

The Moment. The Backdrop. The Persona.

Narrative in
contemporary art
from the collection of
Francie Bishop Good
and David Horvitz



The Moment. The Backdrop. The Persona.

On view through September 26, 2015

Curated by Sarah Michelle Rupert and Michelle Weinberg

The Moment. The Backdrop. The Persona. is an examination of the uses of narrative in contemporary art by women. The exhibition of works in drawing, painting, video and new media reveal the continued power of storytelling in art today, and the myriad forms it takes.

The desire on the part of the artist to tell a story, and on the part of the viewer to glean one – in painting, photography, video, performance and more – is irresistible to the human spirit. To recognize the prevalence of narrative in art of the moment, Girls' Club presents The Moment. The Backdrop. The Persona., an exhibition of works by more than thirty artists from the collection of Francie Bishop Good and David Horvitz that invite the viewer to experience a singular isolated moment, an evocative backdrop or a deeply imagined character, sometimes a combination of two or more. Mostly the work of female contemporary artists, many of the stories channel archetypal narratives from mythology and fairy tales. Others examine contemporary relationships across a vast range from sober examinations of self and environment to high melodramas.

Public programming throughout the year include artists talks, workshops, experimental theatre, readings and other events involving the public in the dynamic occupation of storytelling.

Artists

Nina Chanel Abney

Ida Applebroog

Leandra Arvazzetti

Hernan Bas

Sanford Biggers

Leah Brown

Delia Brown

Sophie Calle

Amy Cutler

Melanie Daniel

Scott Daniel Ellison

LaToya Ruby Frazier

Anna Gaskell

Jackie Gendel

Kate Gilmore

Aramis Gutierrez

Marcella Hackbardt

Jane Hammond

Mona Hatoum

Vera Iliatova

Chantal Joffe

Rosemary Laing

Natalya Laskis

Jillian Mayer

Wangechi Mutu

Lori Nix

Christina Pettersson

Paco Pomet

Faith Ringgold

Lisa Sanditz

Alessandra Sanguinetti

Kanako Sasaki

Onajide Shabaka

Dasha Shishkin

Carolyn Swiszc

Alison Elizabeth Taylor

Su-en Wong

Katharina Wulff

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Melanie Daniel
 Born 1972 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Lotus Eater (detail), 2014
 Oil on Canvas
 26 5/8 x 26 5/8"

Daniel's painting titled *Lotus Eater* depicts a sleeping female figure, perhaps spinning stories of the artist's dual geographic inspirations: Israel and Canada. Using dense drips and skeins of paint of varying consistencies, Daniel's paintings are like walls of sound, layering many messages simultaneously.



Mona Hatoum
 Born 1952 in Beirut, Lebanon
Infinity (detail), 1991-2000

Bronze
 24 x 13 x 13"

This compact sculpture is both figurative and conceptual, describing an infinity symbol with soldiers, attesting to the perpetual nature of war. A method for externalizing her own experiences as a Palestinian growing up in Lebanon, sculpture gradually replaced performance art for Hatoum. She discovered in modest domestic objects - items of furniture, kitchen implements surrogates for the vulnerability of the human body.



Scott Daniel Ellison
 Born 1973 in Bronx, NY

Crate (top) (detail), 2011

Acrylic on Board

16 x 16"

Bog (bottom) (detail), 2011

Acrylic on Board

11 x 14"

Ellison's diminutive panels adapt a folkloric or "outsider" painter's vocabulary to spin small tales of modest bogeymen, child-like ghouls and hiding places in nature, such as holes in the ground, dubious caves. His child's world view of the supernatural is comprised of stick figures sporting bear masks, snakes with bulging eyes and green goblins.



Amy Cutler
 Born 1975 in New York

Crying out Milk (detail), 1998

Casein

15 x 16"

Leandra Arvazzetti

Untitled, 2013

Ceramic

16 x 10 x 10"

Arvazzetti's *Untitled* ceramic work fuses the animal and the feminine, suggesting transformation and the swapping of identities.



