

MY GENERATION

THE JABLONKA COLLECTION



Exhibition Facts

Duration	2 October 2020 – 21 February 2021
Venue	Bastion Hall & Colonnade Hall
Curators	Rafael Jablonka Elsy Lahner, ALBERTINA
Works	ca. 110
Catalogue	Available for EUR 32.90 (English & German) onsite at the Museum Shop as well as via www.albertina.at

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My Generation

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With this exhibition, the Albertina Museum presents the most recent addition to its holdings: the collection of Rafael and Teresa Jablonka, which, comprising more than 400 works, ranks among the most distinguished collections of American and German art of the 1980s.

Rafael Jablonka was born in Poland in 1952. After moving to Germany and taking the detour of working as an exhibition curator, he subsequently founded Galerie Jablonka with venues in Cologne, Berlin, and Zurich, eventually turning from a renowned art dealer into an important and passionate collector. Featuring, among others, Francesco Clemente, Roni Horn, Mike Kelley, Sherrie Levine, and Andreas Slominski, the Jablonka Collection includes artists with whom Rafael Jablonka has worked over the years, whom he promoted, and some of whom he discovered. However, he also collected works by artists beyond the program of his gallery—artists he greatly admired and whose works he ultimately wished to conserve for posterity. Over decades it was his motto to always acquire several works from various artistic periods.

In 2017, Rafael Jablonka closed his gallery. Together with his wife Teresa, he established a foundation for his collection and in 2019 entrusted it to the Albertina Museum. Explaining his choice, he points out that Vienna has always been a major inspiration for Polish art and architecture and that the city has always been close to his heart. On the other hand, his interest had been aroused by the Albertina Museum's repositioning, its new diversity in terms of epochs and media.

The collection is much more comprehensive than the selection on view here, ranging from Michael Heizer and Andy Warhol to Nobuyoshi Araki and Richard Avedon. In this exhibition, Rafael Jablonka concentrates on the artists of his own generation. With rooms devoted to individual artists, the show, installed on two exhibition levels, offers impressive insights into their respective oeuvres.

Artists:

Miquel Barceló | Ross Bleckner | Francesco Clemente | Richard Deacon | Eric Fischl | Damien Hirst | Roni Horn | Mike Kelley | Sherrie Levine | Cady Noland | Thomas Schütte | Andreas Slominski | Philip Taaffe | Terry Winters

*Doing the unexpected,
breaking ranks,
surprising yourself,
contradicting yourself,
avoiding any kind of routine,
doubting, taking detours,
and even failing, if necessary.*

Rafael Jablonka

Miquel Barceló

Born 1957 in Felanitx, Mallorca, lives and works in Mallorca, Spain, and Paris, France.

Miquel Barceló became known as a painter and virtuoso draftsman exploring the traditional genres of Western art in the early 1980s, when Neo-Expressionism was on the rise. From the mid-1990s, Barceló has also worked as a ceramicist. He has a large studio in Mallorca, where he devotes himself solely to the making of ceramics.

Barceló frequently starts with traditional shapes like bowls, jars, urns, bricks, or roof tiles, alone or in unusual combinations, which he then transforms by bending, crushing, striking, slashing, perforating, flattening, or coloring. Several of his works are extraordinarily large. Many have identifiable forms or are decorated with recognizable motifs, whereas others are more abstract. In general, the ceramics appear unresolved or unfinished suggesting that everything is in a constant process of change and transformation.

Miracle of Loaves and Fishes

One of Barceló's most important works is a ceramic relief: he created a permanent intervention in Saint Peter's Chapel in the cathedral of Palma de Mallorca, illustrating the *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*. According to the Gospels, Jesus managed to feed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish. He made a ceramic mural measuring 300 square meters that covers the walls of the chapel like a second skin. During firing the surface cracked and split randomly into countless pieces that were then reassembled on location like a gigantic puzzle.

These four works are studies for the project. They resemble paintings but are made out of clay. The use of ceramic, a traditional material, gives these works a timeless, archeological aura, even if they do not compare to anything we know. Barceló experimented with crack formation and color. The shapes of the curved fish and the repetition of some of the forms suggest movement, growth, and transformation. The way in which the forms spring from the clay corresponds to the idea of the biblical miracle. The iconography, which includes monkfish, octopus, eel, oyster, and sea urchin, is unusual. Barceló observes fish while diving. The ceramic works might thus also be interpreted as portrayals of the artist amidst what he has created.

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Ross Bleckner

Born 1949 in New York City, USA, where he also lives and works.

Ross Bleckner's poetic pictures combine abstraction and figuration with ease. Many of his symbolically charged paintings oscillate between such forms as flags, birds, and flowers and abstract atmospheric painting. For Bleckner, his art is the art of consciousness. He sometimes chooses an almost frivolous confrontation of symbolic or ironic references. His pictures describe something that goes beyond them and their material existence, a reality that could, in everyday language, be referred to as "the world surrounding us."

In *Birdland*, many small, blurred blue birds hover against a dark background. In this picture, the artist has experimented with the technique of airbrush and various surface textures. Fragments of a living reality, the birds buzz back and forth across the abstract space of the picture, seemingly altering their appearance with the changes in perspective.

Bleckner's "stripe paintings" of the 1980s—such as *From Unknown Qualities of Light (Part 1)* in this exhibition—are an homage to Bridget Riley's Op art, the artist's exploration of optical perception in painting. With their vibrant patterns, the geometrically arranged stripes seem to be breathing or resemble a curtain draped over the canvas as if to hide something from our view.

Bleckner's paintings often address themes like suffering, death, loss, change, and remembrance. Both sadness and anger about the way the AIDS pandemic was dealt with emanate from Bleckner's gloomy abstract works from the 1980s and 1990s. Paintings of Bleckner's imagination transcend reason and carry us to another dimension.

Architecture of the Sky

Like the "stripe paintings" from Bleckner's early period, the series *Architecture of the Sky* continues in the tradition of abstract art. The innumerable small, geometrically arranged dots remind us of a view into the night sky. Vaults and domes composed of spots form a kind of three-dimensional organic, constructive grid. To produce the unique light effect within his pictorial space, Bleckner initially applies tiny clumps of resin to the blank canvas and then covers them with several layers of paint before finally filing the mounds down again.

