



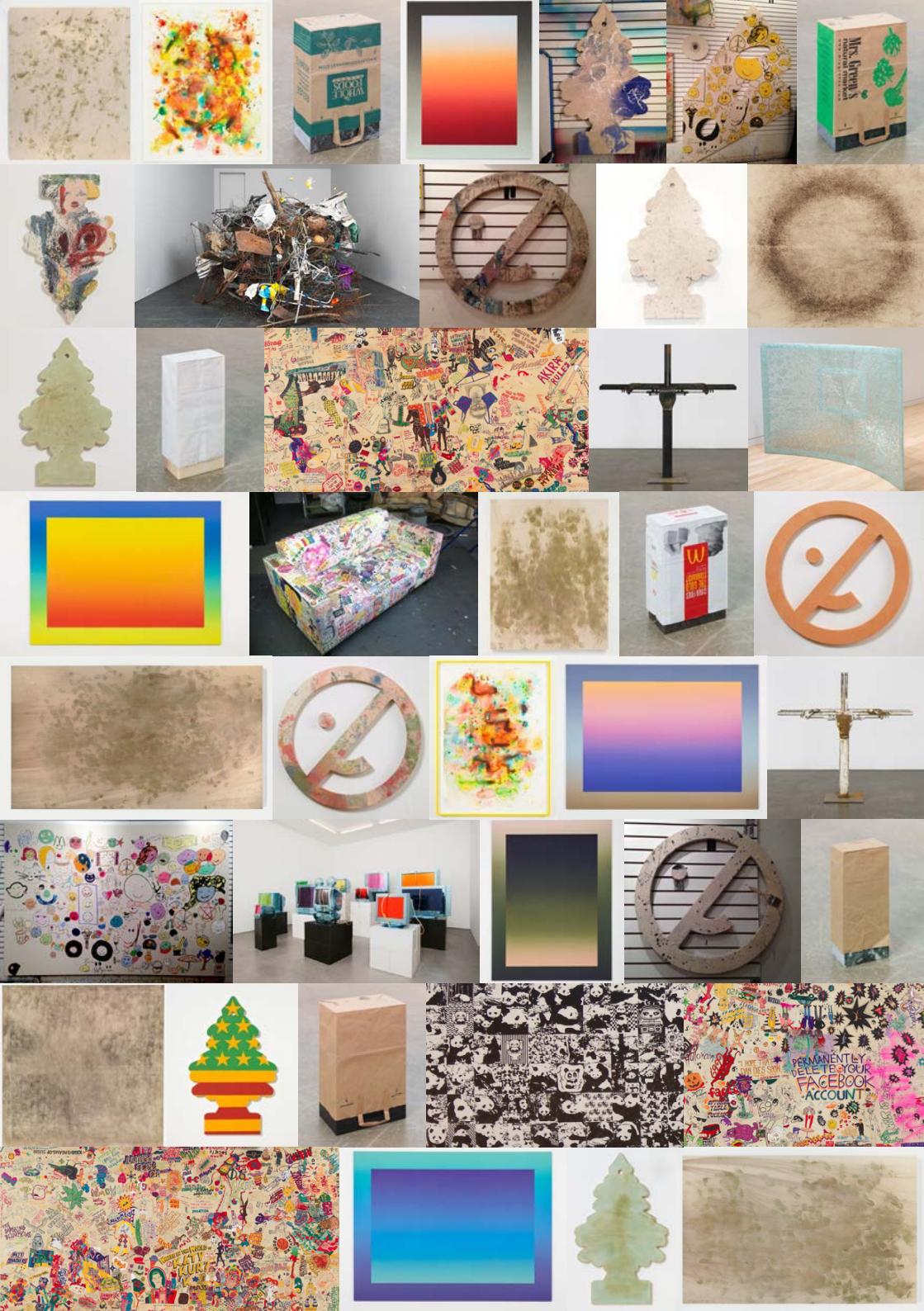
MUSEUM
DHONDT-DHAENENS

VIEW

2014 #01

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THREE BLIND MICE

DAN COLEN
NATE LOWMAN
ROB PRUITT

THREE BLIND MICE

Maria Nicole Terlizese

Deze tentoonstelling presenteert drie kunstenaars van verschillende leeftijd, elk met hun eigen achtergrond, geworteld in een verschillende werkelijkheid, maar met een vergelijkbare artistieke houding: Nate Lowman (°1979), Dan Colen (°1979) en Rob Pruitt (°1964). Deze drie kunstenaars wonen en werken allen in New York. Als zonen van de meesters van de Amerikaanse kunst, getuigen elk van deze kunstenaars van een connectie met de pop art, van het overnemen van elementen uit het minimalisme, van invloeden van *Marcel Duchamp*, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, *Richard Prince*, *Mark Rothko* en *Andy Warhol*, hoewel hun kunst tegelijk duidelijk hedendaags is. Zij richten zich, elementen overnemend vanuit verschillende lagen van de werkelijkheid, resoluut op het nu, en zonder de lessen te vergeten, maken zij desalniettemin aanspraak op de erfenis van het verleden. Samen vertegenwoordigen deze kunstenaars een interessant perspectief op de Amerikaanse hedendaagse kunst en samenleving.

Dan Colen is een "downtown" New Yorker, wat duidelijk blijkt uit zijn artistieke attitude en zijn gebruik van graffiti en materialen zoals kauwgom of geplette bloemen. Voor de berucht geworden sculptuur *Untitled (Vete Al Diablo)* (2006) bekladde hij een menhir-achtige steen met graffiti en vogelpoep, zo een monument creërend voor de gemarginaliseerde achterbuurten van de grootstad. Eén van de voor Dan Colen belangrijkste concepten is de notie van "Everything and Nothing" (*Alles of Niets*), een soort dualisme dat hij in zijn leven altijd aanwezig acht, waarbij het ene wordt gezien als tegengesteld en toch gelijk aan het andere; denk bijvoorbeeld aan de manier waarop iemand iets tracht te doorgronden, en daarbij zowel zin als onzin gaat betrekken in het denkproces.

Nate Lowman houdt van taal; zijn werk inspireert zich op elementen uit de beeldtaal van de pop art, op politiek wangedrag, op de vernietiging van het milieu, op allerlei mogelijke wreedheden, op massaconsumptie. Hij beschrijft de Amerikaanse samenleving

met sarcasme en donkere humor. Nate Lowman reflecteert over de beroemdheid-cultus in Amerika, over de macht van wapens en de cultuur van het geweld, met haar kogelgaten en plaatsen van delict. Hij heeft het over wreedheid en banaliteit en een gevoel van onrechtvaardigheid, maar altijd met humorvolle ironie.

Rob Pruitt slaagt er door middel van een eclectische benadering – en gebruik makend van ironie, visuele impact en dubbelzinnigheid – het publiek te shockeren. Een aantal van zijn bekendere werken zijn het *Cocaine buffet*, de glitter pandaschilderijen, de dinosaurussen, *101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself*. Zijn concept heeft te maken met de notie dat iedereen kunst kan maken, dat er niets mysterieus aan is, dat kunst toegankelijk is; “kunst gaat echt enkel over het ontwikkelen van een gevoeligheid voor je omgeving en het leveren van commentaar over de wereld waarin je leeft op een mooie manier”. Hij reikt ons een uitgangspunt aan dat we kunnen ontdekken en verder uitwerken.

Het is één van de doeleinden van de tentoonstelling om oudere en nieuwe werken met elkaar in dialoog te laten treden, om een progressieve lijn van creativiteit te presenteren, om duidelijk te maken hoe het werk van deze kunstenaars doorheen de tijd evolueert en hoe alles voortdurend verandert. Dit is de reden waarom de werken van de kunstenaars niet worden gepresenteerd als individuele stukken, maar eerder als series.

Elke kunstenaar heeft een specifieke eigenheid; zelfs als ze een gemeenschappelijke artistieke houding delen, gaat hun werk in verschillende richtingen. Hier en daar vallen overeenkomsten te bespeuren, maar de verschillen tussen hen zijn nog duidelijker. Hun benadering van pop art, hun ironie, de invloeden van het minimalisme, het concept van “alles en niets”, en vooral de beeldtalen die ze hebben ontwikkeld, zijn duidelijk eigen.

Het tentoonstellingsproject in Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens tracht een fysieke emotie op te wekken. Ze willen een totale ervaring creëren: de ruimte wordt een allesomvattende installatie. Het werk van elke kunstenaar wordt gepresenteerd in een directe dialoog met dat van anderen; bezoekers kunnen, in de opeenvolgende ruimtes, de werken vergelijken, proeven van de verschillen en de overeenkomsten en ervaren wat hen verbindt en wat hen onderscheidt.

THREE BLIND MICE

Maria Nicole Terlizze

This exhibition presents three artists of different age, each with their own background rooted in different realities, but with a similar artistic attitude: Nate Lowman (°1979), Dan Colen (°1979) and Rob Pruitt (°1964). All three artists are working and living in New York.

