Volume 2 | Issue 7 // Free

Bruce Conner

Gary Garrels And Rudolf Frieling On Bruce Conner • Marion Gray • Evie Leder: In Conversation With Brion Nuda Rosch • Dena Beard: In Conversation With Jackie Clay • San Quentin State Prison's Art Studio • *Thinking Bodies: Heavy Breathing*

Frank Stella

A Retrospective

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Frank Stella, *Lac Laronge III*, 1969. Acrylic on canvas, 108 x 162 in. (274.3 × 411.5 cm). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1970. © 2016 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Stephanie Syjuco FRI / 11.4.16 / 12:15

UC Berkeley Students WED / 11.16.16 / 12:15

Conversation: Chip Lord and Steve Seid WED / 11.16.16 / 7:00

Tom Marioni FRI / 12.2.16 / 12:15

Ana Mendieta: still from *Creek*, 1974; Super 8 film; color, silent; © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York.

Ant Farm: *Media Burn*, July 4, 1975; performance Cow Palace, San Francisco; performance documentation; BAMPFA collection. Photo: © John F. Turner.

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Bruce Conner

Gary Garrels In Conversation With Leigh Markopoulos

Gary Garrels is the Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and along with Rudolf Frieling (see p. 8), one of the originating curators of Bruce Conner: It's All True. *Although Conner was a protean producer across a number of media—notably film, assemblage and photography—and although he is increasingly acknowledged as one of the Bay Area's most significant artists, this is only the second major monographic exhibition of his work and the first to be shown in San Francisco, his adopted hometown. On the eve of the show's opening at SFMOMA, I spoke with Gary via telephone in order to discuss the critical reception of* It's All True *at New York's MoMA, and the role this exhibition could play in defining Conner's importance, as well as to understand better some of the reasons why Conner matters, and why he is only now—eight years after his death in 2008—receiving his due.*

I haven't seen the exhibition at MoMA and I don't know enough about Bruce Conner, so I guess the biggest surprise for me, at least, is to see him through this show,* Bruce Conner: It's All True*, emerging on the scene with a bang after many years of being fairly quiet in terms of his presence in the art world. People I've been talking to say that they were aware of his films for a while, but they've also been surprised, if pleased, by his recent ascent into visibility. I was equally surprised, but really pleased, to see him in my curatorial practice students'* Void California *show earlier this year through their inclusion of the seminal punk zine* Search and Destroy*, to which he contributed, and one of his punk documentaries, which was curated into the exhibition programming by Craig Baldwin. He also cropped up in the Jay DeFeo retrospective as the maker of the film,* The White Rose*, but he hasn't tended to crop up in general, has he? Or has he, and I've just missed it?

I think your description is exactly right. There's been little bits and pieces of Bruce around, but nobody really had much more than a fragmented sense of his work or career.

In fact this show is his first comprehensive retrospective, but he's being billed as a major American artist. When, and how, did he become major?

The Walker organized a very large survey of his work in 1999 called 2000 BC: THE BRUCE CONNER STORY PART II. Bruce actually had a typology of what he saw as his retrospective, which was basically an exhibition in seven sections, each one addressing a particular body of work or works. He very consciously did not include several bodies of work in that exhibition. The show came to the de Young in 2000, and then went to MOCA in Los Angeles, before heading to Fort Worth, but there was no interest on the East Coast at that time. I think it brought the work to a lot of people's attention and was visited by quite a few people, but it still didn't really break through in a—

Significant way.

And then there was a show organized by the Kunsthalle in Vienna, in 2010, that looked specifically at his '70s work, and that traveled to the Kunsthalle in Zurich, which got Bruce a bit more on people's radars in Europe.

BLACK DAHLIA, 1960; cut and pasted printed papers, feather, fabric, rubber tubing, razor blade, nails, tobacco, sequins, string, shell, and paint encased in nylon stocking over wood; 26 3/4 × 10 3/4 × 2 3/4 in. (68 × 27.3 × 7 cm); the Museum of Modern Art, New York, purchase; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

So there's been a bit of activity, but what about the more cynical view, which I'm sure you've had to contend with, that Bruce Conner's emergence has to do with the market, and the need to find new artists to promote and sell.

I have to say, I don't think it was so much the market looking for material as it was that the market began to realize that scholars, art historians, and curators were really getting very interested in Conner and what he contributed, and they in turn realized that here was a very good, interesting, important artist who hadn't been fully embraced. Michael Kohn in Los Angeles has been showing Bruce since the late '80s, and he had a presence at Susan Inglett Gallery in New York for many years, but she was dealing primarily in works on paper. So, again, he didn't have a major presence in New York, which is really where the market is definitely centered. Paula Cooper Gallery took on his estate about three or four years ago. And of course, he was represented in San Francisco by Paule Anglim for many, many years. It's really been a swelling up of interest on the part of art historians and curators who have been taking Bruce more fully into account, and certainly since his death in 2008.

Right. The catalog, which I want to talk about more in a minute, positions him very much as an inspiration to artists, so there is this sort of notion that they have maintained his legacy, particularly someone like David Byrne who apparently saw Conner's films just after he made them in the early '70s. But then you have someone like Dara Birnbaum who says that she never met him, nor does she remember discussing his work with her peers, and she wonders why Conner's name "had not crossed our lips, nor even entered into our conversation over drinks?" Do you think that this makes the argument that he became somewhat marginalized by relocating to the West Coast?

I think that's true. I mean, he basically spent most of his life, most of his career here in San Francisco. He decided very early on, in the mid '50s, that he did not want to be based in New York. He also always had a very intense ambivalence about the art world. There's a strongly individualistic, even anarchistic kind of underpinning to all his work. I mean, he undermined his "career." He canceled museum shows, he had difficult relationships generally with galleries. He didn't want to play by the rules and be an artist in the "system."

Yeah, I got that, very, very clearly when I was researching him. At the same time I was as confused, as I'm sure a lot of people were, by this. He moves away to get off the art world's radar, but then he's annoyed when the art world ignores him! You just think, well, this is difficult for everyone really. I noted a few instances in the catalog, but I'm sure there are more, where he talked about giving up: he gave up assemblages because they became too popular, he despaired in 1967, he contemplated withdrawing from the art world in 1976, made a work titled LAST DRAWING, and then in 1999 he effectively did withdraw, although I think I understood that he actually was still working, but in an anonymous way.

He completely denied having his authorship related to work by "artists" with other names: Anonymouse, Anonymous, Emily Feather, Justin Case, and so on. He really treated that very seriously and sort of squarely, that those artists existed in their own right. What he was willing to do, after his retirement, and using his own name, was to rework works that he had already made. So he did continue to produce work, but only reworkings of earlier works that were attributed to him, nothing "new."

So Anonymouse, etc., were nothing to do with him? They were not personas. I thought I read his wife, his widow, saying somewhere that it was him, but I might have misunderstood that. I was going to ask you whether that was a conceptual gesture.

Well, I would say yes, but Bruce never talked about those artists' work in that way. He always talked about them as independent artists.

When you say Bruce never talked about them in that way, it makes me think that you knew him personally?

No, I didn't. I met him a couple of times, but only very briefly. I had no sustained interaction with him, so I really didn't know him. I moved to New York in the fall of 1984, and I can't remember whether it was that fall or maybe in the winter, but there was a gallery in New York called Phyllis Kind, she had been in Chicago as well, and she set up the film screening in her gallery—literally folding chairs and an old-fashioned kind of screen on a tripod—and showed some Bruce Conner films, and that's where I first saw A MOVIE. And that was totally mind-blowing, it was just a crazy, wild, amazing film, and I had no idea about Bruce Conner, had never heard of him. I went to work at the Walker Art Center in 1991. One of my colleagues there was a man named Peter Boswell. Peter had written his dissertation on Bruce and was involved in an aborted retrospective of his work at MOCA in the '80s. He was the museum curator who had maintained the most consistent relationship with Bruce over a long period of time, and through him I really got to know Bruce's work. Peter was already then beginning to attempt to organize a retrospective at the Walker, which of course then didn't happen until 1999. I was there from 1991 until the spring of '93, and then I came out here to work at SFMOMA. Bruce Conner is such a major figure in the Bay Area that I became much more conscious of him. So for me becoming more aware of him as an artist was a long, gradual process, and it was really through the way my life developed that he came into my awareness.

That makes sense. It's interesting that you should mention Phyllis Kind because she was a dealer primarily of outsider art, right?

Outsider art in Chicago.

One of the things that I've been wondering about with Conner, just visually, is the relationship some of the work bears to outsider art, especially some of the works on paper, some of the felt tip drawings, or the ink blots. These are classic tropes of outsider art, primarily the work made by people with developmental disabilities, if we think of the Prinzhorn Collection or some of the work that Creative Growth artists are making. I know I read somewhere that Conner hated the word obsession, but do you think that one of the reasons that he hasn't been taken as seriously is that visually his work wasn't really aligned with any of the schools that were on the radar of people at the time, and that it does seem a little more kind of "fringe" in a way? Or is that unfair?

Yeah, that could be part of it. I have to say, I've never considered Bruce's art in the context of outsider art, but I can certainly see where one could make associations or see affinities. I think it's also the breakdown, just in general, of the New York-centric narrative that's been going on now for many years, but it just keeps deepening. For me when the Pompidou did the *Magiciens de la Terre* show in 1989, that was like the first full-blown assault on the standard New York-centric narrative, bringing in whatever you want to call it, folk art, outsider art, or artists who were not in the mainstream kind of paradigm. That has accelerated, you know, and here in this country, a growing awareness of postwar movements and artists in Latin America, South America, Asia, and India has gradually opened up the construction and narrative of art history. So I just see this as just one more element.

I have to say, when Rudolf Frieling—we have adjacent offices—one day asked, "Would you have any interest in a Bruce Conner retrospective?" I said "Yes, let's talk!" That's how it started at our end. But I also have to say that when I became head of the Prints and Drawings Department at MoMA in 2000, one of the first acquisitions I made there was of what I think still is one of Bruce's most significant drawings called 23 KENWOOD AVENUE, which I think is the jumping off point for those '60s drawings of mandalas and meanderings. There was only one small ink-blot drawing in MoMA's collection up to that point, so for me it was really important to bring that work into their collection.

When did that initial conversation with Rudolf take place? How many years has this been in the making?

I'm thinking it was probably 2009, but I'm not absolutely sure about that.

You decided pretty early on to collaborate on the organization of the exhibition with curators Laura Hoptman and Stuart Comer at MoMA and to open the show in New York first. How will SFMOMA's installation differ from MoMA's?

The show in New York is a pretty straightforward classical presentation, and we are going to do something here which will be very immersive, it will be much more theatrical and experiential, with bodies of work much more sharply focused by theme.

That's so interesting, because some people have said to me that they found the installation at MoMA hyper-sanitized.

It's very MoMA.

Too white, too chronological.

Very clean. The walls are a uniform—if I recall it correctly—sort of light grey throughout. Our show is going to have a very different look and I think will give a very different experience of the work. We've met with Jean Conner and Bob Conway two or three different times about our intentions in terms of the presentation, and we're still planning to look at it even more closely together with them.

I think that sounds great. I mean, that's been most people's main critique if they have one: they love the show, but they questioned the way that it was laid out.

But let me tell you, Bruce was deeply, deeply involved in the presentation of the survey show that the Walker did. And at the Walker it was super clean and clinical and sanitized, and very, very classical! That's what Bruce wanted.

Well, I guess at that point that was kind of the flip side to what he was doing. He wanted museum recognition—

I think he did.

Whereas we want to experience Bruce Conner, because we never did, so we want the psychodrama. I read somewhere that the MoMA show, has around 250 works in 10 media. Are you showing the same works at SFMOMA or are you able to bring in different works?

We're showing everything that's there, except for maybe one or two drawings, but we're going to add another 50 to 70 works.

So over 300 works? That's huge!

It's going to be a very dense show.

Fantastic. And how many of the works are SFMOMA's? Is he really well represented in the collection?

He is really well represented. We have works from virtually every period and body of work. I will confess, the one thing that somehow slipped by the museum over the years is that we don't have any of the engraving collages, but we are certainly working to remedy that. But otherwise, we have wonderful drawings. When I was here in the '90s, I bought drawings. Early on in the '60s and '70s assemblages came into the collection. We have two of the photograms, the big ANGELS, I mean we have a very, very good collection here.

Yes, I'm sure. When was the last time that SFMOMA showed Conner and what was the exhibition?

Sandy Phillips did a show of the ANGELS, in 1992.

So almost 25 years later he's coming back, that's great.

That's just that one body of work.

Yes, and it's a great body of work (and one of my personal favorites). The reviews of the MoMA edition have all been super positive. There's a quote I pulled out of* The New York Times*—I don't think this was Roberta Smith, but it might have been—which says that, "partly by its very organization, [the exhibition] implies that the films are his greatest work. They feel alive and of our time in a way that only a few of the assemblages do, and the ink drawings convince by their strange timelessness."

I think that was Roberta.

What are your thoughts on that?

The films definitely don't outweigh or have a larger presence than the other work in exhibition. It's a very balanced exhibition between film works and other kinds of works. I've got the review right here in front of me: she said the show is split into starkly different halves, assemblage and after-assemblage—which I don't think is true either, and certainly not going to be true here.

