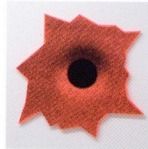
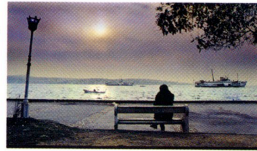
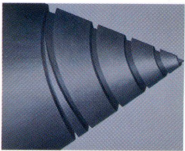
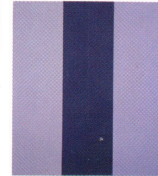
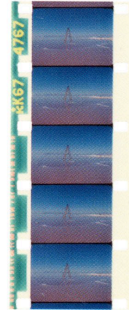
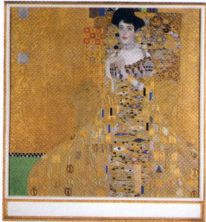
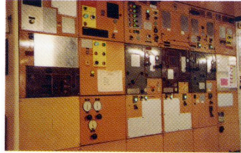
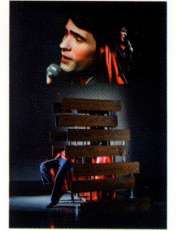


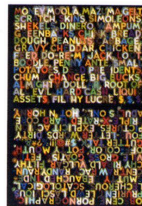
# ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 2006

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



## BEST OF 2006



\$10.00





# Alison M. Gingeras

CURATOR OF THE FRANÇOIS PINAULT COLLECTION, ALISON M. GINGERAS IS PREPARING THE NEXT EXHIBITION AT PALAZZO GRASSI, VENICE, SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 2007.

**1** Charles Ray's "A four dimensional being writes poetry on a field with sculptures" (Matthew Marks Gallery, New York) An elegant exercise in distillation, this show was proof once again that artists are often superior curators. Ray condensed his analytic vision of sculpture—attuned specifically to how the medium defines and occupies "social space"—into four formally and conceptually disparate yet equally compelling works by four different artists. Alberto Giacometti's austere portrayal of the female form (*Standing Woman*, 1948), Mark di Suvero's monumental, precariously balanced assemblage of subway-inspired beams (*The A Train*, 1966), Edgar Tolson's disarmingly charming narration of the book of Genesis (*The Fall of Man*, 1969), and Jeff Wall's creepy two-dimensional mise-en-scène of middle-class Americana (*A Ventriloquist at a birthday party in October 1947*, 1990) did not vie with one another; instead, the artworks quietly made the case for differing artistic strategies and pre-occupations. Assembled by Ray under an intriguing title (quoting Giacometti), the combination of these four sculptures offered a rather revealing peek into this immensely important artist's mind.

**2** Ashley Bickerton (Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York) Bickerton is the most underestimated and overlooked artist of his generation, and this two-gallery overview last spring made the case for his full reinstatement on the art world's radar screen—and the urgent need for a full museum retrospective. His most recent works—painting/sculpture tableaux depicting *les tristes tropiques* and a series of self-exploitative portraits made in Bali—are as wonderfully toxic as the now classic-looking '80s icons, his faux-high-tech contraptions and his "abstract" logo paintings. Like his

unconventional career choices, Bickerton's anthropological art forces us down an angry, politically incorrect path.

**3** David Hammons "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger" could be David Hammons's motto for 2006, a year that saw both an unauthorized retrospective of his work made up of photocopies at the naughty Triple Candie arts center and a secondary-market show at Zwirner & Wirth (both in New York) made against the artist's wishes. These illicit yet highly rewarding attempts to conjure this elusive artist underscored how great work can resist even the most dubious of contexts—not to mention how hungry we all are for a real Hammons show.

**4** John Currin (Gagosian Gallery, New York) While writing an essay for Currin's latest monograph, out this month from Rizzoli and Gagosian, it became clear to me from studio visits with the artist that he has gone full tilt for his much-anticipated Gagosian debut. The signature cheesecake nude imagery has given way to full-fledged porno—painted, naturally, in Currin's masterful Mannerist style. Perhaps this is a brilliant visual response to the gang of moralists who publicly pelted Currin for "selling out"? In addition to the pleasures of the flesh, Currin delivers quieter yet equally disconcerting images of figures reading books (*2070*, 2005, is a standout) and a gem of a still life with china tableware (*Heritage Hall*, 2003–2006).

**5** Lucio Fontana: Venice/New York (Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice) This neo-avant-garde master's *Tale of Two Cities* is chock-full of seductive materiality and metaphysical ambition. In two previously little-known groups of *Concetti spaziali* from the early '60s, Fontana captured the majesty of Venice through a Byzantine series of works—

complete with Murano glass-studded canvases and liberal use of gold and silver pigments—while he invoked the towering architectural presence of New York using slashed sheets of gleaming copper. Organized by Luca Massimo Barbero, this was a bijou of an exhibition.

**6** Yves Klein: Corps, couleur, immatériel (Centre Pompidou, Paris) What stand out in this Klein retrospective, organized by Camille Morineau, are not the "pure" art objects but all that is "impure"—the tuxedo-clad musicians, the naked ladies, the gold leaf thrown into the Seine, the Rosicrucian regalia, the judo poses, the leap into the void, etc. While his IKB monochromes, fire paintings, and grand anthropometries are as gorgeous as ever, it is the orchestration of Klein's persona that seems most significant today. This show confirms Klein's place as the undisputed godfather of Eurotrash.