Lisa Sanditz
 Born 1973 in St. Louis, MO

If you didn't know it's the Swiss Alps, you might believe you're there (top) (detail), 2003

Mixed Media on Canvas

72 x 68"

Pink Slime (bottom) (detail), 2012

Mixed Media on Canvas

30 x 40"

"My paintings update the idea of the sublime landscape, locating its essence as much in the commercial as in the natural. I have investigated this through the ways the marketplace and the wilderness intersect, overlap and inform each other." – Lisa Sanditz





Nina Chanel Abney
Born 1982 in Chicago, IL

The Beauty in the Beast (detail), 2009

Acrylic on Canvas

54 3/4 x 66 3/4"

Highly graphic and stylized, Abney figures are cartoon-like, and her compositions are complex and feature flat patterning that pushes toward abstraction. She responds to the information overload of everyday life by externalizing stories in her work, often sparked by an event or a relationship. Abney states "I treat the canvas like a journal in that it's a place where I can release any concerns, emotions, and just the different thoughts swirling around in my head in general."

Ida Applebroog
Born 1929 in Bronx, NY

Promise I Won't Die (detail), 1987

Lithograph, linocut handwash collage

36 x 48"

Applebroog's works in drawing and printmaking reference storyboards, a method borrowed from film and television to tell a story by framing individual pictures. Now in her 80s, Applebroog, born Applebaum, has consistently focused on the female body and gender issues. Recently exhibiting drawings she made in 1969 of her vagina.



Jackie Gendel

Born 1973 in Houston, TX

Book Club (detail), 2009

Oil on Canvas

24 x 22"

Gendel's painting style massage together references to 19th century painters Matisse, Dufy, Picasso, Picabia, and earlier mannerists Fragonard and Boucher. Female faces and bodies are drawn with brush, exposing areas of color beneath linear elements. In this work, her nostalgic aim for painting is married to a more contemporary psychological effect of personalities fusing into one. The impression is of sisters, friends, multiple personalities, dream projections of the artist's self.

Chantal Joffe
Born 1969 in St. Albans, VT

Kristen (detail), 2008

Oil on Board

96 x 72"

Joffe's portraits of women and children, fashion models and friends, create a cast of brooding and alluring characters. Broad, thick strokes and swaths of color animate her often intimate portraits, simplifying her subjects to their core. This painting, of high fashion model Kristen Mcmenamy.



Sanford Biggers

Born 1970 in Los Angeles, CA

Quilt #15 Buddha Bless (detail), 2013

Repurposed Quilt, Fabric Treated Acrylic,

Spray Paint and Silkscreen

89 x 70"

By painting on quilts, Biggers pays homage to diverse spiritual practices, from Vodoun and African religions to Buddhism, and to the North Star and "stations" on the Underground Railroad. Freely collaging these visual references in an improvisational manner reminiscent of music is significant for Biggers, who has collaborated with musicians throughout his career. The narrative component of Buddha Bless is akin to an icon, in which symbols co-exist in a single picture plane, their messages to be teased out and analyzed by the viewer.

Carolyn Swiszc
Born in New Bedford, MA

August 2001 (detail), 2002

Mixed Media on Paper

15 x 48"



Aramis Gutierrez
 Born 1975 in Pittsburgh, PA
The Brief Return of the Megalodon
 (detail), 2007
 Oil on Canvas
 84 x 72"



Paco Pomet
 Born 1970 in Granada, Spain
The Race (detail), 2011

Oil on Canvas

15 3/4 x 23 1/2"

Subverting vintage vacation photographs with absurd and humorous interventions, Pomet's paintings create a surreal fantasy world that is both familiar and strange. Piggy-backing on the narratives documented in historical photographs, the artist hijacks each scene with a playful visual twist.