As someone who's coming to Conner's work relatively late, I have to say that I'm not instantly drawn to the assemblages, and that's not just because they're made out of sort of funky materials. They just feel so much of a time.

I think that may be true. MoMA did *The Art of Assemblage* show in 1961 and Bruce was included, and there's no question, he was absolutely of the moment in terms of a "zeitgeist" at that time. And of course, he felt that he was being too pigeonholed and that it was too restrictive and so he declared that he was not going to make any more assemblages. That's actually not strictly true, because some of his punk assemblages from the '90s are definitely assemblages, he just didn't call them assemblages.

Yeah, those were pretty hardcore. A lot of assemblages can look not exactly the same, but I think you need to be a connoisseur sometimes to distinguish between them. What do you think is a signature Bruce Conner assemblage? Is it his use of materials and the nylons he seems to use to bind most of them together?

They're gritty and they're urban. When he was living here "urban renewal" was going on and there were lots of houses being torn down in the Western Addition, meaning there was just lots of material available to him, so part of it was just availability, but I think it was also a sense of the cast-offs of our culture, the things that were being "thrown out" that were being devalued. He had an intrinsic visual interest in this material, but also was attracted to it because it symbolized outcasts.

SPIDER LADY NEST, 1959; Wood box with aluminum paint, spray paint, window shade, nylon, thread, fabric, fur, lead customs seal on string, pearl bead, cotton ball, feathers, tassels, and cardboard; 31 x 28 1/2 x 7 in. (78.74 x 72.39 x 17.78 cm); Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Richard Brown Baker, BA 1935, Collection; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Bruce Conner photographed by Leo Holub, circa 1980. Courtesy of anonymous.

J. Hoberman in the* New York Review of Books *mentions that CHILD, which I guess is the shocker or crowd-pleaser assemblage, however you prefer to see it, has never been shown at MoMA before, even though it's in their collection. Do you think it's significant or just a coincidence that the work that he made in 1959 in response to the sentencing of death-row inmate Caryl Chessman has never been displayed?
It's significant. Every museum in New York was interested in presenting this show, but because Bruce has had this long history with MoMA, and also because of their interest, we felt it was an occasion to re-address CHILD, which was a very important work very early on in his career and had significance here on the West Coast, as Chessman was from Los Angeles. Peter Selz awarded it a prize in a local art show that he juried in 1960, and then it was acquired by Philip Johnson, who gave it to MoMA in, I think, 1970. MoMA felt that this history gave them a real leverage, a jumping off point to really look at CHILD, which had been deemed "unexhibitable" because of its deteriorating condition, and to consider it again. We had a study day together in New York to talk about Bruce's attitude toward conservation and the continuity of his work and its restoration, and also whether it was even feasible or desirable to try to resurrect CHILD. We concluded it was, and one of the sculpture conservators, Roger Griffith, took it on as a personal cause—for him it was a personal, professional challenge, but also I think moral, and about the museum and its relationship to Bruce. He felt like this could be done and had to be done. What he's achieved is just a marvel. It's also a tribute to the techniques that have developed in conservation work and that wouldn't have been available 20 years ago.

You mentioned before that even after Conner stopped making work, he would remake older works, and I saw that Michelle Barger, SFMOMA's Head of Objects Conservation, had an essay in the catalog. I didn't have a chance to read it, but I understood that there was something going on with the stability of his work. I'm intrigued that he was actually involved in conversations about the future of the work.
Yeah, but he was also ambivalent about his relationships to museums so I think he felt he could continually revise the work.

I get that and it makes total sense. Although it's just not possible after you're dead.
He felt that his work was alive, you know? I've been very interested in the comparisons that one could make with Dieter Roth—the Swiss-German artist—and Conner, and the similar kinds of issues their work provokes around material and conservation and decay.

That's a super interesting point. I hadn't even thought about that when I was thinking about synergies with other artists, but I like that, Gary. The thing that you made me think about when you were mentioning his ambivalent relationship with institutions was this real strand of institutional critique, if you will, that runs through his work. It's sometimes expressed really gently and kind of humorously. There was an image that caught my eye in the catalog of the PLEASE TOUCH card that enables the bearer "to touch or alter any collage or assemblage." He made that in 1963 and that's an early date to be challenging the institution in this way, isn't it?
Yeah, but again, if you look at Fluxus, you will see very parallel things around the same time, but I don't know that Bruce was aware of Fluxus really.

I think of Fluxus as being outside the institution—
It was.

And this feels like it was intended to be inside. I got the sense the card was supposed to be on display, so it was quite a radical gesture, maybe also tying back to this notion of him being the only person who had the right to alter his work. Perhaps he was also kind of challenging himself on that level and trying to open up his process?
Yes and no. The work called DARK BROWN, that came into the museum's collection in 1961, was a painting he had made and given to Michael McClure, who was a very close friend and associate. Michael needed money so he sold it to a collector here in San Francisco named Harold Zellerbach, and Zellerbach gave it to the museum in 1961. It was the only work in the museum that had a sign on it that said "Do Not Touch." Bruce had made that piece for McClure because he knew he liked to touch paintings and works. He put a fur frame around it so it would be enticing to touch, and he built it up with many layers, and he knew that those layers would be revealed over time through the process of touching. That was his intention for that piece—that it would have an ongoing life as a painting because of its interaction with people touching it. And of course, generally the idea of the museum is that it preserves an object's original identity. So there's always been a question of to what extent the artist can alter a work. I think there's been a lot of change in museum attitudes and practices in the last 50 years—and it's a huge discussion among art conservators—about what extent an artist should continue to work on a piece once it's in a collection. I feel really great that our conservators are deeply, deeply engaged with artists to try to understand their intent and to try to be as sympathetic as possible to that when they make decisions about a work's condition, or future.

SFMOMA is a front-runner in terms of liberated conservation practices.
It is, and in terms of relationships with artists.

You're one of the first institutions to start recording artists' wishes for their works, right?
Yes, and in regards to looking at the materials they use and meeting with artists to talk about those materials. We have a big materials archive. I think the Whitney has also been way up in front on this, too. The Getty actually had a symposium—it was probably in 2008—around the issue of stability or instability or stopping time. It's a subject that's been at the forefront of conservators' and museums' considerations for the last 10 years, certainly, if not longer.

Can we talk about Bruce Conner and women? I'd be remiss if I didn't. In some ways I'm probably the perfect audience because I'm coming at this from a quite naïve, uninformed way, so to me he seems to be very in touch with his feminine side, and to really embrace the female, and women. So I read with interest in the* Financial Times, *Ariella Budick's review claiming that Conner embraced the femme fatale myth of the late nineteenth century and suggesting that the feminist upswelling in the '60s left him deeply unsettled, and that with his works around women he was "exploiting the vengeful sex goddess" theme. Budick also says that MoMA tries to frame that tactic as a critique of perverse eroticism, but she's not buying it. What do you make of that, and do you buy it?
Well, in the catalog we've definitely tried to get a woman's point of view about Bruce's relationship to female imagery. I think in a lot of his work he was critiquing norms in our culture, our society, and exposing and revealing those kind of normative ways of thinking and seeing. This goes back to de Kooning. Did he have a hatred of women? Was Bruce operating through critique or was it something about his own relationship with women? It's probably some of all of the above. I mean, Bruce and Jean Conner got married in 1957 and they remained a very, very close, stalwart couple until his death. But Bruce was also infamous for the relationships he had with many other women.

Platonic friendships?
No, love, sexual relationships, infatuations, whatever. He clearly loved women, and women loved him, and many women remained devoted to him over long periods of time even after the relationship had ceased. And I don't know what his relationship was with musician Toni Basil, but she was the one who in the late '70s introduced him to the punk scene in San Francisco. Women were very important to Bruce!

But not in a Pierre Molinier or Hans Bellmer kind of way.
No, not at all. One of his very, very last films—of course, all these films are recycled and remade—is called EASTER MORNING, and I don't know if you've ever had a chance to see it but it is the most beautiful, moving, lovely, adoring image of a nude young woman and it's the epitome of the idealization of beauty, and spiritual purity. It was made in 2008, and it's a remake of earlier material going back to the '60s. We will have that film in one of the galleries in the museum, and actually it's the last film in MoMA. It's the very last thing you see before you leave the exhibition.

I'll make sure to try to see to before I talk to Rudolf. A couple more questions if I may—I wanted to ask you about the layout of the catalog, or the decision to use the chronology by Rachel Federman, to structure or to frame the plate sections.
That's a way to integrate the work, rather than segregating it. We felt it was very, very important to be tracing the life and the work in tandem.

I think it works very well; I enjoyed it. You have to stay quite focused though, because it is interrupted here and there by people, mainly artists, reminiscing about Conner or giving their impressions of his work, which I loved, because they are very personal impressions and they add to a sense of oral history. Did you all think about the catalog together, or was there a sole driving force and vision behind what needed to be in there?
We thought about it all together, but Rudolf and I made a lot of the final decisions and we worked pretty closely with our catalog designer and our publications department. We have a wonderful publications department and Kari Dahlgren, the head of it, is just fantastic, so it was a very collaborative process.

When I was looking at the images in the catalog, I was thinking, as I always do when I look at images, of what they remind me of in terms of other artists. So before I even read that this was a "thing" I felt that the collages were pretty much Max Ernst inspired.
They are, there's no question.

And then Dada came to mind, and Kienholz, Cornell, the surrealists, and Goya, and I read that William Blake was an influence in your essay—but were there any people that Conner was particularly inspired by or referred to, or was he an artist who really got inspiration not from other artists, but more from life?
I would say both. He was very aware of art and art history from the very early days when still in high school in Wichita. When he and Michael McClure went to New York in the '50s, McClure called up Robert Motherwell out of the blue and asked if they could visit. Motherwell invited them to go to his studio and see his work, and what he collected. So they were, Bruce was, very, very aware of other artists and what was going on in the art world. In that way he's not an outsider, he's not naive. But he was also influenced by things that were outside of art—like this crazy book that his grandfather had and that he pored over when he was still in Wichita, by a guy named Manly P. Hall. It's called *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, and it's filled with visual imagery from other cultures. And he was very familiar with Masonic imagery. So he was looking at popular culture, he was looking at art history, but he was also looking at the world around him, at what's going on in the here and now.

I think it's your joint intro with Rudolf in the catalog where you quote Giorgio Agamben's definition of the contemporary, which I think is really apt.
Yes, that was Rudolf and yeah, it's perfect.

It* is *perfect. The focus is on Agamben's argument that the contemporary "holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness." Agamben goes on to say that the contemporary is always the person who's slightly out of time, as it were, who stands outside of time, and is able to observe it, and whose observations might not be recognized at that moment because of this fact, but who later on will be proven to have been truly contemporary. It seems like Conner is a very happy kind of illustration of Agamben's definition of contemporary. But then I wondered, as I was thinking about this, about the fact that much is made of Conner's subjectivity, his emotionality—how do we trust the contemporary who is so bewildered by so much that he sees, or who's having the identity crisis that he portrays in the ANGELS, or who wants to leave the art world?
I wouldn't use the term bewildered. I think he was—

Too deliberate and too intelligent to be bewildered.
Yeah, I mean keenly, obviously intelligent, and again, nothing was off-limits. There was no thought, no pocket of experience that was off-limits.

All right, Gary, I'm going to end with a really cheesy question, but I really want to know—what's your favorite Bruce Conner work?
No, the question is, "which Bruce Conner?"

Okay, you can take one work from the show home, which is it?
Well, for me it would probably be 23 KENWOOD AVENUE, partially because I was able to buy that for MoMA in New York. It's like the underpinning, it's the coalescence of drawing as a medium that became fundamentally important. For me it's the most fully realized drawing, maybe the first fully mature drawing; it's all there. It's about as complete and perfect a drawing as Conner ever made, and it embodies almost all aspects of his work. I could take it home and put it on my wall and live with it.

Gary Garrels is the Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA.

