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Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why

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Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art:
An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why

By

Alessandra Ruggiero

A curatorial project submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Master's Degree in
Contemporary Art Sotheby's Institute of Art

2021

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Curatorial Proposal

What is an Icon?

The purpose of this exhibition, *Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why*, is to explore the nature of icons, specifically contemporary renditions of modern or traditional icons. Colloquially, icons are a symbol of something well-known or an image that is easily recognizable. Traditionally, icons refer to religious figures, most commonly devotional paintings in Roman Catholic and Orthodox Greek churches and are used as a means of prayer to represent peace, piety and faith. However, what constitutes an icon in Western contemporary culture has changed significantly. Devotional images have been replaced by celebrities as cultural icons, relying on politicians, TV personalities, singers and even more recently TikTokers to influence our everyday life.

Western contemporary pop culture has familiarized the term icon to mean anyone with substantial influence and whose image has circulated in mass media enough to be recognized by almost anyone with a smart phone, computer or television. Charles Peirce's theory of signs, included in his 1867 publication "On A New List of Categories", specifically the semiotics of icons, will serve as the basis of my theoretical analysis. I will explore how Peirce's definition of an icon – "a sign that which refers to an Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characteristics of its own, and which it possesses just the same, whether any object actually exists or not"¹—can help deepen the understanding of the pieces chosen for this exhibition, the psychology behind why certain people and places are so easily recognizable and how technology influences contemporary society's vision. Contemporary icons are recognized by their physical characteristics which are presented repetitively through multiple media outlets.

¹ C. M. Smith, "The Aesthetics of Charles S. Peirce," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31, no. 1 (1972): pp. 21-29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/429607>, 23 - 24

Andy Warhol was a pioneer in this space as well, reproducing images of famous actors and actresses, brands and even car crashes and works of art that have become icons of art themselves. His works highlight James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Dolly Parton, Campbell soup, the *Mona Lisa*, Jackie Kennedy and so many more. The way he represented these cultural icons was not through conventional painted portraiture or realistic photography, but rather by altering their image in a way that created contrast, layering silkscreen over different colors. However different and distorted, Warhol's subjects are still recognizable because they and their physical features are identifiable. Repetition and reproduction in Warhol's work connects with contemporary iconicity – the more an image of someone or someplace is seen, the more cultural significance it holds.

From the broad concept of an icon, the exhibition will include contemporary renditions organized under four subdivisions: *Iconic People*, *Iconic Pieces*, *Iconic Places*, and *Childhood Icons* by artists Jenny Boot, Otto Mühl, Michael DeJong, Tim Gatenby, Geo Rutherford, Shiri Wrotslavsky, Philippe Shangti, Alexander Van Glitch, Robert Melee, Bill Armstrong and Norwood Vivano. Although many of the artworks can be under multiple categories, *Iconic People* will include works of art that represent people in modern pop or political culture that have the same kind of following that echoes that of old religious icons. These pieces are recognizable but distorted, making us look twice to extract defining characteristics. Similarly, *Iconic Pieces* depict historically significant works of art with added elements to make the viewer look at the work critically. *Iconic Places* will show locations that are familiar but represented in unfamiliar ways and finally, *Childhood Icons* will include pieces of art that bring back a sense of nostalgia, remembering icons, traditionally childhood cartoons, but seeing them this time as adults.

Works List/ Checklist



Fig. 1

Michael DeJong
Blush, Blue Brush, 1988

Mixed media
13 x 8.5 in.

Private Collection
Photograph © the collector



Fig. 2

Michael DeJong
Table for Ladies with Even More Fruit, 1988

Mixed media
9 x 11 in.

Private Collection
Photograph © the collector

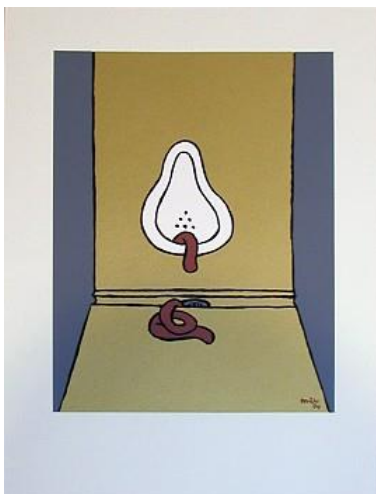


Fig. 3

Otto Mühl
Marcel's Nachlaß, 1994

Silkscreen on paper
8 1/2 x 6 1/8 in.
Edition info: 45/100

Private Collection
Photograph © the collector



Fig. 4

Jenny Boot
Black Girl with Pearl, 2016

Canson infinity platine fibre paper
73 3/5 × 57 1/10 in.

Oliver Cole Gallery
Photograph © Rise Art



Fig. 5

Bill Armstrong
After Francis Frith, Pyramid II, 2015

Archival pigment print
16 x 20 in.
Edition info: 2/15

Private Collection
Photograph © the collector



Fig. 6

Robert Melee
Bob Ross, 1995

Oil on canvas
24 x 18 in.

Private Collection
Photograph © the collector



Fig. 7

Alexander Van Glitch
*Contemporary Sacred | Study for a
Portrait of Virgin with Child
002 Artwork, 2019*

New media, digital on canvas
23.6 W x 23.6 H x 0.8 D in.

Artist's studio
Photograph © Alexander van Glitch



Fig. 8

Alexander Van Glitch
*Contemporary Icons | Study for a
portrait of Ariana Grande Artwork,
2018*

New media, digital on canvas
31.5 W x 31.5 H x 0.8 D in.

Artist's studio
Photograph © Alexander van Glitch



Fig. 9

Alexander Van Glitch
*Contemporary Icons | Study for a
portrait of LeBron James, 2018*

New media, digital on canvas
31.5 W x 31.5 H x 0.8 D in.

Artist's studio
Photograph © Alexander van Glitch

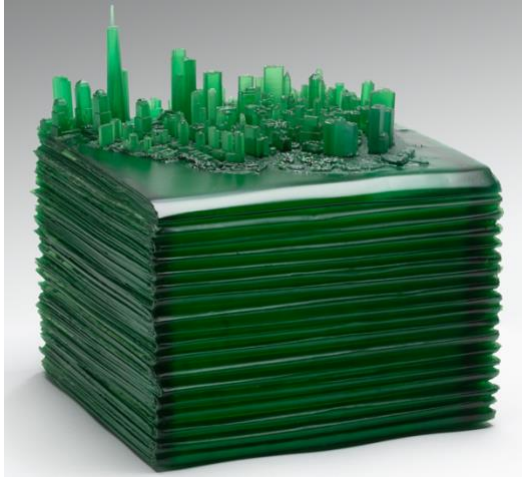


Fig. 10

Norwood Vivano
Recasting New York

Kilncast glass and 3D printed
pattern
12.5" x 12.5" x 13.5", 2017

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Norwood Vivano



Figs. 11, 12, 13

Geo Rutherford
Beach Detritus Series, 2020

Manière noire lithograph
15 x 20 in. each

Artist's studio
Photograph © Geo Rutherford



Fig. 14

Philippe Shangti
Wonderwoman vs Drugs, 2013

Printed on a glossy paper with
Plexiglas (front) and alu Dibond
(back)

Limited and numbered artworks,
signed by the artist

44.9 x 47.2 in

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Philippe Shangti



Figs. 15, 16, 17

Shiri Wrotslavsky
Studies of John Singer Sargent, 2021

Oil on Canvas
12 x 16 in.

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Alessandra Ruggiero



Fig. 18

Shiri Wrotslavsky
Study of Gisele Bundchen, 2021

Oil on Canvas
30 x 40 inches

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Alessandra Ruggiero



Fig. 19

Tim Gatenby
The Doghouse 2, 2021

Oil on Canvas
40 x 31.5 in.

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Tim Gatenby



Fig. 20

Phillipe Shangti
Superman vs Drugs, 2013

Printed on a glossy paper with
Plexiglas (front) and alu Dibond
(back)

Limited and numbered artworks,
signed by the artist

44.9 x 47.2 in

Artist's Studio
Photograph © Phillippe Shangti



Fig. 21

Tim Gatenby
Scary Painting, 2021

Oil on canvas
39 x 47 in.

Guy Hepner Gallery
Photograph © Guy Hepner Gallery



Fig. 22

Tim Gatenby
Kanye Yeezus Last Supper, 2020

Oil on canvas
47 × 29.5 in.

Plan X Art Gallery
Photograph © Plan X Art Gallery

Distorted Icons Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why

The essence of an icon is nuanced, especially in contemporary society where anyone and anything could be considered iconic with enough public attention. Whereas historically icons were generally religious, political or militaristic symbols – or any combination of these three subjects – the present conception of an icon is so broad that those with any widespread influence could be considered iconic. Late Twentieth and early Twenty-First Century popular culture has usurped the traditional symbols of iconicity, replacing them with individual persons – entertainers, politicians, influencers and other celebrities that appear present in our everyday life through easily accessible media. For the purposes of this thesis, I will examine the semiotics of icons and iconicity through Charles Peirce’s Theory of Signs, focusing on the present broad use of the term icon and its significant change from past conceptions of the term. Through Peirce’s theory we can further understand how we recognize icons and their role in our lives.

Peirce’s Theory of Signs is known for its complex study of the meaning of signs, introducing a multitude of classifications for examining the semantics of a given sign’s interpretation and significance. In order to understand a sign, we must first understand the theory’s 3-prong structure: (i) the sign, (ii) the object, and (iii) the interpretant. The sign is what we can physically see, for example a footprint in mud. The object is what can be perceived from the sign, i.e. the shoe that made the footprint in the mud. The interpretant is the connection between sign and object, and the understanding that there is a connection between the two. Peirce infers “that signification is not a simple dyadic relationship between sign and object: a sign signifies only in being interpreted... the meaning of a sign is manifest in the interpretation

that it generates in sign users.”² The interpretant is vital for Peirce’s theory and our understanding of contemporary icons, and therefore requires further analysis.

