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NEWS | CRITICISM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2022 C1

Arts

The New York Times

An Artist Who Prefers To Wear His Ideas

The work of the costume designer Machine Dazzle is blossoming all over town.

By JENNIFER SCHUESSLER
It was movie night at the Museum of Arts and Design in Manhattan, and the costume designer Machine Dazzle was ready for his entrance.

The selection was the 1980 roller-disco fantasy “Kanachu,” and he had draped his 6-foot-5 frame in a shiny take on Olivia Newton-John’s purple Grecian goddess look, accessorized with pastel-rainbow pumps, sequined leg warmers and a Venetian-style ONJ mask on a stick.

The movie, of course, was a mess — but the kind of wildly colorful, overstuffed, yes-to-everything mess that could have roller-skated right into his own work.

“How many different ideas can find their way into a costume?” Dazzle asked the audience, plenty of whom came in their own homemade light-up headdresses, sparkly jackets and leg warmers. “A lot. If you don’t believe me, go upstairs.”

“Upstairs” meant the museum’s fourth construction site.

Machine Dazzle in his studio at the Museum of Arts and Design, where his first solo exhibition, “Queer Materialism x Machine Dazzle,” is on view until Feb. 19.



Cultural Heritage as a Battlefield



The Monastery of the Caves in Sviatohirsk, Ukraine, has endured numerous Russian attacks.

Tallying the damage made to museums and cathedrals during the war in Ukraine.

WHEN HE FIRST SAW the ruined cathedral in 1918, the young writer Georges Bataille hardly knew what he was looking at. He had come home to Reims, whose cathedral had been the site of French coronations for a thousand years. As a boy he had stood in awe of the High Gothic cathedral, its massive rose window, its imposing gallery of kings. Now Bataille was 21, discharged from a brief stint in the French Army, and trying to recognize a cathedral whose roof was gone and whose nave was choked with debris.

Reims Cathedral stood hard by the Western Front, and amid the fathomless violence of World War I, beyond the trenches and away from the gas, the repeated shelling of the cathedral became one of the elemental symbols of its barbarity. French newspapers invoked Reims as proof of German inhumanity. German propagandists blamed



The Year in Late-Night TV
Samantha Bee, above, and Trevor Noah are gone. What’s next for the time slot on television? Page 4

JAMES MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN; JASON FARAGO

An Artist Who Prefers to Wear His Ideas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and fifth floors, where “Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle,” on view through Feb. 19, is currently offering perhaps the city’s most glittery, tinselly, witty display of bling this holiday season.

The show, Dazzle’s first solo exhibition, brings together more than 80 costumes and other artifacts, ranging from self-worn creations from his beginnings in the ‘90s downtown experimental drag scene to his outrageously extravagant costumes for Taylor Mac’s epic “24-Decade History of Popular Music,” which was a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize.

It’s a summing up, but also a bit of a pivot for Dazzle, who turns 50 on Dec. 30. Lately, he said, he’s been broadening his possibilities, “slowly moving uptown” — and not just because there’s currently a 30-foot photograph of him in rainbow-epangled drag on the museum’s facade, looking up Central Park West (or as he put it, “shooting lasers” at the nearby Trump International Hotel & Tower).

This month, he designed and performed in “Bassline Fabulous,” a fanciful staging of Bach’s Goldberg Variations with the Grammy-winning Catalyst Quartet in a Versailles-themed gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (where his character, among many other things, constructed an elaborate topiary garden from ingenious props pulled from under the covers of a giant bed, and at one point did battle with a giant bottle of Elmer’s glue). Next up: costumes for Rameau’s “Ito” with the Washington-based Opera Lafayette in the spring. “I love there’s this shift into classical,” Dazzle said. “It makes me want to dive into it more.”

Before the commission, he said, he had never heard of the Goldberg Variations, but then he listened to them every day for months. “Music inspires me more than anything visual,” he said. “When I hear music, I see shapes.”

Chatting in his studio on the top floor of the museum known as MAD, the evening before the “Bassline Fabulous” dress rehearsal, Dazzle — dressed in paint-splattered jumpsuit and sneakers, his Medusa-like head of dark curls tucked into a knit hat — came off as both knowing exactly what he was doing but also a bit hard pressed to describe his indeterminate position in the intergalactic space between the art, theater and drag worlds.

“It’s taken me years to describe what I am, what I’ve been my whole life,” he said. “I’m an emotionally driven, instinct-based conceptual artist in the role of costume designer” — he paused ever so slightly — “most of the time.”

If the exhibition floors are a dazzling parade of exquisitely detailed looks, the studio is unabashed chaos, crammed with bits and pieces of costumes from previous projects. On a dressmaker’s dummy, there was not quite finished Louis XIV-ish costume for “Bassline Fabulous,” including a bondage-tied cage of ruffled elastic over a lace catan that had been pulled through the holes.

“You get these weird blob shapes, which are kind of oozing,” he said. “You don’t want to lose the body, but there can also be sculpture.”

Nearby was a neck corset, a pair of size 15 period shoes awaiting their blue-sky-and-clouds trompe l’œil paint job and a pile of cloth flowers in “weird Barbie flesh tones” set to be incorporated into a headdress. And, on the table, his sewing machine: a basic \$250 Singer from Michael’s, the arts and crafts emporium.

“I use a sewing machine the way I use a hammer,” Dazzle said. “I’m not a fine tailor. What I do with a sewing machine is attach two things together. It’s sort of like civilized glue.”

“Civilized glue” — or maybe Krazy Glue? — might be an alternate title for the exhibition, which showcases the way his work bonds not just wildly disparate elements but trash and glamour, metaphor and materiality, emotion and intellect.

“I love wearing ideas,” Dazzle said. “You can make something that’s really beautiful but gets boring after five minutes onstage. I like giving the audience some work to do. I want them to ask, ‘Why the hell is he wearing an apple pie on his head?’”

The show was assembled by Elissa Auer, the museum’s chief curator. She had seen photographs of Dazzle’s costumes for “A 24-Decade History of Popular Music,” a 24-hour-long queer retelling of American history from 1776 to the present through songs of the time. “I thought I’d be lucky if I could find 10 costumes available,” she said. Instead, she was surprised by the profusion of material that came out of Dazzle’s studio, his apartment and friends’ basements. The title “queer maximalism” was her idea — and one meant to challenge aesthetic hierarchies.

“In the art world, these kinds of maximalist styles are viewed as stylistic embarrassment, lacking in rigor or meaning,” Auer said. “But Machine really, really brilliantly demonstrates it as an embodied aesthetic category. These surface effects are really political effects of resilience and survival.”

Dazzle, whose name is Matthew Flower, was born in 1972, and spent his early childhood in Houston, where his father worked as an engineer in the energy sector. He was always into crafting and movies like “Grease” and “Xanadu.” On his 10th birthday, he was enchanted by a trip to “The Nutcracker,” which involved not just elaborate costumes but children like himself onstage. “I thought: ‘This is what I want to do! Look, there it is!’” he said. “But then I got depressed, since I was so far away from that. I didn’t consider it a cultured place. I had to find it for myself!”

