

Amy Yoes (American, b. 1959)

Mobile Animation Unit, 2018

Color animation, sound

5'32"

Courtesy the artist, Narrowsburg, New York, Made possible by a Film/Video Studio residency at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio. Special thanks to the Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago and to all of the volunteer animators.

Website:

Amy Yoes combines photography, painting, sculpture, and performance in her installations. While she is interested in upending traditional forms of cultural practice, she does so by tweaking high Modernism's seriousness by injecting in some technicolor fun. She uses the vocabularies of art history and architecture, infusing them with a bright flash of color that stands against the austere International Style that dominates our contemporary cities.

Previous projects include a series of large-scale, moveable sculptures that resemble giant Swiss Army knives, and a secret type of Morse code projected onto large forms, animating them as if they are communicating to us. In her Kitchen Project, every kitchen cupboard door has its own sound track of scrapes and pings, suggesting a secret life for each. The artist helps us see that the supposedly "neutral" objects of our world shape us as much as we shape them.

The work *Mobile Animation Unit*, 2019-20, comes from the Hélió Lab workshops she set up at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, organized to coincide with the Art Institute's Hélió Oiticica exhibition in 2017. Oiticica was a Brazilian artist whose mid-20th century cross-genre work freed artists to create works that were of, and for, the people of his time.

In response to the Oiticica show, Yoes created a workshop of colorful shapes and forms that were manipulated by teams of students and volunteers who helped the artist choreograph the abstract shapes as they made micro-movements in a dance of time. The stop-animation elements were made of cardboard, plexiglass, acetate, paper, and wood. These were supplemented by Yoes' larger sculptures that supplied an additional range of machine-like motions.

The work is at once funny and a little menacing. While watching the small, brightly colored elements twirl and turn without any outcome or output, it makes the viewer wonder if their own daily machinations have as little return for the energy invested. Occasionally elements will clank and clash against one another, which in the real world this would cause a bottleneck on an assembly line or stress at a staff meeting. Here, all is dissipated in a loss of energy.

This visual vocabulary recalls the work of the Russian constructivists from the first half of the 20th century. Their commitment to non-expressive abstraction was intended to create a universal language for everyone. But the menace of man dominated by machines, so celebrated as freeing humans by the constructivists, is found in work such as Fritz Lang's 1927 silent science fiction film *Metropolis*. Lang showed workers fed to machines to keep them going. While Yoes does not explicitly convey whether she thinks machines are good for us or bad, she charges us with sorting that out for ourselves.

Lawrence Weiner (American, 1924-2021)

AT THE SAME MOMENT, 2000

Language + the materials referred to

Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

Website:

One of the leading figures of the global Conceptual art world from the late 1960s onward, Lawrence Weiner was among the first to question traditional conventions of objecthood and propose a new relationship to art making and redefine the status of the artist.

Artists have stretched our understanding of art, adopting and adapting new and old practices to express something about our changing world. Weiner and his peers have “dematerialized” art works, deliberately evading strict academic genre definitions. Weiner has specifically questioned the connections and obligations that link artist and audience through the objects they make. Instead, Weiner has chosen to make these connections through language, the very material that shapes our relationship to the world, to objects and to one another.

Weiner’s works are described by him as ‘language + the materials referred to,’ and he defines them as ‘the relationship of human beings to objects, and objects to objects in relation to human beings.’ His parameters allow for an endlessly adaptive representation of the relationship of material components, processes and states, permitting simultaneity and a flexibility of spatial construction.

A poetic ambiguity of his pieces allows the individual viewer a point of reception that is not bound by time and place, enabling personal interpretation through real time experience of the work.

Although Weiner does not consider his works site-specific, each piece can be reconceived and built anew. Building a distinct relationship to content and/or context, Weiner’s language fosters a universality that offers the public a multitude of interpretations, that are their interpretations. Realized in many diverse forms, whether on building facades, museums, on sidewalks and cross walks, in public or private commissions, as music or as multiples, artist books, film, video, posters... Weiner’s belief in the democracy of the object and multiplicity of its reception is the essence of his conception of the work of art.

