, these motifs and figures can act as loci for the making of publics and communities. What ought to be kept in tension is the utopian desire to transgress conventional idioms of queerness and the tactical utilization of their historical import. It has always been a queer project, after all, to steal away iconographies and reformulate them as needed. Even more so, abstraction in the reified world of art production is already its own iconography. It is the language of museums, art history, and high-brow hobbies. Abstraction has a cultural baggage that cannot be ignored, but it can be resignified, repurposed, and fucked up. It is a utopian impulse to transcend the things we see in an immediate field of vision dominated by cisheteropatriarchy, and the aspirations of this impulse cannot be merely discarded. But utopias are best when they are situated amidst the dystopias that surround them.

1. David J. Getsy in conversation with William J. Simmons, "Appearing Differently: Abstraction's Transgender and Queer Capacities, in *Pink Labour on Golden Streets: Queer Art Practices*, eds. Christiane Erharter, Dietmar Schwärzler, Ruby Sircar, and Hans Scheirl (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 43-4.
2. Ibid., 41, 43.
3. Jarret Earnest, review of *Abstract Bodies: Sixties Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, by David J. Getsy, *The Brooklyn Rail*, February 3, 2016, http://brooklynrail.org/2016/02/art_books/abstract-bodies-sixties-sculpture-in-the-expanded-field-of-gender.
4. Avram Finkelstein, "FOUND: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction," *The Archive* 60 (Spring 2017): 3-4, https://issuu.com/leslielohmanmuseum/docs/issue60.

M+B

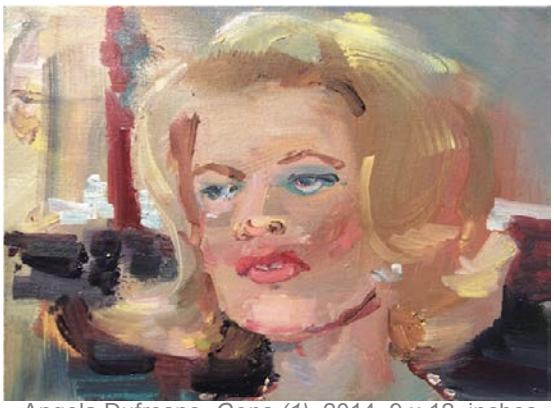
The New York Times

Art Once Shunned, Now Celebrated in 'Found: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction'

August 23, 2017
By Holland Cotter

The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, which has a lively show called "Found: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction" on through the fall, is itself an archaeological project of many layers. The museum reopened last spring after renovations, but has existed in New York, in one form or another, for nearly 50 years.

It originated in a SoHo loft shared by two men, Charles W. Leslie and Fritz Lohman (1922-2010), life partners and collectors of homoerotic painting, drawing and photography. In the summer of 1969, they opened their home as a weekend art salon and were astonished when hundreds of people showed up. It turned out that the type of art they loved, "unambiguously gay" and shunned by conventional museums, had a zealous following.


Angela Dufresne, *Gena (1)*, 2014, 9 x 12 inches

Soon afterward, the couple opened a commercial gallery in SoHo. But in the 1980s, their focus turned from promotion to preservation. AIDS was devastating the gay art community. Entire careers were disappearing as artists lost homes or died and had work trashed.

In response, in 1987, the two men formed the Leslie/Lohman Gay Art Foundation, a nonprofit collecting and exhibiting institution, which eventually acquired a new gallery at 26 Wooster Street in SoHo. The foundation was awarded official museum status in 2011, becoming the first accredited gay art museum anywhere. After closing for renovations, it reopened its Wooster Street gallery at double the size in March.

Over the decades, the institution had pretty closely adhered to its founding criterion for what made art gay: basically, the presence of the nude, usually white, male body. But gay culture itself changed. Women, often shunted aside in the early movement, had become a powerful aesthetic and political force. Trans people, once silent, were speaking out. Ethnic and racial diversity increased. Queerness, a concept of difference that floated free from binary notions of sexuality and gender, had evolved. And this more complicated sense of identity, incorporating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer consciousness, had gone global.