In order for there to be an interpretant, previous knowledge of both the sign and object must exist. The observer must understand that shoes can make footprints when someone walks on mud to conclude that someone had previously walked on that spot. For Peirce, “the idea is that the interpretant provides a translation of the sign, allowing us a more complex understanding of the sign’s object.”³ The sign is able to signify the object because of its distinct features. This is where Peirce begins to incorporate his theory on the contemporary understanding of objects. There are three ways in which Peirce deconstructs representations of signs, such as symbols which “have a convention-based relationship with their objects (e.g. alphanumeric symbols)” and indexes which “are directly influenced by their objects (e.g. a weathervane or a thermometer).”⁴ However, this essay will only concentrate only on his dissection of icons.

According to Peirce, “‘representations’ generate further interpretants... via ‘a mere community in some quality’” which “he calls likenesses, but they are more familiarly known as *icons*.”⁵ Simply put, an icon is a type of sign that the viewer recognizes through some unique quality that they have seen before. Some of Peirce’s examples of icons are portraits because of their shared aesthetic quality with the person they represent.⁶ Icons have similar rationale to “diagrams used in geometrical reasoning,”⁷ having “no dynamical connection with the object it represents; it simply happens that its qualities resemble those of that object, and excite analogous

² Albert Atkin, “Peirce’s Theory of Signs,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, November 15, 2010), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Drew Huening, “Symbol/Index/Icon,” The Chicago School of Media Theory RSS (The University of Chicago, October 9AD), <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/symbolindexicon/>.

⁵ Albert Atkin, “Peirce’s Theory of Signs,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, November 15, 2010), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness.”⁸ Therefore, using Peirce’s semantics, the works of art in this exhibition are icons because they share physical likenesses with a person, place or piece.

The connections between Peirce’s icons and fine art are implicit. “Peirce classified as icons both mimetic images and diagrams, both illusionistic landscape paintings and maps.”⁹ It is not necessary for an icon to be exactly the same as what it represents, but a physical likeness is required to be present. The “elision of what might loosely be termed “perceptual” and “conceptual” resemblances is an idiosyncrasy of Peirce’s semiotics.”¹⁰ Icons can be both an observed thing and an illustrated idea. Works of art can be placed under a broader umbrella and still be considered icons. Therefore, understanding works like those by Jenny Boot, Otto Mühl, Michael DeJong, Tim Gatenby, Geo Rutherford, Shiri Wrotslavsky, Philippe Shangti, Alexander Van Glitch, Robert Melee, Bill Armstrong and Norwood Vivano becomes much deeper and fulfilling because the viewer can recognize the origins of the distorted subjects and what the artists’ intentions were when adapting iconic people, pieces, places and characters.

Iconic People

Iconic people, specifically film stars in Western culture, are more closely studied by the famous academic Richard Dyer in his 1979 book *Stars*. His analysis concentrates on the connection between “realm of representation and ideology” focusing “in particular on the relationship between stardom, star images and discourses of individualism.”¹¹ His work investigates how “cinema circulates the images of individual film performers and how those

⁸ C. M. Smith, “The Aesthetics of Charles S. Peirce,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31, no. 1 (1972): pp. 21-29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/429607>, 4.

⁹ Michael Leja, “Peirce, Visuality, and Art,” *Representations* 72 (2000): pp. 97-122, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2902910>, 112.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Su Holmes, “Starring... Dyer?: Re-Visiting Star Studies and Contemporary,” *Westminster Papers of Communication and Culture* 2, no. 2 (November 1, 2005): pp. 6-21, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.18>, 8.

images may influence the ways in which we think of the identity of ourselves and others.”¹² Just as art reflects and effects society and culture, so too do “societies change historically, and stars reflect those changes.”¹³ More currently, stars and celebrities gain influence and relevance in peoples’ lives through content created on different media platforms. Unless the viewer knows the celebrity personally, a wide gulf likely exists between who the celebrity is and what the viewer perceives. The viewer’s fabricated image of a given celebrity is based on a reflection of the individual’s context.

Like Dyer, artists Shiri Wrotslavsky, Alexander van Glitch and Robert Melee use their art to participate in a larger cultural conversation about contemporary icons. Wrotslavsky’s three *Studies of John Singer Sargent* were a way for the artist to practice portrait painting while also injecting her own style. Additionally, Wrotslavsky paints Gisele Bündchen in a way that she is slightly unrecognizable. In fact, the painting could be of anyone, but because the artist has intentionally titled the piece *Gisele Bündchen*, the viewer internalizes the subject and compares her to what is seen on Instagram, TV and magazines: a female model, activist and businesswoman with expensive taste and a flawless physique. Using Peirce’s model, the portrait is in fact an icon because the viewer “pack[s] the physical outline of the person [seen] with all the notions already formed about him, and in the total picture of him which we compose in our minds those notions have certainly the principal place.”¹⁴ The object (Bündchen) is recognized through the viewers close study of the subject’s physical features and subsequent comparison to what they know about the subject. Wrotslavsky’s portrait is meant to capture and emphasize Bündchen’s sexuality, a side of her that the media has emphasized repeatedly. Bündchen has

¹² Richard Dyer and Paul McDonald, “Reconceptualising Stardom,” in *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1998), pp. 175-200, 176.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁴ Michael Leja, “Peirce, Visuality, and Art,” *Representations* 72 (2000): pp. 97-122, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2902910>, 115

etched “herself as the supermodel of her generation” becoming “somewhat of a beauty chameleon, chopping and changing her look according to designer demands and editorial whimsy.”¹⁵ Bündchen has been in the spotlight for fashion and looked to for beauty standards since she was 17 years old. Thus, Wrotslavsky paints Bündchen, but also the modern ideal woman. The painting emphasizes Bündchen’s breasts pushed forward by the plugging shirt, her flawlessly rosy and high cheekbones, pronounced collarbone and sharp jawline. The romanticized perfections of the human body are encapsulated both by Wrotslavsky’s painting and by media’s manipulation of beauty expectations.

Although Alexander van Glitch also creates works representing iconic people, he characterizes contemporary culture very differently from Wrotslavsky. Van Glitch’s works are more directly concerned with technology’s growing presence in art. Currently, there is an evolving branch of contemporary art concerned with the growing use of the digital sphere. NFTs are becoming increasingly popular and accessible, while iPhone cameras are getting better and better with each upgrade, allowing anyone the opportunity to become a photographer. Van Glitch’s depictions of icons range from Mary and Jesus to Babe Ruth and da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man in a glitchy metaverse of pixelated cubes. Van Glitch creates a pixelated and color streaked Madonna and Child as well as a blue, yellow and red Christ on the cross that looks like the colors are raining from the top of the canvas to the bottom. His art is meant “to reflect the uncomfortable, imperfect, distorted beauty of human life through the use of our most recent and advanced technologies and through a constant dialogue between contemporary aesthetics (the use of multiple kinds of glitch) and a more traditional/classical artistic language (the reference to

¹⁵ Chrisanthi Kalivotis, “12 Times Gisele Bündchen Was Our Beauty Inspiration,” *Grazia Magazine*, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://graziomagazine.com/articles/12-times-gisele-bundchen-was-our-beauty-inspiration/>.

XVII and XVIII century paintings).”¹⁶ Van Glitch’s *Virgin with Child* is a reaction to society’s “biological and anthropological change determined by the planetary use of the smartphone.”¹⁷ Contemporary culture is obsessed with looking and searching for more on each electronic screen where modern devotion lands somewhere between an iPhone and an Xbox. There has been a loss of what is sacred in this technological blackhole, which van Glitch highlights in creating his *Virgin and Child*.

Along with his religious works, van Glitch also features a portrait of Lebron James and Ariana Grande in this exhibition. All pieces are fragmented, geometric and pixelated images, but regardless of how distorted each depiction is, the subject is recognizable. Ariana Grande is featured with her signature ponytail, while Lebron James sports an exaggerated Lakers jersey. Just as van Glitch takes fragments of color and shapes to create a complete portrait, so too does the viewer piece together disjointed information about each subject to create a full image of these icons. These fragmented ideas of reality and ideology that contemporary society participates in is what van Glitch points to in his works.

Lastly, Robert Melee’s *Bob Ross* is a psychedelic portrait of the famous television painter. I have memories of watching Bob Ross on “The Joy of Painting” on PBS as a child and therefore wondered if this would be better suited under Childhood Icons. However, this piece is more concerned with making a statement about Ross rather than his influence on children. Melee places a cutout of Ross’ face against a bright orange background and marbleizes his recognizable perm hairstyle and beard with various pigments. The piece was created in 1995, the same year that Ross passed away at 52 from lymphoma. Melee’s art typically has a hint of “melancholy

¹⁶ Alexander van Glitch, “Alexander Van Glitch,” Ardehali Art Gallery , 2018, <https://www.ardehali.art/index.php/profile-view/670-alexander>.

¹⁷ NFTHours Staff, “Alexander Van Glitch: Art as an Antidote to Homo Digitalis,” NFT Hours, November 4, 2021, <https://nfthours.com/alexander-van-glitch-art-as-an-antidote-to-homo-digitalis/>.

specific to domestic space, one derived simultaneously from familiarity, decoration, and otherness.”¹⁸ This work is outside of Melee’s most famous repertoire, which consists mostly of strange domestic photography and large installation pieces, and is considered one of his early works. From early on, the artist wanted to elicit emotional responses and take the familiar and make it unfamiliar. He has successfully done so with *Bob Ross*, giving the viewer something familiar in an unfamiliar way, but still portraying Ross as friendly, whimsical and cheery, just as he was on television.

Iconic Works

Over the course of art’s history, certain works have been “deemed to be “canonical”, typically due to their broad influence, display in prominent museum collections, and extensive scholarship.”¹⁹ These are priceless works that mark important innovations and turning points in Art History. Vermeer’s *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is a typical example of a “tronie”, or a 17th century Dutch “head” painting,²⁰ Edward Hopper’s *Tables for Ladies*, currently owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is a vivid depiction of the interior of a café, Diego Velázquez’s *Infanta Margarita Teresa in a Blue Dress* echoes that of the artist’s famous *Las Meninas* painting, while Duchamp’s *Fountain* challenged art historians to question what truly is art.

