



Readers Choice: Most Popular 15 Stories in 2017

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

With 2017 winding down, it's a great time to pause and consider the year. Readers turned out in droves to check in with Hamptons Art Hub and read our online publication to discover noteworthy art exhibitions from the East End, New York City and the NY Metropolitan area as well as news from the art world at large, noteworthy events in The Hamptons and East End as well as art fair news and coverage.

We've compiled the most popular stories and present them for your reading pleasure. All were published in 2017.

15. "ART REVIEW: Sally King Benedict Brings Smiling Expressionism to Quogue" by Charles A. Riley II

Partway around my second tour of the [Sally King Benedict](#) show of paintings and drawings pulsing with bright colors at Quogue Gallery, I was still searching for the right word for the arc sweeping upward in many of the works. Then I returned to the aptly titled *Going Light and Bright Face*. The painting—beaming out from the main wall in the light-filled rear gallery as the keynote to the exhibition—gave me the answer: The billowing gesture should be read as a smile.

Influenced by Kenneth Clark's charming essay on "the smile of reason" in "Civilisation," I suddenly could grasp the tenor of the whole "Through Ocean Eyes" exhibition in one welcome curve. As Clark recognized, the "smart" smile in the portraits of the age of Voltaire and the capable grin of Benedict's sure hand in the studio stand in contrast to the vacuous laughter of the Rococo period, to which in our time we can add the grimace of [de Kooning](#)'s women, the vacuous idiocy of the emoji, or the smartass smirk of [Jeff Koons](#). Benedict bestows the heartfelt smile of hospitality in these abstract answers to the faces of [Alexei Jawlensky](#)...

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"Going Light and Bright Face" by Sally King Benedict, 2017. Mixed Media on Canvas, 80 x 74 inches.

14. “A Son Reflects on Larry Zox and Their East Hampton Roots” by Larry Zox

Our house in Springs was off of Dorsett Road, where [Jackson Pollock](#) had his fatal car crash. This had affected me, relative to the fact that my father Larry Zox was also a painter who loved, with abandon, to paint, fish, and have absolutely no apologies for finding avenues for his own creative headlock on life.

Painters existed in a kind of bubble here. But they could also find a sudden end, which I didn't have any notion of how to contemplate. I guess when you are a kid at some point you realize sometimes things could get crazy. When it came down to it, no matter that Larry Zox had a working lobster boat plying the waters of the East End of Long Island named after his wife, the “Jean Marilyn,” and one night he almost died fishing in a storm: every waking moment, in his hands tending to something of visceral appeal, in his examination of mixing paint, or his extolling the beauty of the natural patterns on a striped bass, he lived a man obsessed with what he found beautiful, powerful on the edge of life and death. It was all the source of a sort of instant charismatic flow, which he employed when concerned with his own reckoning, relating every aspect of what he loved and what he disliked...

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Photo courtesy of Alexander Zox.

13. “SOCIAL SEEN: Opening of “Eric Fischl: Late America” at Skarstedt” by Pat Rogers

A crowd made up of celebrities, artists and art fans turned out for the Opening Reception of Eric Fischl's latest solo show at Skarstedt, held at its Chelsea gallery in New York City. “Eric Fischl: Late America” exhibits a series of new paintings that return to Fischl's exploration of contemporary life, social malaise and moral ambivalence set in suburban scenes. All the paintings on view present figurative narratives taking place around a swimming pool and explore the dimmer side of suburbia and America.

His last solo show at Skarstedt, “Rift Raft,” presented paintings examining art fair culture which leapt from scenes Fischl witnessed at art fairs. Click [here](#) to read a review for Hamptons Art Hub for the show presented May 3 to June 25, 2016. “Rift Raft” was Fischl's first solo show with Skarstedt

after leaving Mary Boone Gallery...

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Photographer Ralph Gibson, Eric Fischl, Phyllis Hollis. Photo by Tom Kochie.

12. “ART REVIEW: African-American Artists Draw on Realism’s Aesthetic Strengths” by Charles A. Riley II.

Timed to celebrate Black History Month, [Grenning Gallery](#) has assembled a group show of contemporary African-American artists working in the realist mode for an exhibition that is long on the traditional portraiture for which the gallery is renowned. The exhibition is co-curated by Andréé MiChelle, the first gallery director for Grenning Gallery, with Laura Grenning. It features the works of seven artists, most of whom are new to the gallery’s exhibition roster.

“Expanding Tradition: The Journey of the African-American Artist” relies on aesthetics rather than politics to make its mark. The most edgy of the works are the “lifescape” watercolors of [Philip Smallwood](#) (whose work is in the collection of the [Parrish Art Museum](#) in Water Mill). Two portraits of young men in what the gallery press release calls their “natural environment” depict moments in their day-to-day urban lives captured by the artist...

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“Flavas” by Phillip Smallwood, 2016. Watercolor, 28.5 x 21 inches. Courtesy of Grenning Gallery.