MEXICO COLLAGE, 1962; netting, paper, paint, ink stamps, fringe, bell, and costume jewelry on Masonite; 23 × 32 × 5 in. (58.4 × 81.3 × 12.7 cm); di Rosa Collection, Napa, California;
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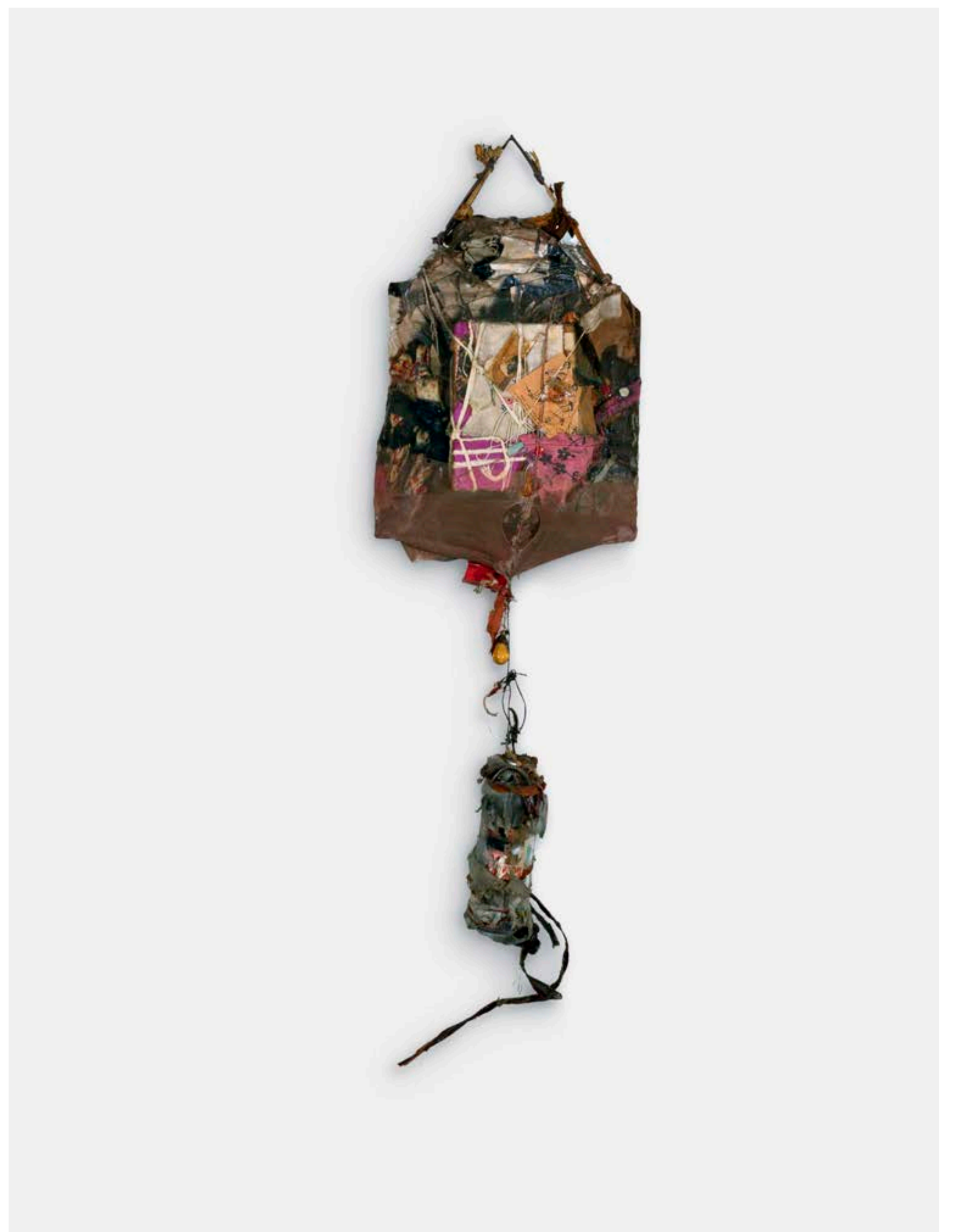
TICK-TOCK JELLY CLOCK COSMOTRON, 1961; wall component: wood, fabric, cardboard, wallpaper, magazine pages, stickers, string, twine, plastic film, glass fragments, mirror fragments, iron straps, grommets, nails, screws, upholstery tacks, metal foil, aluminum sheet, electrical socket, electrical wiring, rubber hose, beads, costume jewelry parts, sequins, ribbon, nylon stocking, cigarette filter, paint, graphite, bitumen, and resin on pressed hardboard; painted wood frame with mirror segments; floor component: wood spool, fiberboard cone, paper, paint, monofilament netting, electrical plug, insulated wire, speaker, audio cable, iron wire, rings and clips, paper, yarn, and twine; 5" reel of half-track monaural tape transferred to digital files; wall component: 57 1/2 × 53 3/4 × 5 in. (146.1 × 136.5 × 12.7 cm); cone: 43 3/4 × 15 in. diameter (111.1 x 38.1 cm diameter); the Art Institute of Chicago, restricted gift of Janss Foundation, Twentieth-Century Purchase Fund; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

CHILD, 1959; wax, nylon, fabric, metal, twine, and wood high chair; 34 5/8 × 17 × 16 1/2 in. (88 × 43.2 × 41.9 cm); the Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Philip Johnson; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



HOMAGE TO JAY DEFEO, 1958. Cardboard, nylon, costume jewelry, book wrapped in fabric and twine, beads, paper, plastic, glass, postage stamps, rubber bands, burned fabric, staples, and zipper. 32 × 10 × 4 inches. Mumok Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, former Hahn Collection, Cologne, acquired in 1978. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Bruce Conner

Rudolf Frieling In Conversation With Leigh Markopoulos

Rudolf Frieling, Curator of Media Arts at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, developed an interest in Bruce Conner's work soon after relocating to the Bay Area and has subsequently acquired several of the artist's films for the museum's collection. Frieling's conviction that Conner was not only one of the twentieth century's most important experimental filmmakers, but also one of its more significant artists, led him to suggest initiating the retrospective Bruce Conner: It's All True, *which was co-organized with New York's MoMA. I spoke to Rudolf via telephone in order to find out more about Conner's films and filmic innovations, and to ask what in particular distinguishes the artist's approach as contemporary.*

Gary mentioned that the seeds for* Bruce Conner: It's All True *were sown when you acquired Conner's THREE SCREEN RAY (1961/2006) for SFMOMA. What year was that, and what about that moment in particular prompted you to consider organizing this retrospective?

It actually goes back all the way to when I joined the museum in 2006. After a short while I realized—as I was assessing the status of the collection—that we did not have a single time-based work by Bruce Conner and I thought, well, we'll have to change that at some point. I was subconsciously, I guess, waiting for the right moment to meet Bruce and start a conversation, but before I could actually even think about that properly, he died. That was in 2008. I didn't quite know how to respond to that, so I waited a while. Then, a year later, in the summer of 2009, I approached his estate and said I would really love to meet and just discuss what might be possible. We met and Michelle Silva, his editor, showed me THREE SCREEN RAY, which I hadn't seen, obviously, because it hadn't been released. It had only been shown once or twice as a single-channel composite projection in screenings, but it had never been installed. It hit me at that moment that this piece would be a fantastic contribution to the museum's 75th anniversary show in 2010, despite the difficulties that Bruce had with almost every institution, and certainly including SFMOMA. We also had a long history with him, and there were more than 20 works in the collection—assemblages and works on paper, an ANGEL, and so on—but as I said, no film work. He's one of the most important Bay Area artists, so it made sense to include that work in the exhibition as a sort of homage. It was fitting for a number of reasons. Have you actually seen it?

Just snippets.

So if you remember, it is not only a sort of digital remix of his 1961 film COSMIC RAY, but it actually goes beyond that, and includes other images as well, and other image sources. It seemed to me almost like the sum of his filmic work with found footage. That's one aspect. The second aspect was that it was a review of not only past works and past footage, but also technically of what he had considered essential up to that point and it really achieved the shift from film to digital. So while until the early 2000s Bruce's mantra had been that "film is film; it needs to be celluloid," all of a sudden he understood that he could rework his own work digitally with the same artistic integrity.

Interesting. This notion of reworking or repetition was going to be a later question for you.

Okay, let's go back to that later, I'll just finish this one thought. So there was a frantic and very urgent push to bring this one work into the collection, and then we presented it with two of his other film works from around the same time, BREAKAWAY (1966) and MEA CULPA (1981), and added more recent contemporary works that were all centered around music and appropriation, found footage. We had this idea from the very beginning that we could explore how Conner relates to contemporary artists, and at the end of that presentation in 2010, which met with such a phenomenal success with the critics, but also with the public, it occurred to me that we might have a really, really important job to do if we did a full retrospective, considering that his last so-called non-retrospective organized by the Walker Art Center had happened 10 years before in 2000, and obviously did not include the last nine years of his work. And, given our renewed and emphasized commitment to California and our specific context here, that was the first time ever I got an immediate yes from our director for an exhibition proposal.

Good! You said you came here and when you looked at the collection you noticed a lack of Conner's time-based works, but had you been thinking about him in Europe? Was he someone on your radar?

No, but in my previous job at ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe I didn't have the same responsibilities, so there was no need really to think about acquisitions. It was also a very different context. As the media curator at SFMOMA, I'm really confronted with a specific expectation, which is very often centered around the notion of working with or acquiring new media, and I wanted to make a case for a much larger understanding of time-based performative works. So film would necessarily, obviously, be part of that, although I didn't want to start a film department or a film collection of sorts, but rather to respect whatever medium artists were working in, and that obviously includes Tacita Dean, and others, who really insist on using film as film.

Well, he's an unusual artist, Bruce Conner, in that he can excite a number of curators at one time across departments. So apart from you, Gary and the photography department are also invested in his work. He's a bit of a gift in a way to a museum. Can you talk about what you see as his importance specifically to experimental film making or media based art, whether it's the kind of technical innovations he made, or just more generally?

Well, it's a complex question.

Yeah, it's a big one.

I'm not sure I can answer it so quickly, but let's say there are two different ways of looking at media art histories. One is that you consider innovation and technology, and I would argue that he was not in the business of addressing innovation and technology per se. The other is about a very specific time-based performative experience, and developing a language and a concept, and I think that's where he's really, really strong, and arguably one of the first artists to address that in such scope. I think that's why he became so successful early on, after he made A MOVIE. His career mirrors the histories of a lot of artists within the context of media art, in that they really struggled to find a place in the visual arts, although that was where they were aiming to be. Conner started as a painter and a sculptor, and an assemblage artist, and he tried to integrate his interest in film into his gallery presentations, but that didn't work at the time, understandably. It was just stretching the boundaries of what one could envision as art or institutionally collectible. And so, although it wasn't necessarily by choice initially, he then embraced the idea that the place for these films would be the cinema and the theatrical screening, and then, of course, it became a sort of experimental or underground niche for that kind of work. And so there are a lot of people who know him as either the assemblage artist and painter, or the film artist and experimental filmmaker.

MONGOLOID, 1978 (still). 16mm, black and white, sound, 3:30 min. Courtesy Conner Family Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

That makes sense because it seems that the way that his practice has been positioned in this exhibition is that everything cross-pollinated everything, so that he imported techniques from film into assemblage and vice versa. The distinction—was he a filmmaker or was he an artist making film—could almost be seen as semantics. I can't remember where I read, it might even have been in your essay, but he was quoted as having said that he was a "factory working on his total environment," well before Warhol.

Yes.

Was it something he said later in life, with hindsight, or do you think he was always aware of working across many different media?

Absolutely. I would say whatever he did in film was really time consuming and I think he just psychologically, but also physically, needed to do something else, parallel. So I think one can argue that he's always made drawings, almost throughout his career, maybe not at the very beginning, parallel to whatever else was going on. The response to A MOVIE, and specifically to COSMIC RAY, the success of those films, forced him to review what he had accomplished in terms of always trying to skew the categorization of, "here is the appropriation filmmaker," or "here's the found-footage artist," or "here's the assemblage artist." He made all these twists and turns and U-turns often, and very consciously, but not necessarily to his benefit. Certainly not to the benefit of his market; his galleries were constantly frustrated by this strategy and his cunning in undermining commercial success.

I respect that and I really get it, because it must have been so frustrating for him to be pigeonholed, or categorized by his output rather than by his inquiry. To me his work seems very existential, it's really related to identity, to the twentieth century, to change, so for people to say things like, "oh, he was the father of music video" is too unnuanced.

Yes, yes, exactly.

You were talking about THREE SCREEN RAY as being, in some way, a summation of what he made previously. Is there a noticeable arc in the trajectory of Conner's films? Do they progress and develop? Do the later films differ significantly from the earlier ones or are they really the same thing?

No, I think it's probably fair to say that he spent his last nine years reviewing what he had done earlier. This notion of remixing found footage was key to almost all of his films, although he did also insert his own footage, here and there. BREAKAWAY is the big exception as it's completely his footage, but its a driven, frantic, complex montage and its aesthetics show he's continuing his exploration of the representation of the female body. I would say the beauty of a later film like THREE SCREEN RAY, is that it manages to function on the level of a fantastic response or resonance to the song "What I'd Say" by Ray Charles, but at the same time it explodes it and becomes super complex. I think that quality of Conner's, that you never get to the bottom of his work, is something that I most appreciate after working for years now on this retrospective with my colleagues. The more you look, the deeper and more complex things become, and that applies to his films, to the assemblages, to the drawings, to almost everything he did.

Depth is one of the signifiers of a really great artistic practice, or not? And one of the reasons why you could position him as major, I guess.

You made me think about something just now that I can't get my head around—when he remakes his films, what is left of the earlier versions? You mentioned in your essay that REPORT (1963 - 1967) was refashioned eight times, same amount of frames, same footage, but reedited: Is there—and this is just my technical ignorance—is there a print left of the preceding seven versions by the time you get to version number eight, or does each one have to be destroyed to create the next one?

