



Critic's Picks: Best 15 Exhibitions on the East End in 2017

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

It's a tough task to roll back time in order to consider all the exhibitions held in The Hamptons, North Fork and East End in 2017 and then select ones with staying power that shined the brightest. Hamptons Art Hub critics along with arts writer and publisher Pat Rogers rolled up our collective sleeves and did just this. Following are our picks for the best exhibitions in 2017 on the East End of Long Island.

Best Shows Selected by James Croak

'Tis the time of year to play St. Nicholas and lower a few presents down the chimney for the savants who engaged our minds and hearts, and toss lumps of coal for those who confused shower curtains with fine art.

Tripoli Gallery: "Black and White"

Exhibited: February 25 to April 30, 2017

Why Selected: "Color will not aid or inform," was the central idea of Tripoli Patterson of the Tripoli Gallery in Southampton with his "Black & White" show this past April. I move that this line should be a tattoo that art critics can legally stencil on artists at will.

Tripoli Gallery made my year-end top-three list for this clear and instructive show that thrilled the mind and the senses with brilliant art by a group of mature artists, all of whom were working sans color. Each of these artists displayed pieces realized simply in form and delivered elegantly in black and white.

One, Tracey Emin, worked with needlepoint, black thread on beige canvas, a spinster's craft she reproduced with the linear spontaneity of Picasso. Photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto took a break from his timeless shots of the sea and added this same magic to blurred images of a Richard Serra sculpture, shot on black and white film and out of focus. Looking at these, I felt I was participating in Serra's thought process as he conceived the work.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Incandescent” by April Gornik, 2016. Charcoal on paper, 44 x 48 inches. Courtesy Tripoli Gallery.

Parrish Art Museum: “John Graham: Maverick Modernist”

Exhibited: May 7 to July 30, 2017

Why Selected: “This took a lot of work!” I gushed to the publisher as we swaggered into the Parrish Art Museum last spring, glass in hand, to view the doubleplusgood “John Graham: Maverick Modernist.” This survey revealed Graham as a unique individual whose pluriform accomplishments rebirthed the discarded term “Renaissance man.”

The exhibition required three curators and a dissertation to properly sort out the artist’s ambitious life, which started in Kiev and ended in Southampton. Along the way he married frequently (five times), acquired language fluency (12), painted (hundreds), published poetry (numerous titles), curated important early shows (several), and published an analysis of modern art and its relationship to primitivism (an entire year before Robert Goldwater).

Oh, and some local artist named Jackson Pollock wrote to Graham, to thank him for influencing him.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Two Sisters” by John Graham, 1944. Oil, enamel, pencil, charcoal, and casein on composition board, 47 7/8 x 48 inches. Courtesy of The Parrish Art Museum.

Watermill Center: “Fly into the Sun”

Exhibited: Saturday, July 29, 2017

Why Selected: The final sleigh stop for this critic’s picks would be the Watermill Center summer fiesta, “Fly into the Sun.” The annual event was organized this year around an uplifting bacchanal of non-material works produced by young minds in their incubator residency at the Center.

Kinky sex is the overarching narrative on this woodsy campus and the summer fundraiser party is

always a high point of the rosé season. Robert Wilson's Hamptons center plays JV team to no one on the planet; more exactly, other college performance programs are the JV feeders to the Watermill Center's hip majors.

With a bevy of Dionysian comedies, this year's residency artists nailed the current societal mood of hurtling bonkers toward the great light in the sky, tried before by a young lad named Icarus, with unfortunate results.

Read a Review [here](#).



Miles Greenberg performance, "Hands: Giving and Taking Away."

Best Shows Selected by Charles A. Riley II

For this reviewer, 2017 was the year of the North Fork. From the opening of a terrific new art space in Greenport to a series of quietly serious shows at a small but determined photography gallery in Cutchogue, the traditional imbalance between the two forks of the East End was redressed.

NORTH FORK

VSOP Projects, Greenport: "Very Special One-Time Performance"

Exhibited: May 25 to July 16, 2017

Why Selected: Blending art and design in an avant-garde space that says, "Brooklyn imported to the East End," this new gallery's debut was the best news of the year. Top work: Justin Horne's brilliant 9 (red) *Boomerang*, a suite of small oil on cardboard paintings using an unmistakable red, L-shaped gesture on a white ground.

