

Jenelle Porter

MAXI-  
MALISM  
NOW!

Less is more.

Mies van der Rohe

Less is a bore.

Robert Venturi

More is more.

Everyone in the 1980s

More may not be enough.

Robert Kushner

“Maximalism” is a term that has been used to describe music, literature, architecture, art, and fashion. On Wikipedia (what’s more maximal than Wikipedia, the ultimate ingathering, for better or worse?) I learned that a group of early twentieth-century maximalist musicians embraced heterogeneity and complexity. Maximal literature is described with (a lot of) words like “digression, reference, and elaboration of detail” and “excessive, overtly complex and showy, providing redundant overkill in features and attachments, grossness of quantity and quality, or the tendency to add and accumulate to excess.” (In a good way!) And this:

Maximalists are called by such an epithet because they, situated in the age of epistemological uncertainty and therefore knowing that they can never know what is authentic and inauthentic, attempt to include . . . everything belonging to that age, to take these authentic and inauthentic things as they are with all their uncertainty and inauthenticity included; their work intends to contain the maximum of the age, in other words, to be the age itself.<sup>1</sup>

In the art world, maximalism has yet to attain minimalism’s critical might. Perhaps maximalism is just too emotional, excessive, disorderly, *overtly complex and showy*. Art critic Robert Pincus-Witten’s maximalist art stake never stuck, despite his launch of the word in his many essays about the “turbulent expressionist resurgence” of 1980s neo-primitivism and expressionism.<sup>2</sup> Had he used maximalism to describe the pluralist era that begat Pattern and Decoration in the 1970s, I think we might have achieved some category leverage. But he didn’t and here we are, angling for a reinvigoration. So, here goes.

Maximalism is an attitude as much as a method. Maximalism welcomes the world into the studio rather than barring the door. Maximalism looks outward rather than inward to the artist’s spiritual and psychic struggle (as in abstract expressionism). Maximalism is the embrace to minimalism’s exclusions. It is hip-hop compared to punk: multiplying layers of samples versus sixty seconds of three chords.

By and large, the artists in *Less Is a Bore: Maximalist Art & Design* subscribe to a maximalist philosophy, which led me to appropriate for the title Robert Venturi’s witty retort to Mies van der Rohe’s modernist edict that “less is more.” Why such a smart and smart-alecky riposte? Venturi, an architect and theorist, saw in the International Style’s glass-and-steel boxes a creative cul-de-sac. So in his influential book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966), Venturi proposed that architecture embrace historical allusion, ornament, and humor. His work and that he did with partners, including most significantly Denise Scott Brown, leaned toward the mannerist, baroque, and rococo, and introduced a postmodern sensibility to architecture. Venturi wrote,

I like elements which are hybrid rather than “pure,” compromising rather than “clean,” distorted rather than “straightforward,” ambiguous rather than “articulated,” perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as “interesting,” conventional rather than “designed,” accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple, vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity. I include the non sequitur and proclaim the duality.<sup>3</sup>

*Less Is a Bore* begins in 1969, soon after Venturi’s rousing text, and continues to the present, dipping into a wide range of artworks made primarily but not exclusively by artists working, or who worked, in the United States. The exhibition surveys a field of creative production that proves decoration, patterning, and ornament to be multivalent and exceedingly adaptable methods to make artworks that play fast and loose with concepts of “high” and “low,” and that reference ideas, forms, and symbols at once personal and political, contemporary and historical, local and global.

At the genesis of all this was a group of artists who adopted the moniker of Pattern and Decoration (P&D) and with their art sought to challenge established hierarchies that privileged fine art over applied art and Western art over other art histories and traditions. Incubated amid the nascent stirrings of pluralism, P&D intersected painting, sculpture, installation, design, poetry, performance, fashion, and craft. Its first and principal critical advocate was art historian Amy Goldin, who, during a visiting professorship in 1969–70 at the University of California San Diego, focused her teaching on non-Western art. Among her students were Robert Kushner and Kim MacConnel who, later in New York alongside Valerie Jaudon, Joyce Kozloff, Miriam Schapiro, Robert Zakanitch, and others, would formulate a creative alliance, an approach, and a name. It was 1975. For their embrace of decoration, P&D artists were often viewed as contemptuous and polarizing—and they wanted to be. The first P&D group exhibition, *Ten Approaches to the Decorative*, was organized in 1976 by artist Jane Kaufman for the Alessandra Gallery in New York.<sup>4</sup> Critical notice and commercial success were swift to follow, lasting into the mid-1980s after which the movement had run its course.

P&D artists were interested in color; patterning and floral motifs; surface density and energy; the grid; non-Western visual culture and mimetic appropriations of wallpaper, fabrics, carpets, and quilts; Islamic tile work; Celtic and Gothic architecture; Byzantine, Roman, and Mexican mosaic; embroidery; and Iranian and Indian miniatures. Some P&D artists were key to the feminist art movement and gestured in their art to so-called domestic materials such as fabric and “women’s work” such as needlework. Their art was at once an affirmation and an “anti-” response, as exemplified by Kozloff’s 1976 statement “Negating the Negative,” written for *Ten Approaches to the Decorative*. A rejoinder to abstract painter Ad Reinhardt’s

unpublished notes “On Negation,” Kozloff’s list begins with “anti-pure” and continues through a host of “anti-” positions: anti-minimalist, anti-boring, anti-linguisticized, anti-cold, anti-dogmatic, anti-colorless, etc. What bound the P&D artists was not similarity but rather, as art historian Anna C. Chave notes, a shared “vision of multi-cultural, non-sexist, non-classist, non-racist, non-hierarchical art.”<sup>5</sup>

But artists associated with P&D were not the only ones dismantling hierarchies at the time. Consider Sol LeWitt’s color wall drawings, which he began in the mid-1970s; Jennifer Bartlett’s postminimalist serial paintings; Lucas Samaras’s witty chairs; and Venturi Associates’ flowery *Grandmother* fabric. These works cohere in a convincing portrait of an era in which the act of mixing and matching across eras and cultures was not only desirable but imperative. As Jaudon described,

Today it is almost impossible for anyone to understand the intolerant conformity of the early 70’s institutional art world, its museums, galleries and critics. Not only was the “mainstream” narrow, but there were no models, art historical or otherwise, to guide one out of the modernist box. The dominant assumption that an artwork could be understood on its own terms, without recourse to extraneous personal, political, historical, social, or cultural factors was unquestioned. A restriction of perception to formal aesthetic qualities, in other words, an aesthetics of exclusion, seemed to echo social exclusion. There was a strong feeling that contemporary American art, and its “pure” criticism, had now supplanted Europe. This aesthetic nationalism, with its rigid criticism and its prescriptive effect on artists, paralleled a very real nationalistic America with a strong military presence in Europe and Asia.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the possibilities of feminism, pluralism, and globalism, the 1970s in the United States were plagued by recession, deteriorating social institutions, urban riots, Vietnam, protests, and political upheaval. In New York City, the locus of the art market, financial decline defined the decade. But this malaise and faithlessness led to a kind of productive nostalgia: looking back was more generative than looking forward. (A marked contrast to recent political skulduggery in which nostalgia is wielded like a flare gun to incite nationalism.) In architecture, postmodernists assimilated historical and vernacular forms. Fashion parroted art nouveau, Victoriana, and folk art. Culture moved in the direction of recuperating, remixing, recycling, and remodeling.

