

## JERRY KEARNS

### FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 "What The ????" One Person Exhibition of recent works, Studio Artego LLC, New York
- 2022 One Person Exhibition of recent drawings, Frosch&Co Gallery, New York
- 2022 One Person Exhibition of prints, Studio Artego LLC, New York

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 "BLAM!!!" One Person Exhibition of recent works, Frosch&Co, New York
- 2020 "Swoon" One Person Exhibition of recent works, Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 2015 "Give and Take" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco, California  
Jerry Kearns & Nora York, *Diva's Song*, Mike Weiss Gallery, New York
- 2014 "RRRGGHH!!!" Mike Weiss Gallery, New York
- 2009 "Paleface" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco, California  
"What Goes Around: Paintings from the 1980s & 1990s," Modernism West, San Francisco, California
- 2007 "Between Heaven and Earth" Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston, Texas
- 2006 "Forever More" Michael Steinberg Gallery, New York  
"Sea Cruise" Herter Art Gallery, University of Mass.
- 2004 "Jerry Kearns" Jack The Pelican Gallery, New York  
"Double Dutch" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 2001 "Jerry Kearns" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 2000 "Not Guilty" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 1999 "Babyface" PPOW Gallery, New York
- 1996 "White Lies" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco  
"White Lies" The Alternative Museum, New York
- 1995 "Jerry Kearns" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 1994 "Photographs 1970-1980" Jose Friere Fine Art, New York  
"Jerry Kearns" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 1993 "Probable Cause" Kent Gallery, New York  
"Proma Facie" Jose Friere Fine Art
- 1992 "Jerry Kearns" Benjamin Mangel Gallery, Philadelphia
- 1991 "Jerry Kearns: Bilder" Galerie Fahnemann, Berlin  
"Body and Soul" Meyers/Bloom Gallery, Los Angeles  
"Deep Cover" Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Temple University  
Philadelphia, PA  
Traveled to:  
Art Gallery, Lehman College, The Bronx, New York; University Gallery, University of Massachusetts at Amherst; University Art Museum, University of CA, Santa Barbara; Gallery of Contemporary Art, Raleigh, North Carolina

- Catalog with essays by Eleanor Heartney, Don Desmett
- 1989 "To Have and Have Not" Kent Fine Art, New York  
 "Jerry Kearns" Galeria Temple, Valencia, Spain  
 Catalog with essay by Elizabeth Hess.
- 1988 "American Icons" Meyers/Bloom Gallery, Los Angeles  
 Catalog with essay by Jefferson Morley.
- 1987 "Risky Business" Kent Fine Art, New York  
 Catalog with essay by Lucy R. Lippard  
 "Jerry Kearns" Atrium Gallery, University of Conn. Storrs, Conn.
- 1986 "Jerry Kearns" Perimeter Gallery, Chicago  
 "Jerry Kearns" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco  
 "Jerry Kearns" Western Gallery, Western Washington University,  
 Bellingham, Washington.
- 1985 "Jerry Kearns" EXIT ART, New York

### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2022 "Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities"  
 Tufts University Art Gallery, Boston, MA
- 2021 "COLAB'S NO MORE STORE!" James Fuentes Gallery, New York, NY
- 2019 Art Miami, Modernism Gallery, San Fransisco, CA
- 2012 "Young Curators New Ideas IV" Muelenstein Gallery, New York, NY  
 "Party Headquarters: Art in the Age of Political Absurdity," Pratt Manhattan  
 Gallery, New York, NY  
 "2x2," Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation, Jersey City, NJ
- 2011 "Heroes Like Us?" Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Western Michigan Uni-  
 versity, Kalamazoo Michigan  
 "ÆC/ÆV," Big & Small/Casual Gallery, Long Island City, NY
- 2010 "Twin Twin III," Big & Small/Casual Gallery, Long Island City, NY
- 2009 "Twin Twin III," Big & Small/Casual Gallery, Long Island City, NY
- 2008 "Here's Looking at Us," Pace University Gallery, New York, NY  
 "Nowhere Else But Here: 1958-2008," Herter Art Gallery, University of Mass-  
 achusetts
- 2007 "Kentucky Derby Benefit Party and Art Benefit Auction", Smack Mellon,  
 New York, NY.  
 "Anniversary Benefit Auction", Exit Art, New York, NY
- 2006 "Scope MIAMI" Jack The Pelican Presents Gallery, Miami FLA.  
 "What a War" White Box Gallery, New York , NY. Curator Eleanor Heartney  
 "Gallery Artists" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco, CA.  
 " WORD" Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston, TX. Curator Brandon Krall  
 "Hedonistic Imperative", Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston, TX  
 "The Studio Visit", EXIT ART, New York

- 2005 "Back to the Garden", Mayors For Peace Auction, Ruby Falls Gallery, New York
- 2004 "The Print Show", EXIT ART, New York  
 "25 Anniversary Exhibition", Modernism Gallery, San Francisco  
 "Urgent", Underground Gallery, New York
- 2003 "High Fashion", The Chelsea Art Museum, New York  
 "New Lawn", Jack The Pelican Gallery, New York  
 "Cry Baby", Smack Mellon Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
- 2002 "Thin Skin", UFA Gallery, New York  
 "Reactions", EXIT ART, January 26 - March 30, New York
- 2001 "Snapshot", The Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, Maryland  
 "ART CHICAGO: International Art Fair", PPOW gallery, Chicago, Illinois  
 "San Francisco International Art Fair", Modernism Gallery, San Francisco,
- 2000 "OPEN ENDS: 11 Exhibitions of Contemporary Art ", The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York  
 "Bizarro World! The Parallel Universe of Comics and Fine Art." Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, Florida  
 "THE END: An Independent Vision of Contemporary Culture. 1982 - 2000", EXIT ART, New York
- 1999 "20th Anniversary Exhibition", Modernism Gallery, San Francisco  
 "MUMIA 911", PPOW Gallery, New York  
 "Post-Pop Culture", Art Center of Battle Creek, Michigan  
 "XMAS", Kent Gallery, New York
- 1998 "Hey You Never Know", 534 La Guardia Place, New York  
 "Drawings", James Graham and Sons, New York  
 "A Delicate Condition", Kent Gallery, New York  
 "The Warehouse", Exit Art, New York  
 "New York: Now", Butters Gallery, Portland, Oregon
- 1997 "Elvis & Marilyn: 2x Immortal"  
 Traveled to:  
 San Jose Museum of Art, California; Hokkaido Obihiro Museum Hokkaido, Japan; Daimaru Museum, Umeda-Osaka, Japan  
 "It's only Rock and Roll"  
 Traveled to:  
 Dean Leshner Regional Museum, Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, California; Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona  
 "Aphrodisia" The Alternative Museum, New York  
 "Transforming the Social Order", Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia  
 "Auto Portrait", Exit Art, New York  
 "Works on Paper", Modernism Gallery, San Francisco
- 1996 "Figure Heads & Red Herrings" The Koplín Gallery, Los Angeles CA  
 "Imaginary Beings" EXIT ART, New York  
 "Under Siege" ABC No Rio Gallery, New York

