

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

JIMMY RASKIN

selected texts & press

JIMMY RASKIN

Jimmy Raskin was a poet. At the age of nineteen, however, Raskin stopped writing poetry to devote himself to exploring and manifesting the conditions under which what he calls 'the Poem' might remain an achievable aim in our current cultural conditions. Toward this end, Raskin has developed a theatrical, multimedia universe, fluidly combining writing with sculptures and the production of props for lecture-performances. Collages typically appear alongside videos, cartoons, and diagrams of what he has determined to be the essential existential problems confronting the central figure of the 'Poet Pure.' Since 1989, a diverse body of work has emerged, marked by remarkably consistent subject matter and a restricted set of visual motifs, all in the service of Raskin's mysteriously pedagogical aims. His illustrational project articulates a dualistic cosmology—a grandiose effort that attempts to capture and affirm the fundamental opposition between, on the one hand, the 'Spirit of the restless Poet' under the expressive mode of 'Inseparability' and, on the other, 'Critical Distance' under the mode of 'Simultaneity,' or what he calls 'Infinite Juxtaposition' and the figure of the 'Documentarian.'

Ultimately, modes of expression themselves are Raskin's medium. His sources are few, but intensely engaged and idiosyncratically referenced. Roland Barthes's 'rustle of language' comes back to haunt the artist time and again; entire exhibitions can be directly about specific poems by Arthur Rimbaud, such as "Vowels" or "The Drunken Boat." Raskin's major book to date is titled *The Prologue, The Poltergeist & The Hollow Tree*, on Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

If the mode of the Poet is rigorously distinguished from the mode of the Critic, it is because the artist has been fundamentally attracted to their potential yet uneasy fusion. Raskin has had deep insight into the dangers of one mode killing the other, which is perhaps why his work has so arduously separated the two. He shows us with clarity and persistence, however, that any work of art worthy of the name, any potential Poem, must stage one and the other.

Jimmy Raskin (b. 1970, Los Angeles) lives and works in New York. A graduate of CalArts, Raskin has exhibited his work and staged "lecture-performances" in institutions, art galleries and other non-traditional gathering places internationally since the mid-1990s, notably at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Thread Waxing Place, Foundation 20 21, Greene-Naftali, Cooper Union, Miguel Abreu Gallery, SculptureCenter (all in New York), as well as at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, Real Art Ways, Hartford, The Swiss Institute, Paris, and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. In 2013, Raskin participated in Performa 13 as part of Performa After Hours, which marked his second contribution to the performance biennial, following A Certain Misgiving in the Disciple (2009). His work was selected for the Art Statements sector of Art /42/ Basel (2011), and was included in For the blind man in the dark looking for the black cat that isn't there (2010), a major group exhibition organized by Anthony Huberman at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. The exhibition traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, the ICA, London, de Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam, and Culturgest, Lisbon. Raskin also participated in the group exhibition Breaking New Ground Underground (2009), curated by Thea Westreich at Stonescape, a private museum in Napa Valley, California. Raskin's fourth one-person exhibition at Miguel Abreu Gallery, Stations of the Last Eccentric, was on view during winter 2022. A Short Video screening and performance was held at the gallery's 36 Orchard space on January 21, 2022.

Raskin's publications include the aforementioned The Prologue, The Poltergeist & The Hollow Tree (Foundation 20 21, 2005), The Lisbon Lecture (Sequence Press, 2012), Corner Jump (Onestar Press, 2012), and The Final Eternal Return, published in 2019 as part of his participation in the group exhibition Tribe-Specific at Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna.

CLICHÉ GARDEN, his fifth solo exhibition at the gallery is currently on view at 36 Orchard Street through July 26th.

"Cliché garden," *Meer*, August 2024



Cliché garden

26 Jun — 30 Aug 2024 at the Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York, United States

22 AUGUST 2024



Jimmy Raskin, *Cliché garden*, exhibition view. Courtesy of Miguel Abreu Gallery

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Wednesday, June 26th, of Jimmy Raskin's *Cliché garden*, the artist's fifth solo exhibition at the gallery. In varied new sculptures, paintings, collages, and wall reliefs, Raskin furthers his extravagant, playful exploration of the poetic impulse and sharpens his vision of what the formation of meaning might "look like". He introduces, here, the key figure of the *Witness*, as it relates to the mysterious text collage in the show: *The meta is not the witness*.

