

Art in Review

Ranjani Shettar

'Night skies and daydreams'

Talwar Gallery
108 East 16th Street, Manhattan
Through Sept. 27

One of Ranjani Shettar's diaphanous, constellation-like sculptures of hand-molded wax beads and cotton thread, installed at the entrance to "On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century," at the Museum of Modern Art, made a stellar introduction to that 2010 show. A new, similar piece, called "Tuntoroo," fills a room at Talwar Gallery. And here, in a way that wasn't obvious at MoMA, light plays a big role in the work, as patterns of shadows cast on the wall compound its intricacy and emphasize its apparent fragility.

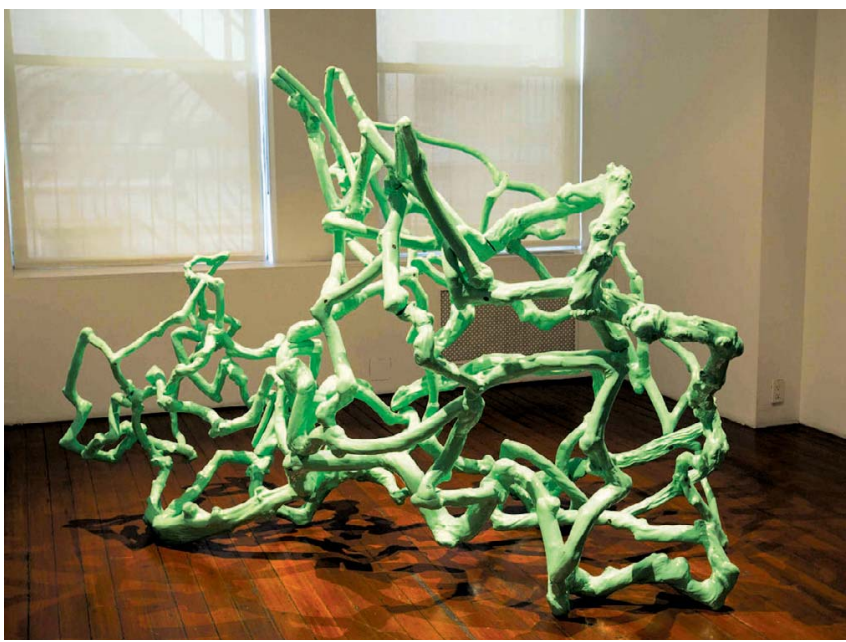
Ms. Shettar was trained in art school in Bangalore, India, but has always found formal sources for her abstract work in materials associated with the craft traditions of Karnataka, the southwestern state where she lives and works.

For another, very different suspended piece from 2007, "Fire in the Belly," she carved more than a dozen largish biomorphic shapes from local acacia wood, painted them a glossy, metallic yellow-green and suspended them at varying heights. They suggest a school of morphing amoebas, or a bunch of Brancusi gone rogue.

A 2014 sculpture, "Flight of the Butterfly," stands on the floor but looks as if it could easily lift off. It's composed of gnarly light-weight coffee-wood branches bolted together to form a tangled enclosure and colored with bright turquoise automotive paint. The branches are oddly homely; they look like bones. The paint is thick and unpretty. Ms. Shettar has done nothing to hide the metal bolts that hold everything together.

A resulting slight sense of awkwardness is what makes her art so persuasive: It indicates that the hand is there; the material is unlevigated; the technology is organic. Pure abstraction, with its implication of perfection, is beside the point. In Ms. Shettar's transubstantiated modernism, local nature and culture have their way.

HOLLAND COTTER



TALWAR GALLERY, NEW YORK/NEW DELHI

Ranjani Shettar's "Flight of the Butterfly," in coffee tree wood, with automobile paint and bolts.



2014 CARLOS GINZBURG ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK AND HENRIQUE FARIA, NEW YORK

"Le Dentier Occidental à Fes" (Maroc, 1980), from Carlos Ginzburg's Voyages series, at Henrique Faria Fine Art.

with surveillance and the domination of everyday life by machinery. But it's hard to see how turning these sorts of things into wood, however ingeniously, adds anything consequential to that project.

KEN JOHNSON



2014 JEAN DUBUFFET ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK-ADAGP, PARIS/ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES

Jean Dubuffet's 1950 "Tête de Héros" ("Hero's Head").

sexual act (or at least contemplating one). But the phrase "Laying Here Together" implies platonic asexuality.

