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for art's sake

Interview by Lance Scott Walker
Photography by Christopher Rosales

NO
MOUNTAIN
MOLLY
GOCHMAN



A LOT OF PEOPLE WANT THE WORK TO STAY THE SAME 20 YEARS LATER,
40 YEARS LATER; I EMBRACE THE CHANGES THAT HAPPEN.

TIME IS AN IMPORTANT CONCEPT IN YOUR WORK – THE LAYERS OF TIME AND SUCH. BEING THAT OUR CONCEPT OF ‘TIME’ IS CHANGING SO RAPIDLY BECAUSE OF THE IMMEDIACY OF EVERYTHING IN THIS DAY AND AGE, HOW ARE YOU DEALING WITH THAT – IS THAT AFFECTING YOUR WORK?

Yes. I made one work at the end of October, beginning of November, it was called “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough...” Actually, the work was called “Traffic.” It was based on the song “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough,” but it was based on bird songs.

YOU’RE STEALING MY THUNDER ALREADY. I HAD THIS QUESTION WRITTEN...

Oh, I’m sorry! I don’t know if I ever actually publicly talked about this with that work but there’s so much of our communication now is through text messaging and email that I think because of that, the roots with relationships are less grounded. With relationships and also with *home*, because we’re moving so much. I think that people are feeling that. I’m feeling that. I’m working with materials a lot of the time off of the street and I also embrace how things change over time. Even how my work changes over time. A lot of people want the work to stay the same 20 years later, 40 years later; I embrace the changes that happen.

YOUR WORK HAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION. NOT WITH EVERY ONE OF THEM, BUT WITH A LOT OF THEM YOU ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THOSE VIEWING YOUR WORK. THIS SORT OF REFERS TO THE LAST QUESTION, BUT AS WE MOVE MORE AND MORE INTO THIS SORT OF NARCISSISTIC SOCIETY WHERE EVERYONE HAS A FACEBOOK OR A TWITTER PROFILE BY WHICH THEY COMMUNICATE AND SORT OF PUT THEMSELVES OUT THERE, DO YOU EVER WORRY THAT THE WONDER OF PARTICIPATION WILL EVER GET LOST?

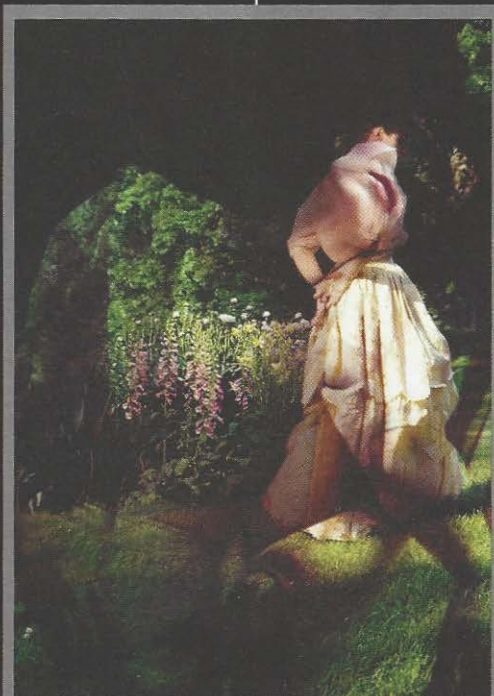
Well, I feel like the participation that we are *doing* is pretty distant. I haven’t been able to really get into... maybe I shouldn’t go there, but I think that participating on Facebook or participating on Twitter is very different from participating *live*. And having a live exchange with someone... the *quality* of that is richer. Our memories are formed in nine dimensions, and in front of the computer screen, we don’t experience *time* the way we do moving in architectural space. In movies, when they screen architectural spaces, they’re pushing you through the spaces to help you create better memories of what’s going on. And I think that time is moving faster because we’re spending more time in front of the screen, and we are creating more relationships that are more shallow in a way because the memories of these relationships are more difficult to grasp.

THEY’RE ONE-DIMENSIONAL.

Right.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

I’m interested in working on the memory collage some more. I’m about to talk to Mary Beth Edelson, an artist who’s in New York, and we’re going to do a show together in 2010 in Dallas. She’s a feminist artist and a pioneer in the feminist art movement. She’s been doing these performances that are one-on-one, and she makes eye contact at the person and the person stares back at her until one of the people breaks the gaze. That experience is recorded with 3 photographs. And then after that performance is done, she makes a drawing based on her perspective of the performance. So there are 4 perspectives – there are those 3 photographs and then there’s the drawing, and she doesn’t *share* the drawing. It’s her personal documentation; and so the idea that part of the work is something that no one ever sees I find really interesting. But I don’t know what part of the project *she’s* most fascinated with, and I’m looking forward to getting to talk to her more about this while in New York and being able to collaborate with her in some way.



