

BACK  
AND  
FORTH

thinking in paint

August 14 - October 25, 2015  
The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art | State Art Museum of Florida  
Florida State University, Sarasota, Florida

#### PROJECT SUPPORT & ORGANIZATION

The exhibition **BACK AND FORTH** thinking in paint was organized by The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. The project received support from the Office of Sponsored Research and the Museum of Fine Arts Press at Florida State University.

#### PUBLICATION DESIGN CONCEPT

Lilian Garcia-Roig, FSU Art Department

Judy Rushin, FSU Art Department

# The Ringling

THE JOHN & MABLE RINGLING  
MUSEUM OF ART

STATE ART MUSEUM OF FLORIDA | FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

#### MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS PRESS

Jean D. Young, Designer

Allys Palladino-Craig, Editor-in-Chief

#### PRINTER

Durra Print, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida

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Florida State University

College of Fine Arts

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ISBN 978-1-889282-31-2

## THE ARTISTS

**CARRIE ANN BAADE**

**RAY BURGGRAF**

**LILIAN GARCIA-ROIG**

**MARK MESSERSMITH**

**JUDY RUSHIN**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Peter Weishar



In 2000 the stewardship of The Ringling was placed by the Legislature under Florida State University. Following that important event, one of the first exhibitions on the home campus to hint at the wealth of Ringling Collections was the 2002 exhibition of paintings from the 14th through the 19th centuries. While the Museum of Fine Arts had worked with The Ringling Collections as early as 1985 — borrowing Cypriot artifacts for an exhibition curated for the Classics department and thematic imagery for other exhibitions — the new relationship between Sarasota and Tallahassee has made possible a largesse of visiting artworks including: a newly restored European painting that allowed for a conservation lecture; exquisite Chinese ceramics; contemporary graphics and photography; Old Master drawings; Turkomen silver; and Rubens prints.

The Ringling campus has recently become the location for the capstone year of the MA in Museum and Cultural Studies, representing a gratifying internship for students in that degree track. As new exhibition spaces have been added to The Ringling, the curators have also embarked on an exciting calendar of contemporary exhibitions.

The College of Fine Arts acknowledges the warm welcome that The Ringling is extending to faculty from the Department of Art. To foster collaboration and reward the interaction of five artists who have created their own works of art in response to various pieces at The Ringling, the Council on Research and Creativity has awarded a faculty planning grant to Mark Messersmith and his colleagues; from the very beginning, Lilian Garcia-Roig has been the energy and the hopeful inspiration for an exhibition of faculty work. This project is indebted to the Council, to the Museum of Fine Arts Press in the College of Fine Arts, and to The Ringling Board and Staff for this inaugural exhibition of our talented artists.

— Peter Weishar, Dean  
College of Fine Arts, Florida State University

The original idea for this show took shape when The Ringling Museum became part of the Florida State University system. The Ringling is one of Florida's gems and I was excited to see what might be possible in a collaborative future.

*Back And Forth: thinking in paint* is a dialogue between The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Collections and contemporary painting from Florida State University faculty. The premise is straightforward: given that most periods of art are being mined by contemporary artists, this exhibition pairs paintings created by FSU faculty with works in The Ringling Collections. This format reflects contemporary art's continuing influence in juxtaposition to the historical works on which it was founded. With a perspective gained through the iconic, historical works that compose The Ringling's Collection, this exhibition offers diverse solutions in contemporary painting's dialogue with the past.

At the Florida State University campus in Tallahassee, we want to thank the Office of Sponsored Research for providing the financial support that made this exhibition and catalogue possible; Gary Ostrander, VP for Research, demonstrates his belief in the value of the arts. To our new Dean, Peter Weishar, who has proven his desire to create more exchange between The Ringling campus and the various departments and programs in the College of Fine Arts, we express our sincere gratitude. To our outstanding department chair, Carolyn Henne, for always listening and supporting a good cause, go our heartfelt thanks as we also recognize her amazing office staff, Rebekah Elliott, Rob Berg and Kathryn Bailey, whose assistance with the logistics of executing our grant were invaluable. In the College of Fine Arts we want to thank the always-supportive Allys Palladino-Craig, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, whose whole-hearted enthusiasm led her to volunteer the Museum of Fine Arts Press for this catalogue. We are deeply grateful to Jean D. Young, Registrar of Collections/Exhibitions & Publications Designer, whose creativity and patience with painters' visions made this catalogue possible (and should earn her sainthood). Special thanks to Wayne Vonada, MoFA Preparator, for his expertise in assisting us in transporting our works.

At The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, The State Art Museum, our gratitude goes out to its director, Steven High and Curator of Contemporary Art, Matthew McLendon; both have always supported collaboration and this exhibition in particular. A special thanks goes to Matthew for writing the introduction for the catalogue. To all of the curatorial, archives and education staff who contributed to this project (especially Françoise Hack, Heidi Taylor, Carolyn Hannan, Ellie Bloom and Sonja Shea) as well as all of the pleasant docents, volunteers and staff we have met in Sarasota, we extend our thanks.

Last, but not least, I give a huge thanks to my inspiring and hard-working colleagues, without whom, none of this would have happened: Mark Messersmith, Carrie Ann Baade, Judy Rushin and Ray Burggraf. Special thanks to Judy for initiating the "Conversations" among the painters that appears in this catalogue; to Carrie for being The Ringling liaison; to Mark for being the PI on our grant and main art handler and to Ray for his wisdom and perspective as an emeritus professor. Additional thanks go to Mary Stewart and Julietta Cheung. Having worked at several highly ranked art programs, I can honestly say that my painting colleagues at Florida State are not only outstanding educators, but their work represents highpoints in the broad spectrum of contemporary painting today. This makes for an excellent studio art program and one that I am very honored to be part of. So it is with great pride that my colleagues and I present this exhibition for visitors at The Ringling Museum of Art.

— Lilian Garcia-Roig  
*Professor and Painting & Drawing Area Head, Florida State University*

# INTRODUCTION

Matthew McLendon

In 2000, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, The State Art Museum, officially came under the auspices of Florida State University. This was not Florida State's first connection with Sarasota, nor with The Ringling. The Asolo Conservatory, FSU's MFA acting program, has been located in Sarasota since 1973. However, of interest here is the long connection between the museum and the visual arts and humanities programs at the university.

In 1946, one of the most visionary directors in American museum history, A. Everett "Chick" Austin, took leadership of The Ringling. Austin had distinguished himself at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, as one of the champions of living artists. He was responsible for mounting some of the first exhibitions in this country exploring the work of the Surrealists as well as the work of Pablo Picasso. While he busied himself revolutionizing museum practice, he also found time to be on the faculty of Trinity College, Hartford, where he created the Fine Art department. His innovative spirit coupled with his evangelism of the avant-garde followed him when he left Hartford to become the first director of The Ringling Museum as it re-opened to the public after the long period of probate following John Ringling's death in 1936.

In April of 1948, Austin convened the first three-week seminar on the topic, "The History of Art" in conjunction with Florida State University. Students were welcomed into the galleries of The Ringling and taught by an impressive roster of invited lecturers including the architectural historians Russell Hitchcock and John McAndrew, noted curators Agnes Mongan and Iris Barry, and the gallerist Julien Levy. The lectures covered a wide range of topics including contemporary painting, modern architecture, and Surrealist cinema and would have been quite avant-garde for the Florida of the 1940s. Through his strong connections in the New York art world, Chick Austin was able to provide a level of scholarship in the arts to the students of FSU (and the wider community) that was unprecedented and was the beginning of a long and productive sharing of intellectual capital between the two institutions.

This exhibition, then, is a return to the shared history of The Ringling and Florida State University as well as to their shared educational missions. It marks the first group exhibition of Florida State faculty from the College of Fine Arts. Like all group exhibitions, the first impression is of a loosely related collection of objects, radically different in style and concept, brought together for no other reason than professional geography. However, upon closer looking stylistic affinities and consonant conceptual frameworks emerge here that can only come from a department that has significant shared history.

There is an obvious thread of maximalism in the paintings of Carrie Ann Baade, Mark Messersmith, and Lilian Garcia-Roig. Garcia-Roig states that she wants, "the viewer to come away believing that more information, more square footage, more complexity, more time, more abstraction, more representation, more paint, etc., even in a single image, can add up to a more powerful and rewarding visual experience." In her plein-air work, composed on the grounds of The Ringling and paying homage to our signature Banyan trees, she overwhelms the viewer through the intricacy of the brushstroke. Yet, rather than being forced back, the viewer is drawn into the dense layering of line, shadow, overlapping contours and colors hoping to, and eventually finding, structure within chaos — a metaphor for life.

Likewise, Mark Messersmith's work is concerned with the natural world, in particular the world of a soon-to-be-forgotten Florida as the swamps, backwoods and the creatures that inhabit them fight for survival and constantly adapt and re-adapt to smaller habitable environs. These messages may first seem lost in the tidal waves of imagery and color that confront the viewer. However, as in Garcia-Roig's work, the payoff is in the detail. The

initial push gives way to a powerful pull as the viewer begins to locate focal points of anchor, often objects that imbue a wry sense of humor, tomato cans and syrup bottles, among the dense layers of flora and fauna.

Carrie Ann Baade's maximalist canvases reference the history of art, in both form and technique, but are unquestionably contemporary in their commentary. By creating a bridge to the materiality of the past through the techniques employed, Baade hopes to "bring to a contemporary audience a material connection to the history of painting while contemplating the ageless issues of morality, politics, and the individual quest for self-expression." Within the context of The Ringling galleries, in close proximity to her historical source material, her paintings take on a renewed urgency of purpose.

Judy Rushin's work stands in stark contrast to the maximalism of her colleagues. While her individual canvases may be minimal, economical even in their execution, when amassed in the space such as with *Here Today* composed of over 150 canvases, her installations create a slippage and begin to take on a maximalist's engagement through the viewer's interaction with form and color. The modular nature of the work comes to symbolize the modular and mobile lifestyle of the circus artists who travel from city to city and whose histories resonate throughout the Circus Museum.

Similar in the focus on pure form and color found in Rushin's painting, the paintings of Ray Burggraf insist on the contemplation of the basic elements of art. Like *Joseph's Coat*, the adjacent Skyspace by James Turrell, *Three Dualities* uses color and light to bend the viewer's perception and engage him or her in the conscious act of seeing, or, in Turrell's words, "to see that I am seeing." Depending on the point-of-view through which the work is viewed, any number of associations can spring to mind as perception gives way to recognition.

The artists brought together here each offer highly individual creative visions. Yet, the meticulousness displayed in each of their works and the rigor with which their conceptual frameworks are developed and presented bind them together. It is a great opportunity to reflect on the long and fruitful history of The Ringling and Florida State University.

— Matthew McLendon, PhD  
Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art



# CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ARTISTS

Carrie Ann Baade • Ray Burggraf

Lilian Garcia-Roig • Mark Messersmith • Judy Rushin

The five artists in this exhibition represent just how broad the field of painting is today. Although our work varies wildly from classically driven traditional canvases to hybrid abstractions, we all have at least two things in common: we rely on our visual perception to engage and understand the world, and on the history of painting as a complex tradition that is equally rich and unsettled. With these points in mind we began a conversation in hopes of finding common ground and points of departure.

**RUSHIN:** There are two things I would like us to talk about. One has to do with Painting as a conceptual and perceptual process and the other has to do with historicism. Since the exhibition is based on our responses to works in The Ringling Collection, let's begin there. Legacy is extremely important to painting, but can it also limit? Mark, you've talked about the burden of painting before. What do you mean by that?

**MESSERSMITH:** Unless you are a folk artist, it is important to be part of the history of painting. Really all painting is about painting. We have used the same rules and conventions — perspective, scale, format, two-dimensional surfaces — for hundreds of years. They are known, understood and expected by viewers. Painterly responses to things like implied motion, weight or even synesthesia are less obvious but still conventional. It is like being a magician; the audience knows they are being tricked but don't mind the machination.