Raskin's initial 'singularity' or first strike, so to speak—that elusive initial point of stillness which becomes at once the destined through line for an artist—was viewing Arthur Rimbaud's handwritten excerpts from *Illuminations* at the Huntington

Library in Pasadena. The pages were displayed under glass within thick wood vitrines. Raskin was not so much drawn to the writing as such, but more to the presence of "text as both object and reading material," as a container of thought and feeling one could literally gaze upon.

Ultimately inspired by the text-as-art strongholds of Barbara Kruger and Lawrence Weiner, the philosopher-poet and designer early on chose his 'devotional typeface': Avant garde. He embraced the font for its sturdy, plain design "perfectly fitted to hold potential zingers". Further, he created a streamlined typographic system that allows him to capture basic phrases he calls "Cliché candidates. Raskin is interested in clichés as endpoints of signification. Like the pun, both are assigned the function of pluralizing meaning with the simplest of formulations in a language space where $1+1=3$. The pun's mission is meta, that is it exists primarily to trigger the sarcastic laugh at the joke of a word's double entendre. And yet, the cliché holds a secret key of sensitivity with its authentic attempt to instill a sense of meaningfulness within a person's "felt-mind." Like the pun, the cliché holds outsized meaning, yet if positioned at the right time for each encounter, it might produce a moment of felt-connection where $1+1=\infty$. Alas, the cliché requires such a high degree of vulnerability of the moment to deliver a felt-experience, it nearly never finds a path to fulfillment. Thus, containing a magical paradox, "the cliché carries with its instantiation its own *amor fati*; as the French poet Gérard de Nerval once said, 'The first man who compared woman to a rose was a poet, the second, an imbecile.' Bestowed with a lack of originality, the cliché sets adrift as a sign of and for critique itself"¹.

The *Cliché candidates* survive over time in the auxiliary space of the artist's practice. They generate works of art which bring to life not only the literal qualities of language, but the paradox itself: we are all in on the joke of how rudimentary meaning can be, yet we would not know it without the work's capacity to expand and bring the viewer back in through Raskin's pivot a land recurring motif of the *Cone of expression*.

This idea of singular intensification reminded him of the stones set in an ancient Zen garden he visited in Kyoto a few years ago. During the contemplative tour, he received a text message from Miguel Abreu: "objects and thoughts need to mutually reinforce one another, one cut at a time, and build up toward something objective. No sentimentality, eliminate all narcissistic impulses".

"How did I solve this?" notes Raskin, "I brought in the witness to the self enjoying oneself in the process of making art". The exhibition turned into an experience of Beingness. Each stone is alone, yet belongs in an ocean of sand, the erosion of the

stone itself. This is epic in the mind-body, yet simple enough to elicit the right kind of laughter, the kind that releases oneself from the binds of the meta, becoming free for a moment as the witness of it all.

*Space serves I
Or the rebirth of myth.*

*A breeze without a source
Or the allure of the nonsensical.*

*The meta is not the witness
Or the pure speck of in-sight.*

When I close my eyes I stare.

Jimmy Raskin (b. 1970, Los Angeles) lives and works in New York. A graduate of Cal Arts, Raskin has exhibited his work and staged “lecture-performances” in institutions, art galleries and alternative spaces internationally since the mid-1990s, notably at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Cooper Union, SculptureCenter, Thread Waxing Place, Foundation 20 21, Greene-Naftali, and Miguel Abreu Gallery (all in New York), as well as at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT, Swiss Institute, Paris, and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. In 2013, Raskin participated in *Performa 13* as part of Performa After Hours, which marked his second contribution to the performance biennial, following *A certain misgiving in the disciple* (2009). His work was selected for the Art Statements sector of *Art |42| basel* (2011), and was included in *For the blind man in the dark looking for the black cat that isn’t there* (2010), a major group exhibition organized by Anthony Huberman at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. The exhibition traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, the ICA, London, de Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam, and Culturgest, Lisbon. Raskin also participated in the group exhibition *Breaking new ground underground* (2009), curated by Thea Westreich at Stonescape, a private museum in Napa Valley, California. In 2022, Raskin staged his fourth one-person exhibition at Miguel Abreu Gallery, *Stations of the Last Eccentric*. Raskin’s publications include *The prologue, the poltergeist and the hollow tree* (Foundation 20 21, 2005), *The Lisbon lecture* (Sequence Press, 2012), *Corner jump* (Onestar Press, 2012), and *The final eternal return*, published in 2019 as part of his participation in the group exhibition *Tribe-Specificat Felix Gaudlitz*, Vienna.