The decades that followed would be defined, in many ways, by an artist-led dismantling of the residual divisions between fine art, design, and craft, and between the present and the past. *Less Is a Bore* tracks these transformations throughout 1980s postmodern painting and appropriation

art, the emerging multiculturalism and globalism of the 1990s and 2000s, and more recent category-defying practices such as those that seek to expand theories and models of craft. But the exhibition is by no means comprehensive or organized according to tidy categories. Instead it focuses on shared connections among artists and designers who espouse strategies that include pattern, decoration, and maximalism, and on the ways that appropriation, quotation, and borrowing might be reconsidered as tools of fidelity to original sources. Artistic means and ends have shifted radically from 1969 to now. Where once artists had to seek out the artistic traditions of other countries in books and museums and through travel, they now inhabit an era in which the internet instantly delivers all kinds of information and images in a kind of timeless primordial slurry.

### More More More

*What purpose is served by making the distinction between decoration and art? It doesn't make for a neater world. New and ambiguous forms will continue to appear, answering to more than one set of criteria.*

Amy Goldin

By the inaugural P&D meeting in 1975, Miriam Schapiro was an established artist and feminist who, with Judy Chicago, created the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts in 1971. The next year Schapiro introduced fabric collage in her work, calling it femmage. It aligned her with the twentieth-century avant-garde and also connected her to centuries of creative tradition. Schapiro deployed femmage in rigidly geometric yet referential frameworks, as in her *Fan*, *Kimono*, and *Vestiture* series. Clothing and accoutrements allowed her to explore costume, masquerade, and identity, as well as apparel's metaphorical associations with shelter and the architectonic. *Vestiture: Paris Series #2* (1979) derives from Schapiro's grandest declaration of femmage, the majestic *Anatomy of a Kimono* (1976).<sup>7</sup> In both, printed fabrics are affixed to painted canvas in large, flat robe shapes, a motif that allowed the artist to examine costume and gender roles. In 1978 Schapiro introduced femmages in the shape of a fan, one of the most recognizable and recurrent motifs in Asian art—and Western art's appropriation of Asian culture; the form appears in other cultures as well, which Schapiro referenced in *Mexican Memory* (1981).

Valerie Jaudon's *Pantherburn* (1979) mines the visual language of architecture, synthesizing for example, round Romanesque arches and pointed Gothic ones. Her work from the mid-1970s on, especially the paintings associated with the P&D era, is characterized by modular symmetry, impasto surfaces, and monochromatic color with, in some works, the addition

of metallic pigment. Jaudon sought an approach to formalism that embraced subject matter and subjectivity, as well as all manner of the decorative, from weaving to architectural ornamentation. She brilliantly appropriated geometric abstraction and made it her own by defying artist Frank Stella's dictum "What you see is what you see" (as Stella would later do as well), but also, conversely, by deferring to the example of his work. As Chave has noted, Jaudon's works refused "to claim any profound originality; in part by their more unabashed decorativeness . . . [and] in part by their excess," or what the artist describes as "too much repetition, too many curves."<sup>8</sup>

Too much repetition could also describe Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing 280* (1976), among the artist's earliest works to adopt color, albeit in minimalist primaries. Though LeWitt was one of the most influential practitioners of both minimalism and conceptualism, his grid-based, systems-driven wall drawings from the mid-1970s nevertheless anticipated decorative tendencies. A painted wall is a decorated wall, is it not? As minimalism abandoned art's conventional supports (canvas, pedestal) for "real" space—the wall, the floor, the site—LeWitt's preferred support might just be the realization of Henri Matisse's 1934 proposal: "My aim has been to translate paint into architecture, to make of the fresco the equivalent of stone or cement."<sup>9</sup>

Jasper Johns embraced the logic of the grid for *Scent* (1976), a print series related to a 1973–74 painting of the same title that shows the artist using a complex pattern of hatch marks.<sup>10</sup> Johns reported that the motif—later described as crosshatch (though it is actually sequenced parallel line sets)—was inspired by a glimpse of a painted car speeding past him on the highway.<sup>11</sup> He was drawn to the "literalness, repetitiveness, an obsessive quality, order with dumbness, and the possibility of a complete lack of meaning."<sup>12</sup> This lush and dazzling motif remained part of his lexicon, and it drew as much from the decorative, as noted above, as from minimalism's step-and-repeat rationality. Of the latter, the dominant strain of 1970s art, note Johns's deployment of three different printing processes to make *Scent*: lithography, linocut, and woodcut.

The modernist grid remained foundational for much of the era's creative output, including dance. In *Calico Mingling* (1973), the choreography by revolutionary minimalist Lucinda Childs is set on four dancers, each of whom performs a series of forty phrases. Characteristic of Childs's prosaic-movement-based choreography, *Calico Mingling* is composed entirely of walking-type phrases—albeit walking that is meticulously coordinated with swinging arms in counterpoint. A key visual element of Babette Mangolte's film of the dance is the gridded paving pattern of the outdoor plaza that the dancers ornament with their lines, circles, and semicircles. This fanciful decorativeness is underscored by the work's title. Calico is a tightly woven cotton cloth named for its Indian port of origin, Calicut (Kozhikode). The anglicized "calico" has over the past centuries come to be associated with



brightly colored, flowered fabric. In the context of *Less Is a Bore*, the association of the dancers in *Calico Mingling* with flowers on a fabric field is too delightful to go unmentioned.

In the early 1970s Joyce Kozloff's large geometric paintings demonstrated a kind of fidelity to their sources, including Mexican and Islamic art. Making a decorative painting at that time was in itself a political act. "Pattern painting was a reaction against the pieties of modernist thinking," she said, "and I saw the politics of art as connected with larger politics."<sup>13</sup> Feminism was integral and instigating. In works of the later 1970s she further complicated hierarchical categories of art and craft with printed fabrics and handmade glazed ceramic tiles patterned onto panels. *Tile Wainscot* (1979–81), which quotes domestic interior decoration, is composed of twenty individual panels that can be configured, as wainscot, to suit the particular site of installation. Kozloff's recent investigation of pattern, *If I Were an Astronomer: Boston* (2015), derives from a 1977 artist's book based on Islamic star patterns titled *If I Were an Astronomer*. In the new mixed-media work, she collages and paints atop the 1977 page enlargements, bringing together the central subjects and motifs of the past forty years of her work—patterning and mapping.

The grid as map and locational device is central to Jennifer Bartlett's *27 Howard Street; Day and Night* (1977), one of a series of autobiographical works that record the homes of family and friends, in varying configurations

Joyce Kozloff, *Tile Wainscot*, 1979–81. Hand-painted and glazed ceramic tiles grouted on plywood, twenty parts, 48 x 256 inches (121.9 x 650.2 cm) overall



and compositional styles. Bartlett's paintings are recognizable by her characteristic ground: one-foot-square steel plates, each coated with baked enamel and silkscreened with a quarter-inch grid of lines. Emerging as she did from conceptual, minimalist, and process art, Bartlett imposed upon this systematic substrate an equally systematic mark-making in order to dissect painting: she used dots and dashes along with more expressive gestural brushwork. What transpires in a painting such as *27 Howard Street*, though, is an extraordinary decorativeness that is precisely calibrated by Bartlett's systematic rigor.