The ostensible calm is shattered by a pink-on-pink sign, "Only yelling older women in here/Nothing to sell." To wit: Angry art by angry (especially older) female artists has no market. A free-standing canvas near the door reinstates composure, wishing us "Best regards."

You might also take note of Ms. van der Stokker's impeccable sense of scale. It gently encompasses and dwarfs without overwhelming, while we extract our different readings, of which this one but scratches the surface.

ROBERTA SMITH

Carlos Ginzburg

'The Forgotten Vintage'

Henrique Faria Fine Art
35 East 67th Street, fourth floor,
Manhattan
Through Oct. 4

The early days of Conceptual Art seem long ago and far away. But you get a sense of the movement's mix of politics, perversity and humor in this survey of early work by Carlos Ginzburg, an artist and theoretician — were the two ever really separable in Conceptualism? — who was born in Argentina in 1946 and has lived in

Paris since 1972.

Almost everything involves some kind of site-specific performance or action documented in photographs and texts. For one of the earliest pieces, done for the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires in 1971, Mr. Ginzburg fenced in a vacant lot near the museum with tall wooden hoardings and put up signs advertising an "unexpected aesthetic experience" behind the walls.

To have the experience, however, visitors were required to enter the museum, which was on the ninth floor of a high-rise, locate a particular window and look out, only to find the single word "Tierra" — "Earth" — written large on the ground in the lot below. Amused, bemused or annoyed, people were at least given a new definition of "art" to wrestle with, and art that took them back where they came from, the street.

That piece now exists as a series of photographs, as do several others based on Mr. Ginzburg's trips to different parts of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas between 1972 and 1982. Calling himself simply Traveling Artist in various Asian cities (the capitals of Thailand, Bangladesh and Indonesia) in 1979, he had local people pose in cartoonish portrait masks of President Jimmy Carter.

A year later, he took pictures of tourist sites in and around Mexico City, pairing the images with travel guide descriptions of the sites, the words (mostly in French) making the places sound far more charismatic than they appear in the bland black-and-white images. In short, before today's global tourist industry had fully set in, he was rehearsing its big-footing presence and misrepresentations.

HOLLAND COTTER

'Dubuffet/Barceló'

Acquavella Galleries
18 East 79th Street, Manhattan
Through next Friday

This pairing of the postwar Art Brut leader Jean Dubuffet and the contemporary Spanish painter Miquel Barceló is predictably unbalanced but nonetheless stimulating. It includes a fantastic selection of Dubuffets from the 1940s and '50s, among them his richly marbled "Texturologies" and earthy portrait heads — all of which make for an excellent prologue to the Museum of Modern Art's fall exhibition "Jean Dubuffet: Soul of the Underground."

Dubuffet's "Tête de Héros" ("Hero's Head," 1950) and "Tête Envahie de Fluids" ("Head Filled With Fluids," 1951) present the head as a flat, gelatinous blob — a protozoan under a microscope, perhaps. In mid-1950s works like "Riches Vaiselles" ("Rich Dishes"), fossil-like hints of the figure emerge from heavily knifed and scraped grounds. And in the fully abstract "Texturologies" of the late 1950s, Abstract Expressionist drips, à la Pollock, are buried under thin, glassy layers, as if glimpsed through sheets of ice.

Against Dubuffet's restless, searching paintings, Mr. Barceló's works feel utterly formulaic. A conservatism creeps through, even when he uses unorthodox techniques, as when he paints conventional-looking portraits with bleach, chalk and charcoal on canvas, or makes insipid monochromes with strips of polyvinyl acetate coated thickly in titanium pigment. The exception is "Huitres II" ("Oysters II") from 1988, in which a creamy ground appears scarred by scattered little C-cuts with raised flaps.

In a quotation on the wall, Mr. Barceló discusses his fascination with Dubuffet's writings, which "read like culinary recipes with jam, butter, boiled-down ingredients, etc." You sense a literary interest not really expressed in paint — or, at any rate, not in these paintings.

KAREN ROSENBERG

Roxy Paine

'Denuded Lens'

Marianne Boesky Gallery
509 West 24th Street, Chelsea
Through Oct. 18

Roxy Paine is known for technically ambitious sculptures, like trees made of stainless-steel tubes, and computer-controlled machines that produce globby plastic sculptures. Lately he has taken to woodworking, creating realistic objects that look as if they had been transformed by a Midas with a wooden touch.

