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2016 TOP TENS
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CARMEN HERRERA
TAOS SPOTLIGHT
DESERT X

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"MARSHALLTOWN SCHOOL, MANNINGTON, NEW JERSEY," 2008, **Wendel White**
ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT 13" X 20" PHOTO: COURTESY PHOTO-EYE BOOKSTORE + PROJECT SPACE

This body of work spun off from one of White's long-running artistic projects. In the 1980s, he began documenting endangered, all-black communities in southern New Jersey. These neighborhoods on the Northern edge of the Mason-Dixon line served as havens of education and industry for African Americans in the 19th and early 20th centuries. His images, audio and video recordings, and writings furnish the immersive digital exhibition "Small Towns, Black Lives," which debuted in 1995 and was updated in 2003. In his current exhibition "Schools for the Colored," White extends his stomping grounds across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. His subjects are structures (or in some cases, empty plots) that once housed segregated black schools. The artist takes photographs of the various sites then digitally pastes a semi-translucent white screen over each of his images, leaving only the schoolhouses and nearby telephone poles unobscured. Buildings that no longer exist appear as crisp black shadows or ghostly white silhouettes, their outlines reconstructed through historic photographs and White's imagination.

The breadth of White's project is impressive: he captured the images from 2004 to 2010, and from 50 different towns. The structures he discovered are diverse, ranging from one-room houses to two-story brick buildings with steeples. They are symbols of the larger communities they inhabit, which acted as sanctuaries for a persecuted people—and are now rapidly changing. The fog that encircles them is a clear border, demarcating the schools as shelters but also rendering their surroundings inaccessible and potentially hostile. As a fastidious artist-historian, White renders visible the weave of Dubois' veil, and challenges his viewers to sense its enduring presence in the contemporary world.

—JORDAN EDDY

BOISE, ID
Stephanie Wilde: "Paramnesia"
at Stewart Gallery

For over 30 years, Boise artist Stephanie Wilde has focused her paintings on a range of societal issues, from the AIDS epidemic to indictments of corporate greed and the gap between rich and poor. Self-indulgence, arrogance, prejudice and environmental denial are frequent targets. Her informed blend of mythology, symbology and cultural history, so enticingly rendered in acrylic, ink and gold leaf, belies the moral outrage within. For despite appearances, this is an art of cultural despair. Wilde's current exhibit is comprised of nine large works in two parts. Four of the pieces are an introduction to what is projected to be an extended series titled *Murder of the Crows*. Five are from another series, *The Golden Bees*. We have, in essence, a double entendre, simultaneously addressing environmental and political issues seen through Wilde's critical eyes.

Paramnesia is a disorder of the memory, which is the central theme of *Crows*. Historically, large flocks of these noisy, mischievous birds were seen as symbolizing a herd mentality that is the antithesis of independent thought and judgment. It is the collective loss of memory of past consequences, recurring periods of intellectual poverty that have relevance to our own time. Wilde's quotes from Greek and Egyptian mythology are the personifications of her worldview with three Greek goddesses representing female consciousness and mother earth, entities under assault. *Daphne II*, *Cassandra II* and *Ophelia* are sister metaphors for the cause and effect of paramnesia in terms of mankind's refusal to take the environmental crisis seriously, perennially dismissing the warnings of scientists,

