

Franz Xaver Messerschmidt	→	TONY BEVAN
Jean-Honoré Fragnord	→	REBECCA CAMPBELL
Giovanni Bellini	→	CHARLES GARABEDIAN
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# LOOSE CANON

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# LOOSE CANON

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45 North Venice Boulevard  
Venice, Ca 90291  
Tel 310 822 4955  
Fax 310 821 7529

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Tom LaDuke  
*The Nobodies*, 2010  
 oil and acrylic on canvas over panel  
 45 x 60 in. (114.3 x 152.4 cm)

Choosing imagery that informs his own curiosities and personal reflection, in "The Nobodies," Tom LaDuke paints a film still, a shot of his studio, and selected elements of an Old Master work to create a complex layered composition. LaDuke uses a palette of muted hues to recreate a film still taken from George Lucas' *Star Wars*. He juxtaposes this with an image of his studio, which is conveyed to simulate a conflict of surrounding images as reflected onto a television screen. On top of this, with a gestural hand, LaDuke paints passages taken from a reproduction of Ambrosius Bosschaert's "Vase with Flowers," 1618, to complete the composition.



Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder  
 (Dutch, 1573-1621)  
*Vase of Flowers in a Window*, c. 1618  
 oil on panel  
 25 1/4 x 18 in. (64 x 46 cm)  
 The Hague, The Netherlands



Elizabeth Turk  
*Collar 11*, 2006  
marble (Sivec)  
overall: 28 x 20 x 11 in. (71.1 x 50.8 x 27.9 cm)

Stargazer: "If we are all made of star-dust, I forgot to ask him how I will find him up there." My Mom whispered this to me, the day my Dad passed away.

"Stargazer": Simply said, I love it. I want it.

Without a word, its voice is strong. This inspires me.

Carved in marble by an ancient hand, I am touched by the sculpture's simplicity and universal gesture.

— Elizabeth Turk



Unknown  
*Female Figure (Stargazer)*, 2800 - 2200 B.C.  
Chalcolithic, Anatolia (present-day Turkey)  
marble  
height: 5 5/8 in. (14.22 cm)  
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA





Charles Garabedian  
*Frances*, 2010  
acrylic on paper  
49 x 47 1/2 in. (124.5 x 120.7 cm)

I have had a long relationship with Giovanni Bellini's "St. Francis in the Desert." Ever since I can remember, it has captivated me, and whenever I have visited New York, I have sought it out at the Frick. I was not conscious of its presence when I began this painting. I wanted to paint an ecstatic figure. I was completely absorbed by 14th-, 15th- and 16th-century Italian paintings of the saints — Mary, Sebastian, John, Jerome — by Giotto, Titian, Bellini and other masters. The ecstatic saints and Last Supper subjects of my friend Ed Carrillo also floated in my mind when I first conceived of this prominent female form, at first armless. It was then when the figure's stance reminded me of Bellini's St. Francis. I added a resolute "thrown back" left arm; a shovel and the hole in the ground came later. The presence of Bellini's painting grew and grew as I painted, but my Frances dominates the picture plane.

— Charles Garabedian



Giovanni Bellini (Italian 1430–1516)  
*St. Francis in the Desert*, c. 1480  
oil and tempera on poplar panel  
49 1/16 x 55 7/8 in. (124.4 x 141.9 cm)  
The Frick Collection, New York  
Henry Clay Frick Bequest





David Hockney  
*Van Gogh Chair (Black)* ed. 15/35, 1998  
two color hard ground etching with sugar lift aquatint  
37 1/2 x 34 1/2 in. (95.3 x 87.6 cm)

Commissioned by La Fondation Vincent Van Gogh d'Arles, David Hockney created three portraits of chairs in 1988, which were inspired by the work of Vincent Van Gogh. Depicting each side of the chair as it would be seen from multiple viewpoints, these works employ Hockney's use of altered perspective, providing a sense of space and movement.

"Because of the many viewpoints in these pictures, the eye is forced to move all the time. When the perspective moves through time, you begin to convert time into space. As you move, the shapes of the chairs change, and the straight lines of the floor also seem to move in different ways."

— David Hockney (*Hockney's Pictures*, 2004)

In 1998, the Van Gogh Chair reemerged as a subject in a series of etchings Hockney produced for the exhibition "Recent Etchings," at L.A. Louver in July 1999.