When he was 11, the family moved even farther from Xanadu, to Idaho Falls, Idaho. In 1984, after art school at the University of Colorado, he bought the proverbial one-way ticket to New York City (in his suitcase was a bag full of milk tops that said “HOMO,” for “homogenized,” collected from a favorite cafe in Boulder, which he later fashioned into a kind of chain-mail breastplate included in the show).

He worked a series of day jobs, including a 15-year stint as a costume jewelry de-



JARA KELLER/FOX THE NEW YORK TIMES



STEPHANE SEGIZO/THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



JENNA MATHWILL/MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN



AUSTIN J. WELLS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



AUSTIN J. WELLS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

signer. (In his studio, he pointed out one of the first pieces he made in the early 2000s, for a friend: a choker made of a piece of windshield retrieved from a burned-out car on the Brooklyn waterfront.) At night, he was a regular at venues like Exit Art, a performance-oriented gallery, and small downtown queer clubs like the Cock, the Side and the Pyramid Club. He began making costumes for the Dazzle Dancers, a “Solid Gold” style dance troupe formed in 1996 (represented in the show by writhing mannequins in barely-there costumes and a video for their raunchy cover of the theme from “The Love Boat,” which introduces them as “a naked sensation” that had “come to heal a broken nation”). A friend called him a “dancing machine,” and it stuck. He also began making costumes for downtown performers like Julie Atlas Muz, Justin Vivian Bond and Mac, who in 2004 invited the Dazzle Dancers to participate in “Live Patriot Acts: Patriots Gone Wild!” a “political vaudeville” that parodied the Republican National Convention. “I had my own rougher aesthetic, and Machine had a similar take on things,” Mac recalled. “It was about making a trash bag beautiful, and not so much about making something that was already beautiful beautiful.” “His costumes are always metaphors for something,” Mac continued. “With everyone else, if you say the costume is a cat, it’s a cat. But he would make a costume of what cats make you feel like.” They are also, Mac ventured, “a storage of pain.” “It’s a flooding of all the emotions

and things a little queer kid wasn’t allowed to express, growing up in the time we did,” Mac said. Dazzle made what became nearly 100 costumes for “The Lily’s Revenge,” Mac’s six-hour, 40-performer play staged in 2009 at HERE Arts Center in Manhattan. It’s represented at the museum by a single flower headdress. But MAD’s entire fifth floor is dedicated to Dazzle’s dozens of costumes for “A 24-Decade History of Popular Music,” including the companion costumes he made for himself. (For those who missed it, there’s a sizzle reel in the gallery, and an HBO documentary in the works.) Dazzle summed up what he calls his “recipe” for Mac’s show: a silhouette informed by what people wore at the time, but layered with references to inventions, technological and social change and collective emotions. Take his costume for 1886-88: a shredded military jacket on top of a skeletal hoop skirt made from barbed wire and strings of... sausage? “It was the Civil War, so there’s loneliness, dead people, sadness, winning, losing,” Dazzle said. “But also barbed wire, which was invented at the time. And hot dogs! I read in a couple places that the American hot dog was invented in this time, by German immigrants.” Representing the 1960s, there’s a Jackie Kennedy pink suit painted with Roy Lichtenstein dots, backed with giant “wings” of Pop Art hands pointing like guns. For the AIDS era, there’s a robe made of cassette tapes, topped by a many-headed mushroom-cloud-like death mask. It was in 2016, during the performances

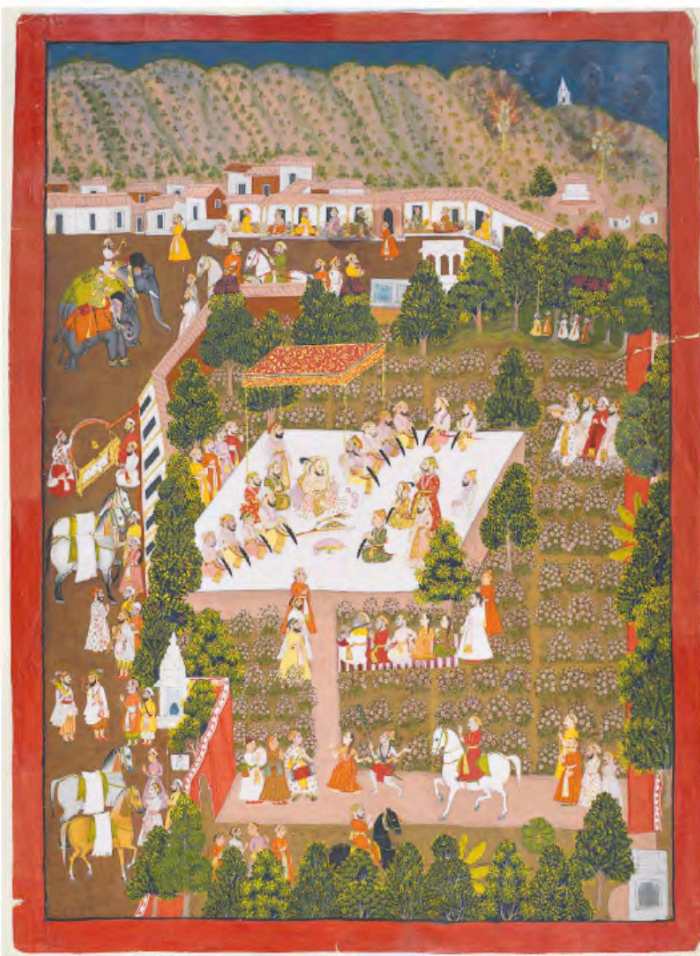
leading up to the one-time-only, 24-hour marathon show at St. Ann’s Warehouse in Brooklyn, that Dazzle got the courage to quit his day job. “I’m Capricorn, Virgo rising — very responsible, practical, realistic,” he said. “I was really scared, but I decided to take the leap and follow my heart.” The show highlights some work with new collaborators, including his costumes for “Once Within a Time,” a 50-minute wordless art film by Godfrey Reggio (“Koyaanisqatsi”), which had its premiere in October at the Santa Fe International Film Festival. (One oversize mannequin wears the mad-cloth shaman number worn by Mike Tyson, who plays a character called the Mentor.) There’s also a moving suite of costumes for “Treasure,” his 2019 indie-rock cabaret piece about his relationship with his mother, who died soon after he moved to New York. (An album version was released in October.) And Dazzle is also working with Mac on a new, large-scale piece, “The Bark of Millions,” a suite of 54 original songs inspired by queer figures throughout history, written by Mac and the composer Matt Ray. At a recent preview concert at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Dazzle — who also sings in the ensemble — wore a jumpsuit and “a large poncho.” But their usual extravagant footwear for some maximalist minimalism. “Being barefoot onstage is very punk,” Dazzle said. “It’s raw and it’s real and it’s kind of witchy.”

Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle
Through Feb. 19 at the Museum of Arts and Design, 2 Columbus Circle, Manhattan, (212) 200-7777; madmuseum.org

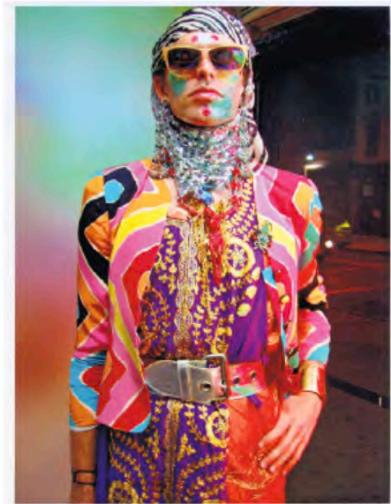
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JARA KELLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; STEPHANE SEGIZO/THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; JENNA MATHWILL/MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN; AUSTIN J. WELLS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE NEW SEASON

Art



Meret Oppenheim's Surrealist work "Object (Object)" from 1936, now included in "Meret Oppenheim: My Exhibition" at the Museum of Modern Art.



"Experimental Drag Look" from 2002 by Matthew Flower, who is also known as Machine Dazzle. His work will be shown at the Museum of Arts and Design.

The Beaten Path Is Growing Wider

By ROBERTA SMITH

There is no time like the present — ever. In terms of art, this moment has been distinguished by startling fluidity, rapid change and thrilling expansion both in terms of what constitutes art and who makes it. (Or who has made it, since art's past is expanding too.) The fall exhibitions that intrigue me most continue this expansion. The latest cracks in the barriers between art and craft include a show of 19th-century African American stoneware jars at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a survey of some of the most outrageous costumes of this century at the Museum of Arts and Design. Overdue retrospectives will occur at the American Folk Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. And three museums have given midcareer artists the run of their galleries.

With "Hear Me Now: The Black Potters of Old Edgefield, South Carolina," the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in concert with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, ventures into the expanding study of 19th-century African American visual culture (through Feb. 5 at the Met). It focuses on the Black potters who worked in the Old Edgefield District of South Carolina before, during and after the Civil War. The point of departure is the work of a literate enslaved artisan formerly known as Dave the Potter, and now as David Drake. Skilled at throwing and glazing large stoneware storage jars, Drake signed his vessels and sometimes inscribed them with poems and abolitionist messages. At the Met Drake's jars are joined by expressive face jugs by potters and clay artists whose names are as yet unrecovered.

"Threads of Power: Lace from the Textilmuseum St. Gallen" at the Bard Graduate Center, will give New York its first in-depth look in nearly 40 years at the history of this intricate, fragile and costly textile (through Jan. 1). Organized in collaboration with the Textilmuseum in St. Gallen, Switzerland, the show presents scores of examples from the 16th to 21st centuries, including bobbin-lace and needle-lace borders, bonnets, mantellets and samplers. Lace's modern allure is reflected in dresses by designers like Dior, Givenchy, Saint Laurent and Prada, and in the lemony felted lace and silk razzmir ensemble that Isabel Toledo designed in 2009 for Inauguration Day in January 2009 when Michelle Obama officially became first lady.

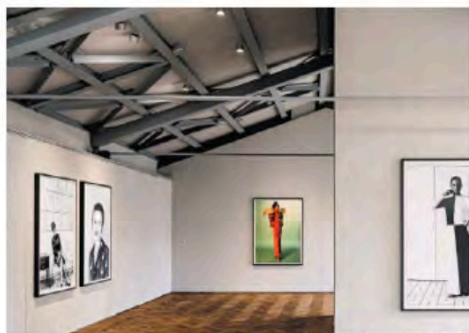
"Morris Harsfield Rediscovered" at the American Folk Art Museum examines the life and art of Harsfield (1872-1946), who retired from shoe manufacturing in 1936, began painting in 1937 and soon found his featured in the press (too clumsy, too risqué and — horrors — no right feet). It became the last showdown between Alfred H. Barr Jr., the

museum's founding director, and its trustees, who dismissed him. The first major Harsfield exhibition in a New York museum since, this show (Sept. 23-Jan. 29) presents 40 of the 77 paintings the artist completed, along with remakes of his shoe designs.

In 1936, the German-born Swiss artist Meret Oppenheim (1913-1985) made what is arguably the most notorious Surrealist artwork of all time. An icon of sexual innuendo and disturbing physical contrasts, it is officially titled "Object," but is known the world over as "the fur-lined teacup." The teacup promptly traveled to the Museum of Modern Art to assume, some months later, a prominent place in its historic "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" exhibition of 1936-37. It drew the ire of the press and some trustees, but became hugely popular. Still, MoMA never granted Oppenheim even a small solo show. This changes with "Meret Oppenheim: My Exhibition" (Oct. 30-March 4), the largest Oppenheim survey yet in this country, organized with the Kunstmuseum Bern and the Menil Collection, Houston. It sets Oppenheim's masterpiece among 150 of her objects, paintings and drawings.

"A Splendid Land: Paintings From Royal Udaipur" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, organized by the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, could well be the most beautiful painting exhibition of the season, handily upending Western views of Indian painting as small portrayals of the carryings-on of gods and kings (Nov. 18-May 14). Many of its 80 works have never been exhibited in this country. Most are big, and were made by Udaipur court artists in the 1700s. The increased size encouraged more complex narratives — both urban and natural — grounded in real life. Yes, Udaipur's extraordinary palaces and gardens are present, but so are expansive views of modest neighborhoods in proto-Cubist array and lush landscapes.

"Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle" will honor the Museum of Arts and Design's acronym — MAD. It is surely among its wildest, most ambitious exhibitions (through



View of "The Black Image Corporation" (2018), by Theaster Gates, who'll be at the New Museum.



A stoneware jar by Dave (who was later recorded as David Drake) from South Carolina in 1858.

Feb. 19). With 80 costumes on two floors, it pays tribute to the genius of Matthew Flower (b. 1972), better known as Machine Dazzle. His ensembles are models of excess that are living sculpture, if not walking assemblages, initially worn to clubs, street events and parades, and in performance (his first, in 1996, was at Exit Art).

The show includes environments, photographs and videos and more than two dozen costumes that the artist created for himself and his longtime collaborator, the singer-songwriter-queer performer Taylor Mac, for "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music" (2016). MAD's larger mission, presented with unusual clarity in the show's catalog, is to examine queer excess as a survival tactic, aesthetic stance and political resistance.

"Xavieria Simmons: Crisis Makes a Book Club" at the Queens Museum (Oct. 2-March

5) is the largest exhibition so far devoted to one of the most talented artists of her generation. Simmons (b. 1974) has tackled the issue of Blackness both head-on and in oblique, lyrical ways. Her art ranges, with almost unfailing success, from text-based paintings to figurative sculptures, staged photographs, videos and video installations and interactive, socially oriented pieces. It touches on cultural difference, the fusion of aural and visual experience and the sustaining effect of community and nature. This sprawling show will occupy much of the museum's interior, and not a little of its exterior. And Simmons will distribute around 4,000 copies of books that figured in her own development, spawning the club of the show's title.