As sons of the masters of American art, each of these artists evidences a connection to pop art, elements of minimalism, and influences of *Marcel Duchamp*, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, *Richard Prince*, *Mark Rothko*, and *Andy Warhol*, yet their art is distinctly new. Taking cues from various components of reality, they are focused on the now, and without forgetting the lessons, they nonetheless claim the legacy of the past. Together, these artists represent an interesting perspective on American contemporary art and society.

Dan Colen is a downtown New Yorker, which is clearly evidenced in his approach and his use of graffiti and materials such as chewing gum and smashed flowers. For the famous sculpture *Untitled (Vete al Diablo)* (2006), he used graffiti and dropped bird shit on a big menhir-like rock, creating, in this way, a suburban wasteland monument. One of Dan Colen's key concepts is the notion of "Everything and Nothing", a kind of dualism that is always present in his life, wherein the one is seen as opposite and yet equal to the other, much in the way both sense and nonsense are involved in one's process of trying to make sense.

Nate Lowman loves language; his work takes its cues from the pop art, from political misconduct, from environmental destruction, from every possible atrocity, from mass consumption. He describes American society with sarcasm and dark humour. Nate Lowman meditates on the cult of celebrity in America, on the power of weapons and the culture of violence, with its bullet holes and crime scenes. He talks about cruelty and banality and a sense of injustice, but always with smiling irony.

Rob Pruitt manages, through his eclectic approach, to shock the public, using irony, visual impact and ambivalence. Some of his famous works include *The Cocaine buffet*, the glitter panda paintings, the dinosaurs and *101 Art Ideas You Can do Yourself*. His concept is that anybody can make art, that there is nothing mysterious to it, that art is accessible; "art is really just about developing a sensitivity to your environment and making comments about the world you're living in in a beautiful way." He provides us with a starting point that we can explore and expand upon.

One of the purposes of this exhibition is to bring into dialogue older and new works, to present a progressive line of creativity, make clear how their work evolves over time and how everything permanently changes. This is why the works of the artists are not shown as individual pieces but rather as series, representing a particular period of life, illustrating a particular way of looking at reality.

Every artist is different; even if they share a common artistic attitude, their work takes them in different directions. It is possible to notice similarities, yet the differences between them are even more apparent. Their approach to pop art, their irony, the minimal influences, the concept of "everything and nothing", and the languages they have developed, are distinctly their own.

The exhibition projects in Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens seek to generate a physical emotion. They aim to create a total experience: the space becomes an all-encompassing installation. The work of each artist is presented in direct dialogue with that of others; from one room to the next, visitors can compare works and taste the differences and similarities between them. Paintings, sculptures and installations are brought together so as to involve the public in a complete art experience.

THREE BLIND MICE

Maria Nicole Terlizze

Cette exposition présente trois artistes d'âges différents, ayant chacun leur propre univers, enracinés dans une réalité différente, mais avec une attitude artistique comparable: Nate Lowman (né en 1979), Dan Colen (né en 1979) et Rob Pruitt (né en 1964). Ces trois artistes vivent et travaillent à New York.

En tant que fils spirituels des maîtres de l'art américain, ces trois artistes témoignent d'une filiation avec le pop art, de l'emprunt d'éléments au minimalisme, des influences de *Marcel Duchamp*, *Jean-Michel Basquiat*, *Richard Prince*, *Mark Rothko*, et *Andy Warhol*, bien que leur art soit manifestement neuf. Empruntant des éléments à différentes couches de la réalité, ils visent résolument le présent, mais font néanmoins appel à l'héritage du passé en refusant d'en oublier les enseignements. Ensemble, ces trois artistes représentent une perspective intéressante sur l'art contemporain américain et sur la société américaine.

Dan Colen est un New-Yorkais « downtown », ce qui se reflète clairement dans son attitude artistique et dans son utilisation du graffiti et de matériaux comme le chewing-gum et les fleurs écrasées. Pour la sculpture devenue célèbre qu'il a présentée à la biennale Whitney de New York, il a recouvert une pierre en forme de menhir de graffitis et de fientes d'oiseau, créant ainsi un monument pour les quartiers défavorisés marginalisés de la métropole. Un des concepts les plus importants pour Dan Colen est la notion de « Everything and Nothing » (Tout ou rien), une sorte de dualité qu'il considère toujours comme présente dans sa vie et à travers laquelle une chose est vue comme le contraire, mais aussi comme l'égal d'une autre. Pensons, par exemple, à la manière dont quelqu'un tente de pénétrer quelque chose en insufflant tant du sens que de l'absurdité dans le processus mental.

Nate Lowman aime le langage. Son œuvre s'inspire d'éléments du langage pictural du pop art, de l'inconduite politique, de la destruction de l'environnement, de toutes les

cruautés possibles, de la consommation de masse. Il décrit la société américaine avec sarcasme et humour noir. Nate Lowman réfléchit au culte de la célébrité en Amérique, à la puissance des armes et à la culture de la violence, avec ses impacts de balle et ses scènes de crime. Il traite de la cruauté, de la banalité et d'un sentiment d'injustice, mais toujours avec une ironie empreinte d'humour.

Rob Pruitt réussit à choquer le public par le recours à une approche éclectique et en maniant l'ironie, l'impact visuel et l'ambiguïté. Certaines de ses œuvres les plus connues sont le *Cocaïne buffet*, les portraits de pandas pailletés, les dinosaures, *101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself*. Son concept a trait à la notion selon laquelle chacun peut faire de l'art, qu'il n'y a rien de mystérieux à cet égard, que l'art est accessible. « L'art ne concerne vraiment que le développement d'une sensibilité pour votre entourage et la formulation de belle manière de commentaires sur le monde dans lequel vous vivez ». Il nous donne un point de départ que nous pouvons découvrir et approfondir.

Un des objectifs de cette exposition est de faire dialoguer des œuvres anciennes et plus récentes afin de présenter une ligne progressive de créativité pour clarifier la manière dont l'œuvre de ces artistes évolue dans le temps et dont tout change continuellement. C'est pour cette raison que les œuvres des artistes ne sont pas présentées individuellement, mais plutôt comme des séries qui présentent une période de vie donnée ou une manière d'illustrer le regard porté sur la réalité.

Tous les artistes ont une singularité qui leur est propre. Même s'ils partagent une attitude artistique commune, leurs œuvres empruntent des directions différentes. On peut y déceler des convergences, mais les différences entre elles sont encore plus manifestes. Leur approche du pop art, leur ironie, les influences du minimalisme, le concept du « tout ou rien » et, surtout, les langages picturaux qu'ils ont développés sont clairement propres à chacun d'entre eux.

Un projet d'exposition au Musée Dhondt-Dhaenens tente de susciter une émotion physique, de créer une expérience intégrale. L'espace est une installation globale. L'œuvre de chaque artiste est présentée en dialogue direct avec celle des autres. Dans les espaces successifs, les visiteurs peuvent comparer les œuvres et déceler les convergences et les différences, expérimenter ce qui les unit et ce qui les différencie.





INTERVIEW WITH DAN COLEN

by Maurizio Cattelan

Dan Colen: Would you like me to tell you a story of knifey spooney?

Maurizio Cattelan: *What?*

DC: Uh, you know. You wanna hear a story about knifey-spooney? Uhhh, like right hand-left hand?

MC: *I don't understand. Do you speak any Italian? Any Spanish maybe?*

DC: You know, smoochie, smoochey?

MC: *What are you talking about?*

DC: Good and evil! Sense and nonsense! Can I tell you something about violence?

MC: *Yeah, yeah, sure, whatever. Let me ask you some questions first. Then you can tell me about anything you want. Do you have problems with the art world?*

DC: Sure.

MC: *What are they?*

DC: There are so many contradictions that I encourage, or at least by doing what I am a... part of. So to start listing my problems or complaining about the life I live or world I live that life in. Well, it seems

silly. It seems like it would only be adding fuel to the raging fire of bullshit.

MC: *Well, give me an example of something you wouldn't complain about or something that doesn't bother you.*

DC: You could be one of them.

MC: *Come on. Seriously, though?*

DC: No seriously: you're a pretty big problem.

MC: *Ok. Why's that?*

DC: I don't get your shtick about: if people stopped asking you to make work, you'd stop making it. That ties in well with more general problems I have, like misguided assumptions and jaded ambitions.

MC: *Could you collaborate on that?*

DC: Do you mean elaborate?

MC: *Yes. I'm sorry. Please?*

DC: Not really.

MC: *Well, how does that make you feel? Does it make you want to get involved in redirecting things? Does it make you want to jump ship?*

DC: No, neither.

MC: *Well, does it inspire you?*

Interview for Muse Magazine by Maurizio Cattelan

DC: I'm sure it does have an effect on me. But specifically I'm not sure how so. In general I feel my time and energies are best spent doing what I do. Just pursuing my art.

MC: *You don't feel responsible in engaging these problems you mentioned?*

DC: Not really. Sometimes I question my decisions and the ways that I choose to direct my energies. Doubt is constant. I question my work, the context I put it in or allow it to be placed in. I question the world I exist within, the people I do business with, the people I work with, I question everything I'm surrounded by, the people I talk to, the people I do or don't interview with. I think about how much money we're surrounded by. About how unfair and unequal the world is. If there was something I'd want to devote my energy to it would definitely not be the art world.

