



AC

ARTS+CULTURE
NORTH TEXAS

DECEMBER 2011+JANUARY 2012

conduitgallery



JOHN RANDALL NELSON

Fraught, Simply Fraught with Narrative...



STEVEN J. MILLER

Fish and Fowl

January 7 – February 11, 2012

opening: Saturday, January 7, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Through December 31, 2011

From Outside, in Floats a Music Box

VINCENT FALSETTA, GABRIEL DAWE, REX RAY,
TED LARSEN, & W. TUCKER

JEREMY RED *Catching Up* / Project Room: TOM RUSSOTTI

1626 HI LINE DRIVE, #C DALLAS, TEXAS 75207
214.939.0064 www.conduitgallery.com



ARTS+CULTURE MAGAZINE

THE STATE OF THE ARTS IN TEXAS

PUBLISHER
KEN VILLALOVOS

NORTH TEXAS

MAILING ADDRESS
381 Casa Linda Plaza, Suite 363,
Dallas, Texas, 75218
Advertising 214-282-2845

EDITOR / ART DIRECTOR
SCOT C. HART

SENIOR EDITOR
MARK LOWRY

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
RACHEL VAN HORN

AD DESIGNER
JONATHON KIMBRELL

WEBMASTER
BLACK NEW MEDIA

COPY EDITOR
DAVID TAFFET

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER
RICARDO PANIAGUA

CONTRIBUTORS
ANDY AMATO, ALEXANDRA
BONIFIELD, ANNA CAPLAN,
DANIELLE MARIE GEORGIU,
GREGORY SULLIVAN ISAACS,
PATRICIA MORA, DAN PRITCHETT,
KASTEN SEARLES, CHRISTOPHER
SODEN, CHARISSA TERRANOVA

HOUSTON

MAILING ADDRESS
4820 Caroline Street,
Houston, Texas 77004
Advertising 214-282-2845

EDITOR
NANCY WOZNY

ART DIRECTOR
JONATHON KIMBRELL

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
CANDACE KIZER

AD DESIGNER
SCOT C. HART

WEBMASTER
BLACK NEW MEDIA

COPY EDITOR
DAVID TAFFET

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER
BRYAN ROSS

CONTRIBUTORS
HOLLY BERETTO, ZACHARY DOSS,
GEOFFREY SMITH, BETH SECOR
DEBRA BARRERA, KATIA
ZAVISTOVSKI, JOSEPH WOZNY
CHARISSA TERRANOVA, MEGHAN
HENDLEY, CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
NANCY ZASTUDIL

MEDIA PARTNER

TheaterJones.com

COVER IMAGE © JAY RUSOVICH "THE PAYOFF" 2009.
HOUSTON BASED PHOTOGRAPHER JAY RUSOVICH WILL HAVE A DALLAS
OPENING AT SAMUEL LYNNE GALLERIES, JANUARY 14, 2012.



published by ARTSTARS MEDIA, LLC. printed by MIDWAY PRESS, DALLAS.
all rights reserved. copyright 2011.

ArtStars Media, LLC is in no way responsible for the loss of any unsolicited materials. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts or art. ArtStars Media, LLC is not responsible or liable for any misspellings, incorrect dates, or incorrect information in its captions, calendar, or other listings. The opinions expressed within the fair confines of Arts+Culture magazine do not necessarily represent the views or policies of Arts+Culture magazine or ArtStars Media, LLC or any of its agents, staff, employees, members, interns, volunteers, or distribution venues. Bylined articles and editorial represent the views of their authors. Letters to the editor are welcome. All letters may be edited for style and libel, and are subject to condensation. Arts+Culture magazine accepts advertisements from advertisers believed to be of good reputation but cannot guarantee the authenticity or quality of objects and/or services advertised. As well, Arts+Culture magazine is not responsible for any claims made by its advertisers. Publisher reserves the right to accept or reject any editorial or advertising matter. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MODERN MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH

Mark Lowry was a staff writer and theater critic at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram from 1998 to 2008, where he also wrote about dance, opera, dining, music and pop culture. In early 2009, he co-founded **TheaterJones.com**, for which he now serves as editor. He was a proud drama geek in high school and earned a journalism degree from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Charissa N. Terranova is Assistant Professor of Aesthetic Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas and a freelance writer and curator. She recently stepped down from the position of founding Director of Centraltrak: The UT Dallas Artists Residency to complete her book, "Automotive Prosthetic: The Car, Technological Mediation, and the Conceptual Turn." She contributes art reviews for Visual Art Source, a national online arts portal, and Art Ltd. magazine, based in Los Angeles.