Dave Hickey said: "painting isn't dead except as a major art. From now on it will be a discourse of adepts like jazz." Maybe Hickey, like many people, defines painting too narrowly? I think there is clear evidence of painting's continued evolution when you look at the five of us and our relationship to painting as a contemporary practice. That is the interesting underlying aspect woven within the fabric of our approaches.

Starting with Carrie, her work is flat and in one plane which seems to recede back into space. She uses all historical material — references and devices to paint a windingly rich story of multiple interpretations while touching all our inner passions, dreams and fears. Lilian builds off the surface with paint; paint is a real material and the equal subject of her work. It is a 3-D material on a 2-D surface describing a 4-D world of passing time. I work mostly on a conventional rectangular surface, but with forms hanging in front of or added on the tops and bottoms of the painting. I try to balance where an illusionist 2-D painting world interacts with the interface moment of 3-D reality. Ray shows increasing disregard for a rectangular format and formal containment of his work. His work is real and of this moment. It feels familiar — the sunset, ocean, sky, even meteor showers — but he translates those universally stored memories in all of us into solid things of pure color and anamorphic forms. The wall is merely a convenience to Ray, something simple to support the memory objects.

All this seems to move directly towards your work, Judy, and your willingness to impose painting onto objects themselves, holding its place firmly in the reality of the 3-D world. To you, a painting is a reality and reality can be a painting. You no longer depend on the paradigm of representational painting — perhaps you even hope viewers can abandon their expectations of the historical conventions of painting and see it and the world without any artistic duplicity.

We all five see the world through the eyes of painters: through color, line and form. Some of us do it by directly referring to the baggage of painting's history while others so firmly believe in the strength of painting that it can be made into real stuff. No matter what, we all get to carry the burden of painting's history while at the same time reap the opportunities inherent in carrying that knowledge.

I think I went on a bit without providing anyone a chance to chime in. I'd like to ask you all about time; freezing it, recording it, watching it and how it varies to each of us in our work. This might be about repetition, motion, viewing....

**GARCIA-ROIG:** I think a lot about the passage of time since the idea of trying to transpose a four-dimensional experience of a three-dimensional place onto a two-dimensional surface is at the core of my work. I know this is a futile proposition from the get-go but the acknowledgment of a type of defeat allows me to then just try to capture, interpret and transpose what I see and feel as best I can. I let the resulting painting exist on its own terms, creating a type of compressed, highlighted residual impression of what I saw while being in a specific place.

Richard Shiff said some interesting things about the nature of time in my work/process in an essay he wrote about my rushing-river water paintings. He said my work is less about fixing the image of a moment and more about participating in the moment. He went on to say that this participation in the moment heightens my sensitivity to my existence within nature's continuity. In one way I have to lag behind time, defeating my attempt to be true to nature. The finished painting is as much about abstraction as it is about representation. What was being represented — the momentum of the river — was already in the past, but the abstraction is timeless in a way. I see Ray's and Judy's work in this way; examples of extreme compressions of impressions that create their own new realities. I often wonder about how they make their journey from point A (reference) to point B (painting).

**RUSHIN:** I think painting does lend itself to a non-linear sense of time and that can feel like compression or expansion of time, depending upon how you look at it. My journey from point A to point B is non-linear partly because I don't use a singular reference and a lot of times my 'references' are just ideas that impel me to work. But whatever the prompt I'm often searching for a dialogue between the present and the past. You could say I am compressing my impressions because I'm only interested in essentials. But the journey feels expansive. I'm also thinking about painting as something that takes a kind of muscle memory to do and to see. You can't always explain why it's working but when it is, you know it. That intuition is something developed over time; it's not easy and sometimes you end up spinning your wheels for awhile. Lilian, where you believe more is more, I say less is more, but we're both interested in contemplative experiences through material and color relationships and it does seem clear that we both experience a different kind of time through painting.

I'm not asking viewers to abandon their understanding of painting's historical conventions. I am actually working within conventions that painters have used since the 1920s. The sci-fi writer, William Gibson coined the term 'atemporality' over a decade ago and the concept is just now arriving in the art world. It describes an experience of time that is specific to network culture in which we encounter the past, present, and future all at once. So today's painters, like any other creative people, see an array of styles, ideas, and cultural moments all at once through the internet. I don't want to repeat history, but it's impossible not to consider it. What I hope, what any artist hopes, is to make something fresh. Painting is a beautifully resilient, abounding, and spacious field that is big enough to accommodate multitudes, and it does. In fact sometimes it resembles a circus, which is one reason I decided to respond to that particular aspect of The Ringling.

**BURGGRAF:** I see Lilian's question as a companion to Mark's question about time, so I will attempt to answer both. Even though it looks abstract, I think of my work as landscape. I address time by showing multiple views of the same experience. Until very recently, I did this by engaging a left to right reading of a serial image of connected panels. The paintings were grouped in similar color gradations representing sky-land-water and viewers could 'read' these as multiple views of a whole experience.

The problem with that organization was that the individual color gradations were restricted by the conventional rectangle when they really needed to be on unique shapes. However, when I tried shaped panels the serial images didn't fit together very well. In addition, my view of the visual world, one I had depended on as a subject, had changed over time. Landscape as a record of a scene was lost to a plethora of physical phenomena coming primarily from science and travel. Forces such as gravity, energy, and light along with speed and aerodynamics rose in importance. Along with the contentious social issues of the day, I believed these were the best ideas an artist could use to confront the observer. They were images very much of our time. Happily, I found a more appropriate, looser configuration in the independent shapes of the carved color units, other-worldly imagery, and gradations.

The logical next step was to add motion. Through experimentation I found that a moving unit creates a new space in and around the object — a kind of 'force field' that introduces repetition, indeterminacy, and randomness to a work already headed in that direction. My paintings now stand clearly in the camp of kinetic art, long held in high regard by the proponents of constructivism. I hope this will make my Bauhaus roots clearer to a knowledgeable public and possibly attract a few others who just like machines.

**BAADE:** I find my imagery through an elaborate culling process. Before painting, I search through thousands of images I have collected from books, self-portraits and other subjects, and my travels. I've been archiving images for over a decade.

I agree with Mark that all painting is about painting. I have literally chosen to use the baggage of painting's past to create new narratives. I am the inheritor of art's pre-modern legacy, looking for evocative hands, eyes, and symbols to incorporate into new works. Out of a bone yard of material all those images painted from 1400 to 1900 — those paintings past copyright — are my domain. By using collage as the blueprints for new paintings, it becomes a way to reconstitute historical painting back from printed material.

It is through the comparison of past and present, or back and forth, that we are able to understand time's relative nature. As a child I loved advent calendars, doors that marked time and told a story. By using arcane and/or historical fragments of paintings in my work, I create portals that connect to another painting in another time. So in this way, I use time as a wormhole to the past. The historical painting carries its own symbolism, which has the potential for contemporary allegory. Like Ray, I try to create paintings viewers can 'read' and experience as multiple views of a whole.

I feel very strongly that I am resurrecting painting. I was told painting was dead for so long that I thought no one would care if I used it to do something new. Perhaps that is a common ground of all the painters, that we are engaged in an act of resurrection because of the inherent history and legacy of our medium.

Mark, how do you perceive time to function in relation to your work?

**MESSERSMITH:** I think what all artists really deal with is the arrow of time, it's one-way direction and the changes that occur as all things move from order towards chaos. What artists do is catch, save, and archive moments in time, but all in different ways hoping to halt that ceaseless slide of time towards the inevitable.

Lilian deals with blocks of observed hours as best she can, chasing and recording its passing. Time can't be stopped, it can only be documented with the compelling residue of its passing. Carrie, you seem to think of time as a big smorgasbord offering itself up to you in your studio. It allows you opportunities to select moments of the past and re-assemble sequential events into a singularity. Ray doesn't bother with documenting the footprints of time, but seems more interested in the residue of time through his awareness of ethereal observation or circumferential experience. The physicality, weight, and palpable color in Judy's work seems to challenge the absolute certitude of the march of time towards disorder and chaos. Its physical significance is that it is a single moment frozen permanently in time by our observation. This attempt to defy time's effects seems to be at the core of Judy's exploration. My work is about no particular moment of time, or perhaps a moment that could have happened if only it had been witnessed by someone. They are expressions of a universal evolutionary movement of all matter towards the harmony of inexhaustible chaos.

I think the idea of color/pigment vs light/energy in relation to our research could be interesting. Maybe Ray can start this one off.

**BURGGRAF:** When I paint I try to keep in mind that I am building a reflector, which requires a preoccupation with surface. There are two big variables concerning light — the illumination of the painting and how it reflects that light. We tell ourselves that we are putting pigments on a surface that reflects particular colors and values. That is not true. We put substances down that absorb most wavelengths of light and reflects some that the viewer mentally processes and perceives as particular colors. This scientific fact reminds me that there is a variation in how what I paint is perceived that I can't control even at a basic physical level — not to mention the viewer's reaction to the subject matter and historical references that the painting may contain. The following is a list of six other variables having to do with light and pigment that I try to keep in mind when working on a painting:

1. When mixing colors, light is additive and pigment is subtractive
2. All color is relative
3. A painting as a reflector has energy
4. When building a painting, the substrate matters
5. My hand gesture is in the painting
6. Possibly the most important variable in painting is the lighting I work under and use for exhibited work

Mark has asked a good question. Lilian, what do you think?

**GARCIA-ROIG:** Given my paintings' visceral surfaces, I am clearly interested in the materiality of paint, which makes my works solidly situated on the color/pigment side of the fence until you think about my painting process and perception in general; then they dip into the light/energy side of the conversation. We all know objects are not a specific color, per se, but rather the color they appear to be to us depends upon which part of the visible spectrum they reflected back to us. With plein-air painting the light is constantly changing which multiplies and intensifies the already relative nature of color. This means our eyes get a good workout as we try to see all of those colors next to all of those other colors over time.

A great, seductive non-objective painted surface is as captivating to me as a convincing, beautifully painted illusionistic image is. I just love paint as a medium with all of its transformative possibilities and perceptual realities.

**RUSHIN:** I'm glad you guys mentioned surface because it's been a real preoccupation of mine. In fact, it's my engagement with color and surface that defines me as a painter. Ray talks about how his hand gesture is indexed in his paintings. The same is true for me. The gesture is very subtle, just a quiet indication of my body in the work, but it is there. Everything is on the surface — spraying, brushing, sanding, scratching. The color is opaque, synthetic and is an adaptation of modern industrial and commercial materials and techniques that reflect a contrast between high art and labor, elegance and rawness, cool geometry and analogue warmth.

Carrie, I am curious about your relationship with materials and surface. You are almost religious in your use of traditional materials and techniques to create rich, reflective surfaces. In relation to your conceptual practice, what does material meaning signify to you?

**BAADE:** Today, I find myself walking in a graveyard overlooking Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance, asking myself how I might answer your question. Out of the earth we are born and to the earth we return. What is paint but dirt? A little bit of powdered stone or pigment mixed with a vehicle, or something to bind it. When I interpret fragments of historical paintings, I am investigating the palette of that artist by using the paint that most closely replicates the original. I do this in homage and respect to the dead painters who have come before me and to practice successful technique. I hope to make a contribution to painting without ever betraying the link to tradition. On the contrary, I try to make that link even stronger.

Beginning with the first charred stick used to make black marks on a cave wall, each color we use today carries the legacy of civilization's discoveries. James Elkins relates painting to alchemy in his book, *What Painting Is*. As painters we take inert pigments and transform them into illusions and textures that invoke emotions — transmutations. Painting carries the history of civilization within its colors.

*These conversations were recorded in the Summer of 2015 between the artists of Back and Forth.*





Carrie Ann Baade, detail of *Triumph of Divine Love: The Eternal Mother*, 2015, oil on panel, 40 x 30 inches.