Questioning the legitimacy of what I do is a constant part of my practice. But... well, here I am in my studio talking to you... fuck. Still, maybe not one of my surest moments.

MC: *It's funny you say that. I have an idea for a tattoo on my lower back, just above my butt crack that would say, "But, well, here I am in my studio talking*

to you." But hearing you say it makes me question if the idea is as original as I had thought it to be. It was part of an art project I planned.

DC: I wouldn't second-guess it now. It's a different thing for you, for many reasons.

MC: *How do you mean?*

DC: For starters, you're always talking about how you operate without a studio. I couldn't operate without one.

MC: *Yeah, maybe you're right. You know those Douglas Gordon photos of the tattoos he's gotten? Do you think they're real?*

DC: I think so. But it might be more appropriate for you to get some rub on tattoos. You could give them away at art fairs or some shit.

MC: *Yeah. I'll figure it out. Do you have any tattoos?*

DC: No.

MC: *What's that on your shoulder? Is that a grasshopper?*

DC: It's nothing.

MC: *It looks like a grasshopper.*

DC: It's Jiminy Cricket. You know, Pinocchio's conscience?

MC: *Yeah, yeah. Don't you make paintings of Geppetto's worktable?*

DC: Yeah, that's one right there. But there's no real relationship.

MC: *I see a relationship. What about any of your other tattoos? Do any of them have a more direct connection with your work?*

DC: I don't have any others.

MC: *What about those on your arm?*

DC: Do we really have to talk about this?

MC: *Yes. I'd like to.*

DC: Uh, I guess there's one that has more to do with my work than any others. But just this moment, right after you asked me, my first thought was questioning the possibility that the longer it is written on my body, the less I spend time thinking about it... but there may be no truth to that at all. Either way, the conclusions I could make are endless and smothered in contradiction.

MC: *What do you mean by that?*

DC: I'm sorry. I think my brain just blew a fuse. I just thought I was involved in a totally different conversation. One that has already happened, but not like that. Differently...? What were we just talking about?

MC: *Me fucking your mamma! No, just kidding.*

DC: Oh man! I don't think I can do this any longer. Can we finish this over e-mail? Better yet, send one of those guys that impersonate you over.

MC: *No, please. I'm sorry.*

DC: I really need a break.

MC: *Ok, I will come back tomorrow at the same time, ok?*

DC: Sure, whatever. Later alligator.

[Next day Maurizio comes back to Dan's studio, but two hours early.]

DC: What are you doing here so early?

MC: *I'm sorry. I was so excited to finish the interview, and I wanted to show you the tattoo. I'm just coming from the tattoo shop!*

DC: Why are you wearing a fake glue-on mustache?

MC: *What do you think of the tattoo?*

DC: Looks cool.

MC: *Looks awesome! Doesn't it look awesome?*

DC: Yeah, it's great. Is that the first one you've gotten?

MC: *Uh, well, I have this other one from high school, but...*

DC: What is it?

MC: *I had a pretty big Guns N' Roses phase in the 80s. It's kind of hidden under my pubes. Right above my dick to my right is a picture of a pistol and on the left a rose. I don't know how I feel about it anymore. Anyways now that I've shown you mine you've gotta show me yours. What does that say on your arm?*

Interview for Muse Magazine by Maurizio Cattelan



DC: That's what I was trying to tell you about when I first came over.

MC: *What do you mean?*

DC: My tattoo: Everything & Nothing. The other day I asked if I could tell you story about right hand-left hand.

MC: *I don't understand.*

DC: It's just a reminder that nothing and everything are the same and opposite. That everything is equal. That all things deserve the same amount of attention or consideration.

MC: *Yeah, yeah. I think a lot about that too. Let's pose a question to you. Do you know how many a people a year are crushed to dead by falling meteors?*

DC: Uh...

MC: *Never mind. The number is of no significance to the point I am making... why are these, no why now were these people important? No, NO, why is it these people who were never so important have become so?*

DC: I don't think I get what your question is.

MC: *I'm sorry. I'm having trouble, it's my English. Well it's important for you to know that these people, although they no longer exist, will always remain extremely important. But, it distracts me...what people have been important to you?*

DC: Important?

MC: *Important! Yes, who has been important to you lately?*

DC: Do you mean like family and friends?

MC: *No, no! Well, yes. But what I mean is... well, you see, lately I've been thinking about Modigliani! Are you familiar with his work?*

Well, I've been thinking a lot about him. I have so many curiosities about his paintings... as well as his person.

DC: He's a really great painter.

MC: *Have you ever noticed how rarely he paints any detail inside the eye? And on the rare occasion he does, he does so in the most minimal ways. On top of that the shape of the eyes often occur to me as slightly Asian. He's someone I really wish I'd had the opportunity to interview.*

DC: You could just pretend.

MC: *How do you mean? Pretend?*

DC: Like, when I was applying to college, I had to create a fake interview with an artist of my choosing. I did Egon Schiele. My father helped. I pretended he was Egon.

MC: *Egon Schiele? Schiele and Modigliani share much in common. It's funny that you chose him.*

DC: Yeah, I guess? They both seemed to like women?

MC: *Just like us!*

Interview for Muse Magazine by Maurizio Cattelan

DC: Really? I thought you... uh, I thought, well what do you think of that idea? To interview Modigliani?

MC: *I don't know if I could pull that off. I find it such a difficult task to think up questions for the interviews I do. Having to come up with the answers as well might be too difficult!*

DC: Why don't I help you? We can finish the interview off pretending I am Modigliani.

MC: *Would you! Oh, but wait, the magazine. The magazine wants me to find out about upcoming shows, what's been on your mind lately. Things like that. Do you mind me asking you a few more things and after that you can help me with Amedeo? I am all about resurrection.*

DC: Me too.

MC: *So, Dan. I heard you've been working on a book for the last two years called "Investment." It sounds a lot like some magazines I've published.*

DC: It's not. Although it does share many similarities with something like Charley or Permanent Food. The book's foundation has no relationship to those magazines, so I think the similarities will helplessly be absorbed or digested in a very different way.

MC: *Do you have a mock-up around?*

DC: Yeah, right over there. You see

that thick blue book above the sink? That's it.

MC: *Yeah. You're working on this with a bunch of your friends, right?*

DC: Yeah, I've had a lot of help. It's kinda been a bit of a hot pancake. But right now Nate [Lowman], Leo [Fitzpatrick], and Aaron [Bondaroff] are all involved and my friend Brendan Dugan is helping me put it all together.

MC: *I heard you were doing a show with Gagosian. How does that make you feel?*

DC: Strange. Weird.

MC: *Not excited?*

DC: There was an excitement in knowing the interest exists.

MC: *But not in actually doing a show?*

DC: I don't know. It's complicated. I am young in the relative scheme of things.

MC: *So why do it?*

DC: I couldn't figure out the right way not to but was able to figure out a way to do it.

MC: *What is it that you figured out?*

DC: He has a space in London, a city I have never done a solo show in, which is the case for most other cities... regardless, it is a shallow, wide space. It seems the kind of space in which most of the people that

experience my work will have done so accidentally, only in passing. I had an idea for a painting that was ideal for this and haven't come across a space with the same possibilities.

MC: *Sounds like The Wrong Gallery.*

DC: It is. Like it. Unfortunately I never was invited to do a piece there, so I'm gonna do it with Larry [Gagosian] and now that I think of it neither option really seems better than the other.

MC: *Didn't you already do a show in Gagosian's Chelsea bathrooms some years ago? What was that all about?*

DC: Someone who worked for Gagosian one night, very late, started talking to me about how important it would be for me to show there and how realistic it was. I was either 25 or 26 at the time, and unlike now I felt I was too young to work with Gagosian anyway. He kept on pushing it. So as a joke I told him although there's not a chance in hell I would hang a painting in their galleries I would be happy to make a painting and hang it in their bathroom. He told me there were 5 bathrooms and almost posed it like a challenge. Anyway, the night soon moved beyond comprehensible words. A few months later I was working on a series of "found paintings". Although I really liked

them, I couldn't imagine a space that seemed appropriate for showing them. Then I remembered the conversation about the bathrooms.

MC: *Do you think that has anything to do you showing with Larry now?*

DC: I don't have a clue. Do you think you can find out for me?

MC: *Hey! I'm giving the interview here. Ok enough about you, actually. Now you are Modigliani.*

Dan [as Modigliani]: Ok. Hi, I'm Amedeo.

MC: *Do you find it difficult to do interviews?*

Dan [as Modigliani]: When someone is interested or looking for failure, it makes the process maybe a more relaxing one. But usually yes.

MC: *Why do you do them?*

Dan [as Modigliani]: Aside from the few moments when talking aloud leads to a new understanding? Without art I can't imagine how I could support myself (much less be able to repay all the people who have helped me along the way). It seems as though talking about my work can help me make more work. The second reason is almost the same as the first: I don't make my work for myself. I hope this interview can reach an audience that my work would not

have otherwise.