Patricia Mora was recently recognized as an "arts writer of outstanding merit" by The Warhol Foundation and has work soon to be published by the International Association of Art Critics. In addition to writing for A+C, her work has appeared in The Huffington Post, Visual Art Source and Humanities magazine, an arts journal published by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her commentaries have aired on the North Texas NPR station, KERA, and an ongoing series of articles appear in The Dallas Morning News. She currently works as a ghostwriter for corporate clients. Mora earned a Master's Degree in Humanities and studied both in the U.S. and abroad.

An NEA/Annenberg Fellow in theater criticism, **Alexandra Bonifield** has enjoyed life-long involvement in performance arts as performer, director, producer, arts manager and advocate in both Texas and California. She has lectured in theater criticism at the University of North Texas and has been honored for her writing at UNT's Mayborn Non-fiction Writers Conference. She brings perspective, grounded understanding and committed passion to her commentary. A Texas native, she is a graduate of The Hockaday School. Find her stage reviews and interviews online at criticalrant.com.



Gregory Sullivan Isaacs is currently the music critic for TheaterJones.com, and contributes regularly to the Fort Worth Star Telegram. He is a winner of a Peabody Award for performance as well as an ASCAP Award for his commitment to American music. His critically acclaimed three-act opera for tenor and piano, "Henry Faust," was produced for public television and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. He holds a master degree in music from the prestigious music program at Indiana University.



TABLE OF CONTENTS
DECEMBER 2011 **JANUARY 2012**

10 POP ARTIST KAWS SHOWING OFF AT MODERN

13 THE BLACK+WHITE OF LENSMAN JAY RUSOVICH

21 THE ABSTRACT WORLD OF ARTIST REX RAY

26 A GIANT MUSICAL AT THE WYLY THEATER

29 PLAYWRIGHT CONTEST BEGINS NEW CHAPTER

31 CHILDREN'S CHORUS UNITES IN SONG



PHOTO: DAVID LEE KELTING

7
Artifacts:
News+Briefs

11
The Story Behind
Curious George

25
Dramalog:
News+Briefs

32
New Theater
Group Nouveau 47

35
Reviews

Top: KAWS, "Where The End Starts," 2001, will be on display at a new show at The Modern Museum of Fort Worth, see page 10; Above: Teresa Coleman Wash, at Bishop Arts Theater, hosts an annual playwriting competition, see page 29; Right: Artwork by Chance Dunlap on display at Bath House Cultural Center, through January 28, see page 45.



LIFE IN BLACK & WHITE

Texas photographer approaches art with cinematographer's eye

Fine art photographer Jay Rusovich is fiercely — and refreshingly — old school. He shoots only black and white film and adamantly refuses to use Adobe Photoshop on any of his images. His camera of choice is an RZ67 Pro II Mamiya: a “big, heavy, cumbersome [thing that’s] almost impossible to hand hold,” but is also well suited to the slow and precise way Rusovich works.

His photographic career emerged as an offshoot of post-collegiate aspirations to become an actor in the early 1980s. The Louisiana native discovered photography while living in New York and working as a bit player in commercials, soap operas and movies. A quick study, Rusovich soon became a much-in-de-

mand commercial portrait photographer. But he never forgot his early experiences in the motion picture industry.

“From the time I started [shooting, I felt] that I was really more of a film director because of the amount of time I spent with the people I was photographing,” he says.

Rusovich, who now resides in Houston, made the switch to art photography in 2005. Like his commercial portraits, his artistic ones are all carefully staged. Reveling in the role of artificer, he determines in advance what elements will appear in his images, eschewing anything that smacks of the photojournalistic. “I have a lot of respect for people who go and photograph wars and what-

ever,” remarks Rusovich. “I think that’s great documentation, but it’s not their work: it’s life’s work. I’ve never believed that there was any art in witnessing anything.”

At once playfully transgressive and mordantly ironic, Rusovich’s oeuvre is nothing if not visually compelling. But his cinematic approach to portraiture has also made his work controversial to curators of fine art photography.

