



“Still Life: 1970s Photorealism” Final Weekend at Nassau County Museum of Art

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

What do Audrey Flack, Malcolm Morley and Ralph Goings have in common? Their art is being highlighted as part of a group show presenting American Photorealism at the Nassau County Museum of Art. The exhibition, “Still Life: 1970s Photorealism” is having its final weekend before the works head back to the Yale University Art Gallery, where they make their home as part of its permanent collection.

The exhibition features the work of 30 artist and encompasses Photorealism and Hyperrealism. Included are Audrey Flack, Malcolm Morley, Ralph Goings, Chuck Close, Noel Mahaffey, Richard Thorpe, Paul Sarkisian, Bruce Everett, Robert Bechtle, John Baeder, Duane Hanson and others.



“Time to Save” by Audrey Flack, 1979. Acrylic and oil on canvas, 80 x 64 inches. Yale University Art Gallery. Lent by Audrey Flack, courtesy Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

Photorealism rose in the late sixties in New York and California. Painters and sculptures used photographs as muse to make art with lifelike realism as goal and using microscopic detail to help get there.

Audrey Flack, Chuck Close, Robert Bechtle, Charles Bell, Robert Cottingham and Richard Estes were among Photorealism artists who placed a focus on surface and the effects of light, according to the Guggenheim’s [website](#). [MoMA](#) also credits painters Richard McLean, Don Eddy and the English painter John Salt as pioneers of the mostly American movement. Sculptors including Duane Hanson and John De Andrea were also early practitioners, according to MoMA.

Photorealism is considered to be an offshoot of Pop. Arguments have been made for its connection to Modern art through its concern with the issues of making art and “the medium being an end to itself,” according to MoMA.

The Guggenheim put it this way: "[Pop art](#), which challenged the principles of [Abstract Expressionism](#) by incorporating representational imagery, served as a catalyst for Photorealism," according to the museum's [website](#).

"Pop art legitimized the appropriation of popular iconography from consumerist culture in fine-art practice as well as the use of materials derived from commercial art, such as airbrushing and the employment of opaque projectors to enlarge images," writes the Guggenheim. "By focusing on a commonplace reality and the antielite subject matter of quotidian surroundings, the Photorealists withdrew from the idealization of the artistic gesture endemic to Abstract Expressionism through creating a mimetic art that adhered to the prerecorded imagery of a photograph."



"Stardust Motel" by John Baeder, 1977. Oil on canvas, Unframed: 58 x 70 inches; Framed: 60 1/2 x 72 1/4 x 2 9/16 inches. Yale University Art Gallery; Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935, Collection.

"Still Life: 1970s Photorealism" at the Nassau County Museum of Art is made up of works found in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery. The show was organized by Cathleen Chaffee for Yale University Art Gallery. She is now a curator at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. It contains both American and European artists.

"A significant trend in art of the 1970s, Photorealism has sometimes been described since then as a more mechanical offshoot of 1960's Pop art," according to the Nassau County Museum of Art. "However, the works in *Still Life* make a compelling argument that Photorealists captured life in the 1970s with a grittier honesty than has previously been acknowledged. These works have renewed relevance as the ability of photography to capture "the real" has undergone dramatic changes and continues to develop in unanticipated ways."



"Man in Chair with Beer" by Duane Hanson, 1973. Fiberglass and polyester resin, oil paint, and mixed media, 39 x 42 x 65 inches. Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of Richard Brown Baker, B.A. 1935.

If you're looking for a Hamptons connection to Photorealism, there's plenty of them. Audrey Flack is based in the Hamptons. Chuck Close is a former long-time resident whose work appears frequently in both Guild Hall and the Parrish Art Museum. Close has a single work in "Still Life": a print of *Keith/Mezzotint* (1972).

Malcolm Morley, who's based in Bellport, NY, frequently exhibitions at East End museums. His solo show, "Malcolm Morley: Painting, Paper, Process" helped christen the Parrish's new building when it was unveiled in 2012 in Water Mill, NY. Morley's work is part of "Still Life" at the Nassau County Museum of Art.



"America's Queen of Opera" by Malcolm Morley, 1971.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches. Yale University Art Gallery.
Gift of Gilbert H. Kinney, B.A. 1953, M.A. 1954.

Howard Kanovitz (1929-2009) was another pioneer of Photorealism and Hyperrealism with a Hamptons connection. He was based in Southampton, NY in the later part of his life. His painting, *Hamptons Drive-In* (1974) is part of The Parrish's permanent collection. Most recently, is was exhibited as part of "Changing Views: Painting as Metaphor" which closed today at The Parrish. (Note: The artwork isn't part of "Still Life" as the painting isn't part of the Yale University Art Gallery collection).



"Hamptons Drive-In" by Howard Kanovitz, 1974. Acrylic on canvas, 42 x 90 inches. Parrish Art Museum, Gift of the Howard Kanovitz Foundation and Museum purchase, with funds provided by Dorothy Lichtenstein, the Parrish Art Museum Collector's Circle, and Barbara Slifka, 2012.9.

Contemporary hyperealism sculpture has been appearing in the Hamptons gallery scene. Mark Borghi Fine Art has exhibited sculpture by Carole A. Feuerman and Peter Marcelle Project exhibits hyperrealism sculpture by Mark Siijan.



"Cornered" by Mark Siijan.

"Still Life: 1970s Photoealism" includes the works of around 30 artists. Through their focused look at ordinary things, the show also provides a look back at life in the 1970s.

BASIC FACTS: “Still Life: 1970s Photorealism” opens July 19 and remains on view through November 9, 2014. The Nassau County Museum of Art is located at One Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor, New York 11576. www.nassaumuseum.org.

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