MC: *How did you settle on the unique style of your portraits?*

Dan [as Modigliani]: The sitters have the same look to me. Maybe it's because I have the eyes of someone who knows he's going to die, or maybe it's the spirit of the subject. Maybe the subject thinks the same as me? How do I know? I put them out there to try to find out maybe. It's a race.

MC: *Jesus Christ.*

Dan [as Modigliani]: Jiminy Cricket. You don't know right from wrong. Be careful you might get turned into a donkey.

MC: *Do you want to meet up for dinner later?*

Dan [as Modigliani]: Get out of here.

Interview for Muse Magazine by Maurizio Cattelan, 2008

Index Images

p. 8-9: *The Illusion of Life*, 2013 / Installation view / Dimensions variable

p. 10-11 / 14-17: *Tumble Weed Sculpture (detail)*, 2012 / Mixed media, birds / Dimensions variable

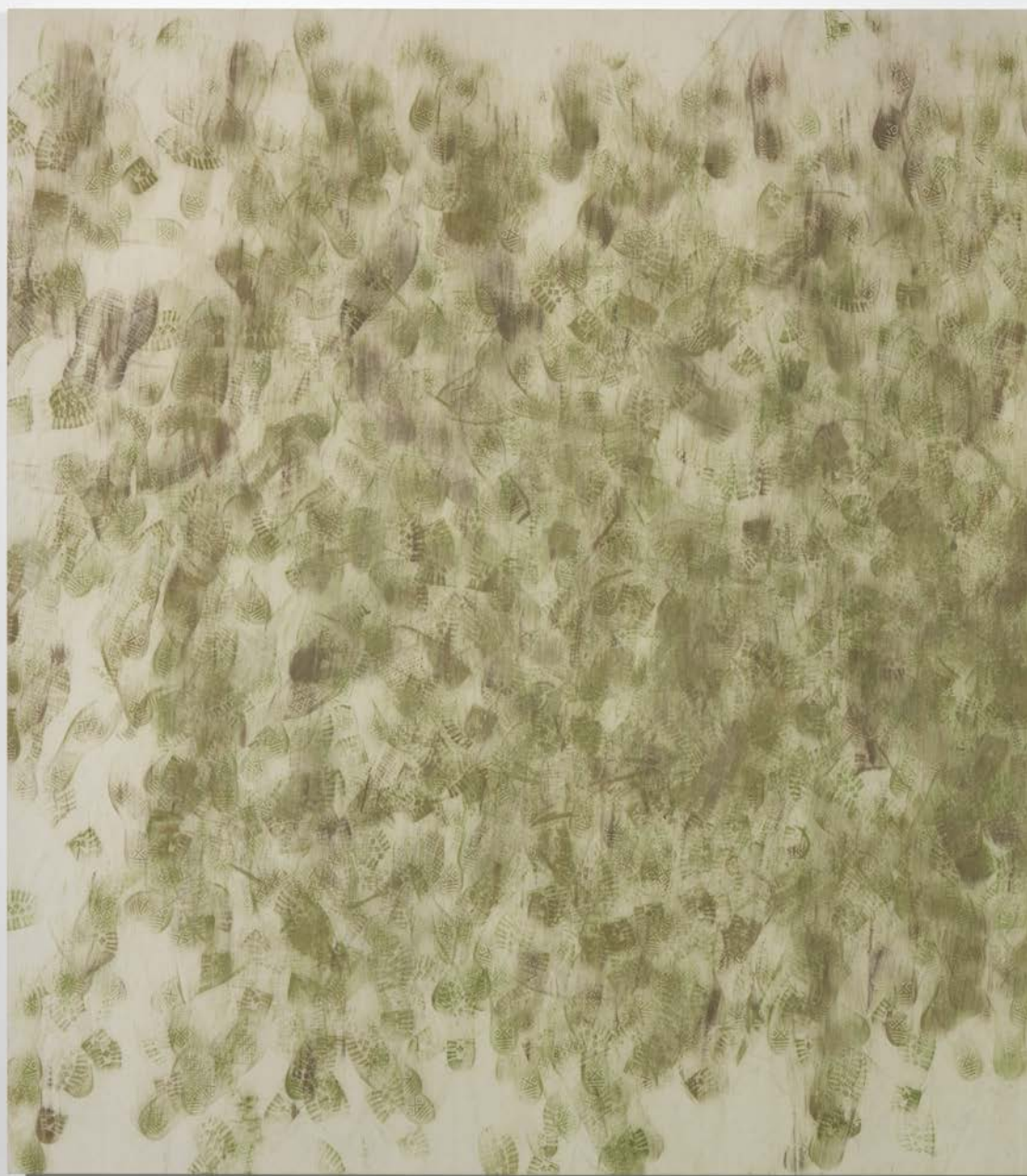
p. 12-13: *Study for Oh Dan!*, 2010 / Drawing on paper / 123 x 164 cm

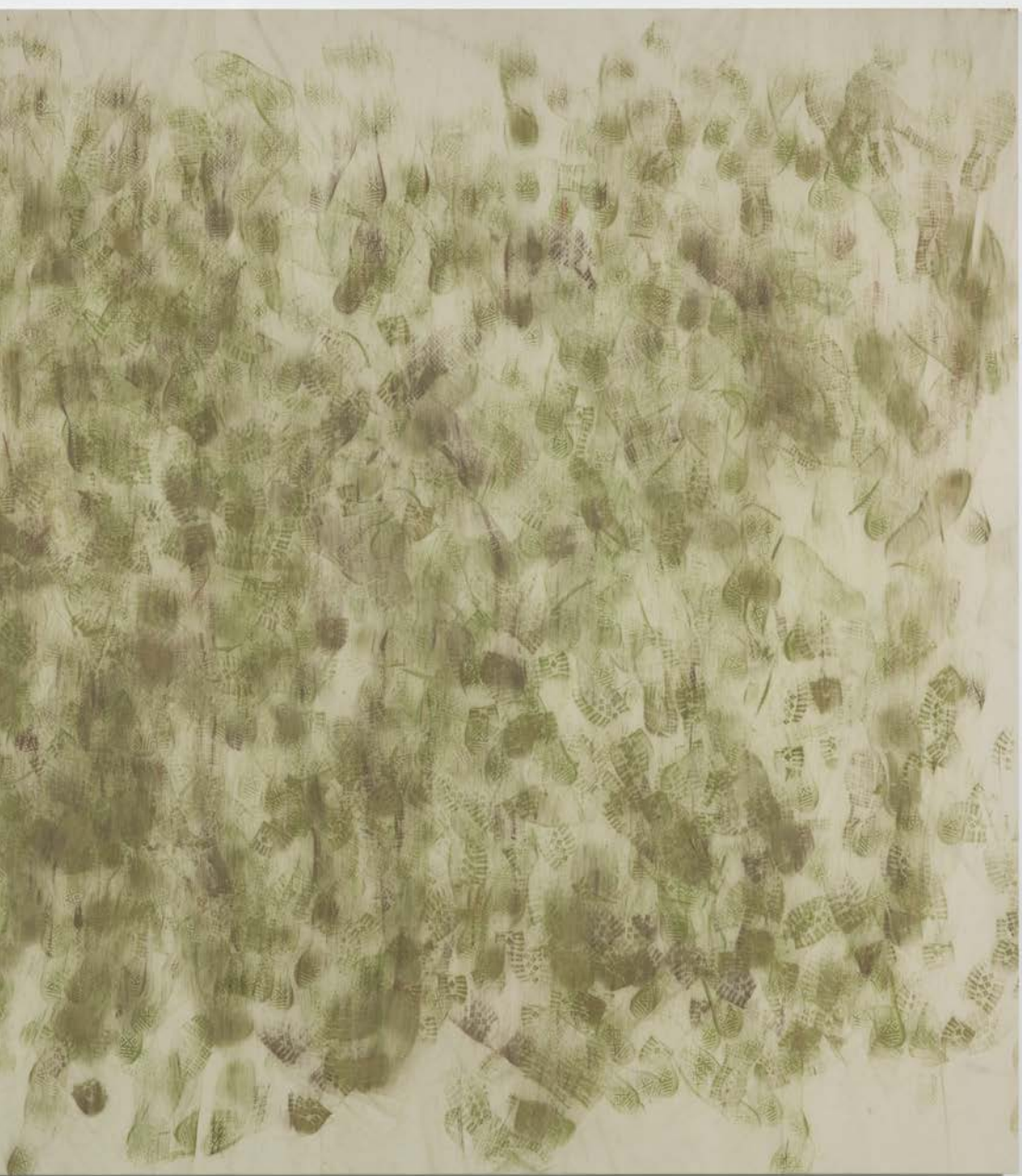
p. 18-19: *Nobody Move. Nobody Get Hurt.*, 2010 / Mixed media on canvas / 325 x 595 cm

p. 20: *Oh Vey! Oh Dan! Oh God! Oh Fuck! Oh Shit!*, 2011 / Enamel on canvas / 121.9 x 91.4 cm

p. 21: *Resurrection of the Dead*, 2013 / Studs on canvas / Ø 127 cm

p. 22-23: *Tumble Weed Sculpture*, 2012 / Mixed media, birds / Dimensions variable





OY VEY!