Previous knowledge of these art historical works is important for this section of the exhibition. According to Peirce’s theory, for something to hold symbolic significance and deepen our understanding of how the work fits into contemporary culture, previous knowledge of both the sign/icon and object must exist, here the contemporary piece and its forebear, while the interpretant is the historical significance of the original piece and its connection to its newer

¹⁸ Andrew Kreps Gallery Staff, “Robert Melee,” Andrew Kreps Gallery, 2018, <http://www.andrewkreps.com/artists/robert-melee>.

¹⁹ “Iconic Works of Art History,” Artsy, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.artsy.net/gene/iconic-works-of-art-history>.

²⁰ Anastasia Manioudak, “What Is a Tronie? Famous Examples of Tronies in Dutch and Flemish Baroque,” DailyArt Magazine, May 30, 2020, <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/tronie/>.

rendition. In order for the piece to be considered iconic, there must also be a physical likeness to the original subject.

Jenny Boot's *Black Girl with Pearl*, photographed in 2016 to mimic the 1665 painting by Vermeer, is an example of this comparison. Vermeer's painting is undoubtedly a token of the Dutch Golden Age. His painting depicts a young white girl, slightly turned with parted lips against a black background. She wears a blue and tan turban and looks directly out of the painting to capture the viewer's gaze. Her large pearl earring dangles next to her chin. With a penetrating yet subtle stare, Vermeer's subject was a symbol of economic wealth and worldliness. Similarly, Boot's subject is slightly turned toward the viewer against a dark background, with parted lips wearing a black head piece. Her bright eyes and pearl earring are highlighted against the subject's dark skin and background. It is clear that Boot's photography is an ode to Vermeer's renowned painting. However, Boot's subject is a young Black girl who symbolizes beauty, elegance and change in contemporary culture. While Vermeer's subject was a representation of the Dutch Golden Age, Boot's subject is a representation of contemporary culture's diversity. Both artists highlight women, albeit of different races, to comment on their respective contemporary cultures.

Michael DeJong's *Blush*, *Blue Brush* and *Table for Ladies with Even More Fruit* are mixed media works using 17th and 20th century paintings as a base. Diego Velázquez's *Infanta Margarita Teresa in a Blue Dress* was executed in 1659 as one of several court paintings. Margarita Teresa also appears as the center subject in Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. Velázquez's works are renowned because of his use of perspective, loose brushstrokes and elegant depiction of the Spanish royal family. Edward Hopper's *Tables for Ladies*, painted in 1930, is a depiction New York City's atmosphere after the economic hardship of the Great Depression. The title is a

reference to a sign that would be on café windows, inviting single women to sit alone or with other women without being mistaken for prostitutes. Because of both Hopper and Velázquez's fame, artist Michael DeJong knew that viewers would be able to recognize the famous paintings as a piece of his contemporary work.²¹ DeJong believed that painting had become an overdone form of art to represent contemporary culture and that readymades and collages were much more in touch with the New York City art scene in the 1970s and 1980s. DeJong worked alongside artists David Wojnarowicz, Keith Haring and Félix González-Torres and commented that “artists weren't making much money, so I made art from things I could find, like cutting pictures out of magazines and books.”²² The famous pieces were backdrops which DeJong could manipulate by adding everyday objects. DeJong appropriated priceless works of art and distorted them by affixing toothbrushes and plastic fruit to add both a satirical, but also critical element to the works. DeJong's works show the struggle of being a working artist in the 70s and 80s in New York City, emphasizing the less than glamorous side of art.

Lastly, Otto Mühl's *Marcel's Nachlaß*, created in 1994, is a clear adaptation of the controversial Duchamp *Fountain*. Mühl was a scandalous figure himself, both because of his art and his convictions regarding sexual assault and abuse. His lewd art and questionable performance pieces with the Viennese Actionists, gave the artist a damning reputation; however, his works are still of great significance as a representation of life in Austria after World War II. Hubert Klocker is the director and chief curator of the Sammlung Friederichshof Museum and the Estate of Otto Mühl and stated that “Muehl is one of the most interesting and complex artists of the Second Austrian Republic in terms of both Actionism and his painting oeuvre in general. So many artists—Martin Kippenberger, Mike Kelley, Albert Oehlen—oriented themselves on

²¹ Ruggiero, Alessandra, and Michael DeJong. Interview with Michael DeJong. In person, November 4, 2021.

²² Ibid.

him.”²³ While Mühl’s reputation is stained by appalling actions, his art critiques an important part of Austrian art history.

The title of Mühl’s work does not have a direct translation from German to English, but the idea loosely translates as *Marcel’s Estate*, or what has been left behind.²⁴ This translation could have a few different interpretations. Duchamp’s *Fountain* is perhaps the creator’s most famous piece and “is widely seen as an icon of twentieth-century art.”²⁵ Therefore, the original piece by Duchamp is a symbol of the artist’s legacy. Mühl drew from Duchamp for inspiration, but viewed “him to be a philosopher, who makes use of artistic media and museums in order to make a statement,” while Mühl “deformed the objects, unlike Marcel Duchamp, who left the object unadulterated.”²⁶ The silkscreen print is a much more squalid interpretation of the artist’s legacy, placing the urinal on a blank wall with feces flowing out of it and spewed on the floor. Interestingly, Mühl created this work as a criticism of Duchamp’s legacy while he was in prison for child molestation. “What has been repressed by society and banished to the side is still at the center of his work. Mühl seems to recall that Duchamp’s urinal had a function whose traces Duchamp removed and which he now makes visible.”²⁷ Mühl shows no change in artistic practice even during his imprisonment, keeping with his earthly form of art. Thus, he engages in a discussion surrounding Duchamp’s legacy, one that is typically revered in contemporary culture. Through this work, Mühl asks what made Duchamp’s legacy: his readymade art or art institutions that originally rejected than praised the French artist.

²³ Kimberly Bradley, “How Should the Art World Handle the Dark Legacy of Viennese Actionist and Convicted Sex Offender Otto Muehl? His Victims Have a Few Ideas,” Artnet News, February 10, 2021, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/how-to-handle-otto-muehl-legacy-1942254>.

²⁴ Patricia Senge, tran., “Marcel’s Nachlass,” *Texte zur Kunst*, accessed November 27, 2021, <https://artmap.com/textezurkunst/edition/marcel-nachlass?print=do>.

²⁵ Tate Staff Tate, “Fountain’, Marcel Duchamp, 1917, Replica 1964,” Tate, 2021, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573>.

²⁶ Andrew Grossman, “An Actionist Begins to Sing: An Interview with Otto Mühl,” *Bright Lights Film Journal*, November 1, 2002, <https://brightlightsfilm.com/actionist-begins-sing-interview-otto-muehl/#.YaJ5vS1h1B0>.

²⁷ “Otto Mühl’s Marcel’s Nachlass,” *Texte Zur Kunst*, June 1994, accessed November 27, 2021, <https://artmap.com/textezurkunst/edition/marcel-nachlass?print=do>.

“According to Mühl, it was excrement that Duchamp left behind as an inheritance and that could receive the status of artistic material.”²⁸ Although vulgar, Mühl and his art raise questions often not asked by contemporary society and challenge viewers to form opinions about the artist, his work and the subject he is deforming.

Iconic Places

Peirce’s analysis of icons did not exclude the possibility that places can be iconic. New York City’s skyline, the Eiffel Tower, Taj Mahal, Great Wall of China and Pyramids of Giza are some of the world’s most recognizable landmarks. In this exhibition, such landmarks are depicted through illustrative works rather than exact portrayals in order to convey a more complex dissection of the place itself. Artists Geo Rutherford and Norwood Vivano produce works that illustrate meaningful places so that the environment, population and space is better understood. Bill Armstrong creates colorful photographs to distort the reality of a place, allowing viewers to perceive his work, and the landmark, through a dreamlike lens.

Geo Rutherford’s *Beach Detritus Series* is a sequence of three lithographs each showing found objects from the beaches of the Great Lakes in the United States. Branches, plastic forks, needles, shells, leaves, insect remains, buttons and feathers are several of the items Rutherford decided to include in her prints. They intertwine to create a web of debris along the lakes’ shores. These objects would otherwise go unnoticed or swept back into the lakes’ waters; however, her works focus on bringing attention to the health of the Great Lakes and ensuring that the importance of the Lakes reaches a larger audience. Rutherford chose printmaking because she thought it “was the perfect medium to demonstrate the idea of “things coming in multiples,

²⁸ Otto Mühl's Marcel's Nachlass," *Texte Zur Kunst*, June 1994, accessed November 27, 2021, <https://artmap.com/textezurkunst/edition/marcel-nachlass?print=do>.

things exploding in population.”²⁹ She also wants her work to be accessible, so anyone can view her work and learn something about the Great Lakes.³⁰ With or without previous knowledge of the Great Lakes ecosystem, her audience can recognize the iconicity and importance of the bodies of water and their large ecological impact on surrounding areas. Rutherford’s art is intended for the audience to question their own interaction with the Lakes, or more broadly, with the environment.

Fascinated by the symbiotic “relationship between manufacturing and population changes,” artist and professor Norwood Vivano uses 3D printing and object installation to represent historic transformations in America’s largest cities.³¹ His “artistic intention is to better understand [contemporary culture’s] place in time by focusing on land use through pictorial imagery and on industrial growth and decline through population studies that also ask questions about the present and future of communities.”³² Vivano researches how different pieces of a city’s history, culture and industry merge to create its current landscape. *Recasting New York* is an example of the artist’s 3D printing. Through the work, Vivano shows how the island evolved from farmland into a major metropolis. New York’s current landscape rests on top of what looks like stacks of folded dollar bills, hinting that economic success is what propelled the city to thrive. The color of the sculpture, an emerald green, also hints at New York City’s industrial wealth. The piece “combines imagery from the city’s manufacturing past with the current architecture of the urban landscape,” leading the viewer to draw the connection between monetary wealth and the city’s evolution³³. Vivano’s 3D representation of New York City’s

²⁹ Maddie Burakoff and Jeff Dahdah, “Trash to Treasure: How One Wisconsinite Is Spreading Great Lakes Awareness through Art and TikTok,” Spectrum News 1, May 7, 2021, <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2021/05/07/trash-to-treasure--how-one-wisconsinite-is-spreading-great-lakes-awareness-through-art-and-tiktok>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Norwood Vivano, “Norwood Vivano,” Norwood Vivano - About, accessed November 11, 2021, <https://www.norwoodvivano.com/about>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

skyline is precise and illustrative. The mold is an icon of New York City and the connection of industry and development is the interpretant.