Notes

¹ Jimmy Raskin, *The final eternal return*, artist edition, 2019.

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

NEW YORK



Jimmy Raskin, *Station 1*, 2021, UV-cured inkjet on paper mounted on aluminum, 18 1/2 x 31 3/4".

Jimmy Raskin

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY | ORCHARD STREET

36 Orchard Street

December 9, 2021–February 5, 2022

Jimmy Raskin is an aberrant poet who reveals himself on rare and vital occasions, like “a kind of ten-year cicada,” as critic John Reed once wrote. His work is often a whirlwind of chaotic, exciting, and sometimes incomprehensible musings on the nature of artistic creativity. Thankfully for us, Raskin has emerged from the soil once again with “Stations of the Last Eccentric,” a presentation that attempts to describe a metaphysical state in which an artist’s desire to create has evaporated into absolute fulfillment, an experience that, per Raskin, is “filled to the brim with inspiration, but no desire to act upon it.”

If you’re confused by the concept, it’s OK. Raskin created a guide, the show’s central motif: a perspectival “Cone of Expression”—the titular figure is bisected by a single line, which connects the form’s vertex to its base. *Primordial Diagrams* (all works 2021), located at the front of the gallery, presents this map across a suite of eight black-and-white ink-jet illustrations. The prints call to mind a number of things: various fragments of the Hermann Minkowski’s space-time diagram, for instance, or even occult symbols. An accompanying audio component offers an abstruse list of instructions in deciphering the piece before experiencing the rest of the exhibition.

Stations 1–9, 2021, are cosmic explosions of kaleidoscopic pattern and color. These UV-cured ink-jet renderings of the universe, originally captured by satellites and mounted on aluminum, have been digitally altered by Raskin into uncanny images, both beautiful and terrifying: A Cone of Expression appears front and center in almost every work here. Raskin’s *Stations* make me think of the stations of the cross, but these pieces have more in common with a DMT trip than the crucifixion of Christ. If at this point you’ve found yourself spiraling into an art induced neurosis, perhaps you need to recalibrate your metacognition, as Raskin would likely advise.

