



Artists Choose Artists: A Visual Dialogue of the East End - Part 1

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by Gabrielle Selz

The Parrish Art Museum's "[Artists Choose Artists](#)" show has become an established event on the East End. For the bi-annual exhibition, on view at the museum in Water Mill until Jan. 19, 2014, seven notable East End artists are invited to serve as jurors. Each selects two artists after reviewing 300 online submissions and making follow-up visits to the artists' studios.

The works selected are shown in tandem with the work of the jurors who picked them. This protocol not only encourages interaction among artists at different points in their careers, but also offers fresh insight into the nature of both established and emerging talent.

At first glance the connections between the juror artists and their picks are not always obvious. More often than not the choices are based on responses ranging from an acknowledged affinity to excitement and/or a delight in dissimilar methods and techniques. Like the rock star on the television show, "The Voice," applauding the country western singer, new combinations abound. Still, some themes and threads slowly emerge. Landscape, light, narrative lines, and formal concerns of geometry are a few of the strands that run through this year's exhibition and serve to weave it together.

Viewing the show, I was not only surprised and delighted by some of the pairings, but, after looking at the work of those who had been selected by the seven distinguished artists, I turned once again to the jurors' art. I saw things in David Salle's and Mel Kendrick's and Laurie Anderson's work that I hadn't noticed before. In fact, these new amalgamations and links, these exchanges and intersections, are the beating heart of the exhibition. Ultimately, this visual dialogue is at the core of what defines the community of artists on the East End that the Parrish endeavors to foster.

Since the show is large, encompassing the work of 21 artists, and each selection deserves equal consideration, the review of this show is divided into two parts. **Part I** focuses on the art and artist selections of Laurie Anderson, Judith Hudson and Mel Kendrick. Next week, in **Part II**, the focus will shift to the works of David Salle, Ned Smyth, Keith Sonnier and Robert Wilson, and the work of the artists they selected.

Part I

Laurie Anderson with Elizabeth Dow and Mary McCormick

Widely known for multi-media presentations and as an innovator of electronic music, [Laurie Anderson](#) has a longstanding interest in storytelling. Even in her most experimental pieces, her work has a strong narrative presence. At the Parrish, Anderson's two large theatrical charcoal

drawings from her series, *Lolabelle in Bardo*, depict her recently deceased terrier, the beloved Lolabelle, traversing the realm of Bardo. “Bardo” is the Tibetan term for the liminal state—lasting 49 days—that takes place between the end of one life on Earth and the beginning of the next. Poetic and hallucinatory, Anderson’s panels are dreamlike scenarios full of turbulent motion, expressive scratch marks and ghost-like imagery.



“Lolabelle in the Bardo, May 29, 2011” by Laurie Anderson. Charcoal on Paper, 124 x 172. Photo: Tom Kochie.

Though [Elizabeth Dow](#)’s large landscapes are visual snapshots exploring the natural world, they, too, are concerned with motion and encapsulating atmosphere as it transforms matter. In her pieces as a textile artist and fine artist, Dow’s work investigates “coverings,” incorporating paint streaks, marks and dabs as highlights across the surface of her blurred landscape photographs.

[Mary McCormick](#)’s small paintings depict domestic scenes that seem almost dreamlike. Made from memory, McCormick’s figures are seen from a distance, depicted against muted backgrounds that give her scenes an otherworldly quality. One painting in particular shows six coffins floating above McCormick’s bed.

“We have four children, so that meant one for each of us,” McCormick said of the dream that inspired this painting. It’s a poignant narrative, and, as seen in the works of both Dow and Anderson, it depicts states of transition.



“Dream in a Blue Room” by Mary McCormick, 1985. Oil on canvas, 36 x 42 inches. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

Judith Hudson with Don Christensen and Christine Sciulli

Judith Hudson is known for luscious, watery and luminous imagery that she often combines with pithy, contemporary text. Both of the artists she selected are exhibiting playful and imaginative installation works.

At the Parrish, Hudson presents seven new works from her *Midsummer Night’s Dream* series, shimmering watercolors that embrace both words and figures in the fluid territory of theater.



Midsummer Night's Dream Series: "The eye hath not heard, the ear hath not seen what my dream was" by Judith Hudson, 2013. Watercolor on paper, 40 x 60 inches. Courtesy Salomon Contemporary, New York.

[Don Christensen's](#) installation of acrylic geometric abstractions, painted on the top of wooden steps, benches and small table, is composed on the wall in a 3-dimensional interplay of geometry and symmetry. Titled, *Top 40* these brightly colored surfaces literally "play" off one another like riffing in a musical jam.



"TOP 40 - 2013" by Don Christensen, 2013. Acrylic paint, oil paint, wood, wire, 120 x 138 x 25 inches. Photo: Michael Pintauro.

[Christine Sciulli's](#) *Engulf* is a site-specific installation. In Sciulli's art, light activates and shapes the volume and depth of space. At the Parrish, the artist has built her own environment, a plywood box that enables her to project beams of light onto a crinoline shape. The tight enclosure allows the viewer to witness light as it spirals and fills the space until it becomes an engulfing presence. Then, as if being pulled down a tunnel, the light recedes.

Mel Kendrick with Elise Ansel and Eva Faye

[Mel Kendrick](#) is known primarily for sculpture that combines a minimalist aesthetic with abstract design. In each of his three pieces on view at the Parrish, Kendrick has carved out the insides of blocks of wood or cement, then restacked the forms to create a final configuration whose interiors and exteriors are displayed together: a shape beside its hollowed out echo.

[Elise Ansel's](#) three paintings are vibrant expressions of abstraction. Using Renaissance and Baroque depictions of bacchanals as her jumping-off point, Ansel has reinterpreted master works of art (by Titian and Bellini) through the lens of abstraction. Like the great formalist painter Hans Hoffman, who taught his students to look at Rembrandt's light and dark shadows and replace them with corresponding colors, Ansel uses a rich palette and thick, gestural brushstrokes to translate these masterpieces into a contemporary vocabulary.

As homage and inspiration, the original composition remains the touchstone—the formal language where Ansel and her pre-existing depictions meet. Ansel's work is new pictorial exploration, but, like Kendrick, she integrates the shadow—in her case the masterwork—with her own images.



“Feast of the Gods, After Titian and Bellini” by Elise Ansel, 2013.
Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches. Courtesy the artist.

Likewise, the universe of [Eva Faye](#) is concerned with dualities: light and shadow, positive and negative shapes. Faye’s skin-like vellum paintings portray transparency and opacity simultaneously. Hung a few inches off the wall, they create corresponding cut patterns, an echo painting on the surface of the gallery wall.

BASIC FACTS: “Artists Choose Artists” juried biennial is exhibited at the Parrish Art Museum from Nov. 9, 2013 to Jan. 19, 2014. Part II of Gabrielle Selz’s review will publish shortly.

The Parrish Art Museum is located at 279 Montauk Hwy, Water Mill, NY 11976. www.parrishart.org.

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