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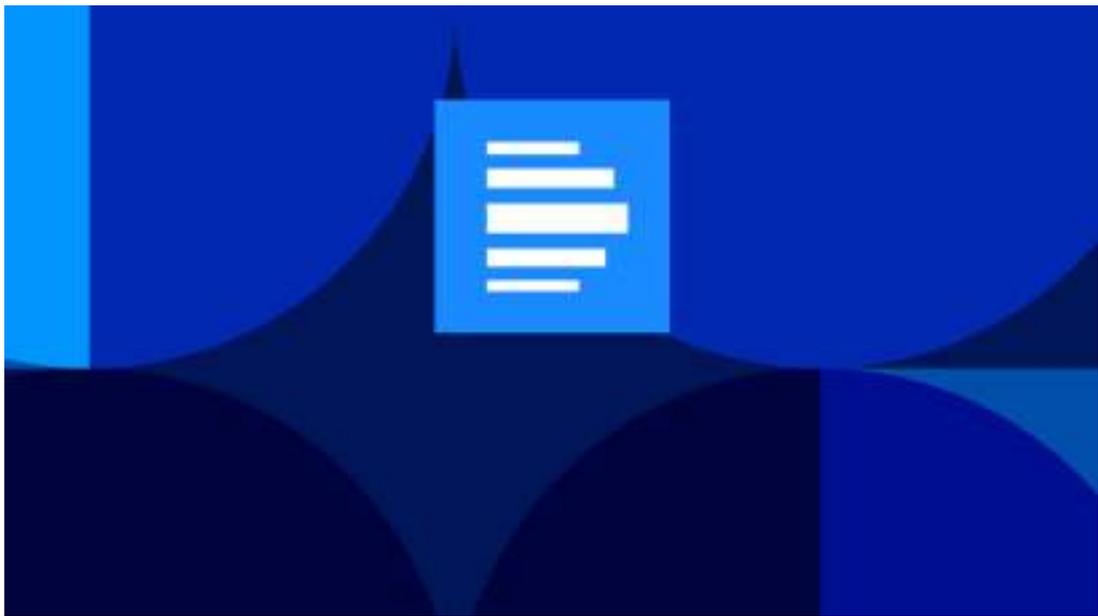
Schawuot als Performance: Interview mit der Künstlerin Rachel Libeskind

Schulz, Benedikt | 13. Juni 2024, 09:41 Uhr

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Künstlerin und LABA-Fellow Roey Victoria Heifetz



Künstlerin und LABA-Fellow Ella Ponizovsky Bergelson

„Wir wollen jüdische Kunst aus dem Ghetto herausholen“

Das Residency-Programm LABA stellt jüdische Kunst aus und liefert damit einen Vorausblick auf den Wiederaufbau der Synagoge Fraenkelufer als Kulturzentrum. Ein Gespräch mit den drei Macher:innen

INTERVIEW: HANNO HAUENSTEIN

Wie funktioniert jüdische Kunst im Spannungsfeld zwischen Gebrochenheit und Wiederaufbau, Zerstörung und Reparatur, Krise und Heilung? Mit diesen Fragen setzen sich acht in Berlin lebende jüdische Künstler:innen im Zuge des Residency-Programms „LABA Berlin: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture“ auseinander.

Das Programm nutzt religiöse Texte als künstlerische Inspiration und will die Vielfalt jüdischer Kunst und Kultur im öffentlichen Raum sichtbar machen. Die Gruppenausstellung im CLB am Moritzplatz, die Ergebnisse dieser Auseinandersetzung vorstellt, umfasst neben Kunst auch Vorträge, Filme und eine Drag-Show. LABA Berlin ist eine Initiative des Jüdischen Zentrums Synagoge Fraenkelufer e.V., das in den vergangenen Jahren den Wiederaufbau des zerstörten Hauptteils der Synagoge als Kultur- und Gemeindezentrum in Angriff genommen hat. Ziel ist es, einen Raum für jüdische Kultur im Herzen Kreuzbergs zu schaffen. Wir haben die Leute hinter dem LABA-Programm zum Interview getroffen: den Wissenschaftler und Vorsitzenden des Jüdischen Zentrums Fraenkelufer, Dekel Peretz, die Künstlerin und LABA-Absolventin Rachel Libeskind und den Künstler Olaf Kühnemann.