Think of it like writing a book with a typewriter and submitting your first draft to an editorial process and then rewriting or adding or subtracting, etc. In some ways that was his constant process and it sometimes became public. He would show what he thought was the film, without knowing that this would only be a first version, and then possibly because some time had passed, or possibly because of reactions, whatever the reasons might be, he went back to it. REPORT is significant because he was so psychologically entangled with the fate of John F. Kennedy and the significance of his murder for American society, as well as the fact that at the time he was living close to his birthplace. There were a number of reasons that made it very, very difficult for him to find a final form for that film, although he probably felt that each version that he publicly showed was the work. THREE SCREEN RAY has a much more complex history because it actually returns to a number of different versions that he made in the '60s. First he made COSMIC RAY as a single projection film, but then he made a silent version, a three-channel 8mm projection, I believe, for the Rose Museum in 1965. He clearly, very early on, had this idea of an expanded cinema in mind, but then obviously met technical challenges, and it wasn't until around 40 years later that he felt there was an opportunity to review what he had done, digitally. So he produced a silent, unsynchronized version in 2006 called EVE-RAY-FOREVER, and then THREE SCREEN RAY, which is a synchronized musical version where COSMIC RAY is actually the center of the triptych.

Just even hearing you recount this history is complicated. How are the various stages in the film's life tracked? Was he a meticulous chronicler of everything that he did?

Well, I can't give you an answer for all the films, but there are records. There's a film that we're not showing in the retrospective called MARILYN TIMES FIVE, and it started off as MARILYN TIMES THREE. That exists, I believe, in Chicago. It may be in the collection of the Art Institute. In any case, there is a print that is in Chicago and there are a number of different prints in different archives. BREAKAWAY, for example, was followed by a somewhat similar, but also somewhat different, edit called ANTONIA CHRISTINA BASILOTTA, which is Toni Basil's real name, and that's in the collection of MoMA.

So he wasn't one of those artists who kept detailed records or archives? A lot of this cataloging has had to be done retrospectively, then?

I think he *was* very meticulous, and he was very much aware of what exactly he had done before. He possibly just wasn't interested in you knowing about the differences between the versions, because each time he considered his most recent version the ultimate final word on it. There's a very nice story, which we are going to unfold a little bit in a public program around the opening, about his one big unfinished film called THE SOUL STIRRERS: BY AND BY. It was his only big documentary film project. The producer, Henry Rosenthal, whom we've invited to show clips, and pictures of the production process, and other unfinished materials, said he was crazy enough to start this journey with Bruce, but once he realized that the only way that Bruce could actually work was to control every single second so meticulously that it would take him weeks to produce a minute of film, he was out. If you want to do a feature-length documentary of 80 or 90 minutes or something, that is a major, major conflict.

I'll say!

So conceptually, psychologically, but also in his practice generally, he was just not able to deal with a team, or to deal with the very idea of a feature-length film. He needed to edit and re-edit, and re-re-edit all the time. It's that kind of obsessive quality—in his basement with his films—that really identifies his most intimate relationship with his materials.

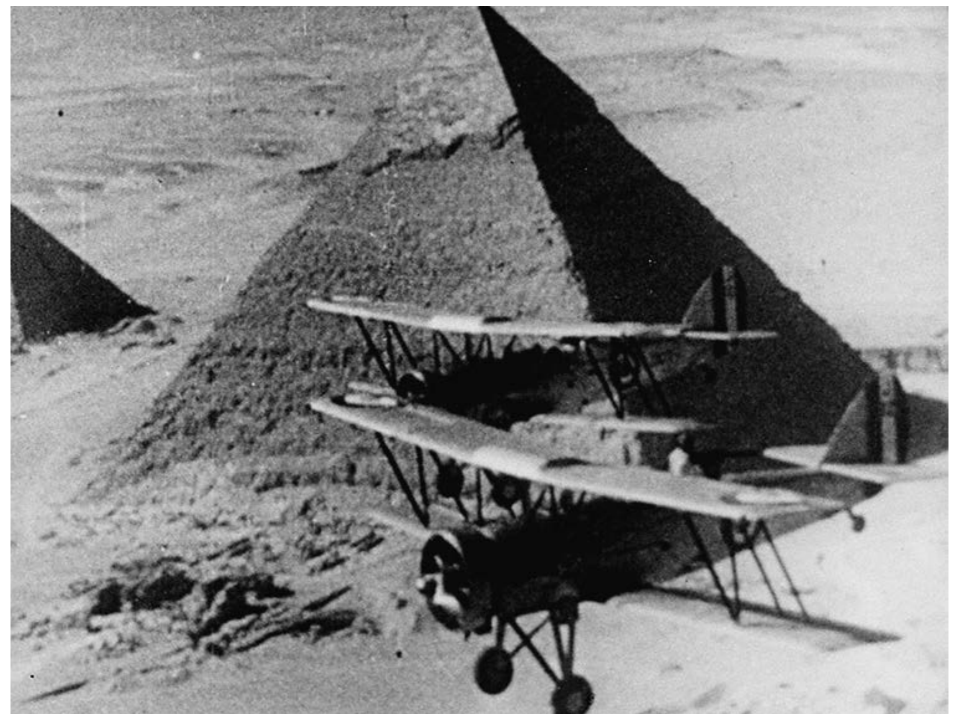
How about the way in which they are presented? Are there stipulations around the fact that THREE SCREEN RAY, for example, can only be projected, or is there some leeway?

Well, there are some very specific conditions, and there are some variables. Stuart Comer, (MoMA's Media and Performance Curator) and I agreed early on that we would try to show a range of different proposals rather than saying we will only show the very first original format of what was produced. So we are including film as film, and thank god Kodak has sponsored that and is still able to provide film stock—which wasn't so clear even a few years ago. At the same time we will also show digital restorations of some films, most specifically of CROSSROADS, which will be shown as a big digital projection in the digitally restored version in the gallery, and we also want to screen cinema formats, 35mm in this case, in our theater. And then there are two works that he did for television, for David Byrne and Brian Eno, that were supposed to be shown on MTV, but never got there.

Because of copyright?

Well, yes and no. It wasn't so clear in the end why it didn't happen. David Byrne basically suggested that MTV wasn't ready for this kind of work, and possibly because there were hypothetically copyright issues involved. Anyway, MEA CULPA and AMERICA IS WAITING are going to be shown on monitors, but you could certainly consider projecting them in our digital and network age. So in some cases you can sort of—not exactly do as you please—but there are variables. Although his estate tries to minimize this, some films are online, and we thought it would be good to embrace that audience. MoMA showed a movie online for two weeks as a kind of online screening, and we will do something similar, although we're still discussing which film. The sum of that is that we actually show the range of possibilities of integrating Bruce Conner's film and his aesthetic into different contexts, whether the gallery, online, or the cinema.

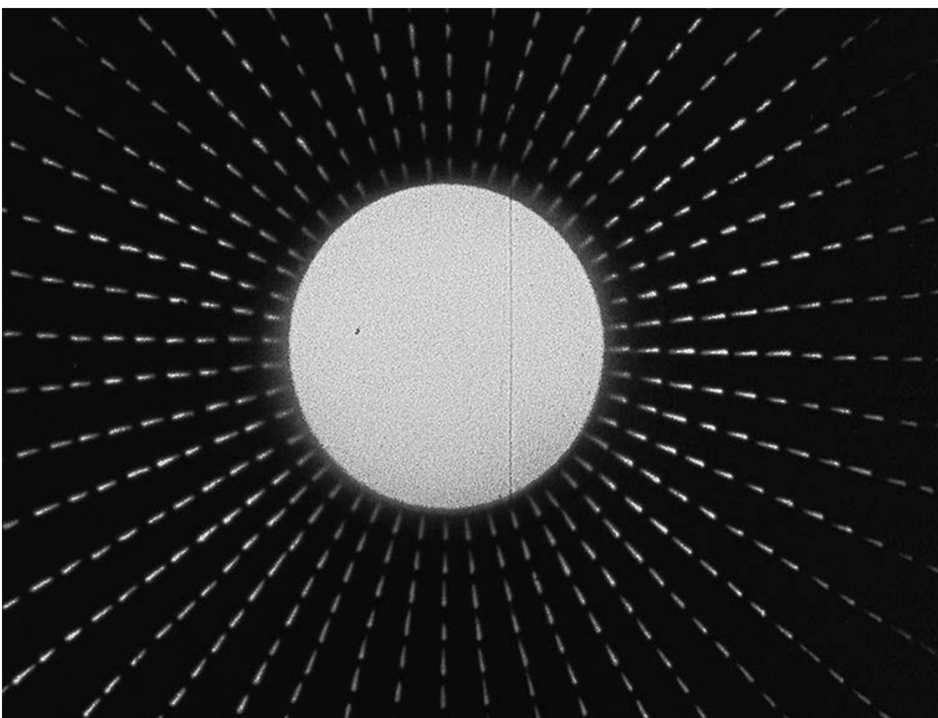
A MOVIE, 1958. 16mm film, black and white, sound, 12 min. Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Accessions Committee Fund purchase) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, with the generous support of the New Art Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



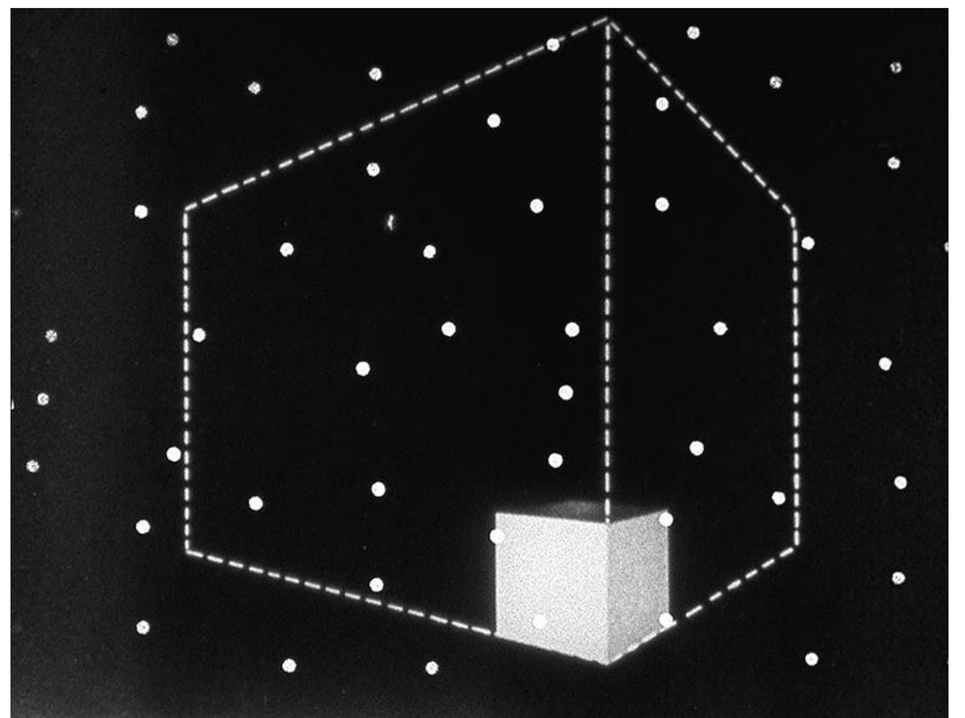
A MOVIE, 1958. 16mm film, black and white, sound, 12 min. Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Accessions Committee Fund purchase) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, with the generous support of the New Art Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

AMERICA IS WAITING, 1981. 16mm film, black and white, sound, 3:30 min. Courtesy Conner Family Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

AMERICA IS WAITING, 1981. 16mm film, black and white, sound, 3:30 min. Courtesy Conner Family Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



MEA CULPA, 1981 . 16mm film, black and white, sound, 5 min. Courtesy Conner Family Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



MEA CULPA, 1981 . 16mm film, black and white, sound, 5 min. Courtesy Conner Family Trust. © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

CROSSROADS, 1976; 35mm film, black and white, sound, 37 min.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Accessions Committee Fund purchase) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, with the generous support of the New Art Trust; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco

Are there going to be any films at SFMOMA that weren't shown at MoMA?
Actually they are showing one film more than we are, the Devo—

MONGOLOID.
Yes, exactly. We felt that two music videos were enough here, as we had to make some choices in terms of real estate. The important message is that for the first time his film work—have you seen the show at MoMA?

I haven't.
That's ok, it's going to be even better here, don't worry (laughs). It's going to be the first time that his films take center-stage within the context of a museum presentation.

It certainly seems that way. One of the things I like about the catalog is the number of voices and perspectives that it represents. I like that there are musicians that he worked with, like David Byrne, talking about their experiences. It's clear that he was important to a lot of people. I was interested to hear from you whether you felt that he was himself influenced by filmmakers, particularly, because I felt like I could see Hans Richter's influence when I was looking at BREAKAWAY and AMERICA IS WAITING. I may be wrong, but I know that he was influenced by Dada. However, the kinds of influences that he might have had don't seem to be part of the conversation—there's talk about Conner and popular culture, but not about art.
Well, that was a long discussion we had: To what degree did we want to establish references in art history? He was very cautious and very guarded and tried to minimize those kinds of narratives as much as he could, but then we also felt that while we wanted a lot of different voices and different perspectives, we didn't want to go too deep into the typical art historical/curatorial narrative, but rather to emphasize different narratives. There's no need for us to extensively analyze all of his films; Bruce Jenkins did that marvelously in the BC2000 catalog. For our part, certainly from my personal interest, there was much more emphasis on finding out what is relevant today. How do contemporary artists, for example, look at this kind of work, or respond to it? And in terms of Richter, your specific question, we can only speculate about that. What is known and documented is that he was close friends with Larry Jordan. He had close connections to many of his contemporaries in the '50s and '60s, so I'm sure he was very much aware of their work, but in terms of what he personally admitted to as an influence, it was more the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup* or something like that, rather than experimental film history.

