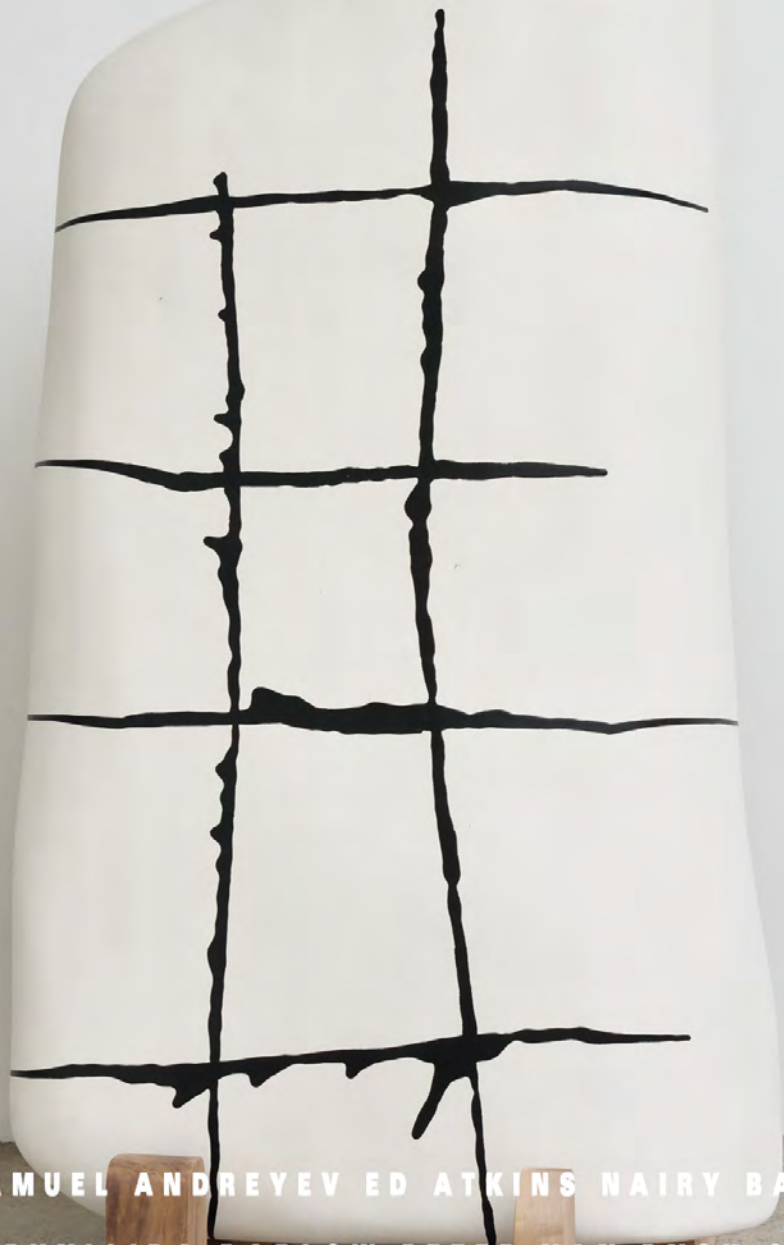


INCREASING THE RANGE OF ART

TREBUCHET

PROCESS



SAMUEL ANDREYEV ED ATKINS NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN
PHYLLIDA BARLOW PETER VAN DYCK OLIVIA KELLETT
TAE KIM CHRIS LEVINE GISELA McDANIEL
JEFF MUHS PAUL SIETSEMA

ISSUE 11

£12.50



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Gisela McDaniel

Manhaga Fu'una

Pilar Corrias Savile Row

27 January – 26 February 2022



pilarCorrias

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ORKS MUST

BE CONCEIVED WITH

FIRE IN THE

SOUL

BUT EXECUTED

WITH

CLINICAL

COOLNESS

-JOAN MIRÓ

On the cover:



528 Hz Cover
Chris Levine, *528 Hz
Love Frequency*
(Houghton Hall,
installation view)
2021. Photo: Michael
Fung. Courtesy of
the artist
© Chris Levine



Misfits Cover
Nairy Baghramian,
Misfits N, 2021
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Courtesy of the
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Tae Kim
<Faceless Gamers>

26 March - 30 April 2021

KH

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The artistic process is whatever it needs to be. It has an immanent presence that cannot be seen directly but marks its existence with reflected glints, gravitational effects, changes in the barometer of mood, and increases or decreases in cognitive pressure. Similar to *déjà vu*, an artistic process follows our footprints into dark, forgotten arenas that bring us to a place where we conclusively remember we've never been before.