Olaf Kühnemann, Dekel Peretz, Rachel Libeskind: das Team des Residency-Programms „LABA Berlin: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture“. BELLA LIEBERBERG

LABA Berlin geht nun ins zweite Jahr. Wie ist die Idee ursprünglich entstanden?

DEKEL PERETZ: Wir haben uns gefragt: Was brauchen wir, um ein jüdisches Kulturzentrum zu schaffen und dieses mit Leben zu füllen? Wir wollten die Inhalte für dieses Zentrum schon vor dem eigentlichen Bau festlegen, um den Menschen ein Bild davon zu geben, was wir vorhaben. Schließlich planen wir nicht nur, eine Synagoge zu bauen, sondern vor allem ein Kultur- und Kunstzentrum. Olaf Kühnemann und ich hatten zuvor bereits in einem anderen Projekt zusammengearbeitet.

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Ich war letztes Jahr selbst LABA-Stipendiatin und wurde in diesem Jahr als Creative Director eingeladen. Als Künstlerin, die in Berlin aufgewachsen ist und lange in New York gelebt hat, ist Berlin als Ausdrucksort jüdischer Kultur für mich von zentraler Bedeutung.

Als Residency-Programm existiert LABA auch an Standorten wie New York. In Berlin wirkt ein solches Programm außergewöhnlich. Denkt man in Deutschland an jüdische Kunstausstellungen, kommt historisch zuerst die Nazi-Ausstellung „Entartete Kunst“ in den Sinn. Wie begegnen Sie dieser Frage: Was ist jüdische Kunst?

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Jüdische Kunst ist nicht wirklich definierbar. Was LABA so einzigartig macht, ist, dass es Künstler:innen

zusammenbringt, die sich gemeinsam mit jüdischen Texten auseinandersetzen. Für mich war es das erste Mal, dass ich in einem säkularen Kontext und gemeinsam mit anderen religiöse Texte beackern konnte. Das Thema damals lautete „Chosen“, was sich leicht mit Nationalismus und religiösen Konflikten in Verbindung bringen lässt. Es ist ein politisch sehr stark aufgeladenes Thema. LABA ermöglichte mir, mit anderen zusammen darüber nachzudenken, was es bedeutet, Jüdin in Berlin zu sein, und damit ein intellektuelles Erbe aufzugreifen, das weit vor den Zweiten Weltkrieg zurückreicht. In LABA ist der Schwerpunkt nicht Holocaust und Schoah, sondern jüdisches Literaturerbe und jüdische Identität. Wir versuchen, die jüdische Kunst aus dem Ghetto herauszuholen.

DEKEL PERETZ: Wir wollen dadurch auch die Vorstellungen von Menschen, was jüdische Kunst ist, in Frage stellen. Es geht eben nicht um Menorahs oder Mezuzahs, sondern um einen intellektuellen jüdischen Prozess. Wir versuchen hier nichts zu essenialisieren, sondern die literarische Tradition des Judentums mit Kunst zu verschränken. Das Haus, das wir bauen wollen, soll ein Ort werden, wo jüdische und nichtjüdische Besucher:innen kommen können, um an kritischen gesellschaftlichen Auseinandersetzungen Berliner Jüdinnen und Juden teilzuhaben.

Was macht das LABA-Programm zeitgenössisch?

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Unser aktuelles Programm, das parallel zur Ausstellung läuft, ist ein gutes Beispiel. Eine der Fellows, Roey Victoria Heifetz, hat etwa eine Rednerin aus London eingeladen, die sich mit den Überschneidungen zwischen Antisemitismus und Transphobie beschäftigt.