OH DAN!

OH GOD!

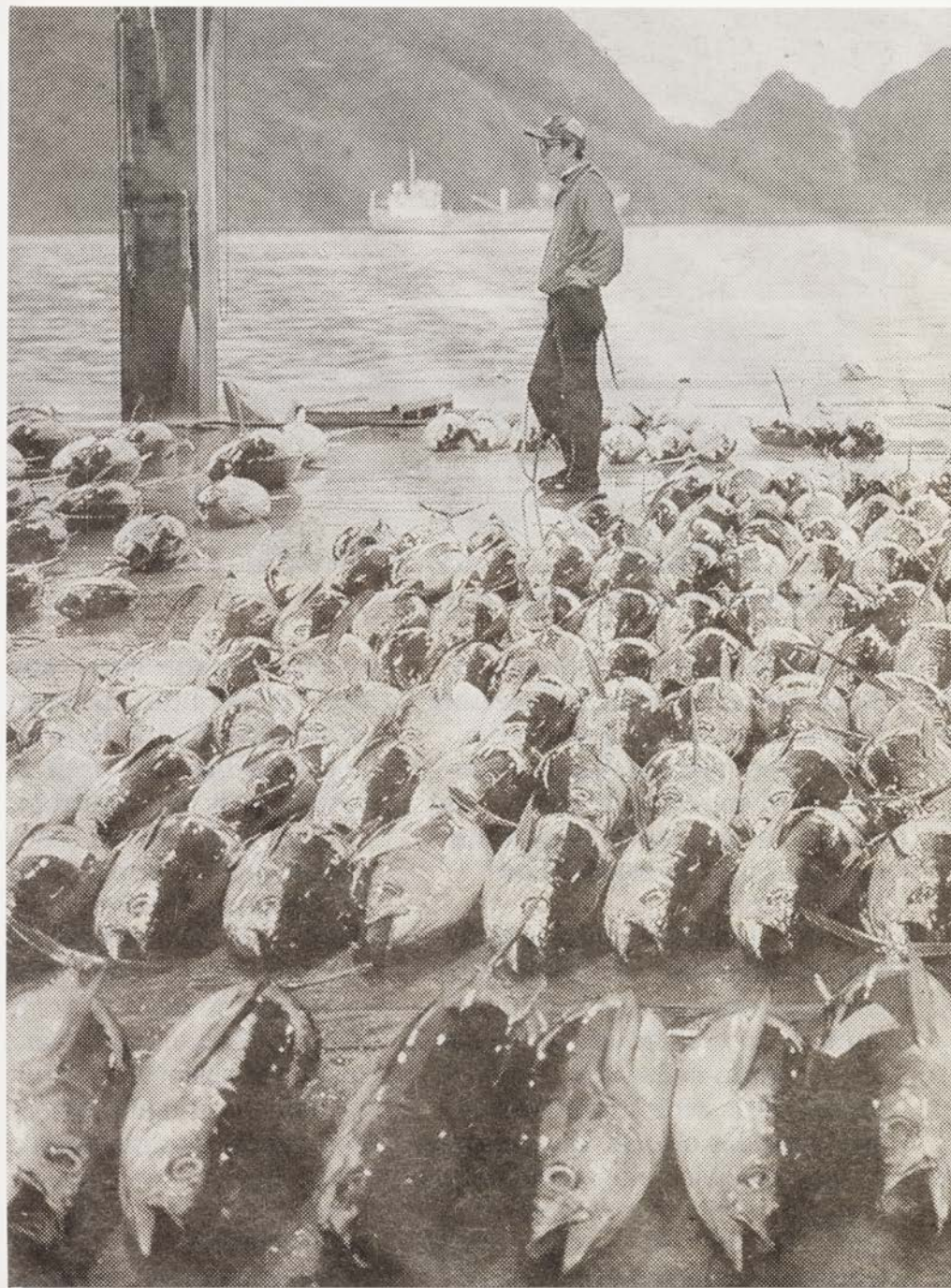
OH FUCK!

OH SHIT!











INTERVIEW WITH NATE LOWMAN

by Leo Fitzpatrick

Leo Fitzpatrick: *What attempt are we on now?*

Nate Lowman: This is the third time, which will be the charm.

LF: *A lot of people probably think it's easy for two friends to get together and do an interview. Is it hard for you to talk about your work?*

NL: Yeah, it's hard. The work is on your mind so much that when someone asks you to talk about it, it's like, "Which part?" I have all these scribbles of smiley faces in my studio that friends do when they come over - yourself included. Try to explain that project to people. I'm afraid the more I talk about it and try to make sense of it in my mind, the more I'll jinx it. My friend Jeff Elrod once saw a painting in his head, and then he couldn't make it. We used to share a studio, and he did these abstract paintings with tape and flat colors, and sometimes he'd be like, "Oh, I know what the painting's going to look like, so I don't need to make it. I know it's a great painting." He had it in his

head, and it was never going to leave, and he got to live with it. I was always like, "Dude, just do it anyway." It was like he didn't want to get bored by his own ideas so he didn't go through with them. I do that too, but think about how ungenerous that is. All you have is this secret, and nobody else gets to share it.

LF: So you think it's more difficult to describe the smiley-face paintings you're doing now as opposed to your more straightforward portraiture or even the bumper-sticker paintings you used to do?

NL: A lot of the images I use are already out there in the public or in the news. I just steal them or photograph them or repaint them, so they've already been talked about, already been consumed. I'm just reopening them to get at their second, third, or fourth meanings. It really comes down to language. I feel like the biggest failure of humans is miscommunication. We can't communicate with each other -

we can fight, we can kill, we can do those things well. Language is the most beautiful and destructive thing because it allows you to express yourself, but it totally confuses everything.

LF: *How does that play into the smiley faces?*

NL: The smiley faces have their beginning in this letter O.J. Simpson wrote when he first got into trouble for the whole Nicole Brown Simpson debacle. He wrote it to his fans as something of a suicide note and signed it "Peace and love, O.J." And the "O" in O.J. has this smiley face in it, and you just know from looking at it how fucking crazy this person is for signing it that way. A lot of people use a smiley face when they write letters. But it's this huge insane compulsion, like "I'm happy! I swear!" I'm not buying it. I don't believe them. Four years ago I made a work based off the O.J. letter, and now I'm making a whole series of them.

LF: *Are you surprised how much different shit you can turn into a smiley face?*

NL: Yeah, you only need to make three marks. But it's fucked-up because I see them everywhere. Every coffee stand has a smiley face - every fucking everything. It's kind

of making me crazy. [both laugh]
It's a good excuse to get to do this project just to get it out of my brain. There are so many different desires that make you execute an artwork. It's nice now that I can go down the road of obsessing over this smiley-face bullshit so maybe I can get free from it and think about something else - it's so banal and yet so crazy!

LF: *You've also curated a few shows, including "The Station" show with Shamim M. Momin in Miami during Art Basel last December. Do you like taking a break from being the artist and turning your attention to other artists?*

NL: Yeah, it's one of my biggest interests, whether it's collaborating with other artists or curating shows. I'm really interested in the difference between selfishness and generosity. It confuses me to no end because sometimes it all just feels like pure indulgence on my part. People have these weird ideas about artists being romantic, generous people, and sometimes I feel like an asshole, a selfish kid, a brat, the lucky one, because I get to do this and it's how I make my living. But other times I do find it generous. I think of other artists as generous when I get inspired by their work. That's why I like curating.





You don't want to take someone else's art and have your way with it. You've got to be respectful of them.

LF: *You grew up in Idyllwild, California, a town in the mountains above Palm Springs, and your dad ran a nonprofit art school there. So when you were little you had already seen all of the fund-raising it took to keep the arts alive. Was that a good introduction for your own career?*

NL: My dad was getting money for the school, running the whole operation by the seat of his pants, and he didn't make it my problem. By the time I realized how the school functioned and what he did to keep it alive and what he and my mom had to do to put food on the table, I had already moved to New York. But they really supported me doing my own thing. When I was really little I got to spaz out. I would just, like, sit around listening to Sonic Youth and making crazy paintings. It was awesome.

LF: *Your parents encouraged that?*

NL: Yes. I don't even know if I'm that talented - I can't really draw - but I had a lot of access to these things. I also played basketball, but I'm slow and short. It was cool to have things that I liked to do. Anyway, you need to keep your kids busy.

LF: *Did you have television growing up?*

NL: Barely, because my town was really small and in the woods. We had terrible reception.

LF: *My mom would do this amazing thing that I thought sucked at the time. In the winter we would have cable, and in the summer, the minute it started getting warmer, she would get rid of it, 'cause she hated us sitting around watching television.*

NL: She needed some kind of privacy or quiet time to get you out of the house.