Such a potent combination of personal subject matter and abstraction exists as well in the work of Howardena Pindell. Since she first adopted the grid and the dot as primary motifs, she has explored many forms of process-based painting. The glorious, large *Autobiography: Artemis* (1986) is part of a series characterized by irregular oval canvases impastoed with high-key color and pattern, manipulated found images (especially postcards), painted self-portraits, and stenciled words and phrases. In *Autobiography: Artemis*, sets of parallel lines—like those of Johns—and dots of lavender, lime, yellow, blue, and cream are laid down on solid areas of light orange, and in one section, mango. The canvas is sliced in circles and jagged lines and loosely sutured with thick thread. Pindell's decades-long devotion to the dot, or circle, stems from a childhood experience traveling through the Jim Crow-era South where she noticed that the restaurant dishware was marked with a red circle to indicate it was reserved for nonwhites. As Pindell has explained, "My fascination with the circle comes from that day. Abstraction is like that: it doesn't have a concrete meaning, but can relate back to signification in the work, like that experience of turning over the cup and seeing the circle, of being marked."<sup>14</sup>

Betty Woodman began making functional pottery in the 1950s and gradually transitioned to artworks that synthesize sculpture, painting, and installation. Her transformation from artisan to artist was finalized in the 1970s when functional concerns became purely conceptual: "vases are now about vases," she said.<sup>15</sup> Woodman's *Window* (1980) establishes her aligning interests with P&D. The printed fabric "window" frames one of the artist's signature forms, the "pillow pitcher," a large, curvy, bulbous shape with no direct historical quotation save one of figurative symbolism. It's a "picture" of a vase, framed by a frame, and displayed. For Woodman, those large ceramic surfaces were ideal "canvases" for expressive color and pictorial painting. In the last decades of her career she experimented with form and scale, including making room-sized, site-specific, colorful installations such as *Of Botticelli* (2013). Painting atop shapes cut out from wheel-thrown slabs (hence the indented parallel curving lines that characterize Woodman's "flat" forms), *Of Botticelli* is maximal by any measure.

Franklin Williams's paintings have been lumped together with everything from P&D to Bay Area Funk. For example, his early work was inspired by quilting and by images in such books as *Erotic Art of India* and *The*

*Medieval Health Handbook*.<sup>16</sup> His paintings are remarkable for their facture, color, and detail. In *Yellow Apron* (1970) the vegetal patterning and stippled surface are dominated by a yellow W-shape stitched along its edges. Beneath its folds and triangulations, a penis vertically descends from a vulva. Quilted black stitches outline and accentuate areas of the composition. *Sixteen Sweet Moments* (1972) resembles a patchwork quilt with its motif of heart-shaped paintings of a tree, a sun, and pyramids—symbols of life and eternity—gridded four by four. The recent *Little Porcelain Boy* (2018) shows the artist abstracting the figure into a mass of pattern.

Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates (VSBA) identified Johns's cross-hatch as one inspiration for *Grandmother* (1983), a floral-and-dash-mark-patterned custom cotton fabric.<sup>17</sup> The other was somebody's nana's floral tablecloth. The juxtaposition of the two patterns allowed them to achieve a "design involving dramatic contrasts of scale, rhythm, color, and association, and one that is usable in many ways."<sup>18</sup> The pattern's most iconic application was as a laminate in VSBA's iconic Knoll-produced furniture line of molded plywood chairs and tables, each stamp-cut to resemble a historical style such as Queen Anne. First commissioned by the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, *Grandmother* is produced for sale by the yard. (You too can bring maximalism home!)

When Lucas Samaras exhibited his Chair Transformation series (1969–70), one critic called him "an artist of extravagant inventiveness with a passion for the over-done, a gilder-of lilies."<sup>19</sup> Unlike his contemporaries of the era, Samaras used everyday materials to create evocative sculptures that were laden with associations. These include huge fabric collage "paintings" (not called femmages!) and a series of twenty-five "chairs" of varying materials and shapes (some of which hardly merit the descriptor) that show the artist exploring the functional object with wit and perversity. The shaped and painted *Chair Transformation Number 9* and *Chair Transformation Number 12* presage Pattern & Decoration and even the design outrageousness of the international group of designers known as Memphis.

The postmodern approach of Memphis was announced at the 1981 Milan furniture fair, where Ettore Sottsass's *Casablanca Sideboard* (1981) was first exhibited. This figurative, arm-waving shape decorated with a plastic laminate "germ" pattern shares a sense of subversion and humor with Samaras's chairs. Nathalie Du Pasquier's *Royal* (1983) chaise combines simple form with exuberant surface decoration. In it, Memphis's germ-pattern laminate mixes with two upholstered fabrics: one designed by fellow Memphis designer George J. Sowden and the other by Du Pasquier, called Cerchio. The latter's charismatic patterns of the era are characteristically flat, graphic, and color-charged, infused by an embrace of traditions from Africa and India, cubism and futurism, art deco and graffiti. One of Du Pasquier's drawings, made for a 1984 Memphis-themed Bloomingdale's shopping bag,



Betty Woodman, *Of Botticelli*, 2013. Glazed earthenware, epoxy resin, lacquer, and acrylic paint, 126 x 384 x ¾ inches (320 x 975.4 x 1.9 cm) overall

evokes an aerial view of a city grid. Produced as wallpaper for *Less Is a Bore*, it partners with the dancers and urban site of *Calico Mingling*. Memphis produced objects for the home and office that celebrated color, ornamentation, and novel shapes; they used appropriation and metaphor as ways to defy traditional modernism and reintroduce humanistic design. Their work was audacious and trendy. Pink and turquoise won out over greige, and Memphis became instantly legendary.

### Arabesques, French Curves, and Flowers, or, The Third Category

*Up to that point in the history of art we as artists had only two choices of subject matter: representation and, in the twentieth century, abstraction. Now, however, at the very root of the P&D concept was the discovery of a third subject matter which for me was the mysterious ideas and possibilities in the beauty of the use of ornamentation.*

Robert Zakanitch

Let's talk decor, where art moves from the idea of "wall power" to, shall we say, wall flower. Frank Stella's Exotic Bird series marked a radical turn to explorations of dimension, color, and shape. The series is characterized by irregular and French curves drawn from drafting templates and by



dimensional exuberance—the works invade the typically sacrosanct space between the picture plane and the room. They are physically imposing, with scumbled, gestural, and wild surfaces. Stella, though identified with the tail end of modernist painting and the beginnings of minimalism, said of his work at this time: “My main interest has been to make what is popularly called decorative painting truly viable in unequivocal abstract terms. Decorative, that is, in a good sense, in the sense that is applied to Matisse.”<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, Nancy Graves’s *Trace* (1979–80) marks a significant transition in her work as she began to make cast-bronze polychromed and patinated sculptures. *Trace* looks like a schematic tree—a tracing of a tree—with “branches” and “leaves” of multicolored steel mesh. Graves would subsequently use direct casting processes, for which no mold is made, for botanically derived compositions. This body of work, art historian Linda Nochlin wrote, was “playing against gravity, against solemnity, against fixed, rigid categories of what constitutes sculpture; playing equally against triviality, unmotivated whimsy or novelty for the sake of novelty.”<sup>21</sup> Despite its formal rigor, *Trace* is materially unruly and winningly goofy.

Stella’s and Graves’s vegetally oriented dimensional arabesques are exhibited alongside works that must be called, for want of a better descriptor, flower paintings. Robert Zakanitch considers ornamentation to be his subject, and decoration and painting the content.<sup>22</sup> *Big Bungalow Suite III* (1991–92) is, at 11 by 30 feet, a monumental flower painting, one of a suite of five of that size. This vast expanse of thick paint—much of which was sculpted by hand—evokes a kind of hothouse kitchen wallpaper. *Big Bungalow III* was influenced by French Aubusson rugs and such early to mid-twentieth century Americana as patterned linoleum floors and decaled glassware. Using numerous stencils to generate a harmonious pattern, Zakanitch augments the fruit and flower design with thick and dripped paint in red, ocher, black, and dark green.