With *AT THE SAME MOMENT* on the Milwaukee skywalk Weiner once again reiterates the relationship of human beings to objects, and vice versa, allowing for multiple interpretations which continue to disrupt and transform our experience of art today.

Nari Ward (Jamaican-American, b. 1963)

Apollo/Poll, 2017

Steel, wood, vinyl, LED lights

360 x 144 x 48 inches

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York/Seoul/Hong Kong, Originally presented and commissioned by Socrates Sculpture Park, New York.

Website:

New York-based artist Nari Ward is a bricoleur. He recuperates left-over objects and images from his walks around New York, particularly his Harlem neighborhood, and breathes new life into them in sometimes elegiac, somewhat shocking juxtapositions. These objects range from furniture and tools to a child's crib. Ward honors how these objects become part of our lives, and end as talismans of a time and place that no longer needs them. These objects speak of loving care by their owners and the unseen forces that end in displacement and abandonment. He is interested in "cultural identity, social progress, material histories and a sense of belonging."

Ward explores themes and imagery from African American culture, sports, politics and place. He investigates the power and hidden histories of objects, embracing this past while allowing them to resonate with today's politics. The artist uses African and African-American traditions—weaving, wrapping, recycling—that embrace old and new, that show us how the flavor of the past colors how we live in the present. There is often an air of melancholy, of meaning slipping away in his sculptures, but Ward's goal is to bring them back to us with lessons of the past.

Ward's most recent show played with visual tropes of outdoor structures: signage, lawn ornaments, playgrounds and monuments. *Apollo/Poll* is an homage to the famous Apollo Theater in Harlem, epicenter of Black Renaissance fueled by the Great Migration from the South to the North between 1910 and 1970. The sign, commissioned by the Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City, reflects Ward's rumination on enterprise and the "...art of self-promotion, performance, originality, and the meaning of communal acceptance." The Apollo was founded in 1914 as Hurtig and Seamon's New Burlesque Theater that did not allow African Americans as patrons or performers. In 1934 the name changed, and the owners marketed specifically to African Americans. While viewers may know Amateur Night at the Apollo, where the audience gets to vote on their favorite act—hence the word POLL.

Apollo, the Greek god of light, healing, music and truth, is an appropriate name for this cultural site. This sense of democracy was likely understood as ironic, for African Americans continued to withstand ever-tightening Jim Crow laws to restrict where they lived, how they worked, and how they created community. *Apollo/Poll* holds particular resonance in our historical moment, when belonging, access and community are under attack. Ward creates works that are slippery, since as an immigrant from Jamaica, his history is not American history. He grew up speaking Patois, where various languages—English, French, Spanish and African languages—are intermingled, not spoken sequentially, or hierarchically. Ward slips between visual languages, bringing us critique and pathos in his installations.

Tony Tasset (American, b. 1960)

Blob Monster, 2010

Fiberglass

96 x 96 x 96 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago

Website:

Over the past three decades, multi-media artist Tony Tasset has created several related major bodies of work. Early in his career he explored the post-modern impulse to make art about art—by making art about art. Tasset showed his love and passion for both the post-modern copies and the modern originals, his references ranging across artistic generations, using traditional and contemporary materials.

Tasset's area of focus turned to identity politics alongside a broad art world press for more diversity and equity in our cultural realm. This push, led by women, people of color, artists of different sexual orientation, and immigrants, challenged how we see authority and authenticity, making room for narratives beyond our worship of the hero-conqueror model of history. Tasset made work about his own middle class, white male life, exposing the personal inside the larger context of the political.

