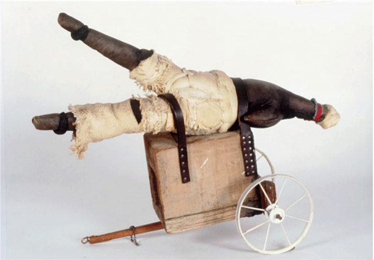
Vasari21

Carole Kunstadt "Under the Radar," Stephen Robeck "Up Close and Abstract," and John Outterbridge "Ripe for Rediscovery.

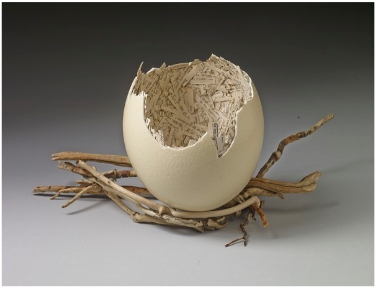
There is a case to be made that assemblage was one of the greatest contributions to art history of the last century. It all begins in 1912 with Picasso and Braque slapping a snatch of oil cloth patterned with fake chair caning on to a cubist still life stuffed other, painted objects, like a pipe, a glass, a knife, and a scallop shell (*Still Life with Chair Caning*). Within a very short time, pieces of the real world begin to find their way into works by Kurt Schwitters, Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, Joseph Cornell, on up through Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Kienholz, Louise Nevelson, Lee Bontecou, and other masters of the 20th century. In our time, assemblage flourishes in many guises: even the shimmering painterly "tapestries" of El Anatsui, the Ghanaian sculptor whose works sell for millions and are collected by MoMA and the Vatican, are made from lowly bits of junk—namely, thousands and thousands of liquor-bottle seals.

The three artists I've focused on this week, I realized after the fact, all make use of an assemblage approach. John Outterbridge (in his studio in 1970, at the top of this newsletter), who died just a couple of months of ago, made charged statements about racial inequities using the flotsam and jetsam culled from junkyards and the streets of L.A. I first encountered his work on a press trip for the sprawling West Coast extravaganza known as "Pacific Standard Time" and wondered then why he didn't have a bigger following in the art world (perhaps because he dedicated so much of his time to the Watts Towers Art Center). Here then is a belated homage to an extraordinary artist.



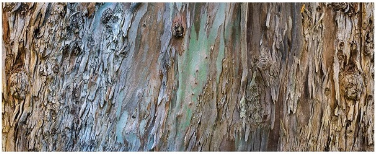
John Outterbridge, *Captive Image*, 1978-82

Carole Kunstadt's path as an assemblage artist begins in 2006 with the acquisition of a collection of psalms and hymns from 1844 in a used bookstore (though she'd been experimenting with collage for some years prior to that Eureka! moment). Since that time the book has served as material inspiration for several series of works, which also incorporate "sad irons" (old-fashioned flat irons), feathers, wooden eggs, gold leaf, thread, and all manner of other stuff, both exotic and commonplace. Like Cornell's works, hers carry an air of mystery and magic. You can read more here.



Carole Kunstadt, *Ovum II: Homage to Margaret Fuller* (2016), mixed media, 5.75 by 10.5 by 8.5 inches

It may be a stretch to include photographs made from disparate "captures" as a form of assemblage, but it is still a way of making that calls on pulling together bits and pieces to create a unified whole. And that is what Stephen Robeck does in many of his sensuous abstractions from the landscape, as seen in this week's Photography Portfolio. A work like *Eucalyptus 370°* (below) is "made from about a dozen vertical captures taken while moving around the circumference of the tree," he writes. "The individual elements are first arranged to achieve the desired end points where you see a visual detail repeated, thus the *370°* in the title. Then the elements are positioned, masked, and painted to create seamless blends." This is way beyond my skill set, but it makes for some beautiful images.

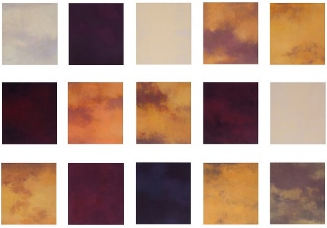


Stephen Robeck, *Eucalyptus 370°* (2015), composite photograph, archival pigment print, 22 by 66 inches

And now let's turn to other members in the news….

