



Artists Choose Artists: A Visual Dialogue of the East End Part II

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by Gabrielle Selz

This week, Hamptons Art Hub continues with the second half of a review that looks at the biannual exhibition “Artists Choose Artists,” on view at the Parrish Museum until January 19, 2014.

Seven esteemed artists associated with the Eastern Long Island were asked to select the work of two artists each, out of 300 online submissions. With works by the jurors installed alongside the work of the artists they selected, the show of 21 artists at different stages in their careers is a revelation of connections, themes and divergent paths.

David Salle with Carol Hayes and Virva Hinnemo

Two startling new paintings by [David Salle](#), *Syrie (Yellow)* and *Syrie (Pink)*, are among the first images that greet viewers when entering the exhibition. For those familiar with Salle’s pastiche style of juxtaposed, cinematic imagery, these singular portraits of his wife suggest a dramatic modification. But though the preoccupation with collaged, media and irony—of the seemingly incongruous—has all but disappeared, Salle’s work is still unabashedly confrontational.



“Syrie (Pink)” by David Salle, 2013. Oil on canvas, 50 x 41 1/8 inches. Courtesy the artist and Skarstedt, NY.

In both the artists Salle selected, self-imposed restrictions— isolation of either image or gesture—have amplified the impact of the final products. In the work of [Carol Hayes](#), large vertical charcoal drawings on stark white paper depict totems of partially burned driftwood. These emblematic forms grab and command our attention. The artist’s still-lives of beach detritus are both organic and symbolic. Inspired by nature, they signify both decay and persistence.

[Virva Hinnemo](#) creates small canvas abstractions in thick, painterly strokes that produce an abbreviated vocabulary of markings. Hinnemo focuses her painting on these simplified, sign-like notations. She works with layers of earth colors but restricts her palette, size and imagery, thereby enabling her to capture the motions of her brushwork within a highly contained space.

Ned Smyth with Koichiro Kurita and Rick Liss

In both his site-specific public art and his studio work, [Ned Smyth's](#) formalistic structures allude to architecture and ancient rock formations like Stonehenge. At the Parrish, Smyth exhibits four reverent photographic portraits of rocks—stones he has been collecting for years. These monumental images are paeans to elegance and precision; records of grain seen as landscape. The prints, made in a 12-foot light box, have been de-saturated, giving the images a more monochromatic palette while still maintaining their gritty, mineral texture.



“Nestle Standing” by Ned Smyth, 2013. C-print, Artist’s Proof, 68 x 48 inches. Courtesy Salomon Contemporary, New York.

As in Smyth’s work, a minimalistic sensibility and a fascination with surface subtleties permeates the art of [Koichiro Kurita](#). His three atmospheric platinum prints made on handmade Japanese rice paper are sepia landscapes of harmony and mystery. Capturing the wind swirling over wild grasses, Kurita’s photographs obscure as much as they reveal.

[Rick Liss's](#) landscape is not drawn from the natural world but the man-made environment: highway signage, the colors and words that merge together in the rush of transit. Inspired by Willem de Kooning’s, *Merritt Parkway*, Liss’s series, *Signs and Mirrors*, combines pop colors with geometric shapes, actual signs, and mirrors to produce a boiled down visual language and scenery glimpsed during a commute.



“Severe Weather: No Parking— From the Series Entitled: Copper, Silver, Gold The Colors That Matter” by Rick Liss, 2013. Acrylic on aluminum street signs mounted on Acrylic mirrors, 19 x 69 x 2 inches. Courtesy the artist

Keith Sonnier with Rossa Cole and Brian Garman

[Keith Sonnier](#) has been combining and recycling found materials with neon to create light sculptures since the late 1960s. In both Sonnier’s pieces at the Parrish, *Gran Twister* and *Wall Extension*, incandescent loops and lines of neon light define and articulate space. Here, the process of re-use is as important as the final object.



“Gran Twister” by Keith Sonnier, 2012. Neon, steel, surveillance mirrors, transformers, and wire, 106 x 60 x 29 inches. Courtesy of Pace Gallery.

Like Sonnier, [Rossa Cole](#) works with repurposed material, in his case twigs, to create miniscule environments: an eco house, a solar-powered motor, a tiny Prius and a dollhouse-size model of the Deep Water Horizon oil rig. Playful and stealthy, these small pieces are powerful comments on our throwaway society.



“Deepwater Horizon Fifth Generation-RBS-8D Offshore Oil Drilling Rig” by Rossa Cole, 2010. Driftwood, bamboo, glue, 16 x 22 x 24 inches; “NEG Micon, Three Blade, 950 kW Wind Turbine” by Rossa Cole, 2009. Twigs, wire, glue, 33 x 19 x 10 inches, and “2011 Toyota Prius II, 1.8-Cylinder, 5 Passenger Compact Hatchback” by Rossa Cole, 2009. Twigs, wire, glue, 6 x 7 x 16 inches. Photo by Tom Kochie.

[Brian Gaman](#) started as a sculptor and switched in the early '90s to two-dimensional works. Scanning his old video images onto paper, Gaman recycles his own past work to create multiple views of the same image. Standing in front of his piece *Untitled (Out the Door)* is like looking through glasses with two different lenses. The macro and the micro appear simultaneously—only reversed. What was once a tiny element in his video is now an immense background, while the original shot has become only a small segment embedded in its own detail.

Robert Wilson with Tucker Marder and Ezra Thompson

[Robert Wilson](#) has been pushing the boundaries of theater, opera and performance since the late 1960s. In his video portrait at the Parrish of performance artist William Pope L., the artist is depicted lying on his side in a green field against a blue sky. Situated behind a picket fence, he is surrounded by eggs and miniature evergreens. He wears a paper crown on his painted white head.

In the foreground, a toy lamb sings out a contorted version of “Mary Had A Little Lamb.” Concerned with the surreal dynamics of home, family and childhood, Wilson has chosen two artists, Tucker Marder and Ezra Thompson, both of whom also memorialize twisted visions of home.

[Tucker Marder's](#) installation focuses on portraits of his pet ducks, Percy and Lula, both of whom he raised from eggs to maturity—until a fox ate them. As if anticipating their demise, Marder took school portraits of his adopted offspring during each day of their lives. These portraits, along with a hooked rug he made in their likeness, are displayed on a huge lemon-yellow mantel.

Marder, who makes soap and grafts trees and one day hopes to open a restaurant, says this piece is about empathy for nature. But it is also very much about family, about raising and caring for anything, tree or duck, to the point that it becomes a member of your family.

Across the room, [Ezra Thompson's](#) paintings are also memorials to family and to the theater of memory. Working from photographs, Thompson says he begins with banal, awkward moments—the unwrapping of Christmas presents, a child captured in a Halloween costume—then attempts to layer back in their significance, with paint. These images have a distinctly nostalgic tone, for in them the artist is not trying to recapture the past so much as the fantasy, the longing and the special hue that surrounds memory.

From small painted strokes on canvas to video and light installations, “Artists Choose Artists” displays the wide variety and range of practices that are evolving in the unique blend of influences and inspiration found in our part of the world. This multi-generational show connects all of us—artists and viewers alike—not only to the rich history that stretches behind us, but also to the present and the future that is being created anew, every day.

BASIC FACTS: “Artists Choose Artists” juried biennial is exhibited at the Parrish Art Museum from Nov. 9, 2013 to Jan. 19, 2014. The Parrish Art Museum is located at 279 Montauk Hwy, Water Mill, NY 11976. www.parrishart.org.

RELATED: [“Artists Choose Artists: A Visual Dialogue of the East End Part I”](#) by Gabrielle Selz.

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