Roger Brown’s *Celebration of the Uncultivated—A Garden of the Wild* (1980) is a botanical panorama bursting with life. Symmetrically organized, the attenuated and schematic foliage is silhouetted against a stacked-up sky of pillowy clouds. Pattern painting and compressed pictorial depth were defining features of Brown’s oeuvre. He looked both to the International Style facades in Chicago, where he lived and was part of the Imagist group, and to patterns found in nature, for example, clouds, rolling hills, and furrowed fields. All of this Brown painted in a flat style suggestive of comic strips, wallpaper patterns, textiles, medieval panel paintings, and the folk art he collected.

Philip Taaffe and Christopher Wool emerged in the 1980s, during the era of the thoroughly postmodern painter—one who appropriates any and all kinds of imagery; one who uses painting against itself, wielding irony and critique and adoration in equal measure. Like Andy Warhol before him, who

silkscreened his paintings and his wallpaper, Wool used relief rollers—the kind used to apply decorative wallpaper patterns directly to the wall—to create the floral-patterned *Untitled (P29)* (1987). It is one of a body of work in which Wool used banal but “naturalistic” imagery, such as flowers, vines, or clover, to make shiny black enamel paintings on matte white alkyd-coated metal panels. The allover pattern serves to generate an “authorless” image that nonetheless carries associations of nature, abstract painting, and the domestic in the guise of decorative banality.

“Categorical ambivalence is in the nature of what I do,” Taaffe has said of his paintings.<sup>23</sup> *Observatory* (2011) lines up silhouettes of architectural ornament, vegetation, star patterns, and other decorative flourishes on green fine-line diagrams atop a rich brown color-field stew. The primary elements are frontal, symmetrical, and set in orderly rows. Taaffe intentionally seeks obscure and ambiguous imagery from natural history illustration, architectural ornamentation, and his extensive travels. Typical of his work are titles that evoke sacred places, sites of passage, and locations where scientific inquiry occurs, as in *Observatory*. Though Taaffe emerged just after the P&D heyday, and despite his early avoidance of categorical confinements—critics strenuously protected his work from being called “merely decorative”—the artist asserts his devotion to the decorative as means “to inspire an awareness of the divine order behind the world of appearances.”<sup>24</sup>

Laura Owens’s collage-like paintings are insistently decorative. Using myriad media that include silkscreen, dye, embroidery, and thick paint, she proposes a self-conscious critique not just of the history of painting but also of her own oeuvre. *Untitled* (2015) is a breezy frieze of clouds and birds that mixes old-fashioned painterly gesture with digital technology. The pixelated flock fly amid puddle-like clouds of white paint and dark impasto brushstrokes. The sky itself has the stair-step edges of digital information “loss” between the blues and pinks and whites. As curator and writer Linda Norden observes, Owens “enacts through her painterly strategies the uncertain locus of any and all processed information—historical, material, abstract, or social—in our digitally underwritten age.”<sup>25</sup>

Polly Apfelbaum’s floor-bound painting-sculptures, nicknamed “fallen paintings,” look to the home, pop culture, and art history, for example, rugs and tablecloths, animated cartoons, punk rock, Carl Andre’s floor sculptures, and Helen Frankenthaler’s stain paintings. With a series begun in the mid-1990s, Apfelbaum shifted from stains of colored dye on swaths of synthetic fabrics to cutting out and arranging the stains, piece by piece (typically hundreds of them), on the floor, in expansive arrays of color. In *Small Townsville* (2001) stains resemble Rorschach blots and intentionally suggest the unconscious, an idea reinforced by their infinitely arrangeable formats. Apfelbaum’s wallpaper installation for *Less Is a Bore, Pattern and*

*Apparition* (2015), appropriates a 1771 Pennsylvania Dutch Fraktur pattern manuscript. The artist, intrigued by the way the timeworn inked images had bled through the paper, made scans of the front and back of each page of the book, gridded them in sequence, and then digitally superimposed squiggly “non-photo blue” lines like so many contemporary doodles atop eighteenth-century ones.

### The Decorated Body and/or the Body in Decor

*In the past within Western high art, artists have used pattern as one of many elements in a painting. Portraiture has been rich in this regard, since the socio-economic status of the subject could be demonstrated by the representation of expensive garments and possessions, many of which were patterned in fashionable, intricate and/or exotic ways.*

John Perrault

Leigh Bowery was an iconic and iconoclastic fashion designer and performer who created genre-defying, elaborate, provocative, fetishistic costumes. Described by one observer as “an extra extrovert, the ultimate spectacle, the fashionable performer, the grand poseur,” Bowery was a physically imposing, blatantly sexual, outrageously spirited force of nature.<sup>26</sup> (His work warrants maximal adjectives and !!!) Bowery hosted the short-lived but influential 1980s London nightclub Taboo! wearing outrageous and subversive creations he called “Looks.” Between 1988 and 1994 Fergus Greer photographed Bowery’s unique take on the transformative capabilities of fashion and makeup. Though photographs cannot fully convey Bowery’s physicality, they do document the experimentation and radicality of his gender-bending creations.

Jeffrey Gibson’s recent sculptures are patterned and adorned garments that hang from horizontally suspended tepee poles.<sup>27</sup> *DON’T MAKE ME OVER* (2018) borrows a song title for an installation/performance that includes a cream-colored chiffon and brass-bell-covered garment and helmet, a rainbow-spectrum curtain printed with a repeat pattern of the title lyric and a video of Gibson’s performance wearing the garment while drumming and singing.<sup>28</sup> Gibson’s recent “proposals” (as he calls the garments) epitomize his knack for making marginalized histories and materials tactile. The result is work at once formalist and decorative, abstract and narrative, traditional and experimental. Gibson adopts and adapts material culture, especially that which is specific to his life and his Choctaw/Cherokee heritage, whether jingles and beads, tanned hides, song lyrics, fancy dancer costumes, or a button from a favorite shirt. In other words, much of his work draws on the ways individuals and communities describe themselves with and through materials.<sup>29</sup>



Installation view, Jeffrey Gibson: *DON'T MAKE ME OVER*, Maria & Alberto de la Cruz Art Gallery, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 2018

As the work of Gibson and Bowery shows, clothing is the quintessential decoration. The desire to adorn is elemental, personal as well as public, traditional as well as trendy. Clothing can camouflage and it can communicate. Robert Kushner used costume for performance and painting. *Wedding Dress* (1976) is a large painting on diaphanous cream-colored fabric, patterned with red and violet fleurs-de-lis, and affixed with gold tassels. Before it was hung on the wall it was worn during a campy fashion show/art performance titled *The Persian Line: Part II* (performed in 1976 at Holly Solomon Gallery), which included fifty-five costume-paintings that allude to all manner of culturally specific dress. Kushner’s *Cincinnati C* (1978) is one section of a three-part installation titled *Cincinnati ABC*. Each of the parts—A, B, and C—is composed of variously shaped paintings on found fabric. Using reverse appliqué, the artist combined swaths of found fabric to make shaped paintings that quote types of apparel (especially those from different cultures, such as the chador here), as well as heraldic banners, tondos, and florals. Kushner’s extravagant pattern play, joie de vivre color, and texture are very Matissean. But his work forces you to think about that wicked word “taste,” and encourages you to consider what line yours follows.