The dots of light may also be associated with the lesions of Kaposi's sarcoma. The skin of patients suffering from this tumor, which frequently occurs in people afflicted with immune deficiencies like AIDS, is covered with bluish to brown nodules. With these memorial paintings, the artist honors the many friends and acquaintances he has lost to AIDS. Could the dots of light be candles in a church commemorating their dead souls?

Francesco Clemente

Born 1952 in Naples, Italy, lives and works in New York City, USA.

Francesco Clemente started exhibiting in Italy in the early 1970s and was soon considered one of the foremost artists of his generation. He was a leading figure of the Italian Transavanguardia movement in the 1980s. In 1973 he traveled to India and henceforth returned regularly, often for long spells. These visits have had a major influence on his work and overall thinking. In 1982, Clemente settled in New York, where he became a visible figure in the city's art scene, collaborating with artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol, as well as with poets like Robert Creeley and Allen Ginsberg. Clemente's oeuvre includes paintings, pastels, frescoes, watercolors, drawings, and sculptures. As might be expected from someone whose life is divided between Italy, India, and the United States, Clemente transcends cultural barriers with his work, his interests being fundamentally multicultural. His work explores the nature of consciousness, imagination, and the self. He has adopted the montage of images and fragmented narratives as an artistic strategy. In doing so, Clemente creates a convincing, stimulating, and highly personal mythopoetic world that is open to interpretation. The themes he pursues range from spirituality, mysticism, symbolism, and dreams to daily life, eroticism, and the body.

Hermaphrodite

In the 1970s, Francesco Clemente began traveling to India. The country's culture has fundamentally influenced his work both conceptually and visually. He feels not only drawn to India's philosophy, religion, classical art, music, and architecture, but also to its popular culture, from comics and mythology to posters and street signs. Over the years he has created numerous works in cooperation with local artisans. In 1976 he took up his collaboration with sign painters, which was continued in the 1980s.

Hermaphrodite is part of a series of gouaches from that period. Each of them is executed on handmade paper and put together with hand-woven cotton strips to form a grid structure resembling a mosaic. This picture consists of 16 sheets and is foldable, being divided vertically into two halves at the center. The halves feature individually colored backgrounds and also differ stylistically, for they were executed by different artists according to Clemente's instructions. The gouaches deal with the concept of duality—with opposite yet complementary forces like yin and yang, male and female, or day and night. The motif of the hermaphrodite is an archetypical image of wholeness.

Portraits

Teresa and *Bill T. Jones* belong to an ongoing series of portraits including members of the artist's family, colleagues, friends, and collectors. *Teresa* shows Teresa Jablonka, Rafael Jablonka's wife. She wears an elegant long dress and stiletto shoes. Bill T. Jones, dressed in comfortable dancewear, is an American dancer and choreographer. The founder of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, he has been one of the most influential figures in international contemporary dance since the 1970s. The format of these portraits is horizontal like that of landscapes, with the sitters seemingly posing on invisible sofas.

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Their complicated positions have been chosen in such a way that their legs are also visible. Their faces, on the other hand, appear calm and serious, looking straight at the viewer. These unusual poses suggest that the sitters are extraordinary personalities.

Self-Portraits

In Clemente's art, the self-portrait plays an important role. The artist has painted and drawn himself in all sorts of poses and guises, engaged in various activities. He is not only interested in the depiction of the self as such, but more specifically in self-awareness, the soul, and corporeality. His eyes, for example, are always larger than they should be. They appear to be the entrance to, and the exit from, his body.

Self-Portrait as an Androgynae shows the artist in an upright standing position, holding the painting of a nude female torso in front of his body. The picture stands for dualism and change, suggesting the perfect union of opposites.

The small pastel belongs to a series entitled *Self-Portraits in White, Red, and Black*. For Clemente, these are primary colors symbolizing light, shadow, and blood or life. The self-portraits in this series present the artist in unusual situations, mostly in states of transformation. In number I of the series, a village grows out of his head, with fishing rods and attached fish sticking out of the houses. In number IV, the artist breathes through a snorkel while diamonds dangle from fishhooks above his head. Here, in number X, he looks at the moon expectantly.

Richard Deacon

Born 1949 in Bangor, UK, lives and works in London, UK.

Richard Deacon, who refers to himself as “fabricator,” has pursued questions of how different materials can be used and to what purpose since the 1980s. What appears to be off limits is what attracts him most. Deacon builds large objects out of materials he manipulates at will by bending, twisting, and connecting them, combining organic forms and technical elements. The appearance of his sculptures contradicts the nature of the chosen materials. The artist is particularly interested in these conflicts.

In his work *Dead Leg*, stainless steel couplings bundle oak lengths, which have been bent with the aid of steam, into pairs or groups of three or four. The apparent randomness of the twists, convolutions, and bends stands in contrast to the rigidity of the metal. While the wood absorbs light, it is reflected by the steel mountings. The strands unfurl as complicated arabesques from a static starting point: a tubular element that eludes the flow of movement. Multiple interpretations come to mind. Being a “dead leg,” this part seems unable to move along with the rest. But it also resembles the handle of a whip, the bands of which swing in space, or, because of its hollow end, a wind instrument from which a melody pours out.

That the stiff wood bends and twists has to do with Deacon’s fascination with the paradoxical, with the relentless search in the visual arts for ways to reproduce the phenomenon of flowing in rigid form, from a Madonna’s curly hair to ocean waves. The artist says: “The parts of the world that are in flux—fire, water, smoke, clouds, for example—pose particular problems for the artist. These are forms without form, disorganized but recognizable, shifting and uncertain.”

Eric Fischl

Born 1948 in New York City, USA, lives and works in Sag Harbor, USA.

Eric Fischl has been considered one of the leading contemporary figurative painters since the 1980s. Fischl does not depict an intact world. He exposes the abyss behind the pseudo-perfect façades endlessly expanding middle-class suburbs. He shows their inhabitants in their living rooms and gardens, at the pool and on the beach. He captures them during ordinary leisure activities, alone, in pairs, with friends, reading, watching television, or having sex. Fischl sees the constraints and uncertainties, the loneliness, emptiness, and boredom of his protagonists.