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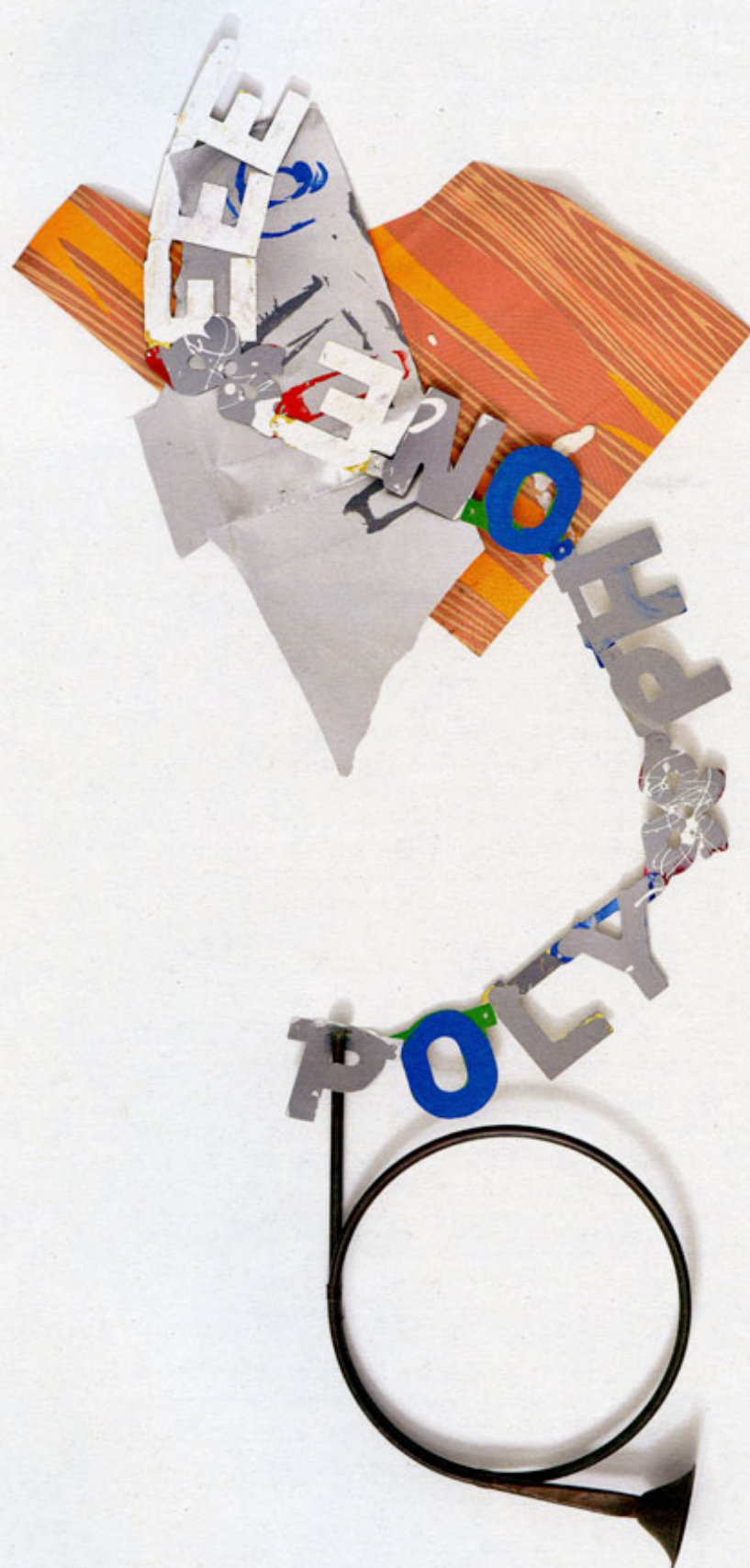
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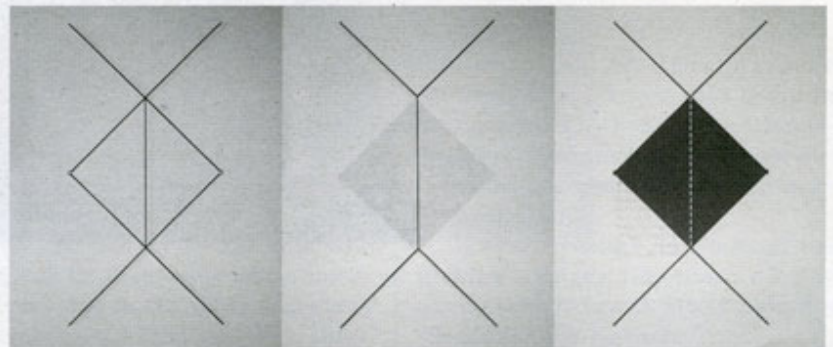
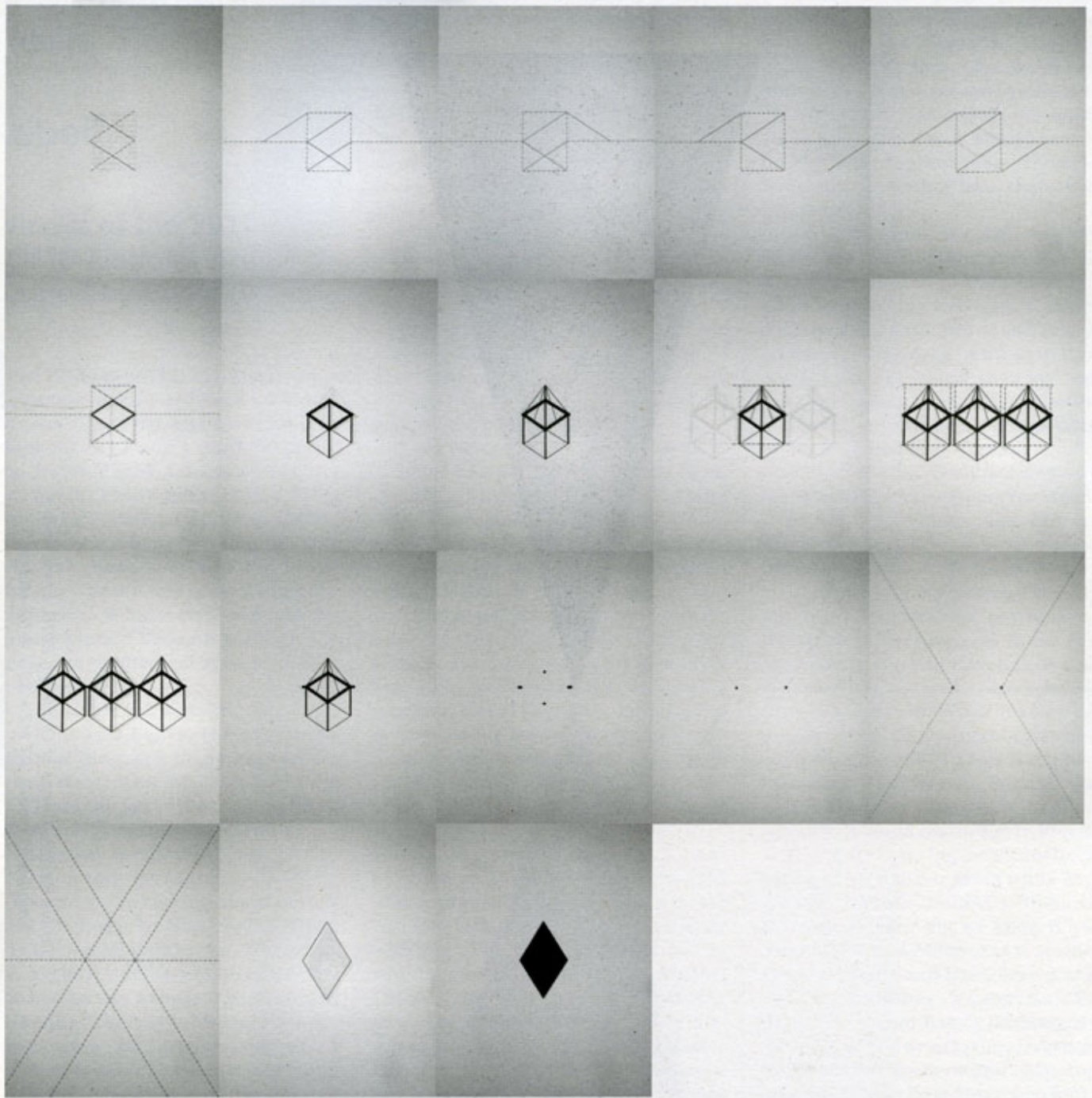
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Jimmy Raskin, Untitled 2 (from The Original Misfire Series), 2011, brass horn and mixed media, 63 1/2 x 29 x 4 1/2 inches. All images courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York.