In Ray Yoshida’s *Phil and Flo* (1971), patterned walls dissolve into pattern-clad bodies whose enigmatic sexuality and camouflaged gender are manifested by the figures’ robe “bulges” and the innuendo of the title—more than just male and female monikers. Yoshida’s oddball and amusing

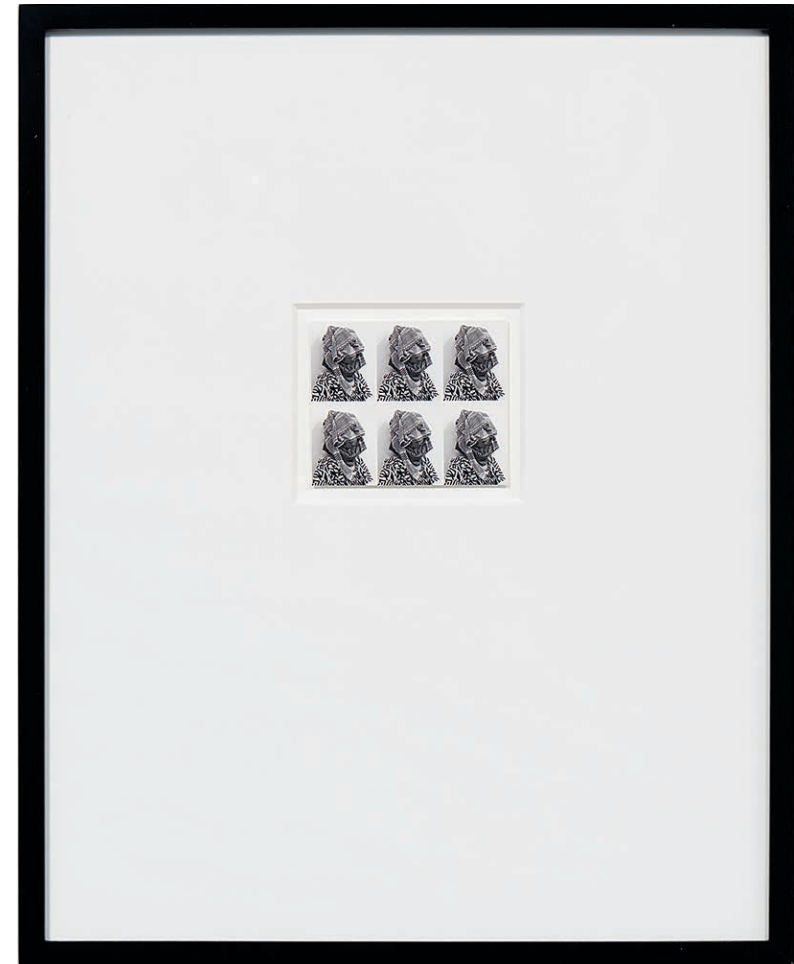


“bathrobe” paintings marry sophisticated formal technique with comics, surrealism, folk art, and non-Western art. Those wavy, patterned lines look as much to Stella’s stripes as to the motion lines used in comics. Yoshida encouraged his students (among them, Roger Brown) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he taught for four decades, to examine the ethnographic collections at the Field Museum of Natural History as closely as they studied traditions of easel painting—which he did as well.

Stephanie Syjuco’s *Cargo Cult* series portrays the artist transformed into four different ethnic Filipino stereotypes by “fast-fashion” garments, jewelry, and various props from chain retail stores. She camouflages herself with a dizzying array of pattern—one is challenged in *Cargo Cults: Cover-Up* (2013–16) to find the very borders of the body. Syjuco’s destabilization and affirmation of the self through dressing up and disguise—a body decorated and a body in decoration—is humorous but pointed. Along with the related series *Applicant Photos* (*Migrants*) (2013–17), whose images imitate passport photos, *Cargo Cults* explores histories of colonialism and ethnographic studio portraiture by exploiting the disposable, “ethnic”-patterned apparel

below: Stephanie Syjuco, *Applicant Photos (Migrants) #1*, 2013–17. Pigmented inkjet print, 3 5/8 x 4 3/16 inches (9.1 x 10.7 cm)

opposite: Stephanie Syjuco, *Applicant Photos (Migrants) #3*, 2013–17. Pigmented inkjet print, 3 5/8 x 4 3/16 inches (9.1 x 10.7 cm)



consistently for sale in the global retail market. She even lets the tags show in a kind of retail burlesque. Syjuco consumes the apparel, transforms it (and herself), and then returns it to the shop for a full refund. In doing so, she reinserts a perhaps differently charged object into the cycles of economic colonialism.

Ellen Lesperance’s colored gouache paintings on tea-stained paper depict abstracted garments, proxies for bodies like those we see in Schapiro’s *Vestiture: Paris Series #2*. Lesperance’s works are created with hundreds of painted dots, often superimposed, ordered by a hand-ruled pencil grid. The compositions are based on knitting patterns, a subject and methodology central to the artist’s work. Begun in 2015, Lesperance’s *Wounded Amazon* series memorializes tragedies both ancient and recent. The garments signify the unusual patterned tights and tunics worn by the Amazons depicted on



ancient Greek pots. These are superimposed on cyanotypes (darkened with iron mordant in a process called “saddening”) of floral arrangements composed on days the artist considers national days of mourning: for example, the day in 2016 that would have been Sandra Bland’s birthday had she not died in police custody in Texas in 2015; or the day after the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting during which forty-nine people were massacred in Florida. Lesperance points us to the poignancy of adornment, and to its capacity to represent and memorialize.

For *The Sisters Zénaïde and Charlotte Bonaparte* (2014), Kehinde Wiley poses the two sitters after the 1821 painting of the same title by Jacques-Louis David. Characteristic of his work, Wiley’s subjects are real people, discovered by the artist in sometimes elaborate social exchanges and rituals, in this case, a casting call for his ongoing series *World Stage*, this one focused on Haiti.<sup>30</sup> The women sit side by side attired in elegant bright blue dresses, immortalized within a tropical flower-patterned setting. As in all of Wiley’s work, the “trappings of power” typical of an Old Master painting are replaced with allover decorative patterning that here and there creeps across the sitters’ bodies, pulling pattern into real life and life into flat pattern.

Dutch designer Tord Boontje’s *Shadowy* (2009) armchair folds together the modern and the ancient, the artisanal and the digital, within histories of the applied arts. Its curvy shape recalls lounge chairs typical of North Sea resorts in the 1920s; its material is modern plastic like that used for fishing nets; its pattern is digitally composed; and the chairs are woven by craftspeople in Senegal. The armchair looks very much like a clothed body, as chairs often do (arms, legs, curves, softness), and visitors to the exhibition can sit in the chairs and experience their patterned embrace.

Like the dancers in Mangolte and Childs’s *Calico Mingling*, Ron Amstutz ornaments a grid with his body. *Re:enact (Remix)* (2009–14/2019) is a two-channel video composed of hundreds of photographs of the costumed artist posing within a painted grid in a durational performance for the camera. The painted grid is a record of light cast through windows onto the studio walls. Black and white coverall costumes alternate and reflect mirrored poses. And here is where it gets maximal. Nine camera angles record increasingly complex poses. Amstutz painted the set in forty-two variations: twenty-one times in gray scale, twenty-one times in muted colors. Each new round of set painting was recorded by adding identical lines to both costumes. Finally, the images were edited into a sequence that increases in rapidity to echo the growing complexity of the pose, until the body is ultimately malformed into a shape camouflaged by pattern.

