

ARTILLERY

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MARC HOROWITZ LAUREN HALSEY DOUG AITKEN GUY RICHARDS SMIT LAURIE FENDRICH



LOS ANGELES HENRY TAYLOR

BLUM & POE
BY EZRHA JEAN BLACK

Henry Taylor has described his figurative painting, which is not infrequently straight portraiture, as landscape; and to press the point, he has taken the further step of mounting the work within a gallery prepared from the floor up, in effect treating the space as landscape. But these are paintings we read implicitly from the ground up. More than a few are compositionally weighted toward the foreground; which accounts for only part of what feels like a virtual gravitational pull. His subjects are mostly thrust forward or arrayed against a backdrop that may be suggested in only the most abstractly schematic terms.

Taylor “sets a scene” in the literal terms of the installation and in the painted space surrounding the figures or portraits: there’s continuity between the stuff that shapes his perception and painting, and the stuff that shapes character itself. He wants us to see the debris—tarp and cinderblock wall, abandoned garden bench and dead tree, graffiti (including a street-muralist-style Michael Jackson)—of the first gallery, or the pool floats and grassy perimeter of the second, in the surrounding paintings, whether suggested by a detail or sublimated into the pigments; and we do. A fragment of the dead tree seems to loom up behind *emory lambus* (all works acrylic on canvas, 2016, unless otherwise indicated), as if to pull him out of the abbreviated crouch that elides one leg into a scumbled void and reduces the other to a ghostly white line.

The pool floats show up in what might be Taylor’s self-portrait in a Hockney-style pool (*fil’s house*). The dense green backdrop for *yellow cap sunday* might actually be a golf course green, with its subject shrewdly lining up a putt; while, in the “dirt field” gallery, the pink atmospheric background and the blue of the man’s sweater flecks the large head that fills half the triple-portrait, *i’m yours* (2015).

Details, highlights—often in clashing and contrasting primary and secondary strokes, against densely contoured impasto—all probe at the membranes of social and psychological space. Taylor is almost classically expressionist in technique and palette, but also direct



and impatient: a “brutalist among the fauves.” A third gallery clearly represents a “studio space” and is given over to less expansive figure-in-ground studies, straight portraits and kindred spirits (e.g., *danny Fox*); but there is psychological complexity in Taylor’s “comfort zone,” where the portraits are as powerful as anything in the preceding two galleries. The “stain” of place seems less immutable here, as Taylor lets it play out against real time and the scope of his sympathetic apprehension. Consider the raw chromatic shredding of a portrait he titles *From Lagos to London*. He’s compressing time and distance, and the color and brush work echo the motion and momentum. Contrast it then with the rough-hewn and tamped-down, almost monochromatic, stillness of *Pride of the Homeless*.

Kahlil Joseph’s film, *Wizard of the Upper Amazon*, made for a kind of black-and-white decompression “club-room” after the electricity of the three preceding galleries—an appropriate pendant to a body of work by an artist intent upon drawing his subjects (and audience) close; intent upon understanding them, and upon showing us how he understands.

SAM FALLS

HANNAH HOFFMAN
GALLERY
BY CHRISTOPHER MICHNO

Visual affinities extend throughout Sam Falls’ solo exhibition at Hannah Hoffman, suggesting relationships between natu-

ral phenomena and man-made objects, while also developing a thematic unity for Falls’ heterogeneous production. A pair of texturally rich photographs with velvety blacks depict the surface of water (*Gravity*, 2016), with light dancing off the moving body, and the door of a car (*Sin*, 2016) riddled with bullet holes, each photograph’s pattern of light and dark values playing off the other.

In an implicit pairing, a tent pitched on a city sidewalk seen in the photograph *Heimatlosigkeit* (2016) resembles the dome-shaped rock on a book cover framed side-by-side with a Polaroid in *Untitled* (*Rock, Merced River, Autumn*,



Yosemite Valley 1962–2015 (2015). In *Repeater* (2016), the dome gives way to an arched tree stretching across a dirt path, and in *Back to the Future* (2016), this shape is echoed in what looks like paint brushed across the surface of a partially developed photo.

It is tempting to try to construct a continuum that connects the disparate objects, texts and soundtrack, as if each piece is part of a larger puzzle that will fall into place after everything has been examined and turned around in one's mind. But Falls shifts easily between media and from idea to idea without a tyrannical concern for cohesiveness.