Read a Review [here](#).



Artwork by Charley Friedman. Solid poplar and gouache, 23 x 23 x 5 inches. Courtesy of VSOP Projects.

Alex Ferrone Gallery, Cutchogue: “Perceptive Dimension”

Exhibited: September 9 to October 8, 2017

Why Selected: Featuring superb photographs by Carolyn Conrad and Scott Farrell, the “Perceptive Dimension” exhibition provided a thoughtful visual essay in messing with the viewer’s slippery grasp of image recognition.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Locked In” by Carolyn Conrad, 2016. Archival pigment print, 21 x 21 inches, edition 1/10. Courtesy of Alex Ferrone Gallery.

SOUTH FORK

Christy Art Space, Sag Harbor: “Late Night Conversations”

Exhibited: June 10 to July 10, 2017

Why Selected: In a quirky labyrinth of rooms packed with significant sculpture, painting, relief and drawings by Nathan Slate Joseph and Larry Rivers, curator Julie Keyes summoned the witty repartee between the two close friends—and, although none of his work was on view, their mutual friend John Chamberlain, whose unseen presence I felt keenly. The robust talents of Joseph were particularly highlighted in this exhibition.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Blue Silence” by Nathan Slate Joseph, 2006. Pure pigment, steel, 48 x 72 x 2 inches. Courtesy of Julie Keyes.

Parrish Art Museum: “From Lens to Eye to Hand: Photorealism 1969 to Today”

Exhibited: August 6, 2017 to January 21, 2018

Why Selected: Huge, boisterous photorealist paintings in this exhibition engaged in what seemed to be a fierce battle for the title of America’s Top Realist. For this reviewer, Richard Estes and Ben Schonzeit emerged at the top of the charts.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Jaws” by Peter Maier, 2009. DuPont CROMAX-AT on fabricated aluminum panel, 56 x 84 inches. Meisel Family Collections, New York. Courtesy of The Parrish Art Museum.

Quogue Gallery, Quogue: “Hans van de Bovenkamp: In the Present Moment”

Exhibited: July 20 to August 9, 2017

Why Selected: In this exhibition, international master of steel sculpture Hans van de Bovenkamp unveiled a new venture into painting of chromatic and gestural vitality. The paintings, works on paper, tabletop sculptures, outdoor sculpture, and examples of jewelry on view offered a look inside the aesthetic connections and influences shaping the artist’s work in different mediums.

Read a story [here](#).



“Marayoor” by Hans Van de Bovenkamp, 2009. Watercolor, 30 x 42 inches. Courtesy of Quogue Gallery.

Best Shows Selected by Pat Rogers

A strong crop of exhibitions grew on the East End in 2017 and my favorites held an element of

surprise and a strong sense of dialogue among the art. Our “Year in Review List” typically features 15 shows and, as the last writer to offer my selections, I have the privilege of selecting seven shows to complete our list of staff choices for the Best Shows on The East End for 2017.

Eric Firestone Gallery: “Postwar Abstraction in the Hamptons”

Exhibited: August 4 to September 17, 2017

Why Selected: Rivaling museum shows in both scholarship and breathe, “[Postwar Abstraction in the Hamptons](#)” allowed visitors to step back in time and feel what The Hamptons must have been like when artist giants were the size of mere mortals and their art was left to dry in studios while they gathered with friends and cohorts.

Selecting artworks that created a visually appealing show of substance, the artist cast was also an impressive one and included Mary Abbott, Conrad Marca-Reilli, James Brooks, Nicolas Carone, Esteban Vicente, Willem de Kooning, Elaine de Kooning and many, many more.

After reluctantly tearing my eyes away from the abstract expressionism paintings and sculpture in the main exhibition areas, I entered a small room filled with black and white photographs by Hans Namuth and Tony Vaccaro that portrayed the life and times of artists now part of history. Bringing the era alive even further was a video documenting a series of 1966 happenings in The Hamptons, organized by Allan Kaprow, and titled “What I Did On My Vacation.”

Read a Story [here](#).