In the new century, under the leadership of Hunter O'Hanian, the museum, which absorbed the foundation, acknowledged these changes. And now, directed by Gonzalo Casals, it fully incorporates them, as is

evident in “Found: Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction.” The male figure is still here, and sometimes nude. But in large-scale watercolors by Geoffrey Chadsey it’s a racial and sexual hybrid. In collages by Troy Michie it’s physically fractured, its erotic charge interrupted, confused, even canceled out.

And in a photomural by the Los Angeles artist Ken Gonzalez-Day, the body is conspicuous through its absence. The mural is based on one of many photographs the artist has tracked down of lynchings of Latinos, Native Americans and Chinese immigrant men in California in the early 20th century. In the nocturnal picture used here, men milling around a tree look upward, but the object of their attention is missing. The artist has erased the form of the hanged victim, leaving dark, empty space.

The show has a small separate section of abstract work, with pieces by two consistently interesting and under-exhibited midcareer New York artists, Nancy Brooks Brody and Carrie Yamaoka. And throughout women are major contributors to the show’s queer rewriting of history and art history.

Angela Dufresne recalibrates the gender balances of Gustave Courbet’s famous 1855 depiction of his Paris studio in a picture of comparably heroic scale. In a deft, shrewd act of painterly transvestism — or transsexualism — Karen Heagle merges her own portrait with that of the renegade Viennese artist Egon Schiele (1890-1918). And Eve Fowler inscribes the revolutionary, logic-skewering language of the lesbian modernist Gertrude Stein on a large wood panel, a format that brings protest posters to mind.

In mentioning these artists, I’m talking about some of the most stimulating American figures around, who are joined on this show by others from Argentina, Brazil, Hong Kong, Israel and Lebanon. Taken as a whole, their work would do any museum proud, as would a suite of eight magical little paintings by Sam Gordon. Several feature what look like astrological signs; all incorporate scraps harvested from Mr. Gordon’s New York studio floor.

Almost everything in “Found,” which has been organized by the artist Avram Finkelstein, a founding member of the Silence = Death collective, is on loan for the occasion. But a second exhibition, “Expanded Visions: Fifty Years of Collecting,” a reduced version of a show that opened in the museum in March, is gleaned entirely from the permanent holdings. Assembled by Rob Rosen, the museum’s director of exhibitions, and Branden Wallace, its registrar, it includes many recent acquisitions and gives a good then-and-now sense of the institution’s thinking.

At any point over the past several decades, for example, you might have found, hanging on Leslie-Lohman walls, a circa 1900 photograph of Sicilian youths by Wilhelm von Gloeden, or George Bellows’s 1923 print of a men’s bathhouse, or one of John Burton Harter’s academic 1980s nudes. You would have been far less likely to find the equivalent of Zanele Muholi’s portraits of the black South African lesbians, or Chitra Ganesh’s feminist mash-ups of South Asian comic strips, or anything at all resembling the doll-like hand-stitched sculptures of the transgender artist Greer Lankton — all of which have recently arrived in the collection and look completely at home in the show.

The museum has a history it can be proud of, a radical one. From the start, it championed an outcast art and stood boldly, unfashionably, by it. Now it is complicating its earlier aesthetic direction without compromising its social mission, which is a tough act to pull off. Whether the museum is, or will continue to be, as advertised, the only art institution of its kind doesn’t matter. It’s a museum that both stretches “gay” and resists “normal,” and for that it’s invaluable.

“Make being different your strength” could be its motto. Wasn’t that the lesson the 1960s were teaching when Mr. Leslie and Mr. Lohman first opened their home and their art to the public that summer — the summer of Stonewall, as it happened — all those years ago?

M+B

HYPERALLERGIC

Upending Conventions with Figurative Painting

July 22, 2018
By John Yau

Angela Dufresne, *70's Mom* (2017), oil on canvas, 20 x 19.5 inches

For years, the phrase "small colonies of the saved" has called out to me to be used. It is from the poem, "Those Being Eaten by America," by Robert Bly. I have never cited Bly in something I have written until now, but this fragment of a line from a not particularly interesting poem seemed more resonant than usual when it rose to the surface of my consciousness.

It all started when I passed Alexi Worth on 30th Street between 7th and 8th Avenue. We were both out of our neighborhoods so to speak, which is to say in Chelsea, where we have seen each other while going to galleries. Passing, saying hello, I knew that we would meet again somewhere in his past and in my future. My hunch was based on the fact that I was going to see the two-person exhibition of Angela Dufresne and Louis Fratino, titled *Glazed*, at Monya Rowe.