**Carrie Ann Baade**

## PAINTED PARABLES

These painted parables combine elements of Renaissance and Baroque paintings, creating surreal landscapes inhabited by exotic figures. As a contemporary painter, I return to the relevant moments in art history to reclaim them not merely as a quotation of a theme or an image, but also as the materiality of methods and techniques that ultimately created them. Studying with professional art conservators early in my career and researching painting techniques of old masters, I deploy the necessary material strategies to bring to a contemporary audience my connection to the past while contemplating the morality, politics, and the individual quest for self-expression.

The root of the name Artemis is thought to be derived from Persian origins from the primitive form of \*arta, \*art, \*arte, all meaning “great, excellent, holy.” Thus the goddess Artemis becomes identical with the great mother of Nature, worshiped at Ephesus. Her temple was among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The many “eggs” denote her relationship to fertility, a goddess who was regarded as both a nursing mother and a virgin. Artemis was known by many lofty titles; however she was most commonly referred to as “The Mother of All.” In *Artemis the Creatrix*, the “egg” shapes are repeated papal tiaras from Van Eyck’s *Ghent Altarpiece*. This object is frequently repeated in my works as a reversed symbol for patriarchy. In my version, Artemis is calling forth the light out of darkness for the purpose of creation. To be a creatrix is to be one who brings forth or produces.



The work on the facing page is a subverted homage and a response to painter Georg Baselitz, a pioneer of the German Neo-Expressionist movement. Baselitz is stylistically known for his “upside down paintings,” which feature inverted bodies and landscapes. In 2013, 75-year old Baselitz was quoted in press worldwide, “Women don’t paint very well. It’s a fact. And that despite the fact that they still constitute the majority of students in the art academies.” Baselitz, who was lauded by the Royal Academy five years ago as one of the greatest living artists, dismissed women painters, saying that they “simply don’t pass the market test, the value test,” and adding, “as always, the market is right,” thus implying that works by women, while being inferior, are also a bad investment.

▲ 18th century engraving of the Greek goddess Artemis.  
◆ Carrie Ann Baade, *Artemis the Creatrix*, 2015, oil on panel, 36 x 24 inches.

Facing Page

▶ Carrie Ann Baade, *Angel of Paradox (Suck My #%@\$ Georg Baselitz)*, 2015, oil on panel, 40 x 30 inches.



In *Angel of Paradox (Suck My #%@\$ Georg Baselitz)*, I juxtapose passages of upright and upside down iconography from Catholicism, Tibetan Buddhism, and art history. The central image comes from *Princess Mathilde's Dining Room*, by Charles Giraud, 1854. The Princess Mathilde was a smart artistic woman who held a salon frequented by the literary and artistic celebrities of the day. While we might acknowledge that women have been historically objectified and considered decorative, their substance and contributions trivialized or usurped by surrounding men, there still remains a vacancy for women to make a larger claim. This painting teases at the “woman’s problem” by playing with the terms for the sexes featuring one-eyed monsters and other idiomatic iconography. An allusion to the penis being more like a clitoris is suggested by the Botticelli women from the *Birth of Venus* who swaddle the penis, thus revealing the similarity of the sexes. Central to the composition is an anatomical model of a penis owned by pinup girl and nightlife personality Lenora Claire. Nicknamed “Oscar,” the model originally belonged to Claire’s father who was a gynecologist.



*The Triumph of Divine Love* by Peter Paul Rubens, an allegory of Charity, is the inspiration for my work by the same title. I have chosen to interpret Mary, the mother of Christ, as the eternal life giver in this portrait. The large central eye is a fragment from images of Our Lady of Sorrows, greatly magnified to show her tears. Her womb is suggested by the oval frame or window that reveals the world, thus relating that the earth is the womb of humankind. The kingfisher, a symbol of abundance, points with his beak directly to the center of the frame, the origin of creation, the outlet of potential life. The landscape in the frame makes the correlation between the biological mother with the sacred Mother.

The cherubs fly in a circle around her womb to show the cycle of life from birth and creation back into the earth and death. From her right side are the arms of Pontormo's *Deposition* showing the sacrifice of a mother's love. The butterflies fly into golden flames — a show of the passion that cannot be resisted. Botticelli's cupid from *Primavera*, on the far right, shoots his arrow through the wounds of Christ and into the heart of the mother. While Rubens' Charity displays kindness and nurturing, my Caritas relates to Mother Nature, the mother of Christ, and all mothers who give birth and sacrifice their bounty in the cycle of creation.

▲ Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577-1640, active in Antwerp and throughout Europe), *The Triumph of Divine Love*, circa 1625, oil on canvas, 152 x 204 inches, SN977. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Museum purchase, 1980.

Facing Page

► Carrie Ann Baade, *Triumph of Divine Love: The Eternal Mother*, 2015, oil on panel, 40 x 30 inches.





**On Process:** To start a painting, I create a collage comprised of hundreds of images, both photographs of historic paintings and images found from magazines. I cut and arrange images often reverse-engineering the original compositions, ultimately creating my own work set in direct dialogue with our cultural heritage. I then paint from the completed collage combining the power of these historical masterworks with my own experience as a contemporary artist. By using this fragmentary “bone yard” of painting with reverence, I am a scavenger salvaging lost aesthetics. My art has been an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable, resulting in an exploitation of fragmentation found in collage; I think of myself as a kind of Dr. Frankenstein attempting to piece together the sublime while contemplating the ageless issues of humanity.

The paintings in the series *Allegory of Good and Bad Government* are inspired by Lorenzetti’s 14th century moralistic mural cycle commissioned by the city hall in Siena. The original fresco paintings served as a constant reminder to leaders to remain just by showing comprehensive cause-and-effect situations of corrupt, tyrannical governing in comparison to those of virtuous governing. In traveling to Italy to investigate these murals, I was surprised to find that these could be interpreted as both external and internal states of consciousness. While we require a government as a people, we also should aspire to states of internal governance to mobilize our human initiative to use our energy and our time creatively.



▲ Carrie Ann Baade, collage study for *Allegory of Bad Government*, 2015, 36 x 48 inches.

Facing Page

► [top] Carrie Ann Baade, *Allegory of Bad Government*, 2015, oil on linen, 36 x 48 inches.

► [bottom] Ambrodio Lorenzetti, detail of *Allegory of Bad Government*, 1138-1340, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.



Cruelty, Deceit, Fraud, Fury, Division, and War are featured in the detail *Allegory of Bad Government*, while the collage above is arranged more like the tea party from *Alice in Wonderland*. In the style of the Seven Deadly Sins made over, these characters act out bad behavior traits that plague their meeting but could also be interpreted as internal sabotaging states of mind. Self-loathing has the face of a bat but wears the mask of the martyr from representations of Our Man of Sorrow. This character shows his indulgent internal dialogue of self-pity by playing out a dead mouse talking to a sock puppet. St. Rage is featured from a prior painting: she can do nothing but attack and scream. Always present at any meeting is sloth, or as I have interpreted him, as a frog with a giant erection in his pants, because he is being aroused by the discord.





Hubris is portrayed as the Alice at this tea party; she is the person who is so engaged in the formality of tradition and propriety, that she cannot be bothered to stop the destruction or bad behavior around her. For example, I imagine those who were too polite to interfere with genocide and other atrocities. The images of blue skies propped up around the table are of the Napoleonic War showing a history of war that can do nothing to inspire change, but is a war within a war, a destruction of earth without a chance for redemption. Gluttony is the Tyrant, made of multiple layers of teeth with a regal crown in its terrible mouth and a papal hat on its head. This figure knocks his full plate to the floor. On the left of the composition are broken plates of layers of destruction. The cape of Tyranny is the tablecloth. To sit at this table, is to participate in Tyranny's oppression, the greed and excess. For any of these individuals to sit at that table, they are participating in the most egregious violations of ethics and harmony. One of the works featured in my composition is Dutch still life painter, Jan Davidsz. de Heem's *Still Life with Parrots*. It shows the intemperance and the vanity of earthly pleasures. This is a Vanitas of abundance having exceeded its limits. Elements in this painting admonish the beholder against overindulgence: melons, which were thought to produce insanity, or oysters, indicative of sexual excess. My contribution to these traditional themes of still life includes horseshoe crabs mating with dinner plates, as a further exemplar of decadence.



The grey parrot from this painting interacts with another noteworthy fragment: Rembrandt's *Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1633), stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990. The parrot has taken a piece not from the original Rembrandt but from a paper image; this style of painting is *trompe-l'œil*, or "to fool the eye." The effect of this harkens back to Walter Benjamin's concept of authenticity, particularly in application to reproduction. Here the original artwork is a copy, yet through the act of reproduction something is taken from the original, changing its context. What is real? What has value? When all is excess and abundance and the world is collapsing from artifice and war? The parrot becomes the judge, the questioner about what is real and what is fake.

*Good Government* is paradoxically an apocalyptic scene that represents the death and rebirth of a world. Exploring the cyclical nature of earthly existence, this painting was inspired by Thomas Jefferson's statement that, "Every generation needs a revolution." As we face internal and external forces of destruction, we meet with renewal. We build over our failures and persevere through disasters to recover order. The embracing of the cycles of birth and death relieves some of the gravity of earthly existence. My interpretation of good government is an attempt to illustrate the divine task of renewing the cosmos through the renewal of self. Frank Herbert (1920-1986) said, "Government is a shared myth. When the myth dies, the government dies."



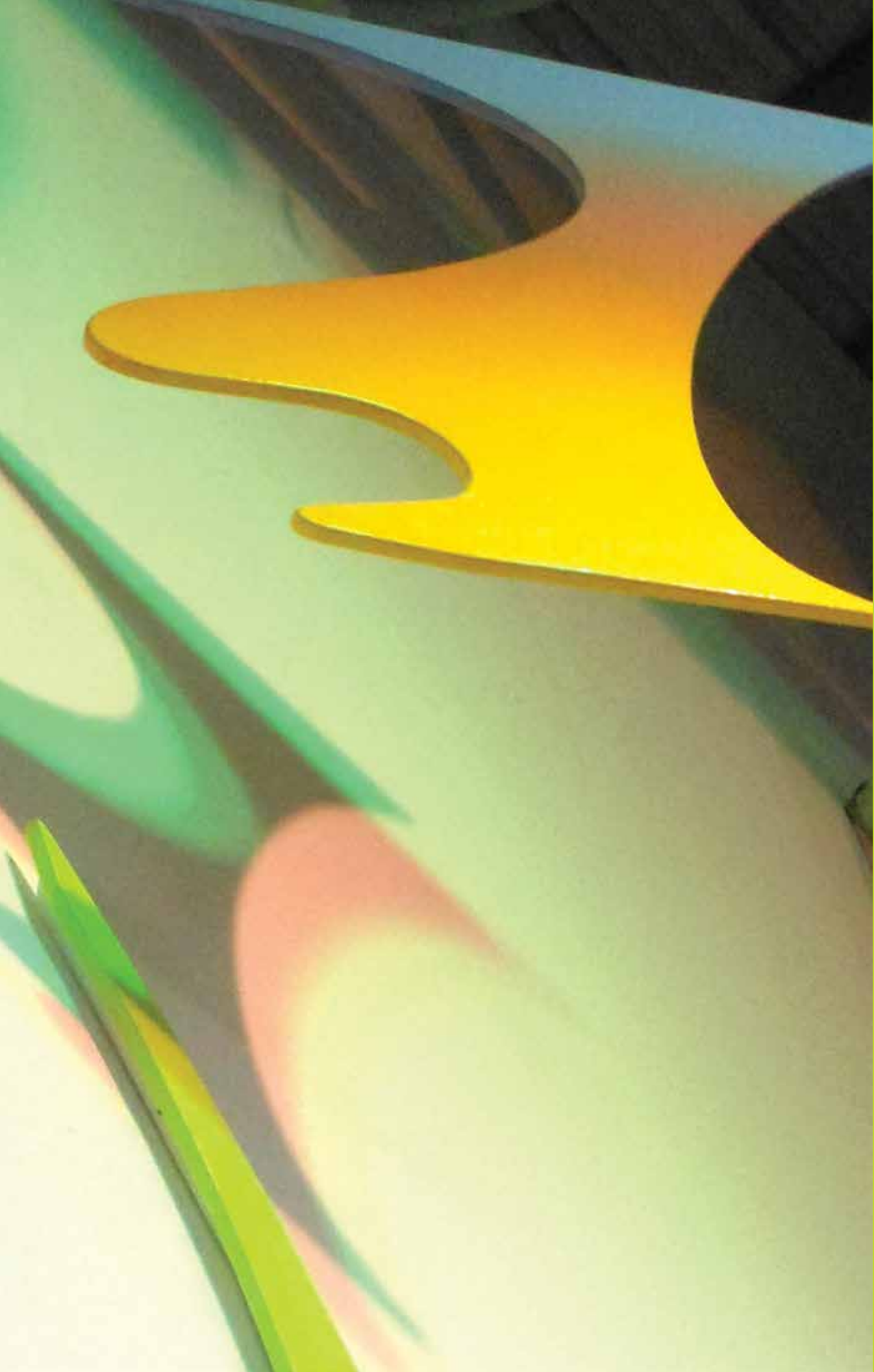
*“Carrie Ann Baade uses art historical references as an anchor for her intricately layered, exquisitely painted, bold compositions. She draws us in through the comfort of these vaguely familiar visual associations, and then confronts us with contemporary issues such as gender equality, sexuality and the struggle to define oneself. Her complex, luscious works are at once reverent, soulful, unsettling and sincere.” —Alix Sloan, Curator, Sloan Fine Art, New York*

