



INSTALLATION VIEW "ANGLE OF REPOSE," 2014
Gail Grinnell

PHOTO: COURTESY BOISE ART MUSEUM

BOISE, ID

Gail Grinnell: "Angle of Repose" at Boise Art Museum

Gail Grinnell's site-specific installation currently on view at Boise Art Museum continues a BAM curatorial focus on presenting innovative sculptural works enabled by the length, breadth, and height of its impressive, sun-bathed Sculpture Court. This Seattle-based artist has fabricated a lightweight, seemingly fragile, yet imposing structure made from 600 yards of translucent seamstress interfacing, held together by long crocheting pins. Her resilient ribbons of treated, spun-bound fabric are dyed with tea, coffee, or India ink to provide a palette of browns, grays, and black, along with acrylic pastels and white. With these, she has woven an elaborate design in the shape of a cornucopian horn which occupies the length of the 80-foot space. In presenting this traditional symbol of harvest and plenty, the artist employs the physics of balance and gravity to achieve a large-scale, biomorphic cocoon at rest, ergo the title.

"In the simplest terms, everything I do is a drawing," says Grinnell. The point is driven home in "Angle of Repose," both by the charcoal project studies on view, and the black-and-white contour lines of the interfacing that form the substantive underpinning of her three-dimensional composition. Metaphorically, the imagery is grounded in family history and personal experience, e.g., her education in dressmaking and pattern work under her mother. A homespun aesthetic and work ethic is reflected not only in Grinnell's materials and attention to detail, but in her reverent deconstruction of the garment-making process. Beyond that, Grinnell's iconography contains other allusions. The content is botanically profuse. Entwined vines, branches and leaves give the installation an arboreal aspect. Yet, less promising omens of the future linger. Scattered, stark-white (as if sun-bleached) depictions of mammalian vertebrae imply biological casual-

ties. And while the installation's inviting, ground-level front end beckons the viewer, up in the narrower, darker reaches of the installation, the shadows hint at a potentially troubling turn in this paradise.

Sculpturally, Grinnell demonstrates a kinship with the late post-minimalist artist Eva Hesse. They share a visual vocabulary and an intuitive, introspective approach to process. Both artists rely on the fluid contours of the natural world, and the juxtaposition of disparate parts from a transitory reality. Equally intriguing, "Angle of Repose" is the expression of a tradition-based, nonpolitical feminism, which makes contemporary the positive historical aspects of the female experience.

—CHRISTOPHER SCHNOOR

DENVER

"Takeover" at Gildar Gallery

Gallery director Adam Gildar has made a name for himself in Denver by focusing on content-heavy conceptual art. While at an art fair in Miami, Gildar met Los Angeles-based art dealer Charlie James, whose eponymous gallery has likewise garnered many kudos. The two clicked, and Gildar instantly hatched the idea of having James, who used to live in Denver, curate a show at the Gildar Gallery with the result aptly titled "Takeover." For the exhibit, James, tapping artists from his stable, explores ideas about power. In Ramiro Gomez's altered found photos, for instance, domestic workers are inserted into the images of luxurious residences that they help to maintain. The point is clear—the people who keep these places pristine are typically out of the picture—literally. A similar idea is promoted in the subtly altered book-covers by Daniela Comani in which literary classics have had their titles changed to flip the sexes of the characters. For example, there's *Lord Chatterley's Lover* and *The Little Princess*. Comani crafts the bogus covers brilliantly, so the gag works over and over. Similarly, Jim Thompson convincingly reproduces baseball cards using oil on canvas for *64 Paintings from 1977*. It might be a stretch to see baseball players in some kind of power relationship but the piece is brilliant anyway.

Some of the works trade on traditional concepts of beauty, but undermine it. There's Sandow Birk's *ADX Florence*, which looks like a 19th-century Western landscape until you notice the maximum security prison in the mid-ground. Carol Selter's photos of birds in nature seem lyrical—except that the birds are apparently dead. Other artists James brought in include Ben Jackel, William Powhida and Erika Rothenberg. But James also included an artist that Gildar suggested—Adam Milner.

