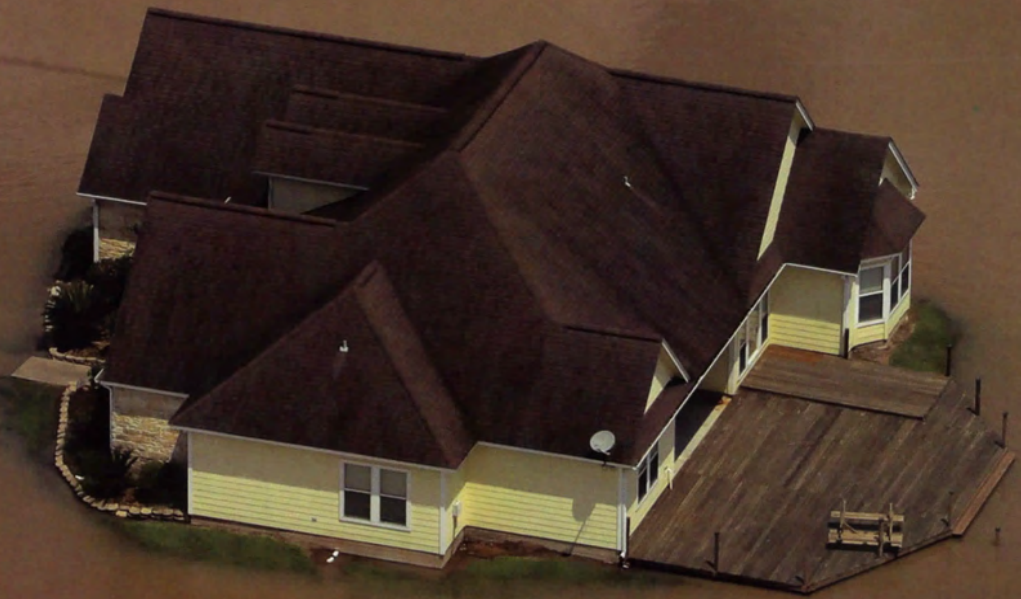


ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 2017

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



\$15 00



“Artists’ Artists: Best of 2017” *Artforum*, December 2017.

FRIEDMAN BENDA 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001

FRIEDMANBENDA.COM TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760



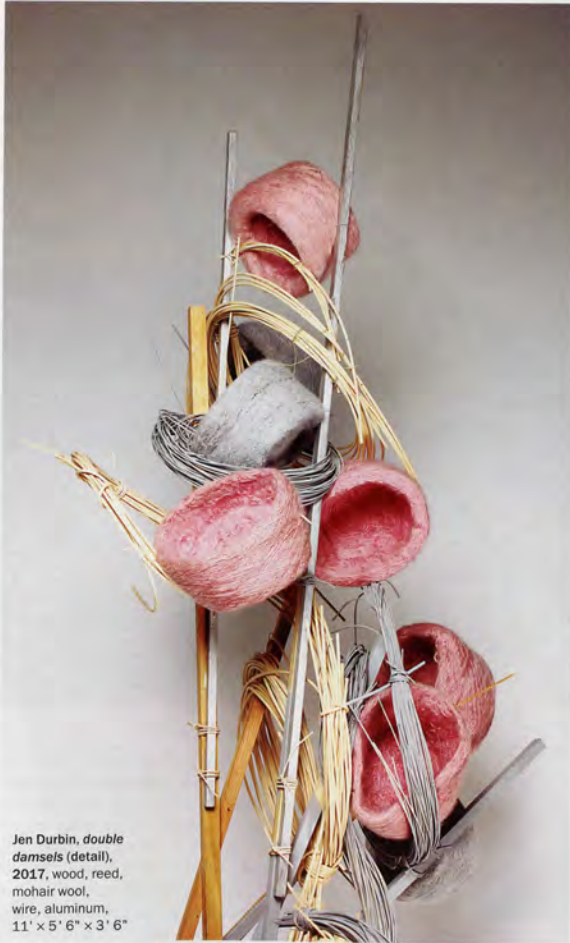
Howardena Pindell, *Free, White and 21*, 1980, video, color sound, 12 minutes 15 seconds.

JORDAN CASTEEL

"We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85" (Brooklyn Museum, New York) "We Wanted a Revolution" was a long-awaited and imperative account of the experiences of black women in opposition to the typically monolithic feminist stance. In the words of Alice Walker, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." This exhibition provided historical context and space for the voices of black women artists who were discounted from the movement's white, largely middle-class mainstream. In their own diverse and distinct ways, each of the artists tackled the intersectionality of their experiences. It's telling that this exhibition was the first of its kind in a museum context, and it signaled the need for a greater awareness and conversation within the art world.

AN-MY LÊ

Jen Durbin (Silas von Morisse, New York) In a storm of humble materials (twists of reeds, wood sticks, and pink mohair), Jen Durbin manifests the violence and devastation recorded, frame by frame, in JFK's assassination. While her sprawling installation plays with what we know, it also places vision and loss at the center of the whirlwind. Durbin's painstaking mapping of the trajectories of Jackie Kennedy's iconic pink pillbox hat and their incorporation in her dynamic assembly overwhelm the viewer with physical presence. Memorials to survivors are paradoxical by definition, yet Durbin's work suggests that bereavement and loss are worthy of memorialization. Her materials wouldn't survive the elements as public sculpture, but I can't help thinking how resonant Durbin's sculptures might be presented in close proximity to our memorials to (mostly) men and their ideas on the National Mall in Washington, DC.