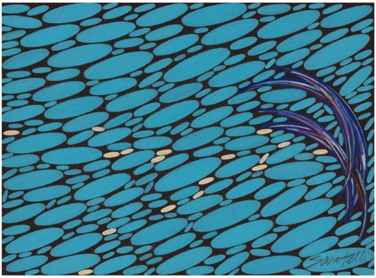
Through March 7, Detlef Aderhold is part of the Bristol Royal Academy's 168th Annual Open Exhibition, showcasing artists from across the country and beyond. "If there is a theme to the Open this year it is that of complexity," says the press release. "So many of the works in the exhibition delve into the multiple layers of experience engendered by this extraordinary year. This exhibition is a snapshot of a specific moment in time. The coronavirus, the political turmoil, the Black Lives Matter Movement and its particular relevance to Bristol, have all impacted the show. What is important is the power of art to challenge and respond to the now."
Aderhold calls his series "Annotation," continues the invitation. "Perhaps they can be understood as annotations commenting on human attempts to grasp tumultuous world events, and this grasping is carried out by means of symbols: linguistic, mathematical or visual. The series 'Annotation' can thus also be understood metaphorically, as an attempt to assimilate the world, but one which (perhaps it is acceptable to spin the threads of our interpretation in this way) does not really succeed. The symbols are illegible: they are more like the traces that people are able to leave behind in world events, or also the reverse – the traces that world events leave behind in them." Below, an installation shot by Alice Hendy Photography. Aderhold's work is in the middle: *Annotation 20* (2019), mixed media on canvas, 35.5 by 43 inches

Congratulations to Tamar Zinn, who is having her seventh solo show, titled “Where I Find Myself,” at Kathryn Markel Fine Arts in New York through February 13. “‘Where I Find Myself’ reflects my embrace of the transitory nature of all experiences,” Zinn writes. “Given that any attempt to capture a moment in time is futile, these paintings offer only glimpses of perpetually shifting light and color. The formal structure of the multi-panel paintings also allows me to place unique sensory experiences side by side and present them as one The paintings are vague recollections of visual sensations that appear behind closed eyes during daily meditation. ‘Where I find myself’ is where I go to lose my self.”



Tamar Zinn, *Where I Find Myself 12* (2020), oil on panel, 15 panels, 18 by 16 inches each, total size, 60 by 92 inches

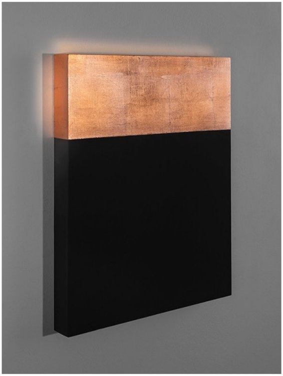
Bill Santelli is part of a three-person show (with Sara Baker Michalak and Mizin Shinn) called “Constellations” at Main Street Arts in Clifton Springs, NY, through February 19. “Each artist’s work relates to the idea of micro and macro relationships and connections—either worldly, astral, or metaphysical,” says the invitation. In addition to the in-person exhibition, a virtual interactive version of the exhibition can be found online here.



Bill Santelli, *Mindstream #22* (2020), colored pencil on paper, 5.75 by 8 inches

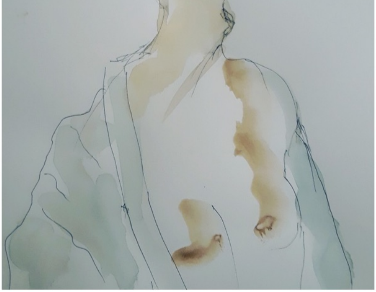
“Resolutions” is the name of the first exhibit of the new year at Michael Warren Contemporary in Denver, CO, featuring works by gallery artists, including Marietta Patricia Leis. “‘*Eclipse’* is a series of paintings of Flashe and copper leaf on panel and linen,” the artist says of her works in the show. “The series came about from my infatuation with the idea of a black surface that would not reflect at all—an echoless environment. I pursued this evasive black relentlessly for several weeks. After many trials I arrived at Flashe, a black that one sinks into and doesn’t return, a black hole. I then began to think of light trying to creep over the edges – like that of an eclipse when the light of the sun limns from the obscurity of darkness. The play of light and dark, what was dominant and what was subsumed, bifurcated and partial, became the intention of the work.”

Leis is also slated to be part of “Breath Taking,” a show of photography curated by Katherine Ware at the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, NM, opening February 12, and running through July (Covid restrictions willing). Leis’s gorgeous and ephemeral photos on silk will be part of the exhibition.



