

# Elena Filipovic



Dorothy Iannone, *Let the Light from My Lighthouse Shine on You*, 1981, acrylic and gouache on board mounted on Pavatex, 56 1/8 × 40 3/8".

**1 PIERRE HUYGHE (CENTRE POMPIDOU, PARIS; CURATED BY EMMA LAVIGNE)** Three hours into my first of several visits to this show, I called several people (breathless, one remembered) to tell them to drop everything and come see it. It wasn't just that a dog (named Human) roamed the galleries, that steam occasionally erupted in one of the museum's rooms, that an ice-skater intermittently pranced about an actual ice rink, or that costumed actors walked across the space as if they had stepped out of one of Huyghe's films. The exhibition's strength lay in something far more fragile and almost numinous: The show exacted a particular mode of attention, refusing to trot out the greatest hits of Huyghe's oeuvre and instead providing a site for telepathic connections among objects, ideas, installations, and films. Huyghe entirely redefined the midcareer survey and the ways in which it can address an audience, with none of the swagger to which others from his generation have succumbed during this rite of passage.

*Organized in association with the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*

**2 BORIS CHARMATZ, EXPO ZÉRO (BERLINER FESTSPIELE), AND XAVIER LE ROY, "RETROSPECTIVE" (NOUVEAU FESTIVAL, CENTRE POMPIDOU, PARIS)** Few artists today are rethinking the exhibition form more percussively than the dancer-choreographers Boris Charmatz and Xavier Le Roy. Both of their projects abjured the obdurate thingliness of objects for the ephemerality of speech and movement; both recounted personal histories of dance, calling on the memory of their performers and the imagination of their viewers; both reflected on how to present, memorialize, and materialize dance in relation to the museum. Still, neither could be confused with the other, so particular is each choreographer's trajectory and larger project. I have linked the choreographers here because both dared to insist that the exhibition as such could be a medium to be dismantled and remade. The art world could learn a lot from their efforts.

**3 DOROTHY IANNONE (BERLINISCHE GALERIE; CURATED BY ANNELIE LÜTGENS)** This retrospective finally gave the American octogenarian's irreverent and relentlessly erotic body of work a proper showing in her adopted hometown. Comprising paintings, objects, films, books, and ephemera spanning from 1959 to 2014 (including blush-inducing textual works that recount how Iannone met and instantly fell for artist Dieter Roth, then left her country and husband for the man who would be the love of her life as well as her muse and initiator into the sexual liberation that her work celebrates), the wide-ranging work on view felt more alive and uncompromising than that of most young artists working today.

**4 ANICKA YI (LARS FRIEDRICH, BERLIN)** "Denial," one part of Yi's emotion-laden trilogy of exhibitions, was held in the balance by a curious mix of material and sentimental fragility. Yi entirely transformed a small Berlin gallery-apartment: Dog food poured out of a carefully made niche; an ice sculpture reminiscent of Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse* slowly melted in the middle of the space while a pendant copy sat cryogenically preserved in a freezer; and what looked like translucent resin sculptures turned out to be casts of delicate glycerin soap. Yi's seemingly simple forms are often the result of such homespun chemical experimentation. It was precisely the unseen processes carried out by the artist, both psychological and alchemical, that gave these objects their arresting charge, cathecting desire, longing, loss, and, well, denial.

**5 HAIM STEINBACH (KUNSTHALLE ZÜRICH; CURATED BY BEATRIX RUF)** Steinbach was much maligned in the 1980s and '90s by those who saw his assemblages as nothing more than empty commodity fetishism. But it is time that the simplicity of that reading be cast off and the full critical complexity, surreal verve, and architectonics of Steinbach's several decades of stubbornly layered practice finally be addressed. This show did just that.

*Co-organized with the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, and the Serpentine Gallery, London.*



**Jana Euler, *Needs I*, 2013,**  
acrylic on canvas, 55 1/8 ×  
78 3/4".

**6 LYGIA CLARK (MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK; CURATED BY CONNIE BUTLER AND LUIS PÉREZ-ORAMAS WITH GEANINNE GUTIÉRREZ-GUIMARÃES AND BEATRIZ RABELO OLIVETTI)** This long-overdue North American presentation of the Brazilian artist's pioneering participatory practice revealed the inexorable unraveling of her belief in the art object's potential to engage with society in a meaningful way. Bringing together rarely seen early abstract works, a vast and stunning display of the artist's performance-inducing "*Bichos*" (Beasts) 1960–66, and a space given over to demonstrations of Clark's therapeutic activities, this show grappled with the paradox of featuring the artist's radical production while honoring her willed "abandonment" of the idea of art altogether.

**7 JUTTA KOETHER (PRAXES CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, BERLIN, AND ÉTABLISSEMENT D'EN FACE PROJECTS, BRUSSELS)** Overlapping shows in these two atypical institutions suggested Koether's centrality in discussions of painting today while also underscoring her dogged concern with systems of viewing. At Praxes, where works were presented in several changing constellations over three and a half months (according to the operative principle of the place), the artist alternately showed her signature gestural paintings or sculptures made of transparent resin and bejeweled bling alongside mirrored panels, the last in particular making viewing a literal act of self-reflection. At the Établissement d'en Face Projects, Koether's *L'établissement aux Folies-Koethère #3: Cirios*, 2013, a monumentally scaled riff on Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, and other paintings were presented according to a protocol whereby they were moved regularly, and almost ceremoniously, between the modest institution's storefront window and its main wall, emphasizing the ways in which the event of perception changes according to location and juxtaposition.

**8 YURI ANCARANI (GALERIE ISABELLA BORTOLOZZI, BERLIN)** Ravishing in their every cinematic detail, the trilogy of films in Ancarani's exhibition are hypnotic studies of the relationship between man and machine. Each follows the peculiar choreography of bodies and technologies that characterizes a different profession. One includes a chillingly filmed surgery performed with the aid of specialized medical machinery; another depicts the conductor-like gestures of a Carrara stone-quarry foreman guiding workers and their forklifts to extract and displace hunks of marble. With these works, Ancarani and his camera (the man and machine behind it all) fabricate an image of labor, the human condition, and the mechanical that is as mesmerizing as it is diagnostic.

**9 JANA EULER (CABINET, LONDON)** The paintings of this German-born, Brussels-based artist are freakish formal oddities (think Surrealism meets socialist realism meets the saturation of a Google image search). Bringing together recent paintings—which alternately depict Barilla pasta boxes, the Sistine

Chapel's iconic "creation of Adam," and a face provocatively reconstituted with sexual organs in place of nose and mouth, and breasts in place of eyes—this show also included the words of its title, "When expectations meet needs," painted across the walls, corners, and pillar of the gallery space. The phrase was perfectly arranged to be legible from only one perspective, as if the artist had composed the entire show for a single installation shot. The strength of Euler's perplexing body of work is that it simultaneously celebrates and mocks (art-world) power, institutions, and celebrity culture; this show was no exception, at once anticipating and scorning its place in the glossy pages of magazines like this one.

**10 PHILIPPE VERGNE AND HELEN MOLESWORTH AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES** The appointment of this ferociously smart and talented duo gives hope that the beleaguered institution will be able to again make the kinds of research-laden, pathbreaking shows that made it one of America's greatest institutions of art.

*Elena Filipovic is Director of Kunsthalle Basel, where she is working on a retrospective of Zhana Ivanova's work. Recently, she curated "Mark Leckey: Lending Enchantment to Vulgar Materials," a major survey of the artist's work at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, which travels in part to Kunsthalle Basel next March.*