LF: *Yeah. That's why when I was young and I discovered skating, it was the perfect thing. I would just go skateboarding every day, and my mom wasn't around to discipline me at all. I could fucking do whatever I wanted until about midnight or something, and then I had to go home. Skateboarding really changed everything in my life - I didn't give a shit about TV, I didn't give a shit about movies, I only cared about music because it was part of the skateboarding culture. I met all these different kids from all these different walks of life, and I don't think if my mom had let us sit around watching TV I would ever have been into skating. Then who knows? I would be, like, working at a bank somewhere. Maybe I would have*

graduated high school. [laughs]

NL: We did have a skate shop for a little while in my town, and we were psyched about that. I had a launch ramp, but I just kept busting my head open. It was woodsy there, so you couldn't skate a lot of places.

LF: You just need a gas station or something with a curb.

NL: People weren't super-into kids lurking around skateboarding.

LF: I don't think they ever are.

NL: Which is a good thing because it makes you go find your secret spots, and learn that an empty warehouse can be something more than a real estate prospect or a sad, empty warehouse.

LF: Yeah. And I think it's also great that it teaches you to question authority. Did you ever feel, as a kid growing up in the environment that you did, that in a weird way you almost wanted to rebel and have a normal childhood?

NL: Not really. I feel like I grew up normal, in a small-town normal kind of way. We had to drive down a mountain to Palm Springs if we wanted to go to the mall, and that was interesting for, like, five seconds when I was in sixth grade, but I was never really around the suburbs much. And by the time I spent any

time there they freaked me the fuck out, dude. I really was intrigued by cities, like L.A.


LF: I grew up in middle-class suburbia - New Jersey is one big fucking mall. But at least where I grew up there was a little diversity, a little character. It's not like these towns now in Arizona, where they'll open a Wal-Mart and build around it until it eventually becomes a town. Tonight is Friday. When I was 14 on a Friday night I'd hang out at the food court in the mall and try to hit on girls and fail miserably and then go skating until, like, one in the morning or something. And that's Friday night. It doesn't sound too bad now, looking back.

NL: Doesn't it sound more fun than a benefit art auction or some bullshit? Or deejaying a benefit auction?

[laughs]

LF: When I'm not acting, I'm usually deejaying, so my schedule gets completely flipped upside-down where I'm just on a nightlife schedule, and I don't wake up until, like, two o'clock in the afternoon, which means I don't go to bed until, like, four in the morning. It's a really unhealthy lifestyle.

NL: I like working at night, though. I like painting then. The night schedule is a crazy pit I fall into most of the



time, but I do like it because the buzz of normal professionalism has gone away. Even though you're working, you feel like you're playing. Of course since I'm never up in the day, I still have this Con Edison bill in my pocket that I can't mail because I haven't been able to buy a stamp.

Excerpted from an article originally published in Interview magazine, February 2009, Courtesy BMP Media Holdings LLC

Index Images

p. 24-25: *TBT*, 2012 / Inkjet on canvas / 137 x 204 x 4 cm

p. 26-27 / 30-31 / 36-37: *Double Smiley*, 2013 / Oil and alkyd on canvas / 213.4 x 317.5 cm

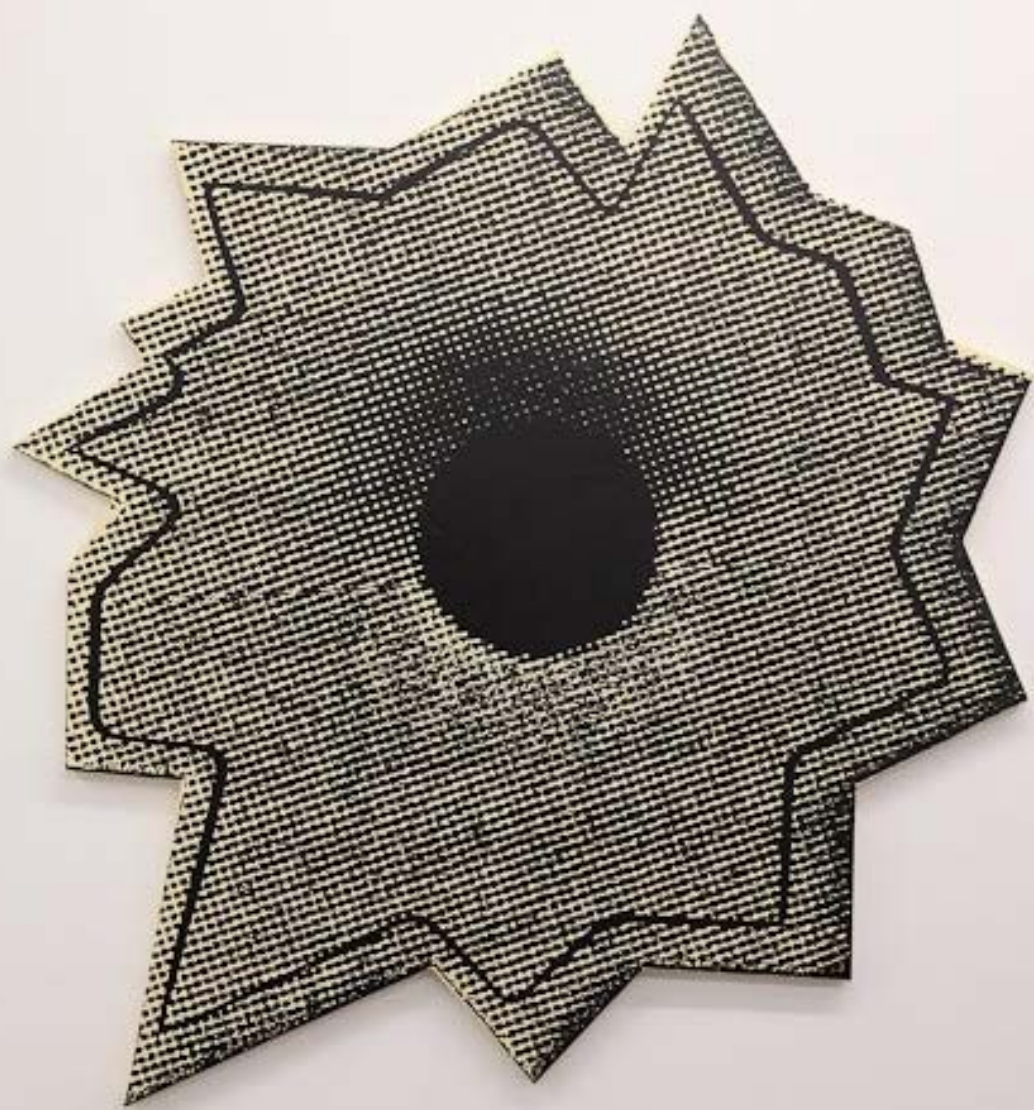
p. 28-29: *Pointers Pointing*, 2012 / Alkyd on canvas

p. 32: *Multicolored tow truck*, 2013 / Steel, paint, rust / 208.3 x 213.4 x 60.9 cm

p. 33: *Yellow Escalade*, 2010 / Silkscreen ink on sharped canvas / 152 x 152 cm

p. 34-35: *Newport Titty*, 2012 / Oil and alkyd on linen / 132.5 x 184.5 x 4 cm













the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million (12% of the population) (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population is ageing, and there is a growing incidence of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector, particularly in the health care industry.

Another reason for the increase is the expansion of the public sector. The government has invested heavily in the public sector, particularly in the health care industry. This has led to the creation of new jobs and the expansion of existing ones. For example, the number of people employed in the health care industry has increased from 10.5 million in 1990 to 12.5 million in 2000.

There are also a number of other factors that have contributed to the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. For example, the government has increased its spending on public services, and there has been a corresponding increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. Additionally, the public sector has become a more attractive employer, particularly for young people, due to its stability and benefits.

Overall, the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is a result of a combination of factors, including the increasing demand for health care services, the expansion of the public sector, and the government's increased spending on public services. This increase has led to a corresponding increase in the number of people employed in the public sector, particularly in the health care industry.

Conclusion

The public sector has become an increasingly important part of the UK economy, and its expansion is likely to continue in the future. This is due to a number of factors, including the increasing demand for health care services, the government's increased spending on public services, and the public sector's status as a more attractive employer.

As the public sector continues to expand, it is important to ensure that it remains efficient and effective. This will require a focus on improving the quality of public services, reducing costs, and increasing transparency. Additionally, it is important to ensure that the public sector remains a fair and attractive employer, particularly for young people.

Overall, the public sector is a vital part of the UK economy, and its expansion is a positive sign for the future. By focusing on improving the quality of public services, reducing costs, and increasing transparency, the public sector can continue to play a vital role in the UK economy.

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the 1990s, the number of people with a university degree has increased in all countries. The increase is most pronounced in the Netherlands, where the number of university graduates has increased from 10% in 1980 to 25% in 1995. In the United States, the number of university graduates has increased from 15% in 1980 to 25% in 1995.