- "Death Penalty" Arts Gallery, SUNY Purchase, NY  
 "Difference" The Kent Gallery, New York  
 "Alternative Press '68 to Internet" EXIT ART, New York  
 "Voices of Conscience" ACA Galleries, New York  
 "Cultural Economies" The Drawing Center, New York  
 "Light Into Darkness" Kent Gallery, New York  
 1995 "It's Only Rock And Roll" The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio  
     Traveled to:  
         Lakeview Museum of the Arts, Peoria IL; Virginia Beach Center for  
         the Arts, VA; Tacoma Art Museum, WA; Jacksonville Museum of Art,  
         FL.  
 "Voices Of Conscience: Then and Now" ACA Galleries, New York  
 "Death Penalty: Loss of Conscience" Visual Arts Gallery, SUNY  
 "Justice / Injustice" Puffin Foundation LTD. New York  
 "Imaginary Beings" EXIT ART, New York  
 "Under Siege" ABC No Rio, New York  
 "Where is Home" Kent Gallery, New York  
 "Martini Culture" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco  
 1994 "Seurat Grows Up" Maine Coast Artists, Rockport, Maine  
 "Single-Cel Creatures: Cartoons and Their Influence on the  
     Contemporary Arts" Katona Museum of Art, NY.  
 "ELVIS + MARILYN: 2X Immortal" Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston  
     Traveled to:  
         Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; Mint Museum of Art, Char-  
         lotte, NC; Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Philbrook Museum of Art,  
         Tulsa OK; Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; Tennessee State Museum;  
         San Jose Museum of Art; Honolulu Academy of Art  
 1993 "Mixing it Up Again" Center for Constitutional Rights, New York  
 "Artists as Catalyst" The Alternative Museum, New York  
 "Great Dates" Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum, Santa Barbara  
 "Under Lock and Key." International Center For Photography, New York  
     Traveled to:  
         The Wexner Center For The Arts, Ohio State University, Columbus;  
         The Santa Monica Museum of Art, CA  
 "The PADD Archive" The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York  
 1992 "Re: Framing Cartoons" Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio  
 1991 "World Disorder" Cultural Space, New York  
 "The Critical Image: Sue Coe, Jerry Kearns, Leon Golub, Nancy Spero"  
     Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University North Carolina, Greensboro  
 "Critical Reactions" Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco  
 "Images of Labor: The 90's" Bread and Roses Cultural Project, Gallery  
 1199, New York  
 "The Hybrid State" EXIT ART, New York. Catalog

- “Artists of Conscience: 16 Years of Social and Political Commentary”  
The Alternative Museum, New York, Catalog
- 1990 “Postcards From America” Freitas Galeria, Caracas, Venezuela  
“Re: Framing Cartoons” Loughelton Gallery, New York  
“The 80’s: A Post Pop Generation” Southern Alleghenies, Museum of Art, Loretto, PA
- 1989 “Reagan: American Icon” Center Gallery, Bucknell University, PA  
Traveled to:  
Humphrey Fine Art, New York  
“Whose Wars: Vietnam and Central America” Bronx River Art Center and Gallery, NY  
“Golden Opportunity: Benefit Sale for the Resettlement of Salvadorian Refugees” Leo Castelli Gallery, New York  
“Tenth Anniversary Benefit Auction.” Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago  
“American Pi(e)” Bess Cutler Gallery, New York  
“A Different War: Vietnam in Art” Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, Washington  
Traveled to:  
The Cordova Museum of Art, Lincoln Mass.; University Art Galleries at the University of Colorado, Boulder; Akron Museum of Art, Ohio; Madison Art Center, Wisconsin; Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles; Block Art Gallery, North Western University
- “Dia de Los Muertos II” The Alternative Museum, New York  
“Benefit for The Wooster Group.” Brooke Alexander Editions, New York
- 1988 “The Social Club” EXIT ART, New York  
“Imprimatur” Greenville County Museum of Art, South Carolina  
Traveled to: North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh  
“Committed To Print” Museum of Modern Art, New York. Catalog  
Traveled to:  
University Art Galleries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio; Peace Museum, Chicago; Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta, Canada; New York State Museum, Albany, NY; Spenser Museum Of Art, University of Kansas; Newport Harbor Museum, Newport Beach, CA.
- “New City Works” One Penn Plaza, New York  
“Art and The Law” West Publishing, St. Paul, MN  
Traveled to:  
Metro Toronto Convention Center; Temple University Law School, Philadelphia; Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.  
“The Whole World is Still Watching” Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago  
“Agit/Pop” Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles  
“Unknown Secrets: Art and the Rosenberg Era” Rosenberg Era Project  
Traveled to:

Hillwood Art Gallery, Long Island University, Greenvale, NY; Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; Olin Gallery, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio; Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University; University of Colorado Art Gallery, Boulder; Installation Gallery, San Diego, Ca; San Francisco Jewish Community Museum; Spertus Museum Of Judaica, Chicago; Aspen Art Museum, Colorado

"New Visions of the Apocalypse" Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design. Providence, RI.

"In search of THE MEDIA MONSTER" Cleveland State University

1987 "All The News That's Fit For Prints." P.P.O.W., New York

Traveled to:

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston

"Movie Muse" One Penn Plaza, New York

"Comic Iconoclasm" Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

Traveled to:

Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin. Ireland; Corner House Gallery, Manchester, England; Circolo Des Belles Artes, Madrid, Spain; Kunstmuseum, Berne, Germany; "Documenta 8" Group Material Installation, Kassel Germany

"Dreams of the Alchemist" Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio

"Subtext" Kent fine Art, New York

"Artists Who Teach" Federal Reserve Board, Washington D.C.

1986 "Political Art '86" Gallery G, Pittsburgh, PA

"MASS" Group Material Installation, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

"Telling Tales" Allegheny College, Meadville, Penn.

"Camino a Cuba" Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City

"The Law And Order Show" John Weber Gallery, New York

"American Myths" Kent fine Art, New York

"Second Biennial of Havana" Centro Wilfredo Lam, Havana Cuba

"Philadelphia Inaugural" Artextreme, Philadelphia, PA

1985 "State of Mind/State of the Union" Judson Memorial Gallery, New York

"Disinformation: The Manufacture of Consent" The Alternative Museum, New York

"Whitney Biennial" Group Material Installation - "Americana"  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

"New York / New Art" Modernism Gallery, San Francisco

**JERRY KEARNS**  
**SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania  
University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Arkansas  
Art Gallery Of Western Australia, Perth, Australia  
Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, Charlottesville Virginia  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Art Institute of Chicago, Artists' Book Collection, Chicago, Illinois  
Columbia Museum, Wilmington, Delaware  
University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware  
Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
National Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu  
Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York  
Ivam Centre Julio Gonzales, Valencia, Spain  
Jersey City Museum, Jersey City, New Jersey  
The Kalamazoo Art Institute, Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Centro Wilfredo Lam, Havana, Cuba  
Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
The Logan Family Collection, Vail, Colorado  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, New Jersey  
The Norton Family Collection, Los Angeles, California  
Palmer Museum, Penn State University, Penn.  
Progressive Corporation, Mayfield Heights, Ohio  
Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia  
Sanford Gallery, Clarion University, Pennsylvania  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California  
University of Vermont, Robert Hull Fleming Museum, Burlington, Vermont  
Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington  
Frederick R. Weisman Collection, Collection  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York  
Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts

## JERRY KEARNS' BLAM!!! AT FROSCH & CO



*Jerry Kearns, Omega, 2017-21, 48x48 in, Acrylic on canvas*

Jerry Kearns, BLAM!!!