*Jimmy Raskin, The Original
Corner Diagrams, 1991, ink on paper,
8 1/2 x 11 inches.*



*Jimmy Raskin, Cones of Origin #1, 2010, brass horn
and mixed media, 63 1/2 x 29 x 4 1/2 inches.*

Art in America

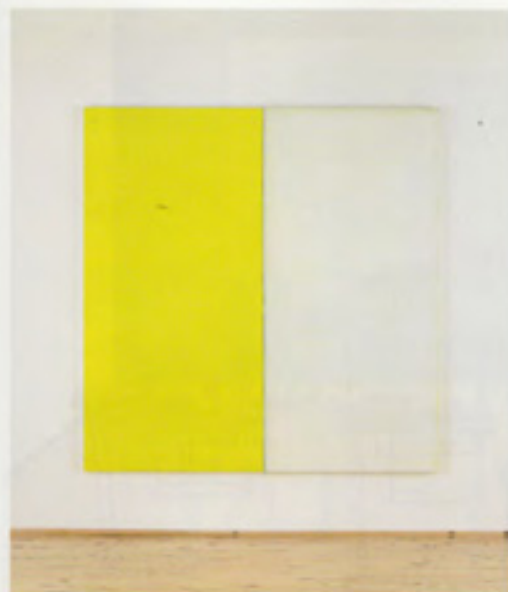
INTERNATIONAL • REVIEW

FOCUS
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MICHAEL HUEY NEO RAUCH
PIERO GILARDI MELVIN MOTI
plus R. H. QUAYTMAN

JUNE/JULY'10 \$9.00



Callum Innes:
Untitled No. 125,
2009, oil on canvas,
76¾ by 75 inches;
at Sean Kelly.



Jimmy Raskin:
A, black, buzz around,
2010, velvet, wood
and mixed mediums,
60 by 24 by 11¼ inches;
at Miguel Abreu.

the new work of Callum Innes, a Scottish painter with a 20-year commitment to deceptively reductive abstraction. Split not-quite-squares, the paintings on canvas (all 2009) in "At One Remove" were each produced by applying sizing (rabbit-skin glue) to canvas, then several layers of gesso, then two adjacent rectangles of solid-color paint, one of which is thoroughly wiped off with turpentine; then two more rectangles of color are applied, and the other side is wiped. Each belabored but resolutely serene final image is divided vertically by a dark line, a residue of the four applications of paint; some evidence of the process can also be found on the edges of the canvas where it wraps around aluminum stretchers.