In spite of their narrative dimension, Fischl's works do not offer a complete story. They merely depict a moment, a fragment of a story. The images are ambivalent. Their tension results not least from what they do not show. Conflicts are only implicit. Together with the artist, we become intimate observers, transgressing the boundaries of privacy. Fischl's figures believe themselves to be unobserved; they are often naked or scantily clad, unadorned and in abandon. However all of these scenes are invented, the result of a well-considered *mise-en-scène* the artist has conceived and photographed as a model for his paintings. Despite his painterly brilliance and Impressionistic rendering of light, Fischl does not resort to an authentic reality. For him, reality is fiction.

Corrida in Ronda No. 6

During a journey to Southern Spain, Eric Fischl visited the bullfighting arena of Ronda in Andalusia. As part of Spanish culture, the bullfights, with their loud, gladiatorial atmosphere, supplied the artist with new motifs for his art. Following in the footsteps of Goya, Picasso, and Manet, he thus continues in this art historical tradition. Photographs served as raw material for the artist's paintings—eight large oils recalling the format of history paintings. With its magnificently dressed protagonists, *Corrida in Ronda No. 6* resembles a painted *tableau vivant*. The colors of the costumes and capes, the Mediterranean light, as well as the gestures and poses of the toreros lend the picture a great deal of pathos. It is spectacular how Fischl jumps with virtuosity between figural narrative and painterly abstraction; how he has rendered the ornamentation of the costumes in a sculptural fashion, whereas the bodies appear as flat as dummies. These are dramatic distractions from the event taking place in the arena—the killing of the bull. The moment of the animal's collapse is of existential significance for the artist. He shows a creature unable to understand what happens in the instance of dying. Dealing with this old theme of European culture, Fischl leaves the American idyll, marking a turn in his artistic practice.

First Sex

Time and again, Eric Fischl's pictures suggest a precarious encounter between a boy and an adult woman that has an incestuous tendency about it. *First Sex* presents a nocturnal beach scene revolving around the central figure of a woman. We see her male counterpart in three different phases of life simultaneously. As a young boy, dressed in pants and T-shirt, he wraps his arms possessively around the woman's thigh—a gesture that makes her his mother.

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He then acts twice as a teenager, like in a film sequence, undressing and focusing on his first sexual intercourse. In this perspective, the woman's identification as lover or mother remains open. Ultimately, these images come together in the adult man in the left background: ardently clutching his genitals, he recalls the heat of that very night.

Glassines

Eric Fischl's works have something filmic or theatrical about them. The artist designs various stage sets for his scenes, including kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room, studio, garden, or beach, furnishing them with his own props. He then has his actors enter, encounter, and interact in these settings. This form of staging is particularly remarkable in the artist's early works on glassine, a transparent and glossy type of paper on which Fischl has applied black oil paint to define the outlines and shapes of his motifs. The figures and objects placed on individual lengths of paper can be combined as desired to create spheres of action using a collage technique. The sheets may also overlap, thanks to the translucence of the paper, and individual figures and elements can be grouped together in different arrangements. The possibility of multiple constellations allows Fischl to generate images with a variety of meanings.

Catboy

Eric Fischl would later hark back to the multi-part structure of his "Glassines" for his paintings, the three-part piece *Catboy* being one such example. The fragile position occupied by the pumpkin painting in the foreground can be read as an allusion to the adolescent's state of mind. The boy's funny costume contrasts with the serious gaze he fixates on the viewer. The disguise turns out to be a kind of protective suit that safeguards him from insistent stare. Viewed in this light, Fischl virtually reverses the voyeuristic moment of his early works. The psychological ambiguity felt here is a key element of his work.

Krefeld Project

For his *Krefeld Project*, Eric Fischl asked two actors to perform "relationship scenes" during three days in a house built by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the late 1920s, and to do so without a script. The resulting two thousand photographs serve as the basis for Fischl's cycle of paintings: no story, no daily routine, just scenes of a couple's over-the-hill relationship. It is as if we were secretly observing what a couple does when it is alone. Each picture shows a moment taken from the matter-of-fact reality of two people's lives and resembles a film still. The two people appear as familiar to us as they remain strangers. Elegant rooms in bright, brilliant colors contrast with the gloomy atmosphere. Sunlight floods through slats casting colored shadows. But the barriers between man and woman—emphasized by pieces of furniture or architectural elements—speak an unequivocal language. Ultimately, this couple also embodies the melancholy insight that one is alone in the world.

Wedding Picture

As the title suggests, the protagonist of this painting is a bride on what seems to be her wedding day. A young woman holds a wedding dress in front of her almost naked body. We see her from behind, in a natural pose. Her face is unrecognizable under the veil.

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In front of her, to her right, appears another woman, who is already festively dressed—probably her best friend, maybe her maid of honor. The gesture of her hands underlines her strong facial expression. We do not know anything about their conversation. Is she saying “Oh, your dress is simply gorgeous” or “Well, hopefully you are not making a mistake marrying this guy”? We do not know because the artist does not want us to know. The application of color varies—it may be swift or slow, in some areas dense, in others extremely fluid, so that the paint flows down the canvas like rain on a windowpane. This painting is first and foremost Eric Fischl’s declaration of love for the color white, the color of innocence. Everything white in the painting radiates with energy and dynamism.

Cringing

Eric Fischl was one of the first artists to respond to the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. He especially remembers the people jumping out of the windows of the World Trade Center in panic—for this was the only moment when the victims of the catastrophe could be seen. “So with 9/11 you have three thousand people die and there are no bodies; everyone is suffering loss and there’s no bodies and the mourning quickly shifts to the buildings. We have to replace the architecture, we have to do whatever is necessary to remember the buildings. There’s no way to remember that it was a human tragedy and not an architectural disaster. We just can’t process it,” he says. In his works, Fischl therefore moves the human body back into focus. In addition to falling figures he also depicts people protectively holding their arms above their heads, cringing or writhing. In this way, Fischl’s pictures express the painful dimension, the desperation and hopelessness in an overwhelming fashion.