Bill Armstrong uses iconic places differently than Rutherford and Vivano because he encourages the use of dreamlike imagination. *After Francis Firth, Pyramid II* is part of the artist's *After: Dreaming in Color Series*. He imagines "the history of photography as if in a dream, making color interventions into iconic 19th century photographs."³⁴ Armstrong has taken Francis Firth's sepia toned photography and colored it in, like a children's coloring book. Similarly to artist Michael DeJong, Armstrong manipulates well-known pieces to create his own "dreamlike history of color photography."³⁵ The viewer sees that the photograph is an icon of the Pyramids of Giza; however, because of Armstrong's distortion, they can relax into Armstrong's imagination and childlike humor. Armstrong appropriates an historically significant landmark into a colorful fantasy.

Childhood Icons

While not everyone visiting this exhibition will be the same age, the works of art chosen for this category contain characters that are recognizable to anyone who watched cartoons or any public programming in the late 20th century. These characters, such as Superman, Wonder Woman, Scooby-Doo, SpongeBob and Snoopy, epitomize a very specific time and evoke certain memories in children who were grew up in Western families that could afford a television and cable. Tim Gatenby and Philippe Shangti distort well-known characters as a way to comment on

³⁴ Bill Armstrong, "After Dreaming in Color," Bill Armstrong Photography, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.billarmstrongphotography.com/after-dreaming-in-color-info>.

³⁵ Ibid.

growing up and living in contemporary society. Symbols of innocence and childhood are shown in various mature situations and unexpected circumstances.

British contemporary artist Tim Gatenby is known for creating parodies by pairing classical works with contemporary imagery. His works fit both the Iconic Pieces and Childhood Icons categories because he merges the two concepts together and “examines art histories’ relationship with the Internet world we now inhabit.”³⁶ The artist “distorts familiar characters, typically drawn as brightly-colored and crisp cartoons, by blurring lines and using muted tones. The result is one where the jovial characters of popular television are stripped of their bright, happy personalities and replaced with an intangible corruption and sinfulness.”³⁷ His works are icons that allow the viewer to reflect on how their own lives have changed since they last saw these characters.

The Doghouse 2 shows cartoon dogs, such as Droopy, Goofy and Scooby-Doo, playing pool and drinking beer at a bar. “Often combining deconstructed cartoon characters with dark humor, his images reflect the pressures of consumerism and modern societal tendency towards overindulgence,” a combination that reflects how people in contemporary society have matured. We once were part of the innocence that was daily cartoons, but now find ourselves drinking, gambling and partying like the cartoon dogs.

Kanye Yeezus Last Supper is an ode to da Vinci’s religious scene and late 20th century television. In this way, Gatenby creates a layered icon piece: *The Last Supper* and all the characters around the table. Once the viewer recognizes the two separate icons, they then must ponder upon what brings them together. Kanye mentions God in many of his songs, thus

³⁶ Timothy Gatenby, “Biography,” Timothy Gatenby, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://timothygatenby.com/>.

³⁷ Guy Hepner Staff, “Tim Gatenby,” Guy Hepner Editions & Prints, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.guyhepnereditions.com/tim-gatenby>.

Gatenby places him at the center in place of Jesus Christ. The 12 cartoons that surround him take the place of the 12 disciples around Jesus, while McDonalds bags, burgers and fries lay all across the long table. Gatenby replaces the religious figures with those of popular cartoons to emphasize the impact that television and music have in contemporary day to day lives. He is equating these characters, which include Tom and Jerry, Patrick and SpongeBob, Rick and Morty, Snoopy and Bart Simpson amongst others, to the 12 disciples. Gatenby also states that he “liked the idea of Kanye surrounded by cartoons going mad, a bit like “Space Jam” or “Who Framed Roger Rabbit”... he can also be a bit like a cartoon character.”³⁸ Relevant and popular subjects such as McDonalds, Kanye West and cartoon characters consume (and are consumed by) contemporary culture.

The last of Gatenby’s works in the exhibition is his *Scary Painting*, an icon of both the horror film “Scream” and Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*. Gatenby uses a very similar painting technique to that of Munch with loose and fluid brushstrokes as well as dark and rich reds, oranges and blues. However, instead of Munch’s screaming subject, the American horror slasher Ghostface from “Scream” is painted as the focus. Ghostface holds the telephone prop used in the movie to threaten and scare his victims. Gatenby paints the subject, not as frightening, but rather goofy with a silly expression and his tongue sticking out. The artist adds another layer of satire by titling the piece *Scary Painting*, a play on the 2000 parody “Scary Movie,” which also featured Ghostface. “Scary Movie” satirizes horror, thriller and slasher genres, spoofing movies and TV shows from the 1990s. Therefore, Gatenby’s piece is a multidimensional commentary on horror films in contemporary culture and how fear has changed and manifested in different forms from Munch’s era to contemporary times.

³⁸ Ruggiero, Alessandra, and Tim Gatenby. Interview with Tim Gatenby. Other, November 29, 2021.

Similarly, photographer Philippe Shangti creates pieces that question contemporary culture's relationship with drugs, sex, money and gluttony. Superheroes Wonder Woman and Superman are the subject of Shangti's two works included in the exhibition. As symbols of justice, morality and fairness, Superman and Wonder Woman are heroes who children, and adults, admire. Therefore, placing them in situations such as taking drugs, is uncharacteristic of what they represent. He "denounced the ravages of drugs by associating with the image of superheroes."³⁹ By breaking the silence surrounding taboos by associating drugs with superheroes, Shangti asks viewers to recognize the defamation that manifests with drug abuse. Because of "the zero-defect policy of these characters, the artist highlights the hypocrisy and denial of drug users."⁴⁰ Both Superman and Wonder Woman are photographed in full costume, with pins stating "No Cocaine Here." The superheroes hold a rolled-up dollar bill in one hand and a round mirror with a line of white powder, presumably cocaine. Their faces reflect back at them through the drug topped mirror. There is a very slight trail of white descending from Wonder Woman's nose, implying her use of the cocaine. Instead of fighting crime, which is how these superheroes are traditionally portrayed, these superheroes are participating in illegal and questionable moral activities. The thought of childhood heroes doing such a thing is reprehensible and devastating to their immaculate image. Shangti's message in creating these icons is to expose how easy it is for someone good to form a harmful habit when surrounded by contemporary culture's many vices.

Overall, these pieces of art, albeit disparate at first glance, are carefully curated to create a narrative between icons and their viewer. The intention of this exhibition is for viewers to connect with the pieces on a personal level, whether looking at the icons through Peirce's theory

³⁹ Philippe Shangti, "Art vs Drugs," Philippe Shangti - Artworks, September 16, 2021, <https://www.philippeshangti.com>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

or through a contemporary lens or both. Ultimately, the importance and recognition of the icons exhibited is up to the individual, thus allowing a discussion to form amongst viewers. *Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why* is a way for viewers to really think about why they recognize these works of art and what their importance is, both in contemporary society and to the individual.

Venue

The best venue for my show would be a small-scale gallery in Manhattan. Manhattan has plenty of gallery spaces for guest curators, including 28pexart, WhiteBox and CUE which are galleries I have already been in contact with for this project. Smaller galleries create a more intimate experience which I believe is important for viewing these works. The subjects of the works are already public and popular, but I want to give viewers the time and space to create a personal dialogue with the art.

Apexart was founded in 1994 as a non-profit arts organization with free admission that challenges “ideas about culture, art, exhibitions, and curation through exhibitions, fellowships, publications and public programs.”⁴¹ Apexart specifically looks for new curators for its shows through open-call curatorial opportunities, which are ideal for someone like myself whose curatorial experience is very limited. Specifically, their “Open Calls are opportunities for artists, curators, and other professionals to turn their curatorial idea into an 28pexart exhibition... Winning proposals become part of 28pexart’s next exhibition season and receive funding and staff support.”⁴² Ideally, I would like to win the Open Call for curation to receive the funding and staff support needed to put on my exhibition. I have submitted my proposal for their consideration and will hear back from the team in early December.

The second location I have looked at for my exhibition is CUE Art Foundation. Founded in 2003 in Chelsea, New York, CUE Art Foundation has a mission is to be “a dynamic visual arts center dedicated to creating essential career and educational opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists of all ages.”⁴³ CUE also has an open call program for guest curators,

⁴¹ Apexart Staff, “Apexart about Us,” Apexart, accessed August 20, 2021, <https://apexart.org/about-us.php>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ CUE Art Foundation Staff, “Mission and History,” CUE Art Foundation, accessed August 20, 2021, <https://cueartfoundation.org/mission-history>.

which is currently closed but will reopen March 2022. The winner of CUE's Curatorial Project Open Call would receive installation guidance and mentorship as well as a \$7,000 to split among participating artists and production.

The third gallery space I have approached regarding my exhibition is WhiteBox. Opened in 1998, WhiteBox provides "the art public and its surrounding communities with a unique opportunity to experience an artist's practice in radical, meaningful and evocative ways."⁴⁴ WhiteBox is constantly looking for new artists to engage in cultural debate and dialogue aimed to provide a more in-depth view contemporary art's ever-changing environment. I have been in touch with Juan Puentes, the Artistic Director at WhiteBox, about potentially working together in 2022. Currently based in Harlem, WhiteBox is looking to expand and lease a new space near the West Side Highway in Chelsea. According to Puentes, this new space would be a good fit for my exhibition. Although the timeline is not set yet, the conversation with Mr. Puentes was very promising and we continue to be in touch.

⁴⁴ WhiteBox Staff, "WhiteBox Harlem - About," WhiteBox, 2021, <http://whiteboxnyc.org/about/>.

