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Vasari21

Patricia Moss-Vreeland and the Meaning of Memory; Revisiting Berthe Morisot

One of the reasons I publish "Under the Radar" profiles almost once a week, aside from the obvious merit of the work, is to show the ways in which artists have rich and fulfilling careers outside of what we might think of as the mainstream: the glossy art magazines, the so-called blue-chip galleries, the big-name biennials. Like others I've written about, **Patricia Moss-Vreeland** has been steadily working and thriving for several decades, while raising a family, fulfilling commissions, giving TEDx talks, and writing a book about her work. If that's not success, I don't know what is.

Unlike others who've appeared on Vasari21, however, Trish is someone I've known since high school. We both went to the same tiny private school, just behind the Frick Collection, on East 71st Street in Manhattan. Even then, her drawings showed such remarkable élan that I can vividly recall one depicting her grandmother's hands. We re-connected through Facebook a few years back, and I'm delighted that I've been able to catch up with her after so many decades. (She also recently contributed an affecting essay to the site about her mother as her first mentor.)

Patricia Moss-Vreeland, a still life from the 1980s

A few weeks ago, I published a poem by Andrea Watson about Berthe Morisot's small but memorable painting *Young Woman Watering a Shrub* from 1876. Morisot belongs to a period beloved by almost everyone, the great revolution known as Impressionism, and the artist has over the years enjoyed a couple of retrospectives, one in Washington, DC, another in Paris. But I realized how little I knew about Morisot on seeing this modest but radical work—an ordinary woman seen from behind, in a simple housedress, in an era when the female subjects of official art were nymphs, goddesses, gypsies, or heroines from history. And so I turned to Anne Higonnet's wonderfully readable biography, published in 1990 and available on Amazon for a few dollars—or possibly on the shelves on your local library.

Until Mary Cassatt arrived in France, Morisot was the only woman to exhibit with the Impressionists during their heyday, from about 1873 to 1886. She still strikes us as contemporary not only in her loose and expressive technique, but in the self-doubt that plagued her throughout her life. And she had the sort of mother with whom many of us are familiar, one who fretted continuously about her daughter's unmarried status until Berthe was well into her thirties. If you're not familiar with Morisot's work or life, here's a **brief introduction.**

Berthe Morisot, *Young Woman Watering a Shrub* (1876), 16 by 13 inches

And now on to shows, open studios, and other appearances by our fabulous members

Hank Saxe's "Unnatural Landscapes" is at Peters Projects in Santa Fe, NM, through May 25. Though these small sculptures have a universal appeal, they are nonetheless rooted in their place of origin in northern New Mexico. His works "recall rock-like formations, but with an almost other-worldly quality, likely stemming from his idiosyncratic blends of natural clays and synthesized substances seemingly not of this earth," notes the press for the gallery. "Always investigating new technologies in a landscape of the Southwest, this body of work brings together many years of experiences, observations and investigations."

Hank Saxe, *Lucky Boy Pass* (2017), stoneware, 5 by 8 by 7 inches

Elisa Jensen will be presenting her works at the Trans-cen-der event at Brooklyn Fireproof Creative, 119 Ingraham Street, Brooklyn, on Tuesday, March 27 at 7:00 pm. “Inspired by the popular (now-defunct) Bushwick Art Crit Group, TRANS-CEN-DER Art Group (TAG) "is a networking and creative development community which, through a monthly lecture series, provides artists a supportive place to share work, receive feedback and form creative opinions,” she writes. “Our goal is to support, strengthen, and enjoy the fellowship of artists. Membership is open to anyone who loves art and there are no fees associated with TAG." Jensen also has a show opening April 6 (through the 29th) called “100 Gold Boats and the Fair Wheel.” “I’ve given Elisa full rein to wreak absolute havoc on the project room, and she has come up with something that is weirdly wild, primordial in its conception, and uncompromisingly contemporary,” says gallerist Michael David.