Vincent Van Gogh (Dutch, 1853-1890)  
*Van Gogh's Chair*, 1888  
oil on canvas  
36 x 28 3/4 in. (91.8 x 73 cm)  
The National Gallery, London

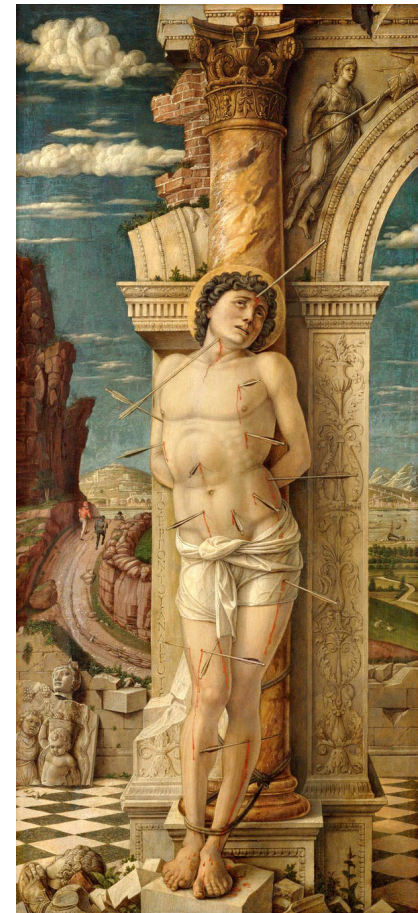




Tom Wudl  
*Henry Flower, A.K.A. Leopold Bloom in Nighttown, 2007*  
 pencil, acrylic, oil and gold leaf on paper  
 71 x 46 1/2 in. (180.3 x 118.1 cm)

It was a fortuitous coincidence that permitted the association of Mantegna's image of St. Sebastian with James Joyce's Leopold Bloom. The original intent for the appropriation was for a decorative purpose, but after generating the image, I lost interest in the project. Several years later, I was motivated to represent different sections of *Ulysses*. This image was inspired by the penultimate chapter of the novel, "Bloom In Nighttown," in which we witness the phantasmagorical mental meltdown brought about by the cumulative psychological stresses of Bloom's day. Joyce intentionally combines Bloom's Jewishness with Christian martyrdom.

— Tom Wudl



Andrea Mantegna (Italian, 1431-1506)  
*Saint Sebastian, 1457-1459*  
 oil on panel  
 24 3/4 x 11 3/4 in. (68 x 30 cm)  
 Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



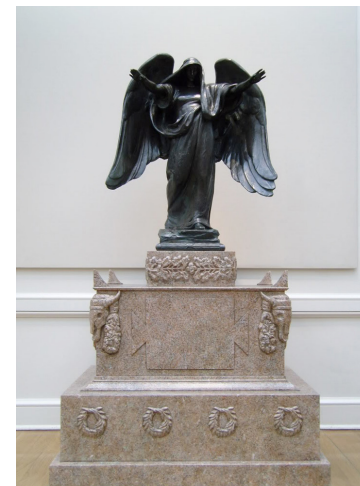
Ben Jackel  
*In the Hearts of Men*, 2008-2009  
stoneware; marble  
42 x 26 x 20 in. (106.7 x 66 x 50.8 cm)

The very first time I saw the maquette for Daniel Chester French's sculpture "Benediction" at The Huntington Library, I felt electrified. The room was full of beautiful objects, but this mournful angel with her hands stretched out was the only one talking to me. I couldn't stop looking at this elegant, serene and powerful figure. The way her arms and wings extended out into space around her body felt magnificent. She was grace and serenity to me.

I knew immediately that I would make my own sculpture of this figure. Mine would be built with coils of clay and fired in a kiln, and through making my own mournful angel, I would be able to find the most complete understanding of this marvelous sculpture. Focusing on this divine object for several months, studying its lines and form, felt akin to slowly reading and cherishing every line of *Moby Dick* or *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

If the full-size sculpture had been made, it would have been dedicated to the American soldiers that died in the Great War. One hundred years later, I have made again this figure for her to raise her arms over the wars of our time.