As Rauschenberg indelibly demonstrated, erasure is hard. No amount of turpentine can eliminate the stubborn ghosts of pigment or stains of medium that remain when all evidence of brushwork is gone. Pillowed by shadows of paint at their edges, the not-quite-pristine areas of wiped canvas, some bright, some smoky, are foils for the rich, glossy rectangles of paint with which they're paired. Smooth, broad swipes of the brush leave faint tracks that catch light, slightly. A few painted fields are brightly colored—alone in a small introductory room was a roughly 2-foot-square example whose size and blazing red right side suggest a semaphore flag. Another, much larger work (76¾ by 75 inches) opposes canary yellow on the left with a white that looks much-laundered and is bordered with a pollenlike dusting. But several works feature

shades of black or dark gray, and a particularly strong trio of Rymanesque canvases, hung on gray walls, sport heavy topcoats of gleaming white.

All these paintings, not Innes's first to rely on subtraction, suggest objects and their shadows—or recollections, or ghosts. Or, images and their exegeses. Even more, the new paintings evoke the divided field of a perceptual experiment in which one image is directed to the brain's right hemisphere (where, in simplified terms, visual processing takes place), and the other to the left (seat of language). You feel your mind's gears grinding. Most provokingly, Innes's new work creates a subtly disorienting physical experience, as of balancing on one leg for a while, then teetering when you've got two feet on the ground.

There were also tall oil paintings on paper shown in a third room (all 80¾ by 39¼ inches, 2008-09), Japanese-y images in which controlled drips of turpentine course like rain through dark fields of muted color. They're lovely, but nowhere near as rigorous, or as satisfying, as the quasi-sculptural, crypto-graphic, not quite monochrome paintings on canvas.

—Nancy Princenthal

JIMMY RASKIN MIGUEL ABREU

Jimmy Raskin's lush work may capitalize on a liberal use of glitter and eye-popping colors, but it was a struggle to make sense of the conceptual underpinnings of his recent exhibition. One gathered from the single-spaced, three-page-long press release that the sculptures, collages and one impressive installation on

view were loosely based on passages from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Raskin interprets Nietzsche's fallen tight-rope walker, described in the book's cryptic prologue, as a metaphor for the poet, and consequently for his own efforts.

More than Nietzsche, the poet Arthur Rimbaud was in immediate evidence in Raskin's show—specifically, Rimbaud's short poem "Vowels," which opens by assigning a color to each vowel ("A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue"). Raskin assembled collages from acetate printed with overlapping circles in these colors, adding a few of his own as paint splotches, in observance of an obscure code. The sculpture *A, black, buzz around* (2010) is a literal take on Rimbaud's lines, "A, black velvety jacket of brilliant flies/ which buzz around cruel smells." Correspondingly, a black velvet jacket hangs on a dress dummy, embellished with stars, fake flies and rhinestones, and with an excrement-like smear on one shoulder.

While this piece is beautifully realized and clear in meaning, elsewhere Raskin's iconography is more perplexing. At first glance, *The Five Lectures* (2008) appears to be a model of a sculpture park set on a metal table. But closer investigation reveals that the five forms within it are lecterns, which, since they are either spherical or collapsing, or distorted in some other fashion, are absurdly nonfunctional. According to the gallery literature, the useless lectern represents the poet's inability to successfully convey his ideas. It is one of several recurring motifs in Raskin's work. Another is "Pinn,"

Magdalena Abakanowicz:
From the "Anatomy" cycle,
2009, burlap, wood and steel;
at Marlborough Chelsea.



a-cartoonish character whose name simultaneously refers to the words pinnacle, piñata and Pinocchio. Pinn is prominently featured in the installation *Last Call* (2010), which includes a vertiginously angled table and two stools with texts inscribed in their seats; one reads, "God Does Not Play Dice," and the other, "Affirm the Dice Throw." Pinn, in the form of a long-nosed piñata, is wall-mounted above this tableau, apparently witness to an ongoing match between control and chaos.

A nearby piece composed of words printed on acetate and then assembled, ransom note-style, on a horizontal white background sprinkled with glitter, reads, "I shall tell, one day, of your mysterious origins." (The line is also taken from Rimbaud.) No doubt some will want to hold Raskin to this promise of revelation. Yet mystifying as his endeavor may seem, he intrigues rather than frustrates, partly because his work is so visually seductive, and partly because its language and imagery foil interpretation in the manner of the best poetry. Like the poet who ignores rules of grammar and plays with form, Raskin can confound rather than elucidate, but he discovers new possibilities for art in the process.