Tasset's more recent vein of work is of surreal, large-scale sculptures that draw imagery from American popular culture. Tasset pulls ideas and inspiration from music, literature, movies, amusement parks, and public swimming pools, his polyglot interests putting high and low art forms on the same playing field. From giant pumpkins cast from a state fair winner to melting snowmen encrusted with shades of shiny glass, Tasset reflects the realities and disappointments of the American dream.

Tasset's giant sci-fi *Blob Monster*, 2009, recalls *The Blob*, a 1958 movie, featuring Steve McQueen in his debut. *The Blob* was about a creeping menace that could not be stopped, a post-war parable about the Cold War. The figure's sad droopy face looks like a child's toy left out in the sun too long. Tasset's monster refers to the monsters inside of us, or perhaps the untouchable forces of culture, both large and small, that define our world.

Tasset uses iconographic imagery, recontextualizing familiar objects in a scale that can compete with architecture. In light of the current pandemic, *Blob Monster* embodies an unstoppable force that we humans must band together to stop.

Maggie Sasso (American, b. 1983)

Too Much Sea for Amateurs—Marooned, 2016

Outdoor rated coated polyester fabric, steel, conduit pipe, pipe connectors and feet, Velcro, light fixture
204 x 144 x 120 inches

Website:

Milwaukee-based artist Maggie Sasso is interested in the unique culture that exists along the shores of Lake Michigan. She explores the myths, legends, and metaphors of maritime culture, and how they represent the fragility of life. Her diverse background in craft, woodworking and metalsmithing has allowed her to create a wide array of objects, from the flags and semaphores used to guide ships to clothing inspired by nautical wear.

In her piece *Too Much Sea for Amateurs—Marooned*, 2016, Sasso has recreated the 1926 Art Deco Coast Guard station along Milwaukee's harbor breakwater. While the building seems like a toy miniature from a distance, the building is enormous, isolated, and dangerous to get to from land or water. Sasso's work recalls the work of our forbearers, their hard work and sacrifice in trying to tame the lake while protecting those on land.

Thomas J Price (British, b. 1981)

Within the Folds (Dialogue 1), 2020

Cast silicone bronze

108 x 27 x 27 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Website:

Multi-media British artist Thomas J. Price is known for his experimentation across diverse media including film, performance, photography and sculpture. His work is deeply philosophical, the artist often referring to ancient culture to probe its influence on contemporary Western art and society. While Price's work is very specific to his time, place and background, there are broad ramifications for his questions about our narrow conception of who shapes our world.

The underlying theme that links across his bodies of work is the subconscious bias that humans share. For example, in a series of photographs Price manipulates art history books of classic Greek sculpture. He folds and overlays images to tell his own subtle narratives, reflecting the times we live in today. In a series of stop animation videos, Price mimics the way that archaeologists imagined our ancient ancestors. Price's plasticine figures are not ancient homo sapiens or Neanderthals, but rather, black male figures whose hairstyles betray them as contemporaries. Price suggests how outdated assumptions about black men, shaped by 19th century scientific experiments, restricts the real lives of contemporary men of color. Most recently Price has focused on the traditional forms of figurative sculpture to challenge our assumptions about public monumentation. Price uses a classic posture from Greek sculpture in *Within the Folds (Dialogue 1)*, 2020, the artist's most recent work. Price hacks into the tradition of public sculpture of almost exclusively male generals, patricians and noblemen by presenting a black British man, standing in comfortable fashion-forward sportswear, and looking into space.

Price's title, *Within the Folds (Dialogue 1)*, might suggest that Price is bringing his figure "into the fold" of art history, but also his facility in rendering fabric in a hard material. Dialogue 1 may refer to Plato's Dialogues, whereby the philosopher used the format of give-and-take discussion to educate his students and readers on complex topics. Price has created a series of these portraits of idealized black male subjects, drawn from an area of London with a large Caribbean diasporic community. Like many artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, Price moves beyond the traditional public art narratives of community or nation-building by presenting us with our neighbor, someone whose history is often buried beneath the prejudices of our time.