Facing Page

◀[top] Jan Davidsz. de Heem (Dutch, 1060-circa 1683/84, active in Antwerp), *Still Life with Parrots*, late 1640s, oil on canvas, 59¼ x 46¼ inches, SN289. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Bequest of John Ringling, 1936.

◀[bottom] Carrie Ann Baade, detail of *Bad Government* (from *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*), 2015, oil on linen, 36 x 48 inches.

▲ Carrie Ann Baade, *Allegory of Good Government*, 2015, oil on linen, 36 x 48 inches.



Ray Burggraf, detail of *Three Dualities*, 2015, acrylic on wood with colored lights and motorized suspended unit, 87 x 84 inches.



## PERCEPTUAL PLEASURES

Florida coastal environs and perhaps even beach-culture airbrush art are strongly reflected in my work. Precise color gradations are my signature; they are hand brushed rather than sprayed. Visual excitement flows like music and builds like progressive architectural morphology. Here, technique and theory work together to bring the language of modernist abstraction into the realm of contemporary landscape.

My abstract paintings and color constructions highlight earth's light and atmosphere. With jewel-like colors, smooth gradations emerge to evoke the grandeur of breathtaking vistas. Thoughts of oceans and the blazes of sunsets burst into creation from acrylic paintings on thin, sinuously-shaped panels of wood. They are a succession of linked landscape scenes remembered.



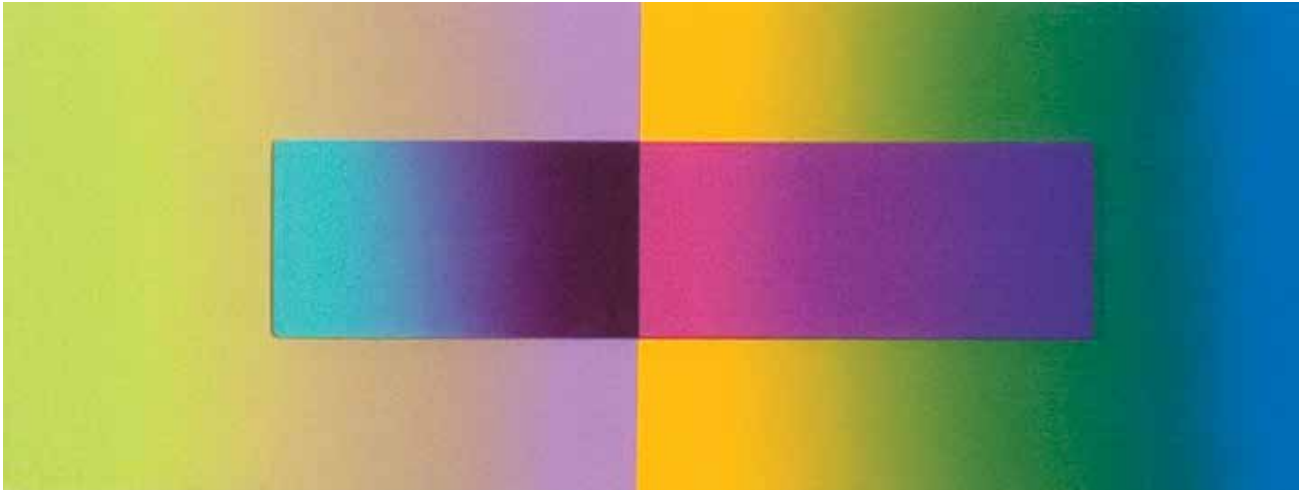
◀The Strobridge Lithographing Company (American, 1867-1960), *Ringling Brothers: Hillary Long*, 1917, ink on paper, 30 x 40¼ inches, ht2001381. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Tibbals Digital Collection.

Facing Page

▶Ray Burggraf, *Quick! Flower Before They Get Us*, 2014, acrylic on wood with suspended motorized rotating unit, 87 x 84 inches.

The initial idea for *Quick!* was a medieval jester as an abstract form. It evolved into an acrobat or tumbler performing. The posters from The Ringling Museum collection are a similar inspiration. In *Quick!*, the central axis with limb or leaf-like projections can be seen as either animal or plant life and the upper suspended elements as dual heads or a reproducing seed. With either reading, it is intended to suggest an explosion of energy radiating out from its central core. The rectangular target seemingly projected on part of the spreading flower-like acrobat form introduced for me the idea of a plant being singled out for elimination, as if it were considered a weed. Knowing it has been spotted, what would this hybrid plant/gymnast do? The usual botanical response would be to rush to flower and reproduce while there is still time, hence the title *Quick! Flower Before They Get Us*.





My *Three Dualities* painting in this exhibition relates to James Turrell's *Joseph's Coat, Skyspace* in the collection of The Ringling Museum, which is described as "a triumph of technology, engineering and aesthetics" and "a gathering place for contemplation and sustained experience."<sup>1</sup> According to *Artnews* "Skyspaces — enclosures with apertures at the top that have been strategically crafted to reveal the local qualities of atmospheric light — have become Turrell's signature compositions: to date (2013) he has created 82 sky spaces in 26 countries and 21 in the United States...Turrell's sophisticated command of LED Technology facilitates the more elaborate visual effects in the newer Skyspaces, providing astute lessons about how light obfuscates as well as illuminates what we can see."

Like Turrell's work, my *Three Dualities* encourages unusual angles of viewing and contemplation. Although not composed entirely of light, it does require light and light interference to complete the composition. The special colored light for my work supplied by floods, is green — leaning toward blue green. It is used to force an unusual pink reading of white full-spectrum light illuminating the work.

Bathed in blue-green light, the suspended part of *Three Dualities*, which I call "old two-faced" with its big-nose cartoon profile, rotates and reveals its contribution to the idea of duality by sporting different colors on each side. More importantly, its shadow becomes an additional, constantly shifting fluid form that seems to be both oddly solid and ephemeral at the same time. Also, you can't help but notice that old two-faced is balanced and turning at a very deliberate pace, similar enough to planetary rotation around an axis to remind one of the motion of the earth. This gesture relates to aspects of Turrell's work that heighten our sense of heaven and earth.

On the lower right in *Three Dualities* is my bar code. Many of my recent paintings have this signature device. My bar code is something of a joke that goes "today everything has to have a bar code on it so why not make mine?" It is also a sincere reiteration of the color interactions in the rest of the painting and becomes the third duality suggested by the title.

<sup>1</sup>To view James Turrell's *Joseph's Coat, Skyspace* at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art: <http://www.ringling.org/josephs-coat-skyspace> James Turrell (American, born 1943), *Joseph's Coat, Skyspace*, 2011, concrete, plaster, marble, granite, LED lights, cypress, open space, live plants, overall (approx) 588 x 840 x 840 inches, SN11201. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, *Joseph's Coat* by James Turrell made possible through the support of Peter A. Vogt Family, Robert and Beverly Koski, and Dick and Betty Watt Nimtz, with special acknowledgment to the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation and to Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing.

▲ Ray Burggraf, detail from *Jungle Botanical*, 2014, acrylic on wood.

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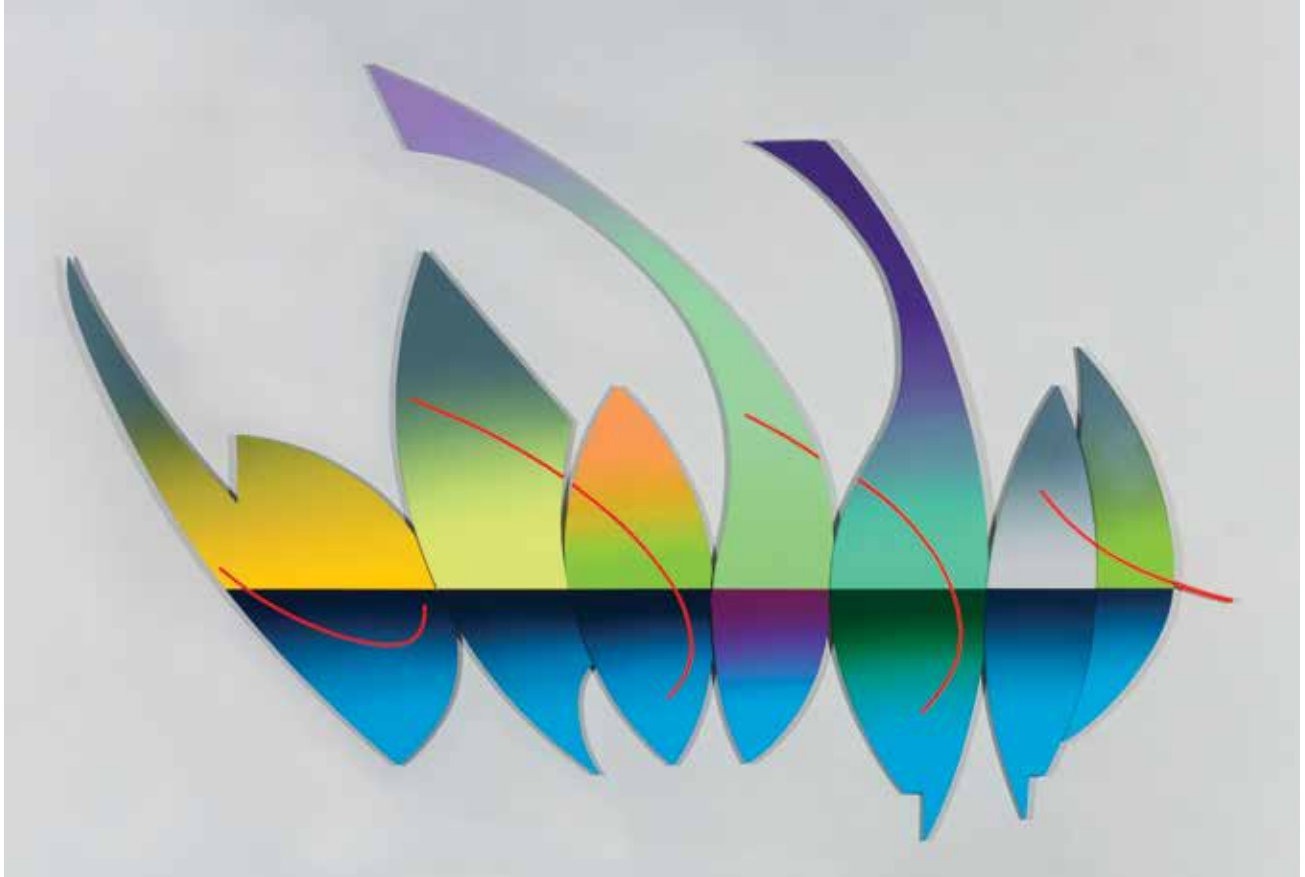
► Ray Burggraf, *Three Dualities*, 2015, acrylic on wood with bar code, colored lights and motorized suspended unit, 87 x 84 inches.



