



Sarah Lutz and Beth Dary, *Interplay*, 2013, mixed media installation (Courtesy of Miranda Arts Project, Port Chester, New York).



Sarah Lutz, *Croquemouche*, 2014, oil on linen, 30" x 48" diptych (Courtesy of Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown).

# AMUSE-BOUCHE

## PAINTINGS BY SARAH LUTZ AND RICHARD BAKER

Jean-George Vongerichten, a New York celebrity restaurateur, describes "amuse-bouche" as the "best way for a great chef to express his or her big ideas in little bites." It is a fitting thematic for the work of two remarkably talented painters – Richard Baker and Sarah Lutz – in their collaborative site-specific show this August in The Gallery at Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill.

This departure into installation as a form of expression comes from Baker's exploration of the genre with "Holiday" this past February at New York's Tibor De Nagy Gallery. "An artist friend said to me during a visit, 'Your studio is the art.' So, I re-created elements of it within the gallery," Baker said. This visitor's keen observation, along with "Against Interpretation," an essay by Susan Sontag and Jacques Tati's film, "Monsieur Hulot's Holiday," were the inspirations for this formidable painter and sculptor's groundbreaking show.

Baker exalts the sort of things that inhabit our environment without our really looking at them; for example, a dense tabletop accumulation of cereal boxes, candy, paper, book covers, pencils and martinis anchored in a surreal landscape.

"Recently, I have flirted with pop art but my work is not about objectification," he said. "My paintings of book covers and comic books that are important to me are intimate; an invitation for the viewer to evoke feelings and emotions of their own experiences with books and everyday objects."

Baker has a deep bond with Provincetown and the outer Cape; initially, he worked in the summer and painted in the winter. He became a Fine Arts Work Center Fellow for two consecutive residencies, then accepted the position of visual arts coordinator for an additional two years. His journey is one that embodies the spirit of the enduring arts

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colony: a studio in exchange for work at Pat de Groot's rambling home; a friendship with fellow Baltimore native filmmaker/painter/author John Waters; a 23-year relationship with Albert Merola Gallery.

Painter Lutz is an abstractionist in a visual conversation with the relationship of color, composition and form. Her work is fed by the summers spent in her Truro studio. "There is a wonderful children's story by Leo Lionni about a mouse named Frederick who stores up color to get him through the long grey winter," she said. "I do this quite consciously: I store up light and air and open space – that place where sky meets the sea."

In early 2013, Lutz and artist Beth Dary and were selected for the first collaborative residency at the Miranda Arts Project Space in Port Chester, N.Y., where they created the installation "Interplay." She sees the experience of creating a large-scale installation in collaboration with another artist as a pivotal turning point.

Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill is Lutz's creative home. At 16, she attended a summer-long intensive workshop instructed by artists Jim Peters and Paul Bowen. She began volunteering and has been very involved ever since. She's currently on the board of directors and artist's advisory council, and her two daughters also take classes there every summer. "It is a vibrant, creative and supportive community of artists," she said, "a very special place."

Baker and Lutz met there 20 years ago and have had an ongoing dialogue about their work ever since. "Amuse Bouche" is their first collaboration. The two painters have also been invited to jury Castle

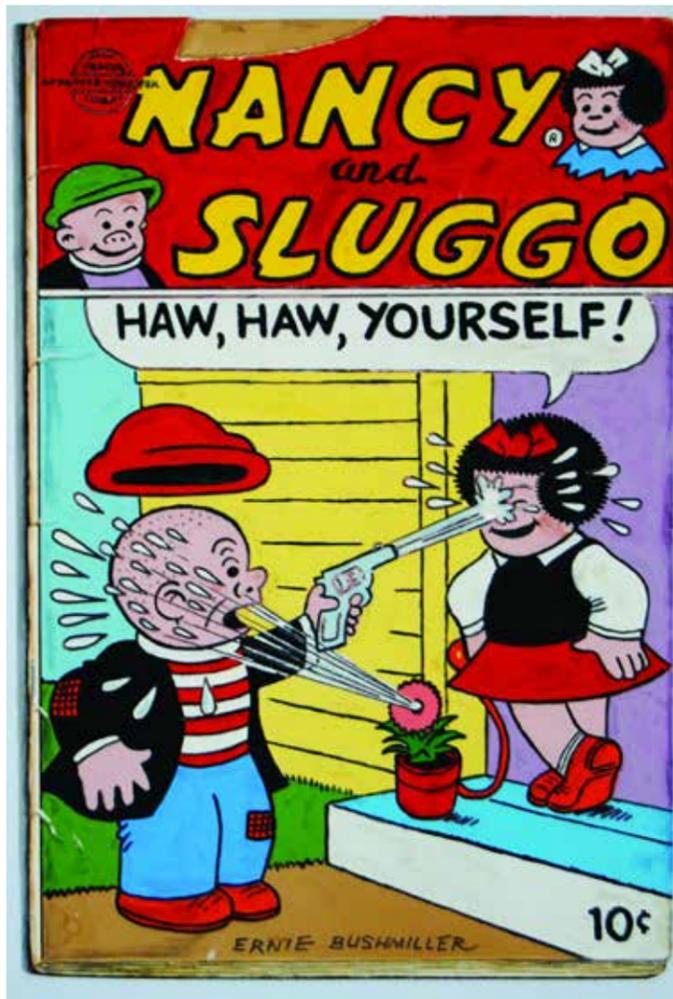
Hill's "Reflections of Now," a show of works by Outer Cape artists that can be seen from July 15 through 28. "To be a juror here is much more difficult than in New York," Baker said. "We are all friends and know each other. But that is the nature of it; I can't select all the works even if I wanted to."