Similarly, "Theaster Gates: Young Lords and Their Traces" will fill most of the New Museum with this artist's first institutional survey in New York and largest anywhere (Nov. 10-Feb. 5). Gates's activities cover a tremendous range, encompassing painting, sculpture, ceramics, video and installation, propelled by his activities as an archivist, collector, preservationist historian and salvager. Central to Gate's art is the remembrance and reclamation of Black history and culture on Chicago's South Side. Several recent reliefs have a more local source: discarded floorboards from the Park Avenue Armory.

Finally, I look forward to "Abigail DeVille: Bronx Heavens" at the Bronx Museum of the Arts (Oct. 12-April 9). DeVille (b. 1981) is known for physically imaginative, symbolically fraught forms of assemblage. Her latest installation will touch on her Bronx-based family's history, incorporating pieces from the living room of her grandmother, who came north during the Great Migration. And in the lobby, visitors will be able to record their own Bronx tales.

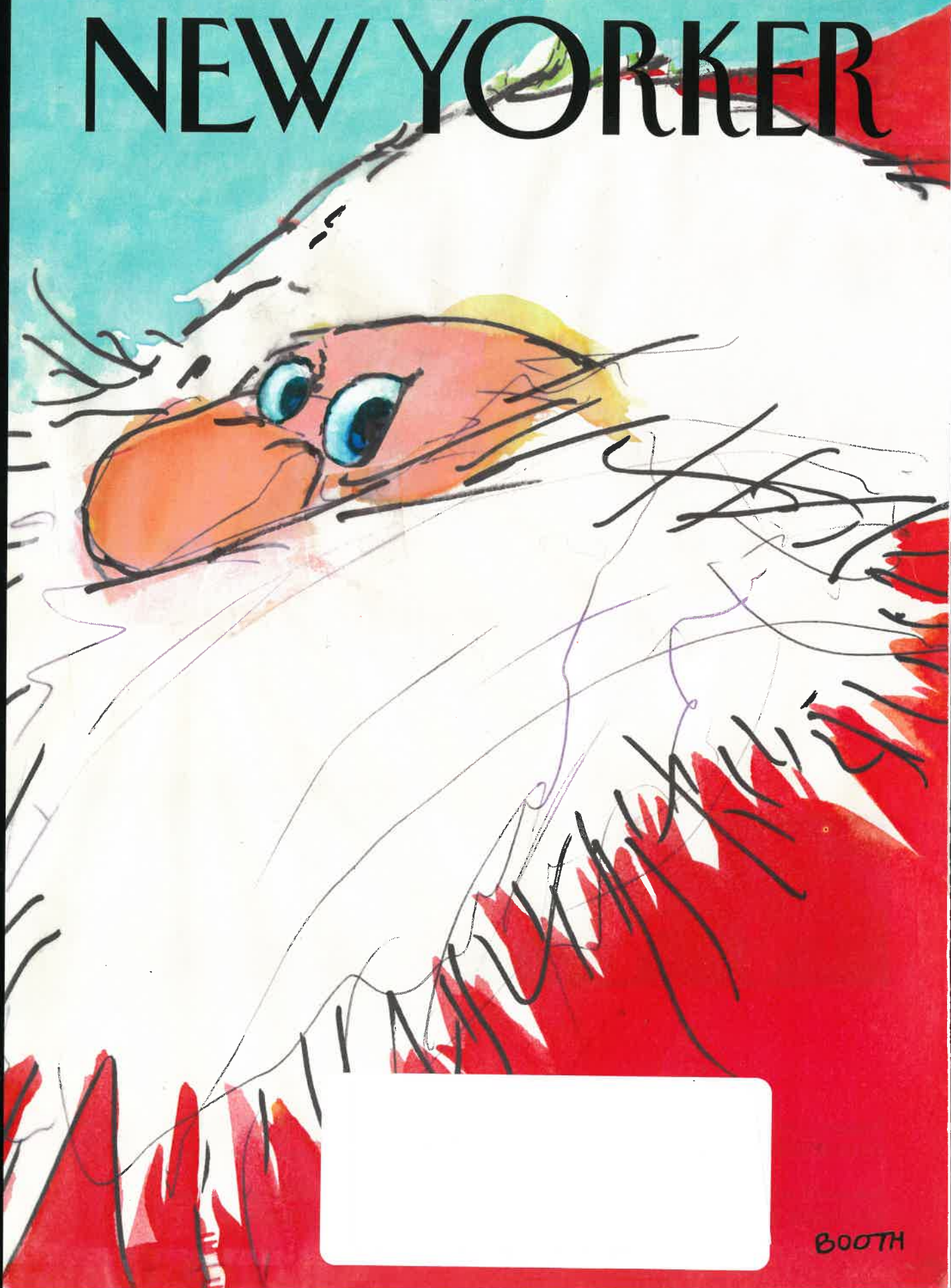
Top left, a work from about 1715-30, included in "A Splendid Land: Paintings From Royal Udaipur" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art.

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THE

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NEW YORKER



BOOTH



DECEMBER 14 - 20, 2022

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



Some might turn to the Hebrew calendar to learn when Hanukkah falls, but rock-and-roll types need only consult New York's concert schedule. Since 2001, the holiday's bounty has included—with few exceptions—an eight-night stand by **Yo La Tengo**. This year, it's at Bowery Ballroom, Dec. 18-25. Each Hanukkah show features an unannounced surprise opener and comedian—but the event's star is this blue-chip indie trio, currently gearing up for the release of its sixteenth LP, "This Stupid World."

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIELLE LEVITT

As ever, it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

ART

"I'll Have What She's Having: The Jewish Deli"

This historical exhibition doesn't skip on the Jewish delicatessen's role in American entertainment—its title borrows a punch line from the movie "When Harry Met Sally," delivered by a patron at Katz's Delicatessen, a witness to Meg Ryan's bravura fake orgasm. A quote from Harpo Marx, a fond mention of Lindy's cheesecake, is emblazoned on a wall above a vitrine lined with vintage menus from New York City's theatre district; the band Guns N' Roses is seen squeezing into a booth at Canter's, in L.A., in a photo from the eighties. But the heart of the story lies in two waves of immigration to the U.S. The arrival of some two million Jews, from Central and Eastern Europe, between 1880 and 1924, brought smoked fish, bagels, and babka. (Katz's, believed to be the oldest continuously operating deli in the country, was founded in 1888; its competitor, Russ & Daughters, opened in 1907, when Joel Russ was selling food from a barrel.) After the Second World War, Holocaust survivors found work at Jewish restaurants or opened their own. Both Rena Drexler, of Drexler's in North Hollywood, and Abe Lebewohl, the founder of the 2nd Avenue Deli, are highlighted as figures who were crucial, in the fifties, to establishing secular spaces for Jewish culture. Above all, the exhibition is brightly informative and often funny. Even a table of fake food, which features a sinister plastic noodle kugel, merits a laugh.—*Johanna Fateman (New-York Historical Society; through April 2.)*

"Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle"

In this spectacular solo debut by Machine Dazzle (the pseudonym of the New York artist Matthew Flowers), the artist's kaleidoscopic, mood-elevating assemblages—originally created as costumes for performers in Dazzle's queer demimonde—are presented as sculptures in their own right, inviting viewers to absorb the transfixing, ultra-ornate details of the artist's punk-inflected, gender-expansive figurative works. Ingenious, deceptively make-shift-looking armatures and draped volumes support brightly colored nests of sparkling found objects and craft materials, reflecting a more-is-more aesthetic of joy and mordant wit. The fifth-floor gallery space is devoted to Dazzle's designs for Taylor Mac's radical interpretation of the American Songbook—the twenty-four-hour drag-theatre piece "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music," first performed in 2016. Standouts of the astounding, panoramic display include a hoopskirt (of sorts), constructed from faux barbed wire and plastic hot dogs, a mermaid throne made of balloons and tulle, and a headdress fashioned out of a Slinky. On the fourth floor, the dense confections and geometries continue, in vignettes featuring costumes from Dazzle's other theatrical and cinematic collaborations. One high point is an ebullient tribute to the legendary Dazzle Dancers, an anarchic, orgi-

astic troupe who emerged as a queer night-life institution in the nineteen-nineties—and who gave the artist his name.—*J.F. (Museum of Arts and Design; through Feb. 19.)*

Wolfgang Tillmans

MOMA's immense, flabbergastingly installed retrospective of the photographer Wolfgang Tillmans, titled "To See Without Fear," persuades me that the man is a genius. There's a downside to the concession—it dampens my quarrels of taste with certain items, among the show's predominantly brilliant several hundred, that I do not like. Geniuses alter the basic terms of their fields; criteria that once applied no longer compel. The ground zero at MOMA is "art photography," its former autonomy diluted in a tsunami of images, in wildly varying sizes, mediums, and formats, which are often mounted from floor to ceiling, and may less risk than exalt banality. Tillmans observes no

distinction, in the show's arrangement, between self-generated and commissioned works, original and appropriated images, framed fine prints and taped- or pinned-up photocopies, deliberate and accidental darkroom misadventures, and, in matters of content, the politically committed and the purely aesthetic. The fifty-four-year-old artist soared to fame, in the early nineties, for his ostensibly scattershot but, in truth, acutely selective documentation of soulful youths whom he encountered on night-life outings, in Berlin and London. His party scenes are like panes of glass dropped through the middle of symbioses: beholding them, you are at once viewer and viewed. This body of work put Tillmans on the art-world map, but he has somewhat downplayed it in his choices for the present show, perhaps from exasperation at being lazily identified with a fleeting Zeitgeist that determined only the opening gambit for a game that he has conducted in no end of other directions.—*Peter Schjeldahl (Museum of Modern Art; through Jan. 1.)*

IN THE MUSEUMS



"El pueblo salva el pueblo"—the people save the people—reads an inscription in the margins of the artist Lulu Varona's tenderly embroidered textile, from 2020, now on view in the Whitney's anguished, jubilant, galvanizing, and often beautiful exhibition "**no existe un mundo poshuracán: Puerto Rican Art in the Wake of Hurricane Maria**" (through April 23). What becomes all too clear in the presence of the show's fifty works, made by twenty artists since 2017, is that the solidarity Varona invokes is both an expression of love and a response to state-sanctioned neglect. When a voice-over in Sofia Gallisá Muriente's darkly comic video "B-Roll," from 2017—a supercut of tourist-board promotions aimed at investors—says that "the government is bending over backwards to help," the intended recipients of that largesse are U.S. businesses, not Puerto Rico's dispossessed. (Several works directly address the swell of protests, in 2019, that led to Ricardo Rosselló's resignation as governor.) The show necessarily touches on painful subjects—a tabletop installation by Gabriella N. Báez, ongoing since 2018, is a moving tribute to her father, who took his own life—as the inspired curator Marcela Guerrero (with Angelica Arbelaez and Sofia Silva) honors the past to shine a light on the future.—*Andrea K. Scott*



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PERFORMANCE

THE YEAR IN PERFORMANCE



"Weird Al" Yankovic performing at Pechanga Casino, Temecula, CA, September 16, 2022. Photo: Daniel Knighton/Getty Images.

CAN AN ARTIST HIT THE JUGULAR while they're reaching for the wallet at the same time? Only if the wallet and the jugular are the same thing. In the cultural devolution of "audience" to "eyeballs," perhaps no genre has so loudly insisted on its robust resistance to power as comedy—and perhaps no genre's complicity has, since 2017, been made more transparent. (Let the rise of Joe Rogan be citation enough here.) To borrow a one-liner from Morgan Bassichis's brilliant solo performance *Questions to Ask Beforehand* (Bridget Donahue), "What stage of capitalism is it called when everyone's a comedian?" In a 1982 interview with the French filmmakers Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub—who might be most expediently contextualized here as *not comedians*—Straub notes:

During the whole Nazi time in Germany, they had a lot of satire. It is kind of important [that] when people are no longer able to rebel or to change what happens or, to use a bad word, influence politics or history, they begin to make satires.*

Cool kids always manage to end up in the pocket of authority—bad boys become good old boys, one way or another.

1

Although "**Weird Al**" Yankovic's spoofs have been gracing the airwaves since the Ford administration, for the two hours of his sublime "**The Unfortunate Return of the Ridiculously Self-Indulgent Ill-Advised Vanity Tour**," he sang not his beloved parodies but his originals—lesser-known genre send-ups that are sometimes surprisingly twisted and ferocious. (Imagine if Dennis Cooper had grown up taking accordion lessons and revering Dr. Demento.) Example: a James Taylor-esque ditty titled "Good Old Days," in which Yankovic sings as a psychopath nostalgic for his youth:

Do you remember sweet Michelle?
 She was my high school romance
 She was fun to talk to and nice to smell
 So I took her to the homecoming dance

Then I tied her to a chair and I shaved off all her hair
And I left her in the desert all alone
Well, sometimes in my dreams I can still hear the screams
Oh, I wonder if she ever made it home

While I was struggling to precisely articulate the cultural necessity of Yankovic's oddball genius, an artist friend happened to send me a quote from Mike Kelley that Dodie Bellamy borrowed for the epigraph to her 2015 book, *When the Sick Rule the World*: "What I dislike about a lot of contemporary artists," Kelley said, "is that they want to be hipsters. They're not willing to be the fools." Cool kids always manage to end up in the pocket of authority—bad boys become good old boys, one way or another. The uncool remain defiant.



Christopher Wheeldon, *MJ*, 2022. Rehearsal view, Neil Simon Theatre, New York, January 25, 2022. Michael Jackson (Myles Frost). Photo: Matthew Murphy.

