

801

# UNIVERSAL COLLORS

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL MIGRANT ARTISTS

# collage



## UNIVERSAL COLOURS



We are here continuing our voluntary work, we are here making service to our community, we are here believing that the future is more beautiful and better than the present, despite the fact that mainly politicians everywhere keep showing us that there is nothing better to come.

Just the other day the Finnish government cut-off all the financial support we got for almost 15 years and today the so-called international policies show us a world much colder and darker than yesterday. But we, the Artists, believe and hope that there is a future much-much better to what we can see now.

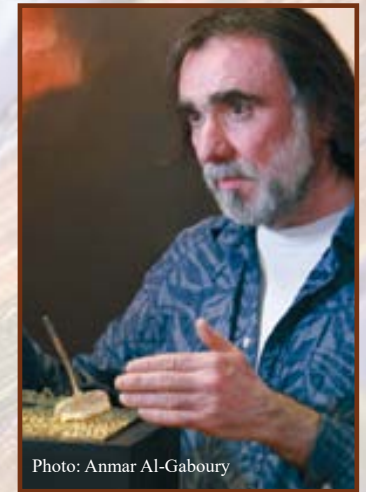


Photo: Anmar Al-Gaboury

That is why we continue our work. Last year we organized and successfully presented seven exhibitions in our EU-MAN Gallery and we published 3 issues of our beautiful, colourful and wanted magazine, the Universal Colours

We also arranged an exhibition in Cairo last December for some of our members. An exhibition that attracted a lot of media attention with two TV channels making it the focus art-news. Nile TV made an hour program, meeting the chairperson of the EU-MAN to talk about the organization in general, the Universal Colours and the host of the exhibition in particular.

Once I read a quote saying that a good book invites you to read it more than one time. So we will return to Cairo and we are going to arrange an exhibition for our members again in Cairo this year. I hope it will turn equally successful like last year and for this time we have thought for some additional activities.

As an active art group we agreed to continue, that's why we publish this wonderful, the most beautiful, and wanted magazine in full awareness. And we say once more that the future can be much better than the present.

**Amir Khatib**

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# ArtNews

If your art gallery or association has some art news or an event it wishes to promote in Universal Colours, then please



## Klemens Brosch

Till June 3, 2018  
Galerie Belvedere,  
Vienna

In a career of just sixteen years, Linz-based artist Klemens Brosch produced one thousand drawings, watercolours, prints, and paintings. Alongside Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Alfred Kubin, and Oskar Kokoschka, Brosch was one of Austria's greatest draughtsmen. This first major retrospective of the artist's work in Vienna will be staged at the Lower Belvedere.



## Scottish Modern Art 1900-1950

Till June 10, 2018 - Scottish National Gallery

The exhibition examines the most progressive work made by Scottish artists as they absorbed and responded to the great movements of European modern art. More than 100 paintings, sculptures and works on paper by over 50 artists are on display. The exhibition charts Scottish modernism from when JD Fergusson and SJ Peplow experienced at first-hand the radical new work produced in Paris by artists such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, to the turn of the 1950s, when emerging Scottish artists like Alan Davie, Doris Zinkeisen, William Gear, Margaret Mellis, and Eduardo Paolozzi were at the forefront of European contemporary art.



## Picasso Love, Fame, Tragedy

Till September 9, 2018  
Tate Modern  
London - UK

This is the first ever solo Pablo Picasso exhibition at Tate Modern. It will bring you face-to-face with more than 100 paintings, sculptures and drawings, mixed with family photographs and rare glimpses into his personal life.



## Stories of Finnish Art

Till December 31, 2020  
Ateneum Art Museum - Helsinki - Finland

If your art gallery or association has some art news or an event it wishes to promote in Universal Colours, then please

## Heidi Piironen:

The Invisibles – Story of a Beggar Family

Till May 20, 2018

Finnish Museum of Photography - Helsinki - Finland



Who are they? Where did they come from? What are they doing here? In 2007, unfamiliar people sat down on the streets in Helsinki and some other Finnish cities. People like these had not been seen in the Nordic periphery before. The newcomers were greeted with bewilderment, pity, questions – and what often comes out of facing the unknown – fear and hatred.

For ten years, photographer Heidi Piironen and journalist, author Kimmo Oksanen have been following the life of Romanian Mihaela Stoica and her family and siblings in Finland, Romania, Greece, Estonia and France.

Stoica came to Helsinki as a street beggar in 2007 from the village of Cetatea de Baltă, Romania. On her 17th birthday, in February 2008, she gave birth to her first child in Helsinki. Now she is a mother of three living in Helsinki. Mihaela herself has not been to any schools and cannot read or write. Her firstborn now goes to school in Finland. Is there hope for a better future for him?

Through the personal story of Mihaela, the exhibition deals with larger societal issues, Romania, Europe and the reception of Romanian beggars in Finland. With photographs and texts, Oksanen and Piironen dig into the reasons for street begging, the living conditions of families in Transylvania, and the phenomenon of Romanian people leaving their homes and becoming street beggars in Western Europe.



## The Emperor's Flowers

Till May 21, 2018

Gulbenkian

Lisbon - Portugal

Throughout the 16th century, Europe's extensive relations with the world reshaped its knowledge of nature. New products and previously unknown plant and animal species were brought to Europe from the West and East Indies. Seeds and bulbs of exotic flowers were brought from the Levant. Deeply admired for their beauty, these flowers attracted a growing amount of attention from botanists, who dedicated themselves to the study of both exotic and local flora. Cherished by curious laymen, scholars and aristocrats, flowers were given a privileged position in newly created gardens.



## Painting Collection

Art Museum of Estonia

The painting collection of the Art Museum of Estonia is based on several private collections, purchases by the government and numerous donations. A survey of the best of the painting collection from the 18th century onwards is provided by the museum's permanent exhibition in the Kumu building. The painting collection contains over 6,000 works of art, including well-known masterpieces from renowned artists, such as Johann Köler, a pioneer of Estonian painting, Ants Laikmaa, and the twin brothers Kristjan and Paul Raud, founders of Estonian art.





## Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg

June 16 - September 9, 2018  
Moderna Museet - Stockholm

Step into the dreamlike animated worlds of Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg, with objects, music and moving images, where playfully told fables hold both humour and darkness and override the moral laws of gravity.



Nathalie Djurberg's vibrant stop-motion animations and sculpture groups accompanied by Hans Berg's electronic music form scenic installations in a surrealist vein. These intense chamber pieces enact fragments of memories repressed between innocence and shame, or feverish daydreams of role play and desire. The shadowy landscapes, sealed rooms and harshly-lit scenes of their films are inhabited by a group of possessed figures seemingly intent on devouring one another. The exhibition describes an inner voyage, an attempt to make existence more understandable in a flow of impulses and impressions.



If your art gallery or association has some art news or an event it wishes to promote in Universal Colours, then please



## TREASURES OF A NATION

National Gallery  
of Iceland

In the collection of the National Gallery of Iceland there are over eleven thousand works of various kinds, from various countries and from various periods. In the exhibition Treasures of a Nation a fair selection of works from the collection displays the evolution of art in Iceland from the early nineteenth century to our times.



## Grayson Perry

Till September 2, 2018  
Kiasma, Helsinki - Finland


The exhibition will take a retrospective survey at the extensive output of British artist Grayson Perry, recipient of the 2003 Turner Prize. Known in Great Britain for his television shows, books and lectures, Perry observes the world through touching stories, the re-appraisal of gender roles and absurd humour. In his work Grayson Perry tackles subjects that are universally human: identity, gender, social status, sexuality, religion. He tries to deal with them in a way that is accessible and yet not patronising.

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## The Moving Museum



**T**he Moving Museum is a not-for-profit organisation that runs a nomadic programme of contemporary art exhibitions. It has held projects in Dubai, Istanbul, and London comprising large-scale exhibitions, artist residencies,[6] public programming, publishing, artwork commissions, and digital programming.

Artists are invited through a collaborative curatorial model composed of contributors from various disciplines and are included in diverse ways: as producers, collaborators, curators, and advisors. Over 50 new projects have been commissioned across a wide range of media[8] including works by Amalia Ulman, Broomberg and Chanarin, Clunie Reid, Hannah Perry, Hito Steyerl, Jeremy Deller, Jon Rafman, Jeremy Bailey, James Bridle, Michael Rakowitz, Tom Sachs, Ryan Gander, Mai-Thu Perret, Slavs and Tatars, Zach Blas, Ming Wong and Lucky PDF.

The Moving Museum is an independent and non-political organization founded by Aya Mousawi and Simon Sakhai in 2012; a registered Community Interest Company (CIC) in England and Wales; and a registered 501(c) Charity in the United States of America.

The Moving Museum is a nomadic incubator for artists, ideas and cities. It is a large-scale, immersive project that manifests in a new place every time. We:

Operate an agile and progressive organizational model, designed to be independent, cross-regional and site aware

Instigate the production of new work and ideas from urgent artistic voices

Provide artists inspiring developmental opportunities in unexpected spaces

Identify and inhabit cities at the epicenter of shifting contemporary culture



## Our Story So Far:

In our first three years, we have mobilized large-scale exhibitions that have taken over a combined 150,000 square feet of space across 10 venues in three countries, curated intensive public programmes alongside each project, published in-depth publications, hosted dynamic residencies, commissioned over 50 new artworks across all media, and developed a digital programme alongside four of the worlds most important internet artists.

We are an activator of thoughts and ideas, with the largest portion of our resources dedicated to the commissioning and production of new work. We don't just provide financial support for commissions, but work closely with artists to realize their projects from start to finish, grow a team of artist local assistants with a proactive approach that galvanizes artists and encourages experimentation.

We have a special commitment to inspiring, non-traditional projects that would not normally be realizable in a standard museum context. Commissioned projects have gone on to win international acclaim at the Venice Biennale (receiving the Golden Lion) and institutions such as Tate Modern and the Whitechapel Gallery.