Academic commentators Phil Ford and J. F. Martel are drawn to the idea of the creative Zone. A Zone depicted in filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky's inimitable *Stalker* (1979) is the inscrutable crucible of the questing soul, a place of endless dangerous opportunities through which the explorers inch past perils towards the realisation of their desires. These perils, often unseen or dreamlike, are meaningful but never directly allegorical; they are deadly in their soul-crushing mystery. They are negation.

Key to the macabre sense of psychic tension in *Stalker* is in the hypnotic suspension of the differences between subjective and objective reality. Beautifully shot and drenched with symbolic meaning, we feel the characters' fear as they confront their own psychological torment, lost in the post-apocalyptic nuclear forests of the subconscious. As they scramble to grasp some line of truth which will lead them out, we feel the Zone permeating their being and hollowing them out. It disengages layers of belief until the supplicant can access the essence of reality that enables poesis, or living creation.

In this edition of *Trebuchet*, we are guided by various artists into their Zones. Places and situations where forces of negation and erasure resist the artist, where false results and fool's gold are sent to trap the unwary explorer and where hope is cradled in shaky hands. On the following pages are living testimonies from those artists whose drive to get beyond the superficial has taken them past the first layer of conditioning and into the authentic abyss where art operates as truth.

TECHNIQUES OF DISCOVERY AND MATERIAL TRANSFORMATION IN ART



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ART
THE POLITICS OF GENRE:
SHAHZIA SIKANDER

“Art history is deeply Eurocentric and tends to place art that doesn’t sit comfortably within its canon as the ‘other’ and never as ‘avant-garde.’”

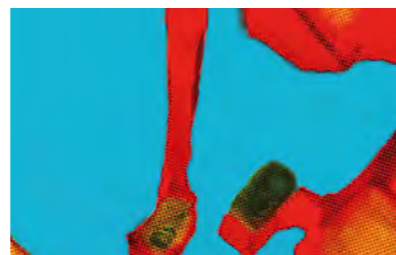


ART
FACES & FAME: ANTON CORBIJN

Auctioneer and art collector Simon de Pury continues his ‘de PURY Presents’ series with a collection of works by photographer Anton Corbijn and his capturing of famous faces.

SOUND
THE SERENELY UNCANNY
SOUND OF DESTRUCTION:
FOSTER NEVILLE

How do fake folk memories and an uncanny set of influences inform a new electronic music release?



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GALLERY AND ART ADVISORY



THE D AR KNESS OF OUR R EF LECTI ON

WORDS: MILLIE WALTON

DIGITAL ALIENATION, LOSS AND REVERSAL IN
ED ATKINS'S VISUAL SORCERY

If you were to ask someone to define ‘process’ in the most basic sense of the word, they would most likely describe it as a linear series of actions or steps that eventually lead to some kind of end, or crucially, for the art market, to the manifestation of a sellable product. Ed Atkins takes a reverse approach in the sense that he “tends to make the final thing first, and sort of simultaneously, once all the pieces are ready” (Atkins 2021). This in itself might not be especially original or even that complex, but it is by working backwards—by first undoing to make again—that Atkins attempts to make visible not just the skin, but the innards of his illusory primary medium: technology.

Atkins is best known for his videos that employ digital technologies to create a range of unsettling environments and scenarios that reflect on their own making. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Atkins’s foray into the moving image came “through an exposure to structural film, particularly the American side of it” (Atkins 2013). Similarities can certainly be found in the way that artists such as Vito Acconci or Lynda Benglis made early use of video as a mirror to reflect back on both itself and the maker, and in an essay in *October* magazine in 1976, Rosalind Krauss goes as far as to ask “what would it mean to say, ‘The medium of video is narcissism?’”

However, Atkins’s artworks engage in a more nuanced form of visual (and literary) deconstruction that, fundamentally, understands “the technology as lost” (Atkins 2018a) thus enabling him to embark on a process of retrieval. “Lost” is used here in the sense that we literally cannot locate or see its source – there is no object to grasp, no visible materiality – but also lost to our wider perceptual field. This state of translucency, Atkins argues, is entirely intentional: “technology constantly seeks to be lost” (Atkins 2018a), or rather, technology is deliberately designed to embed itself seamlessly not only into our exterior lives, but also our sense of self. And so, we simultaneously facilitate and embody the loss, but what’s crucial here for Atkins’s practice is that we do not actually experience it. This is partly unwitting because technology is, increasingly, the filter through which we participate in the world and it works on an illusion of wholeness, but it’s also repression, an unwillingness to see. The result is a neurotic relationship not so much to the medium but to an idea of it. Through his process of writing, performing (movements and voice), recording and animating, Atkins attempts to detach himself and therefore us as viewers from that entanglement. His work wants, in a way, to set us free.