"TORSOS," ONGOING, 2012 – PRESENT

Adam Milner

UNALTERED PROFILE PIX FROM IPHONE SOCIAL
MEDIA APPS DIGITALLY PRINTED
AND MOUNTED TO CARD STOCK
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
PHOTO: COURTESY GILDAR GALLERY

For his piece, *Torsos*, Milner likewise explores beauty by using erotic screen shots from m4m iPhone apps printed on photo paper. The men in the photos reveal their bare chests but have taken the selfies so that their faces are hidden. An ongoing project, there are more than a thousand separate images at Gildar, but the entire piece is actually twice as big.

In an ancillary show that Gildar put together, Colorado conceptualists are featured, notably Phil Bender, who's been creating work by assembling found objects for 30 years. Here he's lined up a grid of Zig-Zag rolling-paper packages, which has a special resonance in pot-friendly Denver.

—MICHAEL PAGLIA

HOUSTON

Alfredo Scaroina: "Reclaimed Matter" at Deborah Colton Gallery

Alfredo Scaroina explores the influence of everyday events, personal experiences, contemporary culture, and the creative process on his paintings. This Dominican-born painter, a modernist in style, embraces experimental techniques and fresh ideas in his work in order to express a universal consciousness. His creative process begins when he staples a blank canvas to the studio wall and starts a dialogue with it. As he applies layers of paint and other materials to the surface, the painting undergoes numerous transformations before it is complete. The result is an accumulation of layers of oil, acrylic, gesso, encaustic, spray paint, oil stick, charcoal, graphite, as well as other materials such as recycled fabrics and papers, wood, rope, and even dirt. "I will-reuse any materials





"UNTITLED," 2014

Alfredo Scaroina

ACRYLIC, OIL, OIL STICK, GESSO, PAPER, DIRT, SPRAY PAINT, FOUND FABRIC, CHARCOAL ON CANVAS
68" x 55"

PHOTO: COURTESY DEBORAH COLTON GALLERY

I can get my hands on," Scaroina says.
"Anything in the studio is fair game."

These colorful, densely textured paintings are worked and reworked over an extended period of time. After building up the surface, Scaroina may sand it down several times and apply a new layer of paint and materials. The dominant color may change several times as well. Some of the paintings, such as *It's Never Enough*, suggest an urban wall on which dozens of posters and graffiti have been applied, exposed to the elements, and partially deconstructed over a period of time. Others are pieced together from fragments of older paintings to which the artist adds additional layers, creating a patchwork effect.

There is magic in Scaroina's process and mystery in his results. He draws on a large vocabulary of archetypal symbols and motifs ranging from crosses and geometric shapes to numbers, letters, and other marks. Scaroina also incorporates chance in his creative process by allowing his subconscious to direct his hand as it moves across the canvas. The resulting paintings have elements that suggest abstract expressionism, as well as the work of Twombly, Rothko, Gottlieb, Reinhardt, Rauschenberg, to name a few. Scaroina takes everything in and lets it percolate in his subconscious before unleashing his creative process. It is this process that determines the form and content of the completed paintings.

—DONNA TENNANT

SANTA FE

Gregory Botts:
"The Madrid Group"

at David Richard Gallery

In mountain towns throughout the West, straw-hatted *plein air* painters pull over at scenic vistas or at the base of dramatic mountain-scapes, hatches of their Subarus and SUVs pitched while they interpret land on canvas. The work, which, to borrow a phrase from Matthew Coolidge, amounts to little more than "advertisements for nature," shows up in airports, hotels, and trophy homes—places where a pleasant, agreeable aesthetic are particularly desirable.