*artist of the...*

## Reda Ebdelsalam

### The Egyptian artist and the passion to environmental fossils

By: Ali Najjar



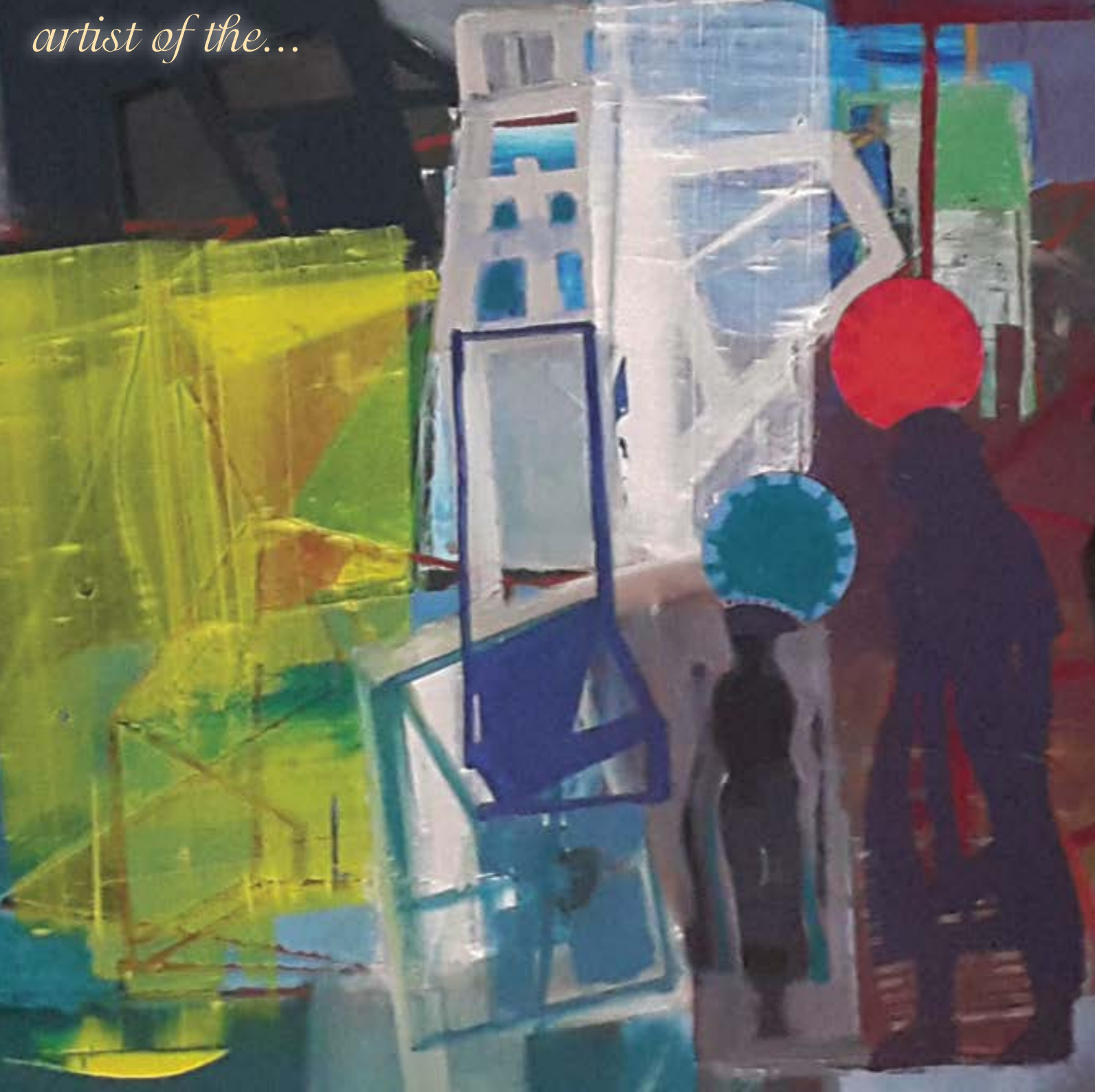
In the middle of the Egyptian art world, figurative in all directions, with references to the local environment and the tyranny of the Pharaonic and Fatimid heritage, the experience of Reda emerges among all well known modern experiences.

Reda, an academic, who combines design and photography, found himself involved in different modes of performance, and with crafty approaches making both of them a homogeneous recipe keeping their individual details. In the end his attitude comes in many of his visual works that overlap, collide and intersect all in chromatic gradients that are not without metaphysical approaches.

At the same time it does not lack ambiguity. What the artist aims is not to



*artist of the...*



highlight the importance of the method and the identification of signs or clear boundaries, but to describe it in the form of a monologue.

Intertwined stories as if they were one of the literary stories of a postmodern metaphor, free of the subject of the story itself, but full in the centrality of his illustrations, of the Egyptian newspapers known to overcome the connotations and hidden characters (heroes), subject, matter, story or event.

It seems that Reda is fond of his local and sometimes regional excavations. He digs the surface of his drawings in depth, a graphic digger, and almost all of his works is filled with mixed techniques and materials, such as pulp-paper. The paper is the trick, the poem, the story, the inherited heritage and the decree. The architecture of the paper in popular heritage is of talismans and talisman valid and this paper is a preliminary material for paste as well.

Although it is often painted, it is not a surface of adhesion, or even if it is, it does not mean that it does not hesitate to paste any preliminary material serving the place of its drawing, but here I talk to the drawing area with drawing materials from outside, if the color gradations are drawn within frames, they are often torn apart and many frames, some of which displace some and some break the boundaries

*artist of the...*



of others, in the sense that the creative concern exceeds the rotation in detail, as long as built and demolished to rebuild again until the end of creative work.

In the city of Cairo and in the district of Zamalek alone there are about fifteen showrooms, except for the rest of the known neighborhoods of Cairo, the halls of the government sector and the Association of artists and art associations, all this large number of halls indicates the capacity of plastic movement and vitality of the number. The actors of the old generation and the newer even the younger ones, and that our person is the general feature of modern Egyptian art, we are often, we find it employing the pharaonic historical root, especially as a local feature of the extent that has so far remained active in the Egyptian conscience. Such a legacy represents Egypt's inherited cultural characteristics, the most obvious of which is its indirect effects.

This artist who floats in his Pharaonic incubator, within a range of modernist artistic works of his predecessors, decided to devise a different path for himself. He did not like the features of his Pharaonic works to be updated, But he tried and is constantly trying to work on the diversity of literary sources, then implications of his works, political, and cultural donuts in general. This mixture, which is essentially counterfeit and formative, has been

*artist of the...*



transformed in the laboratory of this artist into drawings, posters, surfaces, lines and geometric shapes collected in one crucible. And not far from European pop art.

Reda first and finally the son of the Egyptian city, which is characterized by the density of its population and inherited the behavior of the local open to the other space arrogantly and in this sense, the artist tried to prove some of the visual illusions of a virtual social situation in parallel with the real analogies, so you examine his work and especially the wall of goodness do not execute To find a symbol or a reference to an event or a popular story is to be drawn on the media drawing to the extent that it has become sometimes the features of these drawings overlap with their stylistic formulations.

Since its beginnings experimentation that gives richness of color and intellectual paintings, although linked together intellectual link makes it an integrated world, combining geometric shapes and symbols Pharaonic and even folk art, and the remnants of souvenirs and children's games and brands, collect and reconfigure and may re-create it again On a white space to go with each line and color with a new emotional experience, discovering hundreds of possibilities and then choose the closest to his world and his mind boldly and without fear.

*artist of the...*

# UNIVERSAL COLOURS

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL MIGRANT ARTISTS



1997 - 2018

21 YEARS UNIVERSAL COLOURS



Finally, I believe that the writings and interventions of the artist continued monetary either in the composition or newspapers or direct through his presence in the intensive displays in the art halls, made out of him intellect social artist, his behaviour participated in increasing of his knowledge on all plastic art productions in the contemporary Egyptian art movement, that helped him the ability of implementations of his works and inspires him to continue in accord his career, and usually in deference of the nature of a lot of his associated artists.



Collage

# ART IS ART

By: Amir Khatib

When I was a little boy, I made all types of art. I was singing, drawing, acting and dancing, doing all types of art. When I grow up I notice that an artist can do all types of arts, but if some one concentrates on one and special type of art can get good results.

I have gone in a long journey in my life. I was an actor working as professional actor, making stage decoration for the plays, painter, installation artist and now I can say that I found myself on one type of art: "installation." My favourite art. The art that I love really to do. So since 1999 when I made the first installation I continue to work with this type of art, and I wish to not do something else, but some times life push me to do sculputures and paintings and write.

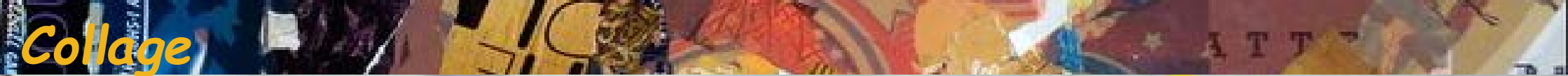


When I was in Iraq going with the students to the art academy in Baghdad, I was for a while interested in collage, it was very easy to me and to everybody to make that type of art, just cut and past on a piece of paper the figures that you mean to put, oh yeah, I found my type of art. So when I come home I take a lot of glow, paper, newspapers, magazines and of course scissors to cut the pictures and compose them the way I want to do.

I was very happy, and I thought that it is very easy to do many-many artworks of these type of collage art, I did show some of them to friends, they just say good it is beautiful, yes you can do it, but inside me was some great hesitation, because I was not convinced that these type of art is mine, I decide to show some teacher of design art, I took those pieces and made an appointment with that teacher, so we set and I start to show him "what I thought" artworks, fortunately he was a serious man, does not play with time as a lot of teachers do, he asked me in serious sound: do you think these are artworks?

I went as any disappointed person and I knew that this type of art is not mine, something else more got be more important and I can do something useful which might make some one enjoy to see or to receive, I was thinking by the teachers advises and I took the matter in a serious way, since then I did not do any type of collage art, I knew it is a great type of art and there is some artists who can make a joyful piece of art out of what I was thinking a game





Collage

# THE ART OF COLLAGE

Today, fifty years after its first serious use, collage is a major art medium whose technique have expanded, range of materials immeasurably broadened, and its use become almost universal. Collage, together with its many off-shoots emerges today not only as a major medium, but as a germinative idea that, once planted, has pointed and even led to some of the most significant, as well as astonishing developments in the astonishing art of our time."

This quotation is from the book "Collage" by Janis and Blesch, published by Chilton in 1967. Actually, the first serious use of collage occurred in 1912.





When speaking of Collage, one refers to an art style, concept and technique closely bound up with the very beginnings of Modern Art and particularly with Cubism and Surrealism. Since the mainstream of Modern Art had its beginnings in France, the term Collage, as so many other art terms, is French, meaning that which is pasted together. Other related terms are: Assemblage, which is the three-dimensional or sculptural equivalent of Collage; Montage, which usually consists only of pictures or photos and Dérivage, when tearing rather than cutting is used.

All these terms signify the basic difference of collage from the medium of painting. A painting is created by the progressive addition of a universally uniform substance - paint, consisting of a basic raw material - a color pigment and a medium. A collage, on the other hand, is created by the progressive addition (or also subtraction) of an unlimited variety of already finished materials, substances and objects. The range of material for collage is truly unlimited and infinite, subject only to the limitations imposed by the individual artist's imagination and discrimination.

Among the various materials successfully used in collage have been: newspaper and magazines



(typographical as well as pictorial elements), wallpaper and other decorative papers as well as solid colored material such as construction and tissue paper, leaflets and posters, letters and post cards, all kinds of woven cloth (opaque as well as transparent), canvass (raw as well as primed and tinted), fragments of paintings, drawings and collages, all kinds of organic substances such as leaves, flower petals, bark, butterfly wings, sawdust, coffee grounds, potato peel as well as sand, string, etc., etc. The range is limitless.

Because of these limitless material possibilities, it becomes particularly essential for the collagist to be discriminating in choosing among this limitless array. The artist working in collage, to an even greater extent than the painter, must develop a keen sense of esthetics as the only true guide if collage is not to degenerate into mere decoration or a gaudy assembly of meaningless material. But used discriminately and judiciously, collage can be the means to go beyond the limits of painting and open up for the adventurous artist new fields of ever-expanding creativity.

It was this motivation - to explore Art beyond the limits of traditional painting - that the first experiments in collage as a serious creative medium took place. The time was the



great artistic revolution we call Modern Art which began at the turn of the 20th Century. It occurred mainly in Paris - but also in Germany, Russia and Italy and after World War II has continued in the United States. What happened in Europe at the beginning of the 20th Century was a revolution, when, within a few years, more radical and drastic changes took place in the Arts than in all the centuries preceding it. This sudden upheaval of artistic creativity was part of all the other revolutions occurring at about the same time in the fields of science, technology, medicine, economics, sociology and politics. The drastic and rapid changes in the Arts of this period must be considered related to everything else that was happening all around the artist. The artist, after all, does not live in some kind of isolated vacuum, but is part and parcel of the time, place and society in which he lives. His art cannot help but reflect - to some extent - the environment in which it is created.

