

Richard Aldrich

Lately, more and more, and above all else, I think the main purpose of art is to be weird. For something to be weird is for viewers to think to themselves, “Why is this like this?” Which really just means: “What preconceptions do I have that this thing [painting, process, object...] either doesn’t register or simply ignores?”

The hope is that someone will experience the work and that it helps them reflect upon their approach in thinking about their own ideas. In this way art can become a philosophical template, helping to advance other fields by example.

When I first saw these Whistler photos, I laughed and thought “What are these?” The watercolor is a nice one, and also resembles the color scheme of my own painting. Ryder is an underappreciated artist who paints his soul onto the canvas.

Joanne Greenbaum

I’ve always been fascinated by groupings of similar things. So when I first saw the John Ferren painting, with its array of colored marks, I responded to it immediately, though I did not perceive it structurally at first. Now I understand it as a painting with a real underlying structure and an additive painting methodology similar to my own. And this little painting was made the year I was born. Using the Ferren painting as a reference point, I added other choices and my own work from there, speaking first to the impulse to collect marks or shapes that coalesce into complete works. Usually in my work there are no do-overs or corrections. The editing comes after waiting and looking. The other works I chose have a similar slowness about them, trusting the first thought as the best thought, and moving forward from there. My studio has become a cabinet of curiosities lately, including smallish sculptures and handmade books.

I chose works that I could see myself having made at earlier points or can see getting back to in the future. I’m constantly fighting a minimalist impulse to reduce everything to its essentials, and the work here exposes the contradictions of my decisions and methods.

KAWS

When I was looking through the Parrish collection, I was struck by the diverse range of works it holds, but I kept going back to this particular Winslow Homer watercolor. At the time I was making the selection, I had just finished a series of paintings that depicted some of my characters adrift in water. I liked how the frozen moment of the composition made the action of the scene ambiguous—is COMPANION leisurely floating or is he struggling to stay above the surface?

Sean Scully

I chose the work of Dorothea Rockburne because I have known her for such a long time, and this is my opportunity to show my love and respect for her. I saw her folded Robe paintings in the John Weber gallery, which was located in the legendary 420 building on West Broadway, in the late '70s. One of the aspects of these works that fascinated me was that their physical size became smaller as they were being made, because they were folded in and on top of themselves, since they were being folded. This struck me as original, particularly in relation to the history of shaped painting.

As for the Parrish, with the grand humility of the architecture, and the mythic status of Long Island in American art history, its importance is undeniable. It acts as a beacon, always far enough from, and near enough to, Manhattan.

Amy Sillman

From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: My selection involves a spectrum of works that move like a mood swing, all the way around three walls of the room in a line going from the sublime to the ridiculous, from silence to laughter, and maybe back again.

We begin with a monochromatic black-on-black nocturne, followed by other works of quiet contemplation and somber restraint. Then, things break apart, new parts emerge, things built of pieces, conflicts, and we get to fragmentation, complications, layers. The sequence moves past the unsettled to the urgent, the unnameable, and towards the bewildering, frazzled, jagged, explosive, and dizzy. Finally, we round another corner and get to outline, diagram, sketch, and eventually cartoon, or just flat-out comedy.

All along the way, feelings seep out of decisions about shape, color, and line—visual decisions, abstraction—but an abstraction rooted in things and places of everyday life. Feelings are really the subject here: it is through fruit bowls, silhouettes, night times, seashores, patches of color, embroidery, tools, implements, explosions that feelings are made manifest, and against which our thoughts can be measured. I am trying to unpack the interlocking conditions of tragedy and comedy by showing the spectrum that lies between.

By the end, we reach the state of cartoon, where objects start looking comically strange and feeling off-real. Then you start to understand why “funny” is also a way of saying “strange,” and why strangeness indicates the anxiety of not being sure where you stand. And this is where things loop back to where we started: on the starkness of an empty horizon, where a person looks out at something inexplicable, and all they have to go on is their feelings.