FROSCH & CO

May 1 – June 6, 2021

By **ROBERT C. MORGAN** May, 2021

Although Jerry Kearns began as a sculptor on the west coast many years ago, his career abruptly changed upon coming to New York in the early seventies. Since then, he has been a devoted painter for the major part of his highly recognized career. His paintings are like none others; that is, like none others I have seen. He calls them “Psychological Pop” – an apt verbal (and visual) appraisal of what he does and how he thinks about his complex subject matter in the process of painting.



Upon entering Frosch & Co on the lower East side, visitors will more than likely recognize the reference to Pop Art. But then the question might arise – What does this have to do with psychology? How does psychology relate to this series of paintings, most of which are babies in a make-believe universe or, in some cases, babies divided between an imaginative universe and a sky filled with bright cumulous clouds or birds that appear out of place or words like “Tick-Tock” painted in bright yellow.



*Jerry Kearns, Joshua, 2017-21, 48x48 in, Acrylic on canvas*

The connection between Kearns’ paintings of hyperrealist babies and their surrounding space is somewhat staggering, in fact, almost paradoxical. Translated into the realm of psychology one might find in these paintings a curious manifestation, particularly when one discovers the original source for these images was inspired by a magazine ad selling diapers. What does this tell us about our relationship to infants? Are they cute because they are real or because they are picture perfect? And how do we come to terms with ourselves to relation to them? What are they learning from us?

Four of the five baby paintings are presumably titled with a child’s name: *Joshua*, *Spud*, *Mollie*, and *Clark*. The fifth carries the title *Alpha*, presumably in relation to a related painting, *Omega*, of a grown adult wearing a space suit also in a make-believe universe.

Another painting, titled *BLAM!!!* – the title of Kearns’ exhibition – depicts a teenage boy and girl, also in a fake universe (with birds) where a seemingly stenciled see-through portrait of a woman’s face is shown over the adolescent boy who stands with praying hands. This technique involves a kind of figurative transparency in which two figures are inverted in relation to one another. This is also shown in *Omega* where a woman’s portrait is placed over the spaceman, perhaps to imply a rumination of passion.



*Jerry Kearns, Clark, 2017-21, 48x48 in, Acrylic on canvas*

Another painting, titled *Lola*, is possibly the most complex “psychological work” in the exhibition. This is largely due to a series of conflicting elements masterfully painted in relation to one another. The woman wears an orange sweater with an imprint of an unidentified male portrait. In the universe above her we see a second larger imprint of a woman’s face apparently looking down at her. There is a scattering of bright green leaves sparsely hanging from a nearby tree. To her right, there are three seemingly unrelated elements: a bird pecking on her shoulder, a hand with open fingers (female?), and finally a pistol suspended in the space beneath the hand as if it had just been dropped.



*Jerry Kearns, Lola, 2017-21, 48x48 in, Acrylic on canvas*

Over the years, Kearns has come to terms not only with his subject matter but also with his observational ability to control his imagery in a way that delivers both an emotional and intellectual charge. It is difficult to forget these paintings. Some will decipher them as being weird – which in certain respects they are – but more importantly they are capable of having both a cognitive and sensory appeal that takes us away from the familiar into the realm of the human imagination. In recent years this has become increasingly susceptible to commercial pressures that dictate how we form a self-image of ourselves in the current century. This is a concern worthy of our attention in the paintings of Jerry Kearns. **WM**

# Jerry Kearns

By **Brainard Carey** - August 1, 2018



*Jerry Kearns*

[Jerry Kearns'](#) “psychological pop” paintings represent a multidimensional quantum universe. Juxtaposing varied modes of representation, Kearns presents a visual mash-up that highlights how certain iconography expresses American belief structures. In compositions rife with conflict, questioning, contradictions and intrigue, Kearns depicts iconic figures sourced from Western popular culture engaged in perpetual power struggles, though it’s never clear who is winning. His characters fluctuate between protagonist and antagonist in a narrative that reflects our own constructions of reality – a matrix of thought where time and space are condensed and presented in a single, tense moment.

Jerry Kearns has exhibited internationally across the Americas, Europe, and Asia since the 1980s. He has been featured many times in *The New York Times*, *Art and Auction*, *ARTnews*, and *Artforum*, among others. His paintings are included in many public and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), National Galerie (Berlin), Brooklyn Museum (New York), the Art Institute of Chicago, Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), The Norton Family Collection (Los Angeles), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Queensland Art Gallery (Queensland, Australia).

In the interview a show was mentioned at [Joe’s Pub by Nora, that can seen here.](#)

# DEATH by DECEIT

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*Jerry Kearns*

In the early 1980s, when I returned to painting and studio art after five years as a cultural activist in communities throughout New York City, I was preoccupied with studying the construction of our definitions of self: *Who we think we are is becoming more and more predigested, interpreted, and controlled.* I saw that our national institutions and belief systems were increasingly employed as social control mechanisms. Entertainment was a soft baton whose marks do not appear on the audience.

I felt then, and still do, that news media, pop culture, and fine art transcribe and integrate what become acceptable values and behaviors. The underlying purpose, besides short-term money, being to bind the individual to the power structure and perpetuate the system. Since the 1980s, the media have shined floodlights down the path to a major cultural and political shift. The nation's slide away from human *values* to embrace commodity *valuables* hit its stride with Ronald Reagan's merger of entertainment and far-right politics.

The accumulation of individual wealth and the attainment of glamour were to become our national religion. At the time, I saw the growth of mediated reality overtaking direct experience. And I sensed the emergence of a new personality type. I used the term *mediated* to describe a personality that gets most of what she or he knows about daily *reality* from mass-media sources.

**Figure 1** *Between Time*, 2017. Acrylic on canvas, 84 × 84 in. Courtesy of the artist







**Figure 2** *Road to Casablanca*, 1985. Acrylic on canvas, 96 x 76 in. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist

I wanted to make my art be part of telling the story we live. So I decided to take a clue from the counterculture of the 1960s. I decided to intervene, to edit and compose another view of the reality generated by mass culture and fine art. I thought artists could function as witnesses by giving testimony. From a review of my work, I adopted the term Psycho-Pop, thinking of my images as conceptual art expressed in painting.

I began to think about mainstream media as deception: *Not only do we get most of what we know from media sources, most of that is a lie.* From the two cowboys, Reagan and Bush the younger, to Bill Clinton, the fake Elvis, back to *Change We Can Believe In* with

Barack Obama, on to Donald Trump's current Joker impersonation, we get the "show." Offscreen is where the real deal goes down, mostly unseen. We live under deep cover with tragically permanent consequences.

Early one morning in May 2015, a team of Sloan Kettering specialists told my wife, Nora York, and me, she would likely die within a year to sixteen months. Nora and I lived, hand in hand, through the next terrifying fourteen months. Pancreatic cancer is an agonizing march of destruction through the digestive system. Victims starve to death in great pain.

As I write, television ads and social media postings are informing the New York region of a class action lawsuit seeking federal funds to cover as many as forty thousand people who were regularly exposed to the deadly toxins carried in the post-9/11 air over Lower Manhattan. Nora's death is one of several thousand already traced to breathing that toxicity. Thousands more will die because of the reassuring campaign of deception and lies orchestrated by the Bush administration through EPA director Christine Todd Whitman, President George W. Bush, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Following the destruction of the World Trade Towers, this trio took to the media. Bush urged everyone to "act normal," suggesting we take the family shopping. Whitman infamously appeared on TV with her children playing outdoors. Mayor Giuliani, riding a wave of presidential ambition, regularly appeared on news broadcasts touting normal behavior as the best revenge. All three lied about the toxicity we were breathing to keep the money flowing. Each of them signed death warrants for thousands when they agreed to lie about the horrifying dangers in what was some of the most toxic air ever measured.