Marietta Patricia Leis, *Eclipse* (2020), Flashe and Copper leaf on panel, 11 by 14 inches

Arlene Ory is the featured artist for January 2021 for the “Tuesday Night Zoom Drawing Group” in Santa Fe, NM, online at agallerysomewhere.com. “Gesture is the brightest part of art,” writes Ory. “Gesture is what inspires my drawings and painings —breaking up space with marks that turn into lines. The first touch. I like beginnings so much that I often won’t finish a drawing” The group, which has been meeting continuously since 1969, began drawing models via Zoom in March 2020, after Covid19 made it necessary to stop gathering in person.



Arlene Ory, Portrait (2020), Japanese ink and watercolor, 17 by 14 inches

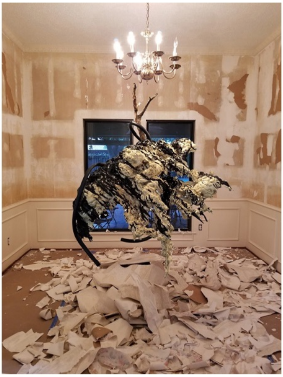
Through February 7, Aline Mare is part of a show called "The Shape of Life," curated by Gary Brewer, at the Wonzimer Gallery in Los Angeles. "This exhibition brings together many different artists to explore and respond to the idea of life's manifold complexities, of its protean nature and the endless possibility of life to take shape and survive," says the artist."This is not an academic show illustrating these concepts but a poetic response to the imagination of nature and of human imagination, whose endless variety and complexity is the wellspring of new worlds."

Aline Mare, *Phallic Birthstone* (2020), unique painted archival print, 44 by 72 inches, and *Yoni* (2020), unique painted archival print, and Yoni (2020), unique painted archival print, 44 by 72 inches

Christine Aaron writes that the Memory Project she initiated three years ago with a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts is going gangbusters with an iteration due to open soon at the California Museum of Arts, Thousand Oaks (CMATO). "I invited community members to contribute a hand-written memory to the project and then created an installation, catalog, and online record of more than 350 audio and written memories submitted in 2017," she says. "Lynn Farran, senior curator at CMATO, asked to do a version on the West Coast. It's been tricky because of Covid, but anyone can still contribute: Just go to the website here." It's not clear when the project can be seen in person, but it's accessible online through the beginning of April. "I do feel, that especially now, the sharing of memories, community and connection are even more important. All memories will be archived on the TMP site (once I receive them back and document them). They are handwritten on strips of gampi, waxed and hung from ceiling, or hand-written on printmaking paper and put into vintage library card catalogs so all can share." Below, an installation shot.

Bonny Leibowitz is another member with an ambitious endeavor in the works, this one a cool twist on the Covid-inspired online shows. "These last several months, with three solo exhibitions cancelled due to the pandemic, taught me the value of physically installing the work and its relationship to a space and its viewers," she writes. "It is with these restrictions and restraints that The Visitation Project has been realized. While visiting my son and his girlfriend, who were then in middle of renovations, I took a picture of their dining room with peeled wallpaper on the floor and photoshopped one of my works, *Looming*, into the space.

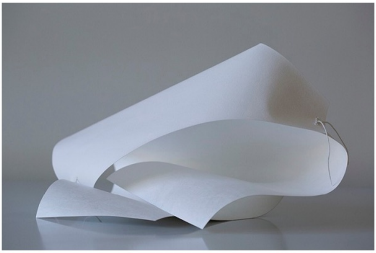
"At that point I imagined acquiring images of other spaces to photoshop my work into. Places my work could visit. Although it's my ongoing intention to exhibit the work in a variety of physical spaces, including galleries in real time, my intention for The Visitation Project is to realize--via photoshop--my work in various settings through images sent to me by artists who want to be part of this project. The documentation will become an online exhibition and prints may be incorporated into future physical exhibitions in various ways. The artists will be attributed in all social media posts and will receive a print of the final work I've created utilizing their image." For more information, along with details on how to participate, please visit Bonnie's website**.** Below, *Looming* as envisioned via photoshop in the room under renovation.