Damien Hirst

Born 1965 in Bristol, UK, lives and works in London, UK.

The conceptual artist Damien Hirst has been one of the leading protagonists of the Young British Artists since the 1990s. His extensive work encompasses sculptures and installations, prints and paintings.

Together with colleagues, he began organizing exhibitions at an early point in his career while pursuing his own artistic practice. Hirst's entrepreneurial approach to the art market is particularly innovative. Evading art galleries, he found new ways of distributing his artworks, such as by auctioning them off directly from his studio via leading auction houses. Hirst's well-known sculptures, including a tiger shark preserved in formaldehyde (*The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991) or a platinum cast of a human skull encrusted with thousands of diamonds (*For the Love of God*, 2007), were international sensations. The titles of these and other provocative works refer to the principal themes of Hirst's art: life and death, transience, love, religion, and consumerism.

In *Alone Yet Together* and *In Love*, two ping-pong balls, seemingly held by an invisible force, are caught in vertical suspension with the aid of two red rubber tubes and spray guns. This work is a sequel to a sculpture involving a single hovering ball and of a similarly lengthy title: *I Want to Spend the Rest of My Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*. Hirst's unusual object ignores the conventional language of sculpture. The two balls quiver and spin above a precarious composition of two glass panels glued together with silicone. The whole thing could collapse at any moment. With this sculpture, Hirst refers to life as a giant composition of numerous relationships—both between people and people and things.

Last Supper

With *Last Supper*, Damien Hirst revisits his well-known medicine cabinets filled with empty boxes of medicines. In his screenprints, however, imitating the graphic layout of these packages, he has swapped the names of pharmaceuticals for those of typically British food like mushroom pie, dumplings, corned beef, or liver, bacon and onions, turning them into brand names by adding ® or ™. Variants of the artist's name, such as Hirst, Damien, Damien & Hirst, Hirst Products Limited, and his own invented logotypes replace and parody the familiar designs.

Hirst broaches several themes here: the quality of industrially produced food, which frequently contains harmful ingredients; the matter-of-factness with which medicaments have become part of our diet and lifestyle; that pharmaceuticals are commodities produced and sold by big companies; our dependence on reliable remedies actually feeding the medical and fast-food industries. For the title *Last Supper*, Hirst borrows from the biblical episode told in Saint Matthew's Gospel, in which Jesus sits down with the twelve apostles for his last meal before his Crucifixion. They share bread and wine, and Jesus says: "One of you shall betray me." In Hirst's version, all thirteen protagonists gathering here are potential traitors—a humorous and cynical commentary on the self-destructive aspects of our society.

Roni Horn

Born 1955 in New York City, USA, where she also lives and works.

Such themes as identity, meaning, variability, and perception are in the focus of Roni Horn's multifaceted production. Her works convey that what you see is not necessarily what you believe to see. Horn succeeds in subtly probing attributions and exhibiting changeability and versatility.

Since the 1970s, the artist has produced drawings, photographs, sculptures, and installations, including works based on words and script. Her interest in the specific qualities of certain materials extends to all media, from structured pigment drawings to the use of solid gold or cast glass and rubber.

That und For How Dickinson Stayed Home

In the 1990s, Horn stopped applying pigments in watery form and instead took to placing them on larger expanses of paper as a sculptural substance, sparingly mixed with binder. At the same time, her interest shifted from individual phenomena to the interaction of similar or nearly identical color forms. As shown in *That XII*, it is not form for its own sake that counts. The composition is much more involved with the multiplication and arrangement of form within a surface. In a tedious process, the traces of which can be read in the work, the sheet of paper was cut up, the parts were displaced and rejoined until the elements were grouped in a loose grid. The space between the forms cannot be equated with geometrically definable distance, but is a dynamic size created in the viewer's perception.

Horn has chosen words as titles that cannot stand alone. "That" as such does not contain any information; it is necessary to point to something at the same time. The juxtaposition of "speechless" material and the semantics of words has been continued, for example, in the scattering of letters as drawn elements on the paper's surface.

Thicket No. 1

Thicket no. 1 is the first work to show Roni Horn's preoccupation with language in the medium of sculpture. Lines of various widths are recognizable along two of the four edges of the flat object, similar to a bar code. Only when we walk around the work does it become apparent that these are the tops of letters made of dark synthetic resin and cut deep into the aluminum, forming a phrase. Like many of Horn's works, this one too is intended to direct attention to the special qualities of the materials used and to how the viewer experiences the work physically. In order to be able to read the phrase, we must become involved with our bodies. Horn says: "I want to make sensible experience more present. I try to reach the viewer by addressing the bodily and not just the mental/nonphysical being. The viewer must take responsibility for being there, otherwise there is nothing there."

The phrase TO SEE A LANDSCAPE AS IT IS WHEN I AM NOT THERE by the French philosopher and activist Simone Weil thus also points to the existence of a perceiving subject. But whereas this work is directed at a physical commitment, the text refers to an experience that could exclude the viewer's presence. The thought of presence and absence can be carried further:

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Where do the letters appear? Is the phrase equally present when we are absent? Where is the boundary at which the meaning of the phrase disappears into matter, into the thicket?

Hamilton Blue

Drawing is a primary activity for Roni Horn, underpinning her versatile artistic practice. This also holds true for *Hamilton Blue*, an early series whose title derives from a place in New England. Each sheet shows a compact form of blue watercolor created from many short brushstrokes. The forms have a sculptural effect, although they possess no stable order. They visualize the process, the closing of the partially still open contours, the condensing of the blue color at the center of the white expanse.

Mike Kelley

Born 1954 in Detroit, USA, died 2012 in Los Angeles, USA.

Mike Kelley is considered one of the most innovative artists of our time. He leaves a diverse and hybrid body of works encompassing drawing, video, music, performance, assemblage, installation, photography, and painting. His work also stands out for his regular collaborations with other visual artists and musicians. With his complex oeuvre, Kelley thoroughly examined culture from the bottom up. A collector of images and relics of pop and subcultures, he worked with found ideas and objects, reshaping them into artworks with a do-it-yourself aesthetic. In his art, great myths of western “high culture” convene with the trivialities of contemporary everyday culture. The resulting works sometimes offend conventional notions of taste and leave the viewer feeling uncomfortable.