Price's "art history hack" is part of the contemporary impulse by women, artists of color or of diverse sexual orientations to simultaneously celebrate and critique art of the past in order to insert new narratives of contemporary life into our shared space.

Julian Opie (British, b. 1958)

Natalie Walking, 2016

LED double-sided monolith

82 5/8 x 35 3/8 x 11 3/4 inches

Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery, New York/London.

Website:

Julian Opie has been making art work rooted in the world around him—buildings, animals, places, and people—for over three decades. His paintings, sculpture, video, and “moving” portraits draw from ancient Egyptian portraiture, Japanese woodblock prints, Old Master portraits, public signage, and 1960s Pop Artists such as Patrick Caulfield and Roy Lichtenstein. He balances realism and abstraction while using new and traditional technologies to challenge those traditions.

Opie explores the unique rhythms of the city through his animated light box works like *Natalie Walking*, 2016. In his trademark style, Opie captures the way we present ourselves to the world—the tilt of the head for attitude, the donning of clothes to express aspiration or social-economic status, the accoutrements to show profession or affiliation. He acknowledges what is common about humans but preserves what is unique in each.

Natalie Walking shows a young woman wearing a fashionably youthful short skirt, her hair in a tight bun that suggests control. We build our own narrative about Nathalie; she is a purposeful woman who is serious about her life but playful about her wardrobe. By placing Natalie outdoors the viewer asks: do young women feel safe in public space? How do we gaze at total strangers walking through the city? Can clothing truly be individual, or, as we learned in *The Devil Wears Prada*, how much are we shaped by the decisions and choices of others?

For a recent exhibition in New York, the artist revealed that he has been concerned with the homogenization of our cities through globalization. Although the internet has allowed us to expand to sample the world and “curate” our own lives and spaces, the corporatization of our public spaces, clothing, vacation, and lifestyle choices shows we still choose from a pre-existing menu. We are simultaneously trying to create a unique self while panicked by “f.o.m.o.”—fear of missing out—that prompts us to conform to what is trending. Opie fights the drive for sameness through the small nuances of his figures. Opie uses the technology of life-size light boxes so his characters stand out in different climatic conditions—in the fog of morning, the bright glare of high noon, in the shadowy colors of dusk, or the tinted midnight sky. The artist has said “We use vision as a means of survival and it’s essential to take it for granted in order to function, but awareness allows us to look at looking and by extension look at ourselves and be aware of our presence.

William Kentridge (South African, b. 1955)

Open, 2018

Bronze

42 1/2 x 21 1/4 x 13 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

Website:

William Kentridge, born in 1955 into apartheid-era South Africa, was one of the first major visual South African contemporary artists to bring his politically active art work to the wider world while global boycotts worked to dismantle apartheid.¹ Kentridge's family were Lithuanian Jews who fled to Johannesburg via Europe during a 19th century Russian pogrom. His family was very involved in the politics of the country, from his grandfather's role in parliament to his lawyer father's fight, with "incandescent rage," at the depredations of apartheid, which officially ended in 1994.

Kentridge explores the "instability of knowledge in the world, its provisionality." He comments on this through the instability of his objects that morph or disappear as a metaphor for the events and experiences of our daily lives. By staging illogical events with often illogical figures, Kentridge questions the solidity of text and of images. We understand Kentridge's goal: to up-end our understanding of reality and to question our assumptions about the world.

Kentridge is interested in the comedy and tragedy of history, and how the "...universality of laughter rather than the particularity of tears is a better way of approaching...huge social shifts and changes."² Kentridge is one of the most stirring and incisive artists of his time, combining artistic forms drawn from Surrealism and Dada, a deep meditation on the history of art in the early Soviet era to the stories, legacy, and ancient narratives of Africa and other parts of the world. He drew as a child, and after moving about in the theater and film worlds, he went back to his original love of drawing. The artist has experimented across forms, from flip books and stop animation to live performance, operas, drawings, sculpture, and shadow plays. He creates an enveloping world of forms and characters that are haunting, mournful, and hopeful as they look towards their common humanity.