You have one more weekend to visit one of my favorite artist-run galleries to see "Stone Soup: Ordinary Matter"—featuring Gina Telcocci, Deborah Benioff Friedman, and Phyllis Lasché—at Gearbox in Oakland, CA (Fridays and Saturdays, 12 to 5 pm, but you can check out the virtual exhibition here**)**. "As artists, the three of us are observing and working with ordinary matter—the unnoticed, the discarded, the extraneous, the disreputable, and the beautiful scraps and fragments that we participants of this world leave in our wake," says the statement on the website. "In this exhibit is a selection of the pieces that have evolved from this visceral collaboration." Below, a couple of installation shots.

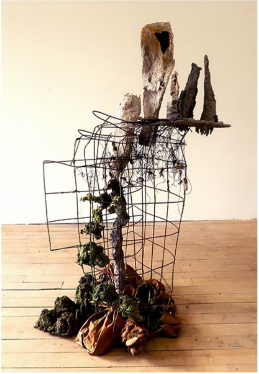
Elzabeth Mead writes about a show that includes her work in Richmond, MD, through February 27: “For ten years running, Page Bond Gallery’s annual photo-based group exhibition features 30 artists in ‘Viewfind.’ In 2021, the exhibition pays homage to the photographic medium and its revolutionary capability to document, reproduce and reinvent instances of lived experience. Throughout the years, Page Bond has championed ‘Viewfind’ as a way to focus on contemporary photography outside of the two-dimensional work typically exhibited in the gallery.

“In my series ‘Fictional Reality: The Photograph and its Object,’ I use sculpture as a photographic motif. The seemingly simplistic forms made of paper, Tyvek and string comment on the capabilities of natural light, and how that further defines our experience of perception, form, and ultimately the physical world.”

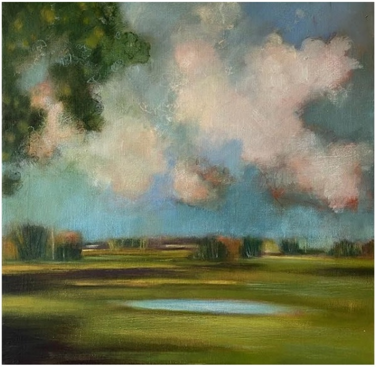


Elizabeth Mead, *Untitled Williamsburg G2 3a* (2020), archival pigment print on Canson Baryta mounted on white 3mm Sintra, custom maple semi-gloss white paint, Art glass, edition of five, dimensions framed, 18-3/8 by 26-3/8 by 1-1/2 inches

Rhonda Smith’s show “Solastaglia” will be at the project space of the Kingston Gallery in Boston, MA, through February 28. “Smith’s sculptures are both a tribute and a requiem for our living world,” says the press release. “Solastalgia is an imaginative look at beloved geographies that are permanently altered due to human devastation. Constructed of clay, papier mâché, and wire, the work invites the viewer to a more intimate relationship with our shared landscape." Below, an installation shot.

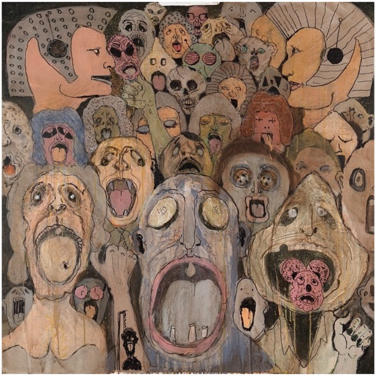


Wendy Goldberg's ethereal landscape *Once Upon a Time* is included in the Crocker-Kingsley juried national exhibition at Blue Lines Gallery in Roseville, CA, and can be viewed in person by appointment or online through February 20. "The work is based on a drawing I did near where I live in northern California," she says.



Wendy Goldberg, *Once Upon a Time* (2020), oil and pastel on canvas, 20 by 20 inches

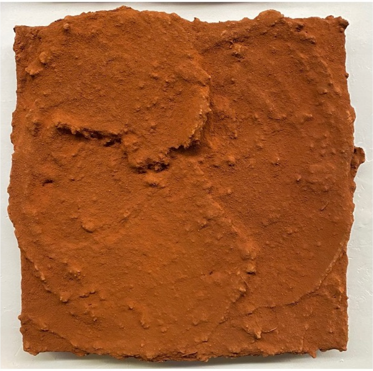
Ira Wright's show of paintings, partially organized by me and co-curated by Sandra Filippucci, will be at the Bareiss Gallery in Taos, NM, opening this Saturday, January 23, from 1 to 5. The exhibition is in a well-ventilated spacious setting (but of course masks are mandatory), so I hope you will drop by this weekend, or any Saturday or Sunday, also from 1 to 5, through February 14. Ira's a remarkable artist, whose monstrous and unforgettable imagery seems tailor-made for our times. (You can also email me to make an appointment: ajlandi33@gmail.com)