Again, quoting from Janis and Blesch ("Collage"):

"Through his own sense of predicament, each artist expresses phases of the general condition. The greater artists add to the personal a more general view... Other artists particularly those with war experience, feel the sense of crisis and disaster

that is our prevailing climate. They, too, give us universal symbols of our time: wounds, fire, and death. Finally, there are those who go beyond the crisis, personal or universal, to seek escape. Some give us games or neo-romantic imaginings. Others are more venturesome, seek new circumstances offering safer, freer, more fruitful and satisfying lives. These men seek a new environment, a new world - even the outer galaxies that beckon to our time, as escape and as fresh start."

It is interesting to speculate on the coincidence of the explosion in the Arts which, with the advent of Cubism, Abstraction and Collage, literally blew apart traditional pictorial perspective, space and eventually all recognizable traces to reality just before World War I. Again, right in the midst of that War, in 1916, the style of "Dada", very consciously, meant to mock and shock the sensibilities of a society which could "sanctify an atrocious war". Surrealism, which followed Dada in the 1920's, destroyed the traditional "singular reality" of a painting and replaced it with a juxtaposition of several simultaneous but unrelated realities, creating thereby an uneasy unreality, or surrealism. For instance, the painting "Empire of Light" by Magritte (at the Museum of Modern Art) superimposes both night and day on an



otherwise peaceful street scene - evidently an impossible, unreal view of a real scene observed at the same time and place, except by a flight of fancy of the artist's imagination.

The view of a steady, orderly world in which diverse and contradictory scenes are in obvious sequence and order, became disjointed by the surrealist's and cubist's method of simultaneous presentation. Or as April Kingsley wrote on "The Collage Esthetic" in Art Forum:

"The Collage Esthetic recognizes multiplicity of form and content, duality, contradiction, juxtaposition, complexity. . . and expansion as the essential qualities of modern life and modern art."

The influence of Freud and the new concept of the subconscious and even irrational nature of man's mind added to the imagery and process of Surrealism. Not everything, the artist realized, is preconceived, conscious and predetermined. Much of creativity is brought forth out of the subconscious and by chance. This new realization found special application in Collage where the shaping of individual pieces and their placement upon the canvass is less self-conscious, perhaps even playful, than in painting or drawing.

The relationship between Cubism and Collage is based on form as well as concept - reality appearing to have

been “cut up” into new galaxies of fragments. Time, too, as in Surrealism seems to have been dislocated. A still life on a table, for instance, heretofore viewed and painted but from one single angle, is seen in Cubism from several angles simultaneously. It is as though a fourth dimension, the dimension of time, had been added to the traditional image, frozen in time as well as space. This new concept and relationship of time and space in art came at about the same time as Einstein’s new Theory of Relativity and the concept of the time - space continuum.

Thus, Cubism and Surrealism can be seen to have a direct bearing on Collage. Diverse, unrelated materials - made at different times and in different places (time-space) are brought together to interact simultaneously as for instance, in the work of Kurt Schwitters and Max Ernst.

Kurt Schwitters (often considered the father of collage) was one of the founders of the Dada movement and produced most of his collages in Germany in the 1920’s. He would collect the junk from waste baskets and streets - bits of newspaper, tickets, stamps, wrappings, picture post cards, etc. - all the flotsam and jetsam of a civilization’s discarded rubbish. From this “junk” (the French more delicately call it “objects trouvés” - found objects) Schwitters



created, his delicately balanced and often exquisite little collages. What Schwitters, in fact, did was to resurrect and endow with a new and, perhaps, even beautiful life, stuff which had been considered worthless. He demonstrated that beauty can be created out of most anything. Given a perceptive and sensitive eye, beauty can be perceived in the most mundane and unlikely places. Depending what we make of it, there may, in fact, be no such thing as “junk”. All things can be reused, recycled and, as can be seen, even elevated to Fine Art. It all appears to depend on a creative intelligence, perception and inventiveness.

Max Ernst, who together with Salvador Dali pioneered the Surrealist movement, was the first to cut up magazine engravings and reassemble the unrelated fragments to create collages of clever wit and non-sense. Bear in mind that the world the artist sees and reflects is not always a rational one. Historically, artists, whether painters, writers or composers, have often reflected upon the more non-sensical aspects of reality. One has but to think of the “absurd” world of Alice in Wonderland. The world the artist perceives is not as obvious as it may appear. It is full of unexplored and unexplained mysteries, incongruities, contradictions and seeming absurdities. The creative artist is not one to reflect and

repeat the obvious. The artist goes beyond all that which seems ordinary to create an art that must be extra-ordinary. Art - true art - has always been extra-ordinary.

Collage, from its very beginning, has been to a growing number of artists the means to transcend the ordinary and explore ever new possibilities beyond the limitations of painting. Picasso and Braque must have been motivated by that sort of spirit of pushing art beyond ordinary and accepted concepts and explore new creative expressions when they produced their first collages around 1912. Picasso questioned the very concept as to what constituted Fine Art when he pasted a piece of newspaper on a canvass and created, with some added color and a few lines, his cubistic "Man With A Hat".

Nothing can, indeed, be considered more worthless than a dated and discarded piece of newspaper. To incorporate it into a work of "Fine Art" was unheard of and a direct challenge to all accepted notions of "refinement and taste". As proof how attitudes change, Picasso's "Man With A Hat" is by now regarded as quite traditional and refined - in fact, a "priceless" museum piece. Picasso performed a similar feat of transformation in the field of sculpture - transforming and elevating a lowly piece of junk into the realm of



art by assembling (assemblage) two discarded bicycle parts - a seat and a handle bar - into the Head of A Bull.

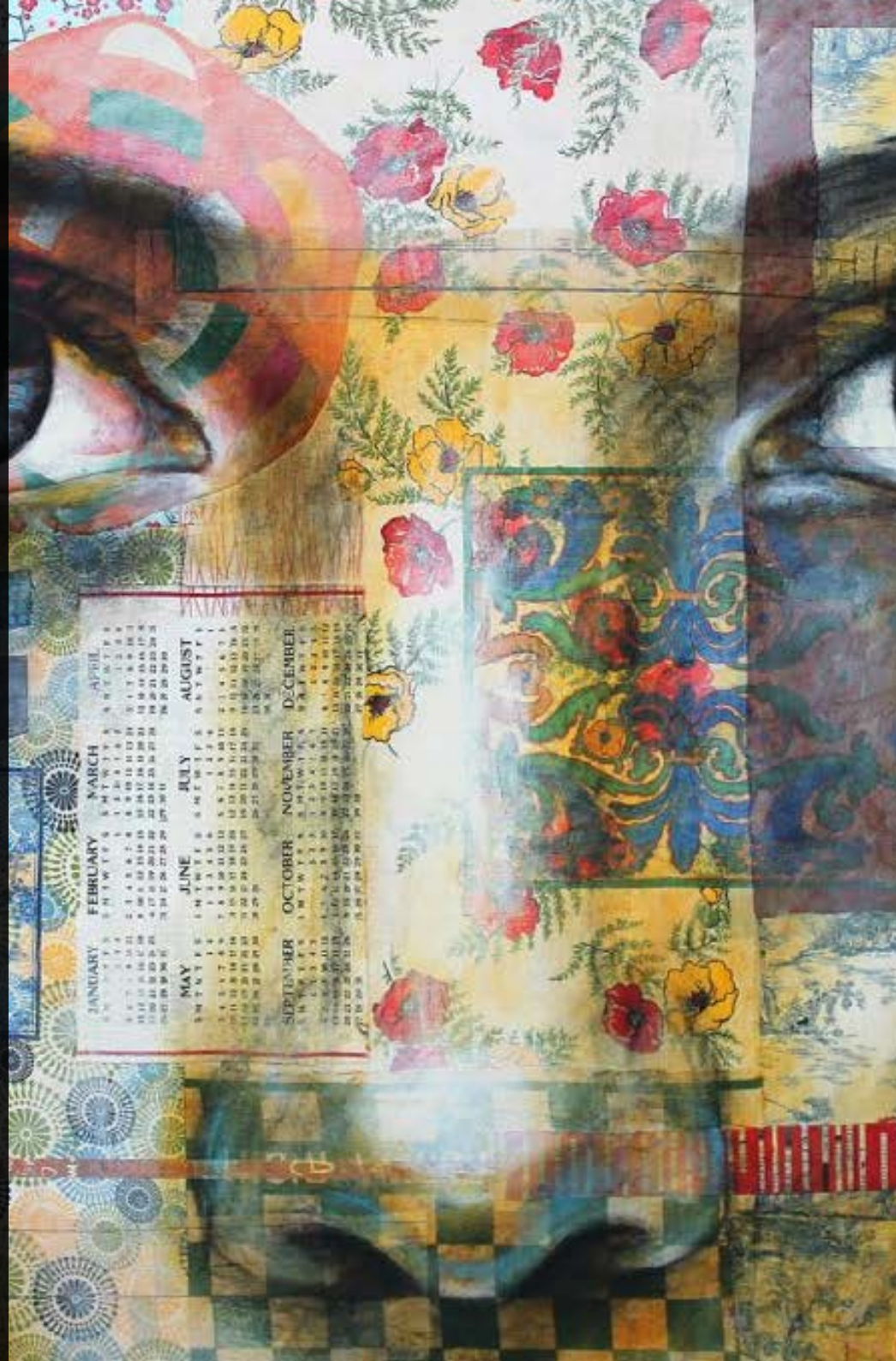
This element of transformation - transforming one or a number of materials into a new pictorial reality or object must be considered fundamental to the concept and medium of Collage. In this kind of transformation or transfiguration a metamorphosis takes place. A head cut out of newspaper takes on a new existence. The object, and the onlookers response, to it has changed - a metamorphosis has taken place. The seat and handle bar of a bicycle are just that until, by inventive wit, they are rearranged and suddenly emerge - the seat as the head and on top the handle bar the horns of a bull. While the original nature of the material may still be discerned, the new creation has taken on a new form (transformed), a new life and a new response. Again, it must be emphasized that a successful collage (or assemblage) requires an uncommon degree of inventiveness, discrimination and even sophistication, if junk is to remain not merely a rearrangement of junk, but transformed into art and, possibly, a thing of beauty.

Another element the early collagists were conscious of was the historical problem of reality versus illusion. Traditionally concerned with realism and naturalism, artists now came to

recognize that no matter how realistically they would portray nature, the only real reality they were eventually left with, was only the reality of paint and canvass (the material) - all else was an illusion. By taking a real object (like a piece of newspaper) and incorporating it within a picture, Picasso demonstrated the meaningful, or meaningless, nature (whichever one prefers) of reality. In so doing he also helped to free Art from a heretofore slavish dependence upon a too narrow definition of reality. More recently, artists such as Dubuffet have gone directly to nature and incorporated leaves, sand and bark in their pictures.

What happens, of course, in the best of these or any collage is not merely an exposition of philosophical ideas or confrontation between reality and illusion. A work of art is expected to be more than a mere reflection of nature or an intellectual exercise: It must also be an esthetic experience. To that end, much art of the 20th Century has concerned itself with "purifying" itself of all extraneous elements or reliance on nature, either as reality or illusion.

Painters like Mondrian and Albers from the beginning of Modern Art concerned themselves solely with carefully composed fields, bands or patches of color. This "pure art" of precisely defined shapes of color



(looking almost cut out) bears an obvious relationship to collage. Mondrian, for instance, would make his preliminary sketches by careful manipulation of strips of colored paper until satisfied with just the right balance. Obviously, an artist has much greater flexibility in composing a work of sharply defined or "cut" shapes by actually using cut-outs rather than paint. The relationship between this kind of "hard edge" or geometric painting to the collage technique is apparent. What may be considered the greatest painting of this century - Picasso's Guernica - may also be said to bear a direct relationship to collage in its seemingly cut, torn and fragmented shapes and forms. In fact, Guernica started out as collage composed of torn wall paper fragments.