2

As the star of the unsettlingly glorious *MJ: The Musical* (Neil Simon Theatre), Myles Frost was not at all a parody but rather a study in *pure* imitation, an embodiment at once canny and uncanny of the King of Pop. Celebrity-on-celebrity biopics jam too much face into a face, so it makes sense that an unknown actor was needed to channel, and to diffuse, one of the world's most recognizable stars. A jukebox musical can't untangle Jackson's complexity—his extraordinary talent, his unrelenting work ethic, his serial sexual abuse of young boys—and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage, who wrote the show's book, sets its story on the eve of the *Dangerous* tour, before the accusations were made public. *MJ* seeks absolution, mostly for itself, asking audiences to return to a time that precedes the need to forgive or forget. As per legendary producer Quincy Jones's command to Jackson to "serve the song," we might well hear Nottage's note to self—or the Jackson estate's note to her and to the show's choreographer, Christopher Wheeldon. Immersed in songs so extraordinary, I wanted a form that could rise to the occasion of telling the whole story.



View of “**Attention Line**,” 2022, Artists Space, New York. Photo: Filip Wolak.

3

The riotous and reinvigorating exhibition “**Attention Line**” (organized by Artists Space and Andrew Lampert) celebrated a motley selection of performers, artists, filmmakers, and writers who have modeled modes of resistance—to power, to capital, to any and all systems that dull art into decoration for wealthy walls. There was no better balm than this show for that queasy feeling New York audiences have been whispering about for a few years now: that America’s descent into fascism has largely gone unacknowledged (formally and otherwise) in culture; that in theaters and galleries and museums, work looks suspiciously business-as-usual. From Johanna Went’s and Tom Murrin’s “trash” theatrics to Circus Amok’s spectacularly queer pageantry; from Vaginal Davis’s outing of the erotics in American violence and the violence in American erotics to Ed Bernal’s deployment of satire as a Trojan horse for information otherwise suppressed in the media, these histories offer much needed lessons in forward thinking.



Machine Dazzle self-portrait, The MAC, Belfast, 2016.

4

The great fashion editor Diana Vreeland once declared that “the eye has to travel,” and the exhibition **“Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle” (Museum of Arts and Design, through February 19)** would have given hers a run for its money. Since the late ’90s, the virtuoso artist-designer Matthew Flower (aka Machine Dazzle) has made his way as the great couturier for the downtown club and cabaret scenes, dressing the likes of performers Justin Vivian Bond and Taylor Mac. Flower transforms the stuff of the world—bullets, cellophane, Ping-Pong balls, cassette tapes, potato-chip bags, pages from gay porn mags—into sumptuous, sculptural, logic-defying garments that look like they could have been made by Charles James if he’d costumed the Cockettes. The show gives the richness of Flower’s imagination, and his seemingly endless powers of invention, center stage at last. His greatest model is himself, for in his creations, artist and artwork become one.



Rosalía with performers and audience members, Radio City Music Hall, New York, September 19 and 20, 2022. Photo: Sasha Frere-Jones.

5

Rosalía's *Motomami* tour (Radio City Music Hall) made a spectacle not only of the mesmerizing singer-songwriter, but of her devoted fans. The video screens behind her onstage were vertically oriented for maximum iPhone-friendliness and periodically projected footage broadcast from cameras brandished by her dancers. The woman sitting in front of me spent most of the show with her phone camera turned on herself, watching herself lip-sync to the songs (nearly flawlessly, it must be said). I admit that I had been momentarily mesmerized by her performance—hovering as it was somewhere between the present tense and fantasy time—when I looked up and saw onstage a group of friends who had been sitting two rows ahead of me now dancing and singing behind Rosalía herself. I'd been so distracted by the show, and by the videos of the show in the show, and by the woman recording her own show while watching the live show, that I hadn't noticed the four of them had gone. Who was having the most fun? They all beamed, beatific from the

attention they'd claimed for themselves, but only those who'd been onstage received wild applause as they strutted back down the aisle to their seats after the number was over.



Kate Valk, *Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me*, 2022. Rehearsal view, the Performing Garage, New York, September 15, 2022. Eric Berryman. Photo: Marika Kent.

6

In oral traditions, a storyteller is given license to put something of themselves into the tale that's passing through them. ***Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me (Performing Garage)*** is performer Eric Berryman's interpretation of select toasts recorded for an album of the same title, released by Rounder Records in 1976. Toasts are lyrical narrative poems that Black American men—historically those of the working class—learned from, and performed for, one another. As the evening's magnetic emcee, Berryman recited a few, sometimes ventriloquizing his own voice, mouthing into a microphone while his prerecorded self sneaked through the speakers and perforated the present tense. Toasts

often spun bawdy, insurgent yarns about tricksters, pimps, and criminals, all having the last laugh. One of the best-known toasts, “Titanic,” tells the story of Shine, a fictional Black man who served on the doomed passenger liner. As he swims to safety, rich white people beg him to save them: “Shine, Shine, you save poor me, / I make you as rich as a shine can be” (to quote a version from the book of toasts that shares the same title as the LP) The show’s title is Shine’s response—sensible advice to anyone on a sinking ship.



Gisèle Vienne, *Crowd*, 2022. Performance view, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, October 13, 2022. Photo: Maria Baranova.

7

Gisèle Vienne’s exquisite, spectral *Crowd* (Brooklyn Academy of Music in association with French Institute Alliance Française’s Crossing the Line Festival) seemed to thicken the theater’s air, her fifteen dancers moving in slow motion, either caught in a delirium or suspended in those moments just before a near-fatal accident when time winds down and the details of the world become unnervingly vivid. With house and techno music thumping

overhead and thick brown dirt underfoot, Vienne's characters gather for an outdoor rave, losing themselves in the music—almost. Darkness looms, blood runs. Some of them fight, others flirt. All are speechless, immersed in their own murky stories. Although the piece debuted in 2017, here in 2022 it felt like watching the living rise again.

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Ken Rus Schmoll, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, 2022. Performance view, Lucille Lortel Theatre, New York, September 16, 2022. David Greenspan. Photo: Steven Pisano.

8

David Greenspan's solo performance of Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*

(Doxsee at Target Margin Theater) made music out of the author's libretto with no instrument but himself. A master craftsman, Greenspan luxuriated in Stein's voluminous language, hitting each of her syllables with lightning precision, giving voice to all the saints (there are sixty-six of them) and all the Steins, too. He became by turns Stein of the *Krazy Kat* comics, who impishly delights in the nerdiest wordplay ("parti-color," "reading read read readily"), and Stein the Insufferable, who repeats and repeats and repeats herself as though we haven't heard her already. He was Stein of the Eternal Swoon, ever singing her love for Alice B. Toklas in some covert register or other ("Saint Therese," the name most often spoken in the text, was one of Stein's pet names for Toklas), and he was Stonewalling Modernist Stein, the sheer textual mass of whom rebuffs those seeking absolution in "plot," "character," and "meaning." (As Roland Barthes pointed out long ago, meaning makes a thing less dangerous to its beholders.) She remains our great writer of theatrical time, her feral rhythms demanding no clock save that of the performer's mouth, so when Greenspan decided Stein's time was up, he shut his, and she and her canon disappeared into the ether while the rest of us, left behind here in the twenty-first century, mindlessly checked our phones for missed messages.