“The Metropolitan Museum in New York has fought with me over this,” he says. “The great art, they say, is through-the-lens photography: I say it’s exactly the opposite. Somebody’s got to create those images.”

For all the control Rusovich exercises over such elements as theme and setting design, however, he never poses any of his models. Instead, he gives them free reign to “act out” the ideas he wishes to communicate visually.

“I can’t remember the last time I posed anybody,” says Rusovich. “[What I do is have] a conversation with people while we are shooting. When I feel the subject understands where I’m going, then I let them go.”

Achieving the desired effect is never easy. It requires that he help his subjects—whom he often calls his “cast members”—do what all good actors must: bring their own emotional expe-

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

Top: Jay Rusovich, “Détante,” 2010. **The photographer’s editorial on the image:** “When I win, you win. And when you don’t, it’s because I simply lost interest.”

riences to bear on the “roles” they play in the photographs.

“Unless we have an emotional connection, the magic doesn’t happen,” he explains. “It would be the same thing if an actor [went] to an audition with a casting director and [didn’t] get the point: [if they can’t], they can never fully communicate the message.”

Rusovich’s images suggest a fascination with the physicality and muscularity of his subjects. But beautiful bodies are only vehicles for his real intent, which is to explore human psychology and offer glimpses into the inner lives of the people he shoots.

“I don’t do anything just for effect,” he says. “I couldn’t care less whether a photograph is beautiful [aesthetically]. I care whether it’s beautiful emotionally. I want people to come away with some message, and if they don’t, then I have failed.”

A dynamic tension between reality and fantasy—especially sexual fantasy that verges on the violent—is ever-present in Rusovich’s work. That tension is heightened by the photographer’s conscious insistence on creating a three-dimensional visual experience in two dimensions wherever possible. Both are crucial to the photographer’s truth-telling aims and desire to get viewers to give voice to unsp-

“I couldn’t care less whether a photograph is beautiful. I care whether it’s beautiful emotionally. I want people to come away with some message, and if they don’t, then I have failed.”

— Jay Rusovich

ken interior truths, no matter how dark or otherwise unpalatable.

Says Rusovich, “Everything is so fleeting and transient and surreal: we’ve gotten so far away from reality it’s ridiculous. [H]alf the nation is in psychotherapy [trying] to figure out who they are as people. Let’s [try having] real conversations and real connections instead.”

An exhibition of Rusovich’s work will begin January 14, 2012 at the Samuel Lynne Galleries in Dallas. More Information at www.samuellynne.com.

— M. M. ADJARIAN



Jay Rusovich, “Fragile Expectations,” 2010. All images courtesy of the artist, and Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston.

CURIOUS ABOUT GEORGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Beginning in the years prior to the war, “The Wartime Escape” explores the Rey’s early creative collaborations and traces how the story of George himself (originally titled “The Adventures of Fifi”) spanned the wartime period. The monkey emerged as a character in one of the Rey’s pre-World War II stories, and the manuscript that became “Curious George” was already in progress by 1939. However, wartime constraints on printing as well as the general turmoil of the period prevented the original contract from being fulfilled. When the Reys were forced to flee Paris along with thousands of other refugees in advance of the German occupation, the manuscript and illustrations for the book were among the few personal possessions that they managed to take with them. Escaping via Spain and Portugal, then across the Atlantic to Brazil, the Reys finally reached the United States in October 1940. A month later, they received a new contract from Houghton Mifflin for “The Adventures of Fifi,” later re-titled “The Adventures of Curious George.”



The exhibition features 27 framed art prints by artist Allan Drummond and supplemental archival images from the holdings of the De-Grummond Collection of Children’s Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi. The exhibition is based in part on the 2005 publication, “The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margaret and H.A. Rey,” written by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York). The exhibition is organized and curated by Beth Seldin Dotan, Director of the Institute for Holocaust Education in Omaha, Nebraska.

— STAFF REPORTS

“The Wartime Escape: ‘Curious George’ authors Journey from France” on view at Mesquite Arts Center, December 15, 2011–January 13, 2012. Information at www.mesquiteartscenter.org

Margaret and H. A. Rey at a book signing, photograph, 10 x 8 inches, collection The McCain Library and Archives, Hattiesburg, Miss.