## Pattern Overload

*One way that art proceeds—it does not progress—is by the inclusion of methods, materials, systems, attitudes, or even subjects previously thought non-artistic. The new art that is going to add something to the already overloaded accumulation of art experiences, art objects, and art history usually does not look like the art we are already used to.*

John Perrault

If you devise a pattern with 192 pair permutations, you’ll have made something that defies distillation—you’ll have made, among other things, a maximalist artwork. This is the case of REDGREENBLACKWHITES (2015–ongoing), a series of paintings by Taylor Davis that are: differently proportioned rectangles; roughly the height of a body (66 inches tall); canvas on rounded stretcher bars; hanging, off square, from a single screw; and painted in red, green, black, and white (“contrasting”) allover patterns that use a devised system of two overlapping, compressed grids. More than paintings, they are demonstrations of balance. That is, the hanging rectangular objects on the wall can achieve their desired impact only if all of the components are singular and simultaneous. The idea behind the work is simple and rule bound. One’s experience before the work is anything but.

Lari Pittman has described his work as “obsessive minimalism” and his involvement with concerns of decoration as “intrinsically conceptual.”<sup>31</sup>

Lari Pittman, *Portrait of a Human (Pathos, Ethos, Logos, Kairos #10)* (detail), 2018. Cel vinyl and spray paint over linen mounted on wood panel, 28 5/8 x 24 1/2 x 1 3/4 inches (72.7 x 62.2 x 4.4 cm)



The diptych *Portrait of a Textile (Glazed Chintz)* and *Portrait of a Human (Pathos, Ethos, Logos, Kairos #10)* is one of a 2018 series of twelve paintings that pairs, through color palette, a large textile “portrait” with a smaller human one. The former “depicts” glazed chintz, a typically colorful flower-patterned fabric long used, because of its soil-resistant finish, for domestic interiors. Pittman paints it as a kind of child’s room fabric, a repeating motif of red rag dolls and toy sailboats against blue vegetation on blue background. The red-blue combination nearly obscures the chain of daggers, each blade tipped at a doll’s throat. Perpetual violence knocks knees with the innocence of the nursery. And the human portrait? What at first glance looks to be an exquisitely adorned person now appears, given the dark implications of its pendant, black-eyed, mottled, and haggard. In his singular way, Pittman in this series connects the histories of portrait and still-life painting with that of interior decoration and material culture—all of which one might consider marked by the convolutions of class, politics, and gender.

Dianna Molzan uses the component parts of painting—paint, canvas, wood—to make eccentric objects. For *Untitled* (2019) the weft threads of the woven canvas are removed so that only the warp threads remain as a mass of string. Affixed at its edges to a poplar frame, Molzan’s canvas, “the most obvious and yet overlooked property of the painting,” wrote art critic Jonathan Griffin, is “suddenly exposed and shown to be a uniquely unstable ground for further painterly activity.”<sup>32</sup> Molzan applies paint to the resulting catenary drape, an exacting process of adornment that draws her painting closer to textile, pattern, fashion, and wallpaper. In this work, Molzan points to the Renaissance concept of painting as window but turns it toward contemporary city life—the collisions of humans sharing close quarters and *Rear Window* voyeurism—using quilt-like pattern and figure-ground color play to evoke Edward Hopper’s lonely city dwellers, Roger Brown’s nighttime skyscrapers, and Martin Wong’s windowed facades.

Ruth Root’s paintings merge geometric abstraction, shape and pattern painting, and textile. *Untitled* (2016) is a two-part painting composed of interlocked irregular geometric panels. The two panels connect via a folded fabric tab, a very unusual joint that recalls sculpture, clothing, and origami. The top panel is a digitally printed, repeating pattern fabric designed by the artist in Photoshop and featuring animated versions of her own works. The bottom panel is painted with overlapping purple dots sprayed through stencils (another kind of predigital patterning tool). The pattern is interrupted by five triangles, each painted a different monochromatic color, that edge the borders and exaggerate the irregularity of the panel shape while also contributing boundaries to a pattern frenzy.

Since 2012 Sanford Biggers has used found antique pieced quilts as grounds for painting and drawing. The quilts are cut up and recomposed,

patchwork upon piecework. Biggers combines these abstract patterns to generate new stories upon which he typically adds—with acrylic and tar—his own lexicon of motifs: clouds and trees rendered under the influence of Japanese art, silhouetted African wood ceremonial figures, Buddha, a smiling mouth, a diagram of a slave ship’s hold. *DAGU* (2016) borrows its title from the Afar people’s system of communication wherein news in this remote pastoral region of Ethiopia is exchanged person to person. Quilts are another kind of relay system: “I consider myself a late collaborator, working with this patchwork that goes over a span of decades and generations,” Biggers says of his work. “No matter how you slice it, it is an American story on a material level.”<sup>33</sup>

Joel Otterson has described his thirty-some-year artistic project as “remaking every single thing in the house.”<sup>34</sup> This might mean using handcraft such as needlework and quilting; or the materials with which houses are built, such as plumbing pipe and wood; or objects like drinking glasses, furniture, and decorative ceramics. During a recent residency at the Kohler factory in Wisconsin, where he had access to the materials and manufacturing used to make fixtures, Otterson made a huge cast-iron amphora-shaped sculpture. Or rather, a three-dimensional drawing of the

Joel Otterson, *Voluptuous Desire* (detail), 2018. Cast iron, brass, and 24-karat gold, 73 x 43 x 36 inches (185.4 x 109.2 x 91.4 cm)





ormolu—all that golden filigree mounted to ceramic treasures—that would hold and adorn the absent vessel. *Voluptuous Desire* (2018) mixes Greek pottery and ormolu, Pompeian floral wall decor, and the primary material of the Industrial Revolution.

Like Otterson's sculpture, Marcel Wanders's *Bon Bon Chair* (2010) marries traditional handcraft to high-tech industry. The result is a sensuous, enveloping seat. Dazzling and uncanny, it is made from hundreds of flower-shaped crocheted doilies that are sewn to a mold, impregnated with epoxy to harden the textiles, and then coated entirely with gold-colored metal. Wanders, a renowned Dutch designer, is recognized for his extraordinary experiments with materials, fabrication, and form.

Virgil Marti's ornamented sculpture and installations mix art and design of various eras—from theater sets to German Romantic painting to Matisse—injecting high- and low-style decor into the gallery. For this exhibition he creates an environment with wallpapered walls, an upholstered pouf, a chandelier, and three looking glasses. All are feats of trompe l'oeil. The *Austrian Swag* (2009) that decorates the walls is not a curtain but

Virgil Marti, *Doppelgänger*, 2017. Installation view, *Person of the Crowd: The Contemporary Art of Flânerie*, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, 2017



rather silkscreened paper. *Large Chandelier (Hybrid)* (2007) appears to be rococo-era Venetian glass but is composed of polyester resin casts of antlers and flowers. The overscaled mirrors are silver-plated, urethane-coated MDF with laser-cut filigree that mimics Chippendale design. Their surfaces were cast from the floorboards of the artist's studio, and the luminous, tinted color generates effects based on Hudson River School landscape painting. Finally, the pouf is a portrait, made with fabric, of its originally commissioned site: the gallery at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia that houses Matisse's *The Dance* (1932–33). Titled *Doppelgänger* (2017), the pouf was one of two. The one included in *Less Is a Bore* was an interloper in the Barnes's traditional rooms, so it attempted to “blend in” with colors that matched Matisse's painting and brocade that alluded to the ironwork collection.<sup>35</sup>

“I love the R&D,” Pae White says of her work, which often emerges from material experimentation.<sup>36</sup> White marries high tech and artisanal craft to ephemeral objects and quotidian subjects: smoke, color, popcorn, time, birdcalls, bugs, clip art. She often works with industrial fabricators, including tapestry manufacturers. Although tapestries are one of the oldest art forms, computer-programmable looms make possible the most improbable of image and material combinations. White exploits the possibilities using (unusual for tapestry) fibers such as cotton, polyester, and Lurex, a metallic synthetic yarn, and sophisticated digital technology. In the series *Bugz + Drugs* (2015–ongoing), computer software generates randomized distribution patterns of insects and psychotropic plants according to the “command” of the individual subtitle: program for Command-D and you'll get one color and pattern variation; Command-K, another. There are millions of possible outcomes, each of which is a unique, luscious, monumental jacquard tapestry.

