



# MOMMA Exhibition Takes on MoMA and The Hamptons, Conceptually

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by Pat Rogers

The doors have not yet opened on “MOMMA” at Rothman Department Store’s art gallery (ART) but it would be difficult to imagine another conceptual art show and artist line up on the East End to rival this one. The title of the five artist group show, “MOMMA”, makes a direct reference (and reaction against) the exhibition track record of MoMA (Museum of Modern Art), a Hamptons art scene overrun by art collectors, and a hipster Hamptons surf culture with a scene all its own. What the art reveals is something completely different.

“Since the arrival of the post-modern, isn’t contemporary art post-MoMA?” queried Bob Nickas in the Exhibition Text.

Playing with the MoMA acronym and pointing out the machinery requires for the modern art museum to function, “MOMMA” brings a fluidity to exhibition organization that’s only possible when individuals and not institutions create art shows, according to Nickas. And when individuals are driving the decisions, anything can happen.

“Artists and museums are hugely divergent in terms of rules,” wrote Bob Nickas in the Exhibition Text. “Artists tend to make them only so they can break them. Never underestimate the human element to keep things unpredictable.”

“MOMMA” is exhibited from September 5 to 20, 2015 at ART, the art gallery of Rothman’s Department Store in Southold on the North Fork. An Opening Reception takes place on September 5 at 6 p.m. with live music. A Closing Reception will take place on September 19 at 6 p.m. with live music (In addition to the art gallery, there is Rothman’s Guitars). Exhibiting artists are [Servane Mary](#), [Virginia Overton](#), [John Miller](#) with Richard Hoeck, [Olivier Mosset](#) and [Michel Auder](#). The MOMMA acronym references the five exhibiting artists (plus an extra “M” for poetic and conceptual purposes).

The art exhibited contributes to the conceptual case in point. While the art is consistent with each of the artist’s work, expect to find trajectories of muse and new explorations. All the works are new or have never been exhibited before.

The show includes photo silkscreens with Western imagery by Servane Mary; pieces relating to the movement of vehicles and images by [Virginia Overton](#); an unusual extension of Olivier Mosset’s found abstraction through repurposed oyster collection burlap bags and a ’70s Shovelhead motorcycle; the premiere of a short video by [John Miller made with Richard Hoeck](#) as part of their mannequin collaboration series, and a new video by Michel Auder.



Olivier Mosset contribution to “MOMMA” at Rothman’s gallery ART.  
Courtesy of “MOMMA” organizers.

When considering the work on view and the exhibition as a whole, the exhibition text holds some predictions for the exhibition in the realm of the commercial. Using the exhibition title “MOMMA” as touchstone, a scathing comparison is drawn between what’s for sale at MoMA and what’s not (gift shop versus exhibited art). But the art buying in The Hamptons versus the North Fork is where the real comparison begins: there’s no expectation of art collectors causing traffic jams or sophisticated sprawl. Instead, the low-key lifestyle of the North Fork allows room for long-standing rural and small community living to continue while the artists among them make art (and sell the work elsewhere).

“At MOMMA, the works are for sale but it’s unlikely that many will come to buy them,” wrote Nickas. “Art collectors have not ruined the North Fork the way they trampled all over the other side of the island. Luckily we have no hipster-retardo surf scene. (Did Lisa Spellman just steal my wave?). Things are quieter in these parts. People and places have been here longer than last week...”

This is not the first time the artists of “MOMMA” are exhibiting together. All have exhibited internationally and have crossed paths along their respective art journeys in gallery and museum exhibitions in multiple countries. Most exhibiting artists have been included in a Whitney Biennial and all have work included in major art collections.

On the East End, nearly all the exhibiting artists and [Bob Nickas](#), a curator and author, participated in the [2014 Martos Gallery Summer Show](#) on the North Fork. (The one exception is Michel Auder. The Martos Gallery connection continues with Michel Auder opening a solo show, “Everybody Knows” at [Martos Gallery](#) in New York City in September (Opens September 17, 2015).

In addition, Overton and Nickas co-curated a floor of the house-wide exhibition both years it was held on the North Fork ([2014 and 2013](#)).

There is one more detail about “MOMMA” that’s worth noting: If paying a visit to MoMA’s restaurant The Modern is part of a typical museum experience, the artists recommend a short drive to [The Modern Snack Bar](#) in Aquebogue—a longstanding North Fork tradition; just like the 95-year tradition of going to Rothman’s Department Store for what’s necessary for sustenance.

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**BASIC FACTS:** “MOMMA” is on view from September 5 to 20, 2015 with an Opening Reception held September 5 at 6 p.m. and a Closing Reception on September 19 at 6 p.m. Both receptions feature live music.

ART gallery at Rothman’s Department Store is located at 54100 Route 25/Main Street, Southold, NY

11971. Next door is Rothman's Guitars where vintage guitars, banjos and musical instruments are sold.

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