Elisa Jensen, from the installation “100 Gold Boats and the Fair Wheel”

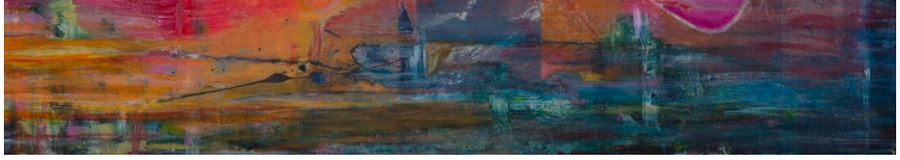
Jamie Hamilton’s show “Active Measures” opens March 31 at the Torrance Art Museum in Torrance, CA, and runs through May 18. “Drawing on raw surplus materials such as aluminum from the aerospace industry and dichroic glass from optical laboratories, the artist has machined sensuous systemic objects in which reflections and recursions proliferate,” says the museum’s press release. “Hamilton’s work is influenced by the legacy of Constructivism and Duchamp’s erotic bachelor machine, but he also scavenges ancient forms that have seemingly mutated with contemporary tropes in genetics, neuroscience, finance and informatics….The palpable density of valuable materials and extravagance of skilled labor exhibited in these subtle pseudo-machines engender a risky question about how our culture establishes value. What endures? Hamilton’s work goes daringly against the grain of the increasingly immaterial labor and aggressive speed of our world while beautifully embodying its dilemmas.” That’s a mouthful, but I’ve been following Jamie’s sculpture for a while now, and I can sum it up more simply: wildly inventive and strangely gorgeous.

Jamie Hamilton, *Active Measure*, *7 and 9* (2017-2018), aluminum, dichroic glass, rubber, steel, 40 inches high by 84 inches wide by 84 inches deep

“Decadence is often alluring in its exuberance, but it can also be sinister and subversive in its indulgence,” notes the press release for a show called “The Neo-Victorians,” which “explores a resurgence of interest over the last decade in ornamental lushness that conceals pointed social commentary beneath a seductive surface technique." The exhibition runs through May 13 at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, NY, and includes seven works by Camille Eskell. All the artists, notes curator Bartholomew F. Bland, engage with the aesthetics of the 19th century, "which they have shaped, molded, and transformed to reflect today's concerns, commenting on gender roles and societal tensions under the guise of the overt beauty."

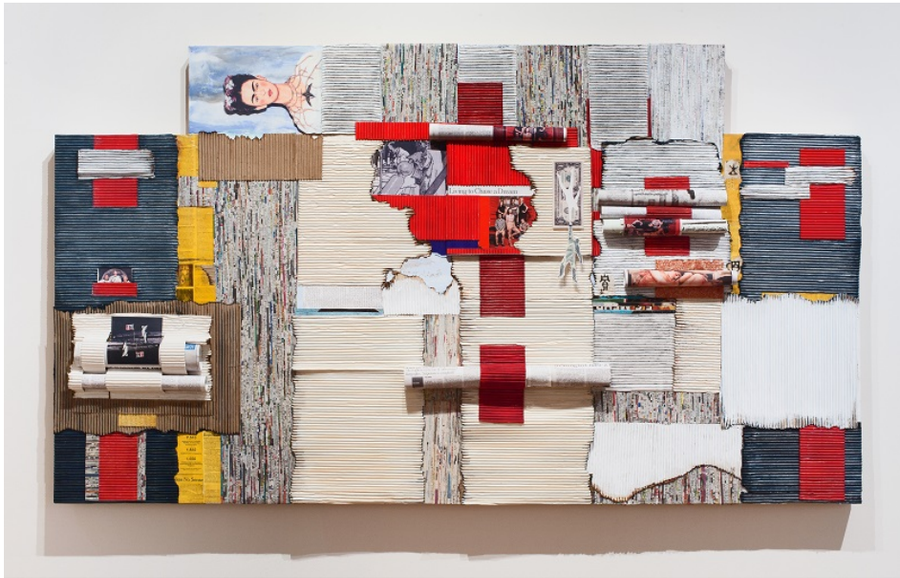
Camille Eskell, *Magic Carpet Ride: Little Maharajah* (2017), digital imagery, paper, textile trim, mixed media,19-7/8 by 20-5/8 inches

Among other endeavors during a busy spring season, Detlef Aderhold is taking part in The Other Art Fair, sponsored by Saatchi Art at Victoria House, Southampton Row, in London. The fair claims to present "a variety of hand-picked works that span all mediums, by 130 contemporary artists chosen by a committee of art industry experts." Next month, Aderhold will also be participating at the Roy's People Art Fair and his work below, *Catalyst,* has been shortlisted for the 250th Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy London. "The article on Vasari21 about the Saatchi platform helped enormously," he wrote to us about the post by Susan Washington in December 2016. "The advice on how to install a profile was very good."