Good for him. One of the anecdotes in the catalog that caught my imagination was Chris Marclay's description of Bruce Conner attending a concert that he and Kurt Henry did back in 1980 at Club Foot in San Francisco, after which they met and then all ended up having a film and sound mixing session for one night only, which must be the stuff of legends. It must have been insanely incredible if you were there that night, but I also see Marclay's work very differently knowing about the Conner connection.
Exactly, you can trace the links from contemporary artists to Bruce Conner, but then from Conner backwards—to Dada like you suggested, or something else—that's much more difficult. You could probably make a film historical argument and say there are precedents and that he picked up certain strands, but that would be your personal curatorial or art historical position. As an artist I think he constantly deemphasized that trajectory and rather pointed to other directions, nineteeth century prints, for example. He wanted to project an image of himself as being very original.

Which is so contemporary or what we take for granted now: eclectic references, populism, interdisciplinarity. Back then it was a bit more extraordinary, wasn't it?
Yes, and he was. That's one of the theses that we're trying to put forward—that he was such a role model in that he would not only constantly defy the very definitions of genres, he would also constantly come up with strategies to monetize his work, although he never succeeded compared to really major, commercially successful artists, but he was able to make a living more or less his entire life. In that sense, he was very much aware of himself as an artistic persona, and as someone fulfilling a role in public and having specific relationships to institutions, for example. Regarding the contemporariness of his aesthetics, one or two reviewers have said that some things look dated. I would argue they even looked dated when he produced them. He was untimely in many things he did and not in sync with the current fashion of the time. While in retrospect you would say this very idea of resistance and a sort of looking sideways and doing different things and changing course repeatedly, these are qualities that a lot of people seek in an artist today.

So in many ways he was born at exactly the right time, because he was able to function as an outsider in a way. Today he would be one of many doing this. This is sort of taken for granted.
He was also probably living in the right place for that.

That could have been just fate, or it just could have been an incredibly canny strategy that paid off a number of years later. We don't know.
Yes. I think what we really tried to keep in mind is not to do the same thing to Conner that others have done: to label him as a funk or as a Bay Area artist, for example. It was much more important to take him out of that box. While you can say he was clearly very much shaped by it, he also shaped a series of radical movements that passed through the Bay Area, from '50s beatnik to hippie, and also punk. Still, he never liked to be associated with these groups. He liked to be in dialogue with them, they were his friends, but he wanted to be perceived as an individual.

On this subject of friends, this is a random question, but it's something I can't find a definitive answer to: Subsequent to him retiring from the art world, artists called Anonymous and other names made Bruce Conner-style work, but they were not Bruce Conner. Or were they?
Well, I can't give you an answer to that (laughs).

I see! Gary said they definitely weren't, but other people, including his widow, seemed to imply that they were. So, it's just something that's mysterious and we don't know?
Well, I think it's part of the work that you don't know. He has a legacy of collaborating with people, and I think he found a way to also obscure who he was, and he did that almost ever since he started. I think the first time he officially declared himself dead was in the '60s, and so the fact that the specific relationship between these authors and himself is a question is part of what he wanted, what the effect of the work is. I want to respect that.

I find all this fascinating. I also find the images of him at work fascinating. There's a great one at the beginning of your essay of Conner in his studio working on a hanging assemblage. You use it to discuss his theatricality, or showmanship, but my eye was caught by the mess in his studio, by the chaos. It made me think about—I'm sorry to keep throwing out art historical references—Francis Bacon's studio, the classic, messy artist studio, and the fact that Bacon said that he needed this chaos because for him chaos breeds images.
I wouldn't go too far with that analogy because that was a very, very early picture, and I think if you had a chance to actually go to his private home over the last decade—

You're going to tell me it was very organized and minimal.
Yes. He was also very, very meticulous and organized, and extremely punctual.

How disappointing!
It's a very complex personality, so again, I think as much as he could embrace change and destruction and chaos, he could go to the extreme opposite and be extremely controlling and very meticulous about the specific conditions of the materials he was working with.

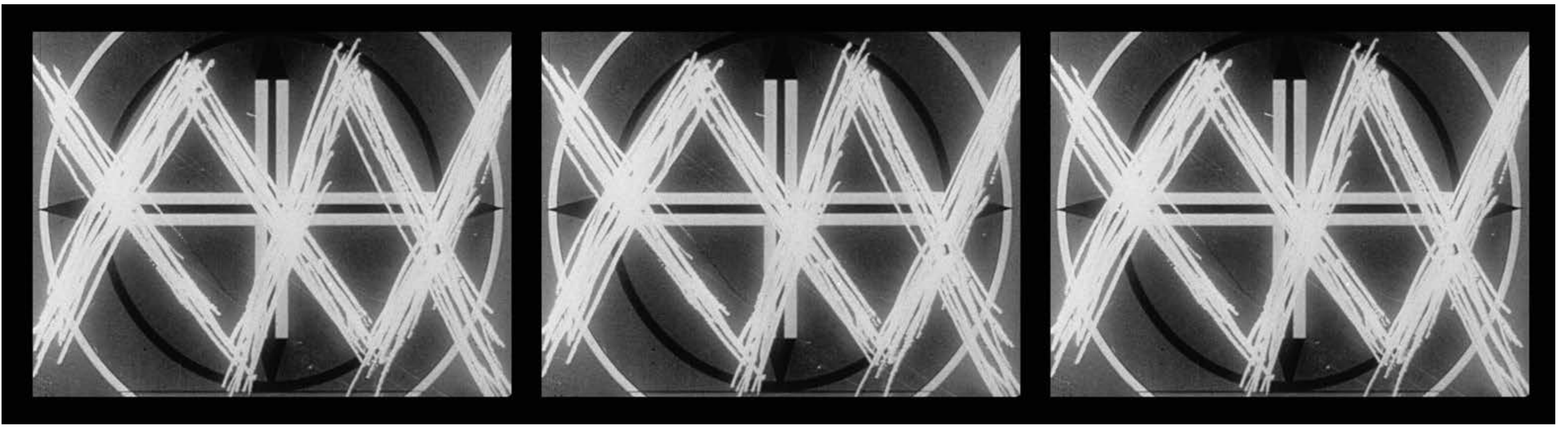
So in terms of embracing change, do we know if he was excited by modernization and by the changing of the times or did he have a certain nostalgia that influenced or permeated what he was making?
First of all, I never met him in person so I can't really speak to his personality, but from all the different stories I have heard and the accounts of people we talked to—I don't think he was nostalgic. But he was controlling, and so it took a strong personality like Michelle Silva, his editor, to actually open his mind to the possibilities of digital non-linear editing, for example. Once he understood what he could do, he got really excited about that. At the same time, they came up with all kinds of systems. How can you reorganize a film that already has a very specific structure and basically make a triptych out of that? What are the governing principles? There were systems in place, if you want to call them that.

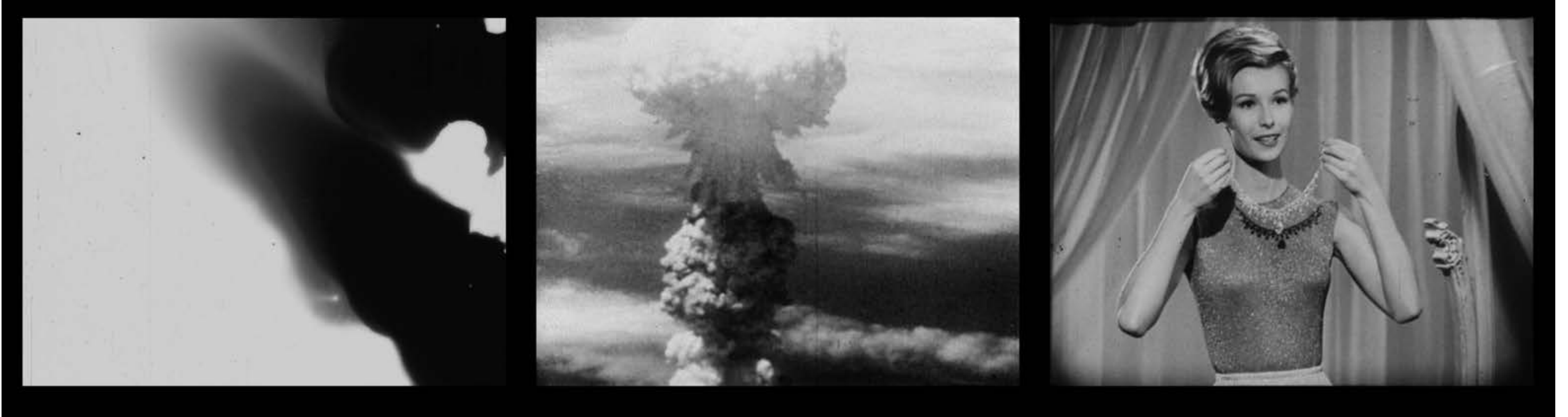
So here's another speculative question for you. What would Bruce Conner make of all this right now then? Do you think he would have wanted what's happening now? Do you think he would have welcomed it?
There's only one comment that I can propose as an answer. When his very last film, EASTER MORNING, was shown at the *Unlimited* show, at Art Basel in June 2008, basically a month or so before he died, he said to Michelle, "Why did it take so long?" Meaning, why did success come so late for me. But, as I have said a number of times, he was so good at sabotaging his own success that I'm sure he would have raised hell with us for all kinds of decisions that we have taken. It's a very delicate balance that we tried, and hopefully managed, to strike, between doing the show without the artist himself and trying to be as respectful as possible of the various comments and the guidance that his direct collaborators and his estate have given us. The way that films are presented has been developed in detailed dialogue with the estate. His wife Jean's comments were always very, very important to us. One thing that's for sure is that we looked at the Walker presentation of his non-retrospective BC2000, and it looked so classic that we felt that was the wrong way of doing it, and we should actually be more radical than it seems like Bruce was at that moment in his life. I'm very, very sure that he would have endlessly struggled with us about this and also because three of the most globally important museums are doing this together—the show is also traveling to the Reina Sofia in Madrid in February—and that puts a lot, a lot of pressure on things, but then again this is only speculation. Apparently at one point during organizing BC2000 the then director of the Walker, Kathy Halbreich, literally put a gun to his chest saying—

Literally?!
Metaphorically! "If you don't treat our curators nicely from now on we're not doing the show. Are you going to do this, yes or no?" It came to that point. Actually we have had a much different experience and it was a very, very collaborative and generous process with everybody involved.

Rudolf Frieling is the curator of media arts at SFMOMA.

BREAKAWAY, 1966; 16mm film, black and white, sound, 5 min.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund purchase; © 2016 Conner Family Trust, San Francisco





THREE SCREEN RAY, 2006
Three-channel video projection, black and white, sound, 5:14 min.
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund purchase.
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Marion Gray

Christina Linden

Within the Light is the title we chose when I had the opportunity to work with artist Marion Gray to produce a small retrospective exhibition of her work for the Oakland Museum of California in 2015. It made sense to me in many ways: photography, certainly, depends on light. And while many of the under-the-radar performances, events, and installations she photographed took place in the dark, or in relative dark, they too depended on some exposure. Seeing requires light and preserving and sharing requires more, since the camera is less sensitive than the eye. Marion shared by staying in motion between performances, and by moving in the shadows around them with her camera. She opened her aperture to let in enough light to catch an impression, on her negatives, of things happening at twilight or in a twilight mood: swirling apparitions holding lights in their hands as they danced in a dark room, for instance, in Nina Wise and Terry Fox's *Yellow Duck and Tonka Beans* (1978), or performances by Contraband, Survival Research Laboratories, Darryl Sapien, Jules Beckman, Jess Curtis, Keith Hennessy, and many others that took place in pits of urban decay in the middle of the city, in or at abandoned forts at its periphery, under highway overpasses, or in empty parking lots.

Marion Gray, Merce Cunningham Company, Ocean, 1996, printed 2014. Archival pigment print.

Of course, photography relies on the shutter as well as the aperture. Within the camera, the light has to intersect within the time, a reminder that feels especially poignant now that Marion's shutter has quietly closed for the last time. As her daughter Jennifer Tincknell puts it, "Her gift was full immersion."[1] She tended to, "focus on detail and texture that conveyed the weight and presence of the moment captured rather than getting the shot that presents an overview."[2] Take for example a 2008 shot of the performance *Songs of Ascension* by Ann Hamilton and Meredith Monk, which took place in a silo-like tower that Hamilton built north of San Francisco in Geyserville. The photograph, focusing on a single body and the reflections that surround it in a pool of water at the bottom of the silo seems to hold the energy of the performance more than those shots of the silo rising above the pool, even if those give more context. For an interview that accompanied the publication of a portfolio of images by Marion Gray in the summer 2010, *Talking Cure*, Jarrett Earnest commented on the way her photographs functioned outside of the assumed "clinical purpose" of documentary photographs: "[T]hey're not 'documents' as much as very personal sharings, and you get these wonderful things. They are kind of bizarre, if you['re] thinking about them 'showing what happened' in the future, but then they show it in another, perhaps truer way."[3]

Marion Gray, Merce Cunningham Company, Ocean, 1996, printed 2014. Archival pigment print.