Mette Edvardson, *No Title*, 2014. Performance view, Amant, New York, April 20, 2022. Mette Edvardson. Photo: Whitney Browne.

9

Part of the delight of a vanishing act is that it reverses a basic theatrical promise: that something of this world will materialize before the audience. **Mette Edvardson's *No Title (Compendio Series at Amant)*** was a *now you see it, now you don't* that conjured thought-images of people and places and things—and then just as deftly took it all away. Alone on a stage that was bare except for a pair of old sneakers, Edvardson, eyes closed, quietly began a strange soliloquy—“The beginning—is gone / the space is empty—and gone / the prompter has turned off his reading lamp—and gone”—as though she were walking us through a memory palace she'd drawn, in the spirit of Borges's cartographer, atop the very theater in which we sat. Starting at its own ending, the piece unfolded and swallowed itself simultaneously. *Gone* was the simple magic word that made past tense out of the space's present nothingness and finally—a slender ray of hope?—out of nothingness itself.



2022. Performance view, New York Live Arts, **Yvonne Rainer, *Hellzapoppin': What about the bees?***, : Maria Baranova. October 5, 2022. Photo: M

10

And then **Yvonne Rainer** announced that ***Hellzapoppin': What about the bees?*** (New York Live Arts, copresented with Performa) would be her last dance. She has never been a mincer—not on her feet, and not of words—so where others expressed their doubts that this was true, I believed her, or believed at the very least that “last dance” was the driving spirit of the piece. She began the evening by screening her dynamic 2002 video *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan: Hybrid*, which collages footage of Mikhail Baryshnikov and other members of his White Oak Dance Project rehearsing and performing a dance by Rainer together with sentences stripped from texts by Adolf Loos, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and others. After a brief intermission began *Hellzapoppin'*, made in part of moves that preceded Rainer: the Lindy Hop from the titular 1941 film; the antics of Laurel and Hardy and and of the boys in Jean Vigo’s *Zero for Conduct* (1933); and the dances of Jerome

Robbins and Michel Fokine. Throughout, performer David Thomson spoke in voice-over as Rainer's alter ego Apollo Musagetes on the subject of racism in America, quoting James Baldwin, Terrance Hayes, Tracy Morgan, and others. Rainer outed herself decades ago as a "permanent recovering racist," which is a very white-person thing to do. And yet racism is most often spoken about by white people as though it were something outside ourselves, most of us preferring to work from the assumption that we ourselves are not racist, rather than from the knowledge that we are. Knowing this much: Were we watching homage or appropriation? Is quotation proof of wisdom or merely of erudition? What is in fact produced when people become sites, channels, or mere receptacles for the ideas of others? Presenting bodies and politics, minds and mouths in various temporalities and distances from one another, Rainer, whose raucous 1964 *No Manifesto* declared

No to the heroic.

No to the anti-heroic

and

No to moving or being moved,

ended these unresolved dance-thoughts—punctuated her life's work—with a line borrowed from James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

and yes I said yes I will Yes.

And yes, I was moved, and said yes to being moved, just as I had said yes to being in the audience for so many years for this artist who, finally, offered so much to say both no and yes to.

* *Wedge: An Aesthetic Inquiry*, Summer 1982, 26.

Jennifer Krasinski is a writer, a critic, and the digital editorial director of Artforum.

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THE MOST DRESSED

Art, Fashion And a Bunch Of Parties

By DENNY LEE

What happens when New York Fashion Week collides with the Armory Show and the fall art season? Lots of parties, of course.

Three big museum openings took place on Sept. 8, including the Wolfgang Tillmans retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. Nearby, the Museum of Arts and Design celebrated the costume designer Machine Dazzle; the bohemian crowd took the exhibit's queer maximalist theme to new heights. And David LaChapelle celebrated his first major solo exhibition in North America at Fotografiska.

On Monday, LaQuan Smith held an after-party at the Blond. It was a more intimate affair than his previous blowouts, with Madonna, Lourdes Leon and Diplo showing their support.



The artist Tabboo! at the Museum of Arts and Design.



'I wanted to dress for the occasion, but also not overdress.' WOLFGANG TILLMANS

Peter Wright at the Museum of Arts and Design.



Wolfgang Tillmans at the opening of his MoMA show.



Ty Cole, left, and Armistead Chandler at the Blond.



LaQuan Smith, center, at his party at the Blond.



Narasha Cannon at the Blond.

'It's a jacket that was designed for me by artist Scooter LaForge. I felt it was in the Machine Dazzle spirit.' MICHAEL MUSTO



Barbara Tober at the Museum of Arts and Design.



Machine Dazzle, center, and the Dazzle Dancers at the Museum of Arts and Design.



Emmanuel Ohunkwa at MoMA.

'I dressed for David. I felt it was very LaChapelle colorful, stylish, wacky, fun and individualistic.' SUSANNE BARSCHE

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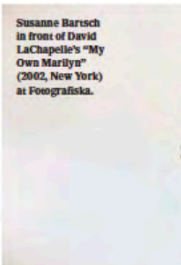
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Michael Musto at the Museum of Arts and Design.



Susanne Barsch in front of David LaChapelle's "My Own Marilyn" (2002, New York) at Fotografiska.



Prinska, in a unikat of his own design, at Fotografiska.



Taylor Mac at the Museum of Arts and Design.

DOLLY BABYBOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN. ULTIMATE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. MADONNA, TY COLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA SNEYD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) PHOTOFEST

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA SNEYD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) PHOTOFEST

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THE NEW SEASON
Art Listings

FROM PRECEDING PAGE
 Nov. 17-July 16; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

DAVID CLAEBOUW: THE CLOSE A Belgian artist's video tour through the past and future of photography, using amateur footage from around 1930 and the latest technology in 3-D rendering.

Nov. 18-Jan. 8; Milwaukee Art Museum

ROBERT MOTHERWELL DRAWING: AS FAST AS THE MIND ITSELF An enormous variety of spatters, lines and other marks appear in a comprehensive show of drawings by this restless and relentless Abstract Expressionist.

Nov. 18-March 12; Menil

Collection, Houston

NICK CAVE: FORTHERMORE A full-scale retrospective for the Missouri-born sculptor and textile artist best known for the beautiful oversize costumes he calls "soundsuits."

Nov. 18-April 10; Guggenheim Museum

MOHR FARMA NFRMAAN: A MIRROR GARDEN Sculptures, textiles and collages by an Iranian artist (1922-2019) who used cut glass to synthesize Iranian geometry with Western hard-edge abstraction.

Nov. 18-April 9; High Museum of Art, Atlanta

JACK WHITTEN Loans from private



Émile Bouisieu's "Shells" (1792-95) will be part of show at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass., focusing on 18th-century French drawings.



Robert Motherwell's "Lyric Suite" (1965) will be part of a show of his drawings at the Menil Collection in Houston.

collectors and institutions offer a glimpse of Whitten's little-known "Greek Alphabet" series from the mid-1970s — black and white paintings in which experiments with unusual tools and marks replace his earlier expressive gestures.

