

OTHER WORLDS THAN THIS

July 23 – November 6, 2022

A Guide to Looking

This guide offers a selection of works from the exhibition.

Look at the included artwork and then use the text to help build a deeper understanding of the artists, their processes, and their works.

***Other Worlds Than This* is an exhibition on the theme of the supernatural. The supernatural is a timeless topic that has captivated artists from ancient rites to the most popular fantasies of today. The show features a roster of influential Surrealists, including Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte and Yves Tanguy and two**

important paintings by Giorgio de Chirico, earliest “metaphysical” painter of the movement. It also includes Contemporary artists including Rona Pondick, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Robert Gober, Inka Essenhigh, Mary Corse and Christopher Winter.

In addition to paintings, drawings and photographs, the exhibition features historically important textiles from Southeast Asia, including shaman’s robes and worship objects, which tap the magic of animism and ancient rituals. Among the many important works are pre imperial sculptures from ancient Egypt, Greece, Shang dynasty China as well as the Olmec culture, a glorious moment in Pre-Columbian history. Dating to the Middle Formative Period (900-600 BC) these mysterious Olmec green jadeite figures are called Seated Stargazers for the evocative upward tilt of their heads.

A rare group of prints by Rembrandt, Goya and Durer are complemented by recent works on the same theme by

Audrey Flack, often referred to as the last surviving member of the Abstract Expressionist group.

published by Brewster, New York, ed. of 150 + 25 AP, 34 1/2 x 28 inches, Courtesy of the Gallery of

Leonora Carrington (1917-2011)

***Bird Bath*, 1978, Ten-color serigraph,**

Surrealism, New York

Inspiration

Born in Lancashire, England, Carrington spent her entire life and career as an artist rebelling against the societal expectations of her upper-class upbringing and the rigid rules of the Roman Catholic boarding schools she attended as a child. This gave birth to a lifetime of creative output as an artist in the Surrealist art movement. Carrington's first foray into working in the style of Surrealism was created amid the fervor and angst of the war in Europe. Simultaneously the artist took inspiration from a childhood immersed in fairy tales and fantasy literature, including the work of Jonathan Swift, Beatrix Potter, and Lewis Carroll.

In the Artist's Words

"I didn't have time to be anyone's muse...I was too busy rebelling against my family and learning to be an artist."



Take a Closer Look

Created later in her career, *Bird Bath* portrays three women positioned against a shallow architectural structure in the background of the work. The building recalls *Crookhey Hall*, her childhood London home, which was as Carrington recalls, decorated with ornamental bird

motifs. In the foreground, an elderly female figure dressed all in black (as Carrington herself dressed, in older age) sprays red paint onto a surprised-looking bird. The use of a large basin of water and a clean white cloth (held by the masked assistant) recalls the Christian sacrament of baptism, and the white bird may allude to the symbolic dove of the Holy Spirit. However, the ceremony enacted by these characters seems humorous as well as solemn. The woman in the scene has undergone her own

transformation, from girl to crone, while retaining her creative power.

Something to Talk About

Throughout her life, Carrington carried with her memories of her childhood stories and experiences, both positive and negative. What childhood memories or stories remain with you now as an adult?

Christopher Winter (b. 1968) Courtesy of the artist and Spectre, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 140 x 140 cm, Edelman Arts

Inspiration

Christopher Winter is a British artist who currently

and works in Berlin, Germany. His work is often referred to as "speculative realism," relating to philosophical explorations of an ever-shifting reality in which extrasensory experiences coexist with perceived truth. He relies on a codex of references; most notably the cinematography of Hitchcock films, which evoke primal emotions through an interplay of light and shadow. Inspired equally by classic horror films as he is by pop culture, comic books, and Grimm's fairytales, his works hint at a larger narrative that we, as the viewers, can access only through snippets and still frames; the artist never gives us the whole story, inviting us to fill the gaps.

In the Artist's Words

"Painting for me is a meditative process, which operates



on levels of the subconscious . . . I'm taking the viewers into the forest to confront them with themselves. The forest becomes a primordial mirror, reflecting fears of

darkness, the unknown. A point where we begin to imagine what could be there."

Take a Closer Look

In this work, unnatural, storybook colors collide with the forested setting, leaving the viewer with the impression that the scene itself is somehow otherworldly. Winter's often saturated and uncompromising palette further conflicts with the subject matter, which hints at something dark lurking in the corners; note the disembodied shadow at the bottom left and the

**Olmec, Seated Stargazer with Cleft Headress (left)
Standing Transformation Figure (right)**

Courtesy of Throckmorton
Fine Art, New York

c. 1100-500 BCE,

first complex .