—Claire Barliant

MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ MARLBOROUGH CHelsea

Like discarded husks, Magdalena Abakanowicz's representations of the human form always seem used up, dried out and left as refuse. The Polish sculptor is well known for her hollow

burlap, bronze and plaster effigies, presented as fragments of the human body that have lost all sense of individuality. They have been seen both as evocations of the dehumanizing collectivity that poisoned the Soviet-era Poland in which she came of age and as markers of the larger existential crises of 20th-century life. Born to wealthy landowners of the minor Polish nobility, Abakanowicz experienced Soviet oppression firsthand, especially that directed toward the former Polish aristocracy and bourgeoisie.

This exhibition extended these concerns, exploring some new combinations of mediums, as well as taking some new approaches to her familiar themes. Among the most effective works here was a group of large plaster-and-wood figures that feature the shells of standing and seated headless bodies. Wood bars lie in front of or poke through the rough plaster forms like armatures that have pierced the surface or have not yet been removed. They ambiguously serve as supports and constraints, either holding the bodies up or keeping them locked in place. Several of these works have also been cast in brushed aluminum. Without the distinction between plaster and wood, the armatures seem to be integral parts of the figures, each of which suggests a version of the medieval Golem constructed out of crude materials and awaiting the breath of life.

Also striking were sculptures comprising fragmentary arms, legs, hands and feet shaped from stiffened burlap

and laid on wooden plinths supported by metal stands. Collectively titled "Anatomy" (2009), the works appear in groups—three hands, for instance, or four legs, each slightly different and lined up in a row. The display recalled one of anatomical specimens laid out for study and lent the installation a rather creepy quality, conjuring memories of Nazi eugenic experiments or early forays into ethno-anthropology. A series of small bronze heads displayed nearby accentuated the haunted mood. An unusual subject in Abakanowicz's oeuvre, the crudely modeled heads differ markedly from the burlap body parts. Smaller than life-size, with faces thrust forward atop elongated necks, the sculptures suggest shrunken heads. The distortions bring to mind the character heads of 18th-century German-Austrian sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt.

Rounding out the show was a set of standing headless figures cast from burlap into bronze, which echoes Abakanowicz's familiar crowd installations, plus a group of three abstracted stainless-steel birds. Made of irregular metal sheets with prominent welding lines and attached to approximately 8-foot-high poles, the birds hover overhead with outstretched wings. They resemble fighter planes, and without the reference to a suppressed individuality, they lack the pathos of the artist's human forms. As a whole, the show had the sense of both a summation and an exploration, revealing that this octogenarian artist is still opening up new territory.

—Eleanor Heartney

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2010

Art in Review

Jimmy Raskin

'Inseparability vs.
Simultaneity'

Miguel Abreu
36 Orchard Street
Lower East Side
Through March 14

Some artists can make you feel dumb. Jimmy Raskin, for one, explains his work in impenetrable prose illustrated by textbooklike diagrams referring to Nietzsche, Pinocchio and black holes. He elucidates his ideas using jargon terms like "conflict-concept," "simultaneity" and "indeterminism." Whether any of it makes sense, only a genius could say.

Fortunately Mr. Raskin also makes lively, visually interesting sculptures. Inspired by a poem by Arthur Rimbaud, a black velvet jacket with embroidered images of flies crawling all over it is stylishly creepy. Other works revolve around oppositions between geometric abstraction and messy assemblage. "Cones of Origin," a work on paper, has two triangles meeting at a point, one all black, the other encrusted by colorful glitter. Modernist purity meets postmodernist festiveness.

Filling a corner of the gallery, the show's major piece, "Last Call," is a concatenation of forms and symbols divided between messy on the left and smooth on the right. A piñata in the shape of Pinocchio's head looms over a slanting desktop bearing an accumulation of objects covered in glitter. To the right, a red arrow cut from sheet metal points down to the clean end of the desk, which has a dark, triangle of veneer inlaid on its wooden top.

Does it help to know that the arrow and Pinocchio both refer to the falling tightrope walker in "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," and that the other parts symbolize aspects of Mr. Raskin's "visionary" system? Maybe. But for the casual viewer, it is enough to see it as a wedding of divergent sensibilities, a wacky marriage of reason and squalor.