“Montauk Highway: Postwar Abstraction in the Hamptons” at Eric Firestone Gallery. Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery.

Crush Curatorial Pop Up: “Alt-Egos”

Exhibited: April 28 to May 5, 2017

Why Selected: Curated by Hamptons-based artist Scott Bluedorn on the request of artist Karen Hesse Flatow, who heads Crush Curatorial as a project space for artist-curators to stretch out in Amagansett and New York City, “Alt-Egos” was the type of show that warranted repeat visits.

Set in a sizable converted potato barn in Amagansett (Flatow’s studio space when not take over by exhibitions), “Alt-Ego” revealed the visual results of taking the road less traveled in the art practices of professional working artists. For the exhibition, Bluedorn consciously selected artworks

that were difficult to match to its artist-maker and created a unique experience for those familiar with the artist line up listed on the exhibition sheet. Even better was the fact the show went beyond a parlor-game of “Name The Artist” to shine as an exhibition of interesting work worth discovering in its own right.

Reading like a list of “Who’s Who” of Contemporary Hamptons Artists, exhibitors included Saskia Friedrich, Eric Fischl, Perry Burns, Randall Rosenthal, Janet Jennings, Mark Wilson, Hildy Maze, Paton Miller, Christine Sciulli, Bastienne Schmitt, Philippe Cheng, Li Trincere, Charles Ly, Peter Dayton, Steve Miller, Bryan Hunt and many more.

Read a Story [here](#).



“Marco the Magnificent” by Jon Kessler.
Courtesy of the gallery.

ILLE ARTS: “Billy Sullivan & Kathy Rudin”

Exhibited: August 26 through September 12, 2017

Why Selected: The exhibition and artist pairing took me by surprise in the strength of elongated curated wall installations and the conversation created between the work of two different yet similar artists. Installed primarily on long opposing walls, Billy Sullivan’s bold photographs of close friends from the sixties and seventies, captured naturally as unprompted moments unfolded, appeared as if they had leapt from the walls of MoMA.

Intricate collages by Kathy Rudin, who was unknown to me, kept me close to the wall with her work—staring in amazement—as different types of life moments unfolded with searing humor and unexpected connections. Set in almost a visual running commentary, my experience was enhanced by the intricate installation itself, with Rudin’s art manifesting the sensation of a tableaux-in-mid-motion, created through the gathering of her intimate text-driven art.

It was an exhibition I was glad I didn’t miss.

To read a Story, click [here](#).



Artwork by Kathy Rudin. Courtesy of Ille Arts.

Art Space 98: “Walking The Walk: Rosemarie Schiller”

Exhibited: September 8 to October 9, 2017

Why Selected: It would be easy to dismiss the symbolic use of feet to conjure migration as a cliché, making it a bold move as a signature for the gallery-wide installation of mostly ceramics. The body of work, made by artist-gallerist Rosemarie Schiller, was created as part of a conceptual and emotional exploration of diaspora that is chosen by individuals but prompted by societal conditions.

Installed in two rooms and made up of five distinct installations, the exhibition immersed visitors in nuances of the migration or diaspora experience through visuals that told tales of different types of journeys. The art was years in the making and wasn't created to connect to current events, said the artist. With Rosemarie Schiller as guide, she revealed her own tale of European migration stemming from World War II, which informed and inspired a series of wall panel works that combined a long-form poem with color captured in motion.

Separately, each connected installation gave rise to the impact and what it may mean to communities, families, friends and to the individual when relocating is chosen for the sake of survival.

Standing among Schiller's hand-molded fired ceramics, the impact of the art was felt keenly; a sensation that wasn't possible without standing in concert with the art and experiencing the show in its entirety. The exhibition-installation went well beyond my expectations and the online viewing of art details that brought me there.

Read a Story [here](#).



“Walking the Walk” by Rosemarie Schiller. Photo: Pat Rogers.