Kentridge's lexicon of "props" appear across his various art forms, drawn from the ancient and modern worlds, from art history, and from his own encyclopedic concordance of images drawn from his films. Recurrent images include the carrier pigeon, a pre-radar listening device, a gas mask, a war horse, and a tank to a cat, reclining nude, flowers, a fan, and German artist Albrecht Durer's rhinoceros. Kentridge manipulates his figures like chess pieces, each move impacting how we read the next, each outcome in the game of unique.

Lexicon Medium Bronze (Open), 2019, is from a recent exhibition in New York that was based on the forms and figures from three performances from the past two years.³ *Lexicon Medium Bronze (Open)*, is drawn from the "corkscrew" figure *Open*. The headless, sci fi figure tilts upwards, as if proud of its place in the world, never mind missing head and arms. Like most of his figures created for his artistic forms, Kentridge uses found objects immediately at hand, allowing for an improvisational yet recognizable object that has vaguely human attributes.

This skeletal figure may suggest humanity hollowed out by the depredations of persistent social and political denigration. As a white man Kentridge sees this devastation. He critiques the mechanisms of power in order to inspire his viewers to dismantle them or contest them in whatever ways they can.

Alex Katz (American, b. 1927)

Park Avenue Departure, 2019

Porcelain enamel, steel

96 x 31 x 1 1/2 inches

Courtesy the artist and Kasmin Gallery, New York.

Website:

American artist Alex Katz has been active in the art world since the late 1940s. He came of age at the height of the Abstract Expressionist movement, animated by a group of émigrés and war veterans scarred by the war, along with recent university grads inspired by philosophy, psychoanalysis, and formal aesthetic considerations. Yet Katz's clean, flat paintings focused on Madison Avenue and popular culture, pre-dating similar Pop works by fellow artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein by several years. Katz embodies the false dichotomy between figuration and abstraction since he merges the two seamlessly. He is primarily known for his twisting of two well-established artist genres: portraiture and landscape. *Park Avenue Departure* is a very flat two-sided sculpture that has the profile of a sign.

We see Katz's life-long muse and model, wife Ada, dressed in a beach-worthy slouchy ensemble, her head protected from the sun. The patches of unmatched color on her tan pants and black shirt suggest light reflected off pavement or a passing car, embedding the figure in her surroundings. The lack of narrative—is she waiting for a friend, has she been left behind?—leave us slightly uneasy about the figure. Viewers perceive the figure like a Cubist puzzle that falls apart and reassembles itself as we walk around the work. Katz began producing cut-outs in 1959, first on wood then later on aluminum, depicting characters from his New York milieu of artists, poets and friends. The works are only partially about factual representation of real people, concerned more with formal shapes and textures of surface. We do not see Ada's face in *Park Avenue Departure*, the artist refusing us any insight into this particular figure. Katz has said his interests are “light, clothes, people,” and this work synthesizes all three.

Since 1951 Katz has been the subject of over 200 solo exhibitions and nearly 500 group exhibitions.

Sky Hopinka (Hochunk Nation and Pechanga Band of Indians Native American, b. 1984)

I'll remember you as you were, not as what you'll become, 2016

Digital video, sound

12'32"

Courtesy the artist, Wittenberg, Wisconsin.

Website:

First Nations artist Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) creates video, photo, and text works that center around his personal relationship to Indigenous homeland and landscape. He also highlights language as a container of culture, through personal, documentary, and non-fiction forms of media.

Hopinka switches between languages in his meditative pieces that focus on native beliefs about how individuals experience time, how we connect to the land, and the effort to bring forth ancient forms of wisdom that helped Indigenous Peoples thrive on this land before First Contact.