— Ben Jackel



Daniel Chester French (American, 1850-1931)  
*Benediction*, 1922  
bronze  
40 x 32 x 23 1/4 in. (101.6 x 81.3 x 59.1 cm)  
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and  
Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA  
Purchased with funds from the Virginia Steele  
Scott Foundation





Leon Kossoff  
*From Veronese: Allegory of Love IV*, c. 1978  
chalks on paper  
23 x 22 inches (58.4 x 55.9 cm)

Throughout his life, Leon Kossoff (now in his 80s) has devoted much of his practice to studying and drawing Old Master works. Kossoff believes that the essence of a subject is lost when painting from photography, and he admires the Old Masters for their mastery of depicting the live subject without the means of photographic aid. In the same vein, Kossoff does not draw from printed reproductions of Old Master works, but finds it essential to experience the physical presence of the paintings. In 1995, Kossoff was granted private access to the galleries of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, during its major Poussin exhibition. This allowed Kossoff to fully meditate upon the paintings, day after day. Using charcoal, chalk and ink, and either paper or an etching plate, Kossoff studied and transcribed the paintings to gain an understanding of their emotive nature. Kossoff's Poussin transcriptions were shown in concurrent exhibitions at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2000. In 2007, Kossoff's solo exhibition, "Drawing from Painting," at The National Gallery, London, included his transcriptions of works by Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Poussin, Goya and Degas, as well as "From Veronese: Allegory of Love IV," which he transcribed from Paolo Veronese's painting in the museum's collection.



Paolo Veronese (Italian, 1528-1588)  
*Happy Union*, c. 1575  
(from *Four Allegories of Love*)  
oil on canvas  
73 3/4 x 73 1/2 in. (187.4 x 186.7 cm)  
The National Gallery, London



“For Fragonard and My Mother” was inspired by thoughts of time, heredity, gender, information, the personal and the historic.

The image is of my mother, reading in a guest bed that she retreats to when dogged by insomnia. This bedroom has looked exactly as it does in this painting since 1971. The mustard stripes and flowers filling the space speak both to the fevers I sweat in this very bed as a child, as well as the cultural conflicts my mother weathered the same decade. Hanging above the bed is a print of “Young Girl Reading” by Jean-Honoré Fragonard. In it, a beautiful young girl, painted almost exactly 200 years before this bedroom was decorated, reflects with a book.

While some may consider Fragonard’s treatment of the subject flip or transparent, what I see is a girl with a book. Complicated with ironic tension created by the relative youth and age of my subject, it is the painting’s subtext of collaboration between the women — a passing of intelligence and experience from one generation through the next — that lingers. Death will come, in the book and in the bed, but it is the circular nature of time that may suggest some comfort.

— Rebecca Campbell



Rebecca Campbell  
*For Fragonard and My Mother*, 2009  
oil on canvas  
36 x 27 in. (91.4 x 68.6 cm)



Jean-Honoré Fragonard (French, 1732-1806)  
*Young Girl Reading*, c. 1770  
oil on canvas  
31 15/16 x 25 1/2 in. (81.1 x 64.8 cm)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Tony Bevan  
*Self-Portrait after Messerschmidt*, 2010  
acrylic and charcoal on canvas  
36 1/4 x 34 1/4 in. (92 x 87 cm)

I remember well the first time I saw the sculptures of Franz Xaver Messerschmidt. It was 1972. The sculptures looked contemporary, although they were made in the 18th century; like all great art, they transcend time.

The sculptures I am drawn to are the late sculptures, the so-called “character heads.” The life-size heads are pushed and pulled in expression, so much so, they go beyond appearance. The head becomes an entity in itself, as though the head has enveloped the whole body of being, the single organ.

The titles attached to the sculptures were given many years after Messerschmidt's death. These titles are misleading and should be ignored.

The sculptures have had a difficult past; a journey through the 19th century when they were appropriated as sculptures illustrating physiognomy, hence the titles trying to illustrate them in that context. They have been exhibited in a circus fair-ground, and for many years held in the category of “outsider art.”

It is only now, in the last few decades, that they are seen for what they are — great works of art.

— Tony Bevan



Franz Xaver Messerschmidt  
(German/Austrian, 1736-1783)  
*The Strong Smell*, c. 1770-1781  
cast metal (lead-tin alloy)  
height: 19 1/4 in. (48.9 cm) without base  
The Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
Purchased under the Murray Bequest





Peter Shelton  
*godspipes (no. 154)*, 1997-98  
mixed media  
24 x 30 x 30 in. (61 x 76.2 x 76.2 cm)

On some very primal level, the distinctions between sculpture, architecture and theater are slight. All are some kind of extension of the psychic body, whether it is an object, a space or an elemental action. I have sometimes referred to my sculpture as “tight-fitting architecture,” and often the viewer is asked to “complete” the work.