Marketing and Press Plan

Because I am looking at smaller venues for this show, it is important to use social media and accessible outlets for advertising (such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook). Social media, especially on the marketing side of the platform, would allow followers to invest in the show through their engagement with the gallery's account. Additionally, including articles about the art and reviews about the exhibition in the gallery's newsletter or email announcements to engage with a larger audience are crucial ways to increase footfall in the exhibition. The majority of artists selected are alive, so hearing their stories would be an intriguing way to get more people interested in visiting the gallery. I could work with the gallery to prepare 3-minute video interviews with the artists to add insight into their artistic careers and intentions and what lead them to make the work in the show. Other examples of content could a curatorial talk given by myself, high quality videos and photographs of the featured pieces, a sneak peak of the exhibition and a behind the scene look of the works installation. Visitors usually only see the end result, but by allowing them exclusive access through these posts, the gallery connects even more with its followers by including them in the process.

As is customary, I would plan an opening night and a press walkthrough. The press walkthrough would take place before the show's opening to give bloggers, art critics and journalists a chance to see the works without a crowd. For the gallery opening, I plan to invite all the artists, their friends and family as well as additional bloggers and journalists. I also am part of Parlor Social Club, which is a New York City based art and culture club that works with galleries to sponsor events that are open to members. Members, like myself, can also cohost events with Parlor. I would reach out to Mitchell Leonard, who is the Operations Manager at Parlor to organize a cohosted opening. The press release for the show is below and is written as

if I have confirmed the show to take place at WhiteBox's planned new location in Chelsea in 2022.


Can You Spot an Icon?

WhiteBox celebrates its Chelsea opening with an exciting exhibition on contemporary iconicity.

It is easy to recognize a famous person when scrolling through Instagram or browsing Netflix's new hot shows. Icons, whether singers, politicians, actors or influencers, appear on our screens in the form of photographs or videos attached to daily newsfeeds or status updates. Images have become a main source of identification, with contemporary society comparing signature physical features to those captured in a photograph. But if something were slightly off and we viewed even our favorite icons through a distorted lens, would we be able to recognize them? Would we view them the same way, or would we change our view of who they are? How can we recognize someone we have never seen in person before anyway?

WhiteBox Gallery's new exhibition, *Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why*, explores contemporary figures in unconventional ways. Located in Chelsea bordering the West Side Highway in Manhattan, Whitebox will house the exhibition, which features 11 artists who utilize a range of media, including photography, painting, sculpture, and print, to alter iconic places, people and pieces. Michael DeJong alters the famous young Infanta Margarita with toothbrushes, while Alexander van Glitch paints a pixelated portrait of the Virgin and Child where the subjects are dematerialized into orange and blue squares on a canvas. Photographer Bill Armstrong colors in the pyramids of Giza like a children's coloring book, while English artist Tim Gatenby shows beloved cartoon characters out at a bar playing pool. *Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art* is not meant to show icons in unflattering light, rather the exhibition forces its viewers to see familiar images in the most unfamiliar way, causing them to enter a world of reimaged reality. The

exhibition highlights the bridge between what the viewer knows and what the artists' works say about contemporary culture.



MAY 06

Distorted Icons at Whitebox Gallery

by [Alessandra Ruggiero](#)

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\$5

[Tickets](#)

Description
Join our grand opening of Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art at WhiteBox's new Chelsea location!

Date and time
Fri, May 6, 2022, 7:00 PM EDT
[Add to calendar](#)

Location
WhiteBox
New York, NY 10016
[View Map](#)

Tags

[United States Events](#) [New York Events](#) [Things to do in New York, NY](#)
[New York Parties](#) [New York Community Parties](#) [#art](#) [#museum](#)

This is an example of the Eventbrite invitation that I would send out for opening night.

Budget

A practical budget for a gallery show with 15–20 works is about \$5,000–7,000. After speaking with various galleries, including CUE, 33pexart and WhiteBox, I have concluded that this budget range should be enough to allocate for artwork shipment and gallery fees. The works coming from the single owner private collection are located in New York City and would need local transportation (less than \$500), Alexander van Glitch would need a total of \$750 for shipping, and Norwood Vivano would need another \$500. The other artists either have yet to respond with a specific quote, would ship for free, or are local and would bring the works themselves. Currently, I have no paperwork or insurance for these works and none of the artists have said the works are insured. All the artists I have spoken with have been kind enough to volunteer their work.

In terms of art handling and hanging, this is something that depends on which gallery I work with. If need be, I can hang the pieces myself because I have training as an art handler, but I also have a team of art handlers who are willing to help from work. If I am chosen as a guest curator at apexart or CUE, I will not need to worry about raising money, while if the exhibition is at WhiteBox I will have to raise about \$5,000 to curate the show since there is no guest curator budget. The gallery's opening night might include drinks that I can budget at \$500 as well as potentially a DJ. The DJ is a friend of mine who would bring his own equipment and perform for free.

Vinyl text is also important for not only the aesthetic of the show, but also informing visitors about the show's concept. The estimate for a 50 in x 40 in wall vinyl text is about \$300 with a \$300 installation fee for a total of \$600. In total, the budget estimate amount is \$2,850, thus giving a wiggle room of at least \$2,150.

Exhibition Layout

Please note that because I do not have a specific gallery space to work with yet that this is an idealized space.

At the top of the stairs in the hypothetical simulation right before the Jenny Boot photograph, *Black Girl with Pearl*, I plan to put the following wall text to introduce the show:

Distorted Icons in Contemporary Art: An Examination into How We Know What We Know and Why explores icons in a unique perspective. In Western culture, the definition of an icon has changed significantly from devotional figures to influential celebrities.

Contemporary culture has familiarized the term icon to mean any person or place with substantial social impact and recognition. This show is catered to those artists who have adapted, distorted and reimaged cultural contemporary subjects and who invite viewers to question what they thought they knew to more deeply understand the bridge that connects the original subject to that on the gallery wall.

The dark hallway leading to Jenny Boot's work is dramatic and feeds into how the artist wants her works to be viewed.⁴⁵ This particular work harkens back to 17th century Dutch painting and therefore I decided it needed a dark wall instead of the more contemporary white wall. Additionally, the work depicts a strikingly beautiful Black girl with a powerful gaze that captures her viewer, thus I added a bumpout to emphasize this piece even more. Immediately, the viewer can relate the iconic Dutch work with its contemporary variant and the social implications made about changing contemporary culture.

To the left is a small room dedicated to Alexander van Glitch's works. Van Glitch is best known for his technologically influenced works and distortion of icons. Because he has three large and unique works, I wanted him to have his own area of the gallery space. His *Study for a Portrait of Virgin with Child* is the most traditional icon imagery of the both the exhibition and

⁴⁵ Jenny Boot, "Bio," Jenny Boot Photography, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.jennyboot.nl/bio/>.

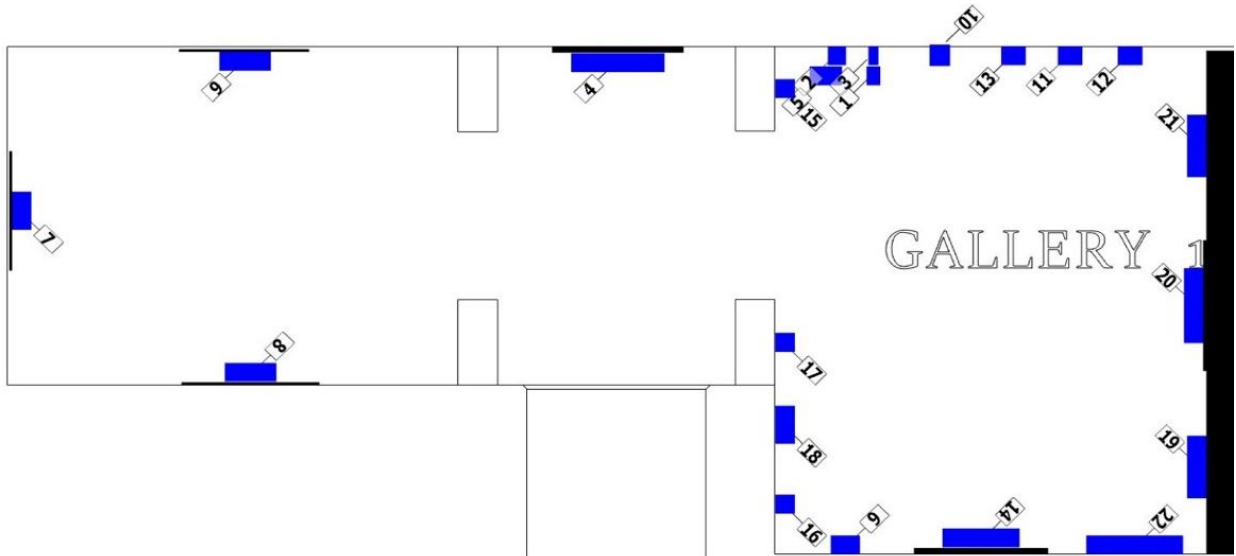
the room; thus, it is placed of the back wall while *Study for a portrait of Ariana Grande* and *Study for a portrait of Lebron James* flank the sides. Juxtaposing a sacred icon with contemporary icons intimately creates tension between devotional icons and contemporary ones.

The viewer then turns around, passes through the entrance foyer and enters the second room of the small exhibition. Here we have a variety of artists who, outside of this show, would otherwise not be put in the same room. Otto Mühl is shown salon style with Michael DeJong and Bill Armstrong. These are the smallest pieces in the show and also the ones that most overtly distort iconic pieces and places. Otto Mühl is on the left, while Bill Armstrong bridges iconic pieces and iconic places, leading to Norwood Vivano's *Recasting New York*. Vivano's work rests on a standard size pedestal (21 x 21 x 40 inches high). Adjacent is another piece showing a different side of an iconic place, Geo Rutherford's prints of the Great Lakes.

Works from Philippe Shangti's collection *Art vs. Drugs* are on the center of the next two walls. *Batman vs. Drugs* and *Wonder Woman vs. Drugs* are each highlighted as center pieces on dark blue bumpouts to emphasize the size and color of Shangti's photographs. Shangti's two superhero photographs as well as Gatenby's three pieces evoke memories of childhood television. Gatenby's works are dynamic and encompass themes of both childhood icons as well as iconic pieces. They reflect iconic pieces, such as Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, which Gatenby recreated to include the main character from the 1996 film *Scream*, and da Vinci's mural of the Last Supper, but with Kanye West and various cartoon characters instead of Jesus and his disciples. Last on the far-right wall is Robert Melee marbled portrait of Bob Ross, tying elements of both Iconic People and Childhood Icons.