That’s not to say, however, that the films are uplifting or even easy to watch. Most, if not all, are performatively disturbing.

A Tumour (In English) (2011), which in a slight nod to Beckett, features a close-up of an animated mouth asking, “Would you mind checking the mole on my shoulder? [...] Will you take a look, son?” and, when shown at Tate Britain, was accompanied by 4,000 free copies of a book that threatens, or promises to “conjure a tumour [...] exactly proportional to the amount of text that you read” (Atkins 2011). Reflecting on the concept two years later, Atkins commented, “I like the peculiar negativity of it... I want to make terrifying work. I believe that this is a powerful route toward comprehending embodiment” (Atkins 2013). He’s talking here specifically about the degradation of the body, which we see visualised in grotesque albeit sterilised detail in many of his works, but the statement also reflects back on his engagement with new technologies and their relationship to corporeality. In *A Tumour*, Atkins might profess to conjure materiality of the unseen, cadaverous kind, but he is, in actuality, calling on our imaginations through one of the most powerful languages there is: fear.

In an essay for *e-flux*, Melissa Gronlund points to the common use of Gothic tropes (mirrors, doubles, death, elements of the uncanny) in contemporary moving-image work, including those by Atkins, suggesting that, “The return of the Gothic, which navigates between old and new and holds ties to an earlier era of rapid technological change, complicates the popular notion that post-internet art is concerned with a featureless and anonymous present” (Gronlund 2014). Although the framing of Gronlund’s argument is frustratingly linear, positing the death of the Gothic genre before its supposedly recent resurrection, she draws attention to temporality and our fraught relationship to it. That is to say, while clock time continues to beat relentlessly on, with our bodies in its brutal grip, our psychological experience of time is much more fluid, fluctuating between memory, observation and prediction.

This often results in a feeling of rupture, distance and disembodiment, which is reflected in Atkins’s work through repetition and an off-kilter rhythm. In *Safe Conduct* (2016), for example, the beaten and bruised protagonist hums a cheerful tune while repeatedly ripping his face off by pulling on his nose. The act is a parody of violence, of a desire unfulfilled as the ‘face’ perpetually reveals itself to be a mask and one that is, as the sound effects emphasise, as flimsy as a sticker. The violence in the film, as in all of Atkins’s work, is not there to induce shock or even empathy; once again, it’s part of his language through which to explore obsolescence.

In a 2018 *Art Monthly* interview, Atkins reflects on a breakthrough shift in his process:

All images courtesy of the artist, dépendance, Brussels, Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, Cabinet Gallery, London, and Gladstone Gallery © 2022





**THE SURROGATE BECAME MORE
LIKE A CRASH-TEST DUMMY,
HURLED INTO SITUATIONS WITH
AN ABANDON**

First: *The Worm* (video still, detail), 2021
Previous: *Good Man* (video still), 2017
Left: *Safe Conduct* (video still), 2016
Next: *Good Baby* (video still), 2017

“Before, it was more like a performance, a version of my presence in the work as a voice and an acting style. Later, the figure became a surrogate rather than an avatar, and the subtle difference between the two became quite important. I decided to be a bit more distanced from the figure in terms of what I allowed myself to do to it. The surrogate became more like a crash-test dummy, hurled into situations with an abandon inappropriate for anything remotely like a character.” (Atkins 2018b)

What the artist is describing here is essentially a move towards abstraction, an attempt to detach himself, and the audience, from the grips of representation. This relates back to the notion of neurosis in the sense that “images trigger mimetic desires and make people want to become like the products represented in them” (Steryl 2012). Take, for example, CGI personas such as Miquela, who takes the form of a flawless, fashionable, good-looking teenage girl as a deliberate play on the aspirational market. The character points to her own ‘unrealness’ while simultaneously projecting an identity that vies for human recognition and empathy. Atkins’s environments and figures, on the other hand, are made to be undesirable precisely because he is trying to break the feedback loop so as to unmuddle literality and figuration. As the artist puts it:

“A confusion of literality and figuration means that ‘the cloud’ remains a cloud, literally, while also operating as an image of a cloud—the one obliterates the conditions of the other sending clouds, along with whatever acceded personal details, to some weird no-place of fug and ignorance and clouds, literally.” (Atkins 2018b)

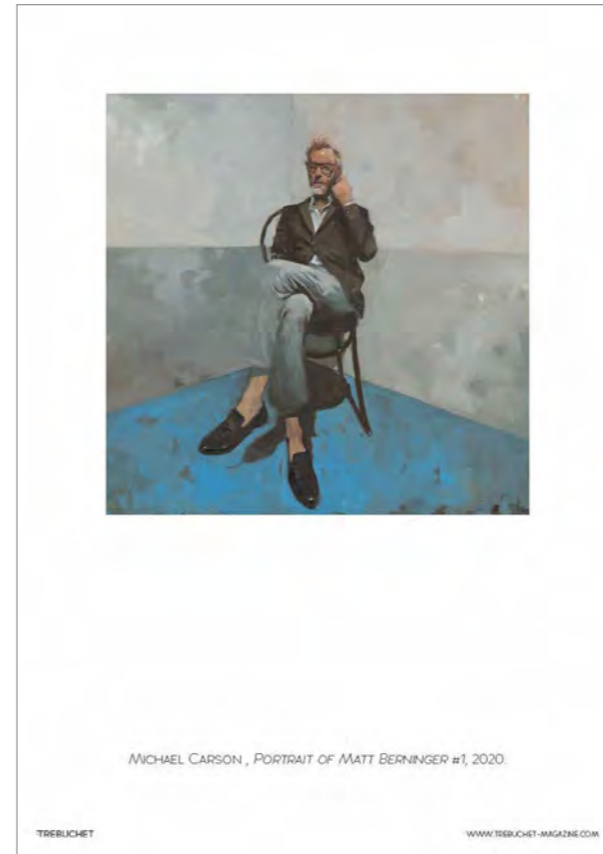
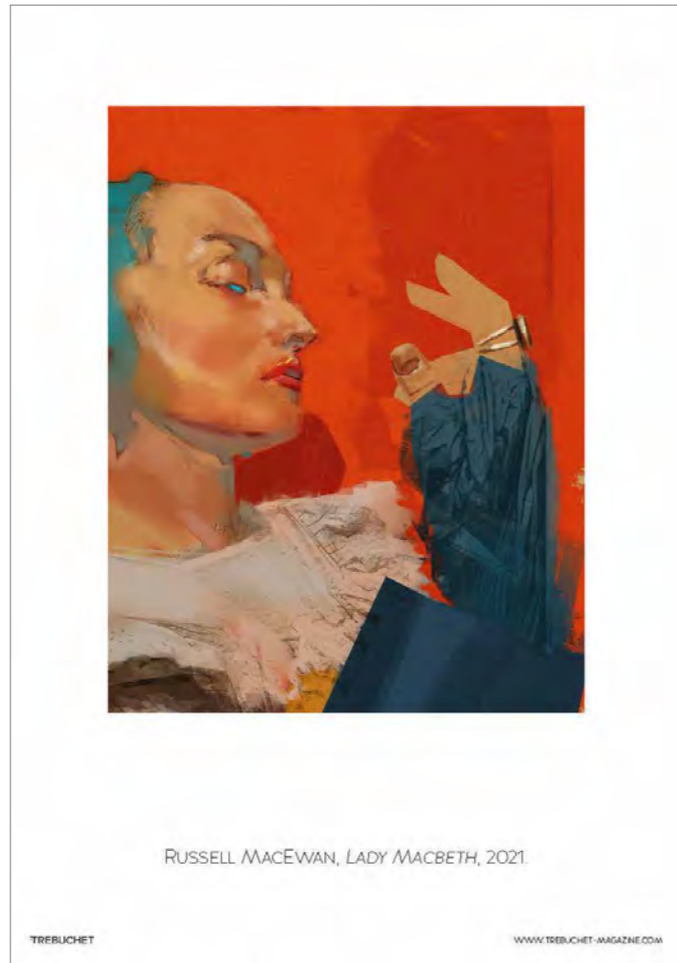
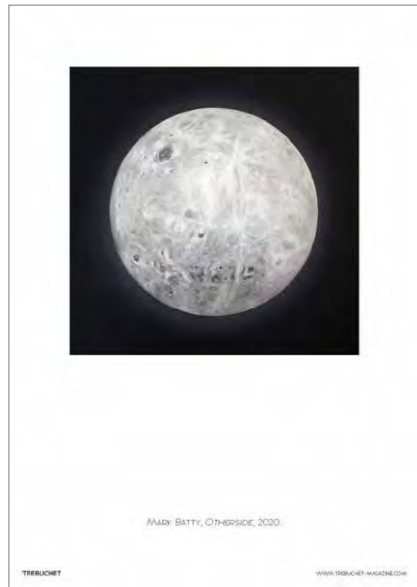
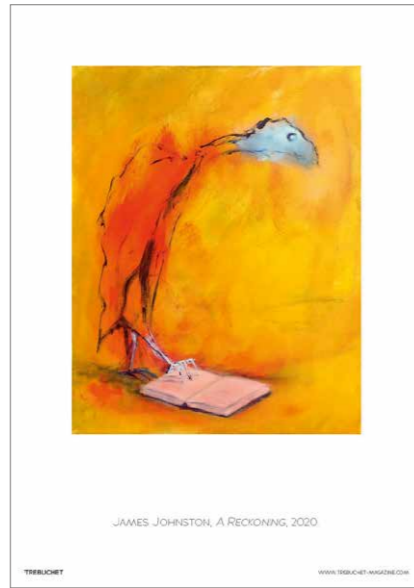
For Atkins, “most images start off as a certain turn of phrase” (Atkins 2021), but rather than seeking to represent or perhaps clarify that imagined thought, Atkins uses it as a kind of base onto which he piles up writing, performance, music and digital technologies to build a “thick sediment” (Atkins, 2013) out of which emerges the final work. This results in the literal manifestation of something repressed or stifled, of something lost. Take the block-coloured, rectangular bar that appears floating in many of Atkins’s video works. It’s a kind of deliberate digital glitch. Its purpose, like many of the artist’s recurring motifs, is to expose the artifice (i.e. that we’re watching something imperfect and computer-generated) but on a more direct level, it also represents the space where a subtitle would be, where we expect an explanation or translation to appear. In viewing these bars, we not only immediately recognise the shape of censorship, but more crucially we relate to it as an embodied experience, a guttural blockage.