This “waist” (also known as “top hat”) form is from an ensemble of 188 sculptures called “godspipes” that I created between 1988 and 1998. I had endeavored to sample comprehensively the plethora of previously used patterns, molds and parts, creating a kind a master catalog of my forms. From this vocabulary, one could hypothetically assemble any biological form we know, or at least that I know in my work.

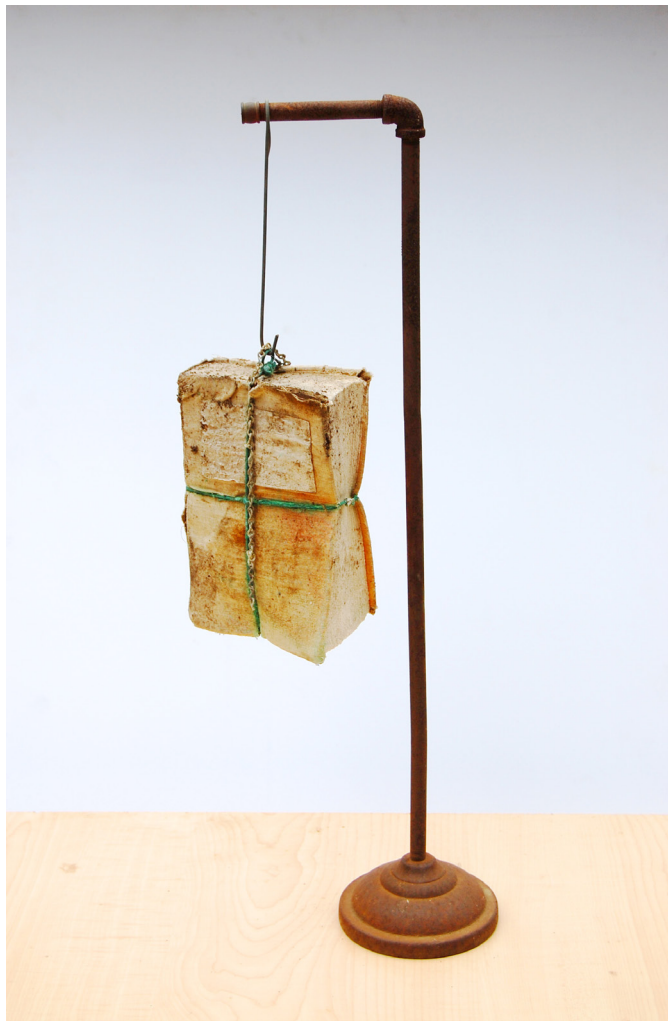
In 1989, I encountered a marvelous Velázquez exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Velázquez’s mastery of painting in the most sculptural way, making near architecture of clothing and forms, was a revelation to me. Specifically, the large Baroque hoop dresses of Queen Mariana powerfully reverberated with the forms that I was creating. So this form is a “sample” from the bodice of a pattern I used previously to make a work called “blackdress,” which is a tribute to Velázquez’s portrait of Queen Mariana of Austria.

— Peter Shelton



Diego Velázquez (Spanish, 1599-1660)  
*Mariana of Austria, Queen of Spain*, 1652  
oil on canvas  
92 1/4 x 52 in. (234.2 x 132 cm)  
Museo del Prado, Madrid