David Salle

I visited the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, Maine one summer with Alex Katz. We saw a lot of rather dour eighteenth- and nineteenth-century portraits, along with some primitive-looking landscapes and other odds and ends. Alex said, “I can find something to like in almost any painting.”

I’ve chosen a disparate group of works, from different periods and in different styles, from artists who would seem to have little in common. That’s the way it is with art: everyone’s doing everything, all the time. What makes these works, coming at us from such different starting points in time and place, cohere into a legible identity? In what language can they be said to speak to one another, as well as to us?

The works range in date from the beginning of the twentieth century to last year. Most of them were made between the 1920s and 1970s—approximately fifty years of painting. The classical genres of representation are all present: landscape, still life, bodies and faces, as well as several different stripes of abstraction. It’s all painting. What they have in common is an image of the artist as a solitary figure. All the works draw from the well of loneliness, to borrow a phrase. It’s the condition America sets for her artists; even the images of the sublime, like the Guy Pène du Bois landscape, are about loneliness. The painter, alone in the studio, works out a relationship to tradition, and to the broader culture generally. To be any good, whatever the artist comes up with must also arise out of his or her own nature.

Viewed from this distance in time, the mysterious collage by Balcomb Greene or the geometric drawing by Dorothy Dehner do not seem to be that far removed from Walt Kuhn's portrait of a clown. All three works say: I, alone, was here. This is what I saw. Stubbornness, ebullience, adventurousness, the desire to claim for oneself a piece of lived experience—the maverick American mind—it's all here.

Rashid Johnson

Dawoud Bey and Vija Celmins are two artists whose work is central to my thinking and project. However disparate including them together may seem, ideally the gesture highlights the range and diversity of artists' inspirations. It is my hope that by seeing these works and my own share space the wide range of how art can affect us is illustrated.

Mel Kendrick

The Line: This piece, *Untitled* (2023), is a prototype for a much larger concrete outdoor installation based on *White Line*, a wall sculpture I included in *Seeing Things in Things*. That sculpture is made of multiple pieces set on a narrow shelf, touching or not touching one another. When viewed from straight-on, they were connected by the white line that ran through them.

Approaching the Parrish's collection, I chose art that incorporates the line as a connecting device. Dorothea Rockburne's beautiful piece *Sahura* (1980) is totally self-referential in terms of the decisions made in reaction to the size and shape of its materials. It is an installation, not a painting, held to the wall and completed by the vertical line drawn on the wall.

Jennifer Bartlett's *One Foot Line* (1974) consists of two panels connected visually by a measured line. The actual line is completed in the empty space between the panels, which is the wall itself. Barry Le Va's drawing *12 Lengths Walked Zig-Zag* (1973) is created with straight lines and arcs on gridded paper. His logic is often impenetrable. I view this as a map for one of his movement pieces, a way of experiencing a space.

peter campus's *Passage at Bellport Harbor* (2010) was my final choice and one I could not ignore. The line in this is the constant horizon. In the span of twenty-five minutes, the only movement is the desultory swinging of anchored boats in the foreground. It brings in the concept of the "water line," which has been a constant but not often stated theme in my work.

Virginia Jaramillo

For her *Artists Choose Parrish* installation, Virginia Jaramillo has chosen five Hasui Kawase woodblock prints from the Museum's permanent collection. Jaramillo was drawn to the Parrish's vast holding of Japanese woodblock prints that had been acquired during Rebecca Littlejohn's leadership. While looking through the array of styles and subject matters, Jaramillo decided she wanted to focus on the prints that represent only a portion of the final image. When deciding on her own work to present, Jaramillo reflected on her early career and the influence of the Japanese concept "ma"—which roughly translates to negative space. She chose three linen fiber pieces she had made in 1979 to be in direct dialogue with the Kawase prints—showcasing some of the earliest forms of this medium, one that she would work with across the following decades.