Rowe is one of the gallerists that you especially root for in these crazily seismic times. She has given many artists their first solo show — Larissa Bates, Angela Dufresne, and Josephine Halvorson, among them. Opening in 2003, her first space in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn was 200 square feet. She has also had galleries in Chelsea and on the Lower East Side. Two years ago, she moved from New York to Saint Augustine, Florida. Recently, she moved back to a tenth floor space in a building that has no other galleries on a street just far enough away from Chelsea's gallery district that people would have know about it to go there. They should, because Rowe discovers artists, which many better known galleries have never done.

Writing about Dufresne on a previous occasion, I stated that she was part of a group of figurative artists:

[…]they seem to have their fingers on the pulse of the cataclysmic changes America has been undergoing, as signaled by [Eve Kosofsky] Sedgwick's foundational book [*Epistemology of the Closet* (1990)], which helped begin the field of queer studies. Sedgewick was one of the first to advance that it was limiting to define sexuality in the binary opposition of heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Whether or not this is the future of figurative painting seems beside the point since it is the future of America, whatever conservatives in the red states think. Flying a defaced American flag in Kansas, as

Josephine Meckseper recently did at the University of Kansas's Spencer Art Museum, is the latest in series of tired privileged gestures where nothing is ventured and a lot of attention is gained.
The work of Dufresne and Fratino is far more radical than anything than Meckseper has gotten attention for — something a large swath of the art world seems unable to wrap its head around: painting can be radical; conceptual art can be a boring, tiresome rehash. Meckseper's flag isn't David Hammons "African-American Flag" (1990) or the Rainbow Flag, which every museum ought to fly just to set the record straight.

Dufresne has a big spirit. In the painting "Just My Type" (2018), she has laid down a washy, abstract ground of blues, turquoises, pinks and reds and outlined two women over it. One woman is holding her arms out, turning in her claw-like hands like she is about grab or catch something, while the other woman is standing behind her, looking over her shoulder. This second figure has one arm around the waist of the first figure and is holding their erect penis.
Dufresne's painting — particularly her use of color, abstraction, and line — shares something with Raoul Dufy, who is said to have never painted a sad picture. The difference is that Dufresne is cruder and jauntier than Dufy ever was. In "70's Mom" (2017), she presents a close-up view of a mother wearing a necktie, holding a baby on her lap and smoking a cigarette. The view is cropped so that we see only the baby's face looking up at us, one hand reaching towards its mouth. For unknown reasons, the mother's other arm is raised in the air, suggesting that she isn't grasping the baby.

Without making a fuss about it, Dufresne undoes all the conventions we associate with paintings of mothers and their child, starting with Mary and the infant Jesus. Remember all of Pablo Picasso's saccharine depictions of a mother holding her child, from "Mother and Child in front of a Vase of Flowers" (1901) to "Mother and Child" (1965), and you get a sense of just how tough, interesting, smart, and funny Dufresne can be.

Louis Fratino also undoes Picasso. In "Reconfiguration" (2018), he uses oil, crayon, and oil stick to depict two young men making love. Tightly pressing their faces together until they become one shape, their kiss knowingly reinhabits Picasso paintings such as "The Kiss" (1969) as well as reimagines Dora Maar's famous profile. In "Waking Up" (2018), a young man is lying in bed. Frantino uses pink and mauve crayon to give his skin a waxy glow.

Alongside Dufresne's joyful challenges, Frantino's celebration of male love and domesticity, as well as his imaginative transformations of motifs found in Picasso, suggests a shift has taken place in the art world: the age of derision, caricature, and imitation has lost whatever edge it once supposedly had. Once seen as radical, the work of many celebrated artists of the early 2000's seems increasingly conventional.

The subjects that Dufresne and Fratino deal with are not new. They date back at least as far as the Classical era, as evidenced in Greek literature and mythology. In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles and Patrocolus share the same bed; Plato called Sappho "the tenth muse." Cy Twombly explored these subjects in his art. And yet, it remains a side of history and culture that is seldom acknowledged by mainstream institutions. It is time they did.