Marion was passionate about time-based live works, but she did photograph work that was not performance-based as well. Even her photographs of sculpture felt as if they were about a certain moment, and about time and movement. *Robert Arneson's "Portrait of George (Moscone)" Sculpture at Opening of Moscone Center* (1981), for instance, was about compromised display and viewers' experience of it. Other images, as in her photographs of sculptural installations by Brian Goggin or Harold Paris, communicate movement and precarity rather than monumentality.

How much seeing fits within one lifetime? Marion often said that she was grateful to have found a practice about which she felt so passionately, and this created a drive to see and keep seeing. Knowing and showing up was a large part of Marion's work. She taught a class for many years at the City College of San Francisco called "Touring the Art Around You." Marion's immersion was remarkable because she pushed herself to tour and see as much as she could, every day, even with kids in tow, even as cancer attempted to slow her down in her final years. Marion's life work was about relentlessly pursuing shafts of light cast by creative energy, within the Bay Area artistic community she made her home, and beyond. It was also about casting that light herself, about building and supporting through fierce devotion and friendship and perseverance and an extreme generosity of spirit.

Marion Gray passed away on September 2, 2016.
She is missed by many.
Her light remains.

1) Jennifer Tincknell quoted by Sam Whiting, "Marion Gray, photographer of performance art, dies," San Francisco Chronicle, September 8, 2016.
2) Kate Mattingly quoted me in these words for her excellent article "Photographer Marion Gray captures performance greats," *The SF Examiner*, April 16, 2015, but it bears repeating here. This was one of a number of articles that were published at the time of "Within the Light." See also http://www.eastbayexpress.com/oakland/performance-art-like-youve-never-experienced-it-before/Content?oid=4216759, http://sfaq.us/2015/03/marion-gray-within-the-light/, http://ww2.kqed.org/arts/2015/02/27/step-within-the-light-at-omca/, http://www.sfgate.com/art/article/Photographer-Marion-Gray-can-t-imagine-any-6065094.php
3) Jarrett Earnest, "Artist as Archive: Portfolio: Marion Gray," first published in *Talking Cure*, Summer 2010 and republished in *Art Practical* 1.18, http://www.artpractical.com/feature/artist_as_archive/

San Quentin State Prison's Art Studio

Chung Kao

San Quentin News Staff Writer

The art studio at San Quentin State Prison. Photograph by Peter Merts. Courtesy of San Quentin State Prison.

When an inmate steps inside San Quentin State Prison's art studio, he is in a whole different world. It may not look different than any other studios in the community. But, to him, it is a doorway to freedom and self-worth, an escape from the stressful reality he has to face once he steps back out. The studio is open seven days a week, and it is always crowded. There are usually about a dozen inmates sitting or standing next to one another in front of their works, preparing supplies, working on a project, or simply contemplating, figuring it out.

"You've really got to like to be around. We're all antisocial. You've got to like it [art], to be with other people to do it," said Scott McKinstry. He leads a crew of other prisoners going around painting murals in the prison. Outside are the daily rituals. On the way to the studio, an alarm went off, and everyone in blue had to sit down on the ground at once, watching the guards running past them toward the south block with their keys clinking along the way, while a guard shouted, "Down! All the way down!" It was a good half hour, after an ambulance came and went, before everyone was allowed to get up and move on. No one knew what had happened, nor did they appear to care. San Quentin is California's oldest prison, infamous for its bloody past and as the state's only death row. Eleven guards, two prison workers, and numerous prisoners have died in The Q since it opened in 1851. Today, the prison is one of the most progressive in rehabilitation. Prisoners beg for transfers to San Quentin. In partnership with the William James Association and the correctional agency's Arts-in-Corrections program, the San Quentin Prison Arts Project has been running art classes in the studio since 2005.

"A studio is the artist's sanctuary," said Carol Newborg, program manager of the Prison Arts Project. The program offers classes in drawing, painting, graphic novel, printmaking, modeling, creative writing, poetry, music theory, guitar, keyboard, and even origami and Shakespeare theatre. Indeed, the studio may well be an escape from the high-control environment of the prison—inmates are always told what to do by the guards, gang leaders, and their peers to keep them in line with the rules and the convicts' code.

"Making models is like an escape from prison, especially when making a seascape because it's like being home," said Bruce Fowler, whose home is on the water and whose elaborate models have intrigued many. "In the jail you always have people telling you what to do. This is what you can do all by yourself. You don't have anyone tell you what to do or how to do it. It's self-expression," added James Craft, a member of the mural crew.

McKinstry and his crew are painting a colorful 64-by-7-foot mural for the north dining hall. Two of them are also working on another one depicting two biblical stories for the Catholic Chapel. Coming into the south dining halls, by the way, one is awed by the gigantic murals rendered in brown paint by the late Alfredo Santos in the 1950s.[1]

Some people work on themselves through arts. "What [artists] do actually is to figure themselves out when they have to sit down to figure things out," said McKinstry. "Art helps me express my feelings and emotions, and they help me understand myself. When I choose a drawing or painting, I look into myself to see if I feel it before I do it," said Bun Chanthon, who picked up a paintbrush for the first time six months ago. "The more and more I'm in prison, the more antisocial I am," said Christopher Christensen. "I love playing music, but I hated to be in front of people. I got into Shakespeare to push myself to be in front of people and out of my comfort zone to train myself."

Amy M. Ho is the studio director at Real Time and Space in Oakland and a contract employee with the Prison Arts Project. "I like the idea of something really slow, like a meditation," said Ho, who specializes in video installation. "What I have learned about prison arts is that there aren't a lot of ways to make art in here, but people have come up with a lot of different styles and ways of making it work."

Source: interviews with Carol Newborg, Amy M. Ho, Scott McKinstry, Bruce Fowler, James Craft, Bun Chanthon, and Christopher Christensen.

1) see: http://sanquentinnews.com/san-quentins-iconic-painter-alfredo-santos-dies-at-87/

Open studios at the San Quentin State Prison art studio with visitors from the public. Photograph by Peter Merts. Courtesy of San Quentin State Prison.

Evie Leder

In Conversation With Brion Nuda Rosch

Since 1979 Evie Leder has been looking at things you are not supposed to. In our conversation, she discusses objects, portraiture, butterfly collections, ghostly presentations, and LED's.

This is the first recorded conversation from the studios at Minnesota Street Project to be published in SFAQ. *In following issues, artists from the program will document varied discussions related to their practice.*

Let's talk about the intimacy of your work and the intimate experience for the viewer. Can you speak to that? The relationships between your production, your thoughtful display, and the audience—
For me, it comes down to this idea of looking and being seen. I'm a voyeur. I've chosen to look deeply as part of my practice.

For most of my life since I was a teenager, I have been looking at things you are not supposed to look at. I remember the first photographs I took were in high school photography class and I made prints of a woman's legs stretched horizontally across the paper. The obviously unshaven, female legs unsettled everybody in school, including my photo teacher. I like to think that it disrupted gender rigidity in some small way in 1979.

The idea of looking and being seen is so fundamental to our binary gender systems. I'm thinking of some ideas that really opened my eyes in college like Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"or philosopher Marilyn Frye talking about the male gaze and the lesbian gaze. Her metaphor is: women are acting on stage and men are viewing the women on stage. The queers are backstage taking in everything from a different perspective. I like to share this perspective, from backstage.

Do you want to talk about the subjects in your series* The Objects *being on their side?
Presenting the men horizontally is my invitation to the audience to ask questions. I was thinking of Jasper Johns really, and how he would paint a number, or a flag, or some other hugely symbolic thing and get you to think about paint texture and forget for a moment that you are looking at a flag or a number. I wanted to do a bit of that with *The Objects*—with the idea of maleness, even if you think "Is this a mistake?" or "Why is it displayed like this"?

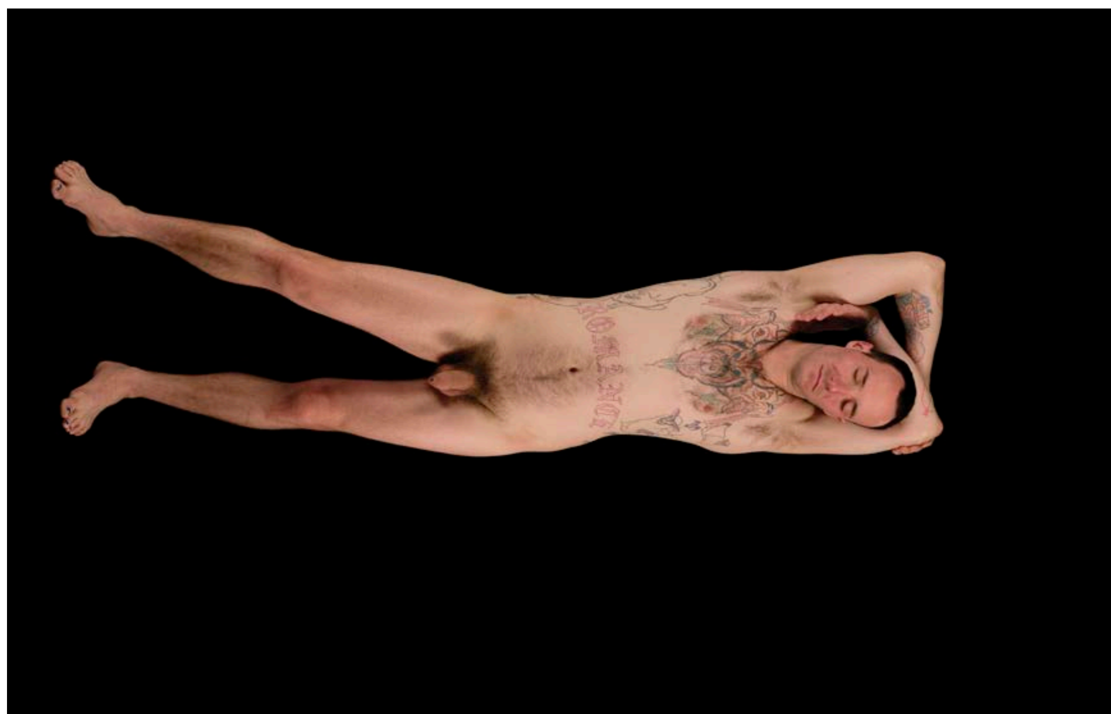
People tell me it makes them think about gravity, or death, or a rocket ship, or breath—or they could hear things when the men would stretch after a time of non-movement. I want to get viewers to forget, even if for just a second, that you are looking at a naked guy.

I think of these works as my butterfly collection. I get to display them. And I get to examine questions like: "What does it mean to be a man?" and "How are these people different than me?" And, if I am lucky, I get other people to also look at them. I have created small moments within the works where the men are still, where they move, stretch, their eyes are open or closed. At the halfway mark, each one turns from front to back, activating the whole gallery at one time.

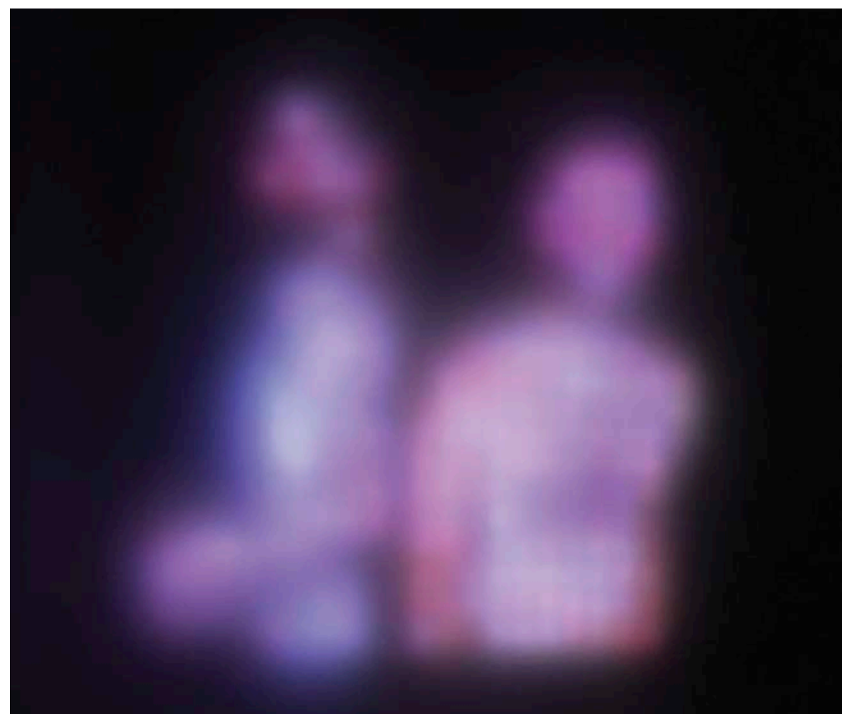
I like that they are a butterfly collection.
They are! And then there is the documentation of a community in a place and time. *The Objects* is a slice of the queer arts in San Francisco in 2014. I started with a list of men who had performed in the nude in public. This led me to folks like Brontez Purnell, Mica Sigourney, Seth Eisen, Keith Hennessy, and Justin Chin. *The Objects* includes recordings of each of these men at a time and place. It is an archive of sorts. Justin Chin passed away last year. He was so sweet when he posed; he even returned to let me re-shoot when there was a technical issue. He was an incredible writer and performer and had posed twice for women who were interested in reframing gender and shooting images of men.