Hopinka uses new and old technologies to express a sensitive, delicate aesthetic. He builds layers of meaning through a collage of imagery in color and black and white, using historic photographs as well as footage from his daily life and experiences with friends and family. He honors Indigenous social spaces such as pow wows that anchor his stories about the diverse First Nations peoples who lived and managed North America for thousands of years.

In his work *I'll remember you as you were, not as what you'll become*, 2016, Hopinka documents a road trip as the sun rises in the east, and a pow wow, its images of dancers abstracted with the jingle of dresses and the call of the emcee in the background. We see a First Nations woman comedian/poet talk about her world. And we see words floating, like talisman or symbols, etching the shape of a mythical being in a black sky. Language is a key component to this work. Hopinka has studied and taught chinuk wawa, a language indigenous to the lower Columbia River Basin of Oregon and Washington states. This cultural area is known for its rich landscape of salmon, and the efforts of Indigenous activists and environmentalists to restore the natural flow of the Columbia River, so important to the livelihood of its people and the salmon that sustain them.

Hopinka reminds us that there are tangible reminders of the peoples who lived in the Americas prior to the arrival of Europeans, and that honoring these ancient cultural traditions should be an important part of our cultural reckoning in this unprecedented period of change.

Leslie Hewitt (American b. 1977)

Forty-two, 2019

Technoscape film

42'00"

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Perrotin, New York.

Website:

Leslie Hewitt's *Forty-two* rewards time spent in contemplation. The artist's conceptually driven practice creates a platform for dialogue across media, blurring the boundaries between photography and sculpture, video and concrete poetry. Although this media installation was originally conceived for a 2019 exhibition, *Reading Room*, it translates beautifully to this uncertain time in which we find ourselves, quarantined and introspective.

Hewitt's work often seeks to transfix audiences through site specificity, both in how objects relate to each other and to viewers in a space, and how the ideas draw on relevant historical and cultural touchpoints at the intersection of photography, poetics, modalities of power, and the trauma of our cultural heritage. This installation, ubiquitous in form and hidden in plain sight, demands a repositioning of perspectives and points to the systems that shape our cultural infrastructures.

For *Forty-two*, the artist created a computer programmed machine that generates concrete poetry using IBM Plex Mono typeface. Although it is software-generated, it mimics active engagement by slowly typing out (and in certain cases deleting) each word, letter by letter, on the screen via the pulse of a cursor. As each new word is added, the overall meaning transforms and shifts. The sentences it creates are legible but often enigmatic, especially without the necessary references, which pushes viewers back to the form itself—to the shape and sculptural quality of the letters as they form minimal shapes on the blank screen.

Hewitt's work is informed by the legacy of Minimalism and she is particularly interested in the convergence of this artistic style and the Civil Rights movement. The title of this work references the lifespan of a landmark bookstore in Harlem. Books are an important element in Hewitt's practice, both as aesthetic form and conceptual symbol. More broadly, she is interested in systematic patterns that underlie the closure of bookstores in the 20th century. To generate the words for this piece, the artist examined photographs of the establishment's interior and storefront and analyzed their visual language to create a vocabulary.

Following in the framework of Minimalist artists who explored the principles and systems of mathematics, Hewitt (as a post-Minimalist artist) is driven to examine systems of knowledge in her own way. She is a problem solver. Her process mimics scientific experimentation in its rigorous and formulaic adherence to systems she constructs to test variations. Though the form may at first appear cold and clinical, the invitation to participate with its content is vibrant and human. By engaging poetry, Hewitt encourages considerations that are at once, mysterious, and familiar, playful and yet critically focused on notions of erasure and retrieval.

Anna Fasshauer (German, b. 1975)

Tallulah Rapsody, 2019

Aluminum, car lacquer

80 x 40 x 50 inches

Courtesy the artist and Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles.