"CASSANDRA II," 2016, **Stephanie Wilde**
INK, ACRYLIC AND GOLD LEAF, 26" X 38"
PHOTO: COURTESY STEWART GALLERY

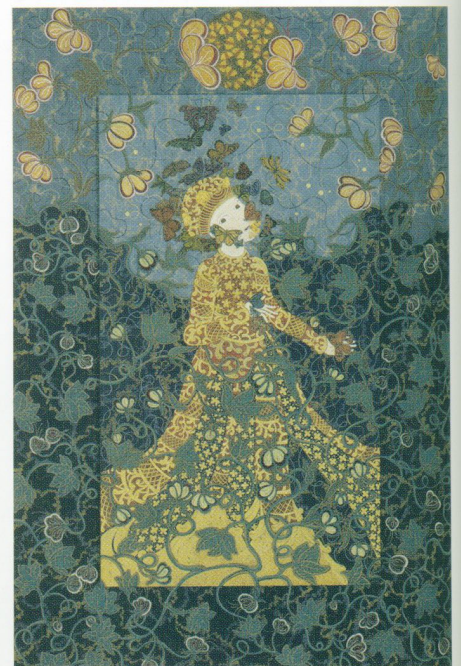
educators and intellectuals generally as the rantings of self-styled elites.

Although the center of attention, these figures have stylized, wan countenances suggesting calm resignation. Their demeanor reinforces their symbolic and metaphoric rather than individual attributes. Enveloping and consuming the subjects are elaborate tapestries of entwined leaves, flowers and vines that have particular relevance for each. *Tears of Ra* is a work that segues into *Golden Bees*. Ra was the Egyptian sun god, who is portrayed here weeping tears of bees in accordance with the belief that they bring messages to man. Implicating the potential extinction of the Western honey bee, along with its unique role in our ecosystem, Wilde has given them an iconic status, particularly in *Queens*, *Drones*, and *Workers* and on the hexagonal black plaques with emblematic victims in gold leaf. Taken all together, it is an art of mourning.

—CHRISTOPHER SCHNOOR

CHICAGO
Diana Guerrero-Maciá:
"SLOW BLOSSOMING"
at Carrie Secrist Gallery

Veteran textile artist Diana Guerrero-Maciá's abstracted, hard-edged works are as much about the geometry of quilting as they are about the aesthetics of Constructivism. In "SLOW BLOSSOMING," Guerrero-Maciá creates a gallery-wide installation of unstretched tapestries, functional objects and even a pair of custom drum kits. Some of the Chicago-based artist's large-scale, grommeted wall pieces are hung with their bottom edge grazing the floor, while others are installed almost touching the ceiling. This simple departure from the typical, eye-level hanging of painting reinforces these works' affinity with banners and signage, prompting the viewer to look for the content within Guerrero-Maciá's formalism. However, none of that content is blatant or didactic,





"SNOWTHING AT NIGHT," 2015, **Diana Guerrero-Maciá**
 WOOL, COTTON, BELGIAN LINEN, DYE, ARMY BLANKETS, AND BLEACH ON COMMANDO CLOTH, 72" x 108"
 PHOTO: COURTESY CARRIE SECRIST GALLERY

and Guerrero-Maciá's subtle messages range from social issues to art historical critique. In a pair of pieces, *Snowthing at Night* and *Snowthing, The Other Unicorn* (both 2015), a simply stylized snowman occupies the center of each composition. While bits of bold, primary colors are peppered throughout these pieces (and many others on display here), the prevailing palette is neutral, with many works nodding toward the monochrome. With this reference to a specific era of Modernism, we can see by contrast how the medium of textile can be almost radical. Guerrero-Maciá's hand-sewn process is warm, domestic and undeniably gendered. Her material, along with the kitsch hearts, rainbows, targets and stars floating amongst the rectilinear forms of her banners, flies in the face of the cool, macho heroism of Minimalism.

The social issues of Guerrero-Maciá's works are not so much gleaned from the signs and symbols of her artworks as they are felt through the overall environment she has created in the gallery. This exhibition is intended as a contemporary take on the notion of the salon—a haven of aesthetics, dialogue and camaraderie. In "SLOW BLOSSOMING," Guerrero-Maciá diverts some emphasis from her own messages within her pieces, shifting the focus to the important social activity we are a part of within the space and amongst the art. With artist-designed seating and call-and-response percussion performances scheduled throughout the exhibition's duration, visitors are encouraged to linger, perhaps even longer than they normally might. "SLOW BLOSSOMING" opened two days after Election Day 2016. As many of us attended the reception laden with fear and anxiety about the outcome, the gathering of our artistic community of liberals and outsiders suddenly felt much more important than it did in October.