In trying to define Collage it is well to go beyond a too narrow definition of its concept, philosophy and technique. Many modern paintings may well be regarded in that sense as bearing a direct relationship to Collage. Without some of the innovative concepts and techniques of Collage much of Modern Art would not have been possible. What occurred was a kind of cross-fertilization between the various schools, ideas and techniques of Modern Art.

As inventive as the first works of Collage were, it should not be thou-

ght however that they were totally without precedence. In what may be considered the pre-history of collage, there always existed a kind of folk art of collage. For centuries it was popular, for instance, to decorate all kinds of containers with a montage of cut and pasted picture fragments. Some of the earliest Valentines were composed of bits of appropriate pictures, decoration and lace. At country fairs there was the inevitable “decoupage” artist who would cut silhouette profiles out of black paper. The popular art of patchwork quilts also bears a direct relationship to Collage, even though the effect of diverse patches being transformed into an entirely new composition and object is achieved by stitching rather than pasting. The basic concept, nevertheless, is the same as in collage.

A more sophisticated precedent to Collage can be seen in the work of a group of 19th Century artists whose work is usually referred to as “Trompe l’oeil” (“to fool the eye”, an illusion) - paintings of objects so photographically realistic that one could be fooled to see them as the actual objects. To achieve this kind of effect the object would usually be two-dimensional, such as letters, cards, news clippings, etc. seemingly tacked up on a flat board or wall. An example of this is William Harnett’s painting, “The Artist’s Card Rack”. To the 19th Century viewer’s ques-



tion “is it a painting or is it real?” must now be added “is it a real Collage?” To go back even further - in the 16th Century, Arcimboldo would compose portraits out of painted bits of fruit, vegetables, animals and landscape. The nose as cucumber - an intriguing metaphor! That kind of metamorphosis - whether witty or profound - is well within the conceptual nature of Collage.

As interesting as some of the results of the “prehistory” of Collage may seem, it was not until the advent of Modern Art and at the hands of some of the greatest artists of this period that the true potential of Collage became apparent. Begun as the medium to explore art beyond painting and as a possible resolution of the historical paradox of reality and illusion, the range and possibilities have grown with each new generation. More recent explorations have concerned themselves with the possible nature of Collage as a kind of “missing link” between two-dimensional painting and three-dimensional sculpture.

When canvass or other heavy material is combined, the result is a low or bas relief. Going one step further, when negative areas within the picture are cut out entirely, leaving “holes” within the picture, a deep sculptural space is the result. Reversing this process: cutting out the positive areas and mounting them on rigid

support, produces a free-standing form. Mounted on a wall, the wall now taking on the nature of a large canvass, several cut-outs become a kind of shifting, flexible collage. The possibilities are endless.

At the other extreme, the combination and interaction between the rigidity of cut collage shapes and the fluidity of painting, provides areas of interesting esthetic exploration, such as for instance, in some of the works of Rauschenberg and Motherwell. Much of this kind of work exists on very subtle levels such as textures and the differences between, for instance, a cut, torn or a burned edge. The use of fire, by means of a blow torch, becomes in collage, an entirely new and valid tool of artistic expression.

Using transparent and translucent materials provides creative possibilities not possible with paint. If these transparent materials are glued on to another transparent background, such as insect screening, a stained-glass window effect can be achieved but with greater flexibility and range than the traditional glass and lead. A mosaic-like collage is created by cutting and arranging small bits of pre-colored paper - again with greater range of possibilities and also practicality than the traditional product. The main point of Collage, however, is not to merely improve



on an existing medium and process, but to open up ever-new possibilities and expand the potential of creative expression.

The widening interest of contemporary artists in collage might not have happened without the invention of acrylic glue. It's what holds all the pieces together. Unlike other traditional glues, acrylic (as in Elmers Glue) is a "thermoplastic substance": Under heat, as for instance from an electric iron, acrylic softens, even when dry, and bonds together - permanently. Acrylic has also proven the most permanent painting medium so far. Science, the science of chemistry, once again came to assist art - as it had on many previous occasions - and opened up a new universe.

To sum up, the possibilities of the collage medium seem infinite. It is up to the individual artist to develop imagination, inventiveness, discrimination, sensibility and skill to explore and to take full advantage of these possibilities. Art, life and man's progression being constantly in flux and evolving, it may be said that the one permanent constancy in art is constant change in its search to create. Collage, as the art of change, is the newest and ideal exponent of transformation, transfiguration and metamorphosis. As such Collage may well reflect the very nature the world is made of.



Perhaps, it should also be worth noting the therapeutic possibilities of collage: During the 1970's Eric Olson, a clinical psychologist and Robert J. Lifton, a psychiatrist, investigated collage and co-authored a research paper on the "Collage Method". It describes the therapeutic effect collage - assembling and piecing together various pictorial materials - seems to have for individuals, traumatized by life-threatening events in their lives. Perhaps, this may also help explain the almost universal interest in Collage and Assemblage in the 20th Century, this most deeply troubled and traumatized century.

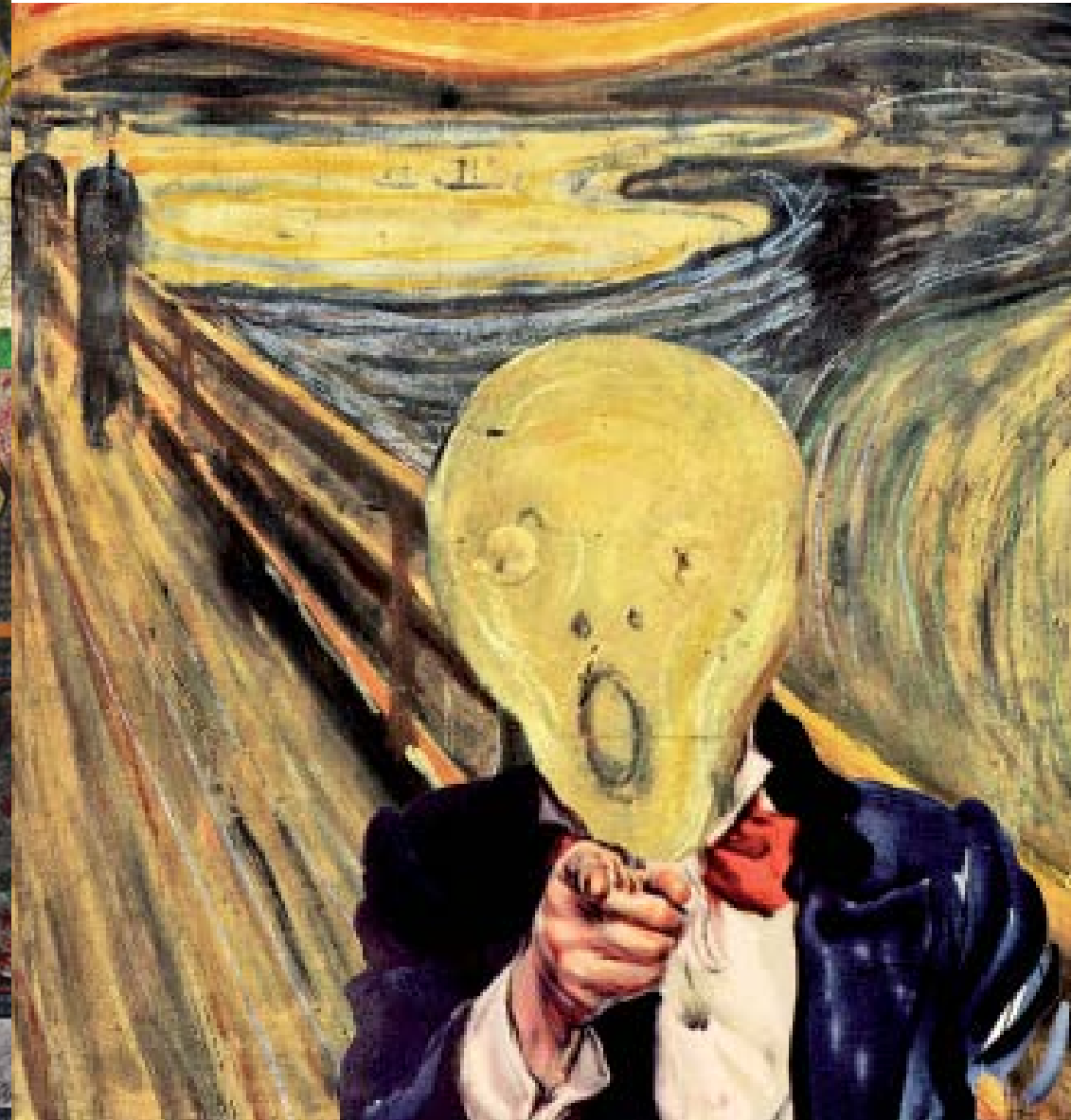


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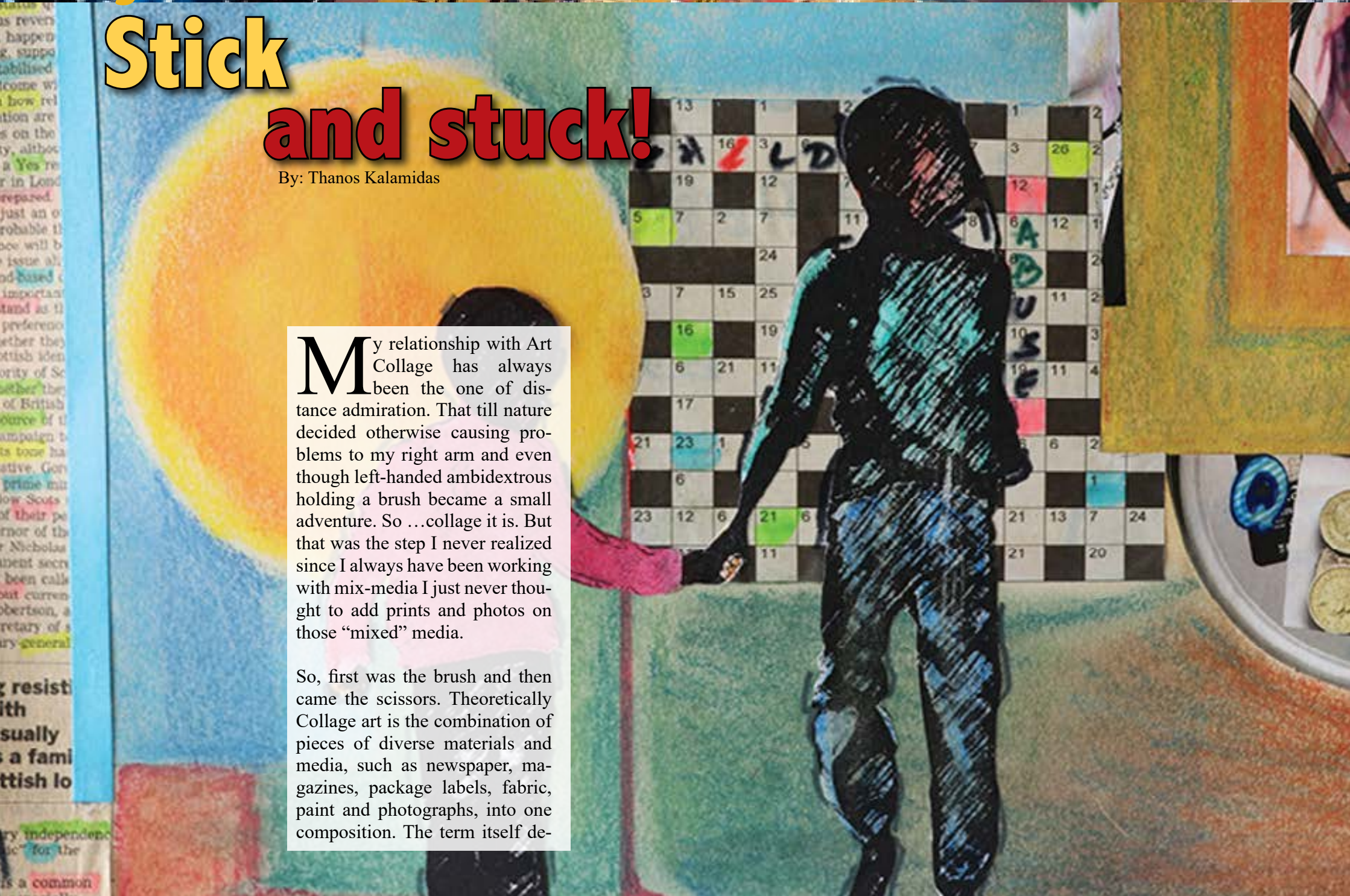


# Stick and stuck!

By: Thanos Kalamidas

**M**y relationship with Art Collage has always been the one of distance admiration. That till nature decided otherwise causing problems to my right arm and even though left-handed ambidextrous holding a brush became a small adventure. So ...collage it is. But that was the step I never realized since I always have been working with mix-media I just never thought to add prints and photos on those "mixed" media.

