



Left: David Hammons, (left) *Fur Coat*, 2007, fur coat, paint, and dressmaker's dummy, 73 x 25 x 17 in.; and (right) *Untitled*, 2014, glass mirror, wood and plaster frame, and galvanized steel, 128.5 x 52 x 10 in. Below left: David Hammons, (left) *Untitled*, 2008–14, acrylic on canvas with plastic netting, 80 x 70 in.; and (right) *Untitled*, 1992, human hair, wire, Mylar, sledge hammer, plastic beads, string, and mixed media, dimensions variable. Below: Pablo Garcia Lopez, *Annunciation*, 2016. Silk, aquaresin, bandage, leather straps, and steel buckles, 46 x 23 x 8 in.



## BEACON, NEW YORK

### Pablo Garcia Lopez

#### Catalyst Gallery

Pablo Garcia Lopez is like a modern-day Bernini, sculpting baroque figures in cast natural silk, rather than marble, to create exquisite and contradictory sculptures. Exploiting the sensuousness of spun-silk, he sets that soft fleshiness against the sharp steel of surgical implements to shock and fascinate.

In *Wedding Cake with Pietà Topper*, Garcia Lopez uses band-saw blades with upright teeth to define the five tiers of the “cake,” which is topped by Michelangelo’s well-known image of Mary holding the body of Christ. Set at the center of this familiar group, surrounded by the graceful flow of cast silk, the presence of a vaginal speculum is particularly disjunctive, giving rise to multiple associations. Punk studs,

leather straps, and garter clips give the piece a sadomasochistic feel, playing Catholicism’s traditional negation of the body against the persistent search for the pleasure integral to the human condition. The entire piece is like an unexpected view into a hypothetical “life to come” after the wedding cake is cut. Even the mother and deceased son bring to mind images from current immigration sagas.

Garcia Lopez clearly delights in being the *artiste provocateur*, posing many more questions than answers. His complex narrative pieces are influenced by Baroque sculpture, which was deeply tied to the religious and sociopolitical currents of the time. In *Offering to Richard Dawkins*, Christ’s face is nearly obliterated by fragmented body parts and crisp Ionian capitals. Expressionistic, extruded foam swirls and

drips, like Pollock brushstrokes in sculptural form, put into question any sense of intelligent design, as if in alignment with Dawkins’ evolutionary biological thesis.

In *Annunciation*, the figure of the Virgin Mary is suspended in a della Robbia-like lunette. Long strands of silk flow, twist, and shine against the clouds of raw silk around the central figure. Among the angels on the lunette, there is not one “whole” face. Rather, there is a pervasive disintegration, a sense of presence and dissolution. In other sculptures, the face of St. Teresa of Ávila floats unencumbered by her body, her expression as ecstatic as in Bernini’s portrayal. The softer, more pliant silk takes on the appearance of faux marble in these tableaux, both absorbing and reflecting light.

The entire ménage of these baroque expressions is alive with the tension of contradictions: beauty contrasted with torment, refinement, and imminent disintegration; familiar forms from art history juxtaposed with what might be construed as implements of torture bringing to mind the Spanish Inquisition; persistent sensuality in the face of religious oppression. The silk—seductive, soft, translucent, and ephemeral yet strong—brings us into another realm within ourselves, where all is an open question. Isn’t this what art always attempts and rarely realizes? A journey into the unknown where even though the endpoint may be mysterious, the journey itself is worth the effort.

—B. Amore

## NEW YORK

### Cornelia Parker

#### Metropolitan Museum of Art

The big buzz surrounding Cornelia Parker’s *Transitional Object (Psycho Barn)* on the Met roof was well-deserved. The family-friendly art experience offered up visual clues in many directions. Though the Hitchcock film *Psycho* (1960) is in black and white, Parker’s scaled-down (three-quarters actual size), blood-red version of the Bates house had many of the same features, including the wagon-wheel wood scallops on the porch and an



LEFT: TOM POWELL IMAGING, INC., © DAVID HAMMONS, COURTESY MNUCHIN GALLERY / RIGHT: COURTESY THE ARTIST



oculus on the steeply sloped Mansard roof. Like its inspiration, Parker's object was only the *front* of a house. Behind its façade, steel supports dispelled the illusion of "home" and revealed the set; large water tanks served as ballast so that the work wouldn't blow off the roof.