Soon after hearing our life-shattering news, I remember Nora turning toward me: *Darling, I'm frightened of losing my mind. How are we going to stay sane? How are we going to get up each day?* I said: *Me too sweetheart . . .* She said: *Let's make art about what it is like when*

*time stops passing you by, and turns around to plow you under!*

My installation, *Diva's Song*, opened at the Mike Weiss Gallery in July 2015. Nora's amazing concert of the same title was performed at Joe's Pub on July 29. She had been performing selected arias

**Figure 3** *Bam Bam*, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 72 × 92 in. Courtesy of the artist







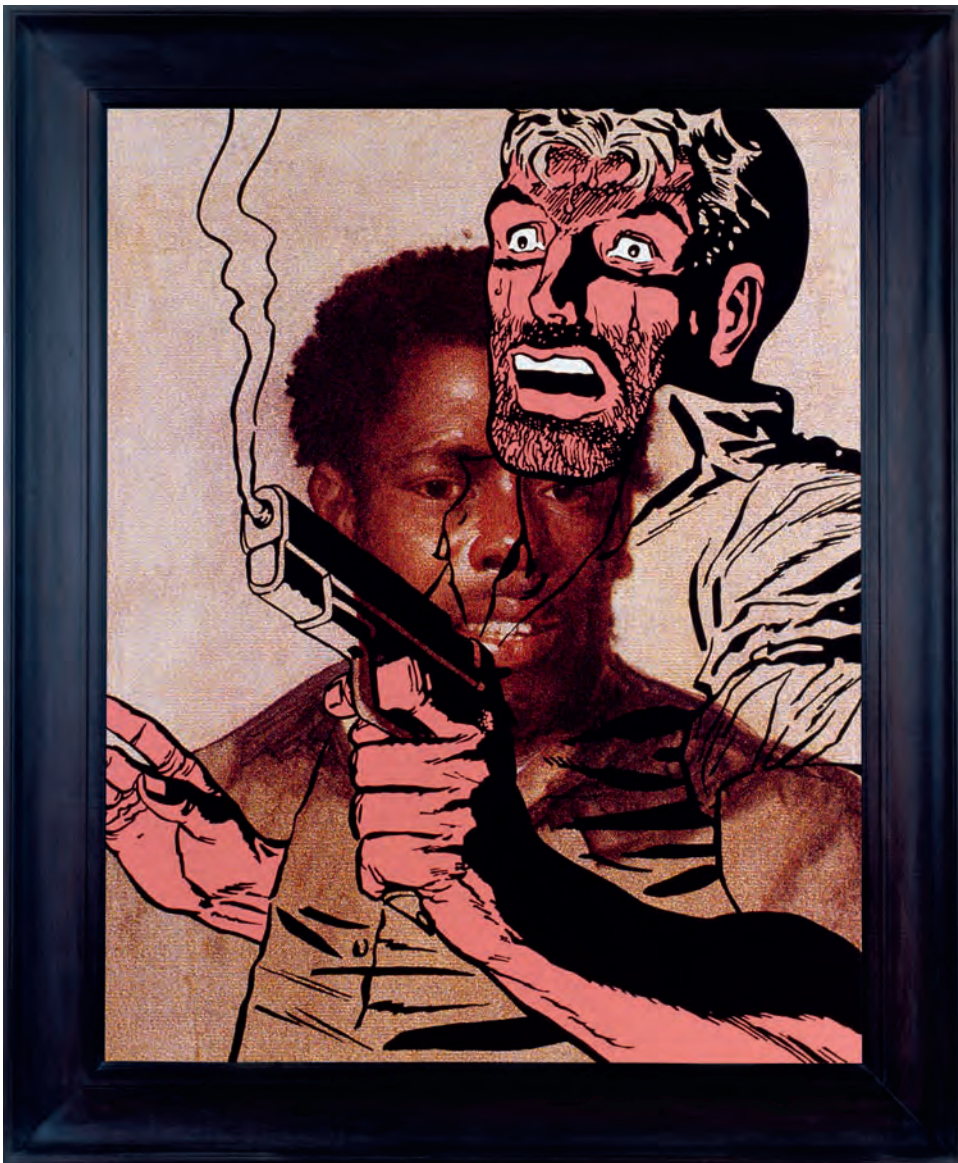


**Figure 4** *Two on a Match*, 2017.  
Acrylic on canvas, 84 × 115 in.  
Courtesy of the artist

from Puccini's brilliant opera *Tosca* for several years. I loved the romantic passionate story and saw elements of our life together in the narrative. Nora's livecast and recorded concert were among the most memorable of her career (Nora York's *Diva's Song*: [jerrykearns.com/ds-events/](http://jerrykearns.com/ds-events/)).

On September 3, 2016, Nora died in my arms. We were in our apartment on Grand Street in Lower Manhattan. Nora York was an extraordinary woman, a great musician and songwriter, and a wonderful teacher. She was also the center of my life. I believe that she was murdered. Her

**Figure 5** *Next of Kin (After J. S. Copley)*, 1997. Acrylic on canvas, 48 × 38.25 in. Courtesy of the artist





**Figure 6** *Madonna and Child*, 1986. Acrylic on canvas, 96.5 × 80 in. Palmer Museum, Pennsylvania State University. Courtesy of the artist

death was not a gun-to-the-head kind of murder. She was killed slowly by the lies of politicians who were serving money, not people.

During the fourteen months since

her death, I have been working toward an exhibition. Maybe I will call it *Next to Nowhere*. The show will include two paintings reproduced here, *Between Time* and *Two on a Match*, alongside six others,

and an animated film. These images are emerging from the between-world I now experience—from living next to nowhere, from existing without her.