Website:

German artist Anna Fasshauer makes Pop-ish, colorful works that bring to mind childhood games of pickup sticks, and the performative, process-based works of first generation feminist artists like Lynda Benglis. Fasshauer's work also smacks of the cheerful soft sculptures of Swedish/American artist Claes Oldenburg, who found meaningful forms in the every day. Fasshauer's works can resemble totems, or industrial cast-offs, or machines ill-suited for their roles. While the works enchant us with their peppy colors, they strike a weighty balance between heavy and light, abstract and figurative, masculine and feminine.

Fasshauer's first sculptural works, of mysterious carpet-covered forms, bounced between Surrealism and the interactive experiments of Austrian artist Franz West's, who saw his works "completed" only when the viewer was physically engaged with the works. She made a series of works using cars as her primary image, each a metaphor for our daily disasters.

Tallulah Rapsody is from Fasshauer's latest body of work that resembles a squashed wind instrument, like a saxophone or clarinet. The artist chose the title *Tallulah Rapsody* because of its musical associations. "Rapsody" (in English rhapsody) is a one-movement composition, and "talulah" (or Tallulah, either an Irish girl's name or an anglicized Choctaw name) means "water source," which evokes the tinkly sound of water or a one-movement composition according to the artist.

The blue of the work was inspired by the sky in Marfa, Texas, the small town turned into an art world mecca by American artist Donald Judd where Fasshauer made the work. Judd took over an old army base to install his own work, and those of fellow Minimalist and Conceptual artists from the 1960s onward, whose experiments used industrial materials assembled in uninflected (non-expressionistic) ways to find truth through a universal visual language.

While Fasshauer's work may mimic the classic geometric abstraction of artists like Mark di Suvero and Bernar Venet, her graphic abstraction is typically based on real people, or places, using linguistic slang and puns to give the viewer a clue to start unlocking the work's meaning.

Fasshauer is in dialogue with these male artists. She shapes, twists and fastens stiff, industrial materials using her own physical capacity to render them soft, pliant and more evocative of the hand-made and personal. We can literally see how the artist has twisted the components of *Tallulah Rapsody* as she struggled with her large-scale straws—actually aluminum beams sourced from nearby El Paso—creating a cheerful piece that is both abstract and figurative. Like the wide-ranging experiments of German artist Isa Genzken that challenge the male-dominated history of contemporary sculpture, Fasshauer pushes herself and her materials as part of the next wave of global artistic feminism.

Jim Dine (American, b. 1935)

Jim's Head with Branches, 2018

Bronze with patine

106 x 80 x 94 inches

Courtesy the artist and Gray Gallery, Chicago/New York.

Website:

Jim Dine has been part of American art history since the early 1960s. He co-founded the legendary Judson Theater with Claes Oldenburg, helping to launch New York's downtown "Happenings" scene, where artists began creating inexpensive, accessible works that combined theater, performance and sculpture. He is best known for his use of common, popular imagery (the "Pop" in Pop Art), linking him to artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, although Dine never felt comfortable being lumped in that movement. Dine is most properly an artist of classical taste, borrowing visual vocabularies from the past to make works fully of the present. His wide-ranging material use shows him to be a curious, restless thinker. He is an inventor, a lover of all kinds of materials and experiences. He is a witness to the events, trials and tribulations that visit us all.

Over the past six decades there have been several threads of imagery found in Dine's work. His focus on hand tools connects artistic practice to artisanal practice, elevating the saws, hammers and screw drivers that help create the work. This use of hand-held tools was influenced, perhaps, by the loss of his mother at age 12, when Dine began to spend time with his grandparents who owned a hardware store. Another thread is self-portraits and the use of other "characters"—like Pinocchio or Venus—as avatars. Pinocchio is a vulnerable naïf with a heart of gold. By choosing Venus as a surrogate suggests Dine's sensitivity to others, an interest in the symbolic relationships in the ancient, classical world.