► *Jungle River*: Especially shallow waters in Florida reflect the blue of the sky with a blue-green glow. This brilliant and unreal blue, especially as photographed from beneath the water's surface, is the subject of this painting. Contrasting with the lush tropical growth and exotic plant collections in The Ringling Museum's Bayfront Gardens, this blue water has an especially brilliant blue glow. It is so easy to see and enjoy and so difficult to capture in paint!

▼ *Jungle Botanical*: Back in the day when exotic animals and plants were so unfamiliar that the naturalist had a hard time with anatomical accuracy, in spite of everything some magical art works were made. I chose the primitive looking, but exotic, *Black Rhinoceros* from the collection of The Ringling Museum to help me express a sense of magic and wonder in my abstract blend of plant and animal forms in *Jungle Botanical*. The threatening upturned horn shapes in both *Black Rhinoceros* and *Jungle Botanical* remind us of the dangerous undertaking it is to contemplate such a creature in the wild.



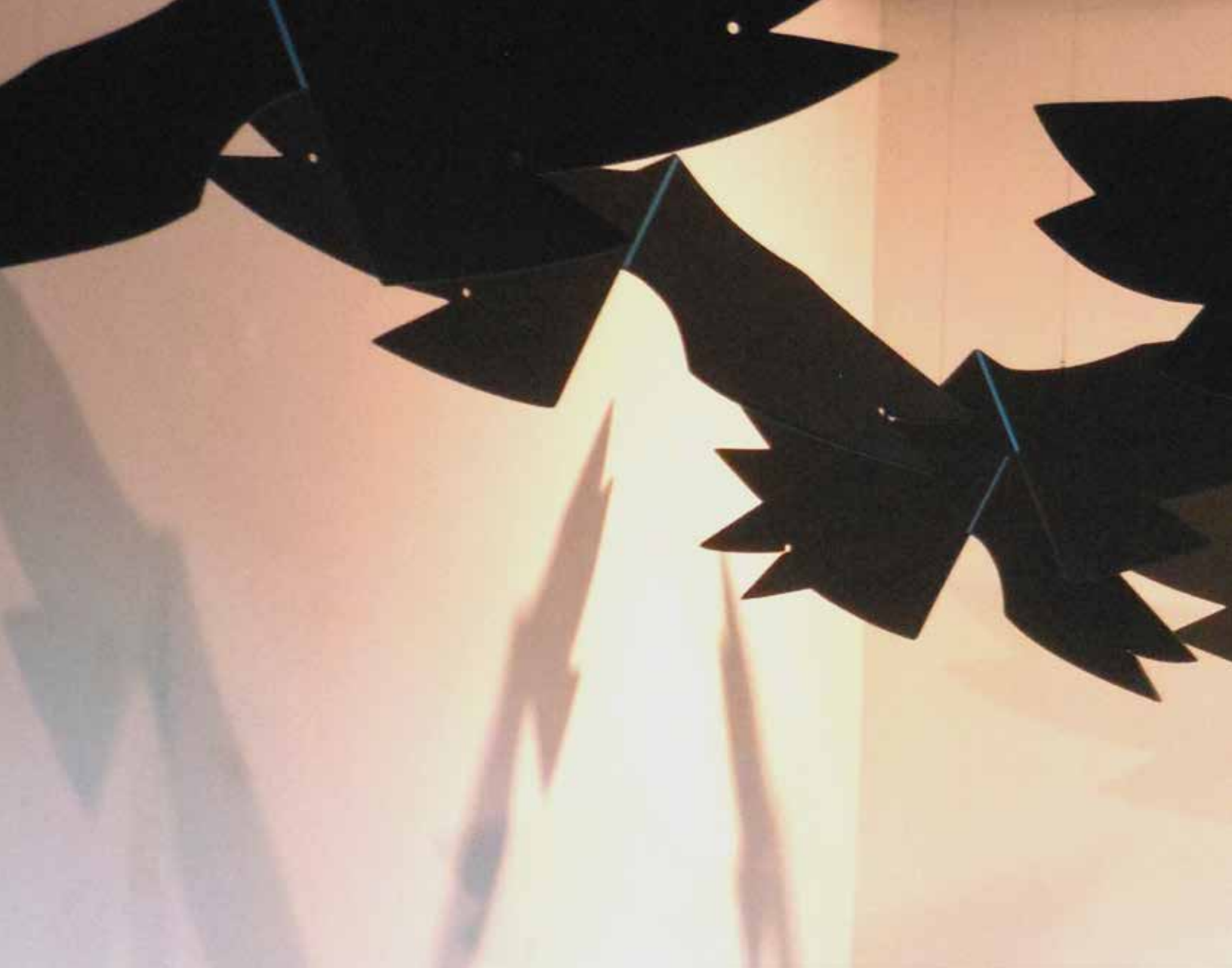


*“Burggraf, it seems, may have his closest affinities, not with his Op art teachers who remained faithful to the ideals of pure abstraction, but with another branch of geometric abstraction with Structurists like Charles Biederman in Chicago or Eli Bornstein in Saskatoon, the latter’s work permeated with the spirit of the landscape of the South Saskatchewan River on whose banks he lives. The Structurists, even as their vocabulary stayed resolutely abstract, took note of how the impressionists, and after them Cezanne, Picasso and Mondrian, explored the structure of nature not by copying nature, but with analogous pictorial languages, responded to the natural world without seeking to mimic it. Burggraf would agree with them that art should build its principles on the evidence of our visual senses. He has therefore set out to hone his capacities of observation, looking intensely at nature and as painstakingly translating his findings about the relations of its southern forms, colors, spaces and light into his eye-dazzling painting constructions.” —Roald Nasgaard, Emeritus Professor of Art History, Florida State University, from Ray Burggraf Retrospective, 2006.*

Facing Page

◆ Ray Burggraf, *Jungle Botanical*, 2014, acrylic on wood, 78 x 72 inches.

▲ Ray Burggraf, *Jungle River*, 2013, acrylic on wood, 55 x 83 inches.



▲Ray Burggraf, detail of *Sky Shadows*, 2015, acrylic on wood, twelve suspended, air activated units and one wall unit, two suspended unit sizes: (3) 20 x 41 inches, (9) 16 x 32 inches, wall unit: 20 x 41 x 16 inches.

◆Courier Co. (American, 19th century), *Montgomery Queens California Circus: Beautiful Plumaged Birds*, no date, ink on paper, ½ sheet (H): 22 x 25 ½ inches, ht2001227. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Tibbals Digital Collection.



**M**anipulating discarded wood shapes in the studio, I happened onto this abstract bird form. Painted black, it became a soaring shape high in the sky: a total optical negative against an imagined sunny-bright background. Abstract enough to avoid being a buzzard or crow, it could be suspended to freely turn in ambient air currents. I made a group of these to hang together to suggest a flock, sometimes moving together and sometimes in opposition. My chosen inspirational bird image from The Ringling Museum archives doesn't have many sky shapes, but instead reminds me of my original discovery of bird shapes. In *Beautiful Plumaged Birds* the exotic creatures are animated, not by what they are doing, but by the interaction of their shapes as abstract forms.



Lillian Garcia-Roig, detail of *Hyperbolic Nature: Florida Vines*, 2008, oil on canvas, 60 x 96 inches.

**Lilian Garcia-Roig**

## CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF LOOKING

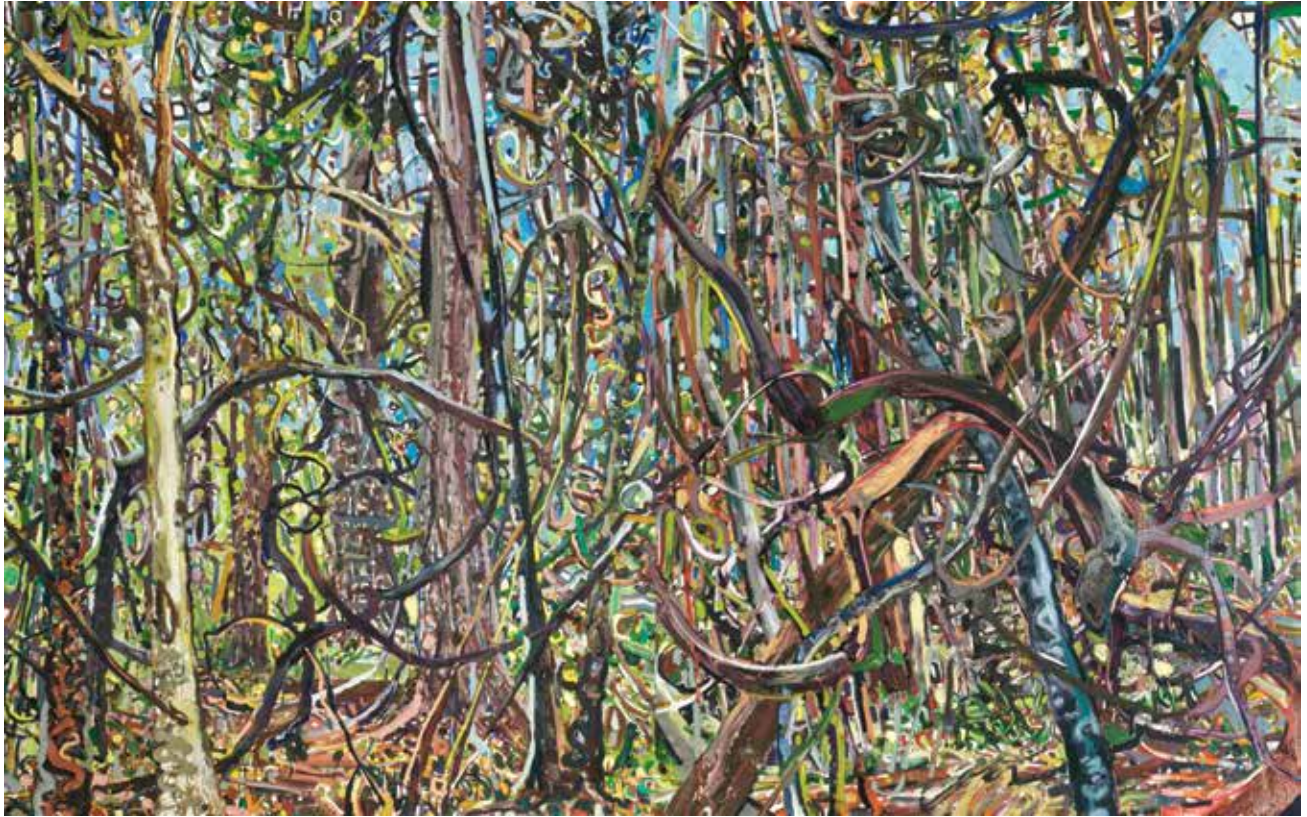
**M**y latest works feature large-scale on-site painting installations of dense, natural landscapes that overwhelm the viewer's perceptual senses. Each individual painting is created over the course of the day in an intense wet-on-wet cumulative manner that underscores the complex nature of trying to capture first-hand the multidimensional and ever-changing experience of being in that specific location. These "all-day" plein-air paintings have become documents of a real-time process: the accumulation of fleeting moments, the experience of the day. The works are as much about the materiality of the paint and the physicality of the painting process as they are about mixing and melding the illusionist possibilities of painting with its true abstract nature.



▲Lilian Garcia-Roig, *Hyperbolic Nature: La Florida*, 12 x 13 feet, from the show *Sight Specific* at the McKinney Avenue Contemporary in Dallas, 2013.