So, first was the brush and then came the scissors. Theoretically Collage art is the combination of pieces of diverse materials and media, such as newspaper, magazines, package labels, fabric, paint and photographs, into one composition. The term itself de-



rives from the French “coller,” meaning “glue.” It was coined by both Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso at the beginning of the 20th century, when collage became a distinct part of modern art. And the word “diverse” is what has really attracted me without that meaning that I left the brushes.

I feel like I just added a new colour in my palette and a new brush in my collection of brushes that already have a lot of diverse tools among them.

I mentioned in the beginning my distant admiration but this admiration is a reference to one name, Kurt Schwitters. A German artist who was born in Hanover, Germany. Schwitters worked in several genres and media, including Dadaism, Constructivism, Surrealism, poetry, sound, painting, sculpture, graphic design, typography, and what came to be known as installation art. He is most famous for his collages, called Merz Pictures.



Then came Matisse and his snail but that was the beginning. Because the deeper you get into collage art you discover the more Max Ernst and perhaps many new about it but despite my love to Ernst I never really pinpointed his connection with collage art. Is one of these strange situations where you see what you want to see and what really interests you missing the rest. And that of course led to even more paths and realizations. That collage art is an experimental art with applications that vary from theatre and cinema to dance and sculpturing, from photography to architect and of course ...painting.

Mixed art and the joy of mixed materials and tools.



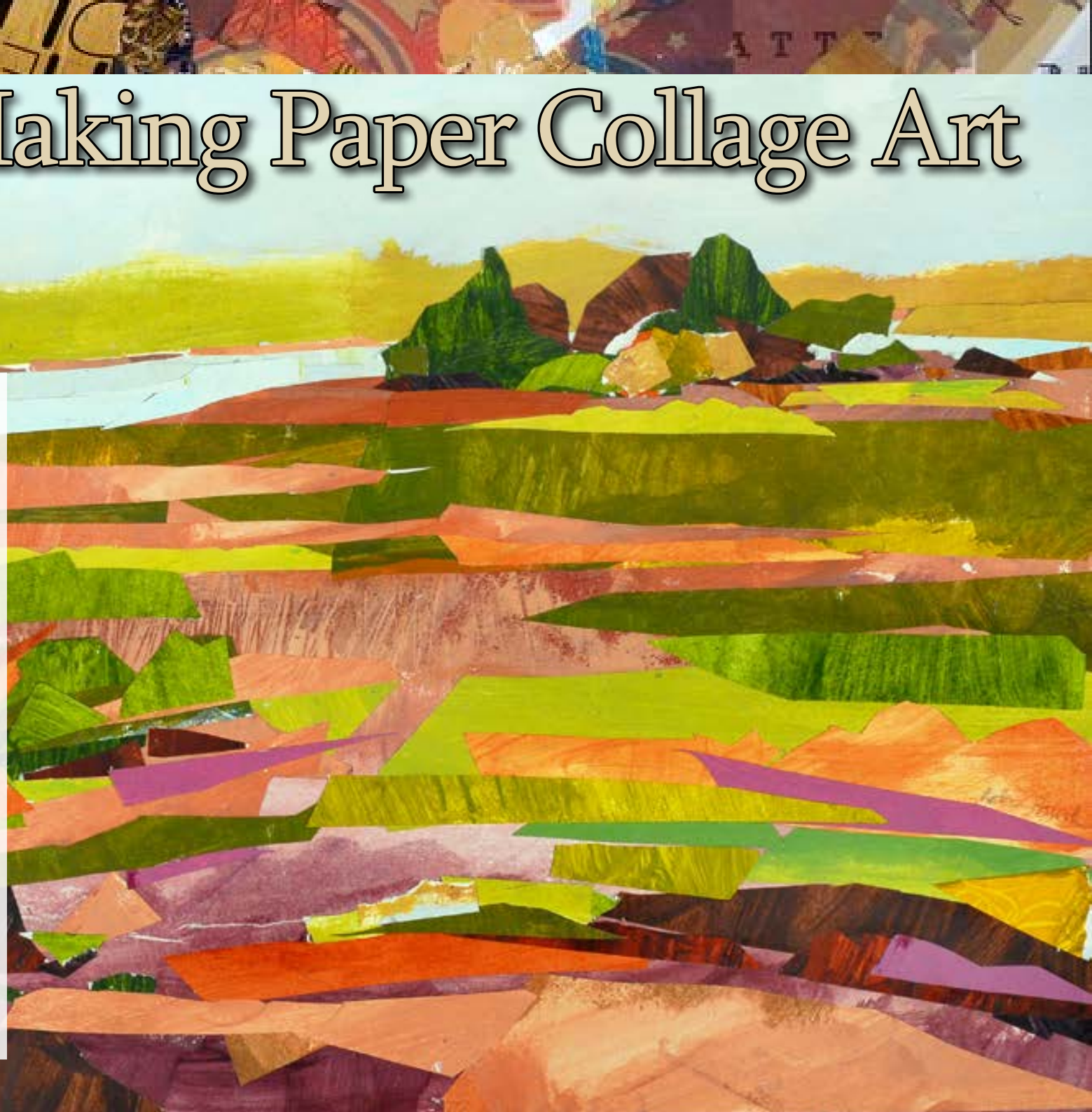
# Tips for Making Paper Collage Art

You have your selection of beautiful, handmade papers, a pile of magazines ready to snip with a pair of scissors, and your collected ephemera neatly stored in a box. Time to get going and make a collage. But sometimes, a plain white sheet of paper can be a daunting prospect and you don't always know where to start. We've turned to our author Clare Youngs for her top rules for making great collages...

Cut and place pieces down to nearly complete stage before sticking anything down.

Use your phone to take a picture you can refer to as you remove pieces to start sticking.

Think about your use of color. You might want to choose a range of blues and greens (colors that blend together) or go for clashing pinks and oranges. The same idea can look very different depending on the colors you use.



Think about the scale, for a dynamic and arresting collage. Turn things on their head pairing something that is normally small made giant size, next to something tiny that is otherwise huge.

Also think about repetition. The repetition of a given image or shape can also make a strong visual statement. A collage made from cut triangles or circles is simple to achieve and can be visually exciting.

It is important to balance the areas of space and imagery. An asymmetrical balance works well. Keeping things off-center in this way does make a good arrangement.

Use the 'rule of thirds'. This is a technique by which you divide your paper into three rows and three columns. The points at which the vertical and horizontal lines meet, are where the focal points of your collage should be.

Use positive and negative shapes. When I cut a shape, I usually love the offcut just as much, and will store it away for future use. Sometimes, I use both pieces on the same collage.

Sometimes you simply have to let go and see where the paper takes you without thinking too hard about it. The colors and shapes may suggest a direction to go in and I let them lead the way. This may sound an odd way to work, but with collage it seems to be the right way.

The main thing to remember is that, once you know about the rules of a good composition, you can break them and still make wonderful and striking works. In collage, rules are meant to be broken. The only thing that matters is spontaneity: start cutting out shapes, moving them around, and sticking them down. Just see what happens. It can be that simple.



# The difference between collage and mixed media

Understanding why different types of art are described as such or why one movement is separate from another is extremely important, especially when it comes to the sale of art. As a buyer, it is essential to be informed about proper art terms in order to avoid being swindled. As an artist, knowing the right terms for a piece of work is crucial when selling that art or trying to get it displayed. In the art world, knowledge equals power and this includes knowing the difference between collage and mixed media art.

This guide is designed to help art buyers or aspiring artists understand the difference between collage and mixed media art in order to help them in the process of buying the art itself or materials for its creation. In fact, collage is a subset of the larger mixed media genre, so knowing what sets it apart is essential. In order to do so, this guide will explain the history of collage and mixed media. It will then individually define each type of art and provide examples of materials and pieces popular to both categories.

## Collage and Mixed Media: An Art History Lesson

Since the broadest definition of mixed media art is any sort of visual art which combines more than one material in its creation, finding examples of work that could fall into this category is quite simple. Artists from as far back as Ancient China were known to blend materials in the making of mixed media art, including collage. Later on, calligraphers in tenth century Japan began to apply glued paper, which included text, onto their poems. Finally, artists in Medieval Europe would add gemstones to religious images and icons in both painting and sculpture.

In its broadest strokes, all of these techniques could represent either mixed media art or collage specifically. However, these examples are not usually considered mixed media in the modern sense by most art historians. That designation came much later in time.



## Modern Mixed Media

Indeed, the idea of collage and mixed media as we know it today didn't take full effect until the Modernist movement of the twentieth century. Later on, when Postmodernism began to take hold, both collage and mixed media became more prominent on the art scene. This is because the ideas of Modernism and Postmodernism revolve around rebelling against traditional "high art." Combining materials to defy previous genres and definitions, as is accomplished in mixed media art, pairs nicely with the spirit of both movements. Over time, however, mixed media art and its subcategories like collage have gained such acclaim that museums like the Museum of Modern Art in New York have entire galleries and exhibitions dedicated to their display.

## Collage and Mixed Media: A Detailed Definition

Though their histories run parallel, there are distinct differences between collage and mixed media art that are inherent in their definitions. In fact, collage is considered a subset of the mixed media genre. This means that all collage is mixed media, but not all mixed media is collage. For this purpose, it is important to define each type of art in some detail.

## Mixed Media Art

The idea of mixed media art is really quite simple. Rather than create a work in only one material such as oils for painting or



clay for sculpture, a mixed media artist combines materials to make a visual work. Some famous combinations for mixed media art include metals and found items ("trash") in sculpture as well as the blending of painting, cutting, and stamping techniques in altered books and greeting card making.

For many amateur artists, mixed media art and mixed media-inspired crafts, like journaling and scrapbooking are really accessible ways to express themselves. However, for anyone interested in either creating or acquiring mixed media art, it is best to understand the genre not by what it is, but by what it is not. In other words, mixed media art is limited to the visual arts. Its cousin, multimedia art is art which integrates other elements such as sound and video or other "arts" such as literature and drama into the visual arts. Therefore, designating mixed media art is usually a process of delineating it from multimedia work, rather than traditional fine art, which employs only one material.

## Collage

In contrast, collage is merely an offshoot of the mixed media genre, a specialized form of combining materials that produces a specific product. However, there are certain elements of a work that make it a collage over something else.

The word collage actually derives from the French verb "coller" which means "to glue." And in fact in its broadest definition, a collage is an act of assemblage in which series of photos or cuts of paper are glued to another piece of paper, cardboard, or canvas. Some



collages may also include textured components such as ribbon, jewels, stickers, or other found objects. The crafting art of decoupage is also considered an offshoot of collage.