The title, *Transitional Object (Psycho Barn)*, is significant on several fronts. Parker's house was made from a deconstructed 1920s Catskills barn, which was constructed with wood salvaged from three even older barns. Parker directed set designers in Long Island City, who disassembled the original barn and constructed the *Psycho* house from the wood and steel. Some wood was carefully bent in thin layers to create the eaves, curving window frames, and oculus frame. The wood's age, character, and paint color were not retouched or manipulated, but the corrugated steel barn roof was transformed into hexagonal roof tiles to catch sunlight. For Parker, who grew up on a small farm in England, red barns signify Dutch barns created first in Europe and later in New Amsterdam, or early America. So *Transitional Object* transformed a wholesome rural structure into the false front of a house where a mentally ill fictional character committed matricide, lived with his mother's corpse, and, finally, "turned into" his mother. Parker told me, in connection with the red of the house, "Europeans used rust mixed with animal blood and linseed oil to

paint barns." She observed that Edward Hopper liked to paint red barns, and that politicians often stump in front of red barns. She was also told that the Met was built on the site of a red barn. In all of these cases, the color red has associations with life and death, good and evil, and these paradoxes are psychoanalytical, literal, and figurative.

In terms of the "character" of the house, Parker mentioned the ego as being upstairs and the id below. This ties in with curator Beatrice Galilee's use of the Freudian term *das Unheimliche* or "the uncanny," which "can be better understood as the absence or opposite of *Heimlich*, the feeling of being at ease and comfort at home." Galilee sees the split personality of Norman Bates mirrored in the architecture: the Colonial porch, Dutch gables and rooflines, and what she terms "a hybrid of Victorian Gothic and French Revival" styles.

When Parker was pregnant, her penchant for scary mysteries drew her to buy the blue nightgown that the haunted, pregnant, knife-wielding Mia Farrow wears in *Rosemary's Baby*. Parker is also known for using steamrollers to flatten objects and

**Above:** Cornelia Parker, *Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)*, 2016. Installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. **Right:** Jessica Stockholder, *The Guests All Crowded Into the Dining Room*, 2016. Platform, deck, ramp, railing, and wire cable, installation view.

for blowing up or burning buildings and then suspending the remains on transparent wires. Even though she varies her installations, they often employ transformed objects or symbols. Considering that the Hitchcock film features a killer with a split personality and that psycho killers abound in American novels, films, Broadway plays, and life, one could argue that Norman Bates's persona abounds in America's psyche. While *Transitional Object* offered another instance of Parker's obsession with change/transition/dislocation, it also served as a metaphor for America. Parker is an avid Hitchcock fan, so it's easy to understand the conflation of universal metaphor, Freudian analysis of a national character, and compelling art object with a split personality.

—Jan Garden Castro

## NEW YORK

### Jessica Stockholder Mitchell-Innes & Nash

Though Jessica Stockholder is known for both freestanding sculptures and works that extend from the wall into space, she introduced an interactive component into her recent exhibition. Taking over almost half of a large gallery space, the title work, *The Guests All Crowded Into*

*the Dining Room*, fused aspects of sculpture and painting with an active experience of viewing. Biomorph shapes rendered in vibrant colors were transformed into a large stage and platform. Meanwhile, each viewer's individual engagement with the work helped to make it responsive to constant flux—Stockholder's sculptural rendition of an ephemeral moment. After entering the platform, one found a staircase leading to an elevated deck. Stockholder's drawings, grouped along adjacent walls at considerable height, came into view during the ascent. Comparatively small in scale, they required intimate viewing, which could only be achieved by traveling through the structure.

The show also included several of Stockholder's so-called "Assists," sculptures that must attach to something other than themselves, such as furniture, walls, or large appliances. Made from purchased and found materials, these works emphasize Stockholder as a gatherer and gleaner of fabricated fragments and everyday trivia. Here, furniture, plastic goods, hardware, linoleum, light bulbs, and paper were among the many eclectic ingredients. Despite her wide range of materials