The increase in the number of university graduates has led to a decrease in the number of people with a high school diploma. In the Netherlands, the number of high school graduates has decreased from 85% in 1980 to 75% in 1995. In the United States, the number of high school graduates has decreased from 85% in 1980 to 75% in 1995.

The increase in the number of university graduates and the decrease in the number of high school graduates have led to a decrease in the number of people with a high school diploma. In the Netherlands, the number of high school graduates has decreased from 85% in 1980 to 75% in 1995. In the United States, the number of high school graduates has decreased from 85% in 1980 to 75% in 1995.

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INTERVIEW WITH ROB PRUITT

by James Franco

James Franco: *It's funny that we are doing this on the phone because we both live in New York City.*

Rob Pruitt: I'm in Montauk. Where are you?

JF: I'm in Asheville, North Carolina, near where Black Mountain College used to be. I'm here for a poetry program. F. Scott Fitzgerald used to come and stay at the hotel I'm in because his wife, Zelda, was in a nearby institution. You're in Montauk right now, but I know you used to have a house in upstate New York. I never saw it in person but it was something of an art piece itself, as I understand.


RP: Yeah. We bought a dilapidated old Victorian house that sat high on a hill in this village in upstate New York called Fleischmanns. The town was sort of set up by Charles Fleischmann, the founder of the Fleischmann Company famous for its yeast, and his family had a couple big mansions and paid for the public parks. The town fell into disrepair over the past 80 years, and Jonathan Horowitz and I

thought it would be really cool to buy this very prominent house and set it up as like a public art piece that could possibly help revitalize the village.

JF: I've seen pictures of the inside of the house, with all of the lamps and chandeliers, many of which were bought at Goodwill and made part of the artwork. I was thinking about that in relation to your work with the panda glitter paintings . . .

RP: Well, there is a connection. There is something that runs through all of my art-making practices - at least the paintings and sculptures - which is that they are basically blow-up versions of dining-room-table craft projects. Like, I've made hundreds of paintings out of glitter. I've really enjoyed letting the world know that not everything is so mystified or so regulated to expertise - that you can make something really beautiful with a little ingenuity and some supplies from Michaels [craft shop].

JF: *It's like your 1999 piece 101 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself. One*



aspect of it is a Martha Stewart-type approach, right? That anybody can do it, that art isn't so mysterious and inaccessible.

RP: Yeah, that's exactly it. When I sat down to make the *101 Art Ideas* project, I was really thinking about how my parents didn't have the advantages that I had of going off to college and studying something that is really very impractical or nonessential in many respects: an art-school education. So I was thinking, my parents provided me with this gift of being able to do exactly what I want to do, which is being an artist, so *101 Art Ideas* was my gift to them. It was my attempt to explain to them what it is that I do. Your average person probably will never go into a New York gallery and see what's being made today. It's still a closed-off world. So I wanted to make the statement that art is really a lot more accessible than most people would imagine - that it's not completely inscrutable and esoteric and just for the rich and educated. In the end, art is really just about developing a sensitivity to your environment and making comments about the world you're living in in a beautiful way.

JF: *But I think there's also another*

side to that project. It seems to me that while you're asking everyone to engage in the world, you're also giving them a way of critiquing it. It's almost 101 formulas for breaking out - like, you suggest sitting on the toilet backward or spending an entire day in a costume. That's obviously a way of breaking out of the monotonous way of proceeding.

RP: Yeah. It's a way of shaking up your complacency. It's a given that everyone uses the toilet at least once per day, but probably not too many people sit on it backward. So a mundane activity can suddenly be read in a whole new way with one simple gesture.

JF: *I don't know if you want to talk about your infamous show at Leo Castelli Gallery in 1992, but this toying with the boundaries of the art world - and coming in and out of it - is a constant theme of your career, isn't it?*

RP: I think that the point that you make is a pretty exciting one within the world of Rob Pruitt. I think *101* showed that I am rather nonessential - like, you don't need to look at my work, you can do it yourself. I'm not really interested as an artist in making a masterpiece. I pretty much show all of my output. I don't throw anything away. You mentioned the Castelli

show, and if one were to find flaws with that show or see it as a mistake, then that's fine by me. I like this idea of learning and growing up publicly and not cleaning up the process so that everything that enters the gallery space is flawless and perfectly done. I mean I'm making my first monograph right now, which comes out in April.

JF: *It's called Pop Touched Me?*

RP: Yeah. And when I sat down with my editors and looked at everything I've signed my name to over the last 17 years, I thought a lot of it wasn't that good. But I wouldn't take any of it back. I'm not embarrassed. I feel like I'm learning along the way, and that trying is better than not trying at all. Some of the art I've made, I'm really proud of. But some of those things are total clunkers.

JF: *You once said that your 1998 piece Cocaine Buffet was, on one level, a publicity stunt, but it also had art history built into it: minimalism infused with contemporary culture visibility.*

RP: The cocaine thing was in a sense a publicity stunt, but it was also a thinly veiled self-portrait or a confession. I mean, it was very autobiographical. Not that I loved drugs, but I was no longer collaborating with Jack Early. I was trying

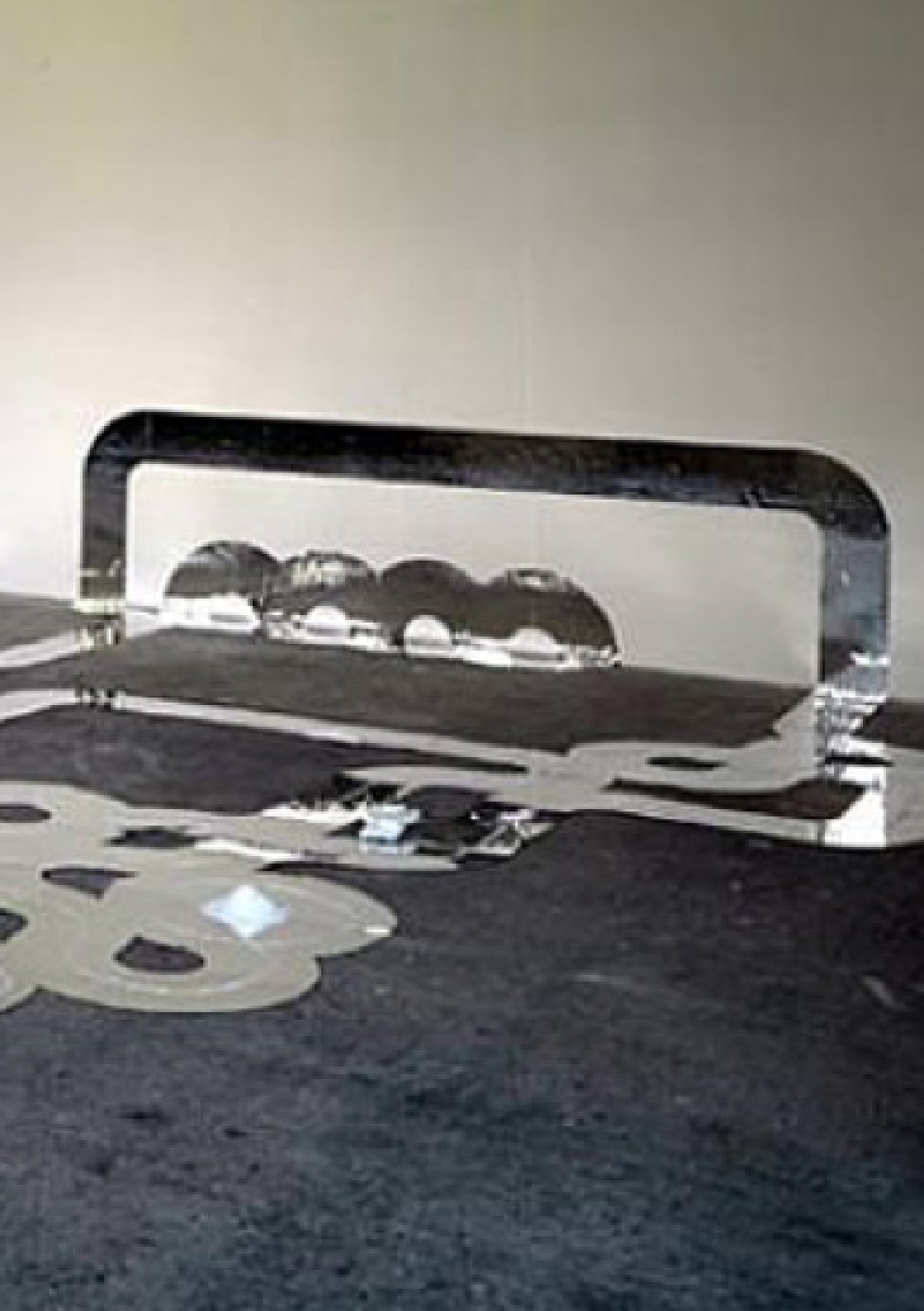
to carve out my own identity. And that involved a couple of problematic situations for me. If you rose to some popularity or notoriety as part of a collaborative team, how do you reemerge with a solo identity? How do I maintain things about Pruitt-Early that I still feel close to, but create a new voice that's exclusively my own? The Pruitt-Early collaboration ended because the show at Castelli was so badly received. Most of the critical responses to it were that it was racist, an abomination. How could a project like this pass the inherent screening that the art world has of only showing the best, most vital things? How could such a racist project actually end up in these hallowed halls of the Castelli Gallery?