Dasha Shishkin
 Born 1977 in Moscow, Russia
Sure Like Shite Sticks to the Blanket
 (detail), 2011
 Mixed Media on Mylar
 30 x 42"



Su En Wong
 Born 1973 in Singapore

Limelight/Caribbean Coast (detail), 2006

Colored pencil and acrylic on panel

76 x 110"

Faith Ringgold
 Born 1930 in New York, NY
Dancing at the Louvre (detail), 1991
 Acrylic on canvas, tie dyed, with pieced fabric border

73 1/2 x 80"

Combining paint, pieced fabric and text, Ringgold began creating her story quilts in 1983. Her use of craft techniques ignored the traditional distinction between fine art and craft, while returning focus to figurative, narrative art.

Part of the series "The French Connection", *Dancing at the Louvre* follows the fictional story of Willa Marie Simone, a young black woman who navigates the cultural artistic landscape of Paris in the early 20th century.



Jane Hammond
 Born 1950 in Bridgeport, CT

Spanish Voodoo, 2001

Oil on canvas

37 x 35 1/2"

Hammond uses images from books, maps, manuals and charts to impart a near encyclopedic assembly of image data in her paintings.

Wangechi Mutu
 Born 1972 in Nairobi, Kenya

Untitled (detail), 2003

Collage on Vellum

24 x 18"

More subdued, twisted figure, stretching from one edge of its paper to the other.

The uprising of a bionic woman, produced in the image of violence from where she came.





Hernan Bas

Born 1978 in Miami, FL

Comus In a Drunken Stupor (detail), 2013
Softground, Spitbite, Soapground, Flatbite,
Aquatint, Unique Inking
41 3/4 x 34 3/4"

Hernan Bas is a painter deeply involved in the romantic power of stories. Drawing from high literary as well as tabloid variety sources, his lush painterly surfaces - and this densely inflected print - depict dreamy fantasies of boys in nature, nature as decaying, decay as nostalgia. Interested in the paranormal and the lives of saints and devils, Bas began his career with waifs and dandies, constructs from his adolescent exploration of his own identity. Originally from Miami, now living in Detroit, Bas's career skyrocketed after an exhibition of his works in the Rubell Collection, and he has exhibited in galleries and museums worldwide.

Leah Brown

Born in Washington, DC

There Was No One Else, 2011

Human hair on mylar,

10 x 8"

Brown's virtuosic sculptures and installations are neo-gothic scenarios in which female figures transform into animals, and exaggerated scale relationships provoke Alice in Wonderland associations. Dream-like fictions reminiscent of Grimm fairytales are rendered in the artist's own hair, from her ongoing series titled "The Story of the Hunted". The artist's hair is ground to a powder and suspended in a clear acrylic medium and manipulated like paint. They are each framed in handmade wood and bubble-glass frames.



Christina Pettersson

Born 1976 in Stockholm, Sweden

Work from the series "my dear leona"
(detail), 2004-2008

Graphite on Paper

18 5/8 x 18 5/8"

Piecing together fragments found in a long lost diary of her great-great aunt, Pettersson's graphite drawings depict the narrative of a story. Interrupted by the corrosion of time, Pettersson's illustrations are paired with fragments of diary entries from late great-great aunt.



Vera Iliatova

Born 1975, St. Petersburg, Russia

Practice (detail), 2011

Oil on Canvas

42 x 36"

Iliatova homes in on vignettes of wooded landscapes, embellished with enigmatic details that.



Alison Elizabeth Taylor

Born 1973 in Selma, AL

West Tropicana (detail), 2007
Multi-color Screenprint
16 1/8 x 18 1/2"

Natalya Laskis

Born 1979 in Miami, FL

What i know (detail), 2013

Acrylic, Oil on Canvas

60 x 48"

Laskis' mundane, everyday scenes are glorified as monumental occasions through scale, saturation and an impulsive brush stroke. She creates a portal into the painting's universe through her voyeuristic perspective, implanting the viewer into the piece as part of the scene, as if we are perched on the stairwell, looking on as the couple embraces.