Lutz will also be part of a group exhibition with Mark Adams, Amy Arbus, David Carrino and Richard Klein from August 8 through 27 at Provincetown's Schoolhouse Gallery. Director Mike Carroll is a huge supporter.

"I have loved looking at Sarah's paintings for as long as I've loved looking at paintings on the Cape," he said. "I recall that the warm tones and the endless intimacies in Sarah's landscape-based paintings are what engaged me at first. Seeing her work was like finding a lost love or arriving home after a journey; there was a sense of recognition and safety."

"Her current palette is more playful and the spaces have become somewhat cinematic, placing the viewer in dialogue with a set of shifting vantage points from which the work can be seen," Carroll continued.

"The surfaces are textured and active and full with 'points of arrival,' concentrated areas where dimension, color, light and volume meet and dance in relative proximity. This activates the viewing space and creates a different sort of generosity from the work. Sarah flies freely in the world of beauty and its conventions, breaking rules and providing joy as she does so."



Richard Baker, *Nancy and Sluggo*, 2014, Gouache on paper mounted to MDF, 14" x 11" (Courtesy of Albert Merola Gallery).

Baker has shown with Albert Merola Gallery in Provincetown since 1992. Gallery co-director James Balla said Baker's solo exhibition there this summer (August 8-28) "will be a creative conglomeration of many of Richard's impulses. Since meeting him in his early days at the Fine Arts Work Center, we were always taken by his ability to re-make the genres of still life and landscape, primarily by turning them on their heads and combining the two. His lush oil paintings of fish or flowers floating above some not-quite-identifiable landscape were unique."

Along with his paintings, Baker always made objects – "small, personal 'funky' sculptures" – Balla noted. "These continue in a three dimensional way the idea of jumbling up ideas and defying traditional conventions. His series of paintings of paperback books has developed into an iconic calling card for him."

I await the show "Amuse-Bouche" as I would a fine meal: with delight and anticipation.

Laura Shabott

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## Reviews

EXHIBITS, ARTISTS AND PERFORMANCES  
ACROSS NEW ENGLAND & BEYOND

# BLACK/WHITE

## LOOKING BEYOND THE GREYSCALE

"Black/White," this summer's show at Bromfield, contextualizes the work of 13 gallery artists. Included are drawings, collaged and digitally processed images on paper and plastic, letterpress and photography, needlepoint and paintings on aluminum and canvas. What counts as (primarily) "black and white" is left up to the individual artist, based on theory, desire or past work.

The limited palette, is for some, the preferred modality. Others produced work just for this show, or had a piece that fit. Ironic, austere, raucous and poetic voices all find their places here. These artists are making work that goes against the tide, emphasizing process, playfulness, and personal search, not grand systems, glamour or global indictments. Within the narrow confines of palette, these works puzzle and delight.

Judy Riola calls the variegated color and strong forms in her large oil-and-acrylic canvases "the antithesis of black and white." Unable to live without color, she decided to "do penance," scaling back to pale yellows and burnt oranges in a diptych already dominated by large black shapes and high-contrast patterning.

Patty Adams' collage-paintings grow from constructions in her studio that she photographs, Photoshops and has printed on large, corrugated plastic sheets; she then builds up new surfaces of paint and collage. "Runaround Sue," from a multihued series, is the first and only variation restricted entirely to black and white.



Jill Weber, *Escalera: Chance*, oil on board, 36" x 36".

Linda Klein and Ted Ollier work with binaries. Klein establishes sharp transitions in her acrylic paintings through a process of repeatedly copying photographs of trees, burning out the in-between tones

and flattening the form into silhouettes. She then grids and scales up the images, transferring them painstakingly with brush to larger canvases and refining the edges in a meditative process.

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