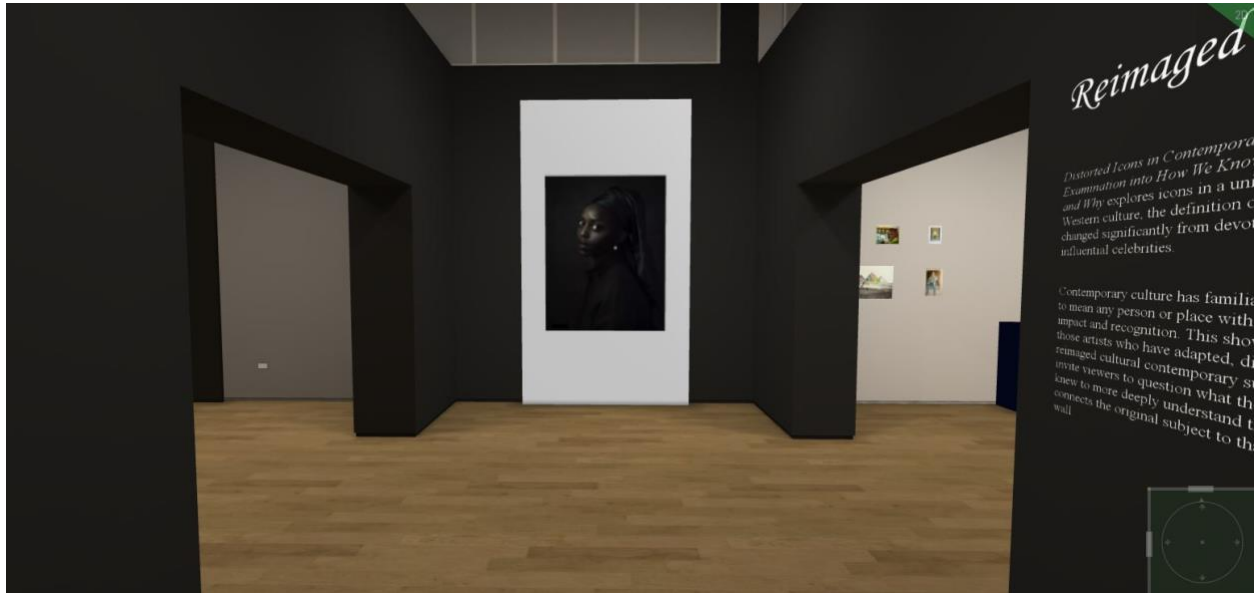
Lastly, the fourth and final wall brings the viewers back to a more traditional rendering of icons. Shiri Wroslavsky's studies of John Singer Sargent and Gisele Bundchen are painted more

traditionally, but capture the artist’s unique interpretation and style of art. Each piece is both a study of iconic people (both Bündchen and Sargent are icons) as well as iconic pieces (Bündchen as a model is a form of art, while Sargent’s pieces showcase a distinct time in American portraiture). I wanted these last four pieces to be close to Jenny Boot’s *Black Girl with Pearl* to create a dialogue between the two artists’ reimaged portraiture.



Lot	Title
1	<i>Blush, Blue Brush</i>
2	<i>Table for Ladies with Even More Fruit</i>
3	<i>Marcel's Nachlab</i>
4	<i>Black Girl with Pearl</i>
5	<i>After Francis Frith, Pyramid II</i>
6	<i>Bob Ross</i>
7	<i>Study for a Portrait of Virgin and Child</i>
8	<i>Study for a Portrait of Ariana Grande</i>
9	<i>Study for a Portrait of Lebron James</i>
10	<i>Recasting New York</i>
11	<i>Beach Detritus Series</i>
12	<i>Beach Detritus Series</i>
13	<i>Beach Detritus Series</i>
14	<i>Wonderwoman vs. Drugs</i>
15	<i>Study of John Singer Sargent</i>
16	<i>Study of John Singer Sargent</i>
17	<i>Study of John Singer Sargent</i>
18	<i>Study of Gisele Bündchen</i>
19	<i>The Doghouse 2</i>
20	<i>Batman vs. Drugs</i>
21	<i>Scary Painting</i>
22	<i>Kanye Yeezus</i>

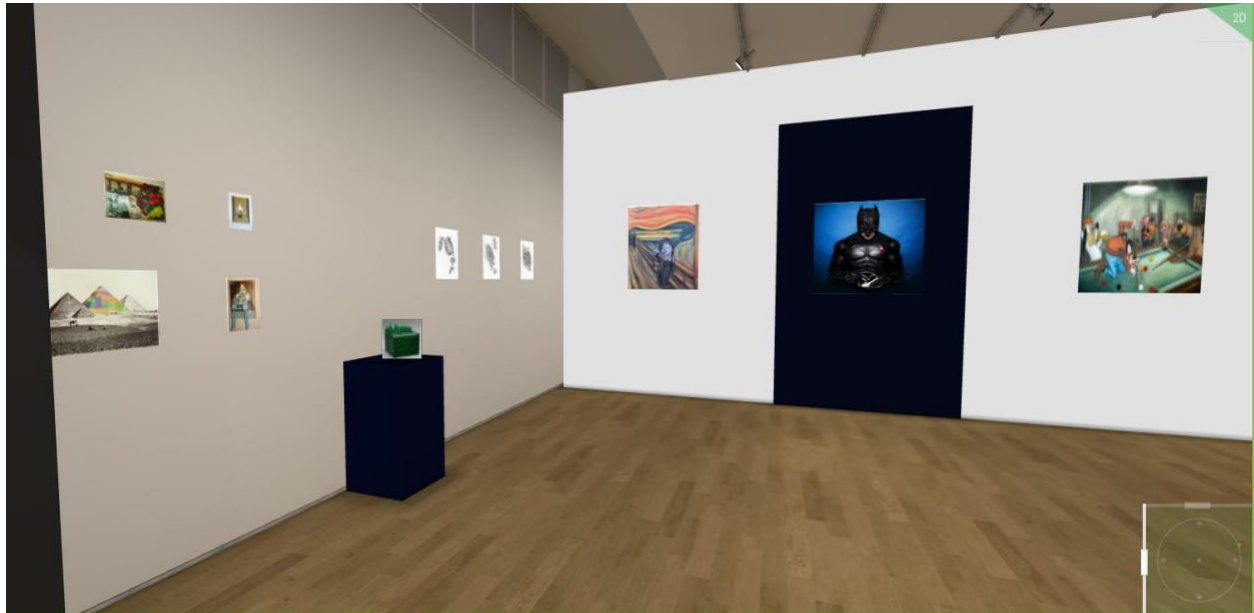
Entrance



West



East 1



East 2



Please click the image below to begin the video walkthrough of the exhibition. If the video does not load, I have attached it as a secondary file in Canvas.



Artist's Biographies

Otto Mühl

Otto Mühl's life, like many artists in the mid to late 20th century, was filled with autonomous artistic practice, going against the grain of tradition and using art as social action. Mühl was born in Austria in 1925 and served in the German Wehrmacht during World War II. After the war in the 1960s, Mühl was one of four artists involved in Viennese Actionism, a movement that stressed performance art that developed parallel to the Avant Garde. Viennese Actionism, however, was much more violent and disruptive, with public displays of urination, masturbation and nudity. The use of one's body as a canvas for artistic production became more and more commonplace among the group, which aggressively broke away from the stifling post-World War bourgeois Austrian culture and government. Through their explicit performances, Günter Brus, Otto Mühl, Hermann Nitsch and Rudolf Schwarzkogler forced Austrian society to confront both the traumas caused by the Nazi regime and also Austria's participation in the events of World War II.⁴⁶

Although he drew on "abstract inspiration from Dadaism, Duchamp, and Tachism, the painterly equivalent of the trance-like automatic writing once practiced by the Surrealists,"⁴⁷ Mühl and his art were initially rejected because of their overtly bold, sexual, and gross nature. It was only until the late 1980s and 1990s that his work was exhibited in museums around the world. The Louvre, Leopold Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Maccarone gallery all exhibited Mühl's works, which just a few years before, never would have been possible.⁴⁸ Surprisingly, some of these exhibitions took place after Mühl was sentenced to 7

⁴⁶ Margalit Fox, "Otto Muehl, Actionist Artist and Provocateur, Dies at 87," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/30/arts/design/otto-muehl-actionist-artist-dies-at-87.html>.

⁴⁷ Andrew Grossman, "An Actionist Begins to Sing: An Interview with Otto Mühl," *Bright Lights Film Journal*, November 1, 2002, <https://brightlightsfilm.com/actionist-begins-sing-interview-otto-muhl/#.YaJ5vS1h1B0>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

years in prison for pedophilia. When asked why there was such a dramatic shift in interest with his art, Mühl responded that “if something appears too bold or outrageous to the public, it needs its time.”⁴⁹ Mühl’s art directs itself against the values held by society at a particular time, therefore those parts of the society being criticized could not see the value in his art. The more time that passed, however, society and culture changed and art that was once viewed as disturbing is now appreciated as groundbreaking and significant to understanding culture.

Jenny Boot

Jenny Boot is a highly acclaimed contemporary portrait photographer. Born in the Netherlands in 1969, Boot started her career as a fashion photographer and painter but found that portrait photography allowed her to create a more accurate and emotional scene. She wanted her works to focus “on creating extreme intimacy with each shot, so much so that her and her subjects become one.”⁵⁰ Because of her background in painting, Boot uses light, tone, and shadow to evoke theatrical painterly qualities in her unique works. Her subjects are placed in front of black backgrounds, with their face slightly illuminated by some distant light. In this way, her works are reminiscent of traditional Old Master paintings. Even the scale of her works are evocative of traditional portraiture. On average, her pieces are 55 inches high by 45 inches wide unframed. When framed, especially if framed ornately, her pieces fit alongside Old Master portraits.