11. “Portfolio: Lauren Luloff on Creating Paintings without Canvas, Primer and Paint” by Pat Rogers

[Lauren Luloff](#) is no stranger to paths not frequently taken. Attracted to textiles, she spent time

studying traditional block printing in India that use natural materials only under a master artisan, entering a tradition practiced by men alone. Attracted to nature, she finds cemeteries a quiet place to commune and escape from the urban noise and traffic in her Brooklyn neighborhood. Interested in color and where art can take her, Luloff now unveils two new bodies of work that present a new medium for the artist and a new technique in the mixed media paintings she's known for. Her art is currently on view through July 24, 2017 at [Halsey Mckay Gallery](#) in East Hampton, N.Y.

In the biggest surprise in her third solo show with the Hamptons gallery, "Lauren Luloff - Sundrawn" presents selections from a new ongoing series of ceramics. The sculptural works, installed on the wall, are an exploration of color for Luloff that adds a tactile element to her artist practice, the artist said in a phone interview. Made from glazed stoneware, working with clay and the limited color palette that an electric firing can render, the process also adds an enticing element of surprise.

Click [here](#) to read the story.



"Split" by Lauren Luloff, 2016. Bleached bedsheets and fabric, 47 x 46 inches. Courtesy of Halsey McKay Gallery.

10. "William Louis-Dreyfus Foundation Offers a Contrarian Collection of Art" by Susan Hodara

MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. — It stands in the corner of a parking lot by an unassuming one-story building in Mount Kisco, N.Y. in Westchester County, not far from the MetroNorth train tracks. With its angled white segments soaring upward like the fluttering wings of a bird, the 20-foot-tall sculpture is a clue that the façade of the former electronics warehouse belies what is housed within.

Inside, the sprawling space is divided into roughly a dozen galleries that are filled with art. Paintings and drawings hang in clusters on every wall and rest in rows along specially designed shelving; hundreds more are mounted on vertical stacks of floor-to-ceiling sliding panels. Sculptures are everywhere: on pedestals, on the walls, on the floor, alongside books on bookcases, atop a couple of filing cabinets and, yes, in the parking lot...

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"Upside-Down Bather" by Graham Nickson, 1979-1982. Lascaux Acrylic on canvas, 125 x 126 inches. Louis-Dreyfus Family

9. “ART REVIEW: John Graham Revealed as a Modernist Polymath Ahead of His Time” by James Croak

He spoke as many as 12 languages, had five wives, influenced Jackson Pollock and lived in Southampton. What's not to like?

[John D. Graham](#), né Ivan Gratianovitch Dombrowsky, is the subject of a scholarly show at the [Parrish Art Museum](#) in Water Mill curated by Parrish Curator of Art and Education Alicia Longwell, Ph.D., along with guest curator Karen Wilkin and consulting curator William C. Agee. At the outset, this exhaustively researched exhibition brings linear clarity to a difficult Modernist star and is an academic achievement one would more likely expect to see at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and not a regional museum...

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“Poussin m'instruit (detail)” by John Graham, 1944.

8. “ART REVIEW: The Pleasurable Melancholy of Wayne Thiebaud’s Landscapes” by Sally Grant

To describe the landscapes of an acclaimed American artist known for his images of cakes and candy in terms of the language of food might seem clichéd. But on viewing the paintings of [Wayne Thiebaud](#) (b. 1920) in “Land Survey” at [Allan Stone Projects](#) in Chelsea, the word *delicious* cannot help but come to mind.

In Thiebaud’s food paintings, glossy impastos convey simultaneously the swirls of confectioners’ frosting and the sensuous possibilities of paint. At Allan Stone Projects, the best of the artist’s landscapes contain similarly expressive whorls and streaks of color, which now capture the beauty and drama of the surrounding world. These virtuosic brushstrokes can be considered both as representational markings and as pure strokes of pigment. In either case, they entice. They also unsettle...

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“Napa Ridge Study” by Wayne Theibaud, 1988. Mixed media on paper, 17 x 23 inches. Courtesy of Allan Stone Projects.

7. “ART REVIEW: Elliott Green Paintings Marry Landscapes to Dramatic Abstraction” by Peter Malone

“Human Nature,” an [exhibition](#) of a dozen canvases by [Elliott Green](#) exhibited at [Pierogi](#)’s new Lower East Side space, epitomizes a crucial aspect of this present moment in painting, a moment that may be felt as a tremor caused by the representational plate grinding against its abstract counterpart.

As the allure of merging intensifies among a growing number of painters, so does the anxiety that was once held in check by dogmatic theories that maintained a stable fault line. As painters today attempt reconciliation, they often and perhaps unavoidably cling to the more comfortable side. With the ground quaking below, they maintain a steady foothold by favoring one side or the other of the divide...

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“Fire Drip” by Elliott Green, 2016. Oil on linen, 76 x 54 inches. Courtesy of Pierogi.

6. “ART REVIEW: De Kooning and Zao Wou-Ki Paintings Trace Paths to Abstraction” by Charles A. Riley II

East meets West is an ancient theme in the arts: Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly” and “Turandot”; Frank Lloyd Wright’s Japanese interiors; [Brice Marden](#)’s “Han Shan” series; would-be Zen ascetics turned on by D.T. Suzuki in the 1960s; and any number of other examples. And now, at [LG Lévy Gorvy Gallery](#) on the Upper East Side, [Willem de Kooning](#) and his Chinese contemporary [Zao Wou-](#)

[Ki](#).

