



2013 In Review: History & Location Combine in Contemporary Art Exhibitions

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by Pat Rogers

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EAST END, NY-

East End history played a major part in the contemporary art presented in 2013 in the Hamptons, the North Fork and Riverhead. Curators seemed inspired to create site-specific exhibitions that melded contemporary art with history revolving around geography, architecture or East End culture.

Following is an overview of the ways specificity of place and history inspired site-specific art and exhibitions linking contemporary art with East End life.

1. “Pop Up 1: MONTAUK” - Group Curation for Private Property in Montauk

“Pop Up 1: MONTAUK” was presented by Fabiola Beracasa and [Art Production Fund](#) in association with Gary Carrion-Murayari and Joyce Sitterly of the [New Museum](#). The summer-only show featured three site-specific works by three artists. Each piece was created to relate to the wooded site and to Montauk’s artistic legacy, according to gallerist Beracasa.

[Anya Kielar](#)’s created a new series featuring fabric paintings with printed imagery of women and household items suspended on clothes line. The outdoor installation prompted the artist to weave elements of nature in her processing. This included using a sun printing technique to weather the fabric, according to the exhibition organizers.

[Virginia Overton](#)’s sculptural installation featured a used pickup truck that was deconstructed and reconfigured. The rough-and-tumble vehicle is meant to conjure farming and physical labor.

[Olympia Scarry](#)’s “Lick” is a series of stacked rock salt sculptures designed to attract wildlife and to morph through exposure to the animal interaction and weather. The artist referenced Jackson Pollock’s drip paintings—made 20 miles away in Springs—in the work through the substitution of saliva and dribbles from wildlife for Pollock’s choreographed drips of paint, according to exhibition information.



“Lick” by Olympia Scarry. Photo by Pat Rogers.

2. “The Expansive Field: The Environmental Art of Christine Sciulli” - South Fork Natural History Museum

[Christine Sciulli](#) was the first artist-in-residence at SoFo (South Fork Natural History Museum). Her charge was to create site-specific work that made use of the natural environment surrounding the Bridgehampton museum and to make it accessible for the general public.

A video and installation artist, Sciulli created “The Expansive Field” for SoFo. The piece incorporated branches, wire mesh, fabric, sound and large-scale video projections to envelop visitors into the work and into the environment.

RELATED: [“From Natural to Supernatural: Christine Sciulli’s Voco Visuals at South Fork Natural History Museum”](#) by Sandra Hale Schulman.



Artist Christine Sciulli besides a part of her “Expansive Field” installation project at the South Fork Natural History Museum. Photo by Sunny Khalsa.

3. “LAT. 41° 7’ N., LONG. 72° 19’ W” - Martos Gallery at Private Home

[LAT. 41° 7’ N., LONG. 72° 19’ W](#) was a sprawling group show organized by Bob Nickas and presented by Martos Gallery of Chelsea in a Victoria home on the North Fork. The exhibition included around 66 artists. Most of the works were created for the show or conceived as site-specific works for the East Marion home and grounds.

The exhibition presented art by Mary Heilmann, T.J. Wilcox, B. Wurtz, Bill Adams, Carol Bove, Ryan Foerster, Jason Metcalf, Sam Moyer, Virginia Overton, Barbara Bloom, Kelley Walker, Aaron Suggs, Amy O’Neill, David Flaugher, Anna Conway, Justin Beal, Christopher Astley and others.

Situated to envelop the grounds, the outbuildings and every room in the house, the art was curated to tightly relate to the home’s architecture, intended usages, and to the landscape of the North Fork, explained artist Servane Mary, who owns the home with art dealer Jose Martos.

For instance, her multi-media installation claimed every inch of the cellar, playing on its function as a place for storage, workspace (with tool bench), and an earthy subterranean space where things that thrive in the dark and damp could flourish. The installation enhanced the atmosphere through

the use of light and shadow and the incorporation of spatial illusion.

In contrast, exhibiting artist John Miller hit the pavement for inspiration and found it a short way up the road in the form of an iconic large rock, said Mary. His work aimed to recreate the North Fork landmark and Nickas positioned the sculpture to dominate the dining room.