The main attraction in this exhibition is a spectacular life-size diorama representing an airport security gateway, with X-ray apparatus, conveyors, plastic bins and so forth, reproduced in maple. Furthermore, it's all been rendered in perspective: Objects are smaller toward the back end, and right angles are skewed, so that the whole tableau seems to exist somewhere between two and three dimensions. With the floor sloping upward from front to back — as it would seem to in a photograph or a painting — it induces a dreamy, slightly dizzying effect.

At first, it appears terrifically impressive as a feat of technical skill. But as you spend time studying it, an anonymous, mechanical feeling sets in. Once you get past the initial shock of the transformation into wood and the illusory perspective, you don't discover any more imaginative surprises.

Another piece, called "Scrutiny," has numerous high-tech observational and measuring devices arranged around a laboratory table, all rendered in wood but without the perspective twist. Mr. Paine is working in familiar Conceptual territory having to do

Lily van der Stokker

'Huh'

Koenig & Clinton
459 West 19th Street, Chelsea
Through Oct. 18

The cartoonish verve of Lily van der Stokker's irrepressible installations, which consist of walls and objects painted light, feminine shades, can sometimes disguise the originality and sharpness of her art. With subtle plays of cryptic phrases, color and forms, her best efforts appear adamantly cute until they start filling up with mixed signals of longing, conflict and repressed urges. "Huh," her current piece, meditates on the illusion of equality between the sexes, and also in relationships between artists, regardless of their sex.

An air of feigned happiness suffuses: Big pink shapes and motifs connect home and studio by conjuring a space they share, the bathroom. Beads of what appears to signify sweat, paint, tears or shower water coalesce on irregular Minimalist boxes, with looping lines that resemble stray hairs. A few too many rolls of toilet paper also set the scene, as do mildly deprecating references to various art world professionals (this critic included).

Matching shapes and phrases on three walls suggest delusional couples: "We are exactly the same" accompanies two vaguely figurative, Gustonish mounds. Around the corner, two more piles with large noses declare "Nice Being Here" to the left or right of the other. Flowers, butterflies, clouds and hearts — all clichés of greeting card joy — drift about. Two immense, elongated flowered blobs atop each other evoke feather comforters stacked for warmth or perhaps caught in some weirdly passive



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JEFFREY STURGES/KOENIG & CLINTON, NEW YORK

"Huh 1" (foreground) and "Huh 2," two of the big, cartoonish pink shapes that make up Lily van der Stokker's exhibition.

AUCTIONS AND EVENTS

580 Madison Avenue at 56th Street
+1 (212) 644 9001

CHINESE ART FROM THE SCHOLAR'S STUDIO
Monday September 15
Preview September 12-14

FINE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS
September 22 (San Francisco)
Preview September 12-14

FINE JAPANESE WORKS OF ART
Tuesday September 16
Preview September 12-15

INDIAN, HIMALAYAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART
Wednesday September 17
Preview September 12-17

AUCTION APPRAISAL EVENTS

Wednesdays 9:30am to 12:30pm

HIGHLIGHTS EXHIBITIONS
September 12-15

The Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art: Part V
The Misumi Collection of Important Lacquer Works and Paintings: Part I
Important Jade Carvings from the Somerset de Chair Collection
The Feng Wen Tang Collection of Early Chinese Ceramics

BONHAMS' LECTURE SERIES
Sunday September 14

Japanese Art, 10:30am
Gaitonde: The Artist in Transition and Zen Influences, 11:30am
Please RSVP for lectures to +1 (212) 644 9143
events.us@bonhams.com



A RARE CAST BRONZE AND GILT LACQUER FIGURE OF GUANYIN
Late Ming dynasty
\$100,000 - 150,000
September 15

A THANGKA OF DHARMAKIRTI
Tibet, 17th century
\$50,000 - 70,000, September 17

FINE SATSUMA CERAMICS
By Yabu Meizan and Sozan
From the collection of Ruth and Carl Barron, September 16

BOOK OF HOURS
Illuminated Manuscript,
France, 1450
\$30,000 - 50,000, September 22

PREVIEW HOURS
September 12, 10am to 5pm
September 13-14, 12pm to 5pm
September 15-16, 10am to 5pm
September 17, 10am to 12pm

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