Ira Wright, Rally (2018), mixed media on canvas, 28 by 28 inches

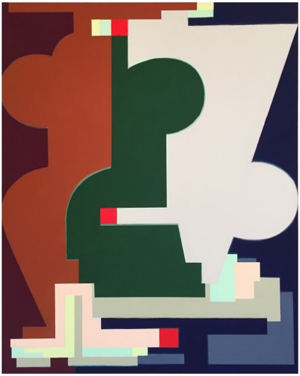
And More Thanks to Recent Donors!

"I've been working on a number of different projects," reports James Austin Murray. "I was going to do road trips this last spring to make more earth paintings. The plan was to go significant historical locations and use the earth from these places to make paint. Covid interrupted that, but it's not done, I'm still working on this project. I have been in some exhibitions, but nothing solo since my show at Bruno David in St. Louis, which opened on March. The big group show I had was at Macadam Gallery in Brussels called 'Eloge du Noir—Praise of the Dark.' I'm also part of a collective show at the gallery."



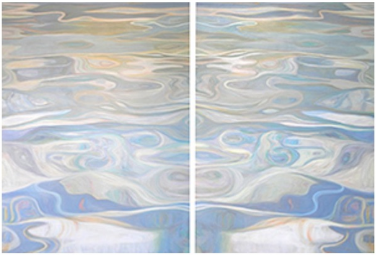
James Austin Murray, *Brasilia Brilha* (2019), earth pigment and acrylic on panel, 12 by 12 inches

Laurie Fendrich, who recently wrote about Salman Toor for Two Coats of Paint (and has promised to write for Vasari21 too!), sends her latest: "I finished this during the attempted coup at the Capitol and it's definitely interpreted by me as political (a friend said that the green shape in the middle is Mussolini ... I hadn't thought that at the time but why not?)"



Laurie Fendrich, *We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us* (2021), acrylic gouache on clayboard, 20 by 16 inches

And a chilly but sensuous finale to the newsletter from Fredericka Foster. “I did this painting after travelling with family to within 200 nautical miles of the North Pole,” she writes. “The midnight sun creates astonishing reflections, mirrored here to reveal a conversation with these waters.”



Fredericka Foster, *Arctic Diptych* (2017), each panel, 48 by 36 inches

End Notes

As promised, we will kick of a year of monthly Zoom meetings on Monday, February 1, with a virtual chat with one of my favorite art dealers, **Valerie McKenzie** of McKenzie Fine Art on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Valerie will talk about her background in the art world and answer questions you may have about finding and cultivating contacts in the gallery world. We will meet at 5 p.m. East Coast time, and if you will send me an email at ajlandi33@gmail.com, I’ll sign you up. I’ll also send a reminder in a week.

Valerie McKenzie with paintings by Don Voisine

Please note that I will moving the posts for Eat My Memoir and Rotten Romance to Substack this week, in the hopes of cultivating a larger audience than I can attract to the website. Every other week will be one or the other, and I'm signing you all up to receive regular bulletins (you can easily unsubscribe). This is a whole new platform and a new launch, and I realize you will already have read some of the EMM posts, so just bear with me. Most of the material for Rotten Romance will be completely new, beginning at the beginning (sort of) when I first started dating after a divorce. It's rich material, nearly three decades of bad dates and failed relationships. Most of it painfully funny.

A correction: In the last newsletter, I mistakenly referred to Noël Hudson, whose paintings grace the pages of *El Palacio* this month, as a "he." She wrote to inform me, sweetly: "I have been a female for quite a number of years now."

And here's a snuggly photo of painter Julian Hatton relaxing at his upstate retreat with Annie, one of two Maine Coon cats in the household. Photo by his wife, Alison Berry.

On this important day, at the beginning of this important week, let's remember the words of the great Martin Luther King: "Keep hope alive!"

Till next time,

Ann Landi

Top: John Outterbridge in his Los Angeles studio, ca. 1970, photo by Robert A. Nakamura for *The New York Times*

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