Liza Lou's meticulous, labor-intensive beaded work has, since 2005, been made primarily in her Durban, South Africa, studio where she employs skilled artisans. Working in a culture that deeply values beadwork has inflected the artist's understanding of the medium and the craft it requires. *Offensive/Defensive* (2008) is one of a series of beaded relief works that adopt the visual language of patterned rugs. Lou amalgamates and translates designs from prayer, Asian, and Oriental rugs; Arts and Crafts florals; and other carpet patterns into “paintings” composed of tube-shaped, colored glass beads glued end-on to aluminum panels. Imperfections in the pattern—imposed by shifting color and bead length (the panels have extraordinary texture)—are intended to convey the uncertainty of lived life.

Since the 1970s Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarman has created paintings, sculptures, and reliefs on glass and mirror inspired by geometry and Persian mirror work. While living in New York City from 1945 to 1956, she was involved with the avant-garde art scene. After returning to her native

Tehran in 1957, which at the time was experiencing a reinvigorated indigenous culture due to social and political modernization, she made a “decisive shift” in her work that she says was prompted “by a visit in 1975 with the American artists Robert Morris and Marcia Hafif to the holy Shah Cheragh in Shiraz.”<sup>37</sup> Farmanfarmaian studied traditional mirror mosaic, Islamic geometry, architecture ornament, and Sufi cosmology. Though Farmanfarmaian and her family were exiled during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, she eventually returned to Iran in 2004, whereupon she reopened her studio and her collaboration with trained artisans. Since then she has made rational yet exuberant reliefs, such as the prismatic *Muqarnas One* (2012), which is installed high upon two intersecting walls, reinforcing its conceptual connection to Islamic architecture.

Haegue Yang’s *The Intermediate—Inceptive Sphere* (2016) is one of a series of sculptures that use straw and plants as links to pagan ritual traditions and folk craft. But Yang subverts tradition and its associations by using store-bought plastic reproductions. The “intermediate” of the title here designates both a person or an object in a state of becoming (inceptive=beginning) and in-between states, for example, movement. Even the wheels on which the work perches indicate as much: it is a moving entity. Yang’s art is consistent in its reliance on the signifiers of language but it does so using a lexicon of abstraction derived from the modification of commonplace objects. By rendering the everyday unfamiliar, and with nods to the material traditions of various cultures, the artist seeks to share with us her ongoing concerns about migration, enforced exile, and social mobility.

Zoe Pettijohn Schade claims to be “pursuing a kind of maximal density” in her paintings.<sup>38</sup> Informing that density is her study of weaving, lacemaking, and, significantly, a rare eighteenth-century French collection of gouache textile preparatory studies. *Crowd of Crowds: Obedience Scale* (2018) is a gouache painting on hand-marbled paper of repeating imagery—feather, monkey, silhouetted shooter with a rifle, a stone head, and more—registered on a grid that is disrupted so the pattern shifts to reveal and conceal layered imagery. The family of motifs is particular to the artist, but also topical. The decapitated king’s head, for example, is from Notre Dame’s facade, drawn by the artist while she lived in Paris and while the Islamic State was destroying Assyrian cultural sites. Throughout her work, pattern remains foremost a tool. “I believe that repetition soothes the mind or the eye of the viewer into accepting more and more information,” Schade says. “We tend to take in patterns in a general way, without scrutinizing all the elements, which allows images to hide in plain sight.”<sup>39</sup>

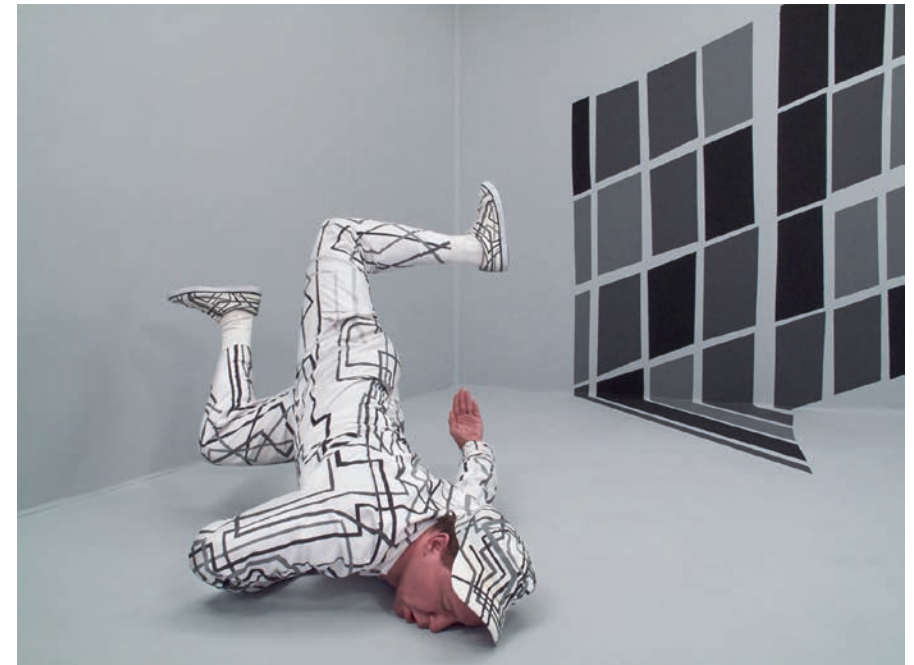
## Against Expediency

*If I repeat the shape of my being enough times will that shape be seen?*

Miriam Schapiro

I had barely an inkling, when I conceived of this exhibition, that a story that begins with *Pattern & Decoration* would lead to a consideration of the twenty-first-century information glut. But consider this: Alvin Toffler’s book *Future Shock*, published in 1970, just after this show’s starting point, details the psychological condition of disconnectedness and disorientation that resulted from the too-rapid transformation from an industrial society to a “super-industrial” one. The term “information overload” stems from Toffler’s book. Media theorist Douglas Rushkoff describes our current state as “present shock,” of feeling so overwhelmed by the digital environment that we can cope only with the present—forget the future.<sup>40</sup> Some symptoms: we choose to communicate with pictures and symbols; we expunge vws. Why do we crave the volume of information that we do? What do we do with it once we possess it? We curate our lives (and meals and shoes and homes) but we suffer from “filter failure.” We possess neither the analytic skills nor the living hours to process this raw information into working knowledge. Furthermore, the simultaneity of the internet has eradicated, I think, the

Ron Amstutz, *Re:enact (Remix)* (still), 2009–14/2019. Two-channel video (color, sound; 11:00 minutes)





concept of linear time. If this is so, then perhaps the notion of timelessness we've long valued in art is readily accessible in different form in the digital age: it's literally time-less. Any artwork, any time, any place. Sort of.

