

Theta

Period Piece

March 20 - April 25, 2026

Paul Etienne Lincoln
Isabelle Frances McGuire
Ty Palow
Timothy Lee Standing
Hannah Taurins

The heiress Marchesa Luisa Casati contorted herself into a living, glittering art object of the beginning of the 20th century. She was obsessed with shock, glamour, and impersonating famous historical figures such as Contessa di Castiglione and Sarah Bernhardt. A notorious muse to this day, Casati squandered her vast fortune on ornate costumes, parties, and exotic pets, dying in debt and glued-on velvet eyeliner at the height of the Great Depression.

Casati is one of more than seventy-five (and counting) members of *The World and its Inhabitants*, a project initiated in 1980 by Paul Etienne Lincoln, which unfolds as a miniature theater of allegorical machines. First conceived as “a miniature circus, a salon divertissement,” the work activates characters encountered through literature, history, and private fascination. Lincoln constructs delicate effigies animated through intricate electrical and mechanical systems powered by champagne and a lead shoe. Once triggered, each figure performs a brief, singular spectacle, condensing its subject’s life into a fleeting gesture before returning to permanent stillness. Historically staged as intimate entremets presentations for dinner guests, the performances combine scientific apparatus with ritualized theater, transforming mechanical ingenuity into a stage for memory and imagination. Presented here alongside such figures as Igor Stravinsky and Big Ben are fragments of the project’s evolving archive—dedicated cards, posters, and other ephemera documenting its origins and many iterations—tracing a decades-long attempt to assemble explorers, magicians, musicians, animals, and spirits into what Lincoln describes as an ever-expanding world.

Lately it feels like every few months we get a new *Frankenstein*. Everywhere you look, the gothic romantasies of the past are being revived, restaged, and repackaged for contemporary consumption—indulging in the opulent aesthetics of historical fiction as a way of holding collective unease at a remove. There’s comfort in recognizable motifs, and a shared language in familiar stories. Here, a more oblique inquiry connects five artists mining the decorative, theatrical, and commercial past as a means of abstracting or elaborating on the present. Materials, ornament, and inherited structures are not simply cited, but reworked into new affective registers—where reference resides at a distance from resolution, and the reboot has little to do with the book.

Isabelle Frances McGuire approaches history as a mutable fiction, drawn to mythologies of power and the recurring narratives through which they are sustained. In their work, fact and fabrication collapse into one another. A pair of chamber pots hold “bouquets” of Napoleon Bonaparte’s head or the fabled Pequod, staging a narrative field in which authorship becomes uncertain and the distinction between inherited myth and personal invention dissolves.

Having worked within the interior design sector, Ty Palow engages directly with the personal nature of design, materiality, and staging. His works—flattened geometric vignettes of decorative space, compact and contained within delicate wood panels—function like fragments of set dressing. With an economy of articulation in matte

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color, Palow signals contexts that seem to slip outside the present tense, drawing attention to the connotations of form and arrangement.

Timothy Lee Standing's sculptures emerge from a peculiar chain of translation between online marketplaces, domestic interiors, and the detritus of consumer display. Beginning with the eBay listings of a mass-produced drunkard figurine clinging to a lamppost—and furthered by soliciting additional photographs from sellers to capture the backgrounds of their homes—the artist reconstructs those surrounding spaces as sculptural shells. Scaled to hold the absent figures, the works function as emptied stages, assembled roughly from found bowling alley wood and clad in materials that carry their own histories of circulation. In this exhibition, Standing presents two works built from a shared template. Their surfaces—wrapped in vintage Saks Fifth Avenue Christmas shopping bags from the early 1980s and waterproof floral wallpaper—orchestrate a curious collision of material cultures and nostalgic codes of consumption.

Hannah Taurins's drawn paintings excavate imagery from the archives of fashion photography, isolating scenes in which subjects perform a heightened awareness of their own dramatic agency. For *Period Piece*, Taurins employs mise-en-scène in the form of costume, chiaroscuro, and overlaid narrative, calling to mind some of Scorsese's favorite tricks.

Paul Etienne Lincoln (b. 1959, London, England) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna (2023); Guido Costa Projects, Turin (2022); Guido Costa Projects, Turin (2015); South London Gallery, London (2011); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2009). Select group exhibitions include: Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles; Gabriele Senn Galerie, Vienna; Akademie der Künste, Berlin (all 2014); Alexander and Bonin, New York (2012); MoMA, New York (2008); Museum of Modern Art, New York; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich (both 2006); Nasher Museum of Art, Durham NC (2005); Biennale of Sydney (2002); Queens Museum of Art, New York (2001); MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (2000).

Isabelle Frances McGuire (b. 1994, Austin, Texas) lives and works in Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include: Renaissance Society, Chicago (2025); What Pipeline, Detroit; King's Leap, New York (both 2023); Scherben, Berlin (2022); Mickey, Chicago (2021); and Good Weather at Et al, San Francisco (2020). Select group exhibitions include: Whitney Biennial (2026); Drei, Cologne; Hans Goodrich, Chicago (both 2025); High Art & Sister, Seoul; Artists Space, New York; Petzel Gallery, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago (all 2024); Bel Ami, Los Angeles; shore, Vienna; M. LeBlanc, Chicago (all 2023); In Lieu, Los Angeles (2022); and Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York (2018).

Ty Palow (b. 1999 Columbus, OH) is an artist who lives and works in New York City. He received a BFA from the Cooper Union in 2021.

Timothy Lee Standing (b. 1981, Munich) lives and works between London and the Bregaglia Valley, CH. He studied at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zurich, and the Royal College of Art, London. Recent exhibitions include: MMXX, Milan; Madame Leniou, London; Galerie Oskar Weiss, Zürich; and a. SQUIRE, London (all 2025).

Hannah Taurins (b. 1997, Houston, Texas) lives and works in New York. She received a BFA from Cooper Union, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: Tureen, Dallas (2026); Theta, New York (2025); Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles; Brant-Timonier, Palm Beach (both 2023); and Theta, New York (2022). Select group exhibitions include: Hans Goodrich, Chicago (2026); American Art Projects x Jeffrey Deitch, Miami; Adler Beatty, New York; American Art Projects, Berlin; High Art, Paris (all 2025); High Art, Seoul, KR (2024); Amanita, New York (2023); Shoot the Lobster, New York; Venus Over Manhattan, New York; In Lieu, Los Angeles; and Entrance, New York (all 2022).