Delia Brown
Born 1969 in Berkeley, CA

Getting Hung Up at a Collector's House en route to the Museum (Katie Waitching Leisa Play Bartender) (detail), 2003

Graphite and gouache on paper
10 x 15 1/2"

Brown's drawings and paintings mine the bourgeois kitsch of daytime soap operas and the daily activities of the leisure class to expose the frivolous connection between artists and collectors.



Katharina Wulff
Born 1968 in Berlin, Germany
Untitled (detail), 2012
Oil and Charcoal on Canvas
20 1/2 x 25 1/2"



Mezzanine

Lori Nix
Born 1969 in Norton, KS
Living Room (detail), 2013
Archival Pigment Print
39 1/2 x 66 1/4"

Building her scenes in miniature, Nix creates tiny stages for her camera, working with building material, lighting and issues of scale devoid of humans, but heavy with the weight of human "In my newest body of work "The City" I have imagined a city of our future, where something either natural or as the result of mankind, has emptied the city of it's human inhabitants. Art museums, Broadway theaters, laundromats and bars no longer function. The walls are deteriorating, the ceilings are falling in, the structures barely stand, yet Mother Nature is slowly taking them over."



Sophie Calle
Born 1953 in Paris, France
Exquisite Pain (Day 7) (detail), 2007
Embroidered text and photograph panels
52 x 75"

Calle is a French artist whose works using photography, text and installation are driven by narrative, exploring the social condition of crossing the threshold from being a stranger to being an intimate. Often, she uses the tactics of a detective who must piece together an detailed picture of a subject by assembling clues. Her works have been exhibited and are in major private and museum collections worldwide.

Latoya Ruby Frazier
Born 1982 in Pittsburgh, PA
Grandma Ruby Smoking Pall Malls (detail), 2002
Gelatin Silver Print
16 x 23"

The portfolio of this photographer is the result of an intimate collaboration with her mother and grandmother, photographing one another and their relations and neighbors in the town of Braddock Pennsylvania. Through these works, three generations of Frazier women embody the phases of prosperity, breakdown, and blight that has afflicted many cities: the life-cycle of American industrialization.



Alessandra Sanguinetti
Born 1969 in New York
Belinda, Chick and Clock (detail), 2000
Photograph
9 1/2 x 9"



Carolyn Swiszc
 Born in New Bedford, MA
Super Bowl Sunday (detail), 2014
 Video Installation and Sculpture
 Dimensions variable

Anna Gaskell
 Born 1969 in Des Moines, IA
Untitled #68 (by proxy) (detail), 1999
 C-Print
 29 3/4 x 39 3/4"



Marcella Hackbardt
 Born 1959 in Standwood, MI
Subjectivity (detail), 2008
 Digital Chromogenic Print
 21 x 44"



Blurring the lines between fiction and reality, Marcella Hackbardt digitally manipulates both her figures and their environments. The curious narrative in her filmic, horizontal image provokes the viewer to question and invent his or her own conclusions.

Kanako Sasaki
 Born 1976 in Sendai, Japan
That Morning (detail), 2012
 Archival Pigment Print
 20 x 24"



Rosemary Laing
 Born 1959 in Brisbane, Australia
One dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape (#2) (detail), 2003
 C Type Photograph
 48 1/8 x 85 7/8"

Laing's epic car fire scene from a remote desert land in the Australian landscape stirs feelings of uneasiness, suspense and awe. Inspired by the tensioned relationship between cultural and historically resonate locations and their populations, her photographs create the cinematic backdrop for the contemporary Australian experience.

Jillian Mayer
 Born 1984 in Miami, FL
I Am Your Grandma (detail), 2011
 Video

Mayer's work explores how technology and the Internet affect our identities, lives and experiences. Through a multitude of media, her work examines and plays with the tension between physical and digital iterations of identity and existence.



Kate Gilmore
 Born 1975 in Washington, DC
With Open Arms (detail), 2005
 Video

Onajide Shabaka
 Born in Ohio
Total Disappearance 1905 (detail), 2012
 Video