—ROBIN DLUZEN

CHICAGO
Shai Azoulay: "Pupil"
at Zolla/Lieberman Gallery

Israeli artist Shai Azoulay paints strange and evocative vignettes that reveal a tender imagination and an empathy for the range of the human comedy that can be both amusing and revelatory. They seem one-offs at first, quick little allusive narratives—a man futilely chasing a wheel, two tightrope walkers about to run into one another as they cross paths above an infinite void, a man in an arid landscape dreaming of blue skies and green grass—that are painted with cursory but sufficient waves of the brush, as if too much attention would disturb the dreamy fragility of the mood they evoke. It's all a kind of lissome surrealism (would that be surreallissime?), a whisper of scenarios that touch on, in turn, universal states of being such as desire, fear, isolation, joy, confusion, social intercourse, and more.

Take, for example, *Pipe* (2016): about a dozen figures, described with great economy but still revealing gender and age, mill about the entry aperture of a large metal pipe, big enough for them to walk through standing up. Are they going to do so, and exit to our left, are they refugees or day-laborers entering Israel illegally, or is this tube—inexplicably here placed above ground—the tunnels Hamas builds to enter Israel for military operations? Azoulay depicts this scene as almost sylvan, he has a delicate but apt color sense and the pure painting of the pipe and nearby tree is, well, lovely. Or *Mingling* (2016), where 16 figures are presented in a rough circle in an interior space, gesturing toward and interacting with one another. Azoulay concretizes this by having orange/gold painted lines physically tie two or more individuals together, as if their encounter is a literal as well as social connec-

"PIPE," 2016, **Shai Azoulay**
 OIL ON CANVAS, 11" x 17"

PHOTO: COURTESY ZOLLA/LIEBERMAN GALLERY

tion, a true linking of individuals. Or *A Plan* (2016), where six tiny figures are swimming at the bottom of an enormous bowl of milk from which they cannot escape; whatever plan they concoct an exercise in futility that nonetheless shows optimistic gumption (the olive green, raspberry and orange palette here is terrific). These are warm images with just a touch of the askew, almost, within the processes of painting what Saul Steinberg was to the processes of illustration and cartooning—visual conundrums that nonetheless ring true. While sometimes Azoulay's interests drift to the life of his studio or odd, totemic studies of multiple heads, it's all a bit as if the *Jerusalem Post* met the illustrators from the *New Yorker*—no bad thing, that.

—JAMES YOOD

NEW YORK
Terry Winters
at Matthew Marks Gallery

For those who prefer their art leavened with critical theory, politics, irony or the like, there may be a temptation to dismiss Terry Winters' current show as eye candy, but, to paraphrase what Cézanne said about Monet, "My god, what eye candy!" Winters' brilliantly hued paintings in this show are a paean to color for color's sake. These 17 canvases ranging from easel size to over 10 feet wide show a genuine humility on the part of Winters, in allowing color to take the lead. As Winters admits in the press release for the show "... color is basically wild and full of surprises." The fact that there are many ravishing works here, and no duds, demonstrates Winters' full command of an intuitive approach to oil painting that is rarely seen in blue chip galleries.

Here as in previous exhibitions, Winters' compositional gambit, layers of organic patterns upon organic patterns, effectively frees up his hand in order to be in the moment. Playing with transparent media such as wax, lakes (dyes suspended in a semi-transparent base that gives the pigment bulk but no covering power), and resins allows him to leave breadcrumbs as to his decisions going from one layer to the next. In *Verdigris* (2014), green petal-shaped forms, some of them lined with red, float on an indigo background, which itself is covering yet another pattern underneath. The numerous layers create an indeterminate space that vibrates around the tensions created by the complementary red