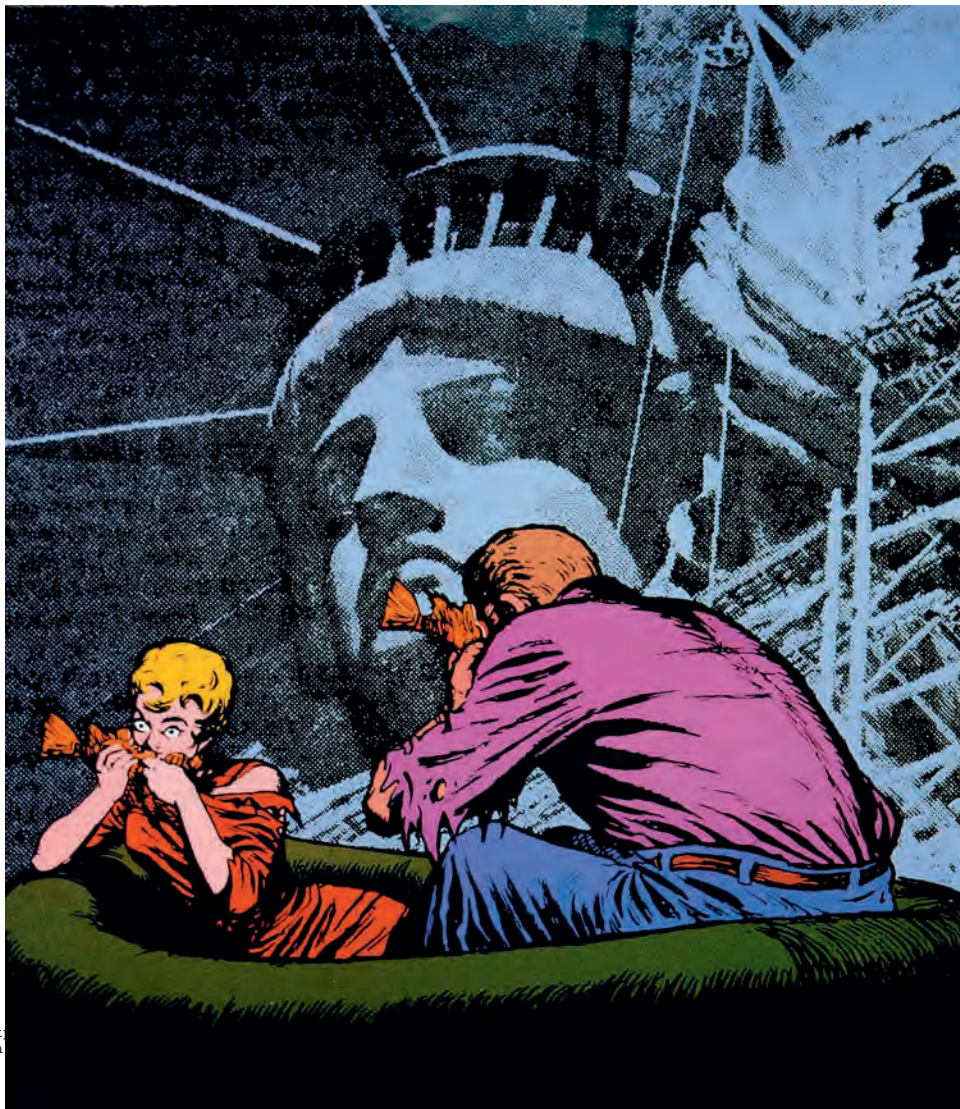
If making culture is to be a hedge against mortality, and a signal of new life, as I believe it should be, then these paintings are memorials to Nora and forays into searching for a way forward. Since there is no way out, the question then becomes: *Is there a way forward?*

**Acknowledgments**

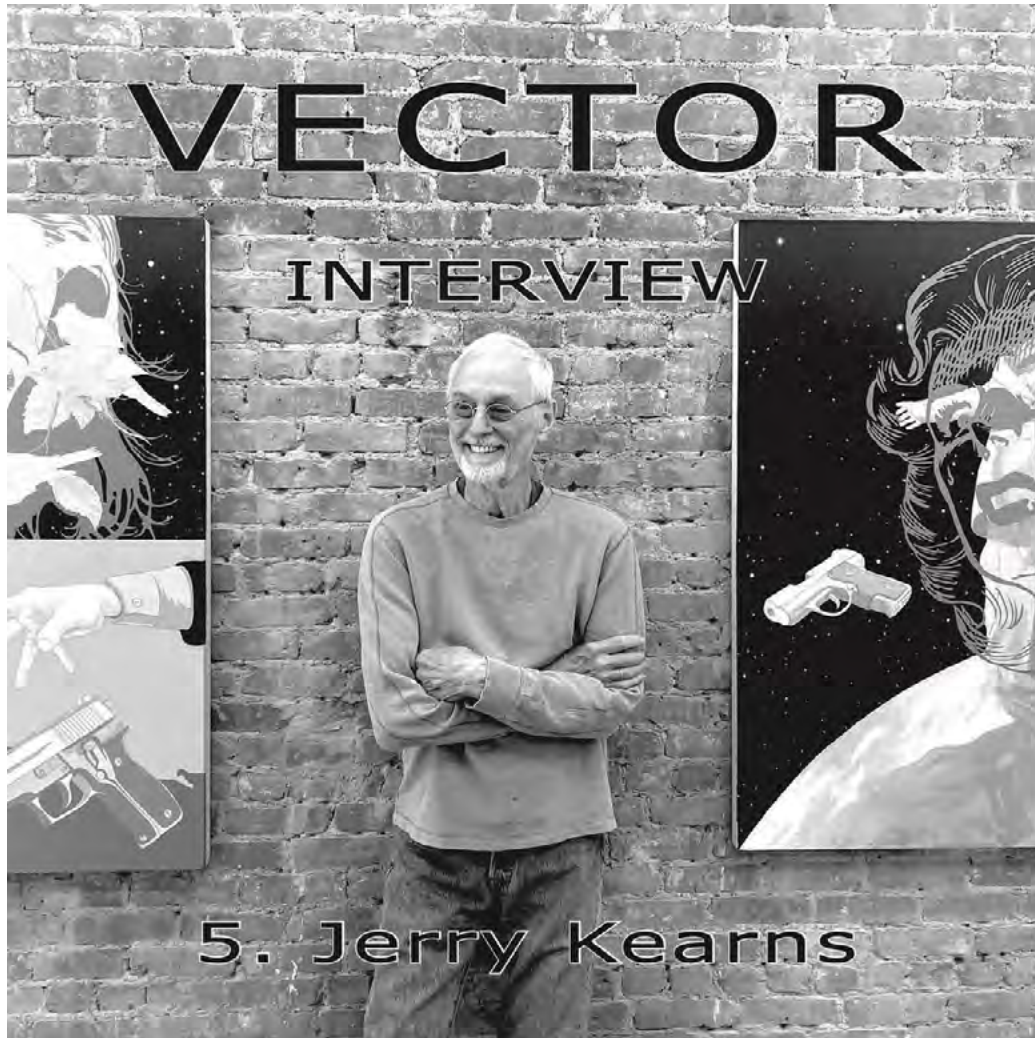
Many thanks to Jim Blasi for preliminary graphic design.

*Jerry Kearns* has exhibited internationally across the Americas, Europe, and Asia since the 1980s. He has been featured many times in the *New York Times*, *Art and Auction*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, and *Artforum*, among others. His paintings and prints are in many public and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), National Gallery (Berlin), Brooklyn Museum (New York), Art Institute of Chicago, Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), Norton Family Collection (Los Angeles), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and Queensland Art Gallery (Australia). See [jerrykearns.com/ds-images/](http://jerrykearns.com/ds-images/).

**Figure 7** *Naked Brunch*, 1985. Acrylic on canvas, 96 × 85 in. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist



Vector Interview Podcast Ep. 5 + Bonus Video



Peter Gregorio of Vector Productions just uploaded our interview in a new episode of [Vector Interview Podcast - Ep.5 Jerry Kearns](#) on the occasion of my current solo show - "BLAM!!!" at Frosch & Co Gallery in New York City, which is up until June 6th, 2021

# MIKE WEISS GALLERY

## Art in America

### JERRY KEARNS

#### Mike Weiss

By Richard Vine  
November, 2014

It's hard to say what struck one most forcefully about this show of five wall paintings and eight new canvases. Was it Jerry Kearns's over-the-top verbal humor, infusing the exhibition title "RRRGHH!" the "KNOCK, KNOCK" repeatedly inscribed in bright letters on the door and the purple "SKREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!" that snaked along an interior wall (as though one were literally walking into a classic Tom Wolfe text)? Was it his comic-book-style imagery, much of it deliberately jumbled and incongruous – like David Salle played for laughs? Was it the seriousness underlying Kearns's repeated figure of Christ dressed as a cowboy and caught up in a deadly shoot-out with the forces of evil? Was it the compositional adroitness and skilled sense of color in the artist's depiction of a solitary modern-dress Charon on the verge of losing control of his boat, or a titular *Day Dreamer* (2004), in bed with his eyes closed, magically inverted on the top of the canvas with his visions (clouds, flowers, a snake, a chubby girl seen up-skirt, the dreamer himself awake in an anxious sweat) circling below? Whatever the answer – and the best one would include all these elements – the show was certainly a confirmation of the power and legitimacy of viewing pleasure.