In *Old Food*, which is both the title of a book of the artist's writings published in 2019 and the name of an extended installation containing a series of digitally animated videos, texts and other props, Atkins evokes a different kind of frustration – one that's perpetuated by excess and over-consumption. 'Old food', in itself, is an immediately visceral term, connoting spillage, decay, contamination, inedibility, but it also reflects the never-ending cycle of desire and dissatisfaction that defines not only our relationship with the digital realm, but the very crux of capitalism. In the video works, Atkins's protagonists—a baby, a boy and an old man, who are mainly mute—drool and cry, their faces rendered in hyper-detail while piles of mannequin-like bodies, flags, masks fall onto slices of bread to be covered with a thick brown liquid that we can only assume is shit. This work might be a bit more on the nose than many of Atkins's more nuanced works, but the question for the artist is not so much centred on how we feel when we look at these images, but on how these images work in a mechanical fashion to transcend or deny technology's functionality. Of course, Atkins, like any artist, is unable to predict the interpretation of his work, but his process is based on interrogating the concept of visibility and what that means in the context of an elusive medium that extends beyond the art world. That is to say, he not only points at the limitations of his own artistic toolbox, but also exposes the dangers inherent in commercialising our representation in a world explained by imagery.

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In 2020, Trebuchet started a discussion about how artists could reach a broader audience and how we might help facilitate building a network of fledgling art collectors.

What if we could encourage our subscribers to start collecting by helping them dip a toe in the water and experience art appreciation as an owner? We could send regular updates on featured artists, shows, new work, key sales and more – as well as demystify art collection and assist emerging artists and up-and-coming galleries.

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THE ART MARKET

Uncertainty shrouds the continued rise of the shiny new collectible, the NFT. We keep being asked about it, but importantly, the conversation has changed from ‘What should I buy?’ to ‘So, do you want to start making some?’ Naturally, *Trebuchet* has some answers and some big ideas, but it’s always prudent to find out where the big fish are biting in our Covid times. Isabel Millar is Associate Specialist, Head of First Open: Post-War and Contemporary Art at Christie’s auction house in London. We asked her what she saw on the horizon for NFTs in 2022?