Facing Page

►Lilian Garcia-Roig, *Hyperbolic Nature: Florida Vines*, 2008, diptych, oil on canvas, 60 x 96 inches.



*Lilian Garcia-Roig's works are "tour de force reinvestigations of the plein-air painting tradition."*  
 —Barbara O'Brien, Curator, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri, *New American Paintings*.

The paintings in the *Cumulative and Hyperbolic Nature* series represent the first works that I produced over the course of the entire day, rather than over multiple half-day sessions. This seemingly subtle shift was the result of my desiring more, rather than less, change in light and colors on my subject and thus placing more of an emphasis on the "performative" nature of my on-site painting practice. I find the passing of time and the changing of light to be essential and welcome elements in the creation of my works. While painting, I continuously focus in and out at various depths. As the light changes over time, different features become highlighted, come to my attention, and are recorded on the canvas. This method achieves an expanded sense of space and time in my work by evoking more than is naturally seen at a single glance. Since I am integrating many moments, my process is more like that of an actor who knows her characters (color/space/shape) and script (changing light) and uses each performance to discover another nuance. In this sense, my paintings are both preconceived and entirely spontaneous.

I like to show my individually conceived paintings as large installations of closely hung, formally connected works that offer a sense of compelling *overwhelmingness* to the viewer. By creating the illusion of recognizable landscape, I draw the viewer into what is first perceived from a distance as a conventional space. Up close, however, the images break down and the lush, gestural paint marks, the squeezed-out paint patches and the occasional areas of raw canvas help, instead, to reinforce the two-dimensional abstract and material character of painting itself. I want to draw you in and then to push you out. All in all, I want the viewer to come away believing that more information, more square footage, more complexity, more time, more abstraction, more representation, more paint, etc., even in a single image, can add up to a more powerful and rewarding visual experience. I believe that, in fact, one can do more with more. I desire to grow comfortable with complexity and hope the viewer will feel the tension of a chaotic representation, harnessed by a recognizable formal coherence.

The banyan tree's longevity and cathedral-like grandeur and scale are impressive. I thought the walking expansions of their aerial roots and support trunks, in the groves around The Ringling estate, could function as a metaphor for how we migrate and settle, or lay down family roots in an area over time...the roots turning into the supportive trunks, the first generation creating and nurturing the next until eventually the new offshoot/roots support the growing canopy. As an immigrant, I know how "sense of place" and "belonging" and "community" (or lack of it) greatly influence the construction of personal identity, and I am drawn to the dynamic collective the banyans represent.

In making *Banyan as Metaphor*, I drew from both old (Peter Paul Rubens, Diego Velazquez) and modern (Robert Henri) painterly masters who created images that were specific in an illusionistic way but also left traces of their brush strokes as evidence of the process of painting and materiality of the paint. I was also influenced by contemporary artists interested in ideas of perception and the relative nature of color (Josef Albers, James Turrell, David Hockney) in The Ringling Collection. Given the grand scale of The Ringling's banyan trees, it was obvious to me to use monumental-scale Rubens' *The Triumph of the Eucharist* cycle and riff on his visually fluid but dense, High Baroque style to create a counterpoint to Albert Bierstadt's romantic vision of a tranquil sublime nature.

*Banyan as Metaphor* will strongly relate to David Hockney's photographic collages that create an expanded overall view of a scene: they are composed of numerous individual images taken over a period of time and from different viewpoints and perspectives. Instead of using a camera, my documentation proceeds from working on-site and independently painting different parts of the banyan trees. Utilizing photographs as a reference for my work may seem like a convenient tool to use but photographs cannot capture what the eyes see, in real time and place. Even with numerous photos of the scene in front of me, taken with various focal depths over the course of the day, the resulting images are too unidimensional and flat, both in illusionistic space and color depth. Photography, like painting, is its own medium with its own strengths and limitations. Working on-site allows me to see more (the full perceptual range) of nature's intensity, as it is revealed to me over the course of the day.



◀David Hockney, *Christopher Isherwood Talking to Bob Holman, Santa Monica, March 14, 1983*, photographic collage, edition of 20, 43½ x 64½ inches, © David Hockney, SN8970. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Museum purchase, 1986.

Facing Page

▶Lilian Garcia-Roig, one of the individual *Banyan as Metaphor* (M2) paintings (middle row, second from left), 2015, 60 x 48 inches.

●Overleaf, pages 38-39

Lilian Garcia-Roig, Ringling installation view of *Banyan as Metaphor*, 2015, 14 x 20 feet (15 panels).

Lilian Garcia-Roig "has mastered the art of keeping tactile materiality and the optics of representation in balance and in productive tension." —Richard Shiff, *Professor of Art History, University of Texas, Austin*, "Catching up with the Instant," in Lilian Garcia-Roig: *En Plein-Sight* (Polk Museum of Art, 2011).





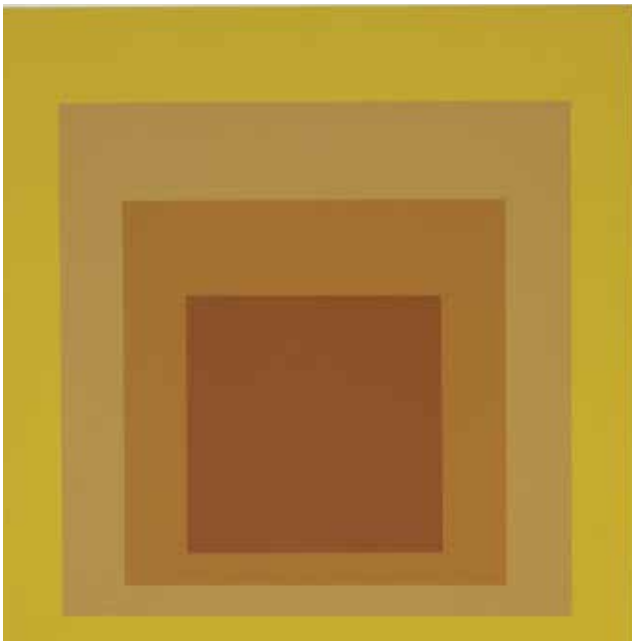


Detail of a painting by [illegible]



In this post-modern era where all is fair game in the chaos that is the new order and a multiplicity of styles clash and merge, I seek a balance between description and total abstraction, as well as between specificity and generalization as I subvert yet reaffirm the classic image over time.

*Plein-air* painting could be considered to be an act of defiance in our virtualized world but as passé as it may seem to some, my painting practice is both relevant and potent to me. I believe that the very act of making and viewing perceptually based, *plein-air* painting invites discourse on our own ability to have a meaningful, even sublime experience of nature today. As I continue to work in and with nature, I think about what Thoreau said: "You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment." There is a similar imperative and urgency about my paintings. There is a strong sense in my works that nature is intoxicatingly near and yet unreachable...just out of one's grasp. Nature won't settle down, be passive, or ever fully reveal itself; but, at the same time, it will offer us more than we seek. I can only hope my paintings can do the same.



▲Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577-1640, active in Antwerp and throughout Europe), *Portrait of Archduke Ferdinand*, 1635, oil on canvas, 45 ¾ x 37 inches, SN626. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Museum purchase, 1948.

◆Josef Albers, *Homage to the Square*, 1970s, screen print, 11 x 11 inches, SN8551.16. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Robert Feitz, in memory of her husband. © 2015 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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►Lilian Garcia-Roig, detail of *Banyan as Metaphor (M2)* paintings (middle row, second from left), 2015, 60 x 48 inches.

*"The plein air paintings by Lilian Garcia-Roig occupy the border between painting and sculpture. Creating tactile surfaces that show how the process of seeing is related to physically feeling." —Arte al Dia International, October 18, 2012 review of "Medios y Ambientes," at El Chopo Museum.*





Mark Messersmith, detail of *Wild as Angels*, 2012, oil on canvas with carved wooden top parts and mixed media predella box, 65 x 82 inches.

**Mark Messersmith**



◀Albert Bierstadt (American, 1830-1902), *Indian Encampment, Mono Lake, California*, c. 1870, oil on canvas, 14 1/8 x 20 1/8 inches, MF86.6. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Bequest of Carl C. Busch, 1986.

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▶Mark Messersmith, *Those Left Behind*, 2013, oil on canvas with carved wooden top and side parts and mixed media predella boxes, 90 x 70 inches.

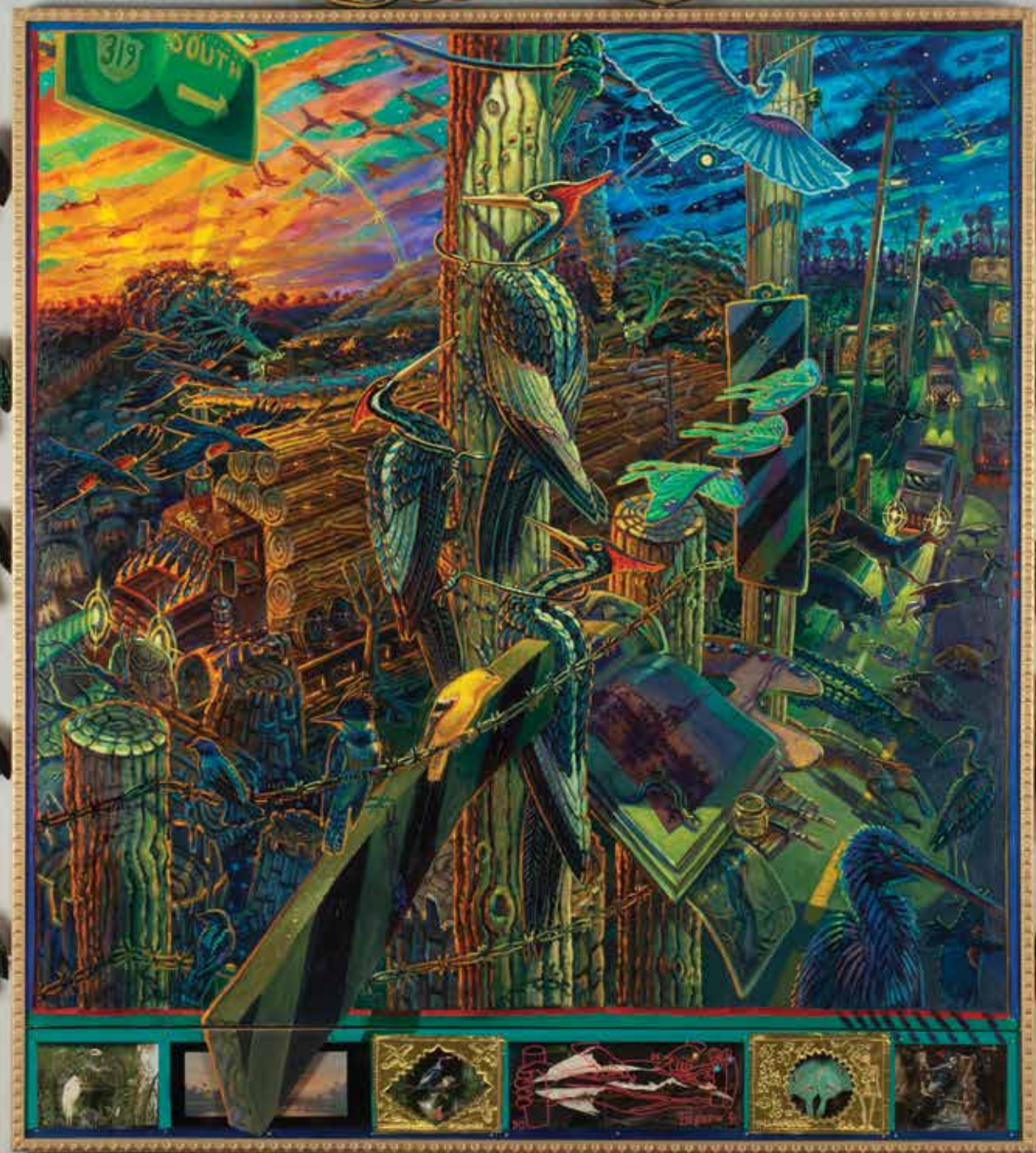
## FADED ROMANTIC

For a number of years, I've had an interest in reaching back to reconnect with an artistic lineage of American landscape painting from the late nineteenth century, focusing on a group of painters who came to Florida from the Northeastern United States immediately following the Civil War: artists such as Martin Johnson Heade, George Inness, Thomas Moran and Winslow Homer to name but a few. They came with, and often painted, romantic visions of this exotic southern landscape. Though they looked at this world as artists with some scientific curiosity and concerns, they still managed to view and paint it through the field glasses of dreamy romantics.