Jerry Kearns: *HEY COWBOY*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 84 by 108 inches

That experience – all too rare of late – is not unrelated to the fact that, back in the 1980s, Kearns was known as a political artist: one who showed at edgy alternative venues like Exit Art, who worked alongside Lucy Lippard in the 1980-86 advocacy group Political Art Documentation and

Distribution, and who did not hesitate to portray a stereotypically handsome North American couple, wide-eyed in their bed, haunted by ghostly oversized heads severed by Salvadorian death squads (*Talking Heads*, 1985; not in the show). “RRRGHH!” might seem deeply contrary to that early seriousness, but is it really?

Kearns’s work, rife with mass media imagery, has always reflected its times, and today – at least within the commercial art world bubble – we live in the age of Koons, not of Kollwitz. What’s more, Kearns has long found conceptual richness in a dialectic (or is it a Mexican stand-off?) between narrative and collage – between an urge to tell rousing, momentum-driven stories and a need to acknowledge the nearly paralyzing fragmentation, plurality, contradiction and all-at-onceness of contemporary life, now magnified exponentially by digital means.

In such a situation, what can you do, if you are, say, appalled when the inept Western-marshal mentality of George W. Bush is transferred from the sagebrush environs of Crawford, Tex., to a global theater of war? Well, you can – if you are an artist raised Southern Baptist in North Carolina and steeped in 1950’s-era comic strips, pulp novels, movies, and advertising, to say nothing of the later Pop art techniques of subtle mockery – paint a Cowboy Christ who attempts unsuccessfully, in picture after picture, to right all the world’s wrongs. To show that “hero” getting blasted away at while being distracted by a femme fatale (*HEY COWBOY*, 2014), or falling helplessly, Mel Brooks *High Anxiety* fashion, through the spiral void of the Guggenheim Museum (*BAM BAM*, 2010-13), is to convey a message that is pointedly political and more. This work suggests that no *one* is the Redeemer – not the lone Christ, not the lone gunman, not the lone president, not the lone artist. Social woes, we infer, require social solutions. And maybe a good sense of humor.



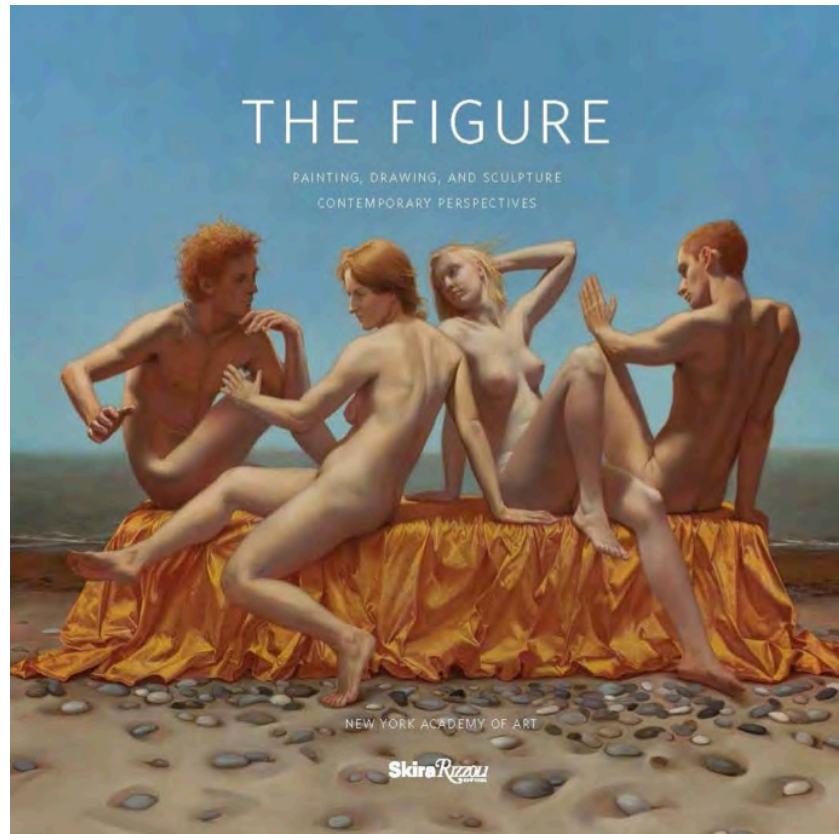
# MIKE WEISS GALLERY

## HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

### Contemporary Art's Body Language

by John Seed on September 30, 2014



***The Figure: Painting Drawing and Sculpture, Contemporary Perspectives*** has the look of a high-end coffee table decoration, but don't judge this book just by its Martha Mayer Erlebacher cover. Inside, you will find it crammed not only with striking images but also with essays by critics, artists, and other thinkers that air out thematically related historical, philosophical, theoretical, and technical issues. *The Figure* is an ambitious and overdue tome that fills a void: if you haven't noticed, contemporary representation is coming on strong. It is also a celebration of the burgeoning influence of the New York Academy of Art (NYAA), a singular institution that has come into its own more than three decades after its establishment.



Will Cotton, *Fairy Floss* (2009),  
oil on linen, 83.25 x 56.25 inches

The NYAA held its first classes in a church rectory on Lafayette Street in the early 1980s — it was free, had no curriculum, and offered no degrees — and was the brainchild of plastics tycoon Stuart Pivar, firefighter Dennis Smith, and philanthropist Russell Wilkinson. After receiving a generous infusion of cash from the estate of Andy Warhol in the late 1980s, it then managed to survive a series of upheavals in the 1990s. Warhol, whose own late imagery was devoid of traces of the hand, still held the conviction that classical art training was a necessity for the next generation. Bob Colacello, writing in *The Figure's* preface, asserts that Warhol “strongly believed in the necessity of a classical art education, though it was seen as hopelessly archaic by the then dominant Conceptual Art establishment, and generally unavailable at the country’s top art schools.” The NYAA, which evolved to offer the nation’s first graduate school of figurative art is now a thriving nonprofit cultural institution, which received its accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in May of 2013.

*The Figure* came about after Rizzoli broached the idea of a book to the NYAA; its President David Kratz then appointed artist and teacher Margaret McCann as the book’s project manager and editor. Because the NYAA favors techniques that are grounded in the development of technical skill, McCann realized that it was important to give the book a sequence that bridged the old and the new. As she points out in her introduction, the consideration of artist’s techniques over time necessitates discussion of “how the handcrafted and mechanical intersect.”



Edward Schmidt, *Conversation (Diana and Callisto)* (2003),  
oil on linen, 39 x 43 inches

As a result *The Figure* is divided into three main sections: Past Momentum, Present Reflections, and Future Continuum. McCann also made an effort to build the book's visual and written content by working with individuals who had some kind of connection to the NYAA: most of the writers and artists represented by images and/or texts have taught or lectured there. Each section consists of a group of featured essays interspersed with Artist Methodologies contributed by individual artists or artists writing in collaboration.