JF: *[laughs] How did it go up?*

RP: Well, Leo came to us because we had established a certain amount of success and renown in a very short period of time.

JF: *With those sculptures for teenage boys?*

RP: Yeah, *Artwork for Teenage Boys*. Those images weren't generated by us - we just sort of collected and organized them. I think Leo Castelli had an affinity for the way they looked because it was reminiscent of





work he had pioneered in the 1960s, so he offered us a show without knowing what the project would be. As it was being developed, he did make studio visits. I think he thought that it was going to be very exciting. We were simply trying to make a project that celebrated the very rich black creative culture that emerged after so much slavery, racism, and oppression. That's truly what we were trying to do. The fashion of the day was to make identity-issue work, you know - if you were part of a particular group then you would make work about your participation in that group.


JF: Yeah.

RP: So as two white, gay men, it was strange to people that we were making this body of work, celebrating achievements of black American culture. I think the exhibition did fuel the fires of the racist reading, because we shifted tone. I mean, *Artwork for Teenage Boys* did involve pretty offensive, sexist, misogynistic expressions of white, male teenage culture that we'd basically gotten from T-shirt iron-ons and rock music lyrics. That was our first project right out of art school - not that I'm making excuses for it. I thought it was pretty good. We were trying to make a portrait of

this segment of the population who was the enemy, who harassed us in high school, who beat us up behind the gym. It was an interesting exercise in politics and aesthetics just to gather all of this really vile information and see what it looked like together. I really viewed that project as a portrait of the enemy. And then we did shift gears. But the Black show was not a portrait of the enemy. It was a celebration of a group of people that we felt aligned with. Growing up gay in the '70s and early '80s, I think that we just felt as if we had some of the same liberties and rights breached as well. It's difficult to explain away all of the reactions that happened 20 years ago. Obviously, I want the story to go in my favor and to not be the villain anymore. But I also want to be responsible for what I did at every point in my life.

JF: Where did you go to art school?

RP: Well, first I went to the Corcoran College of Art and Design, which is a museum school in Washington, D.C. But then I switched to Parsons The New School for Design in New York. I loved school. My dream was to move to New York, and at Corcoran I met this really great person, Tim Gunn, who is now on Project Runway.



He's the person who admitted me to art school at the Corcoran and then the following year, he left to go to Parsons. It wasn't exactly that I followed him, but my father won the Maryland State Lottery and got, like, two million dollars. We had been a pretty poor family, but that all changed.

JF: *Wait - your dad won the lottery?*

RP: Yeah. Back in the early '80s.

JF: *I can't believe that actually happened. And who would've thought that Project Runway had such a basis in the contemporary art world?*

RP: [laughs] I know. Tim Gunn is truly amazing. I owe a lot to him. He really saw something in me when I was just 17. He was the first person

who ever bought something that I made. It was a four-panel drawing about incest. It was a family of four in all different sexual combinations. Like mother and father, mother and son, mother and daughter . . . It was basically an exercise in shock value, and it was also based on Sol LeWitt and reducing art to a mathematical equation. Maybe I haven't actually moved too far away from that piece, because I still always include a certain amount of shock and base work on a system.

Excerpted from an article originally published in Interview magazine, October/November 2009, Courtesy BMP Media Holdings LLC

Index Images

p. 38-39: *Suicide Painting IV*, 2013 / Acrylic on linen / 274.3 x 205.7 cm

p. 40-41 / 44-45 / 50-51: *Plywood Arch*, 2014 / Sharpie Markers on plywood / 243.84 x 121.92 cm

p. 42-43: *Cocaine Buffet*, 1998 / Mirrors, cocaine / Dimensions variable

p. 46: *Candy Dish (Grey Scale)*, 2012 / Acrylic and shellac on tire, candies / 83.8 x Ø 58.5 cm

p. 47: *Mili Lara*, 2012 / Marble and paper bag / 31 x 12.7 x 8.3 cm

p. 48-49: *Panda Wall Paper*, 2014 / Wall paper / 393 x 1012 cm





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CONTEMPORAIN QUI PRÉSENTENT UN INTÉRÊT SOCIAL.

EN SA QUALITÉ DE CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, ELLE EN-
TEND JOUER UN RÔLE ACTIF SUR LA SCÈNE ARTISTIQUE INTER-
NATIONALE.

MISSION STATEMENT

THE MUSEUM DHONDT-DHAENENS IS A PRIVATE FOUNDATION
RECOGNISED BY THE FLEMISH GOVERNMENT.

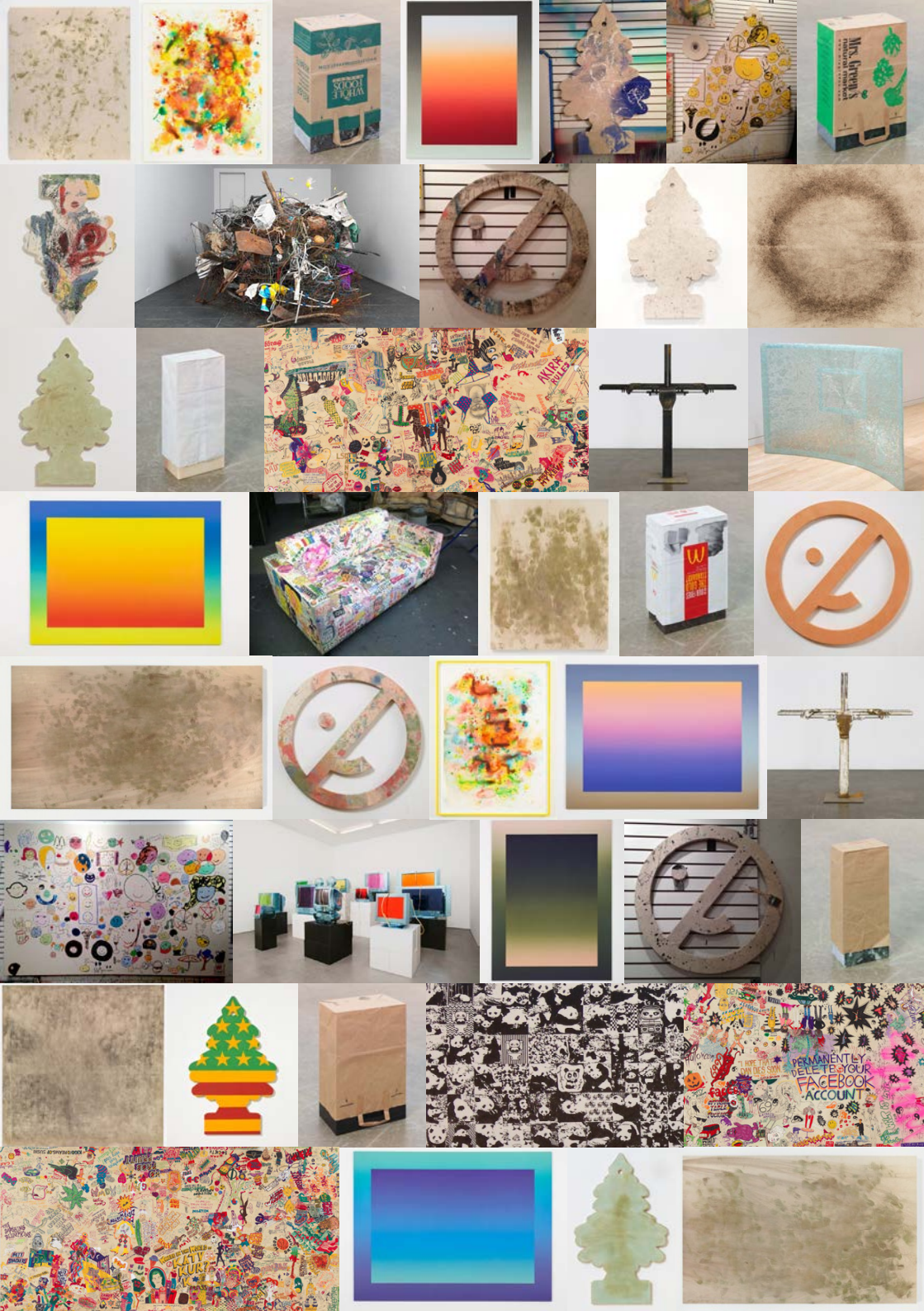
AS A MUSEUM IT MAKES PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE IMPORTANT
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY PRIVATE COLLECTIONS WITH
A SOCIAL RELEVANCE.

AS A CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE IT AIMS TO PLAY
AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL
ART FIELD

Dank aan / Merci à / Thanks to

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3 BLIND MICE

DAN COLEN
NATE LOWMAN
ROB PRUITT