Your images have become ghostly in their presentation, balancing between video and new technology. It's layered. And maybe it's more approachable because of the translucent spirits involved: "I can handle this . . . I think that's a body." Through technology you seem to naturally be following your desire towards something visceral.
I love the dreaminess that these diffused low-resolution panels create. I think visceral is the right term! I'm at a moment where I have just made new tools for myself to explore the movement of light, bodies, color and shape. It's an exciting moment for me—also being at the Minnesota Street Project studios. I'm about to embark on the second group of works in *Kaddish*. These will be a gift to my late sister who had a really rough life. She loved riding motorcycles with the wind against her body, so I'm going to make some works that would speak to her joys. I think new technologies give us frameworks to create work, and to focus the work. I'm interested in the LED work specifically because it's low resolution. These custom electronics provide the backbone of my current work and allow me to work more abstractly. I can be very literal in my work and it is forcing me to play, and allowing me to explore ideas that are not always so cut and dry.

I love that there is physicality to the new work. It's not simply a projection or a video on a TV screen. It's hand made. I love that part of my art making process is now about soldering, hanging things on the wall, holding something up and seeing how it looks, trying again, trying something different. I like how my work is getting more focused on process and materials. I spend a lot of time now in hardware stores looking at materials and imagining how I might use this or that!



The Objects; Object Number Two, 2014. HD multiple video projection installations, archival pigment print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag archival paper. Featuring Mica Sigourney. Courtesy of the artist and Black and White Projects.



Kaddish, 2016. 576 LEDs, custom electronics, video, anodized aluminum, and vellum, 42 x 42 inches. courtesy of the artist and Black and White Projects.

The Lab

Dena Beard In Conversation With Jackie Clay

The Lab is a nonprofit experimental art space in the Mission District of San Francisco, where Jackie Clay and Dena Beard serve as Special Projects Manager and Director, respectively. This September, Clay and Beard had the following conversation regarding their history, their curatorial philosophies, and their plans for the future.

Dena Beard: What is the root of your interest in small art spaces? I think we both grew up in small town environments with more conservative atmospheres. I never saw contemporary art growing up, not until I was 16 or 18 or something like that. But the only analogous thing I can say about a place like The Lab is that it's kind of like a church. The ethos of the place has to be collectively held for it to continue existing. It's weird.

Jackie Clay: I agree. Being from Alabama, which is like ground zero for conservative ideology, it's a good and a bad thing. Structurally they are're similar. You have a charismatic leader who symbolizes the institution. There are audience members that are very committed and come regularly and then there are people that come for Easter Sunday, New Year's, and Christmas. You have people that work there: your deacons and deaconesses. Perhaps most notably, non-profits also function as tax shelters for the rich.

DB: You've also talked about how you wish art spaces like The Lab were more intergenerational.

JC: Honestly, I want older people as visitors more than just young kids and families. And really, I want that selfishly, as an object lesson. I want to see my future. Speaking of older people, do you want to talk at all about your long-term goal? Your dream, post-Lab?

DB: Post-Lab? Well, it's a bit illicit.

(*JC claps hands eagerly*)

As you know I've given myself a contract. So, I'm done in 2020. The idea is to avoid burnout and to allow the institution to refresh itself, to be given over to someone else. After that I'm going to create a retirement home. The idea of retirement and leisure is intriguing to me. I'm always trying to figure out the distinction between work and play. How can we start moving more towards play and less towards work? I'm trying to build that into my life in advance. I think it's a really interesting conceit. Also . . . there will be pot-growing involved.

JC: I'm interested in that, in part, because right now I think everyone is working too hard. I think people are too productive. I mean I'm saying this as I have four jobs—but that's about survival. When you talk to some folks they recount a litany of projects. I'd rather have just one or two.

DB: I think that's completely valid. As with any job you spend a lot of time doing really wretched stuff. That's 75% of the work, wherever you go. However, I find my work more pleasurable now than I ever have in my life—now I can keep a through-line in my head from the more base tasks to the overarching meaning of the project. I don't create meaning algorithmically—despite living in a technocracy, humans aren't actually becoming more machine-like. We're terrible drivers. We can barely use our common sense to walk down a city street. Experience and learning are important but not as an accumulation of senseless gestures; they are important when they allow us to know a form well enough to take it apart, to look at it differently. That is when work becomes synonymous with play—it is the act of making our world meaningful to us again.

JC: My critique of productivity: being overly productive is, at its root, about competition. About us *seeming* busy. "Machines" have made us more impatient. We think things should happen really quickly. Like when I think about dial-up . . . I would lose my mind. I am shaped by it.

DB: Do you have a curatorial philosophy? A way of organizing your work or your thinking?

JC: Yes. I'm definitely pretty research heavy. I do also like the service aspect of being a curator being in service to this project that I don't have to author but can facilitate or even improve sometimes, through technical knowledge.

I think it's weird how the work has shifted, but we still think of exhibitions as central. People ask me about our space and ask "Are there exhibitions?" I mean we could put one up . . . but are you going to that many exhibitions that often? Is that what you're seeking out? It's a model that I enjoy, but I don't think it has to be the lead in the way that I shape my practice or shape things for other people.

DB: Absolutely. Sometimes stewarding the artwork means doing something totally different than an exhibition. Many exhibitions are so over-determined, so self-serious. There are usually only a handful of shows that we will see in our lifetime that will have lasting impact. That seems about right to me. What was the first exhibition that you saw that totally blew you away?

JC: My best birthday, my 21st birthday, my family and I went to an exhibition at the Central branch of the Birmingham Public Library, and they had a Lorna Simpson. I remember it was hung really high. There's a dramatic entryway with escalators and it was hung 12 feet in the air. I remember liking that it was in that particular space, even though it wasn't the most attractive exhibition . . . it didn't work in some ways, and I even recognized that at the time, but I was kind of into it. It didn't make sense for it to be that far away or that high up. I think . . . I think I kind of like bad exhibitions.

(*laughter*)

DB: What else have you been looking at recently?

JC: I've been looking at video work from the '90s . . . thinking about who was in practice then and thinking about myself at that age—what might have happened if I could have seen this work at age 16 or 17. This artist Ayanna U'Dongo was in the 2000 Whitney Biennial and now seemingly doesn't show at all. Who continues to be historicized? Who isn't historicized and what can that tell us about what we think about or talk about now?

DB: That's a really good premise for a show.

JC: Well, that's what I'm trying to do with the upcoming show at Et al. in Chinatown! I'm curating for my 17-year-old self.

DB: Yes! We are curating for our little selves.

Jacqueline Gordon and Zackery Belange, *The Acoustic Deconstruction of 2626 Bancroft Way*, 2016, at The Lab.

Xara Thustra: Retrospective Divestiture, 2015. Installation view at The Lab.

Exterior view, The Lab. Sign painted by Margaret Kilgallen. Courtesy of The Lab.

Thinking Bodies: Heavy Breathing 2015-2016

Sophia Wang with Lisa Rybovich Crallé

In 2014, Lisa Rybovich Crallé and I had an ongoing conversation about combining her sculptural practice with my movement practice to make hybrid, site-specific pieces. That fall at the Arteles residency in Finland, Lisa was walking up a steep hill with a fellow resident when she noticed that the effort of walking while talking caused their conversation to derail in surprising ways. She wondered: How might physical exertion combined with dialogue produce new modes of discourse and learning?

Lisa wrote to me from Finland and proposed that we apply for Southern Exposure's Alternative Exposure grant to fund a series of artist-led discussion seminars doubling as fitness classes. The premise—that foregrounding corporeal experiences in the context of critical discourse would offer new resources for learning—was intuitive for me. I'd begun training in dance while writing a PhD dissertation on materiality in experimental poetry, and my dancing had become necessary to my research and writing. It was the way that I moved my thinking.

We got the grant, and in 2015 we launched *Heavy Breathing* as a summer program of 12 free, weekly workout seminars designed by over 25 artists in public spaces and arts venues in San Francisco and Oakland. Sessions engaged participants in physical activities while listening to lectures or participating in discussion as a way to explore ideas from each presenting artist's practice or research. Group activities ranged from aerobics and resistance training, to running and Reichian somatic exercises; discussion topics included Sapphic poetry, nineteeth century British gender and class dynamics understood through dominance/submission play, and the experience of anxiety as a symptom of financial risk management practices. *Manners*, what Lisa and I eventually decided to call our movement and sculpture-based collaboration, got going that year too, but *Heavy Breathing* came first.

I think of hybridity and divergences as the major through-lines between *Manners* and *Heavy Breathing*. With *Manners*, hybridity generates moving matter from the polarity of static objects and dynamic bodies. With *Heavy Breathing*, we're interested in overlaying experiences of intellectual and corporeal engagement to challenge the mind-body dualism that treats certain operations as the province of one and not the other. Olive McKeon wrote an essay for the 2015 *Heavy Breathing* series catalog that observed the way our project "disrupts the codes and conventions of pedagogical spaces, layering the social norms of the studio class onto that of the seminar room." Our interest in experimental pedagogy is motivated in part by the practices that inform our work. Lisa's work as a sculptor and studio arts educator makes engaging hands and bodies intrinsic to her research and teaching; my work in dance and choreography engages bodies in labor, which I view as an extension of my research into the materiality of language and poetry.

Precedents for this experiment are broadly categorized as performance lectures or participatory performances. Writer and artist Christian Nagler's *Market Fitness* and *Yoga for Adjuncts* engage participants in embodied, kinesthetic experiences as a way to somatically process the menacing scale and complexity of global financial systems. We invited Christian to lead a *Heavy Breathing* workshop as part of the 2015 series, and in a planning conversation, identified the challenge that was most interesting to us about *Heavy Breathing*'s format—If performance lectures blur the line between performance and pedagogy for the artist-lecturer, what might an equivalent, blurred experience look like for a seminar or discussion group participant?

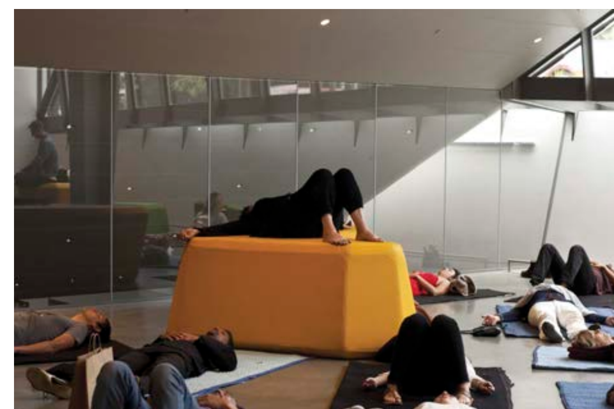
The comparison is imperfect, because performance emphasizes presentation intended for display and external orientation. With *Heavy Breathing*, we're interested in how somatic experiences—the internal awareness of the body's workings, efforts, and interior relations—can be a resource for redefining terms and modes for critical discourse. The physical rituals of the seminar classroom, (such as chairs circled around a table and the prescribed gestures and expressions of attention) can feel oppressive and paralyzing. Visual artist Olivia Mole led a *Heavy Breathing* session last year in which she delivered an experimental lecture through an underwater speaker at the San Francisco Chinatown YMCA swimming pool, while participants swam around, moving in and out of range of her voice, processing her collaged reflections on the intersections between Irigaray, Nietzche, and *Ren & Stimpy*. Being immersed in water while wrangling my focus on Mole's lecture was a somatically rich experience of literal and figurative free floating attention.

Free floating, improvised attention as a generative practice has plenty of philosophical, political, and art practice models: the dérive, peripatetic philosophy, and dance and musical improvisation. Sound artist Jacqueline Gordon and movement artist Margit Galanter co-led *Unseen Influence*, the second session in this year's *Heavy Breathing* series at the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive. They engaged participants in activities that alternated between Feldenkrais-based attention to the body as we lay on the museum floor, and active listening-based attention to sound as we walked through the galleries with heightened awareness of our bodies.

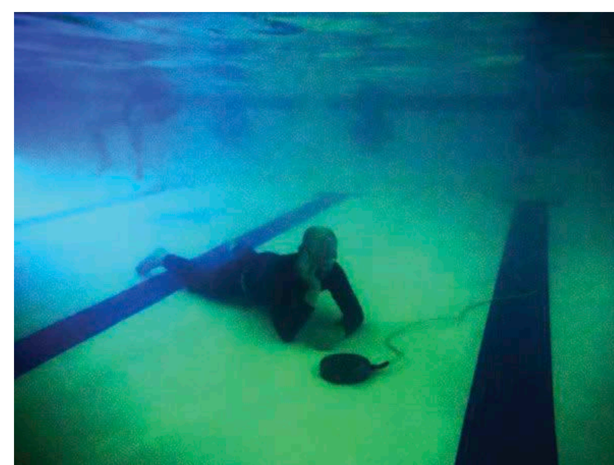
This year's *Heavy Breathing* series is presented in collaboration with BAMPFA and expands from last year's model of the fitness class to explore somatic experiences guided by structural, material, and social information that exceed conventions of "exercise." Sessions engage participants in hands-on art making (Stephanie Syjuco's *Public Productions*,), group relations (Olive McKeon's *Group Experience*,), expanded social practice (*Intentional Community in Exile*,), and the final two sessions for this year: Sofía Córdova's guided dance meditation on the "transcendental physical and psychic possibilities the dance floor provides the colored, marginalized body" (*Army of Darkness*) and Chris Sollars's action and motion-based session, aimed at physically internalizing 21st century California's state of drought (*State of Drought*).