“Untitled” by John Miller. Insulation foam board, skim coated with concrete, glitter, ink, concrete hardener and acrylic paint, 60 x 160 x 65 inches.

4. Andrea Cote’s “Eyes On Main Street” - Riverhead & Online

[Andrea Cote](#) fused history and contemporary life in Downtown Riverhead through an interactive, community-based public art project. Cote created a series of video portraits of locals where they described their past experience and what living or working in Riverhead was like now.

In addition, Cote took photographs of people’s eyes, silkscreened them onto white scarves, and then installed them in a vacant storefront where people could watch the project’s progress unfold.

The scarves also provided an interactive component where people could try on other people’s eyes in a symbolic gesture of empathy during community events. Ultimately, the project grew to include 100 silk blindfolds printed with the eyes of those who live or work in Riverhead and installed in the East Main Street window.

The videos from the project can be found at www.eyesonmainstreetriverhead.com.

RELATED: [“The Community Mosaic Street Painting Festival Returns to Riverhead”](#) by Pat Rogers.



Window installation of Andrea Cote’s “Eyes on Main Street.”

5. Almond Zigmund’s “Interruptions Repeated” - Parrish Road Show at Sag Harbor Whaling & Historical Museum.

[Almond Zigmund](#) created a site-specific installation at the Sag Harbor Whaling & Historical Museum for the Parrish Art Museum’s off-site summer art series, the Parrish Road Show. *Interruptions Repeated* was a large-scale sculptural work that conjured the hull of a ship while directly relating

(and contrasting) to the classic architectural details found in the parlor of the Greek Revival home that houses the historic museum.

Zigmund's work suggests walls, barricades, enclosures, and structures that are difficult to classify and can elicit spatial disorientation by meshing real and representational space. In the case of *Interruptions Repeated*, it also served to entwine Sag Harbor's past and present as the historic fishing community met the contemporary art colony.

RELATED: "[Art Review: Almond Zigmund's Interruptions Repeated](#)" by Gabrielle Selz and "[Parrish Road Show Returns](#)" by Pat Rogers.



"Interruptions Repeated" by Almond Zigmund. Raw Plywood, 87 x 181 x 71 1/4 inches. Photo by Jenny Gorman. Image Courtesy of the artist.

6. Site-Specific Installation by Dana Sherwood - Kathryn Markel Fine Arts

While most of this group show was not site-specific or related to the Hamptons, [Dana Sherwood's](#) installation deserves a call out. Sherwood created an interactive installation for Hamptons wildlife in the outside enclosed garden of [Kathryn Markel Fine Art](#) for the group show "Everything Has Its Place". The installation was designed to be consumed by birds and whatever rouge animals could circumvent the fencing and to change with impact from weather and gnawing.

In creating the open air mixed media banquet, Sherwood selected edibles that would appeal to local birds, said exhibition curator Robert Dimin. The process of deterioration and destruction was captured by motion-activated cameras. Later, the artist intended to cull through and select images to make photographs for a future series.

The Hamptons installation is typical of Sherwood's art process except her installations are usually set deep in the wild (versus a controlled and contained setting). Photographs are then made to portray her process-based art in a permanent way.

RELATED: "[Everything Has Its Place at Kathryn Markel Fine Arts](#)" by Pat Rogers.



Installation (partial) by Dana Sherwood at Kathryn Markel Fine Arts in Bridgehampton, NY.

7. August Group Show - Southampton Center

Southampton Center Summer Curator Zannah Mass (Founder and Director of [Red Engine Creative](#)) curated two group shows for the new arts venue's inaugural run with an environmental bent to link to the natural beauty of the Hamptons, she said. For the August show, two art installations were specifically designed to link to the Hamptons.

A subtle sound installation by [Krista Dragomer](#), *Where the Wild Things Were*, was tucked inside a shrubbery in the west garden (near the dancing cherub statues amid an inactive pond). The site-specific eight channel sound installation paired bird twitters to cell phone songs. The bird calls relied on Hamptons wildlife as inspiration for the birds to include, said Dragomer.

The site-specific interactive eight-channel sound installation featured interactive programming by [Bob Pritchard](#).