Foxglove 2009 – (exhibited at Performa, 2009)

Two Photographic Prints that comprise one work. Both are of the same images taken from the exact same file. One is a Digital C-Print on Glossy paper. The other is an Inkjet Pigment Print on thick cotton rag, similar to watercolor paper.

WHEN YOU DO A LARGE-SCALE WORK LIKE “WELCOME,” THE BRAILLE ESPLANADE PROJECT IN NEW ORLEANS, THE REALITY IS THAT WITH A WORK THAT’S OVER 100 FEET LONG, PEOPLE ONLY REALLY EXPERIENCE A PART OF IT AT A TIME. DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT, THAT YOUR LARGER WORKS ARE EXPERIENCED IN PIECES?

Yes, I do. I always think about that, actually, with all of my work. Even if it’s a small object, I think about how someone’s going to enter the room and what it would be like if someone were 6 feet tall or if it was a child and if the room was full of people. Depending on the lighting in the room, the time of day. So, when thinking about *Welcome*, I thought about all the different views

coming into the city park, coming into the museum, from various spaces in the park.

BACK TO WHERE YOU STOLE MY THUNDER EARLIER, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE “AIN’T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH” FOR “TRAFFIC?”

Because it was my little brother’s favorite when he was about 5, and at that time I was walking in the botanical gardens where they were protesting the expansion of this road nearby and I was curious why they were protesting this and I did some research and found that the sound of automobile traffic was affecting bird populations – and my brother’s first word was ‘bird.’ So all of these things came together to make this work. I don’t know if my brother is crazy about this work. He doesn’t like Diana Ross anymore –and it was the Diana Ross version. Now, he’s not as fond.

DALLAS NOVEMBER 2010
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ARTNOTES

GIRL POWER PLUS A GIANT INFLATABLE:

A ground-breaking exhibition at **McKinney Avenue Contemporary** pairs two generations of female artists with a decidedly feminist stance. **Mary Ann Edelson**, who burst onto the SoHo scene in the 1960s, brings works circa 1981 through 1997 — mostly small-scale, mixed-media offerings, plus an installation materialized as a vast spider web. Concurrently, Houston and New York-based **Molly Gochman** unfurls the series “Lullabies,” which interweaves photography, sculpture, video and audio into a hypnotic installation (November 7 — December 12) ... At Victory Park, Artopia on Saturday, November 13, includes headlining Dallas artist **Billy Zinser**. His work is hard to miss: It’s a 20-foot-tall, forced-air inflated sculpture, series three of his ongoing Macrodon toys. Zinser’s day job is as an art dealer at **Marty Walker Gallery**. **MUSEUM MUST-SEES:** If you identify with the Middle Ages, the **Dallas Museum of Art’s** contemplative exhibition “The Mourners” is required viewing (through January 2). The DMA is co-organizer of this gem-like show of tomb figures from the 14th- and 15th-century Court of the Burgundy, which once reigned over a territory encompassing France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. The DMA’s **Heather McDonald** serves as co-curator for this seven-city national tour ... Make tracks to the **Amon Carter Museum** in Fort Worth for “American Modern: Abbott, Evans, Bourke-White.” The exhibition showcases **Walker Evans** alongside the lesser-known **Berenice Abbott** and **Margaret Bourke-White**, focusing on the trinity’s classic documentary black-and-whites à la the 1930s (through January 2). **WHERE WOULD YOU GO?:** **Christopher Blay** is an installationist whose time-



Billy Zinser’s *Macrodon (Series 3)*, 2010, at Artopia, Victory Park

machine vignette with the viewer as performer is creepy cool. Catch his final days at **Conduit Gallery** in the Project Room (through November 13). **REFRIGERATOR MAN:** *ARTnews* recently anointed former Texan **Peter Saul**, the acknowledged genius of the darkly comic figured canvas, as one of the best underrated artists, so Dallas Art Fair co-founder **Chris Byrne’s** curatorial turn at the New York branch of international gallery **Haunch of Venison** — a survey of 50 years of Saul’s prodigious output — seems perfectly timed (November 5 — January 8). On ice are Saul’s famed paintings of refrigerators (an early precursor to Pop art, the “Icebox” series continues today). **BOOKIN’ IT:** **Dallas Contemporary**, one of the beneficiaries of the volume *Texas Artists Today* — whose North Texas project leader is collector/patron **Karla McKinley** — hosts the first Dallas book signing on Friday night, November 19, followed by another signing at the **Nasher Sculpture Center** on Saturday, November 20, 1 to 3 pm. See you there! *Catherine D. Anspan*



Molly Gochman’s *Topography of a Town* from the “Lullabies” series, 2008, at The MAC

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND COOTON & FRIB GALLERY, HOUSTON