“The rise of digital art and NFTs is an exciting opportunity for artists and collectors. The direct access to the marketplace is empowering for artists who can share their work directly with the community and connect directly with collectors. It’s a relatively new market for us – the first NFT sale at Christie’s of Beeple’s *Everydays* having taken place in March 2021 – but incredibly fast moving, with nearly \$150m in sales achieved by the end of the year, making up 8% of Christie’s contemporary art sales total in 2021. It’s also been interesting to see the crossover between collectors of NFTs and physical art – the direct underbidder of *Everydays* (which sold for \$69m) went on to buy a Picasso and Warhol in our March London evening sale for his collection.”

But what about Covid? Surely it’s affected the auction houses? Have there been any changes?

“Absolutely, the shift to bidding online. Our online sales have been extremely successful with our First Open Post-War and Contemporary Art online sale achieving its highest total to date in October 2021. What is really interesting is that 63% of bids across all sales at Christie’s – including live auctions – are now placed online. Online sales have also proven to be the entry point for the majority of our new buyers, with two thirds of new buyers are first participating in online sales. The age demographic is also changing – of these new buyers, 32% are millennials. Private sales have continued

to be very active, and have not decreased with the return to in-person auctions and viewings.

While the situation presented us with new challenges, we adapted very quickly by offering creative and flexible options for our clients. We were able to quickly shift our focus towards online and live-streamed auctions and private sales. The art market has proved to be extremely resilient – in 2021, Christie’s achieved the highest sale total in the past five years.”

There you have it. The future is technological, the present is digital, and there will be a new platform or experience around the corner to capture the imagination. The NFT bubble is showing no sign of bursting but the relationship between NFTs and cryptocurrencies is a drama that continues to titillate and give you the FOMO with the figures being bandied around. The problem with NFTs, as we feel it, is that if you like traditional art it’s not a traditional experience, so we miss the hit. If you think in a socio-speculative way, then it’s all a fun ride that surely someone as smart as you can outfox, right?

Houses like Christie’s are offering what many reputable sources are offering – peace of mind. But they’ve yet to convince us that NFTs are appreciable to others than those with a vested interest in the digital economy and the success of NFTs. *Trebuchet’s* advice on NFTs is to learn how to make one and see if your spine tingles with anticipation of artistic inspiration or a big cash prize. With that insight, judge yourself, and proceed accordingly.

DETAILS IN FOCUS

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Jeff Muhs, *St. Sebastian*, 2013

Image courtesy of the artist and Runway Gallery
© Jeff Muhs

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Ed Atkins, *The Worm* (detail of video still), 2021

Image courtesy of the artist, dépendance, Brussels, Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin, Cabinet Gallery, London, and Gladstone Gallery © Ed Atkins

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Jeff Muhs, *No, No, Don't Get Up*, 2019

Image courtesy of the artist and Runway Gallery
© Jeff Muhs

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Oli Kellett, *Alaskan Way, Seattle*, 2018

All images courtesy of the artist and HackelBury Fine Art
© Oli Kellett

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Chris Levine, ‘528 Hz Love Frequency’, Houghton Hall,

Installation view, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist. Photo Pete Huggins. © Chris Levine

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Gisela McDaniel, *Inagofli'e*, 2021

Image courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery
© Gisela McDaniel

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Tae Kim, *Facelessgamer-'ziğÜ'İmà'*, 2021

Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery
© Tae Kim

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Paul Sietsema, *At the hour of tea*, 2013

Image courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery
© Paul Sietsema

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Peter Van Dyck, *Efrem's, Early Morning*, 2021

Image courtesy of the artist © Peter Van Dyck

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Oli Kellett, *SOAP DRAWING No.14*

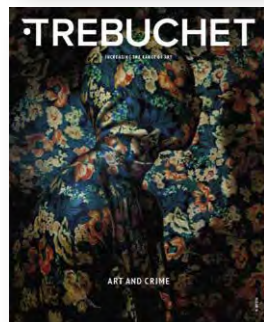
Image courtesy of the artist and HackelBury Fine Art
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Tae Kim, *Facelessgamer-'DS INDUSTRY-all chat'*, 2021

Image courtesy of the artist and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery
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JUSTMAD Contemporary Art Fair
24-27 February 2022. Madrid, Spain
justmad.es

Focused on emerging art, JUSTMAD offers a mix of predominantly paintings and sculptures. Described as affordable, it provides a snug location for upcoming artists looking to establish their names. Expect rare and raw voices incubating away from old influences typically unwilling to make room, the fair even encouraging artists to come and represent themselves.