The Sun is my Undoing (2016) is emblematic of his practice of exposing portions of an object to the destructive rays of the sun, while protecting others, so that pigments leach out in a pattern. The small, cloth-bound book cover, detached from pages of the Marguerite Steen novel it once covered, is also a visual pun: spread flat on the wall, the plum-colored sun-faded spine flanked on either side by deep-purple flaps announces its bleak state with its title. Here, one might seek to extend a

composition notebook. Falls' notes of longing and grief, delivered in his first-person writing for the exhibition press release, form a kind of preamble to the exhibition. In his notes, Falls invokes the deceased Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño as an example of radical empathy that Falls seeks, by implication, to embody. Falls finally reaches a kind of transcendence, returning to a direct experience of nature in the sublime and exquisitely glazed ceramic slabs that contain the impressions of flowers collected from locations presumably near his upstate New York home.

MIYA ANDO

LORA SCHLESINGER
GALLERY
BY ANISE STEVENS

A descendent of samurai-era Bizen sword makers, Miya Ando was first introduced to metalworking as a child while living in a Japanese Buddhist Temple. In homage to her ancestral heritage, she has since looked to this medium (whose impermanent properties convey the transitory nature of being) as a means to convey the basic tenets of Buddhism, which thematically remain central to her practice.

More than half of Ando's 16 new works appearing in her new solo show at Lora Schlesinger Gallery, "Ginga ('Silver River' / 'Galaxy') and Mandala," are painted on metal panels. Among them are several individual works that share the same title: *Kumo* (all works 2016), the Japanese word for cloud. Feathery wisps, fleecy tufts and other cloudlike formations, all painted in white matte ink, dance across six

square panels of stainless Alucore. The reflective quality of these works' metal surfaces is what gives each of these pieces such a strong sense of movement; reflections of the sun's movement seen between the clouds are what draw onlookers to stop and contemplate our environment's constant state of flux.

Pink Aura and *Spectrum Aura* elicit a similar reaction. A vibrantly colored circular shape, blurred and undefined, like a starburst or supernova, sits at the center of these aluminum panel paintings. Hypnotically alluring, both pieces bring to mind James Turrell's explorations in light and space, which continue to challenge viewers' perceptions. Ando's transformative process of metalwork-

ing, which involves grinding, sanding and the application of heat, among other arduous techniques, produces more than enough stimuli for anyone to mull over. Yet, again, it is the reflective quality of her materials that ultimately compels viewers to indulge in a new awareness.

The exhibition also includes a selection of delicately constructed mandalas made of dried Bodhi tree leaves, which, according to Buddhist belief, symbolize peace and happiness. While one might think that the pairing of these seemingly fragile works against Ando's metal pieces would seem incongruous, their union creates a prevailing sense of harmony that speaks to the overarching interconnectivity that exists between our inner selves and the cosmos.

Most impressive among them is *Meditation Mandala Grid*. Comprising 24 individual mandalas, the set collectively spans 154 inches and stands 90 inches in height. Like Ando's other works, each of her mandalas encourages intrigue. On first glance, viewers are apt to question how she constructed them and by what means. What appear to be hand-sewn webs of intricately woven thread are actually dried Bodhi skeleton leaves, which Ando bleached and dipped into dye for various lengths of time before arranging them monochromatically into entrancing microcosms reminiscent of the galaxy.

Despite the laborious steps of Ando's multifaceted processes, her work consistently reflects a distinct simplicity characteristic of Japanese design. By approaching her work from a Zen perspective, she not only sheds the unnecessary, but she articulates the primary essence of her materials throughout her artwork, which acts—both visually and metaphorically—as an innovative yet apt impetus for true introspective enlightenment.

ANALIA SABAN

MIXOGRAFIA
BY ANNABEL OSBERG

Through her show, "Paper or Plastic?," at the innovative Mixografia studio, Analia Saban breathes new life into plastic grocery bags while highlighting their rapidity as an aging commercial technology.

In earlier bodies of work, Saban cast mundane objects in pure paint and attached them to canvas. In this body of work, she extends that methodology to printmaking.

The exhibition consists of sculptural prints created using a special Mixografia® process to portray plastic bags and hand towels in high relief. Each piece was cast to produce a copper plate mold. The metal form's interior was then inked,



political motive to Falls: surely it is no accident that he used the cover of this book—a novel about the slave trade—as shorthand to signal a major thread of his work; or is the title merely a convenient conceptual slogan too attractive to resist? More likely, it serves as a reminder of mortality, like *Untitled (Red Rover Mine, Acton, CA, Flower Bed 1)* (2016) which is faded, torn and dirt-encrusted from exposure.

One can read a shifting emotional register in Falls' work. The atmospheric and vaguely mournful performance by Imaad Wasif of the exhibition's soundtrack echoes the sentiments expressed in the half confessional, half conceptual poem found in Falls'