**7** "Voyage(s) en utopie, Jean-Luc Godard, 1946–2006: à la recherche d'un théorème perdu" (Centre Pompidou, Paris) JLG avoided the trap of translating his cinematic oeuvre into video-installation art by addressing the problem head-on. The perennial *soixante-huitard* served up a glorious, deliberately unsatisfying mess: A scatter art-like installation punctuated with snippets of video montages from the history of cinema came off as deliberately shoddy and unfinished. As the official press release glued to the wall at the show's entrance cited "creative, technical, and financial problems" in realizing the show (with the words *technical* and *financial* crossed out by Godard), it was no secret from the get-go that the auteur was actively thwarting the attempt to institutionalize his work. Not many artists would indulge in such an open celebration of the impossible—nor would they dare to fire the exhibition curator!

**8** Mike Kelley, "Day Is Done" (Gagosian Gallery, New York) A cusp pick from the last months of 2005, Kelley has cast a long shadow into 2006. This Coney Island-like constellation of sculptural installations—cum—stage sets and video projections pushed Kelley's ongoing investigations of adolescent angst, repressed desire, and subcultural milieus to a crescendo of complexity. Inspired by photographs of freaky after-school antics culled from high school yearbooks, his thirty-one *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstructions* created a darkly entertaining portrait of our collective unconscious.

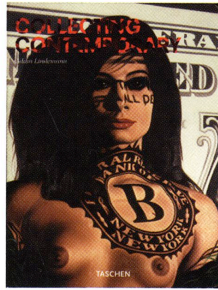
**9** Sophie Calle When Sophie Calle placed a classified ad in the daily newspaper *Libération* this past June seeking a curator for her show in the French Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale, it was a brilliant gesture consistent with her playful, irreverent oeuvre. But the real stroke of genius came when she chose her rigorous compatriot Daniel Buren from among the "approximately two hundred candidates." No matter the end result, Sophie's Choice is perhaps one of her best conceptual works to date.

**10** *Collecting Contemporary*, Adam Lindemann (Taschen) If the '90s were about the figure of the Curator, our current zeitgeist is focused on the cult of the Collector. Lindemann managed to get all the major art-world players from Charles Saatchi and Baroness Marion Lambert to Barbara Gladstone and Glenn Lowry, to weigh in on art and commerce. More a trashy confessional than a how-to, this juicy tome is tantamount to art porn. Amid all the cheap thrills and egomania, there are some sociological pearls to be gleaned from these gossip tales of flipping famous artworks, secondary-market speculation, and rivalry among artists and dealers. □

1. View of "A four dimensional being writes poetry on a field with sculptures: an exhibition curated by the artist Charles Ray," 2006. 2. Ashley Bickerton, *Green Reflecting Head Sam No. 2*, 2006, printed paper with steel pins, 49 x 39". 3. View of "David Hammons: The Unauthorized Retrospective," 2006, Triple Candie, New York. 4. John Currin, *2070*, 2005, oil on linen, 36 x 28". 5. Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale. Il cielo di Venezia (Spatial Concept, The Sky of Venice)*, 1961, oil on canvas, 59 1/2 x 59 1/2". 6. Yves Klein, *Untitled monogold (MG 17)*, 1960, gold leaf on board, 78 3/4 x 60 3/4". 7. View of "Voyage(s) en utopie, Jean-Luc Godard, 1946–2006: à la recherche d'un théorème perdu," 2006, Centre Pompidou, Paris. 8. Mike Kelley, *Devil's Door*, 2005, mixed media with video projection and photographs. Installation view, 2006. 9. Classified ad placed by Sophie Calle in *Libération*, June 16, 2006. 10. Cover of Adam Lindemann's *Collecting Contemporary* (Taschen, 2006).



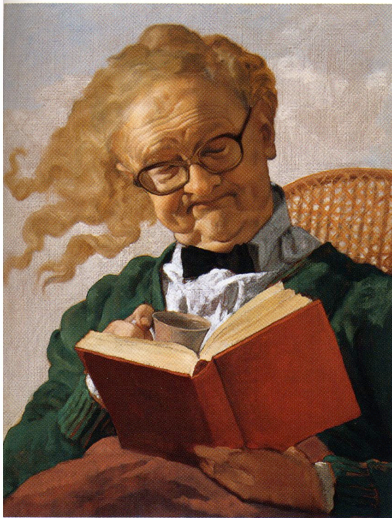
1



10



3



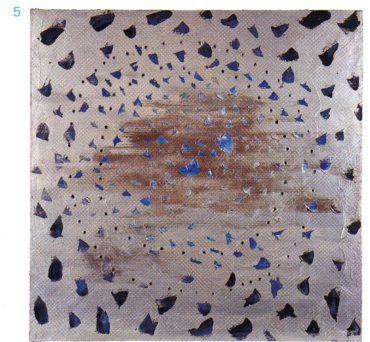
4



6



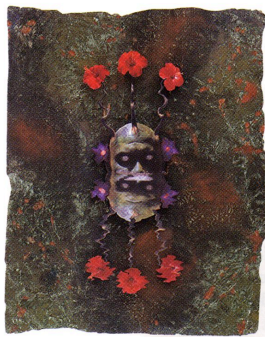
7



5



9



2



8