As mentioned above, collage as a form of mixed media art took hold in the twentieth century through the Modernist movement. In fact, Pablo Picasso, along with Georges Braque, is credited for coining the term collage from its French derivative.

### Buying and Creating Collage and Mixed Media Art

Whether buyers are interested in purchasing completed collage and mixed media works or making them on their own, the process of buying art and art supplies is essential. There are specific tips and tricks to each act that buyers should note in order to ensure success.

### Buying Completed Works of Collage and Mixed Media Art

Many art collectors and home decorators who enjoy the modern look prefer collage and mixed media pieces as accents and collectible items. The diversity of materials, colors, and subjects in this dynamic genre alone make collecting completed works a fun and exciting task.

There are several ways to buy collage and mixed media art, but the most popular methods are through purchasing them directly from the artist or buying them through dealers and resellers. Artists generally sell their work at



craft fairs and flea markets whereas dealers and resellers are more likely to offer work through auctions, galleries, and websites. Additionally, buyers may want to consider specialized retailers and websites.

### Buying Collage and Mixed Media Art on eBay

eBay is one website where interested buyers can find the collage and mixed media work that they want from both the artists directly as well as dealers and resellers all in one convenient spot. The eBay Art Shop allows buyers the ability to browse the collage and mixed media section or to conduct an Advanced Search for the product they want, using either description, price, or buying method as a limiting factor. This is one great way to blend the benefits of craft fairs and galleries into one space without the need for travel. Buyers can also take their time deciding on that “just right” piece since the 24/7 nature of the web allows them to browse and buy whenever they are ready.

### Buying Materials to Create Collage and Mixed Media Art

For those interested in the creation of collage or other forms of mixed media art, browsing the work of other artists as described above is an excellent way to begin and get inspired. Once a project has been decided upon, however, the next step is purchasing the materials necessary for its completion. The following table describes some of the most popular materials for either collage or mixed media work.



## Collage

Possible materials for a collage include:

- Paper
- Canvas
- Cardstock
- Adhesives (glue, tape, etc.)
- Embellishments (rhinestones, beads, etc.)

## Mixed Media Art

Possible materials for mixed media art that is not collage include:

- Clay
- Metals
- Paint
- Cutting Instruments (for scrapbooking or altered books)
- Adhesives
- Found Object (“trash”)

Depending on the exact piece an artist will create, purchasing the right materials for collage and mixed media art can be accomplished in a number of places. Art supply stores and even art sections of big box retailers present many options. Those interested in craftier mixed media work, such as cardmaking and scrapbooking, may also consider specialized boutique retailers. Those working with found objects might even consider looking through a junkyard.



## Conclusion

Whether you are an art collector or an aspiring artist, knowing the difference between genres and subgenres of art is extremely important when it comes to buying and selling art. One such example is the difference between collage and mixed media art, which, though related, represent a distinct category and subcategory of work. Remember: all collage is mixed media, but not all mixed media is collage.

Once a buyer or artist understands this basic distinction, learning more about the beautiful and diverse world of collage and mixed media art is extremely rewarding. In addition, purchasing either the completed works or the supplies to make your own work can help those interested in this genre of art to really engage with it. eBay, a website dedicated to bringing buyers and sellers from all walks of life together, offers a great way for both artists and collectors to engage in the world of collage and mixed media art in one convenient spot.



Text written by **Dušan Zidar**

Text translated by **Lucija Mihić Zidar**

## Dušan Zidar: Evil's Gold Monetary Reserves

The City Art Gallery of Ljubljana is currently hosting a group exhibition titled "Densifying". The idea was conceived by the curator Sarival Sosić after a reflection that densifying is not only the physical process of sculpturing, but also a mental reflection which grants the materiality of the sculpture a symbolic meaning in the form of a story, statement, presentation, iconography etc.

My exhibited work "Evil's Gold Monetary Reserves" tries to sharpen the general topic of the shared exhibition title into a complex matrix of current antagonisms. It is framed by two images: a tree of life being cut down (adapted from a medieval fresco seen in a church in Salamanca) and a rubber dinghy.

The merging of both images develops the sublime nature of an altar. Especially, since the meaning of the central part of my piece is extended into the image of the night sky, acting either as the sky or the sea surface, and the poetic script "Why does Evil get an extra bonus for its action?" written in ASCII code. And there is another ASCII code message on the backside of




the central piece (the bottom of the dinghy) “Who is the artist responsible to for a failed aestheticization of a victim?”

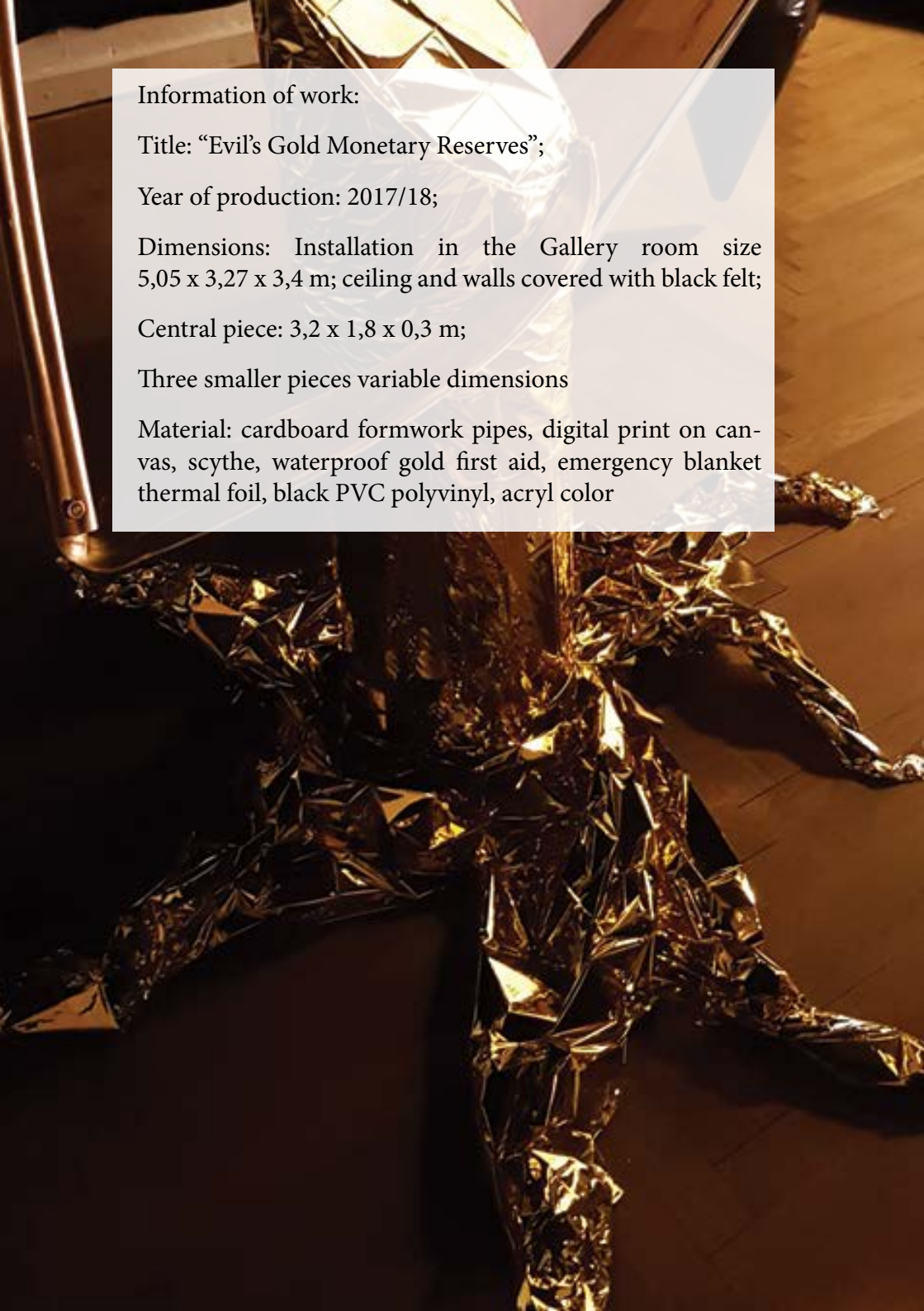
West European humanism and art of the 20th century collided with epochal dimension of evil in both World Wars, and the eventual disclosure of the Nazi concentration camps’ horrors shook their ethical foundations. The severity of the shock is shown in the inefficiency of the oath that such things should never happen again. Both ASCII code messages reflect the helpless phenomenon of repetition, which remains one of the primary ethical dilemmas nowadays. For this reason, I see the context of ethics as a metaphor for today’s social antagonisms that happen when tectonic plates of global financial markets move.

The refugees are the consequence, the final link of this crashing wave chain. In other words, global finance transformations immediately reveal refugee epochal crisis on one hand, as well as camouflage its origin on the other. Even S. Freud’s theory Death Drive failed to notice the fact that his interpretation of evil maintains the creationist dimension claiming that the existence of evil depends on some other being in the universe.



A photograph of an art installation. On the left, a woman with dark hair tied back is sitting on the floor, holding a young child. They are both looking at a crocheted cardigan that the woman is holding. The room has white walls and a dark wooden floor. On the right, there is a large, abstract sculpture made of crumpled gold foil. A projection of a map with blue dots is visible on a screen or wall behind the sculpture. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

With the exhibited piece I did not intend to mime, or worse, illustrate the stunning images of refugees and their suffering. I have no authorization for it, and strongly believe this is something they can only do themselves. With that reason in mind, I organized a performance at the opening of the exhibition in which two asylum seekers crocheted children's cardigans to demonstrate their presence, loss of their homes and humanity . They broke their silence a few days later at the guided tour where their reflections and appeals "became flesh".



Information of work:

Title: "Evil's Gold Monetary Reserves";