Jim's Head with Branches is not a "selfie," a celebration of the unadulterated fabulous self as it does fabulous things. Instead Dine's self-portraits follow the long tradition by artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn, or contemporaries like John Coplans and Robert Arneson, whose works are an unvarnished document of the aging male body and psyche. Are the branches trapping Jim's head real or imagined, imposed from the outside or from the inside? Dine matches his psychological state with his materials and methods. The work has a heavily scumbled surface, roughed up with scars, as if the mind's traumas have migrated to the surface.

Jim's Head with Branches also recalls the fragments of ancient cultures, from partial statues of the Egyptian god Horus to Roman Emperor Constantine's giant head. Dine's contemporary fragment suggests social dissociation, a self divided from its own context and time. The artist's unflinching take on the impacts of ageing, and contemporary society's dismissal of the wisdom that comes with experience, creates a figure at both monumental and sadly alone.

Paula Crown

JOKESTER, 2018

Painted epoxy resin, fiberglass, urethane foam, stainless steel

84 x 108 x 120 inches

Courtesy Atelier Paula Crown, Chicago.

Website:

Paula Crown has an active studio practice of drawing, painting, video and sculpture, using high tech tools and ancient techniques while committing to sustainability. Her practice is also rooted in social activism. She has been involved with the national movement For Freedoms, launched in 2016 by artists Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman, contributing imagery that juxtaposes the hard fact of guns against the political platitudes of “thoughts and prayers” that attend mass shootings in our country. That Crown’s home of Chicago has had historically one of the highest gun violence rates in the country makes this type of intervention timely and meaningful. In other works Crown highlights the climate crisis, and the personal perils faced by immigrants around the globe.

For several years Crown has created work to bring the growing environmental crisis caused by single-use plastic to our attention. Single-use plastic includes the flimsy plastic bags from the grocery store and expands into virtually every product we buy from amazon, the grocery store, the mall, and the convenience store. There is no escaping this product.

The image Crown uses is the ubiquitous red plastic SOLO cup that has become synonymous with frat parties and floating refuse. Crown suggests through her giant work *JOKESTER*, 2018, that although there is a big party going on somewhere, someone is responsible to clean up afterwards. The slick red cup—a cry of joy or alarm—sits sedately on the sidewalk, unaware that it is crushed and discarded after a rough night’s use.

The Third Ward is a deliberate site for the work. As the area adjacent to Milwaukee’s Summerfest grounds that plays host to “the world’s largest music festival,” and numerous concerts and ethnic festivals held throughout our warmer-weather seasons, the Third Ward becomes that ground zero for cleaning up refuse left behind by transient visitors.

Like all sites of human habitation, Milwaukee was founded on the shores of a great body of water that sustains life, food, agriculture, manufacturing, sport and recreation. Yet each pond, stream, river, lake and ocean is increasingly under threat from the chemicals that are released through our sewer system, the air-borne particulate matter that settles from the sky, and the tons of garbage that finds its way into the very lifeblood of the earth. Crown’s giant red cup, crafted to perfectly mimic the throw-away culture we live in, becomes a shameful reminder of how we treat Mother Nature.

Paul Druecke (American, b. 1964)

Shoreline Repast, 2017

Double-sided aluminum, paint, steel, recycled wood, hardware.

72 x 78 x 4 inches

Website:

Milwaukee-based artist Paul Druecke explores the various forms of public inscription that exist in our landscape. From faux National Park service historical markers to poetry-infused welcome mats, his experiments replace “official” language, that fix value and identity, with alternative narratives and cultural structures that allow us to consider how our world is shaped.

Druecke is interested in all kinds of social gatherings. For example, he documents friends gathering in a kitchen to share their food, which is always at the heart of every community. In these homemade films, the casual atmosphere, low tech aesthetic, and occasional bouts of singing and laughing provide an antidote to modern cooking shows, whose high production value and sophisticated knowledge discourage all but the hearty among us.