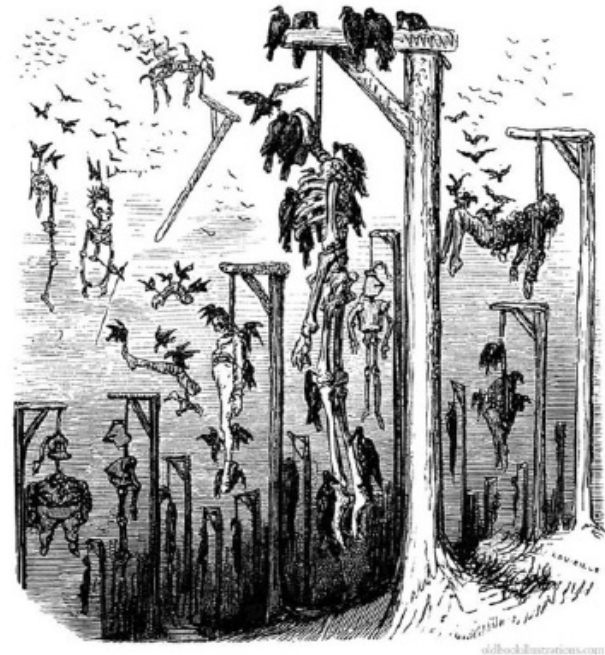


Michael C. McMillen  
*A Divine Comedy (after Dante Alighieri's Divina Commedia)*, 2011  
Assemblage: altered book, salt, copper, iron  
27 1/4 x 10 1/2 x 5 in. (69.2 x 26.7 x 12.7 cm)

As a child, two books in my grandfather's library held special fascination for me. One was *Droll Stories* by Honoré de Balzac, and the other was *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, both beautifully illustrated by Gustav Doré. Steel plate etchings in one, and powerful ink illustrations in the other, carried me off into medieval worlds and Renaissance realms of terror, mystery and wonder. I felt at times, that I should not be gazing upon these depictions of human foibles and divine retribution, but in the end, curiosity trumped propriety.

The image of a “hanged” book seems both comedic and tragic. A metaphoric image of a deteriorating tome, knowledge locked up and no longer accessible? Knowledge punished? Ignorance triumphs over...what? We can only speculate upon what is within the literally bound volume. It speaks to the seemingly endless struggle between enlightenment and ignorance, inquisitiveness and dogma: issues as timely now as ever in our past.

— Michael C. McMillen



Gustave Doré (French, 1832-1883)  
*untitled illustration*, 1855  
from *Contes Drolatiques (Droll Stories)*  
by Honoré de Balzac, 1881, tenth edition



Don Suggs  
*Earthy Delights Iris*, 2011  
oil on canvas  
diameter: 45 in. (114.3 cm)

This is one of a series of 45" tondo paintings derived from the analysis of iconic western works — from the “canon”, that is — and collectively titled “Canoniris.” This one is based on a portion of the central panel from Bosch’s “The Garden of Earthly Delights,” a classic example of axial landscape composition. All of the “Canoniris” paintings begin with a circular crop of the subject painting. The next step is to translate the cropped areas from tabular and relational, to concentric and radial. Colors are matched as closely as possible from the available reproductions, with color bands sized proportionally and placed in loose proximity to original color groupings. This conversation tests the limits of syllogistic reduction. Fudging helps. The painting is developed from the center outwards, and in this instance the cropping choice was an easy one, centering on the most prominent sphere, a blue-black habitation with a golden equatorial band, around which everything else seems to gravitate.

— Don Suggs



Hieronymus Bosch (Dutch, 1474-1516)  
*The Garden of Earthly Delights (detail)*, c. 1490-1510  
oil on wood triptych  
86 1/2 x 153 in. (220 x 389 cm)  
Museo del Prado, Madrid





Matt Wedel  
*Hieronymus and Frederik Adolf van Tuyll van Serooskerken*, 2007  
 fired clay, glaze and china paint  
 68 x 36 x 44 in. (172.7 x 91.4 x 111.8 cm)

“Hieronymus and Frederik Adolf van Tuyll van Serooskerken” is from a series of portraits created as homage to a type of painting that has become a grounding influence throughout my work — whether the subject is landscape, mythology, figure or beast. My work gravitates towards the awkward and innocent, rather than the heroic and dramatic that has dominated western art for centuries. For example, in the depiction of naive and stoic Dutch portraits of children, bodies are painted frequently in disproportioned ways, but at the same time, they are so highly rendered that the initial read is convincing, even though subtly disturbing to modern eyes. I find these images strangely familiar, and yet utterly bizarre, in the way the children seem like stand-ins for their adult counterparts, while retaining a childlike innocence. In working this way, I have built a foundation and a vocabulary of subjects from the history of art; which I can then transform or adapt in accordance with my own curiosity to play with forms, colors and the narrative possibilities these sources suggest.

— Matt Wedel



Gerard van Honthorst (Dutch, 1590-1656)  
*Hieronymus and Frederik Adolf van Tuyll van Serooskerken*, 1641  
 oil on canvas  
 48 1/2 x 51 1/4 (123 x 138 cm)  
 M.A.O.C. Gravin van Bylandt Stichting,  
 The Hague, The Netherlands