Scrutinizing popular myths and mass- and countercultures, Kelley addresses in his work the underlying themes, the shapes that lurk under the carpet in our society as well as in our private lives. He consistently and critically reflects upon concepts of repressed memory and trauma, occasionally using a relentlessly dark humor.

Frankenstein / Paperworks

In the late 1980s, Mike Kelley took to integrating stuffed animals into his works, ultimately becoming his trademark. The toy animals convey a childlike innocence. Cute and neat, they represent for Kelley what a child should be like in the eyes of adults. “The stuffed animal is a pseudo-child, a cutified, sexless being which represents the adult’s perfect model of a child—a neutered pet,” the artist says.

Like Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley’s novel, Kelley has conceived an artificial creature. But whereas Frankenstein’s creature accidentally turned out to be a monster, Kelley’s version is the direct opposite. Nothing indicates that this beast, composed of fabric remnants and cuddly toys, could ever become a threat. It has not even been completed. A large, elongated part and a smaller, circular part—torso and head?—lie next to each other; the pin cushion suggests that the creative process has been interrupted only briefly. Will this creature ever come to life? Will it live up to its friendly appearance or is this appearance deceptive?

There is something inherently uncanny in these sewn stuffed animals, they suggest an unscrupulous and brutal trait in the creator’s personality. Kelley proceeds just as brutally when he misuses the stuffed animals as paintbrushes. He dips the eponymous bear, frog, or yellow plush banana into black acrylic paint, placing wide, saturated lines onto the paper with expressive gestures.

Kandor

Mike Kelley’s installations of Kandor are named after the capital of the fictional planet Krypton, Superman’s place of birth. According to the comics, the city Kandor was shrunk by the villain Brainiac, one of Superman’s worst enemies, and encased in a bell-shaped bottle. When Brainiac came to Earth to harvest additional cities, Superman snatched the miniature city away from him and kept it in his safe and secret hideout, the Fortress of Solitude.

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For Superman, Kandor is thus a constant memory of his own past, a metaphor for his alienated relationship to Earth, the planet on which he lives.

With the aid of a comic book collector, Kelley accumulated hundreds of images of Kandor and began translating the drawn images into three-dimensional objects. Each Kandor installation consists of a furniture-like pedestal supporting a cast resin model of the city, covered by a bell jar of hand-blown, colored glass. Tubes and gas tanks give the impression as if life could be breathed into these miniature cities. These objects are complemented by “Bottle Projections” showing Kelley’s experiments using air compressors to cause particle matter to swirl inside the glass jars like colored gas.

Superman’s Kandor narrative coincides with Kelley’s consistent interest in traumata and memory. For example, Kelley once built architectural models of every school he attended, leaving out those parts he could not remember, which implies that his inability to reconstruct them must be the result of a trauma. Looking at images of Kandor, Kelly was fascinated by the fact that this city was similarly difficult to reconstruct: its design having never been standardized, there was no continuity in the representations of Kandor, as generations of illustrators had depicted the city in various ways. Given Superman’s traumatic loss of his home, Kelley finds this inconsistency remarkable. He describes Kandor as “the home that can never be revisited, the past that can never be recovered. Yet there it is, shrunken to the size of a dollhouse—an ageless memento in real time.”

Lenticulars

For his *Lenticulars*, Mike Kelley has blown up graphically modified drawings of Kandor to the scale of the sculptures and placed them inside lenticular lightboxes. He has thus achieved a spatial effect on the one hand, while, on the other hand, the appearance of the city changes depending on the viewer’s movements.

In the artist’s *Animations*, the shrunken city inside the bell jar is personified: it laughs, breathes, or giggles in a cartoonish manner.

Structural Mimes

This installation is based on a found photograph of two mimes. One of the mime’s faces is cropped in half by the photographic frame. Mike Kelley reinforces the play at the edge of the picture using a special mirror effect in his video: the pantomimes move in and out of the frame symmetrically and mechanically. This regular rhythm of video editing, initially synchronized to the beat of a click-track, increasingly falters. The mimes double or overlap until they can no longer be distinguished from each other. The rhythm of the soundtrack distorts, while in a second projection the colors of the costumes flash and flicker. The restlessness of this installation gives us an inkling of the cacophony so typical of Kelley’s work.

Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #16 (Structuralist Mimes) on display here consists of props, set pieces, screenplay notes, and sketches for the production of a large-scale video and performance complex entitled *Day Is Done*. For this Gesamtkunstwerk, or “total artwork,” Kelley refers to photographs from high-school yearbooks and newspapers of extracurricular activities like theater, school dances, or pageants.

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He is mainly interested in the prevailing images of a specific type of iconography familiar to us from Halloween or Goth culture, including dance or religious scenes. Kelley restages these carnivalesque rituals typical of US-American youth. As such, high school serves as a symbol of US-American society, where identities and class relations are negotiated. In Kelley's words "these events serve no productive function other than being nonsensical escapes from institutional daily routine. They carry within them a subtle critical subtext."

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Sherrie Levine

Born 1947 in Hazleton, USA, lives and works in New York City, USA.

In 1981, Sherrie Levine gained renown with her *After Walker Evans* series, for which she photographed Walker Evans's famous 1936 pictures of impoverished Southerners in rural America from an exhibition catalogue and presented these images as her own, newly created works. Levine is considered the most important exponent of Appropriation Art, which makes use of existing artworks. By reflecting upon a work of art, she offers a new perspective on the "original." In the 1980s, the omnipresent question of copy and original, of model and imitation was confronted in art, which had over centuries fetishized the unmistakable original as a unique collector's item.

In her works, the artist primarily deals with the male heroes of modernism. For each of her paintings in the *Melt Down* series, a specific work by Yves Klein served as her point of departure. Analyzing the piece, she determined the average tone of all the colors in that painting, subsequently creating a painting in the very tone of the "melted down" colors. The results allude to the original work of art at best, but present it, distilled in this way, in a pure and sensual form.