Unlike Bierstadt's 19th century romantic vision of Manifest Destiny, my paintings are of that once-seeming inexhaustible natural world, only now, seeing the price for that misguided vision. To paraphrase historian Francis Parkman, Indians, animals, even nature itself is "destined to melt and vanish before the advancing waves of Anglo-American power," which "rolled westward unchecked and unopposed" in the nineteenth century. Even as early as the 1870s, prophetic artists like Bierstadt foresaw this fate, though surely not to the current level of decimation.

My work explores themes of spirit and struggle within modern Florida's "natural environment:" lands and creatures that still manage to survive, though often in small isolated natural habitats, and effects of inevitable forced migration, dislocation and destruction of most of Florida's once rich and unique flora and fauna. Critics have used "apocalyptic" and "iridescent cacophony of theatrical landscapes" to describe my work. You won't see mushroom clouds in my painting, but in some cases there are implied threats like oil refineries, cities and logging trucks.

*"Messersmith's frantically busy style 'Maximalism'. His compositions crackle with electric energy, like Audubon prints zapped with St. Elmo's fire. He further complicates his canvases by adding hand-carved wooden frames inspired by medieval manuscripts, festooned with glinting broken glass fishing lures and glitter — plus wooden birds and butterflies dangling like puppets from wires. If a disconcerting sense of ecological collision was Messersmith's goal, then he has succeeded in spades."* —Bradley Sumrall, 2012, Chief Curator Ogden Museum of Southern Art





## MAN VERSUS NATURE

**D**ogs are a reference to humans. The dogs have choke chain collars so it's clear they've been trained to do and be what they are. You see them running through the woods raising havoc towards all the other creatures — they're always the perpetrators of ill deeds on the human's behalf against all nature, "chthonic monsters" like the Calydonian Boar or the Florida panther or ivory billed woodpecker. Still, even today, powerful birds, vigilant panthers, wary gators, blackwater swamps, old cypress trees, are still managing to survive in Florida and in my paintings, along with back road citrus stands, and careening logging trucks. These paintings are really of a time and place, midway between hope and despair.



▲ Mark Messersmith, carved wooden top for *Malaise of Discontent*, 2014.

◆ Jan Fyt (1611-1661, active in Antwerp and others), *Atalanta and Meleager Hunt the Calydonian Boar*, 1648, oil on canvas, 96 x 181 7/8 inches. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Bequest of John Ringling, 1936.

Facing Page

► Mark Messersmith, *Progress of the Waiting*, 2013, oil on canvas with carved wooden parts, 102 x 83 inches.

*"Mark Messersmith's solo show titled Blighted Eden at Bernice Steinbaum Gallery is an exhaustive bio-circus that, literally, turns tragic with miniature 'staged' scenes in plexiglass predella boxes at the lower edge of each work. Delicate paper cutouts of finches, reptiles and insects float within; each cell is a subtle narrative of the evolution and destruction of the tangled, Northern Florida wetlands and jungles where Messersmith pools his memories. On the immense canvases themselves (reaching dimensions of six by seven feet), a veritable catalogue of local wildlife teems and slithers rendered in tropical, Technicolor palettes of indigos, lime-greens and fiery reds. The environments are dramatic: a clash of techniques and historical traces triggering Rousseau's faraway exotics, Audubon's razor-sharp illustrations and pre-Renaissance icons embellished with finely carved wood ornaments." — Miami Art Guide, August 2011*



My paintings often reflect my fascination with the great religious paintings and illustrated manuscripts of the High Renaissance. The sculpted woodcut pediments on top of the paintings and the little predella boxes at the bottom allude to the delicate painted scrolls and flourishes that decorated the margins of medieval manuscripts, books of hours and Renaissance altar paintings. All of my large paintings have small predella boxes across the bottom containing miniature paintings and found-object assemblages. Painted predellas were a commonly used convention in early Christian altarpieces and they tell a loose, usually chronologically-ordered narrative from left to right. In my predellas, the left panels tend to be more naturalistic, optimistic, or benign. As the story reads to the right, it becomes somewhat darker and more fatalistic.



●Mark Messersmith, details from bottom portion of *Wild as Angels*, 2012, carved wood, mixed media predella boxes.

Facing Page

►Mark Messersmith, central panel of *Wild as Angels*, 2012, oil on canvas, 65 x 82 inches.



*"Beyond the feast for the eyes, Messersmith palatably presents the ominous fate of the ethereal 'wilderness'; without direct reference to zoning, lumbering or other violent enterprises, he orchestrates a biological opera on a physically and intellectually epic scale."* —Miami Art Guide, August 2011



## ANIMAL EMBELLISHMENTS

will often hang three-dimensional objects such as carved flowers, birds, moths, in front of the paintings to give them an element of real depth. Painting has an illusion and magical power to convince. These three dimensional objects hanging in front or on the sides of the paintings have to be about life size. The edges and surface of the canvas is that magic point where the painted world meets our reality. These real objects must relate to the painting and that moment where illusion and reality slam together. Sort of three-dimensional versions of two-dimensional trompe-l'oeil.



▲Sells-Foto & Buffalo Bill Wildwest; Hagenback-Wallace (American), *Elephant Bandwagon*, circa 1906, wood, iron, 156 x 97 x 204 inches, SN1858. Collection of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

◆Mark Messersmith, *Elegance of the Disguised*, 2014, oil on canvas with carved wooden parts, crutch and mixed media boxes on side, 92 x 90 inches.

Facing Page

►Mark Messersmith, *Vapid Visionaries*, 2010, oil on canvas with carved wooden top parts and mixed media predella box, 65 x 82 inches.

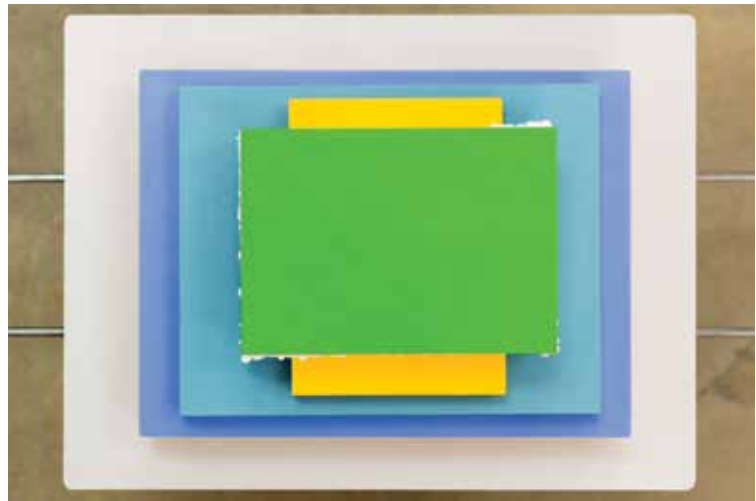
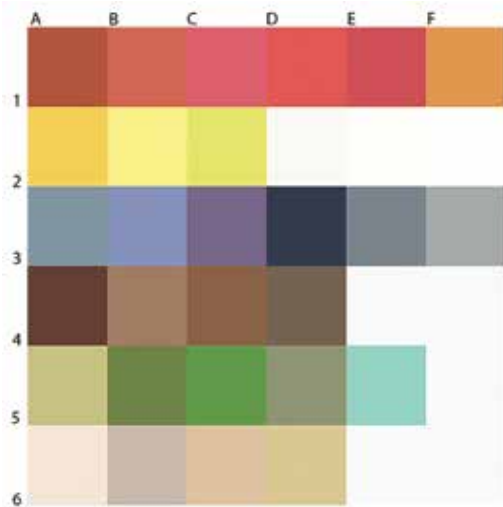


**vapid:** *adjective* | vap-id | \ˈvā-ped, ˈvā- | : not lively or interesting : dull or boring. Offering nothing that is stimulating or challenging: Is about the collecting of things, objects, animals, land, paintings, whatever, without any real feeling or appreciation of the true value of what they lay claim to or the context from which they came.



Judy Rushin, detail of *Here Today*, 2015, vinyl paint on panels, repurposed shipping crates, artist easels, packing foam, wood, steel, ink, wheels, paper, plastic.

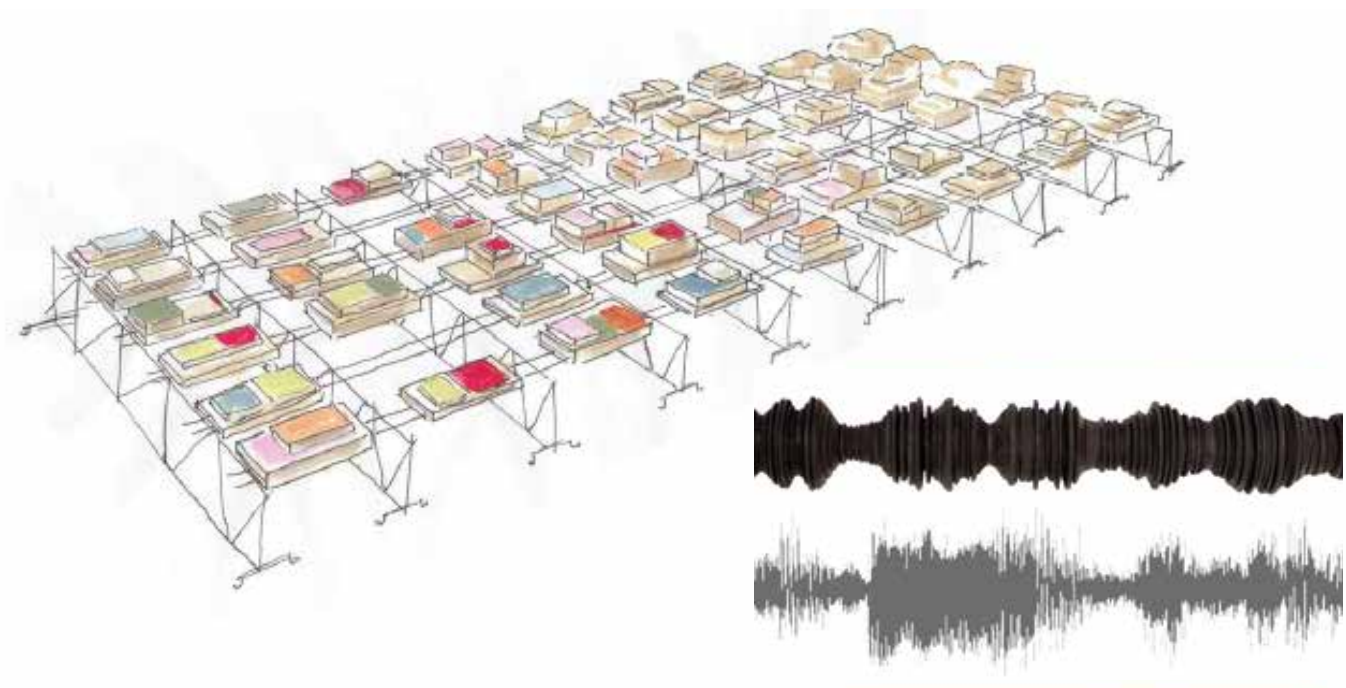
**Judy Rushin**



## MOVEMENT AT REST

Flat surfaces, as level as planes but also without sheen, sit in neat stacks just inches from the floor. There are many colors, as many as twelve or fifteen — maybe more, maybe too many — and in their current condition they seem like even more. Albers was onto something in his Black Mountain sanctuary. He knew how to make colors dance, and he knew that all the electricity lived in the edges where they meet. Colors vibrate together there at the edges, affecting each other like singers harmonizing. Turrell knows. Go pay your five dollars and lie down under the *Joseph's Coat* Skyspace. You won't regret it.