Gregory Botts's work, on the other hand, provides a different reading of the public performance that is painting outdoors. Splitting his time between New York City and the former New Mexico mining town of Madrid (now a popular tourist destination), Botts built the collection "The Madrid Group" from works begun at his mountain retreat from about 2000 to 2009. Plenty of other Western artists depict landscape from within an abstract, or even conceptual, framework, but the work of *plein air* artists is so easily associated with tourist-driven fall arts festivals. Botts breaks us from this association by questioning his own romantic notions of landscape. He confronts his own presence as an artist in a scenic, mountainous, tourist town. This is particularly evident in the fragmented pieces, as in the *Blue Hills Fragmented* series and the *Yellow Sky Fragments* series or the works done by memory, as in the *Blue Remembered Hills* series.

However, the series that best articulates his vision falls under the heading *Madrid, Night Studio*. Take, for instance, *Madrid, Night Studio, All One, falling #1* (2004-2008), a large-scale painting in oil and acrylic. What appears to be a full quarter of the canvas is black. Taking up a full length and width, it is cut only by white, five-sided stars like those in an illustration for children. The remaining quarter is filled with abstract overlapping shapes in vivid solid colors. We must stand back from the 115-inch-by-73 3/8-inch image, across the gallery, to appreciate that we are viewing a painting of paintings against the dark sky, as if Botts (a student of Fairfield Porter and Paul Georges) is reconstructing the landscape around his studio from memory, while that very same landscape is obscured by night. He disrupts his own romantic gaze through the process of revealing it. And yet, void of particular dialogues

"MADRID, NIGHT STUDIO, ALL ONE, FALLING #1"
2004-06

Gregory Botts

OIL ON CANVAS, 115" x 73 3/8"

PHOTO: COURTESY DAVID RICHARD GALLERY

on the romanticized West, the work still fits nicely in places where an agreeable aesthetic is desirable.

—MATTHEW IRWIN

CHICAGO

Jeff Carter:

"A Study in Lost Opportunity"
at The Mission

"The Common Citizenship of Forms"
at DePaul Art Museum

It's likely that viewers of Jeff Carter's exhibition at The Mission will find his aesthetic very familiar. The paper-filled particle board, nickel-plated aluminum brackets and birch veneers featured in the sculptures of the Chicago-based artist are immediate signifiers of one of the most accessible and ubiquitous of household brands: IKEA. Employing a process popularly referred to as "IKEA hacking," Carter deconstructs and reconstructs this company's furniture, both highlighting and undermining the compositions and functions of the objects. However, for Carter, IKEA hacking is no end in itself. At the crux of his practice is a regard for modern design and architecture, with IKEA serving as an illustration of this ideology, a counterpoint to it, and a conceptual entry point for the viewer.

In "A Study in Lost Opportunity," Carter's four pieces are based upon a design by German Bauhaus pioneer Walter Gropius with Adolph Meyer that was submitted as a part of Chicago's famous Tribune Tower architecture competition in 1922. The Gropius/Meyer design did not win, and so was never constructed. Here, Carter



ZEST PLUS STAR

Artists get to put their best foot forward

Artists from page G1

from one place in their careers to another."

At the opening, other dealers joked that Hopson was doing their legwork for them. That made him happy.

Debra Barrera, McMurtrey's gallery manager, a sculptor — and Hopson's wife — said he did laps around Texas to find talent for Hello Project's first show, "Summer Party." It features paintings by Carlos Rosales-Silva, Alike Herreshoff and Michelle Rawlings, photographs by James Scheuren and sculpture by Angel Oloshove. All have Texas connections, but none are represented by Houston galleries — yet. Herreshoff will have a solo show at Art Palace on Main Street in the fall. Oloshove's work has been shown at Lawndale Art Center and other local spaces.

"We want to give artists an opportunity to put their best foot forward," Hopson said. For some, that means a solo show. Come Sept. 5, Hello Project will feature Houston artist Seth Alverson. Hopson is timing the opening to draw a crowd from the Texas Contemporary Art Fair.

He plans to mount new shows every four weeks. That's an ambi-



Dealer Deborah Colton is featuring two artists she's represented for several years during ArtHouston 2014. She says building a relationship with artists allows them to grow. Her front gallery features new paintings by Alfredo Scaroina.

Deborah Colton Gallery

ArtHouston 2014

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