KEN JOHNSON

Art in America

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ST. LOUIS

"FOR THE BLIND MAN IN THE DARK ROOM . . ." CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

At the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, chief curator Anthony Huberman has organized the institution's most ambitious group exhibition to date. "For the blind man in the dark room looking for the black cat that isn't there," which, according to press materials, sets out to explore "the speculative nature of knowledge and proposes that curiosity matters more than understanding." The title comes from a quote sometimes attributed to Charles Darwin, referring to the guesswork practiced by mathematicians; conceptually, the show also draws on Socrates's famous pronouncement, "I know that I know nothing," as well as a slew of sources (including Marcel Duchamp, Georges Bataille, 'pataphysics, contemporary theorist Sarat Maharaj, etc.) on productive non-knowledge, not to mention post-structuralist claims for the indeterminacy of meaning.

For those who believe that contemporary art trades in wilful obscurity, "For the blind man . . ." may serve as a case in point.



Jimmy Raskin: *The Annunciation*, 2009, mixed-medium sculpture with video.

The cryptic-looking works Huberman has assembled ultimately subvert the very notion that art contains a message, that it can be "figured out," or that it provides us with answers about anything at all. Among the most winsome of these demonstrations is Marcel Broodthaers's 1970 audio recording *Interview with a Cat*, in which the artist discusses esthetic dilemmas with his obligingly talkative pet. ("Is this one a good painting?" he asks. "Meow," replies the cat.) Taken from Broodthaers's watershed conceptual project *Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles* (1968-71), the cat interview nicely sets the stage for the entire exhibition, its disembodied, mock-serious voices establishing the theme of esthetics while offering nothing to look at.

"For the blind man in the dark room looking for the black cat that isn't there" is at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, through Jan. 3, 2010, and travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit [Feb. 5-Apr. 4, 2010]. A slightly modified version of the exhibition appears at the London ICA [Dec. 3, 2009-Jan. 31, 2010]; de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam [February-April 2010]; and Culturgest, Lisbon [May-August 2010].



Patrick van Caekenbergh: *Chapeau! (Hats Off!)*, 1988-89, mixed mediums, dimensions variable. Both photos at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis.

An eccentric, antiquated sensibility courses through this show, a reminder that the exhibition's theoretical basis has deep historical roots. That quality is present in Sarah Cwoner's reprint of two 1917 issues of *The Blind Man* (a journal edited by Duchamp, Henri-Pierre Roché and Beatrice Wood, and featuring some of Duchamp's works)—made available to visitors at the original small-change cover price of 10 or 15 cents—as well as the inclusion of a 17th-century image of a *Wunderkammer* and two 1950s still lifes by Giorgio Morandi, who strove to capture the nature of seeing in his paintings.

Some of the technology on display is likewise archaic. Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer's *Flash in the Metropolitan* (2006) is a dreamlike 16mm film sequence of strobe-lit masterpieces at the New York museum, accompanied by the insistent clack of the projector, while Bruno Munari's *Seeking comfort in an uncomfortable armchair* (ca. 1950) is a series of projected 35mm slides of the seated artist, variously positioned. In both these works, the equipment is forever breaking down—the film jumps its sprockets, a bulb is blown—which all somehow feels right in this context.

Breakdowns of logic and rationality also feature prominently here. Hundreds of prints and drawings by Matt Mullican reflect an obsessive and ultimately futile effort to create a private cosmology, while Patrick van Caekenbergh's *Chapeau! (Hats Off!)*, 1988-89, attempts to contain a "memory archive" in a 4-foot-tall top hat split open to reveal dozens of drawers containing personal ephemera. The show even sports a satirical edge now and again, as in Fischli and Weiss's 1983 video *The Right Way*, which has the artists, dressed as a rat and a bear, stumbling through a pristine Alpine landscape, wrestling—sometimes literally—over esthetics and morality and skewering romantic ruminations on the sublime.

While "For the blind man . . ." includes a handful of technologically slicker pieces (a multimedia installation by Jimmy Raskin and an elegiac video projection by Falke Pisano among them), it's the older works, or those with vintage sensibilities, that best take up the exhibition's theme, perhaps because Huberman has conceived the show in distinctly retrospective terms. Even the catalogue, a sprawling intellectual history of being philosophically at sea, comprises a pastiche of bygone graphics. It's an effective approach, one that acknowledges the historic genealogy of the show's expansive, engrossing subject.

—Ivy Cooper

*More information
available upon request*