Body Mask

Whom do pictures belong to? Who created them? Levine's artistic work questions the authenticity and authorship of artworks. The flood of images delivered by the media and the unlimited possibilities of reproduction in particular prompt Levine to question the notion of the original.

Levine's *Body Mask*, a highly polished bronze, shows the silhouette of a pregnant woman representing the origin of the world. The artist was inspired by ritual masks of the Makonde, an ethnic group in the southeast of Tanzania and the north of Mozambique. These body masks are worn by tribespeople in initiation ceremonies during which the men slip into the guise of women. "Stylized" as a work of art, the object no longer reveals anything of its possible ritual function, nor of its mythical significance. Removed from its previous context, it opens up entirely new levels of meaning. The perfection of the high-gloss surface both attracts and repulses the viewer. The polish encapsulates the object and its meaning, causing it to be still or even dead. Its splendor leaves no room for empathy.

Fountain

Levine responds to famous sculptural models with casts in bronze or glass, as well as reconstructions in wood. Here she ironically fetishizes Marcel Duchamp's icon, the well-known readymade *Fountain* (1917). Using an industrially manufactured mass product, Duchamp was the first to make clear that solely the installation in the museum determines whether the object is a work of art or a urinal. Levine has transformed this famous artwork, whose original is now lost, into a precious object of highly polished bronze. The reproduction of an original, its more or less modified copy, rocks the very foundations of our understanding of art.

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Human Skull

Sherrie Levine's dealing with works by other artists questions such concepts as authenticity, appropriation, originality, and authorship. It is art based on art. Since the 1980s, Sherrie Levine has made reference to artists of modernism like Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Paul Cézanne. *Human Skull* is based on a painting entitled *Pyramid of Skulls* by Cézanne, who repeatedly varied this vanitas symbol in his still life paintings. Harking back to this motif of death and transience, Levine translates a single skull from the painting into the third dimension, thereby fundamentally altering its impact.

The immaculate gloss, the concise and unblemished material of Levine's works stand in stark contrast to the dark motifs of her art. The sophisticated production processes employed recall those associated with luxury goods. The splendor of Levine's objects does not contradict their dark motifs but shows the other side of the coin. Similarly, the seductive and beautiful surface of objects in a still life points to the transience of all things.

Bachelors

Sherrie Levine's work *Untitled (The Bachelors: "Gardien de la Paix")* is her interpretation of Marcel Duchamp's well-known and ambitious work *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (or: The Large Glass)*.

Duchamp's work consists of two freestanding panes of glass between which the artist has combined oil paint with such materials as lead foil, wire, and dust. Being an abstract work, its iconography can only be deciphered with the help of Duchamp's notes. He describes *The Large Glass* as an erotic encounter between the bride in the upper panel and nine bachelors, gathered together among an abundance of various mysterious mechanical apparatus in the lower panel. Desiring the bride, they are unable to win her for themselves. Duchamp referred to the lower panel as the "Bachelor Machine," a term that was later adopted in philosophical discourse.

Having isolated individual "bachelors" from Duchamp's works, Levine has realized their abstract forms as three-dimensional cast glass objects. They are each presented in their own individual showcases, having become as inapproachable as the bride.

Newborns

With *Crystal Newborn* and *Black Newborn*, Sherrie Levine refers to a sculpture by Constantin Brâncuși entitled *The Newborn*. The latter's smooth egg shape is meant to represent an act of birth, the origin, the newborn's first cry in this world. The idea of origin being crucial for Brâncuși, he worked with this oval shape time and again. Sherrie Levine has understood this as an invitation to continue his series of newborns.

The process Levine employs to create her sculptures has a certain resemblance to photography. As soon as the mold is ready, she is able to produce several identical copies for which there is in fact no original, the form being a kind of negative that can be reproduced. Both in Brâncuși's and in Levine's artistic practice, this is a play with the concept of origin and its dissemination.

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Golden Knots

For her *Golden Knots*, Sherrie Levine makes use of ordinary plywood boards. In the United States, these boards made of fir are a popular building material—as popular as canvas is in the visual arts. Treating these panels as found objects and framing them like pictures, the artist declares them finished works of art. Framing prevents the plywood from being put to use in a utilitarian fashion. A readymade, each panel bears the ambiguous label of “useful versus useless.”

Plywood is made by peeling thin, even layers of veneer off a tree trunk and gluing them together, with knots appearing where branches have come out. After these knots have been cut out, the remaining oval holes are filled with corresponding shapes of the same veneer. Levine has replaced the organic wooden filling material with the alchemist element of gold, allowing the lively, endlessly varying patterns of the wood grain to predetermine her compositions.

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Cady Noland

Born 1956 in Washington, DC, USA, lives and works in New York City, USA.

Since 1988 the work of the sculptor and installation artist Cady Noland has only been on view in selected solo exhibitions. Having withdrawn from public life and from the art market, the artist declines to be interviewed and photographed. In her works, she addresses themes like anonymity and fame, as well as the failed promise of the American dream. Some of her large-scale installations and objects seemingly randomly combine various resistant objects like metal grids and barriers. The railings, stockades, and fences—items frequently found in Noland's work—prohibit movement, force an enclosure, demarcate inside and outside. They are structures that represent punishment and control. In their brutality, the shape and hardness of the materials in use reinforce the authority and violence of these objects.

In *Fucking Herd – The Horse Gate*, equestrian paraphernalia hangs over a gate, including a bit, the metal element that controls a horse through pressure in its mouth. A gas mask used to prevent the inhalation of toxic substances is draped alongside it, evoking oppressive feelings of lurking danger and death. The strong expression in the title challenges “polite” conventions about giving artworks a respectable title. Or does the title crudely allude to the former use of the gate for mating horses? In addition, by employing the metaphor of the animal herd, Noland points to the unquestioning behavior of humans en masse.

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Thomas Schütte

Born 1954 in Oldenburg, Germany, lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

More than perhaps any other artist of his day, Thomas Schütte has included models (architectural models, that is) in his repertoire. However, these simple and sometimes improvised objects are not models in the usual sense: they are not meant to serve as guidelines for making another, larger structure. They are self-contained works of art making an impact of their own as producers of both mental and emotional responses. They tell stories and propose possibilities in the form of “what ifs.” The play between small and large, idea and realization, sculpture and image, art as a model and the model as art permeates Schütte’s entire oeuvre.