There is a jump where my edges would meet were I “the square man” — two or three colors stacked one on top of the other, but with an inch or two of frame acting like a ground wire that holds each color safely within its field. Jessica Stockholder has said that the frame establishes a dike that has been holding for centuries against the force of real life flowing on the other side.<sup>1</sup> The dike holds the power of painting, of artistic narratives, and the quietly creeping lineage of picture making.



I close my eyes and imagine the circus pulling up its stakes. Everything is packed away in road worthy boxes and crates, organized by act, by performer, by function. All the sequined costumes and props used by acrobats, balancers, plate spinners, contortionists, and clowns are stacked in an interminable row. Stilts, unicycles, Spanish webs, wheel of death, cannons, ladders, platforms, and rings form another. All of that variation is reduced now to colored rectangles. Multiplicity becomes repetition, uniformity. Here today, gone tomorrow.

The monotony is satisfying because it is non-restrictive. I am not confined by the specific visual inventory of the circus or sequences of events that got it from one place to another. You can get bogged down in the details or float on the uniform sea.

Cezanne painted a picture of his wife and it had a deeply profound effect on the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. He said "...the Salon is closing today. And already, as I'm leaving it, on the way home for the last time, I want to go back to look up a violet, a green, or certain blue tones which I believe I should have seen better, more unforgettably."<sup>2</sup>

The picture Cezanne painted may have been as much about his love affair with color as with his wife.

There is no armchair in my painting, no figure, no fishbowl. Only rectangles and color fields. Neti pots for your eyes. It is the story of my labor, the hidden gesture in a honed surface, the delight I take in colors, and my commitment to the mutual generosity that exists between the artist and the viewer.



<sup>1</sup>Stockholder, Jessica. *Swiss Cheese Field – And Sculpture Mingled: What Is The Field and What Is Sculpture?* 2008. <http://jessicastockholder.info/projects/writing/swiss-cheese-field-and-sculpture-mingled/>

<sup>2</sup>Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Paris, VIe, 29, rue Cassette, October 22, 1907.*

#### Facing Page

◀[top left] Colors sampled from *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey: 100 Railway Cars*.

◀[top right] Judy Rushin, detail of *Here Today*, 2015.

◀[bottom] Judy Rushin, sketch and detail (hand-turned representations of Roger Miller's *King of the Road* audio files, each depicting a different segment of the song) of *Here Today*, 2015.

▶[top] The Strobridge Lithographing Company (American, 1867-1960), *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey: 100 Railway Cars*, 1923, ink on paper, 28 x 42 ¼ inches, ht2001436. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Tibbals Digital Collection.

▶[bottom] Miles White (American), 1914-2000, *Swatchcard*, 1952, fabric on board, 13 ¼ x 19 inches, ht3000564. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Tibbals Digital Collection.





# "SLIDE NOT SLUMP"

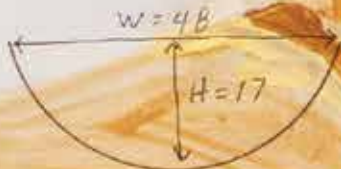
THE INCREDIBLE FEAT OF DERRING-DO

*impossible*

HANGS FROM  
GALLERY WALL  
12-14' UP  
STRAIGHT DOWN  
TO EMPH.  
DANGER

WHAT?  
SOMETHING AT TOP  
A BEGINNING

2 BOLD BLACK  
STRIPE S  
VINYL STRAPPING  
(PATIO FURN. REHAB)



$$\frac{17}{2} + \frac{48^2}{8(17)} = R \quad 8.5 + \frac{2304}{136}$$

$$8.5 + 16.94 = 25.4$$

BRACING AT BOTTOM  
FOR ARC LIKE PHOTO  
REF.  
MAKE FROM 1x1 SCRAP



In the past I have made compositions called slumps — panels leaning low on walls and arching into a drape on the floor. In my research at The Ringling Circus Museum Archives I found a photograph of two circus performers diving head first onto a long slide. I realized that with the smallest nuance, the same sculptural gesture could take on new meaning, moving from something that needs support to something that provides it.

Facing Page

◆ Judy Rushin, sketch for *Slide'not'Slump*, 2015.

▲ Judy Rushin, *Slump: Co-Lab*, 2012.

► Untitled photograph of jump onto long slide, no date, black and white photo print, 5 ½ x 4 ¾ inches, ht0001874. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Tibbals Digital Collection.

● Overleaf, pages 56-57

Judy Rushin, *Here Today*, 2015, vinyl paint on panels, repurposed shipping crates, artist easels, packing foam, wood, steel, ink, wheels, paper, plastic.

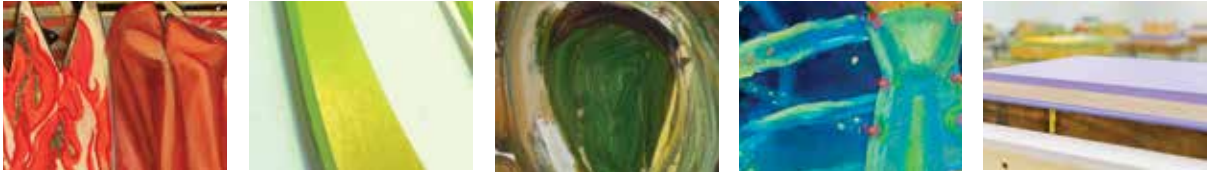


*“Indeed, if practical necessity is the unintended muse of most projects (unless your name is Jeff Koons), Rushin’s Modular paintings offer the idea of practical necessity as an evocative conceptual and material framework. There’s a clear immediacy to them, perhaps because they reflect our own untethered geographies.” —Matt Smith Chavez, New American Paintings*

►Judy Rushin, *Slide'not'Slump*, 2015, lacquer and vinyl on wood with metal support, approximately 36 x 10 x 5 feet.



## ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHIES



### CARRIE ANN BAADE

As a native born Louisianan, Carrie Ann Baade has deep southern roots but she has traveled and studied painting history and techniques around the world. Since moving to Tallahassee in 2006, she has continued to actively exhibit nationally and internationally.

Baade was awarded the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowship in 2010, the Delaware Division of the Arts Fellowship for Established Artists in 2005, and was nominated for the prestigious United States Artist Fellowship in 2006 and the Joan Mitchell Grant in 2012. Her work has been exhibited in museums and galleries, including recent solo exhibitions at the Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, the Rosenfeld Gallery in Philadelphia, Billy Shire Fine Arts in Los Angeles, the Ningbo Art Museum in China, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville, Florida.

Baade received her Masters in Painting from the University of Delaware and her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago that included one year of study at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy. The *NY ARTS Magazine*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Austin Chronicle*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, and *Philadelphia Today* have reviewed her work. She currently lives and works in Tallahassee where she is an Associate Professor of Painting and Drawing at Florida State University. Website: [carriennaade.com](http://carriennaade.com)

### RAY BURGGRAF

Ray Burggraf grew up on an Ohio farm and then attended the Cleveland Institute of Art where he worked with painters influenced by the German Bauhaus movement of the '30s and Op Art of the '60s that helped shape his artistic style. He received the BFA degree in 1968.

From Cleveland, Ray went to California and UC Berkeley where he developed his interest in Bauhaus-style color theory and gradations of color, encouraged by the unique California sunlight. He received both the MA and MFA degrees from Berkeley in 1970.

Arriving in Florida, Ray taught painting and color theory at Florida State University. After 37 years, he retired with Professor Emeritus status in 2007. He continues to paint and exhibit his work and maintains a studio in the popular Railroad Square Art Park. His work reflects a farmer's affinity for the land, a Californian's appreciation of light and color, and a Floridian's experience of atmospheric and oceanic moods.

For more information: Ray's biography can be found in Wikipedia at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray\\_Burggraf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Burggraf). Examples of his recent national public art projects are at FSU in the Student Life Center, the Student Wellness Center and the New Psychology Building. He is also listed in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Volume 21: Art, by Judith H. Bonner, UNC Press, 2013, as "contributing to our understanding of southern landscape." Website: [rayburggraf.com](http://rayburggraf.com)

## LILIAN GARCIA-ROIG

Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1966, she was raised and worked in Texas for 30 years, but for the past 13 years has lived and worked in Tallahassee, Florida. She has shown nationally at such places as the Americas Society Gallery in New York, the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Art Museum of the Americas, both in Washington, DC, and extensively in the south, especially in Texas and Florida. Internationally, she has shown at the Chopo Museum in Mexico City and Byblos Art Gallery in Verona, Italy.

Her MFA is from the University of Pennsylvania (1990) and her BFA is from Southern Methodist University (1988). From 1991 to 2000 she was a tenured Associate Professor of Studio Art at the University of Texas at Austin and in 2001 was a Visiting Associate Professor at the University of California at Berkeley in the Department of Art Practice before deciding to move to Tallahassee where she became the Director of Graduate Studies in Studio Art from 2002-2008. She is currently a professor at Florida State University where she serves as the Painting and Drawing Area Head.

Major awards include a Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in Painting, a Mid-America Arts Alliance/NEA Fellowship Award in Painting, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowship in painting and a Kimbrough Award from the Dallas Museum of Art. Residencies include: Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Fellowship; Vermont Studio Center Artists Fellowship; MacDowell Colony; Milton & Sally Avery Fellowship; and a visiting artist at the Ludwig Foundation in Havana, Cuba. Website: [liliangarcia-roig.com](http://liliangarcia-roig.com)

## MARK MESSERSMITH

Mark Messersmith, originally from St. Louis, was struck when he arrived in Tallahassee, 30 years ago, by the wild nature that exists in Florida, even though it has become somewhat fragmented. He became fascinated with exploring the point of tension between the exotic world and the intrusive human presence that continues to destroy it.

In his 30 years of living in Florida and teaching at FSU, he has shown extensively in the southeast and has had his paintings exhibited in Canada, Italy and France. Recent selected solo museum exhibitions include: Huntsville Museum of Art; Ogden Museum of Southern Art; Frost Art Museum; Art Museum of Southeast Texas; Appleton Museum of Art; and Polk Museum of Art. Awards include: the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painting Award; Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowships; and two National Endowment for the Arts/Southern Arts Federation, Regional Fellowship Awards for Emerging Visual Artists; Ford Foundation Artist Fellowships; and a purchase award from the Le Grande Prix, XXXIII Festival International de la Peinture, Cagnes-sur-Mer, France. Website: [markmessersmith.com](http://markmessersmith.com)

## JUDY RUSHIN

Judy Rushin's paintings and installations have been seen by thousands of people in museums, galleries, front yards, and other alternative environments across the US. Her most recent exhibitions include: The Ulrich Museum, Wichita; Terrain Projects, Chicago; Threewalls Project Space, Chicago; The Orlando Museum of Art; Alexander Brest Museum, Jacksonville; Flashpoint Gallery, Washington, DC; Kiang, Atlanta; Co-Lab Projects, Austin. Her interactive project *Variance Invariance* traveled to individuals who engaged her paintings on their own terms and turf, and then traveled back, bearing the imprint and detritus of the places it had been. She has been featured in *Burnaway*, *Modern Art Notes*, *The Washington Post*, and *New American Paintings*, and has received residency fellowships to Anderson Ranch, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and The Hambidge Center. A native of the south, Rushin earned her MFA at Georgia State University and currently lives in Tallahassee where she is an Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in Art at Florida State University. Website: [swallowwindchime.com](http://swallowwindchime.com)

BACK AND FORTH

thinking in paint