Inspiration

The Olmec people were one of the

back as far as 1600 BCE.

societies of Mesoamerica, dating

They established their civilization in the region that would later become Tabasco and Veracruz, along the tropical lowlands of the Gulf of Mexico. The name "Olmec" comes from the Nahuatl (Aztec) word for "rubber people," likely referring to their active cultivation of naturally occurring latex. They are best known for carving large, 20-ton basalt heads of their rulers, but the smaller figures displayed here constitute an equally significant facet of their artistic production.

pentagram dangling from a branch in the background. This disconnect hints at the larger themes of this painting and Winter's work overall, that of the conflict between innocence and experience, and the hazy border where those realities meet.

Something to Talk About

Winter has been described as employing an "authoritative use of shadow." How is shadow used here? How does shadow add to or subtract from our understanding of narrative and overall mood?



In a Scholar's Words

"The supernatural is revealed in the human images and in those of composite appearance . . . the creation of the world, the origin of humankind, and the beneficent or harmful forces of nature." -Beatriz de la Fuente, *Order and Nature in Olmec Art* (1992).

Take a Closer Look

Two of the items are made of Jadeite, likely imported from the area now known as Oaxaca, hinting at an extensive and far-reaching trade network. The third object is of a class of figures known as "elongated men." This figure features the characteristic upper lip (or perhaps a mustache or fangs) associated with a shamanistic or magical transformation from human to animal form. As we do not have written accounts of the Olmec system of beliefs, much of what we know has been gleaned from material culture. The figures here include motifs common in Olmec iconography, including downturned mouths and cleft heads, emblematic of the were-jaguar and rain deity respectively.

Something to Talk About

What do you think the poses and expressions of the figures communicate about the role or function of these statuettes? Which features have been exaggerated or emphasized, and why?

1952) Cat, 2002-05,
Stainless steel

Rona Pondick (b.

1/8 inches .

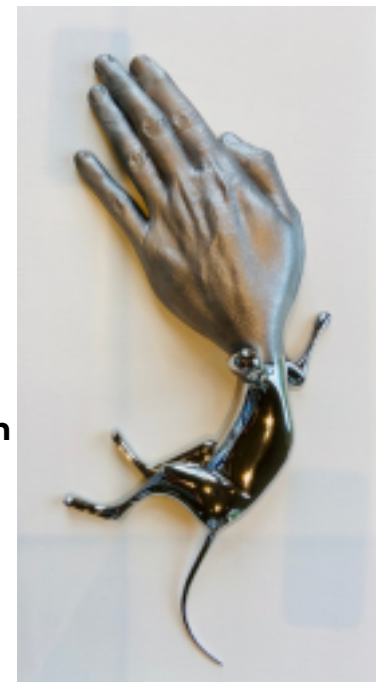
ed. 3/3, 4 1/2 x 33 x 14

Gallery, New York and Galerie
Thaddaeus Ropac, London, Paris,
Salzburg and Seoul

Courtesy of the Artist; Sonnabend

Inspiration

Rona Pondick was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1952. She studied at Yale University School of Art and received her MFA in 1977. She lives and works in New York City. Coming into prominence in the 1980s, Pondick works with familiar, often fragmented objects to construct her hybrid sculptures and often uses



her

own body to create her work. In the late 1990s, Pondick made her first hybrid sculptures marrying her own bodily fragments with animals or trees.

In the Artist's Words

"It started when I combined my head and arms with the body of a dog and then with the bodies of a cougar and fox. These pieces immediately made me think of mythology, science, and an image of a mouse I recently saw in the newspaper. This mouse had an ear growing out of its back. I had two immediate thoughts: that the image looked just like my work and that the mouse photograph was of something real. This was produced in an actual scientific experiment. How interesting, exciting and terrifying. Biological experiments raise so many important philosophical questions. Cloning, for example redefines questions of self. These experiments provoke lots of fears and desires."

Take a Closer Look

Pondick integrates her own head and hands with tree forms using hand modeling, computer technology, and ancient casting techniques. Fluidly integrating the hand modeling with a wide range of cutting-edge technologies, she sees technology as providing tools for her exploration in pursuit of the imagistic, the metaphoric and the psychologically suggestive.

Something to Talk About

Though not traditional self-portraits, Pondick uses her own body as a model for aspects of her sculptures, using human anatomy to express different states of psychological and sometimes emotionally fraught works. If you were to commission an artist to create a portrait of you, which medium would you choose? Photography, painting, or sculpture?