Following 9/11, the artist devoted himself to a series of models entitled *Holiday Homes for Terrorists*, which he built on various scales. The series was motivated by the architectural redesigns for Ground Zero, with their ambitions of providing therapy and healing, designs the artist considers to have been sketched rather superficially. His alternative drafts are provocative contributions to the dictate of modernism and serve as spaces for thinking about the devastating terror attacks that have lastingly upset the Western world. Thomas Schütte maintains: “Someone owning a house does not dash off and drop bombs.”

As is shown in the video, *Holiday Home T.* has indeed been realized as a building on a scale of 1:1. The “T.” could now also stand for its location, Tyrol. One can walk around in the geometrically constructed pavilion with glass walls, but it is not intended for living. As a visitor, one finds oneself in a real house and is, at the same time, part of a model in the sense of an experimental set-up.

Woodcuts

These nine woodcuts hark back to a cycle of enamel paintings entitled *Die Burg [The Castle]* from 1984. Schütte adopts the compositions 1:1, straightens their outlines, divides the depictions into flat fields, and defines a limited number of colors for the prints—in short, he emphasizes the bold effect of the motifs. Cheap industrial woods were used for the outsized printing plates, each with specific grains. The wooden panels were put together according to Schütte’s instructions to create the images in such a way that both colors and grains would structure the picture. The components of the printing plate, resembling puzzle pieces, were colored in keeping with the original model and then printed in one run.

Andreas Slominski

Born 1959 in Meppen, Germany, lives and works in Berlin and Hamburg, Germany.

The oeuvre of Andreas Slominski ranks among the most fascinating contributions to German contemporary art. In the early 1990s, Slominski's sculptural work consisted of smaller objects, but now also comprises large-scale installations. The artist seeks to enter into direct dialogue with his audience from the very outset. Playing with imagination, he encourages us to look closely at his art. His "traps" are seemingly absurd baits oscillating between sculpture and functional object. They can also be interpreted as commentary upon the effect of art, which can be deceiving and enticing at the same time. He stages the act of sculptural creation as an optical illusion. This sculptor's works are to be understood as tongue-in-cheek pranks. But the cunning traps are only one aspect of Slominski's ironic universe, which also draws its inspirations from elements of silent film. The artist also harks back to a standard repertoire of situational comedy. When looked at more closely, defamiliarized everyday objects reveal that Slominski is not only a humorous trapper, but first and foremost an artist in the universe of things

Bicycle

Andreas Slominski's bicycle is an assemblage, a three-dimensional collage, in fact. Removed from the art context, it would probably be perceived as the vehicle of a homeless person, for it is an old, used bicycle laden with plastic bags, baskets, and traveling bags. The artist has composed the work carefully to look like something that nobody would want to have except the person whom nobody likes: an outcast of our society. Or maybe someone who does not want to be part of our boring daily routines? Is this work therefore not a portrait of an artist in general, or maybe even a self-portrait of this artist? Slominski has created a meaningful artwork with objects that we, the consumers, carry to the dump. Out of worthless and useless victims of our existence, he creates objects of desire.

Traps

Slominski's traps are often based on actually used variants of this device. These sculptural objects are not replications but functional instruments, occasionally modified aesthetically and sometimes completely constructed by the artist himself. The first animal trap to catch Slominski's eye was a small metal trap for root voles in 1984. Having discovered it in a store, he was immediately interested in its structure and eager to know how its tension mechanism worked. For the artist, these traps are assemblages, sculptures, and objects at the same time. But who is it the artist seeks to catch when putting up his traps in the form of larger and smaller objects?

Are these traps intended for animals, museumgoers, the institution, or perhaps art itself? Installed as free-standing objects in the museum space, they claim a sculptural presence in their purposeful aestheticism and are therefore only metaphorically out for their anonymous prey. They capture viewers with their material magnetism, which is by far more positive than the original purpose of the traps. The artist demonstrates that we, the visitors, with our play instinct, are just as seducible as animals.

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Trappers

Slominski refers to his drawings of the *Trappers* as time-fillers. They are by-products, created during breaks in production or during quiet, relaxing moments. The artist does not rely on models for these small portraits. Springing entirely from his imagination, they serve as mute vis-à-vis accompanying him through his work process. Here, in the exhibition, they similarly seem to be observing what is going on from above, eagerly waiting for us to be lured into their traps. Or have the trappers themselves become prey, becoming trophies on display?

Bird Trap

The viewer is deceived by the appearance of this old-fashioned baby carriage. The seemingly charming object only serves to conceal a bird trap installed inside. As soon as an animal is attracted and cannot resist pecking at the seeds, it will fall into the carriage through a kind of horizontally mounted revolving door resembling a paddle wheel or vacuum cleaner drum. These tricky and deceptive traps also take us back to the pioneers of slapstick and silent movie humor. Particularly Buster Keaton, a trained magician, serves as a reference for Andreas Slominski. In Keaton's films *One Week* and *The Electric House*, for example, prefabricated houses become life-threatening traps for their residents. Similarly, the sculpture recalls a specific horror motif familiar to us from children's literature, one that is also present in old American silent movies: the professional trapper. Slominski is also interested in the play of mechanical parts, in the entrapping element of standardized objects.

Windmill

Windmills are a recurring motif in Andreas Slominski's oeuvre. They reverberate with a number of specifically Northern European cultural meanings, ranging from the early and now-romanticized function of the mill in agriculture to its role as a kitschy accessory in front gardens. Moreover, they recall the wind turbines used for power generation or bring to mind various proverbs having to do with windmills. With its playful appeal, this colorful windmill resembling a motif from a comic strip can thus be interpreted in many different ways. But similar to the artist's traps, its friendly appearance is deceptive. His search for a possibility to visualize wind prompted Slominski to depict windmills. To be more precise: he sought to capture the wind that must have been blowing from the furnaces of the Buchenwald concentration camp to the nearby city of Weimar during National Socialism. The windmill can therefore also be understood as a mute witness of history.

Philip Taaffe

Born 1955 in Elizabeth, USA, lives and works in New York City, USA.