JUSTMAD also offers an impressive residence programme. This coming year will be focused on digital art, audio and visual compositions, technology and methods defined as modern. Though there are many competitors during this period in Madrid, you can count on JUSTMAD to be watering the art world's grassroots.

Supermarket, Stockholm Independent Art Fair
26-29 May 2022. Stockholm, Sweden
supermarketartfair.com

Proudly maintaining individualism in the face of global commodification, Supermarket is dedicated to providing autonomy and choice to galleries internationally. Determined to exhibit idiosyncratic voices through staged performances, talks and projects, the mostly artist-run fair will continue to champion self-expression on the world stage, as it has since 2007.

“People often ask me what is unique about Supermarket. I would say it’s an art fair for artist-run galleries who are seeking autonomy against market and institutional demands though still wanting to share their art with the community. Over twenty-nine countries participated this year – this makes it very strange and unique for Sweden.”

ART

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Dark Mofo
15-22 June 2022. Tasmania, Australia
darkmofo.net.au

The winter version of the Mona Foma festival, this controversial gathering holds most of its events after the sun sets. Mass nude swims, rolling in the entrails of a bull and unstable psychedelic architecture have all made an appearance in previous years, though not without complaint! Whatever happens, if you visit what has been described by *The Sydney Morning Herald* as “the festival Sydney wouldn’t allow”, you can be sure to come back with a story or two!

“You know we see a lot of narrative acknowledgement statements that we see on buildings. They like it when we acknowledge the original and first owners, you know? If we can take that to the next level, to a deeper level, I think we can really push some buttons. Really start getting people to think about our culture and our history and our knowledge and the stories that exist on this land.” – A. J. King (organiser)

Art-o-rama
25 August-11 September 2022. Marseille, France
art-o-rama.fr

This yearly international contemporary art fair gathers around 40 galleries to produce curatorial proposals. Known for its intimacy and die-hard approach to artistic projects, Art-o-rama’s attention to configuration and individualised curation is unmatched. Amateur artists are made welcome in this diverse and inclusive vision.

Performance, sculpture, painting and digital media arrive from across the world, possibly being the cause of the wide variety of installations. Art-o-rama is dedicated to aiding young artists to professionalise. Each year, a curator highlights the work of four artists, one of whom wins a prize and is provided with extra opportunities to grow their career.