Starfull, 2022, Acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 inches, Courtesy of the Artist

Audrey Flack (b. 1931)

Inspiration

Best known today for her exquisitely striking compositions, Audrey Flack

produces superfluously decadent works of Baroque excess, filling her visual fields with dazzling depictions of modern still-life

elements that refer to her continued interest in the works of Tintoretto, Peter Paul Rubens, Albrecht Dürer and other Old Masters. Flack's work features religious and moral symbolism, through which she fused iconic photographic historical imagery with everyday objects. Flack has often employed an airbrush as a means of bringing the shimmering glow of advertising to her subject matter, thus infusing her art with dramatic qualities.

In the Artist's Words

"I believe in the energy of art, and through the use of that energy, the artist's ability to transform his or her life, and by example, the lives of others. I believe that through our art, and through the projection of transcended imagery, we can mend and heal the planet."

Take a Closer Look

Inspired by German artist Albrecht Durer's engraving Melancholia of 1514, Flack portrays a winged figure,

Whitetail Creature, 2021,
Foam, sola wood,

Allison Janae Hamilton (b.
1984)

bracken fern, resin and paint,
21 1/2 x 29 x 26

inches, Courtesy of Marianne
Boesky Gallery, New York

outlined and filled with luminous colors reminiscent or suggestive of stained glass, in a state of sadness, contemplation or the portrayal of an artist waiting for inspiration to strike. The term melancholia has evolved throughout history. Dating back to the 5th or 4th century BCE in Greece, the term originally referred to mental or physical disease. By the 16th century in England, to be melancholic was a mark of genius within certain cultural and literary circles. Today we use the term to refer to a person feeling "melancholy" or sad.

Something to Talk About

Flack is celebrated today for her strength and sincerity in producing outlandish and unabashedly poignant works of art. While Mary Cassatt is among the first female artists to appear H.W. Janson's History of Art, Flack was among three then-living women to have their art appear in subsequent editions. To this day, woman artists continue to be underrepresented in museums, galleries, and private collections. Why do you think this continues to be an issue?

Allison Janae Hamilton is an American artist who creates work that draws on the rural American South, referring to natural landscapes and history to create earthy and evocative

photography, film, and installations. A New York based artist, she was born in Kentucky, raised in Florida, and grew up spending time on her maternal family's homestead in Tennessee, which inspires and informs the deep connection to the natural world in her work.

In the Artist's Words

"These artworks were conceived as carbon-conscious objects, whose creation (including materials, packing et al) and lifetime (including any transportation locally or globally; past, present, or future) has accrued and will continue to accrue a carbon footprint, but whose accompanying carbon-conscious contribution of \$35 to Art for Acres will conserve 100 acres of land and protect 7 tCO₂ of stored carbon on Earth—this effort abates the carbon

I/Hundred Twenty-Eight,
2019, Thinnam on

Prabhavathi Meppayil (b.
1965)

gesso panel, 24 x 36 inches
(one panel); 18 x 36 inches

(one panel), Private
collection; courtesy

of Pace Gallery

Inspiration

Born in 1965, the Bangalore-based artist practices a subtle, delicate form of geometric abstraction. Prabhavathi Meppayil's abstract

footprint for the artwork's lifetime of existence. This contribution is intrinsic to the nature of the artwork and therefore to the value or ownership of the artwork."

Take a Closer Look

Hamilton's darkly whimsical compositions, including *Whitetail Creature*, references the art of uncanny taxidermy and the artist's powerful sense of place. Hamilton's imagined naturalism blends historical narratives with myth, finding the magic in the routines and rituals of rural life.

Something to Talk About

Hamilton's work brings attention to issue of climate change and justice. What are some present day current social, political, and cultural issues that concern you?

sculptures and installations excavate her Indian culture and are informed by the artist's family history of goldsmithing and her interest in minimalist aesthetics. The artist is interested in interweaving of past and present of artisanal practice and geometric Minimalism.

In the Artist's Words

"My work is often read as being about the artist, the practice and the craft because I come from a family of gold smiths and because that history is there. It is not as simple

as that. I am critically engaging with the language of the work through the context of my lived experience. This is where the histories of artisanal practice and personal narratives come into the picture and overlap with the visible geometric vocabulary."

Take a Closer Look

To create *I/Hundred Twenty-Eight*, the artist creates meticulously rendered marks, which blur the division between handicraft and mechanical reproduction. These marks are often made by hand with a thinnam (a

traditional jewelry tool used to incise ornamental patterns on bangles) on gesso or through the application of found jewelers' molds onto a wall to create intricate geometric patterns.

Something to Talk About

The use of a grid is found throughout time and culture: we see them in Greek coffered ceilings, Arabic screens, the warp and weft of woven fabrics, an ariel view of a city as seen by above. Where do you see the pattern of a grid in your daily life?

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