Robert Venturi espoused what he called "superadjacencies," or the superimposition of varying elements.<sup>41</sup> Hybrid, compromising, distorted, ambiguous, perverse, accommodating, redundant, vestigial, inconsistent, and equivocal. Messy vitality! While *Less Is a Bore* declines to represent, encapsulate, or summarize, it does attempt to visualize superadjacencies—in other words, the ways artists can and often do synthesize a boundless amount of information and present it to us as a work of art, distilled by their knowledge and skill—their point of view. As we know from the decades between the first utterances of information overload and today, the ways artists embrace the world have changed. The through line might be artworks that resist expediency. In its stead, a maximalist attitude is adopted to critique, subvert, and transform accepted art histories and trajectories, among them: craft and design, feminism, queerness and gender, beauty and taste, the grid and systems logic, camouflage and masquerade, pluralism and multiculturalism and globalism, religion and belief. The experience of the exhibition, in real life, is intended to be lush, crowded, overwhelming, seductive, haptic, adorned, patterned, and decorated. To the max.

## Notes

1. "Maximalism," Wikipedia, last modified December 12, 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximalism>.
2. Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism into Maximalism: American Art, 1966–1986* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1987), 341.
3. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966; repr., New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 26.
4. *Ten Approaches to the Decorative*, Alessandra Gallery, New York, September 25–October 19, 1976, included Valerie Jaudon, Jane Kaufman, Joyce Kozloff, Tony Robbin, Miriam Schapiro, Arlene Slavin, George Sugarman, John Torreano, Robert Zakanitch, and Barbara Zucker.
5. Anna C. Chave, "Disorderly Order: The Art of Valerie Jaudon," in *Valerie Jaudon*, exh. cat. (Jackson: Mississippi Museum of Art, 1996), 45.
6. Valerie Jaudon quoted in Lena Burkard, ed., *Patterns: Between Object and Arabesque*, exh. cat. (Odense, Denmark: Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, 2001), 68.
7. In several texts and captioned images, *Vestiture* is written as *Vesture* and *Vestituro*. I cannot verify if the artist changed the titles or if these were scholarly errors.
8. Chave, "Disorderly Order," 20; Jaudon quote, 20.
9. Cited in Holger Otten, "Pattern and Decoration Revisited: Matisse and the Politics of Art History in the Postwar USA," in *Pattern and Decoration: Ornament as Promise*, eds. Esther Boehle and Manuela Ammer, exh. cat. (Aachen: Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst; Vienna: MUMOK—Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig; and Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2018), 33n5. Matisse's statement first appeared in *Hound and Horn*, January–March 1934.
10. The title's reference is to the name of one of the last paintings made by Jackson Pollock, in 1955.
11. Michael Crichton, *Jasper Johns*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with Whitney Museum of American Art, 1977), 59.
12. Quoted in Jasper Johns, *Corpse and Mirror II* (1974/75) object page, Art Institute of Chicago website, <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/118981>.
13. Hayden Herrera, "A Conversation with the Artist," in *Joyce Kozloff: Visionary Ornament*, exh. cat. (Boston: Boston University Art Gallery, 1986), 29.
14. "1,000 Words: Howardena Pindell," *Artforum* 56, no. 6 (February 2018): 155.
15. Betty Woodman in *Betty Woodman*, exh. cat. (New York: Monacelli Press, 2006), 275.

16. Susan Landauer, "A Room of His Own," in *Eye Fruit: The Art of Franklin Williams*, exh. cat. (Santa Rosa, CA: Museums of Sonoma County, 2017), 11.
17. Robert Venturi's partnerships and firm names changed many times over the years. I use Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates as noted by The Fabric Workshop and Museum in the catalogue of their collection.
18. VSBA Archives, project statement, July 19, 1990, in Marion Boulton Stroud, *New Material as New Media: The Fabric Workshop and Museum* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 284.
19. James R. Mellow, "Cozy Objects Gone Berserk," *New York Times*, October 25, 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/10/25/archives/cozy-objects-gone-berserk.html>.
20. William S. Rubin, *Frank Stella* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 149.
21. Linda Nochlin, "Nancy Graves: The Subversiveness of Sculpture," reprinted in Debra Bricker Balken and Linda Nochlin, *Nancy Graves: Painting, Sculpture, Drawing, 1980–1985* (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College Art Gallery, 1986), 13–21.
22. Mary Davis McNaughton, "The Big Bungalow Suite and Thoughts on Painting: Interview with Robert Rahway Zakanitch," in *Larger Than Life: Robert Rahway Zakanitch's Big Bungalow Suite*, exh. cat. (Claremont, CA: Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College, 1997).
23. "Interview: David Brody and Philip Taaffe," in *Philip Taaffe: Anima Mundi*, exh. cat. (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 39.
24. Raymond Foye, "The Alchemical Image," in *The Heavenly Tree Grows Downward: Selected Works by Harry Smith, Philip Taaffe, Fred Tomaselli*, exh. cat. (New York: James Cohan Gallery, 2002), 47.
25. Linda Norden, "Monkey Grammarian," in *Laura Owens*, ed. Isabel Venero (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2015), 224.
26. Robyn Healy, "Taboo or Not Taboo: The Fashions of Leigh Bowery," *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 42 (June 2, 2014), [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/taboo-or-not-taboo-the-fashions-of-leigh-bowery/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/taboo-or-not-taboo-the-fashions-of-leigh-bowery/).
27. *Jeffrey Gibson: This Is the Day*, curated by Tracy L. Adler for the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, September 8–December 9, 2018, and accompanied by a stunning catalogue featuring photographs of models wearing the garments.
28. "Don't Make Me Over" was written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David, and recorded by Dionne Warwick in 1962.
29. See Jenelle Porter, "Jeffrey Gibson: Post-Contact," *Surface Design Journal* (Fall 2017): 26–31.
30. Kehinde Wiley Studio, "The World Stage: Haiti," accessed January 14, 2019.
31. Paul Schimmel, "An Interview with Lari Pittman," in Howard Fox, ed., *Lari Pittman*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1996), 71.
32. Jonathan Griffin, "Dianna Molzan," January 8, 2013, <https://jonathangriffin.org/2013/01/08/dianna-molzan/#more-602>, first published in *Kaleidoscope*, no. 17 (Winter 2012–13).
33. Sanford Biggers quoted in Carly Olson, "Sanford Biggers Makes Art Out of Antique Quilts," *Architectural Digest*, August 31, 2017, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/sanford-biggers-antique-quilts-marianne-boesky>.
34. *Dark Matter: Joel Otterson*, video by John Michael Kohler Arts Center, August 29, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/287302758>.
35. Free of the museum's meticulous mise-en-scène, Marti's doppelgänger of *Doppelgänger* traveled to four indoor and outdoor locations throughout the city, including Laurel Hill Cemetery, between February 28 and May 22, 2017.
36. Pae White quoted in Eric Bryant, "In the Studio: Pae White Keeps Her Curiosity for Materials in Check," *Art & Auction*, July 2013, <https://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/928939/in-the-studio-pae-white-keeps-her-curiosity-for-materials-in>.
37. Suzanne Cotter, "Begin, Begin Again," in *Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian: Infinite Possibility; Mirror Works and Drawings, 1974–2014*, exh. cat. (Porto: Serralves, 2014), 18.
38. Zoe Pettijohn Schade interviewed by Alyssa E. Fanning, *BOMB*, August 7, 2013, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/zoe-pettijohn-schade/>.
39. Schade interview.
40. Douglas Rushkoff, *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (New York: Penguin, 2013).
41. Venturi writes: "Superadjacency is inclusive rather than exclusive. It can relate contrasting and otherwise irconcilable elements; it can contain opposites within a whole; it can accommodate the valid non-sequitur; it can allow a multiplicity of levels of meaning, since it involves changing contexts—seeing familiar things in an unfamiliar way and from unexpected points of view." Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction*, 58, 61.