"Past Momentum" serves up five essays on painting and sculpture including Thomas Germano's "A Brief History of Traditional Painting Pedagogy." Germano opens with a discussion of Raphael's "School of Athens" — noting that its iconography celebrates teaching — and follows the lineage of Renaissance paintings towards later European art academies and mentioning Americans who studied there. Germano closes with the point that " ... with the twenty-first century revival of figurative and representational painting, the perennial lesson of the school of Athens, that ancient pedagogical foundations and traditions of painting remain relevant and vital, is reaffirmed." I'm sure that Clement Greenberg would like to climb out of his grave and challenge that statement if he could, but Germano's assertion of the continuing relevance and vitality of the Western artistic tradition is at the heart of the NYAA's teaching philosophy.

"Present Reflections" is *The Figure's* most substantial section, containing eight essays and eight methodologies. Margaret McCann's contribution, "Refiguring History Painting: Representation Meets Modern Techniques," is guardedly optimistic.



Jamie Adams, *Niagradown* (2013),  
oil on linen, 78 x 83 inches

"Painting will never have the power it had before the last two centuries' explosion of mass media and technology, but the culture wars of the Cold War-era painting that plagued American figure painters (at least) seem over, and Postmodern cynicism perhaps waning." McCann, who has a personal interest in the intersection of painting and photography, goes on to reflect that " ... the mass-produced camera's mimetic power encroached on painting's historical pride, cultural identity and market."

Artist Kurt Kauper's contribution, "Representational Art and Kitsch," brings a cool head to a hot topic that has dogged contemporary representation, explaining, contextualizing, and ultimately reframing the range of kitsch:

"Kitsch still exists, to be sure: Wade Guyton's retrospective at the Whitney, with the artist's use of exhausted Warholian and Conceptual gestures masquerading as progressive, nicely fulfills Adorno's description of kitsch as 'serving up past formal entities as contemporary ...'" Kauper's essay and the images that accompany it constitute one of *The Figure's* most stimulating and vital segments.



Margaret Bowland, *White Fives* (2012),  
oil on linen, 84 x 70 inches

In “Future Continuum,” five more essays and five methodologies speculate on the future of representation, especially in relation to technology and social change. Laurie Hogan’s “The Echo in the Picture: The Social Potential of Representational Painting,” opens the section with a striking metaphor:

Like a tree striving in a harsh environment, painting as a set of historically informed activities has spread across the broad, rocky slope of markets, institutions, audiences and systems of delivery present in this stage of global capitalism.

Mark Mennin’s essay, “Scale, Materials, and Self-Perception in Contemporary Figurative Sculpture,” gracefully connects the ancient to the contemporary, concluding: “After the idea, material has always defined sculpture.” Sculpture is well represented in *The Figure* — drawing, not so much — and Mennin’s contribution includes images of 3-D works by Ann Hirsch, Will Kurtz, Nina Levy, Cynthia Eardley, and Rona Pondick.

Pondick, in her artist’s methodology, relates the technologically enhanced development of her “Dog,” which she conceived as an “animal/human hybrid” connected backwards in time with the long tradition of mythological monsters. The size of its original life-cast head required revision, and in 1998 Pondick apparently crashed a lot of computers before obtaining the output she needed to render it in the appropriate scale. “I go to great lengths to make my hybrid sculptures feel effortless,” she writes. “I am very comfortable using old and new technologies to accomplish this.”

“Painting and Digital Technology: From Film to Photoshop,” by Jean-Pierre Roy argues that “The perceptual world seems on another precipice of revelation,” and the tools he surveys — Photoshop and 3-D animation and rendering softwares — are presented as having the potential to take art to the edge of that historical cliff.



Jerry Kearns, *One Trick Pony* (2013), acrylic on canvas, 72 x 92 inches

In the meantime, media imagery — including the pop surrealism of comics and animation — continues to seep into the imaginations of contemporary artists. “Day into night, birth to death, we are flooded with images,” writes artist Jerry Kearns in his artist methodology. “Cartoon or photo, print or telecast, each type and form carries a great deal of information about the culture that created it. Standing in the flow, I work as an editor.”

The situation Kearns describes hit a chord with me: in this age of informational glut we need editors more than ever before. Reading and glancing through *The Figure*, I found myself appreciating Margaret McCann’s situation as the project manager of *The Figure* and also admiring her selfless scholarship. Working with a core image — the figure — McCann had to surf a tsunami of subjects, approaches, and methods to nominate strong work and weave together diverse threads of meaning without imposing any firm perimeters. Contemporary representation isn’t and shouldn’t be seen as a “movement.” It may sound like something out of Monty Python, but I think of contemporary representational artists as an “autonomous collective” best left ungoverned by art historians.

After Postmodernism — a questionable -ism that has often masked imperfect pluralism — I doubt there will be any enduring global art movements in the future. I’ve heard a few things about contemporary representational art being connected to Metamodernism, Post-Postmodernism, and Post Contemporary but these self-conscious attempts to impose new -isms seem doomed to fail. Maybe what we have now, and should expect to have in the foreseeable future are circles of thought and nebulous clusters of related subject matter. Affinity groups of artists are forming via social media, and in these circles contemporary artists and their followers are forming new groupings and constellations. The human figure is making appearances in more and more of these.



Nicola Verlato, *Mothers* (2005), oil on linen, 42 x 64 inches

As *The Figure* demonstrates, NYAA, with its insistence on skill and the necessity of understanding human anatomy, has become an inspired cultural force. In California, the Laguna College of Art and Design is also training a skilled and ambitious cadre of new contemporary representational artists. The network of theoretical and intellectual support for contemporary representation continues to coalesce, and the Atelier movement is growing fast. The Representational Art Conference (TRAC), which is sponsored by Cal Lutheran University, tripled in size between 2012 and 2014: a third event is planned for 2015.

The figure is the greatest subject of all — it will live as long as we do — and this stimulating book reminds us that even while a parade of postwar -isms distracted us, the human figure, with all its demands and complexities, was lurking in the wings, ready to re-emerge. If there ever was an art book that needed to become a major exhibition — or a maybe a salon — *The Figure* is it.

*The Figure: Painting Drawing and Sculpture, Contemporary Perspectives, preface by David Kratz, edited by Margaret McCann, foreword by Bob Colacello, published by Skira/Rizzoli in collaboration with the New York Academy of Art.*

# MIKE WEISS GALLERY

## The New York Times

### Art That's Made Not to Last

By Randy Kennedy July 9, 2015



*Roy Lichtenstein and his "Greene Street Mural" at the Castelli Gallery in 1983. The Gagosian Gallery will recreate the mural.*

In an era when art is toppling gold and joining high-end real estate as a preferred instrument for storing wealth, ephemeral works tend to flummox the system. A piece that burns bright for a few weeks or months and then exists only in memory, or photographs? But this summer, the system — or at least a major hub of it, Chelsea — is playing around with impermanence. The **Mike Weiss Gallery** has opened a show of work that will be painted over. Gladstone Gallery has, too, with "Hello Walls," a group show of works made on the walls, some of which will cease to exist after the run of the show. And the Andrew Edlin Gallery, which is moving to the Bowery, is bidding Chelsea a fond farewell with a show of wall works that will be destroyed when the building housing the gallery is demolished.