Detlef Aderhold, *Catalyst 1* (2017), mixed media on canvas, 35 by 35 inches

Joan Giordano is taking part in “Going Postal” at the Salmagundi Club in New York on Tuesday, March 27, an evening billed as an “exciting and affordable art event.” A 20-dollar ticket entitles you to admission to a “gala atmosphere with sumptuous food and wine.” The exhibition and sale of more than 400 artworks supports the digitizing of 40-some years of “Artists Talk on Art” recordings with 6,000 artists. The preview begins at 5.30, and the sale runs from 6.30 to 9.00 p.m. If you’ve never been inside the charming precincts of the Salmagundi Club, on lower Fifth Avenue, this is a great chance to visit an inviting haunt for artists since 1871.



Joan Giordano, *Living to Chase a Dream*, mixed media, 41 by 73 by 4 inches

And here's what some new members are up to….

“My work was recently described to me by a fellow painter as phenomenological, which is my favorite assessment to date,” writes Christopher Rico. “It's often about entropy, a visual metaphor of our time as things seem to be unraveling across the culture. But many people experience my work and simply see the beauty that transcends the falling-apart, and I'm totally fine with that. Rebirth. Primordial rebirth into something new in the universe.”

Christopher Rico, *Morte* (2017), oil on linen, 73 by 60 inches (two panels)

“This body of work is inspired by my two artist residencies in Iceland—one in July 2016, the other in

September 2017, when I also taught a workshop," says Janice Mason Steeves. "I love the treeless, big-sky, wide-open spaces of Iceland, which remind me of the Canadian Prairies, where I was born. Although they are small, these images to me reflect the stark expanses, the colors, and the meditative sense of place I felt there."

Janice Mason Steeves, *Iceworks 43* (2018), oil and cold wax on panel, 12 by 21 inches

Phillip Garrett sends a painting made during a residency at the Sam and Adele Golden Foundation in the rolling hills of central New York in November of 2016 (and I will be bringing you more about this retreat next week). His works there were "mostly inspired by the rural landscape and some different approaches to applying wax and oil mixtures to solid panels," he says. "Most of the farms in that region have several small ponds for livestock but also in case of fire. All that I saw were beautiful."

Phillip Garrett, *Tom's Pond* (2017), oil and wax on panel, 14 by 20 inches

What could be more timely than Beverly Rippel's painting from a recent show called "Guns and Gun Violence in America, Too Many, Too Close," which was sponsored by Violence Transformed of MA and on view at the Town Common Gallery at Cambridge College in Boston through March 23. Thirteen paintings from Rippel's "Water Pistols, Cap Guns and Targets" series were featured, along with works by three other artists. "This particular series has been ongoing since 1992, and began after the shooting at Simon's Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington, MA," the artist writes. "Galen Gibson, a student killed by the hand of a fellow student, was a family friend. Since then, for 26 years, I have used the toy gun metaphorically in my paintings. They have been catalysts for dialogue at symposiums on youth violence and have been shown in galleries and museums. *Pink Cap Gun I* was included in the Portland Museum of Art Biennial in Maine in 2011 and was mentioned in a Review of the PMA Exhibition by critic Sebastian n Smee in *The Boston Globe*.

Beverly Rippel, *Pink Cap Gun I* (2010), oil on supported oil-ground linen with pigmented beeswax, 50 by 52 inches

As I often say, if you don't see your work in this week's newsletter, wait till next week. Or the week after. Or feel free to reach out and give me a poke on gmail or Facebook.

Coming your way in the very near future: profiles of Ian Ratkowski, Lisa Pressman, and Carole d'Inverno; more under-known residencies; our third-annual survey of drawings; and a poll of art dealers about how many inquiries they get from artists per week—and how many they respond to. And maybe a tart essay from me on why there's no "me" in #metoo."

Jolly cheers,

Top: Patricia Moss-Vreeland, *Above and Below* (1985), graphite on Arches paper, 22 by 30 inches

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