On view through March 11, 2017, “Willem de Kooning|Zao Wou-Ki” features more than 20 paintings from the two artists’ absolute peak decades, the ’40s through the ’70s, enough to fill three stories of the newly expanded Lévy Gorvy gallery and offering surprising variations on this time-honored theme. Hung for harmony, the paintings progress through dissonance to a revealing counterpoint that left the two artists (who never met in life) far apart. Nobody is likely to mistake a Zao Wou-Ki for a de Kooning after this exhibition...

Click [here](#) to read the story.



“Sail Cloth” by Willem De Kooning, 1949. Oil, enamel, charcoal, and graphite on board, 27 x 32 inches. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy, New York.

5. “ART REVIEW: Alice Neel Portraits Explore the True Colors of the Human Race” by Peter Malone

“[Alice Neel](#): Uptown,” an exhibit of 26 paintings and six drawings on view through April 22, 2017 at [David Zwirner](#), adds to the growing number of exhibitions, books and papers devoted to a painter whose work took 40 years to gain recognition. Selected by critic Hilton Als, the works that comprise the “Uptown” show are portraits of friends, acquaintances and local residents Neel knew personally, or had some contact with during her long years living in East Harlem and later on the West Side at the same Upper Manhattan latitude.

Though the show’s biographical parameters are set by Neel’s distance from the art scene and, later, from her downtown contemporaries, the work itself sheds a welcome light on aspects of her development from 1943, the earliest piece in the show, to 1978, six years before her passing. This survey reveals the artist to be, in spite of her isolation, very much in tune with the times...

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“Horace Clayton” by Alice Neel, 1949. Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 24 inches. © The Estate of Alice Neel. Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London and Victoria Miro, London.

4. “ART REVIEW: Emily Mason Paintings Revel in the Ambiguity of Proximity” by Peter Malone

[Emily Mason](#), a painter whose work represents both a unique marriage of understatement and gestural expression and a union of vibrant color and minimalist reserve, receives an examined look at her recent work at [Ameringer|McEnergy|Yohe Gallery](#).

Measured by Mason’s simultaneous participation in the “Inventing Downtown” show at NYU’s [Grey Art Gallery](#)—a show about artist-run galleries in the early 1950s—the artist’s career has been built on decades of developing a painterly language loose enough to allow multiple voicing, yet purposeful enough to assert a lone sensibility...

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“Support” by Emily Mason, 2016. Oil on canvas, 28 x 22 inches. Courtesy of Ameringer | McEnergy | Yohe.

3. “Retro Miami Underground in Photographs from the '70s to the '90s” by Sandra Hale Schulman

These are the photos the tourist board wouldn’t want you to see, then or now.

In the 1950s and '60s, Miami was an odd mix of sleepy South Florida town and Rat Pack oceanfront candy-colored Art Deco. It lagged behind the era’s social upheaval in almost every way as the population groaned under the ever changing influx of Cubans, Haitians, and New Yorkers. By the '70s, the pink and blue paint had begun to peel in the searing tropical sun, retired people filled the rundown Deco hotels, and crime and cocaine were the main headlines.

It would take another few decades before the resurgence of South Beach fueled a boom in fashion, art and real estate. But out in the trenches, on the streets and in back alleys, photographers were prowling in search of the vibrant underground, the people and happenings that Miami was harboring all along: the eccentrics, the gay rights activists, the cross dressers, the artists and the hippies...

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“Juan Manuel Alonso” by Brenda Kenneally. Courtesy of the HistoryMiami Museum.

2. “Andrea Kowch Sells Out Show Before It Opens at RJD Gallery” by Pat Rogers

Even before the doors open, [Andrea Kowch](#)’s solo show at RJD Gallery is sold out with the exception of a single painting. All of the paintings were purchased before the details of the compositions were fully conceived, according to the gallery.

“Andrea Kowch: Into the Wind” opens on Saturday, August 26, 2017 with an Opening Reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Kowch is expected to attend. The artist is based in Michigan, whose rural landscapes and worn farmhouses are frequent settings for lives imagined in her figurative paintings. An American Magical Realist, Kowch’s paintings are frequently compared to those by [Andrew Wyeth](#).

Click [here](#) to read the story.



“Gust” by Andrea Kowch. Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 14 inches.
Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

1. “CRITIC’S VIEW: Five Booths Not to Miss at Volta NY This Year” by Charles A. Riley II

Two roads diverged at Volta NY this year, and I took the one less traveled by. Parting ways with the raucous laughter in the crowded curated section of the fair—and granting that caricature has its place in art history—I avoided politics in preference for aesthetics.

The invitational fair of artist projects that emphasizes solo presentations, Volta has earned its reputation over the past decade for serious art drawn from an admirably global range of sources, exactly the strength displayed by the work in the five booths I believe ought not to be missed...

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“Kilo #28” by Susan Mikula, 2016. Framed chromogenic print from
Polaroid original
cat. no. SUM089. Courtesy of George Lawson Gallery.

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