DEKEL PERETZ: Wir sollen zeigen, wie zeitgenössisches jüdisches Denken aussieht. Wenn man jüdisches Denken hört, denkt man in Deutschland oft an Rabbiner mit Bart und den orthodoxen Kontext. Das jüdische Zentrum soll aber auch eine Heimat für eine breite Diaspora jüdischer Intellektueller und Kulturschaffender sein. Wir wollen Berlin zu einer Drehscheibe für die jüdische Welt machen und versuchen, es mit jüdischen Netzwerken in Paris, New York, London, Tel Aviv und so weiter zu verbinden.

OLAF KÜHNEMANN: Wenn man die aktuelle Ausstellung besucht, könnte man meinen, es sei nur eine weitere Gruppenausstellung. Aber der Prozess, der zu diesen Werken führt, ist intellektuell weitreichend. Für uns bedeutete das ein volles Jahr Vorbereitung. Für die Fellows sind es etwa sechs Monate, in denen wir in Diskussionen versuchen, eine Community zu erzeugen.

Sie erwähnten den Raum, den Sie hinter der Synagoge am Fraenkelufer neu aufbauen und mit LABA inhaltlich bespielen wollen. Worum geht es da genau?

DEKEL PERETZ: Das Projekt sieht vor, anstelle des zerstörten Hauptsaaß der ehemaligen Synagoge, die früher mal eine der größten Synagogen Berlins war, ein jüdisches Kultur- und Gemeindezentrum wieder aufzubauen. Im Grunde stellen wir uns einen Raum vor, der eine Adresse werden kann, um in Berlin jüdische Kunst und



Interdisziplinäre Künstler:in und LABA-Fellow Perel

ANTON TAL

Kultur zu erleben. Dort sollen das ganze Jahr über Aktivitäten stattfinden.

RACHEL LIBESKIND: So viele Bereiche jüdischen Lebens in Berlin sind von rigidem Gatekeeping bestimmt. Das Fraenkelufer-Konzept ist dagegen eines der offenen Tür. Viele Deutsche haben eine sehr monolithische Vorstellung davon, was jüdische Kultur sei. Dabei ist sie eine lebendige, teils auch widersprüchliche Sache. Das wollen wir mit diesem Projekt zeigen.

Gibt es einen Zeitplan, wann dieses neue Zentrum umgesetzt werden soll?

DEKEL PERETZ: Es wird zirka fünf Jahre dauern. Wir hoffen, Ende nächsten Jahres einen konkreten Plan vorzulegen, wie die Räumlichkeiten aussehen werden. Durch LABA zeigen wir jetzt schon, worin der Zweck dieser Idee besteht.

Das diesjährige LABA-Thema lautet „Broken“ – worauf bezieht sich das?

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Die Themen sind jährlich für alle LABA-Hubs so konzipiert, dass sie das Universelle, Politische und das Persönliche miteinander verbinden können. Ein Großteil jüdischen Denkens dreht sich um Fragen der Gebrochenheit und Reparatur. Aber das Thema hat natürlich viele Ebenen, die darüber hinausgehen. Einige der Ansätze der jetzigen Ausstellung sind sehr ernst, andere eher satirisch.

DEKEL PERETZ: „Broken“ scheint mir sehr gut zu dem zu passen, was derzeit in der Welt geschieht, auf der politischen wie

**„Wir fragten uns:
Wie können wir
diese Grenzen dessen,
worüber Jüdinnen und Juden
in Deutschland
sprechen können,
aktiv erweitern?“**

auf der persönlichen Ebene. Wenn wir uns eingestehen, dass wir alle auf die ein oder andere Weise kaputt sind, ist das ein guter Weg, um Gemeinsames zu erkennen. „Broken“ ist so gesehen ein Thema, das mit einem Gefühl der Demut beginnt.