Signing the guest book, and seeing Worth's name just above mine, Bly's line came to mind. I wondered if "small colonies of the saved" applied to the supporters, friends, and fans of Dufresne and Fratino or to those offended by Meckseper's wan gesture. I don't think the storms gathering on the horizon will clarify the answer.

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Harper's BAZAAR

How Feminist Artists Are Staging Their Own Protests with Paint

February 6, 2017
By Amy Louise Bailey

Angela Dufresne, *Unholy Trinity Anna Magnani from L'amore (segment "Il miracolo")*, 2017, 18 x 24 inches

In the late 1960s, a number of female artists aimed to influence the cultural conversation around gender equality through their artwork. The general message was simple: women deserve to have the same fundamental rights as men. Fifty years later the world has evolved beyond measure, but the central issues of gender imbalance remain, leaving feminist art and expression more relevant than ever.

The misogynist rhetoric used by Donald Trump throughout the presidential campaign (and the looming blow to reproductive rights) has galvanized a new wave of female artists who are set on delivering empowering statements with unique visual content.

In New York alone, several group shows and projects have echoed the sentiments of the Women's March, which last month saw millions of women gather in protest—and solidarity. *#PUSSYPOWER* (an exhibition that is now wrapped up) referenced the evolution of feminist art and showcased works from industry figureheads including Marilyn Minter, Katherine Bradford and Angela Dufresne, alongside emerging female artists that played with the representation of women's bodies in broader culture.

Similarly, Nasty Women featured a group of female artists and nearly 700 pieces that symbolized what came to be the slogan of sisterhood during election season. The Brooklyn show was initially conceived as a stand-alone fundraiser for Planned Parenthood, but when artists and curators around the world got word of what was happening in New York, related exhibitions emerged across America and Europe. Over the coming months, venues in Portugal, England, Australia and the Netherlands are unveiling their own Nasty Women exhibitions, in a show of solidarity.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Coalition has also engaged in the creative movement, aiming to

elevate feminist voices and values through art. The organization partnered with TriBeCa gallery director and artist Indira Cesarine to present *Uprise / Angry Women*—a radical group show that comprised politically charged works from eighty female artists. The show, which ran during the week of the presidential inauguration, donated a portion of the proceeds to the Fund for Women's Equality.

"It's an incredibly exciting time for the female art world; there's a strong sense of unity and liberation," says New York-based artist, Natasha Wright, who is launching her first solo exhibition in Greenwich Village this Friday.

The show, titled *MasculinFéminin* represents female empowerment and experience in an intimate context, depicting women that are in complete control of their bodies and their sexuality—a stark opposition to the rollbacks of the new administration.

The large-scale oil paintings are visceral and abstract; it's almost as if they provide a passage into the female mind with dream-like scenarios that are infused with sensuality and vivid color.

"Women painting women is such a powerful art form," Wright says; "Female experiences can be expressed through an organic, unfiltered lens. Before the Second-wave movement, this type of art had been largely ignored or trivialized, so it's empowering to see this new crusade of emotionally charged, female-focused work back in the spotlight."

MasculinFéminin expresses different states of the female psyche and explores a broad spectrum of universal human emotions. The subjects are complex and contrasted: vulnerable and seductive; exposed and concealed; aloof and domineering.

Female dominance and seduction is perhaps most explicit in a graphic composition inspired by a scene from a banned Nagisa Oshima film, whereby the female accidentally chokes her husband during an intense moment of passion. On the other end of the spectrum, a submissively reclining woman floating gracefully and naked in mid-air channels a certain vulnerability.

"The master narrative of the series intends to highlight the dichotomies of human emotions through a female lens," explains Wright. "The nature of the female experience is channeled through figurative, multi-layered works that stimulate critical thought. We can be strong, but we can also be vulnerable, and this is something that makes us unique, beautiful and equal."

Representing a female perspective is more important than ever in post-election America, and Wright hopes that fellow Nasty Women will take solace in the rising feminist art movement that is challenging outdated representations of women in the media and broader visual culture: “*MasculinFéminin* is a celebration of women that aren't restricted by superficial, antiquated stereotypes, but rather, they are emboldened by the fact that they are multifaceted, powerful humans, deserving of equality and respect."