



Elian Kertess at home in East Hampton. —Megan McGovern

## Jumping Genres and Generations in Art

By Jon FROST

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### Jumping Genres and Generations in Art

Continued from C1 of 1998 for the 100th anniversary of the Parrish Art Museum. Titled "Sea Change," it focused on the ocean's influence on modernism in American painting. Organizing it was a labor of love, according to Mr. Kertess.

"We got a great Pollock from the Addison gallery in Andover, and also a Winslow Homer that was one of those great nighttime paintings with a sort of wave almost covering a fisherman. I was able to hang a Pollock next to a Ryder, which was a really big thrill for me. I mean, everyone knows that Pollock loved Ryder."

The artworks, just over 30 of them, started in the 19th century and ended with Raymond Pettibon's 25-foot wall painting of a wave.

This fall, Mr. Kertess will curate a group exhibit at the Mary Boone Gallery, which represents many established artists, such as Eric Fischl, David Salle, and Ross Bleckner, but has recently been inviting guest curators to produce group shows featuring less recognized ones.

The Boone exhibit is inspired by the inaugural show at the New Museum in New York City, "Unmonumental," which focused on the low-tech assemblage sculpture that has been prevalent in contemporary art recently.

Mr. Kertess felt that many of the artists featured at the New Museum had been influenced, consciously or not, by Cy Twombly and Robert Rauschenberg, whose "ideas are so much a part of our daily lives." The exhibit at Mary Boone is intended to reflect that.

There is a fairly consistent principle to the way Mr. Kertess puts together a group show. By generation-jumping artists and movements, such as by pairing of Pollock and Ryder, he contextualizes promising unknowns with recognized artists whose work may have influenced them. The results lead to a deeper appreciation of both generations, as well as of the historical significance of their connections.

The exhibit at the Fireplace Project is another example of this curatorial inclination. It presents 11 painters, many of whom work in some form of gestural

abstraction, such as Judy Hudson, whose acrylic and canvas paintings are collaged.

James Nares creates large-scale calligraphic, singular brushstroke paintings that straddle abstraction and Pop Art, while Tony Just combines the formal qualities of abstract painting with imagery and techniques from street culture such as text and graffiti.

Joe Zucker's poured-paint constructions are paintings that seem greatly informed by sculpture. Mary Heilmann's work varies from geometric to gestural, but its underlying strength is simplicity, a reminder of how hard it is to make a successfully uncomplicated painting.

Several artists appear to be more directly influenced by the environment and landscape. Michael Tetherow worked directly in nature, and his paintings are known for reflecting that experience. Robert Harms focuses his energetic mark-making on the South Fork's flora and fauna, whereas Cynthia Knott's paintings are teeming with its atmospheric light compressed by the water's distinct horizon.

One might imagine figurative works to be less painterly than the landscape or certainly the abstract, but Mr. Kertess's selection defies this notion. Billy Sullivan and Darius Yektaï take a figurative approach, and Mr. Yektaï shares the kind of intimate and informal style portraiture that has distinguished Mr. Sullivan.

The initiate of the exhibit, Jake Patterson, is a local high school student who came to Mr. Kertess's attention at a Bridgehampton Historical Society exhibit last winter. "He was in the show with a couple of self-portraits that were really boldly and beautifully painted for someone that young," the curator said.

"Once you start doing something like this, you realize how many more artists out here there are than you thought," Mr. Kertess said. "But there are still always people out here working away." The gallery, he said, "could do a whole season of group shows and still not cover what's happening."

Jess Frost lives in Springs and likes art that is produced with a Sawzall.



"The Giant Between Us 2" by Darius Yektaï