In her essay "Teaching as Art: The Contemporary Lecture-Performance," Patricia Milder points to Joseph Beuys's alternative teaching practices, including the performance lecture form, as one route to the "intentions and inventions" he imagined people might organize against our otherwise fully absorptive state- and money-based systems. She observes that: "Working with the fleeting substance of verbal language and the changing thoughts of an audience-as-students is material as amorphous and non-systematic as it gets." For me, the freed and redirected attention we're exploring with *Heavy Breathing* is, similarly, a way to organize bodies and sensory capacities against conventional forms of discourse that determine what we know, how we communicate, and ways we can be together. The contradictions of attempting this within institutional spaces of arts and pedagogy are real. But so too are the resources and relations we'll access along the way.

Stephanie Syjuco, Public Productions, 2016. Seminar for Heavy Breathing. Photograph by Andrea Carazo.



Jackie Gordon and Margit Galanter, Unseen Influence, 2016. Seminar for Heavy Breathing. Photograph by Andrea Carazo.



Jackie Gordon and Margit Galanter, Unseen Influence, 2016. Seminar for Heavy Breathing. Photograph by Andrea Carazo.

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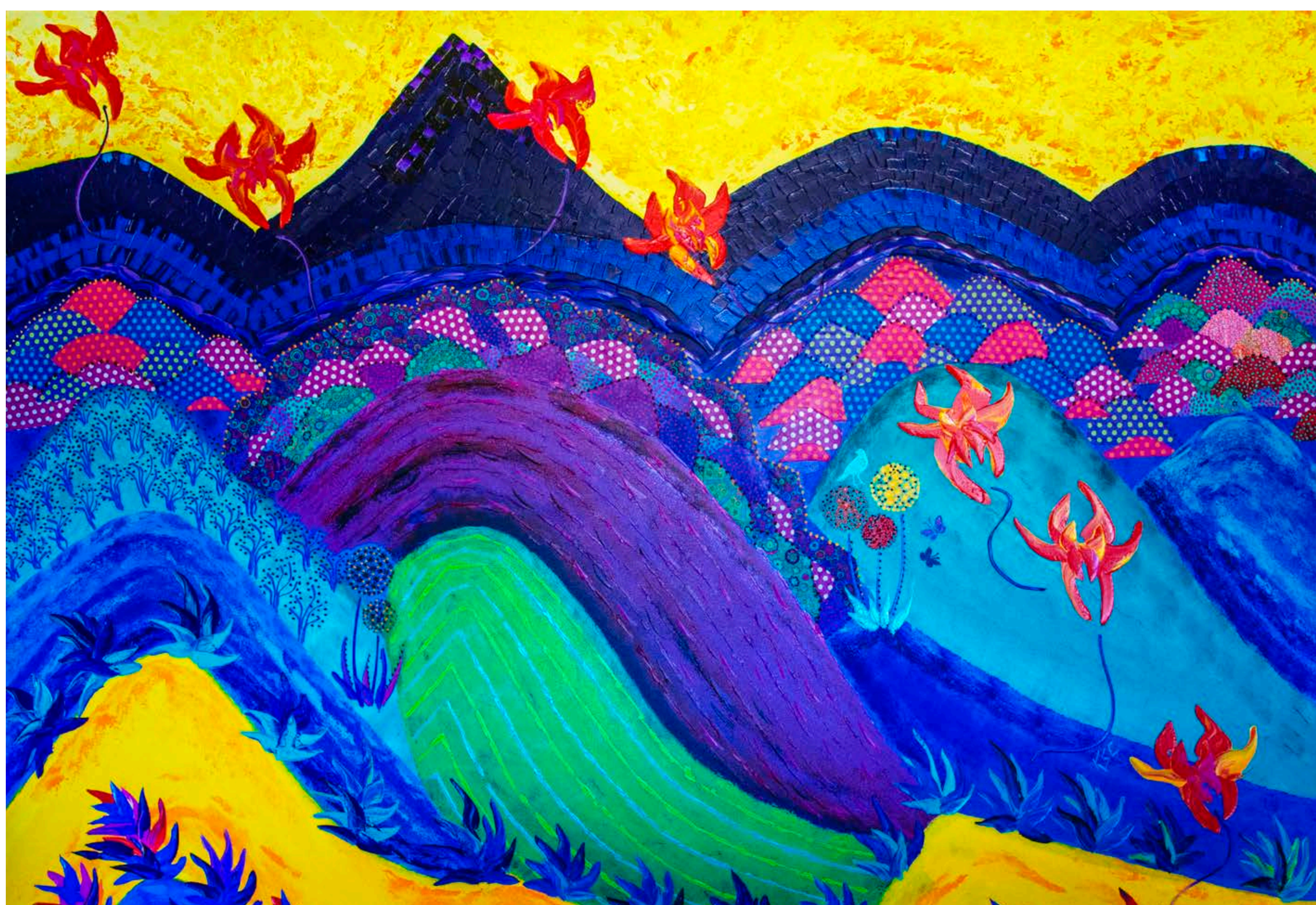

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Thanks:
Pretty much everyone, with a few exceptions. This issue is for Paule Anglim, who I miss and who supported us, without question, since issue #1 seven years ago.

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You say goodbye and I say hello
Hello hello
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello
Hello hello
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello

PHOTOFAIRS
SAN FRANCISCO

International Art Fairs
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San Francisco | Shanghai

Inaugural US Event
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Festival Pavilion | Fort Mason
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© CARSTEN INGEMANN, *Stenbjerg #1, 2015.* Courtesy of In The Gallery, Copenhagen (Denmark).

ASK NEW QUESTIONS
MAKE NEW IDEAS

Marcela Pardo Ariza
MFA, Studio Art, 2016

In The Red, 2015, Archival Inkjet Print, 21 x 28 inches

sfai.edu

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ART INSTITUTE

DANNY LYON

MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE

NOV 5, 2016–APR 30, 2017

de Young

GOLDEN GATE PARK

Danny Lyon, *Crossing the Ohio River, Louisville*, 1966. Gelatin silver print Image:
21.6 × 32.7 cm (8 1/2 × 12 7/8 in.); sheet: 27.9 × 35.6 cm (11 × 14 in.)
Silverman Museum Collection © Danny Lyon, courtesy Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

freddy chandra

SLIPSTREAM

November 5–December 23, 2016

Reception: Saturday, November 5, 4–6

Plume, 2016, acrylic and UV-stabilized resin on cast acrylic, 15 × 78 × 1½ inches

ruth pastine

WITNESS

January 7–February 25, 2017

Reception: Saturday, January 7, 4–6

Witness 1-S6060, (Blue Orange Deep), Witness Series, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 × 60 × 3 inches

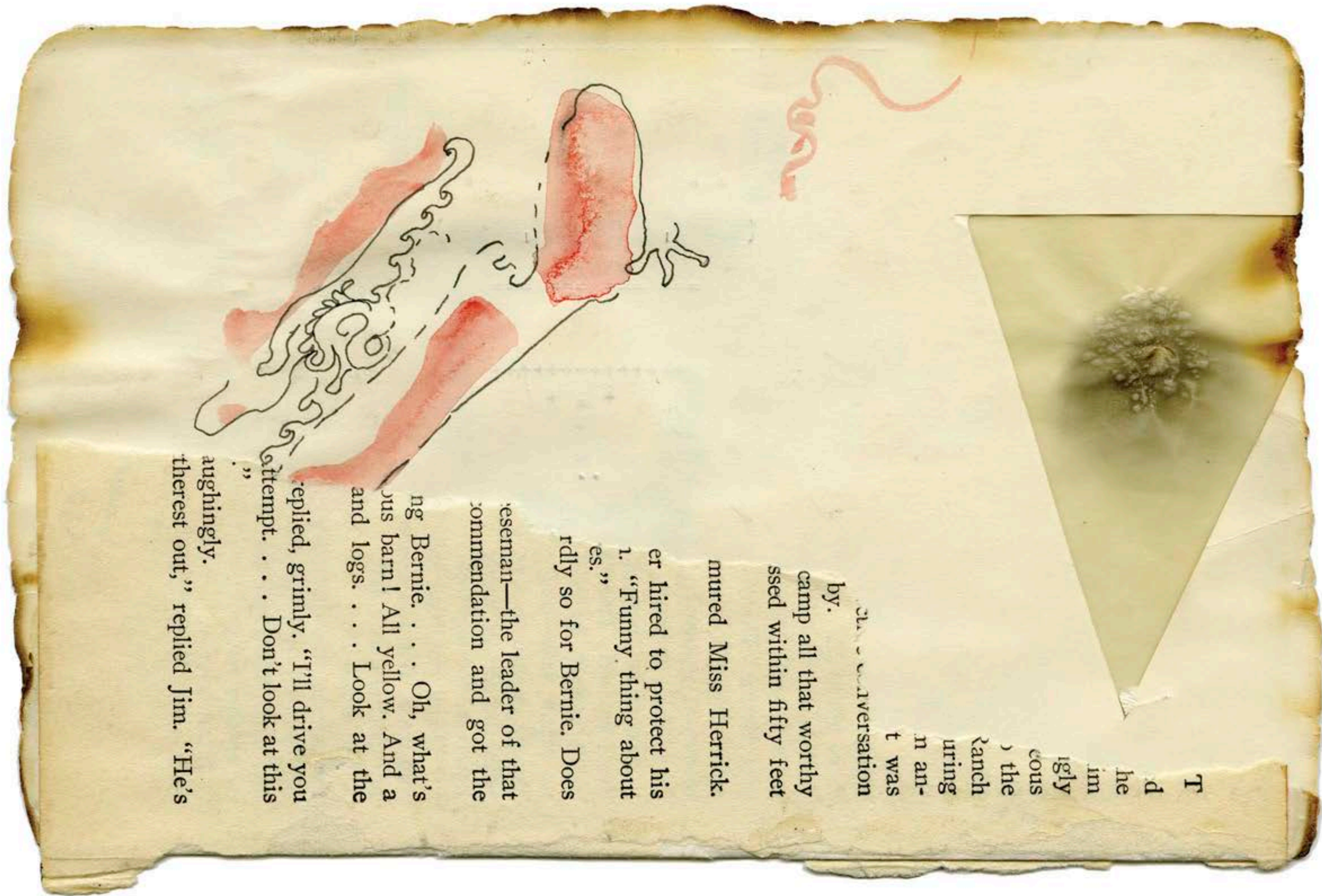
BAY AREA FIGURATIVE DRAWING: 1958–1968

January 7–February 25, 2017

Brian Gross Fine Art

248 Utah Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 788-1050   www.briangrossfineart.com



Bruce Conner, UNTITLED ASSEMBLAGE/COLLAGE TYPEWRITER DRAWING
1962, ink and collage, 5 x 7 3/4 in.

October 19 - December 3, 2016
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT, TOTAL CONSCIOUSNESS
Bruce Conner

December 7 - January 14, 2016
Dean Smith

Anglim Gilbert Gallery at Minnesota Street Project

October 15 - November 15, 2016
Robert Stone

November 17 - January 7, 2017
Anne Chu

January 14 - February 25, 2017
Rigo 23

Art Fairs

UNTITLED, Miami
November 30, December 1 - 4, 2016, Miami Beach

UNTITLED, San Francisco
January 13 - 15, 2017, San Francisco, Pier 70

Anglim Gilbert Gallery

14 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94108 Tel: 415.433.2710 www.anglimgilbertgallery.com
Anglim Gilbert Gallery at Minnesota Street Project 1275 Minnesota St., San Francisco, CA 94107

FOG

DESIGN + ART

JANUARY 12–15, 2017
FORT MASON CENTER
fogfair.com

January 11, 2017
Preview Gala Benefiting the
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Almond & Co.
Altman Siegel Gallery
Anthony Meier Fine Arts
Berggruen Gallery
Blum & Poe
Casati Gallery
Chamber
Cristina Grajales Gallery
Crown Point Press
David Gill Gallery
David Zwirner
Demisch Danant
Dominique Lévy Gallery
Edward Cella Art+Architecture
Fraenkel Gallery
Friedman Benda
Gagosian Gallery
Galerie kreo
Gavin Brown's enterprise
Gladstone Gallery
Haines Gallery
Hosfelt Gallery
Hostler Burrows
James Cohan
Jason Jacques Gallery
Jessica Silverman Gallery
kurimanzutto
Lebreton Gallery
Lorenz Baumer
MACCARONE
Magen H Gallery
Marian Goodman Gallery
Matthew Marks Gallery
Obsolete / SLETE Gallery
PACE
Patrick Parrish Gallery
Paula Cooper Gallery
R & Company
Ratio 3
Reform Gallery / The Landing
Salon 94
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery
Volume Gallery
Wexler Gallery
Yossi Milo Gallery

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OCT 29–JAN 22

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SFMOMA San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

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UNTITLED, San Francisco, Jan 13,14,15, 2017.

art-untitled.com