The painter Roy Lichtenstein, who died in 1997, was intrigued by the idea of evanescence,

too. And in a show opening on Sept. 10, the Gagosian Gallery will recreate his “Greene Street Mural,” a 96-foot-long wall painting he made in 1983 at the Castelli Gallery at 142 Greene Street in SoHo, where it was on view for six weeks — spooling out crisply colored explorations of everything from Art Deco to the Great Pyramids to Swiss cheese — before becoming a white wall again.

Dorothy Lichtenstein, the artist’s widow, said that he had been interested in painting directly on walls at the time for several reasons, among them the boom in the contemporary-art market, which began in earnest in the 1980s.

“It was the first time when people really started to become conscious of money and prices, and that was something Roy thought a lot about,” she said. The full-scale painted replica of the original work, based on documentation from Lichtenstein’s studio, will last only until Oct. 17.

The main difference this time, Ms. Lichtenstein said, is that the artist’s friends will most likely not participate in quite the communal way they did in 1983: “Almost everybody who came through when Roy was working on the mural grabbed a brush and put a brush stroke on it.”



# MIKE WEISS GALLERY

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

## First Nighter: The Nora York-Jerry Kearns Double-Barreled Love Fest, a John Partrick Shanley

By David Finkle July 31, 2015



The event is unique, at least as far as my brain wracking is taking me. It's the joint cabaret (alt-cabaret?)/gallery enterprise called Diva's Song, produced by gallery owner Mike Weiss.

The live performance part occurred July 29 at Joe's Pub, where Nora York--who's appeared at the venue every three or four months for several years as well as at any number of other prestigious arenas--charged the air with enough electricity to power the entire East coast. The Mike Weiss Gallery part is supplied by Jerry Kearns and his succinct graphic-comic wall displays following the tale of a Tosca-like 1940s singer and her avenging (cow)boyfriend Sugar.

The beauty part is that York and Kearns are married. The collaboration is how they've chosen to deal with her recent cancer diagnosis. As Tosca sings--and both York and Kearns believe about themselves--"I've lived by art, I've lived by love." They've put their work where their convictions are. The two-pronged exhibit is impressive proof of their urgent purpose.

Whereas Kearns's contribution to this exciting and touching marital undertaking is on view

until August 22, York's may be only a one-night affair. (No repeat is announced at the moment.) But no matter how short the run, it was indelible for those present, all of whom were aware of York's condition.

The first thing to be said about that is the lack of any physical evidence that the tall and lanky York was less than the hyperkinetic, completely committed artist she's always been, as she's built an ardent following without breaking through to the even bigger following she's always deserved.

Looking like a priestess in a calf-length, straight-lined, blue jacket over a white tunic over another white gown and with her usually long hair cropped short and spiky, she opened with a song she and longtime music director Jamie Lawrence wrote for their "Water Water Everywhere" project. It's appropriately called "Energy," and in it she manages to refer to elements instantly conjuring--but never explicitly mentioning--Einstein's  $e=mc^2$  hypothesis.

Whether or not she intends the reference, she indicates that the themes she has habitually pursued are profound ones--time, reality versus illusion, love, death. Then she got around to them all repeatedly without ever becoming didactic but always remaining rhythmic, melodic and exhilarating. The songs she reprised from her career so far included Jerry-oriented ode "Crazy LOVE," the 9/11-inspired upbeat "Another Day," "Vissi d'arte" (with tenor John McVeigh) and her signature song, the immensely irresistible "What I Want."

Calling the show a party, although it was as much a love fest as anything else, she was backed by her Amazing Band (Jamie Lawrence at piano and synthesizer, Dave Hofstra on bass, Peter Grant on drums, Sherryl Marshall on backup vocals and Jack Lawrence on guitar and in for the absent Steve Tarshis). Supplementing them besides McVeigh were Dorothy Lawson on cello, Claire Daly on baritone sax, brother Andrew Schwartz on bassoon, Flip Scipio on guitar and, reading a T. S. Eliot poem, Patricia Elliott. To a man and woman they were ebullient.

Though York presumably meant to close with the adored "What I Want," the crowd demanded an encore, of course. She obliged with the Rolling Stones's "Ruby Tuesday" (earlier she'd given her all to "I Can't Get No Satisfaction"), which ends, perhaps even more significantly this time, with the sentiment, "You're going to miss me." (No missing her, however, at this concert footage website.)

York has intoned that Stones classic over the years, but the potential added meaning couldn't have been lost on the audience, nor was the emotion she unleashed on her beg-off number, Stephen Foster's heart-breaking "Hard Times Come Again No More."

Kearns's works are so tied in with York's "Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amour" ethos that one of the unbounded panels on Weiss's gallery walls and featuring the Barbara Stanwyck-bewigged York stand-in has this dialogue: "I've lived my life for art. I lived for love. I lived for joy, to ease breaking hearts with my song."

As the story fills in with Sugar's ridding the pair of a villain--involved are kicks, a knife and a cartoon pistol (on the gallery floor)--the York-Kearns commitment to art and love is confirmed. Unmistakably, there's another motive underscored: the battle against negative forces, a battle now echoing the one they're currently waging.

Reporting her diagnosis from the stage, York asks what artists do when confronted with this menace and answers, "You make art." Kearns and she certainly have.

# MIKE WEISS GALLERY

## The New York Times

### DUO CREATES 'DIVA'S SONG'

By Randy Kennedy July 2, 2015



When a couple lives in, around and through art, what happens when the life of one of the partners is threatened?

For the painter Jerry Kearns and the performer Nora York, who met in the art world and have been married since 1998, the answer was obvious: Put their heads together like Mickey and Judy and do a show.

When Ms. York, who has performed for decades at the Knitting Factory and the Public Theater, found out in May that she had cancer, she and Mr. Kearns, whose comics-inflected work often carries a real-world political weight, decided to transform an exhibition he was planning at the Mike Weiss Gallery in Chelsea into a forum about mortality, art and will. Based on Puccini's "Tosca," the show, "Diva's Song," which opens on Thursday, uses acrylic wall paintings of a larger-than-life-size femme fatale, Diva, and her gun-toting cowboy boyfriend, Sugar, to tell a noir-meets-O.K.-Corral story of a showdown with the Devil. "Unlike Puccini's 'Tosca,'" an essay on the gallery's website explains, "the exhibition's narrative outcome is ultimately uncertain."

"Definitely, however," it adds, "the knife-wielding diva, in a stance reminiscent of Judith with the head of Holofernes, is the one in control."

In an interview, Ms. York — who interpreted the "Vissi d'arte" aria from "Tosca" in a show at the Public Theater in 2011 — described her illness as "this dilemma we have in our personal lives."

But she and Mr. Kearns said they wanted the show to be less about personal crisis than about art's existential power. "How do you confront this without making a one-woman show about illness, which I had absolutely no desire to do?" she said. (A website set up for the show, [divas-song.com](http://divas-song.com), puts the exhibition's images together with a recording of Ms. York and others interpreting the "Tosca" aria; Ms. York will also give a performance for the show at Joe's Pub at the Public Theater on July 29.)

Mr. Kearns said the hope was that the collaboration — whose images he and several former students have been creating directly on the gallery walls, to be painted over when the show ends on Aug. 22 — was something that "gets at notions of what art is actually for."

"At the heart of the work both of us do is storytelling," he added. "This is about the question, 'What do you do when you seem to stop passing through life and it turns around and comes at you like a runaway train?'"