



TIM GRIFFIN

TIM GRIFFIN IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR OF THE KITCHEN. IN 2021, HE WILL DEPART THE ORGANIZATION AFTER NINE YEARS AND JOIN THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AS A VISITING PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ART HISTORY AND ENGLISH. GRIFFIN IS A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF ARTFORUM.

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JOHN BALDESSARI, IN MEMORIAM For me, even now, Baldessari is an artist hidden in plain sight. I remember visiting his retrospective at Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien in Vienna fifteen years ago and being staggered by the sheer volume of great unknown (to me) works he produced but left others to pursue: here a sculpture that clearly anticipated Jenny Holzer, there a photo sequence taken up by Mike Kelley. In this way, Baldessari's role as a teacher, turning over conventions (with the ostensibly innocuous yet transgressive power of humor) and continually creating other possibilities in art and beyond, for others, was essential to his practice and remains essential in these times.



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TOMASHI JACKSON (NIGHT GALLERY, LOS ANGELES) Jackson suggests how painting could arrive at another mode of public address—and even insist again, through armature and assemblage, on addressing viewers as necessarily social subjects. In “Forever My Lady,” Jackson’s appropriated images of civic reality revolved around the historical right to vote and, more specifically, around the suppression of such democratic principles for Black voters in the United States. Set and draped by Jackson on scaffolds reminiscent of awnings in Athens (where Jackson was recently artist-in-residence), the pictures—recalling flatbed painting on the one hand and *affichiste* endeavors on the other, and made all the more concrete by the projection of R&B music videos in the gallery—inevitably brought viewers’ minds back to the architectures around us. Form and politic again as one.

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TRISHA DONNELLY (MATTHEW MARKS, NEW YORK) It’s impossible for me to see Donnelly’s sculptures apart from questions of time. Invoking classical form, they seem ruins in advance—projecting the passing of our current era, just one within a sequence of so many others—or better, disrupting any such sequence by realizing a past embedded in our present, so that her works are like stone ghosts. (This last sense is augmented by the barely seen ripples and ridges in their surfaces, which can suggest the work of masonry sects or eons of erosion.) Here, such cultural contingency was only amplified by the white-cube frame broken by the artist, who opened one rear door and removed another to reveal a brick-lined interior vestibule exposed to the elements.

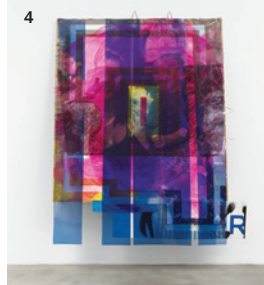


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RODNEY MCMILLIAN (PETZEL, NEW YORK) McMillian is another artist concerned with the ways in which materials accrue cultural histories and personal meaning, records that he dialed into our present in this gorgeous exhibition of crocheted blankets—some inherited, some purchased—whose painted overlays verged on abstraction while evoking, and invoking, natural landscapes. Leaping to my mind in the Upper East Side gallery setting was Douglas Crimp’s well-known adage from the introduction to *On the Museum’s Ruins* (1993), in which his grandmother upsets the scholar’s theoretical conceits by schooling him in the difference between lace and embroidery, tooth and eye—making clear how “what any of us sees depends on our individual histories.” A brilliant articulation of this principle in our day’s material idioms, both mass-produced and homespun.

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1. John Baldessari with the bronze plaque from his *Cremation Project*, 1970. 2. View of “Trisha Donnelly,” 2019–20, Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. All works: *Untitled*, 2019. 3. Rodney McMillian, *Untitled (setting sun)*, 2019, latex on cotton and acrylic blanket, 94 × 87”. 4. Tomashi Jackson, *Girls Time (Heartbreak Hotel)*, 2020, acrylic, paper bags, Pentelic marble dust, canvas, fabrics, linen, ink-jet print on PVC vinyl, 107 × 81 × 12”.



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