Jen Durbin, *double damsels* (detail), 2017, wood, reed, mohair wool, wire, aluminum, 11' x 5' 6" x 3' 6"



Ettore Sottsass, *Mizar Vase*, 1982, glass, 13 1/4 x 11 1/2 x 11 1/2"

THOMAS DEMAND

"Ettore Sottsass: The Glass" (Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice) This show had so many rules, you'd think there wouldn't have been any oxygen left in the room: works by one (dead) artist, all of the same material, of similar size (too large to be decoration, too small to be sculpture), with the same function (none, except maybe you could put flowers in some of them), and displayed in the same manner (side by side, in plain daylight). No biographical relevance, no politics, no theory. But what this approach allowed instead was a refreshingly clear recognition of how the understanding of a material (glass) and a lifetime of experience with it can exemplify what *creation* is all about. Showing the artist to be completely in control of the specificity of handblown glass, Sottsass's imagination was all there, concentrated like syrup: over two decades of beauty, invention, variation, and tacit humor. This modest show delivered evidence of what the Venice Biennale was trying so strenuously to claim: Art is an independent way of using your intellect.



Paula Modersohn-Becker, *Stilleben mit Spiegeleiern in der Pfanne* (Still Life with Fried Eggs in the Frying Pan), ca. 1905, oil on canvas, 15 x 18"

MATIAS FALDBAKKEN

What if there were an excellent Paula Modersohn-Becker show at the National Gallery here in Oslo?



Zhuang Yan, *A Female Soldier on the Fishing Island*, 1962, oil on paper, 21 1/4 x 15 1/4" From "Salon, Salon: Fine Art Practices from 1972 to 1982 in Profile—A Beijing Perspective."

HAO JINGBAN

"Salon, Salon: Fine Art Practices from 1972 to 1982 in Profile—A Beijing Perspective" (Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing) There are two art worlds in China: the "official" art world and the "contemporary" art world. The former continues the tradition of socialist realism. The two don't mess with each other, and neither do their written histories. "Salon, Salon" was an ambitious attempt to bring these spheres together by focusing on the moment when the split happened, as well as by placing people from both sides in the same exhibition and discussion spaces. The trigger for this division was more about an emerging tension between individual will and state will than it was about different artistic pursuits. Today, the tendency of these entities to merge is rather worrisome, as perhaps this reflects a reconciliation between the individual and the state.

PETER HALLEY

Ettore Sottsass (Met Breuer, New York) Ettore Sottsass finally arrived in New York, on the hundredth anniversary of his birth. For more than six decades, the richly sensuous and deeply rigorous objects he made chronicled the rapid-fire sequence of world-changing ideas flowing through the visual culture of his era. In the 1950s and '60s, he created ceramics influenced by Hinduism and Beat poetry, all the while designing computer office systems for Olivetti. The following decade, he briefly veered toward a Kubrickesque, science-fiction aesthetic before retreating into high-hippie life in the Spanish desert. For his work with the Memphis Group, during the '80s, he turned to parody as a last refuge in a post-utopian age. Finally, during Sottsass's last decades (well documented at the Met Breuer), he settled into a refined old-age style that involved limited editions, commissions for unique objects, and exquisite private houses. These late works are a freewheeling, kaleidoscopic synthesis of all that came before.



Ettore Sottsass, *Omaggio 3*, 2007, Corian, wood, 75 x 64 1/4 x 59 1/4"

KATHARINA WULFF

Sibylle Bergemann (Reinbeckhallen, Berlin) I think Sibylle Bergemann's photos have something in common with the music of Catherine Ringer. They are so provocative, and they show that Romanticism can develop into something meaningful—an attitude of rebellion that clashes with a world of convention. It's clear from many of Bergemann's pictures how worn-out the former GDR was: The women look insubordinate, flouting social norms as a way of symbolically drawing attention to the injustice of their situation. I like the images' raw atmosphere.

Apparently Bergemann once photographed her black-clad models looking sullen and moody on the island of Rügen for a fashion magazine, and the Central Committee was so upset by their expressions that the comrades retouched the photo.



Sibylle Bergemann, *Frieda, Allerleirauh, Berlin*, 1988, gelatin silver print, 15 1/4 x 10 3/4"

MARYAM HOSEINI

Hadi Fallahpisheh, "Everything Is True" (Kai Matsumiya, New York) Hadi Fallahpisheh's works generate endless discoveries; open to the viewer's projections, they both celebrate and avoid judgment. For this show, "Everything Is True," through a cameraless photographic process in the darkroom, Fallahpisheh created painterly works that depict not just characters (each represents a fictional Hadji) but narratives (emphasized in scrawling letters and in the jokes that title each piece). *Hadji*, the term for a Muslim who has completed a pilgrimage to Mecca, is an honorific address that has also become a derogatory term, used by Fallahpisheh to caricature Middle Eastern society. With so many Hadjis along the walls, the reflection of homosociality became humorously critical, hideously poetic, and truthfully scary. The work collapses the artist's personal and cultural memories in its complex layering of languages. As I left the show I repeated to myself a favorite line of a Persian poem: "One who has seen the world tells many lies."



Hadi Fallahpisheh, *One day Hadji went to west through ocean, when he arrived he decided to park his boat, so he removed all the oars and paddles; planted trees and flowers. Then people laughed (detail)*, 2016, unique C-print, 60 x 32"

"Artists' Artists: Best of 2017" *Artforum*, December 2017.

FRIEDMAN BENDA 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001
FRIEDMANBENDA.COM TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760