Parrish Art Museum: “Platform: Clifford Ross | Light Waves”

Exhibited: July 16 to October 15, 2017

Why Selected: I loved driving by Clifford Ross's lighted video work, *Digital Wave*, 2017, so much that it felt like a guilty pleasure. Months after its deinstallation, I find myself glancing at the gray

exterior of the Parrish, wishing the dual LED panels were still there to enliven the night. Installed outdoors on the exterior of the Parrish as part of its Platform Series, where an artist reacts to the architecture and grounds of the Parrish, the rolling crashing of waves simulated in *Digital Wave* conjured water in motion in both daylight and surrounded by dark of night. The continuing pulse of water and waves were a dramatic reminder of the grandeur and power of the ocean, located a short drive away from nearly any point in The Hamptons.

Beyond the art drive-by, Clifford Ross's LED-drenched murals provided an interesting contrast for his towering digital prints on sheets of matching maple veneer that were located inside the museum in a solo exhibition. The scale encouraged the sensation of standing at the base of a skyscraper-like wave while remain safe and dry with plenty of time to admire the details and skill that gave rise to the art—all stemming from Ross's on-location photography for his "Hurricane Wave" series, where the artist photographed the Atlantic Ocean during storms from East Hampton in the 1990s.

Read More [here](#).



Clifford Ross Installation, at Parrish Art Museum's Midsummer Party, July 2. Photo by Carl Timpone/BFA.com, Courtesy of the Parrish Art Museum.

Guild Hall: "Avedon's America"

Exhibited: August 12 through October 9, 2017

Why Selected: The lasting power behind "Avedon's America" was a bit of sleeper. Easy to enjoy as a summer show, when on view at Guild Hall, the photography selections from the Avedon Estate made by curator Christine Mossaides Strassfield provided a history lesson and quick tour through American politics and the creative class, starting with the sixties and moving forward through time. Captured through Richard Avedon's access as a celebrated fashion photographer, everyone seemed to get the fashion model treatment—including criminals, gun-enthusiasts, politicians, writers, social justice advocates and more. I particularly enjoyed the thick booklet of information that accompanied the exhibition that gave insight into the portrait subjects as well as Avedon's thoughts on the encounter.

The memory of the exhibition rose in impact and stature while standing among another solo show of Avedon's work at Pace/McGill in Chelsea when it opened on November 17, 2017. ("[Richard Avedon: Nothing Personal](#)") remains on view through January 13, 2018). "Nothing Personal" is culled from images Avedon made for a book of the same-name that emphasized his social conscience. A few of the same photographs selected by Strassfield are included in the NYC show, changing the context and heightening their impact. The Pace/McGill exhibition hits harder than the Guild Hall

show, which radiated a lighter social commentary touch. Seeing both shows gave me a deeper appreciation of Avedon, the Guild Hall and Pace/McGill show and the ways photography can speak loudly or softly but speaks none-the-less of what's beyond the portrayed...even when cloaked as primarily beautiful.

Read a Story [here](#).



“Donyale Luna, dress by Paco Rabanne, New York, December 6, 1966” by Richard Avedon. © The Richard Avedon Foundation.

Janet Lehr Fine Arts: “The Triumph of American Modernism”

Exhibited: August 14 to September 3, 2017

Why Selected: I had never fully considered photography's role in the development of Modernism until gallerist Janet Lehr gave me a crash course in modern art history from the leaping point of Alvin Langdon Coburn's 1910 photographs of Pittsburgh Steel Mills.

Examining these stark works in contrast to the softly abstracted photograph by Man Ray (Underwater, 1928) not only provided a snapshot of early photography but allowed for a visual dialogue to grow from a whisper to an insistent call between painting and photography through art selected from Milton Avery, Oscar Bluemner, Ilya Bolotowsky, Arthur Dove, Perle Fine and many others. The curatorial lens provided a new way to look at Modern paintings and reconsider the photography images on view beyond the obvious.

Photographs by Richard Avedon at Janet Lehr Fine Arts provided a contrast to Avedon's concurrent solo show at Guild Hall (“Avedon's America”) and provided another touchstone in photography's historic journey as a tool for expression by artists.

Read a Review [here](#).



“Homeward at Twilight” by Albert Pinkham Ryder. Oil on canvas laid down on panel, 8 x 10 inches. Courtesy of Janet Lehr Fine Art.



“Pillars of Smoke, Pittsburgh” by Alvin Langdon Coburn, c. 1910. Platinum print with silver wash, 8.5 x 10.875 inches. Courtesy Janet Lehr Fine Arts.

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