Philip Taaffe has allowed his organic imagery to flourish over the years. Dealing initially with motifs from classical and ancient cultures as well as with ornament, Taaffe has drawn upon nature as a source of inspiration for his art since the 1990s. Yet the artist does not go into nature in search of his motifs, consulting rather his private library. Taaffe is a passionate collector of rare books and nineteenth-century botanic literature. He consults his volumes for exciting forms and motifs suitable for his artworks. Making use of reproduction techniques, he produces cardboard stencils, screenprints, or dye-transfer prints. His methods of defamiliarization still respect the origins of his sources. His pictures are based on the employment of an entire spectrum of often elaborate printing processes and accumulated collages. For his pictures, Taaffe also makes use of plant forms he creates from photographs of found and pressed plants, which he then transforms for his art. The final images are obtained through the juxtaposition of various elements and the application of translucent colors. Rather than concrete depictions, his pictures are pictorial fictions open to interpretation. The selection on view here contains some of Taaffe's best-known works. They are pictorial invitations to the artist's jungle of appropriated and abstract forms.

Martyr Group

Martyr Group is an early collage by Philip Taaffe. In a dump he found two types of shooting targets commonly used for police training. The first type shows a schematic representation of the human upper body, the individual segments of which are marked by combinations of a letter and number, whereas the other type is an ordinary circular target composed of numbered concentric circles. Taaffe has mounted the totem-like "body targets" on the canvas in such a way that they overlap, with five to six figures in each of the five staggered rows. This arrangement resembles that of a conventional group photograph of people seated in a grandstand. The circular targets have been placed behind the heads of the first and last rows. Their yellow color intensifies the impression of halos.

Sixteenth-century fresco paintings in Romanian monasteries, with legions of saints looking out at us, served as an inspiration for this work. In Taaffe's depiction, however, the figures are faceless or turn their backs on us. Is this the picture of an execution? Not of a specific one, but maybe of one that is happening now, at this moment, or of one that happens every day? Or could the eponymous martyrs be marching toward death voluntarily, in an orderly manner? The work dates from the beginning of the AIDS pandemic and can therefore also be associated with the first victims of the then surely fatal disease.

Megapolis

With its hypnotizing, pulsating rhythms and patterns, *Megapolis* evokes the conflict between order and chaos in a large metropolis. The vertical snake-like shapes dominating the composition call to mind wooden African sculptures. They are reused print fragments the artist resorts to as models, outlining them on the paper. In the background of *Megapolis* we see numerous black spirals, a motif the artist frequently uses. They are traced iron ornaments the artist found on the island of Capri.

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Megapolis was created in a lengthy and meticulously planned process. It almost seems as if the sepia colored columns in the picture, which was created in 1996 for an exhibition at the Vienna Secession, were dancing a Viennese waltz.

We Are Not Afraid und Quadro Vesuviano

In the 1980s, Philip Taaffe referred to the exponents of Abstract Expressionism in many of his works. At the time of their making, these homages were interpreted as ironic approaches to these artists' legacies. But Taaffe declared that he had created them as ritual reenactments to internalize works of art he loved. At the same time, he thus placed himself within this great tradition.

His monoprint and collage *Quadro Vesuviano* is remarkably similar to Clyfford Still's painting *PH-161* from 1954. Both pictures feature fiery red and smoky black tones. *We Are Not Afraid* is based on Barnett Newman's painting *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue II*. Taaffe's work shows the same colors, and its dimensions are identical. In contrast to Newman's work, his vertical lines are not painted but realized as lino prints. "To take the Newman zip and handle it almost physically, yet illusionistically too, was something I needed to see at that time," Taaffe said.

Barnett Newman's series *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue*, which he created between 1966 and 1970, illustrates the emancipation of color. The motif is color alone. Not representing anything, it only expresses itself. As the title suggests, these pictures, due to their overwhelming size and bold application of color, indeed have an almost intimidating impact. This is emphasized by the bright red color fields dominating the canvases—an effect intensified by the twisted cords and spirals.

Artificial Paradise (Loculus) /Artificial Paradise (Tumulus)

The imposing pair of *Artificial Paradise (Loculus)* and *Artificial Paradise (Tumulus)* takes its titles from the book *Artificial Paradises* by the French Symbolist poet Charles Baudelaire, which was published in 1860. Baudelaire described the influence of opium und cannabis in what could be called a mixture of personal account, manual, and scientific analysis. Most of all, however, the text makes a case in favor of intoxication, for humankind's ability and willingness to enter exceptional states of mind and sensory perception. According to Baudelaire, the consumers of drugs would not encounter miraculous happenings but experience nature in an augmented form, with everything seen as if through a magnifying glass. We experience Philip Taaffe's works in a similar way. They result from a sense of amazement about the natural world.

Terry Winters

Born 1949 in New York City, USA, where he also lives and works.

Winters' abstract pictorial worlds present an amazing variety of organic and geometric shapes. His sense of color and of diverse forms and their structures is unique. Our exhibition illustrates this broad spectrum of structures and forms. The artist draws upon the cycles of natural history and aesthetic idiosyncrasies for inspiration. He is driven by the desire to find exciting forms and patterns in nature and translates them into paintings, prints, and drawings. The drop-like shapes in the foreground of his work *Lumen*, for example, are reminiscent of the natural model of the cocoon.

Winters' ever-evolving abstract pictorial language juxtaposes the both clear and obscure forms of interior and exterior natural phenomena, which are both clear and obscure. His multilayered oil paintings exhibit microcosms and their structures, which are normally not visible to the naked eye. The visual worlds represented here are rather found under the microscope than by looking out the window. In order to achieve this, Winters has spent years or even decades researching into pictorial structures as they exist—more or less archetypically—in various scientific images. This is visual research into the structure of the cosmos as a whole and into its infinitesimal details. Studying a growing plant under the microscope holds great potential for Winters' art. These very crystalline structures imbue the work *Phase Plane Portrait*, which is on view here, with a powerful tension. Winters is interested in nature's processes of transformation in general. Nevertheless, his pictures do not document or illustrate natural phenomena but rather open up new worlds of fiction, their images playing with the possibility of being real.