Unlike painting, however, photography allowed for more control of the artist’s narrative and vision. According to Boot, “even though a photo, an idea, or a model can be beautiful, light is what makes or breaks a photograph. It is through the use of light that she is able to capture her models in painterly images.”⁵¹ In some of her renowned series, namely *Ode* and *Golden Age*,

⁴⁹ Andrew Grossman, “An Actionist Begins to Sing: An Interview with Otto Mühl,” *Bright Lights Film Journal*, November 1, 2002, <https://brightlightsfilm.com/actionist-begins-sing-interview-otto-muhl/#.YaJ5vS1h1B0>.

⁵⁰ Rise Art Staff, “CV for Jenny Boot,” *Rise Art*, 2021, <https://www.riseart.com/artist/65133/bootjenny/cv>.

⁵¹ Jenny Boot, “Bio,” *Jenny Boot Photography*, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.jennyboot.nl/bio/>.

Boot took photographs that were indicative of 17th century Dutch paintings. She infused “the classical with the modern...reinterpreted the traditional and transformed the domestic.”⁵² Dark, dramatic backgrounds feature female subjects dressed in fanciful garb with sometimes extravagant hair and makeup. Boot’s *Black Girl with Pearl* perhaps best exemplifies her connection to Dutch Master paintings as it is clearly a modern interpretation of Vermeer’s *Girl with Pearl Earring*. She combines important classical works with a contemporary twist, adding commentary of race and sexuality into her works.

Boot’s pieces have been celebrated by many, leading her to be the recipient of awards and nominations including the Cannes Lion Award and the Moscow International Foto Award. Her art has been featured at the Affordable Art Fair, Noorderlicht Festival, Scope, AAF, Art Pamplelonne Saint Tropez, Saatchi Art Gallery London, Palm Beach Modern and Contemporary, Olive Cole Gallery Miami and Stedelijk Museum.

Alexander Van Glitch

Alessandro Scali, known to the art world under his pseudonym Alexander van Glitch, is a nanoartist from Turin, Italy. Nanoart is just as it sounds: art that is too small to be preserved by the human eye. It is highly influenced by science and technology, creating a bridge between the two seemingly dissimilar worlds. According to van Glitch, “Nanoart plays on the aesthetic paradox of creating visual artworks invisible to human eyes, nevertheless being inexistent or unreal; although they are invisible, nanoartworks are there.”⁵³ In fact, “Nanoart can be considered a critic of the grandeur of contemporary art system: massive art fairs, gigantic exhibitions, enormous artworks. Maybe there is a need for a healthy and decisive downsizing.”⁵⁴

⁵² Jenny Boot, “Bio,” Jenny Boot Photography, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.jennyboot.nl/bio/>.

⁵³ Valerio Viale, “A Talk with Nano-Art Pioneer, Alessandro Scali,” L’italo-Americano, February 20, 2016, <https://italoamericano.org/alessandro-scali/>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

However, Nanoart is just one of van Glitch's breakthroughs in the art world. He is also the creator of OKKULT Motion Pictures which is a project to make GIFs into a serious works of art. Another project of his is The Giphoscope, a proposal "to artists/galleries/ museums/collectors a minimalistic, unconventional, retro futuristic analog GIF player" allowing an animated GIF to become "a tangible and exclusive artwork, a real-life interactive sculpture."⁵⁵

Van Glitch focuses on how technology has transformed contemporary culture, specifically in his works on canvas. His series of *Contemporary Icons* and *Contemporary Scared* comment on "fragmented culture of compulsive vision and to forgetfulness."⁵⁶ Images of famous people are distorted in a way that makes them almost unrecognizable. The images look pixelated and there are no clear details or fine lines, just geometric shapes. However, van Glitch skillfully uses color to make the figures distinguishable enough that anyone can recognize the icons he portrays.

In these more recent pieces, van Glitch breaks from his early days of Nanoart, while still keeping with his interest in science and technology. His ultimate goal with these works is to fuse "classical and contemporary aesthetics to reveal the uncomfortable beauty of human life."⁵⁷ Van Glitch has been featured in PolisGraphics, Athens Digital Art Festival and LACDA.

Bill Armstrong

Photography, and manipulation of existing photographs, is a powerful form of art. Unlike painting and sculpture, photography is an on-going art form. After the photo is taken, there is a potentially long process to make the photo a complete piece. Bill Armstrong recognized this as an abstract photographer, utilizing multiple forms of deconstruction and reconstruction on

⁵⁵Valerio Viale, "A Talk with Nano-Art Pioneer, Alessandro Scali," L'italo-Americano, February 20, 2016, <https://italoamericano.org/alessandro-scali/>.

⁵⁶"Alexander Van Glitch | Art as an Antidote to Homo Digitalis," AlesCali, 2019, <https://alescali.wixsite.com/vanglitch/about>.

⁵⁷ Alexander van Glitch, "Contemporary Icons: Study for a Portrait of Ariana Grande Artwork," Contemporary Icons, 2021, <https://www.saatchiart.com/art/New-Media-Contemporary-Icons-Study-For-A-Portrait-Of-Ariana-Grande/845750/4692122/view>.

original and historical photographs. Armstrong saw the importance of color in its effect on emotion and perception of photography, thus he manipulated colors and the camera's focus to create blurred images. He also employed techniques such as color filters and a light table to color on top of photographs.

His *Infinity* series includes abstract images that are created using Armstrong's aptly named infinity process. He would set his camera's focus to infinity, leaving the images extremely out of focus and blurry. The artist's "unique process of appropriating images and subjecting them to a series of manipulations—photocopying, cutting, painting, re-photographing—transforms the originals and gives them a new meaning in a new context."⁵⁸ What is usually considered a precise form of art, is challenged through Armstrong's alterations. It allows him "to conjure a mysterious tromp l'oeil world that hovers between the real and the fantastic,"⁵⁹ making the viewer question what they see.

In another of his series, *In After: Dreaming in Color*, Armstrong recolors 19th century photographs to give them a more dreamlike quality. What were previously black and white photos are now injected with color. Armstrong had found that "the standard histories of photography often somewhat arbitrarily pass over the fact that color has been around since the beginning."⁶⁰ Therefore, his art gives these pieces the opportunity to be seen again through a new, colored lens. However, Armstrong does not want his viewers to envision these images as realistic, but rather as his dream that "embodies his study of the contrast and harmony of colors, but this time with an eye toward wit, humor and visual puns."⁶¹ Armstrong distorts historic and iconic images to create a colorful fantasy. He has been featured in shows at the Fogg Art

⁵⁸ Bill Armstrong, "After Dreaming in Color," Bill Armstrong Photography, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.billarmstrongphotography.com/after-dreaming-in-color-info>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Museum, The Art Exchange New York, Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, Uma Gallery New York, Hayward Gallery London, ClampArt, DeSantos Gallery Houston, and Aperture Photographs.⁶²

Robert Melee

Robert Melee is an expert in taking everyday objects and making them uncannily his own. He has transformed bottle caps into paintings, aluminum and enamel into curtains, silver serving trays into abstract works and furniture into installation pieces. He engages “in a conversation between painting and sculpture, making artworks from fragments of the home,”⁶³ purposefully creating familiar, yet very unfamiliar, situations. His alteration of everyday objects is a way to investigate human psychology, specifically how viewer react to something “both uncannily familiar and sometimes, disarmingly strange.”⁶⁴

Melee’s interest in psychology bleeds heavily into his photo and film series that feature his mother. After his first installation of latex covered furniture, Melee wanted to continue working with domestic, interior scenes while incorporating more people. This lead to Melee asking his mother for help and eventually creating an entire photographic series of just her. The art produced between Melee and his mother touches on “mothers and sons in art to some compelling, over-the-top, psychosexual, Oedipal zone where taboo, tragedy, humor and rage merge.”⁶⁵ The scenes are peculiar, and uncomfortable when put into context. In some images, Melee shows his mother completely naked, in others she is dressed like a drag queen or in lingerie. They are strange pieces, but also captivating because the viewer is invited into the most intimate scenes of their mother-son relationship. He uncovers “the aesthetics of suburban

⁶² Bill Armstrong, “Bill Armstrong. Biography,” Artnet, accessed October 23, 2021, <http://www.artnet.com/artists/bill-armstrong/biography>.

⁶³ Robert Melee, “Robert Melee: Bio,” Robert Melee, accessed October 23, 2021, <http://robertmelee.com/bio.html>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Jerry Saltz, “Mommie Queerest,” *The Village Voice*, September 24, 2002, <https://www.villagevoice.com/2002/09/24/mommie-queerest/>.

dysfunction, the sexual, social, and emotional repression masked by comfortable domestic interiors centered on the television console. By incorporating domestic objects, and even his own mother, into his works and making them appear abject, he aims to reveal suburbia's seamy underbelly."⁶⁶ Melee brings a different, sometimes disturbing, interpretation to the everyday and exposes truth that we sometimes would rather hide from.

Melee has been recognized as a prominent 20th and 21st century artist, regardless of how disorienting his works might make a viewer feel. He has had extensive exhibitions in spaces such as the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Columbus College of Art & Design, Milwaukee Art Museum, Corcoran Museum of Art, The Contemporary Art Museum Houston, New Jersey MoCA, MoMA PS1, Sculpture Center, Queens, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa.⁶⁷

Norwood Vivano

Norwood Vivano's interest in creating art about places and demographics stems from his own family's move from Sicily to Detroit in the early 1900s. He began to investigate the relationship between industry and population in American cities, making art based on his findings. Using 3D modeling, glassblowing and materials commonly found in industrial cities (steel, glass, clay), Vivano creates a visual representation of his statistical data. As Vivano describes it, he presents "data-driven information in a three-dimensional format using traditional craft materials in ways that allow viewers to place themselves in the work."⁶⁸

Examples include his *Cities: Departure and Deviation* series in which he shows over 300

⁶⁶ Artsy Staff, "Robert Melee," Robert Melee, accessed October 23, 2021, https://www.artsy.net/artist/robert-melee?utm_medium=p-search&utm_source=adwords&utm_campaign=Marketing_Artist_Dynamic_Search&gclid=Cj0KCQiA15yNBhDTARIsAGnwe0W_uqmnsHk5x8R-YrYnLyM3d-dveDZvSJUoAbxb_PYLkFFACNYaXhkaAkQAEALw_wcB.