Compiled by: Alexander Clarke

GRY & KNUT

COLLECTOR PROFILE

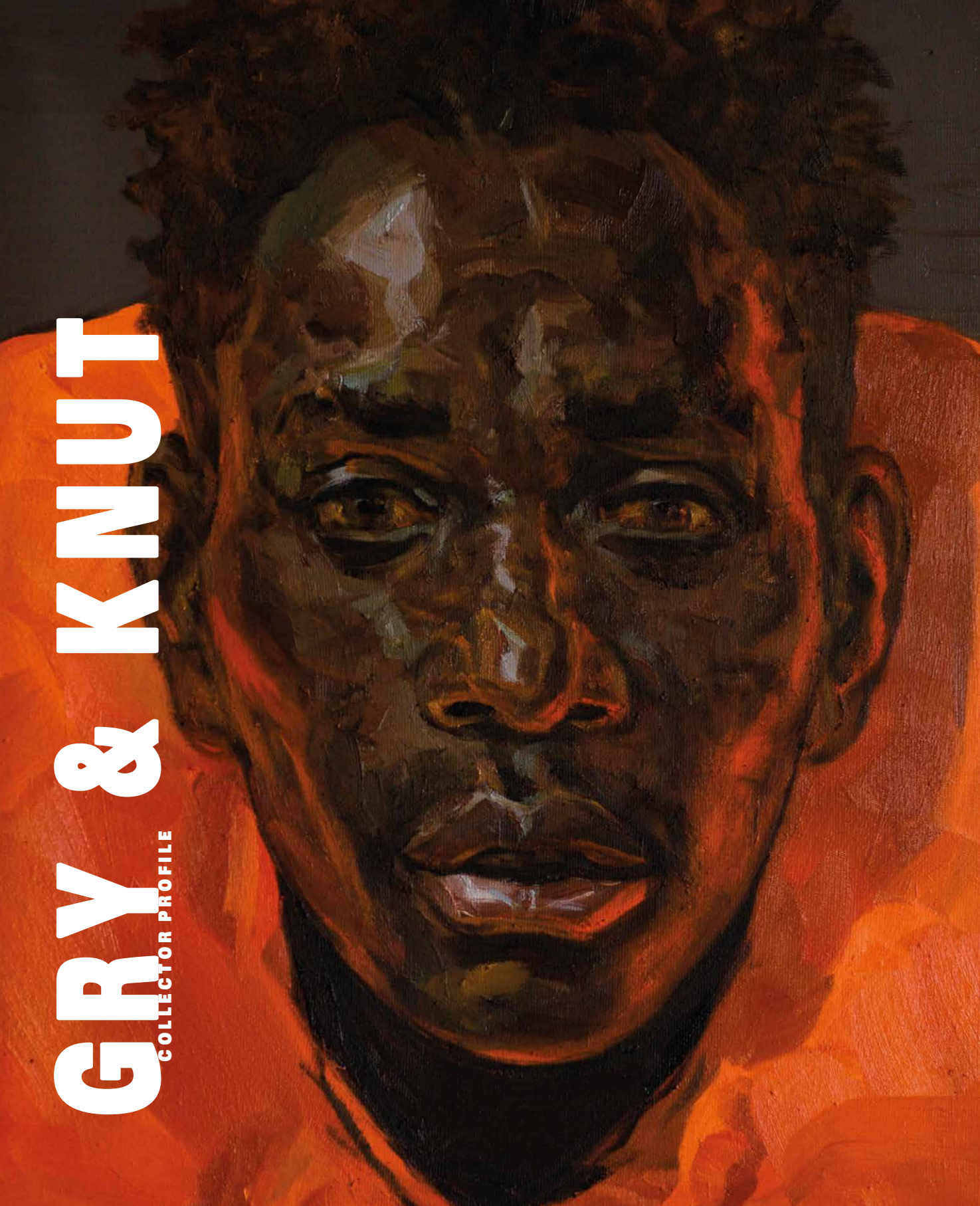


Image courtesy of Gry and Knut

Norwegian art collectors Gry and Knut acquire from a place of adventure. Enjoying work that has a transgressive edge, the couple have amassed a collection of exploratory art that's not necessarily for everyone. But an art collection is a journal of personal connections, and if it enriches your life, then it's right.

Gry: "We are both natural-born collectors and through the years we narrowed it down to art. The first piece I bought was a Per Palle Storm drawing. It's more than 30 years ago now but at that time it was a huge investment. I bought it at a retrospective exhibition at Kunstneres Hus in Oslo. It is still with me, hanging in our living room."

Knut: "My first art pieces were bought through artists and friends. As part of finishing my first house/painting studio at the end of the 1990s in London, I ended up buying a huge oil painting by the artist client Felicia Larsson. The painting was a night street view outside the entrance door of the house. The 3.5 x 2.4m oil painting has lived with me through all my subsequent homes."

Here are some of our favourites:

Bjarne Melgaard, *Untitled* (2001)

Vibeke Tandberg, *Faces* (1998)

Maria Pasenau, *Lust for power and revolution* (2021)

Vanessa Baird, *Without ideas the cows live from day to day* (1996)

Tewodros Hagos, *Journey (28)* (2021) from the series 'The Desperate Journey' (left)

Torbjørn Rødland, *Frau mit bleistift nr 1* (2002)

Knut: "I am very proud to have two paintings from Bjarne Melgaard's death metal period. In this period he merges visual music references provocatively into homoerotic settings. One night at a dinner I proclaimed enthusiastically about the paintings from his Berlin and Stockholm shows and that I would love to have one of these on my wall. To everyone's surprise, the lady across the table said she had two of his paintings for sale for a client. The day after I was the proud owner of these works. Sometimes you don't find the art, but the art finds you."

We are, of course, 'tainted' by living in Oslo, Norway, so we follow the main Scandinavian galleries and art sites. As an ally, we would say Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London and Berlin. Kristin is a curator we trust, in addition to being our good friend. She opens our eyes to international art and is progressive and daring in her choices."

Gry: "I would love to have some more works by Thorbjørn Rødland. I always have an eye out for his photography. We have also talked about starting to collect some sculptures."

Knut: "Gry is more into photography than me, but with Maria Pasenau we have found a shared focus. I think her attitude to photography is very street and creates settings that stick deeper than the photo moment. She also mixes it with other mediums. I love that her work *Lust for power and revolution* that we purchased is number one in a series of one. We are open-minded and always looking for work that engages or touches us!"



Gry M Sætre (Founding Partner, Tangrystan Productions) and Knut Howland (Associate Partner, Nordic Office of Architecture) are based in Oslo, where they collect contemporary art. Focusing on personal taste, they buy what gives them a thrill.

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