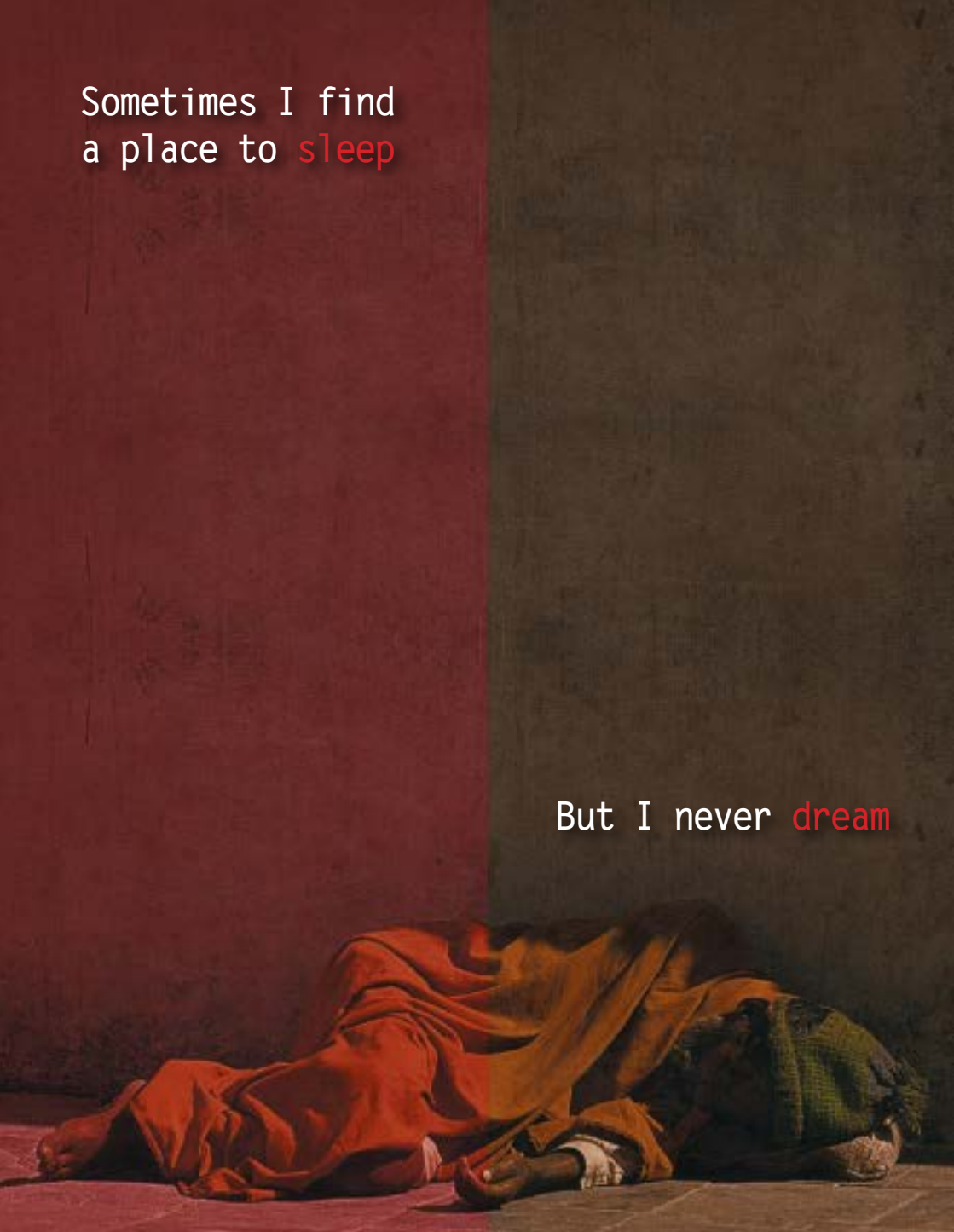
Year of production: 2017/18;

Dimensions: Installation in the Gallery room size  
5,05 x 3,27 x 3,4 m; ceiling and walls covered with black felt;

Central piece: 3,2 x 1,8 x 0,3 m;

Three smaller pieces variable dimensions

Material: cardboard formwork pipes, digital print on canvas, scythe, waterproof gold first aid, emergency blanket thermal foil, black PVC polyvinyl, acryl color



Sometimes I find  
a place to sleep

But I never dream

UNIVERSAL COLLECTS



## Mequitta Ahuja

**M**equitta Ahuja's recent work explores the currency of the figure of the artist at work in the history of European and American figurative painting. Merging the roles of artist-maker and subject, her monumental paintings depict the artist engrossed in various stages of her artistic process, often within the clearly defined architectural space of the studio. Demonstrating an interest beyond the medium itself, Ahuja's self-portraits explore multiple modes of representation, including abstraction, text, naturalism, schematic description, graphic flatness and illusion. Working across multiple modalities of representation allows the artist to fulfil her own representational needs and to ask timely questions about the power dynamics underpinning image production and art history: who does the representing, who is represented and in what manner?

"My central intent is to turn the artist's self-portrait, especially the woman-of-colour's self-portrait, long circumscribed by identity, into a discourse on picture-making, past and present. This includes depicting my intimate relationship to painting - the verb and the noun, the act and the object - painting. I show my subject at work - reading, writing, handling canvases in the studio. I show the work, the mark, the assembling of marks into form, the brushstroke. In these ways, I replace the common self-portrait motif - the artist standing before the easel, with a broader portrait of the artist's activity."



Tiwani Contemporary is pleased to present Notations - a forthcoming solo exhibition, debuting new works by **Mequitta Ahuja**.

Apr 13 - Jun 2, 2018 - London, 16 Little Portland Street

## 10 Moses Paintings to Smithsonian

Jane Kallir, co-director of Galerie St. Etienne in New York, announced that her family will donate ten paintings by Anna Mary Robertson “Grandma” Moses to the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., over the next seven years.

The first three gifts are *Out for Christmas Trees* (1946), *Grandma Moses Goes to the Big City* (1946)—both of which are currently on view at the museum—and *Turkeys* (1958). All ten paintings will figure in a traveling *Grandma Moses* exhibition slated for fall 2023, of which Jane Kallir is a consultant.



# fARTissimo

By Thanos Kalamidas

## In tender blue scissors

The feeling of the female body in tender blue lines and cuts, climbing mountains of passion, cycling curves. Frozen in a mind eventually lost in a snail. A man that had already worshiped the perfection of the arcs.

The Blue Nudes series represents seated female nudes, and is among Matisse's final body of works. Blue Nude IV, the first of the four nudes, took a notebook of studies and two weeks' work of cutting-and-arranging before the resulting artefact satisfied him. In the event, Matisse finally arrived at his favorite pose, for all four works—intertwining legs and an arm stretching behind the neck.

The posture of the nude woman is like the posture of a number of seated nudes made in the first years of the 1920s, ultimately, the posture derives from the reposed figures of *Le bonheur de vivre*.



# Opinion

## Can they cut it?

What is it that makes the destructive construction, reflected in the growing number of the art collage pieces, so appealing to a different number of authors today? The art of collage, rooted in European Dadaism in the first years of the 20th-century, became one of the important techniques of early modernism, which allowed painters to engage and use different materials, fusing anything from newspaper and magazines, to maps, tickets, propaganda posters, and photographs, text, and found objects for the creation of the visually stunning and thought-provoking images. Emerging as a reaction against the First World War and the need to connect with reality in the face of the growing abstractness

of the Analytical Cubism, the term collage, from the French word *coller*, meaning to cut, was coined by the Cubism artists, Georges Braque, and Pablo Picasso. For these two authors, and Cubism movement as a whole, collage allowed for the exploration of painting's illusion of three-dimensionality while exposing and using the flatness of the painted surface. These progressive ideas reflected the breaking from hundred years of Western painting tradition. In the words of the art critic, Clemente Greenberg, who in 1959 wrote an essay on Cubism, "collage was a major turning point in the evolution of Cubism and therefore a major turning point in the whole evolution of modernist art in this century".



Art  
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# Art Won't Save Us

by Anna Khachiyan

<http://www.annakhachiyan.com/blog/>

When the art world resistance is hacked by the attention economy

1. In the wake of 2016's stunning electoral upset, the liberal media went scrambling for a silver lining — and they found it, of all places, in the art world. Over at The Cut, house expert Jerry Saltz declared the post-election comedown a “crucible of possibility” and “call to action,” even going so far as to imagine a scenario straight out of the movies, in which “artists will work with mechanics to disable deportation buses by night.” Meanwhile on Twitter, literary doyenne Joyce Carol Oates volunteered, “Artists thrive on turbulence & estrangement from Establishment/authority—so T\*\*\*p presidency would not be total disaster, for some,” a tweet that swiftly earned the distinction of being “the whitest take of the whole election.”

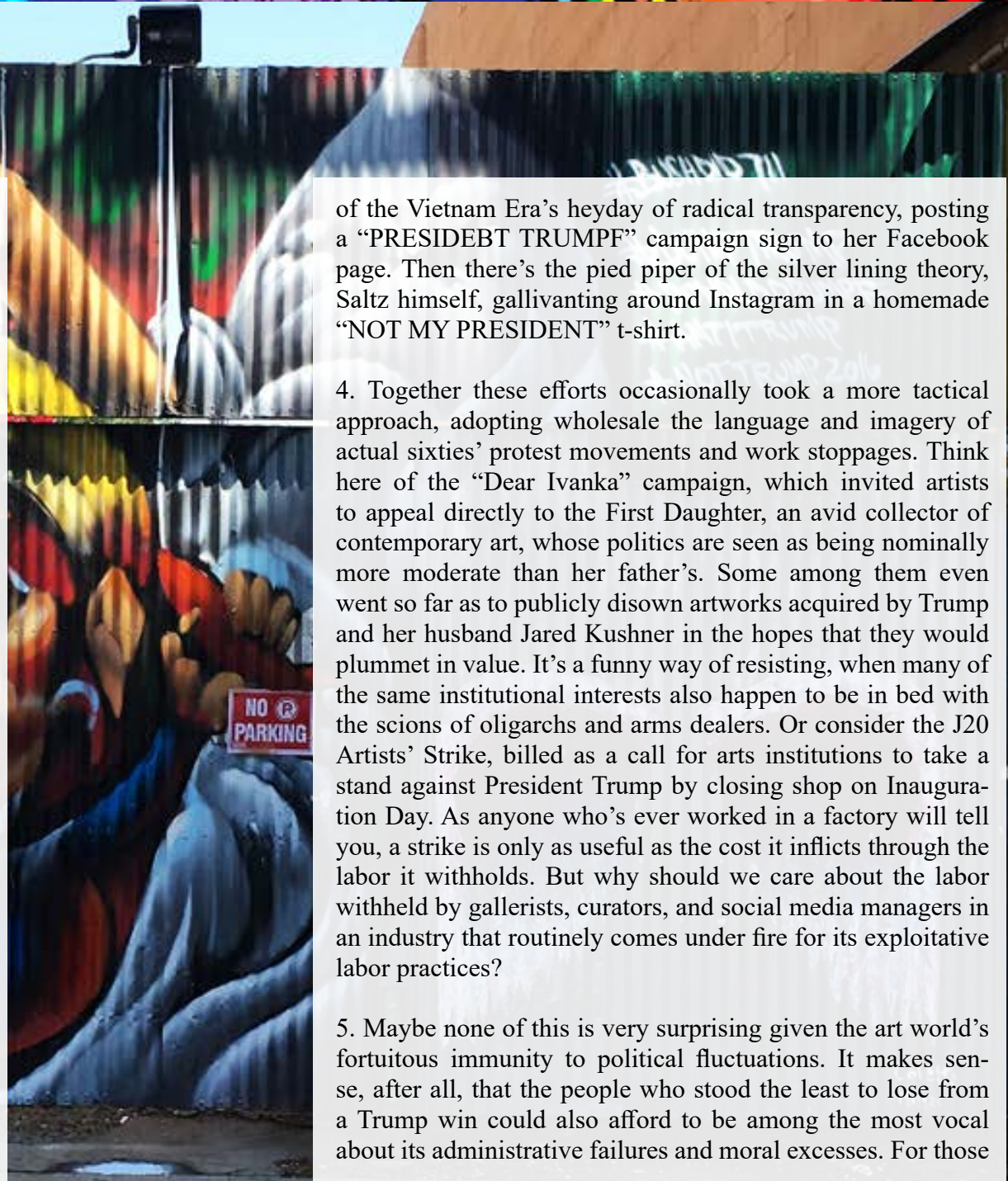
2. Fast forward to 2018, and the theory that a Trump victory would be a shot in the arm for a creative class that had sleepwalked through the Obama years hasn't quite panned out. Instead of the artistic renaissance predicted by the likes of Saltz and Oates, what we got was more of the same: the standard wheatpaste-inspired street art pablum; a second wind for the spiritual heirs of selfie feminism; a reverie of liberal pearl-clutching and self-flagellation repackaged as an updated version of institutional critique. That, and panels — lots of panels — endlessly “unpacking” the role of art in the age of Trump.

3. The rise of Trump has birthed a brave new vanguard of protest art that, all hype aside, mostly amounts to corny wordplay and vapid sloganeering: Marilyn Minter's “PUSSY GRABS BACK” protest banner at the Kushner-owned Puck Building; Barbara Kruger's “PRUMP/TUTIN” cover art for New York Magazine; Martha Rosler, another highly regarded feminist artist and veteran

of the Vietnam Era's heyday of radical transparency, posting a “PRESIDEBT TRUMPF” campaign sign to her Facebook page. Then there's the pied piper of the silver lining theory, Saltz himself, gallivanting around Instagram in a homemade “NOT MY PRESIDENT” t-shirt.