"When birds imitate cell phone ringtones and mobile phone companies offer ringtones that sound like birds, what do the next generation of birds learn to sing?," posed Dragomer. "Is the ringtone version of a birdcall, sung by a mother bird, learned by her baby bird, natural? Is this now the young bird's own native call? The human-built environment affects the ecosystem. The ecosystem responds, changes, and these changes confound any easy distinction between Man and Nature, the Natural and the Artificial."



"Where The Wild Things Were" by Krista Dragomer, 2013. Site-specific interactive eight-channel sound installation installed at the Southampton Center. The piece included interactive programming by Bob Pritchard. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Inside the Southampton Center was the site-specific installation *Tempest* by Wade Kavanaugh and Stephen B. Nguyen. The gigantic paper installation conjured a tumultuous storm-tossed wave that was directly inspired (and made for) the Hamptons exhibition.

At the exhibition opening, the pair said directly that the beach and ocean formed the main natural attraction for the Hamptons, making a wave a perfect choice as conduit to spark the imaginations of the viewers. Ordinarily, the pair creates warehouse-size works but scaled back for *Tempest*. [Kavanaugh and Nguyen](#) have been collaborating to make site-specific art since 2005.



"Tempest" by Wade Kavanaugh and Stephen B. Nguyen. Photo by Pat Rogers.

8. “Moby Dick” by Junko Sugumoto - The Moby Project at East Hampton Historical Society

Tapping into literature and the historic barn found on the grounds of the [East Hampton Historical Society](#), [Junko Sugumoto](#) created a sprawling sculptural work suspended from the ceiling using only paper and fishing line. Her installation, *Moby Dick*, was created to conjure the swells and curling of an ocean that isn't always hospitable, she said.

While the paper pieces were made off-site, the installation was assembled inside the barn with the installation take its final form in reaction to the barn's interior architecture. *Moby Dick* was composed of 1,500 paper tubes that were each hand rolled. The installation was made for the group exhibition *The Moby Project* curated by Janet Goleas.

RELATED: “[Visual Diary: The Moby Project Captures Melville's Whale](#)” by Pat Rogers.



Detail of “Moby Dick” by Junko Sugumoto, 2013. Paper and fishing line.

9. “Artists & Writers: They Played In The Game” - Guild Hall

The Hamptons is a unique place that has created its own cultural rituals. One of these strange occurrences is the annual [Artists vs. Writers Celebrity Charity Softball Game](#). Held every August in East Hampton, 2013 marked the 65th Anniversary that pits artists against writers (plus a variety of creative types) to raise money for local charities.

To mark the occasion, Guild Hall presented an exhibition that put the history of the game on view and some of the art made by artist participants over the years.

RELATED: “[Artists and Writers: They Played In The Game Opens June 15 at Guild Hall Museum](#)” by Pat Rogers and “[Art Review: Something For Everyone - Artists and Writers: They Played in The Game](#)” by Gabrielle Selz.



Ed Tivnan. Photo courtesy of The East Hampton Star and Guild Hall Museum.

10. "A Whale of a Show" - Sag Harbor Whaling and Historical Museum

"A Whale of a Show" group exhibition celebrated the whale and its role in Sag Harbor's history to launch the [Sag Harbor Whaling and Historical Museum](#)'s summer season and raise funds for major maintenance projects set for 2013.

All of artworks portrayed a whale creating a room filled with the large mammals. Further, all of the invited exhibiting artists were based in the Hamptons creating an art colony vibe to the show. Most artworks were made for especially for the show.

As one artist put it: "There's not too many artists who have whales as typical subjects in their work". The exhibition was curated by Peter Marcelle of the [Peter Marcelle Gallery](#).

Exhibiting artists included Eric Dever, Miriam Dougenis, Eric Fischl, April Gornik, Susan Lazarus Reimen, Jim McMullan, Jodi Panas, Dan Rizzie, Gavin Zeigler, Reynold Ruffins, Donald Sultan, John Torreano, and Carol York.

RELATED: "[ART SEEN: A Whale of a Show](#)" by Pat Rogers.



"Sag Harbor Whale" by Dan Rizzie. Mixed media, 16 x 18 inches.

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