Nov. 18-July 10; Dia Beacon

SAMUEL FOSSO: AFFIRMATIVE ACTS Starting as a commercial photographer in Bangui, Central African Republic, Fosso became one of the most widely known African photographers of his generation; this is his first American museum show.

Nov. 19-Jan. 29; Princeton University Art Museum

A SPLENDID LAND: PAINTINGS FROM ROYAL UDAIPUR This exhibition of lavish 18th-century paintings from northwest India celebrates

the centennial of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art.

Nov. 19-May 14; National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington

FORECAST FORM: ART IN THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA, 1990S-TODAY A wholesale reconsideration of Caribbean art, with an emphasis on movement and dispersion.

Nov. 19-April 23; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

THE LANGUAGE OF BEAUTY IN AFRICAN ART More than 250 sculptures from all over the continent are assembled to ask, "How has African art been evaluated — and by whom?"

Nov. 20-Feb. 27; Art Institute of Chicago

COMING ATTRACTIONS: THE JOHN

WATERS COLLECTION Catherine Opie and Jack Pierson curate a selection — with works by artists from Arbus to Warhol, not to mention Betsy the Chimpanzee — from Waters's enormous recent bequest.

Nov. 20-April 16; Baltimore Museum of Art

DARREL ELLIS: REGENERATION Haunting paintings and family photographs by a New York artist who died of AIDS in 1992, at age 33; traveling to the Bronx Museum of the Arts next year.

Nov. 23-April 23; Baltimore Museum of Art

LIVES OF THE GODS: DIVINITY IN MAYA ART Painted ceramics and sculpted jade from the first millennium C.E. depict Mayan gods in childhood, adulthood and old age.

Nov. 21-April 2; Metropolitan Museum of Art

NO EXISTE UN MUNDO POSHUBA CÁN: PUERTO RICAN ART IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE MARIA Since Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, Puerto Rican artists — 15 of whom are represented here — have been sorting through the damage.

Nov. 23-April 23; Whitney Museum

NADA MIAMI The nonprofit, member-based New Art Dealers Alliance returns to the Miami fair scene with its signature mix of youth and enthusiasm.

Nov. 30-Dec. 3

DECEMBER

ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH Of the more than 700 galleries expected to descend on Miami Beach this year, some will travel from as far as São Paulo or Taipei, others from just down the street.

Dec. 1-3

ANIMATED ADVERTISING: 200 YEARS OF PREMIUMS, PROMOS AND POP-UPS A distinctive exhibition of constructed paper ads from the collection of Ellen G. K. Rubin at the Grolier Club in Manhattan.

Dec. 1-Feb. 11; the Grolier Club

DECONSTRUCTING POWER: W.E.B. DU BOIS AT THE 1900 WORLD'S FAIR Juxtaposing data visualizations made by Du Bois and his students with manufactured and decorative objects also displayed at the 1900 World's Fair to unravel the complicated politics, and inequities, behind ideas of "progress."

Dec. 9-May 29; Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

PROMENADES ON PAPER: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DRAWINGS FROM THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE Albums, sketchbooks and optical devices from a time and place where drawing was still the pre-eminent scientific tool.

Dec. 17-March 12; Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.

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MUSEUM SHOP CAFE

Machine Dazzle shows off some of his creations as the Museum of Arts and Design opens an exhibit of his work.

WHEN 'OVER THE TOP' IS JUST A START

Museum of Arts & Design presents wild costumes of Machine Dazzle

BY MURI ASSUNÇÃO
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

It's wild, it's dazzling, it's queer and it's coming to Midtown.

A exhibit, opening Saturday and running through Feb. 19 at the Museum of Arts and Design, celebrates award-winning costume designer and genre-defying artist Matthew Flower, better known as Machine Dazzle.

"Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle," the first solo exhibition dedicated to the artist, occupies two floors of the museum with an explosive, sexy and over-the-top look at his career. It features more than 80 of Machine's OMG-inducing creations for the stage, street events and performance art, along with photography, archival video, material samples and audio.

Visitors will see costumes he created for himself and his long-time collaborator Taylor Mac for the critically acclaimed 2016 show "A 24-Decade History of Popular Music;" a wig made out of dozens of pink layer cakes with a fork stuck on top of them; a dress made out of hundreds of eggs painted in white, red and purple; a

video of the performance group The Dazzle Dancers dancing to "The Love Boat" that ends with everyone naked; and a song about the artist with lyrics like "she is an American homo-sexual, homo-sexual, and she does it very well!"

"It's a very gay, wiggle-your-feet kind of song," Machine, who's 49, told the Daily News. "It's really quirky and strange" — words that can also describe the show chronicling the metamorphosis of Flower into the queer experimental theater artist Machine Dazzle.

Born in 1972 in Upper Darby, Pa., just outside Philadelphia, the artist spent his "formative years" in the suburbs of Houston, Texas, before moving with his family to southeast Idaho and then to Colorado.

At 19, he came out to his "pretty conservative" parents, though the disclosure didn't necessarily shock anyone. "They totally knew I was gay," he said. "Oh, my God! Gay as a unicorn cupcake with rainbow filling, honey! In high heels — and you know there's glitter on there."

After being introduced to — and falling in love with — the campy excesses of the 1980 Olivia Newton-John roller-skating

musical extravaganza "Xanadu" as an 8-year-old boy, Machine knew where his life was headed.

In 1994 he moved to New York City, where he would gain his "real formative" education by going to places such as the punk rock haven CBGB on the Bowery; Tuesday night's legendary Meatpacking District party Jackie 60; and Exit Art, a nonprofit cultural center where Machine ended up working.

Machine's colorful, extravagant and inventive work fits well at the Museum of Arts and Design, whose mission is to "support artists working in underrepresented craft and design media in creative contexts ... and to reimagine traditional techniques and perceived definitions of what art can be," the exhibition's curator, Elissa Auther, told The News.

Auther, who's also MAD's deputy director of curatorial affairs, noted the importance of highlighting a "new generation of artists who comfortably cross over between categories of art and design and craft with distinctive forms of handmaking."

A lot of those artists are queer, she

said, adding that Machine uses his maximalist style as a form of visual politics tying "queer visibility into a renewed critique of the sex and gender binary" by countering prejudices and defying gender expectations.

Machine's work has been recognized with a Bessie Award for outstanding visual design, and an American Theater Wing's Henry Hewes design award — both for "24-Decade History;" a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Earlier this year, his work for "The Hang" was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for best costumes for a musical.

For more than 30 years, the self-taught designer with a penchant for impossible headpieces and jaw-dropping combinations of shapes, colors and textures has used unconventional materials — including ping pong balls, Slinkys, soup cans, holiday lights, pipe insulation and toy soldiers — in his work.

"I love when I resonate with something that is a found object, or something that is secondhand [and] when I can repurpose something and transform it into something else," Machine said.

BARRY WILLIAMS FOR NEW YORK DAILY NEWS