

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Thomas Gebremedhin, "Soapbox: The Columnists," *WSJ. Magazine*, December / January, 2017.

# WSJ.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE

SOAPBOX

## THE COLUMNISTS

WSJ. asks six luminaries to weigh in on a single topic. This month: Expectations.



TODD HAYNES

"Filmmaking is about letting expectations go at every step of the way. Hitchcock claimed to have constructed all of his films in storyboards, but his best movies work because he used steps later in the filmmaking process—shooting, editing, scoring—to build on his original idea. In filmmaking, you can't keep looking back at how you envisioned a story on the page. I've only recently undertaken adaptations from novels, from *Mildred Pierce* to *Carol* and now *Wonderstruck*, and I don't put a lot of energy into navigating readers' prior expectations. Because, ultimately, the real question is, Why is this a movie at all? There are plenty of great books, famous lives and subjects out there that don't necessarily have to be made into movies. There needs to be a good reason why."

*Haynes is a director. His new film, Wonderstruck, was released in October.*



WANGECHI MUTU

"I don't know what audiences expect from my art. Maybe I resist actually thinking about that, because you don't want to be entertaining people. Rather, you want to be thinking about things in depth. I try not to worry too much about the applause, if there is any or ever will be. When I first started my professional practice, I was completely alone in my studio. Not many people knew who I was. But as my career picked up it became more obvious to me that there is commentary and expectation, even as I'm tucked away at work in my studio. Outside elements seep in, because you can't ignore the fact that the world is aware. The gift for me has always been finding the sweet spot where the silence is real. It protects you from your inability to be free and open. I really worked to get to that point."

*Mutu is an artist. She is unveiling a site-specific installation at ICA Boston in January.*



DANIEL PATTERSON

"I opened Coi in San Francisco with the intention of creating a neighborhood restaurant, a place where diners felt like they were in someone's home. But after we were awarded our second Michelin star, we found that customers expected something else from the setting—something fancier. We were just a hippie-chic neighborhood place next to a strip club. Over time customers came to understand that our restaurant was different, and we were able to help them reimagine what they could expect out of a fine-dining experience. Understanding people's expectations is an important part of keeping the experience fresh, vibrant and innovative. Good, caring chefs think about whom they're cooking for, because we don't work in a vacuum. The trick is to give people delicious food and great service while showing them something that they don't expect. The goal is always pleasure."

*Patterson is a chef. He recently released his third cookbook, The Art of Flavor.*



ANNE APPLEBAUM

"As a historian, you're often at war with clichés, which are something similar to expectations. People have stereotyped images of the past; I seek to make them more complicated. In that sense, any good history book defeats expectations because it offers a richer tapestry, a more complicated version of what most people think happened. History can also alter how we think about the future. Although history does not provide a road map of what to expect in the future, it does tell you what kinds of situations should cause concern. Human emotions don't really change that much. The study of history can tell us how people once reacted to certain kinds of events, and can therefore help us know what to expect. The present is not the 1930s, for example—but if you read about it, you will find elements of the 1930s that have an echo in the present, which should both interest and worry you."

*Applebaum is a journalist. Her new book, Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine, was released in October.*



OLIVIER SAILLEARD

"When I'm organizing an exhibition, I don't think about whether it will be a success or not. My focus is on establishing a moment of rest for every visitor, a moment of silence between the materials and the audience. Some curators are opposed to the idea of change, but I'm open to it—I have no hesitation in changing an exhibition two days before the opening. You have these expectations, but when the materials for the show arrive you might realize it's going to be something else entirely. For example, for the Louis Vuitton show I wanted to do something academic, the kind of exhibition that was done at the beginning of the 20th century. I wanted to emphasize the different personalities who built the brand in order to explain it. I try to learn something for myself as well, because it's my belief that if I am learning, the audience will learn something, too."

*Sailleard is director of the Palais Galliera in Paris and curator of Volez, Voguez, Voyagez—Louis Vuitton, an exhibition that runs through early January in New York.*

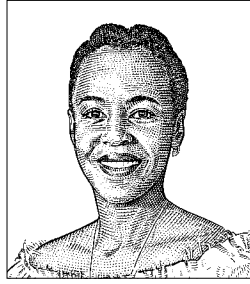


LAURIE METCALF

"When I first started out I never expected to make a living from acting—I was too practical—so I always had a backup secretarial job. I never expected to be able to build a career from something that I otherwise would have done for free. I would have just acted in community theater, for the hell of it, because I feel most creative and happy and alive when I'm performing. I understood that the odds were stacked against me. I would have to be the proverbial needle in the haystack in order to go from a tiny town in Illinois and end up performing in New York or Los Angeles or London, and I didn't want to set myself up for failure. It's scary to go out on a limb. I was an original member of Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and frankly, if it weren't for that group I would have chickened out. I wouldn't have trusted I could make it on my own."

*Metcalf is an actor who stars in Lady Bird, which was released in November.*

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