4. Together these efforts occasionally took a more tactical approach, adopting wholesale the language and imagery of actual sixties' protest movements and work stoppages. Think here of the “Dear Ivanka” campaign, which invited artists to appeal directly to the First Daughter, an avid collector of contemporary art, whose politics are seen as being nominally more moderate than her father's. Some among them even went so far as to publicly disown artworks acquired by Trump and her husband Jared Kushner in the hopes that they would plummet in value. It's a funny way of resisting, when many of the same institutional interests also happen to be in bed with the scions of oligarchs and arms dealers. Or consider the J20 Artists' Strike, billed as a call for arts institutions to take a stand against President Trump by closing shop on Inauguration Day. As anyone who's ever worked in a factory will tell you, a strike is only as useful as the cost it inflicts through the labor it withholds. But why should we care about the labor withheld by gallerists, curators, and social media managers in an industry that routinely comes under fire for its exploitative labor practices?

5. Maybe none of this is very surprising given the art world's fortuitous immunity to political fluctuations. It makes sense, after all, that the people who stood the least to lose from a Trump win could also afford to be among the most vocal about its administrative failures and moral excesses. For those



who prefer to do their activism from the comfort of booze-fueled gallery dinners and WiFi-equipped airport lounges, political dissent is not so much an inalienable right as a lifestyle perk.

6. Artists, of course, have always liked to think of themselves as rebels but, the truth is, as long as art remains a prestige economy of the free market — a glitzy barnacle on the side of global finance — it cannot be an effective tool for political change. The best it can hope to do is comment on the political situation after the fact, “thematize” it as it unfolds, or in rare, purely serendipitous cases, anticipate it. There’s also another way that art can theoretically influence political attitudes, and that’s on the level of cultural consciousness, in the spirit of Andrew Breitbart’s darkly prophetic mantra: “Politics is downstream from culture.”

7. In order for art to have momentum as a political force, it must have the capacity for mass appeal. Yet the relationship between the art world and the general public has historically been one of mutual mistrust. We’re still dealing with the aftershocks of Rudy Giuliani’s pugilistic crusade to shut down the Brooklyn Museum’s 1999 exhibition of Young British Artists, a cultural skirmish that pitted the public’s perception of artists as deviants against artists’ view of the public as philistines. In other words, art in its current form is broadly incompatible with populism of any form, whether of the traditionalist or progressive variety, since it draws its cachet precisely from its elitism and exclusivity.

8. In any case, art’s cozy rapport with capital means that its potential role as a political agent was compromised long before such basic questions of transmission and circulation could even begin to be addressed. When we talk about the art world, after all, we are always implicitly talking about the art market — or otherwise, those fringe aesthetics and grassroots communities that operate outside of its primary value index and are therefore obsolete within its organizing



discursive framework. Today, the sort of dissenting viewpoints rewarded by this discourse are those that are unlikely to deviate from polite bourgeois opinion.

9. It goes without saying — or it should, anyway — that Trump is a particularly libidinal, in-your-face example of everything that’s wrong with a society where politics is experienced primarily as entertainment. But the trouble with the standard liberal critique of Trump is precisely this flair for performative outrage, one that privileges clashes in sensibility over questions of policy. Now that the art world has found an unlikely muse in the figure of a widely despised Twitter addict, artists can continue churning out insider art while keeping their moral alibis and outsider bonafides intact.

10. Even so, all of this is somewhat beside the point, given how expertly Trump’s base has leveraged the aesthetics of neoliberalism against its principal ideologues in the liberal establishment. With the triumph of Trumpism, one could argue, we have finally hit a wall in the collective imagination, or what the late, great cultural theorist Mark Fisher called “capitalist realism”: the aesthetic-ideological complex that not only enshrines capitalism as the normative political-economic system but, in fact, obviates any efforts to envision an alternative order.

11. In effect, the Trump administration has at last solved the conceptual problem originally proposed by the Russian avant-garde and later advanced by the Socialist realists: how to orchestrate a seamless integration of the imaginable and the material, or what art history textbooks commonly refer to, in rosier terms, as the “total synthesis of art and life.” What’s more, it has done so under a devoutly capitalist regime. But if the Soviet era was marked by a cynical veneer of compulsory optimism, our neoliberal epoch is one in which terminal ennui is openly celebrated, whether ambiently, through the flat affect of memes and internet slang, or more measurably, as with the Balkanization of the internet itself into grievance-based identitarian factions.

12. Taking the Russian analogy to its logical conclusion, we can think of the Trumpian turn from the angle of the late Soviet parodic style known as “stioob,” an overidentification so extreme it’s impossible to tell whether the position it adopts is a genuine endorsement or an elaborate troll. Are Trump’s diplomatic blunders, draconian decrees, and late-night Twitter meltdowns the strategic design of a new breed of authoritarianism that thrives on confusion rather than repression or merely a byproduct of his contempt for the norms of conduct? Is his revolving cabinet of cartoon villains and prop-store cadavers a stylized piece of political theater or just a classic case of professional nepotism? Is he a madman or a mastermind? Either way, Trump performs his own incompetence so well that it makes any attempt at parody seem overdetermined to the point of absurdity. In the process, he exposes the impotence and hypocrisy of his liberal critics, unmasking their piety politics as nothing more than compensatory posturing.

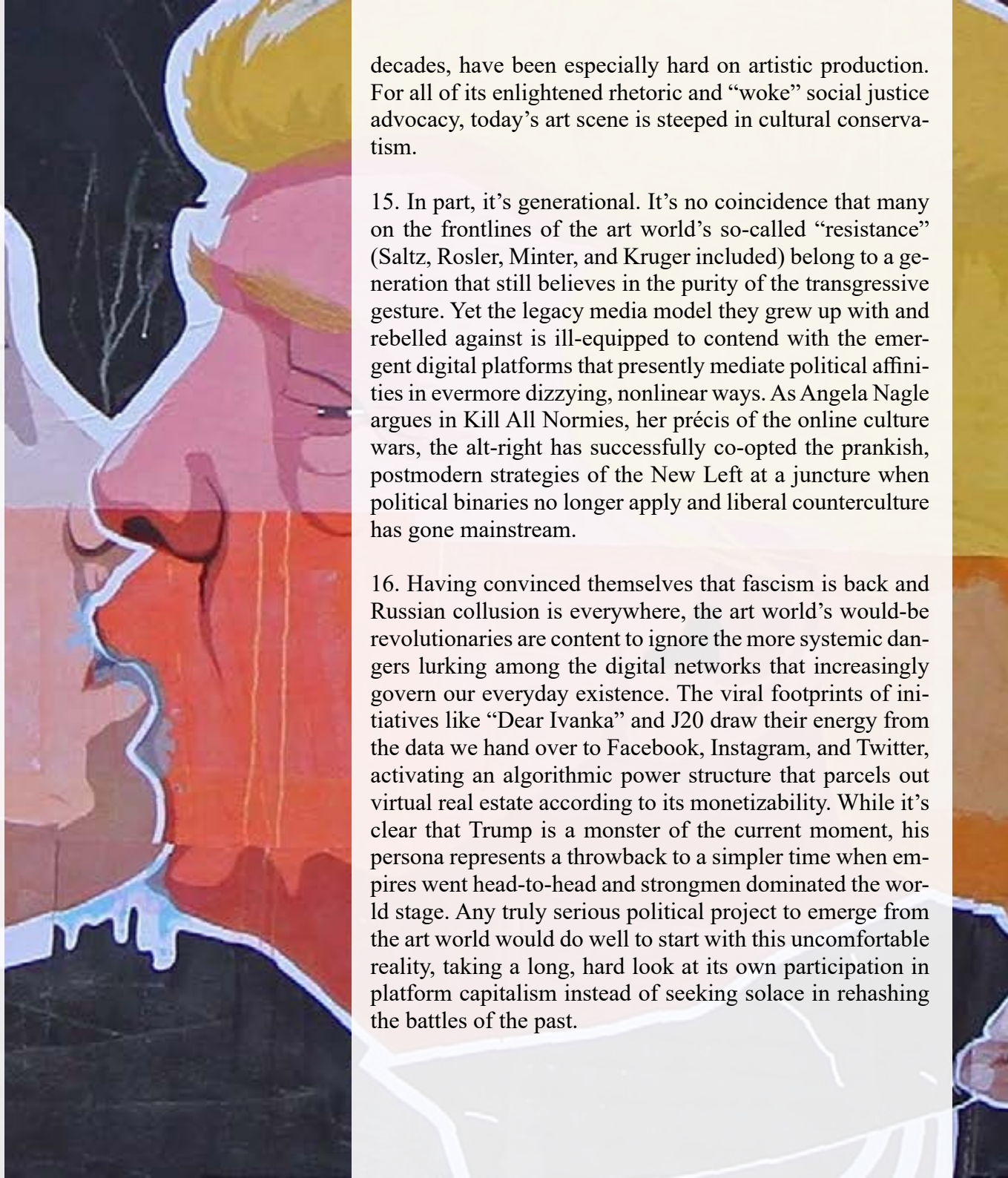
13. In this climate of nihilism, any act of dissent, whether sincere or calculated, is automatically aestheticized to such a degree that the distinction becomes moot. Take, for instance, the Guggenheim’s gold toilet controversy. Senior curator Nancy Spector denied the White House’s request for a Van Gogh loan, offering instead Maurizio Cattelan’s gold-plated, potty-themed sculpture *America*, presumably for its formal resonances with Trump’s personal taste. The inside gag no doubt flared off a momentary pang of catharsis and solidarity for art world cognoscenti. But over time, stunts like these only play into the hands of Trump’s populist messaging: elites care more about symbolic progress than they do about meaningful reform.

14. So far, the “aristocratic bohemians” of the art world, as Saltz calls them, have arguably done little to offset this stereotype. The issue, in part, is class-related. The rollback of public services and arts funding, along with the skyrocketing of property values, that accompanied the ideological triumph of neoliberal consensus over the last several

decades, have been especially hard on artistic production. For all of its enlightened rhetoric and “woke” social justice advocacy, today’s art scene is steeped in cultural conservatism.

15. In part, it’s generational. It’s no coincidence that many on the frontlines of the art world’s so-called “resistance” (Saltz, Rosler, Minter, and Kruger included) belong to a generation that still believes in the purity of the transgressive gesture. Yet the legacy media model they grew up with and rebelled against is ill-equipped to contend with the emergent digital platforms that presently mediate political affinities in evermore dizzying, nonlinear ways. As Angela Nagle argues in *Kill All Normies*, her précis of the online culture wars, the alt-right has successfully co-opted the prankish, postmodern strategies of the New Left at a juncture when political binaries no longer apply and liberal counterculture has gone mainstream.

16. Having convinced themselves that fascism is back and Russian collusion is everywhere, the art world’s would-be revolutionaries are content to ignore the more systemic dangers lurking among the digital networks that increasingly govern our everyday existence. The viral footprints of initiatives like “Dear Ivanka” and J20 draw their energy from the data we hand over to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, activating an algorithmic power structure that parcels out virtual real estate according to its monetizability. While it’s clear that Trump is a monster of the current moment, his persona represents a throwback to a simpler time when empires went head-to-head and strongmen dominated the world stage. Any truly serious political project to emerge from the art world would do well to start with this uncomfortable reality, taking a long, hard look at its own participation in platform capitalism instead of seeking solace in rehashing the battles of the past.



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