⁶⁷ Andrew Kreps Gallery Staff, "Robert Melee," Andrew Kreps Gallery, 2018, <http://www.andrewkreps.com/artists/robert-melee>.

⁶⁸ Norwood Vivano, "Norwood Vivano," Norwood Vivano - About, accessed November 11, 2021, <https://www.norwoodvivano.com/about>.

years of population change in 24 major cities. Each city is represented by a glass blown vase that shows population growth, with the bottom of the vase shape being the smallest and the width of the body and top widening depending on how the population grew.

Vivano's "artistic intention is to better understand our place in time by focusing on land use through pictorial imagery and on industrial growth and decline through population studies that also ask questions about the present and future of communities."⁶⁹ In his *Recast* series, Vivano looks at the history of manufacturing in certain major American cities, such as Manhattan, Houston, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Portland. The casts are of the current urban landscape connected with a cast of the materials that made the city a center of industry. Pittsburgh's modern landscape (Steel City) is set on top of a steel bar, while Toledo (Glass City) is set on top of glasses and Detroit (Motor City) is set on the cast of a car engine.⁷⁰

Vivano's works are atheistically beautiful and elegant, while also being informative. The viewer is forced to look at cities they might be familiar with in a new way, learning about each place's industrial past, population evolution and changing conditions. Vivano's works have been included in the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Chrysler Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, and the 2014 Architecture Biennale in Venice.⁷¹

Philippe Shangti

Philippe Shangti is a contemporary artist that continues to rise in ingenuity and popularity. He began his career as a young photographer who made roots in Saint Tropez and quickly gained recognition by collectors and celebrities vacationing abroad. Captivated by the

⁶⁹ Norwood Vivano, "Norwood Vivano," Norwood Vivano - About, accessed November 11, 2021, <https://www.norwoodviviano.com/about>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

nightlife and constant partying, Shangti creates works that expose contemporary society's addiction to drugs, alcohol, sex, prostitution and anarchy. His use of makeup, costume, background, models (mostly women) create compelling atmospheres. He specializes in overly sexualized, staged, dramatic and extravagant photographs, such as those from his *Luxury Overdose*, *Art vs. Drugs*, *No Prostitution Here*, *No Pollution Here* and *Happiness is Back* collections.

For Shangti, "each new series is a tricky and bold challenge as it blows the whistle on immorality by making it attractive to see, and thus reaching a wide audience. In order to impact people's minds, he chooses the gentle method with beautiful visuals, rather than violent ones."⁷² He structures his art so that jabs at the rich and famous are not directly apparent but hinted at through his exhibitions and conveyed through his glamorous photography. His works, especially those most recently made, demonstrate that actions taken today lead to consequences in the future and that the only way "to change human consciousness and behavior" is "by shaking up the values and priorities of our societies."⁷³ By continuously producing art that illuminates issues are societal taboos, Shangti hopes that perhaps something will change to preserve our future.

Shangti's works have been exhibited at the 2019 Venice Biennale, Museum of Fine Arts of Carcassonne, Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art in Saint Petersburg, Guy Hepner in New York City and Art Angels, Miami.

Geo Rutherford

Grad-student and artist Geo Rutherford explores the "notions of invasiveness, impermanence, and the unseen in relation to the Great Lakes"⁷⁴ and the health of the changing

⁷² Philippe Shangti, "Bio," Philippe Shangti - Artworks, September 16, 2021, <https://www.philippeshangti.com>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Geo Rutherford, "Artist Statement," Geo Rutherford Art, 2021, <https://www.georutherford.com/artist-statement.html>.

ecosystems that inhabit the area. Rutherford is a native to Wisconsin and grew up around the Great Lakes and currently collects materials for her works at Bradford Beach. Thus, her art and practice of publicizing the health of the Lakes is a thoughtful and important subject to her. She is a multimedia artist, with works ranging from prints to book sets to found objects to paper boats.

Each print or found object, “strewn haphazardly along the sand, is a piece of the story” with “much of this evidence [telling] a deeper truth as to what is going on at the heart of Great Lake’s waters, such as the sharp white shells of zebra and quagga mussels, found indiscriminately amongst the lake detritus.”⁷⁵ Rutherford’s art is like putting together pieces of an endless puzzle, with the artist discovering new pieces each time she visits the Lakes. The ecosystems and environmental changes that are currently occurring in the famous lakes are innumerable and unknown to those outside the region; however, Rutherford’s art is sending a widespread message to a much larger audience about the Lakes’ health. As she says, “some material found, some created and manipulated to tell a narrative about the health and wellness of the Great Lakes in these modern times.”⁷⁶ Rutherford had her premier exhibition at UW-Milwaukee’s Kenilworth Studio.

Shiri Wrotslavsky

Working mostly with perception versus reality, Manhattan-based artist Shiri Wrotslavsky toys the line between abstraction and realism. Shiri believes that “the perception of reality is unique to the perceiver,”⁷⁷ where every conscious moment cannot be truly observed in an unbiased way. In her work, she aims to capture the in-depth truths of everyday people, objects, and circumstances. Influenced by Ernest Hemingway’s Iceberg Theory, her artwork portrays not

⁷⁵ Geo Rutherford, “Artist Statement,” Geo Rutherford Art, 2021, <https://www.georutherford.com/artist-statement.html>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ruggiero, Alessandra, and Shiri Wrotslavsky. Interview with Shiri Wrotslavsky. Other, September 9, 2021.

the surfaced elements of her subject matter, but the idea that there are many unknowns floating beneath, all too often overshadowed by what we see.⁷⁸ To the viewers, she hopes the unfinished aspects throughout her paintings showcase the discrepancies we so often have between reality and actuality.

Wrotslavsky works mostly in oil on canvas, allowing her the flexibility needed to paint her abstract realities. The imaginative techniques behind her most notable pieces can be best described as sporadic and engulfing. She conducts her paintings all in one sitting, sometimes spending up to 7 hours on her stool, and rarely goes back for touch ups.⁷⁹ Shiri believes her perception of reality is ever changing and uses each piece of art as a representation of an unaltered vision she will never be able to replicate exactly again. Currently, Shiri paints on a commission basis or for practice and has not had works at exhibition yet.

Tim Gatenby

Tim Gatenby is a British artist whose work mixes nostalgic imagery with Old Master motifs. Gatenby's "work examines art histories' relationship with the Internet world we now inhabit."⁸⁰ 90s cartoon are painted in a way that is reminiscent of fine art and traditionally trained artists by distorting "familiar characters, typically drawn as brightly colored and crisp cartoons, by blurring lines between classical painting and modern imagery. As with a lot of appropriation art his work inherently says something about its time as it reflects collective imagery back onto society, reanalyzing information in a sort of mirror."⁸¹ In his case, deconstructing what are typically referred to as joyous children's cartoon characters into images of dark humor.

⁷⁸ Ruggiero, Alessandra, and Shiri Wrotslavsky. Interview with Shiri Wrotslavsky. Other, September 9, 2021.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Timothy Gatenby, "Biography," Timothy Gatenby, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://timothygatenby.com/>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Gatenby's interest in fine art and Old Masters comes from his traditional training at an atelier in Florence. Over time, Gatenby's works went from purely traditional to "combining classical techniques and imagery with modern pop culture" which according to the artist "says something about who we are."⁸² His works investigate how once innocent and joyous childhood cartoons have changed as we have grown up. Old shows are cancelled, while new shows air with new characters and personalities more appropriate for present-day, pushing aside an entire generation of memories. Gatenby has exhibited works at Guy Hepner, Plan X Gallery and The Waluso Gallery as well as awarded The Columbia Threadneedle Prize Exhibition (2018), Royal Society of British Artists (2018), the New English Art's Club (2014), BP Portrait Prize (2012) and the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (2019, 2012).

Michael DeJong

Michael DeJong started his artistic career almost failing out of art school at the University of Illinois in 1988. He was working to receive his M.F.A. and chose a historically unconventional form of art: ready-mades. DeJong, among other artists at the time, believed painting was dead. "Everything that could happen with painting had already been done," DeJong explains.⁸³ What he wanted to do was recreate these paintings in the context of contemporary culture.

Moving to New York after graduate school, DeJong became part of the growing art scene in lower Manhattan, developing friendship with Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Keith Haring, and David Wojnarowicz. In a phone interview, DeJong stated that his readymade works were torn from magazines or books. He would start with a classic, well-known painting and then added everyday objects to them, "ranging from rulers and flashlights to adhesive tape and air fresheners, all of

⁸² Art Rep Staff, "Tim Gatenby Interview," The Art Rep, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.theartrep.co.uk/timgatenbyinterview>.

⁸³ Ruggiero, Alessandra, and Michael DeJong. Interview with Michael DeJong. Other, November 4, 2021.

whose shiny newness contrasts with the often heavy, atmospheric tones of the paintings.”⁸⁴ Sometimes the objects add a satirical element to the work, like a bottle opener attached to a Dutch genre painting of a tavern, as well as playful, such as a dog bone pinned over a Gainsborough portrait.⁸⁵ DeJong cleverly places priceless artworks on the same level as everyday household items.

More recently, DeJong has stepped away from art and turned to writing. After working at a cleaning business for several years to help support his artistic career, DeJong decided to write a series of books about alternative and non-toxic cleaning products. “Clean: The Humble Art of Zen-Cleansing,” published in 2007, quickly turned into a best seller and was included in Al Gore’s “Trainee Tool Kit” for the international attendees of his Climate Project trainings.”⁸⁶ DeJong and his partner Richard founded OneCleanWorld Foundation in the United States and continue to research alternative and healthier ways to clean. DeJong currently resides in California where he is retired but continues to create art for enjoyment. His works have been featured in George Billis Gallery, Littlejohn Contemporary Fine Art, Henry Art Gallery, BravenLee Gallery, Bernie Toale Gallery, P.P.O.W., and Rastovski Gallery.

⁸⁴ Lois E. Nesbitt, “Michael DeJong, Rastovski Gallery,” *Artforum International* 27, no. 7 (March 1989), <https://www.artforum.com/print/reviews/198903/michael-de-jong-60965>.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Michael DeJong, “Clean: The Humble Art of Zen-Cleansing,” *Huffington Post*, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://www.huffpost.com/author/michael-dejong>.

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