Was sind in Highlights der Ausstellung?

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Das eigentliche Herzstück der Ausstellung ist der Lernprozess selbst. Sowie die drei Berührungspunkte, die LABA ausmachen: Dass wir uns als Juden identifizieren, in Berlin leben und Kunst machen – das ist das eigentliche Highlight. Mich begeistert in diesem Jahr außerdem beispielsweise die Arbeit von Ella Ponzovsky Bergelson. In den gemeinsamen Diskussionen äußerte sie sich lautstark darüber, wie schwer es ihr fällt, die Frauenfeindlichkeit, die dem talmudischen Text in ihren Augen innewohnt, zu überwinden.

DEKEL PERETZ: Ich würde nicht sagen, dass sie den Text an sich ablehnt, eher das patriarchalische, rabbinische System, das Frauenperspektiven ausblendet. Konkret schneidet sie in ihrer Arbeit kleine Versatzstücke von Text aus dem Talmud, also einzelne Wörter oder Sätze, und schreibt und interpretiert ihn dadurch gewissermaßen neu. Es ist ein Prozess des Schreibens durch Entfernung, nicht durch Hinzufügung.

OLAF KÜHNEMANN: Die Künstlerin selbst beschreibt das so, dass sie den Talmud durch ihren Vandalismus editiert, wengleich das aus einem tiefen Gefühl des Respekts heraus geschieht.

Wenn Sie so erzählen, klingt das ein bisschen, als sei LABA eine Art „Safe Space“ für Jüdinnen und Juden. Gleichzeitig kommen sicherlich viele nicht-jüdische Menschen in die Ausstellung, um diese Kunst zu sehen. Wie gehen Sie mit dieser Spannung um?

DEKEL PERETZ: Diese Reibung ist genau, was wir wollen. Wir wollen mit dem Diskurs interagieren und ihn der Öffentlichkeit zurückspeiegeln. Und dadurch auch die Freiheiten der Künstler:innen erhöhen und die Grenzen des deutschen Diskurses sprengen.

OLAF KÜHNEMANN: Unser ultimatives Ziel ist es, klischeehafte Bilder und Geschichten zu brechen, damit eine Öffnung im Diskurs entsteht.

Wie vermitteln Sie diese Hintergründe dem deutschen Publikum?

DEKEL PERETZ: Wir haben nicht das Gefühl, dass wir Kunst als jüdische Kunst definieren müssen. Wir zeigen einfach die Ergebnisse, die aus der Reflexion über jüdisches Erbe und jüdische Identität entstanden sind. Sie sprechen für sich.

RACHEL LIBESKIND: Ich denke hier an das Beispiel der Malerin Charlotte Salomon. Sie hat dieses großartige Werk „Leben? Oder Theater?“ über ihr Leben in der Weimarer Republik geschaffen. Es wurde lange Zeit nur in jüdischen Kontexten gezeigt. Erst vor zirka zwei Jahren wurde es in einem nicht-jüdischen Museum präsentiert. Deutschland versucht aus historischen Gründen, Räume für jüdische Kunst zu schaffen. Aber das führt oft zu kultureller Segregation und einer Art Selbst-Ghettoisierung. Es gibt ein Narrativ in Deutschland, das Juden und Jüdinnen klar definiert, damit sie sich bloß nicht widersprechen – oder gar dem deutschen Status quo. Diese Art stagnierenden, auch unflexiblen Denkens ist genau das, wogegen LABA Berlin vorgeht.

Ist LABA in Ihren Augen eher ein genuin jüdisches oder genuin künstlerisches Projekt?

DEKEL PERETZ: In den USA haben viele Juden und Jüdinnen zwar eine jüdische Identität, sprechen aber dennoch über sehr viele verschiedene Themen. Nehmen Sie Bernie Sanders, der ja aus einer jüdischen Perspektive kommt, aber zu Dingen Stellung bezieht, die universell sind. Da steht er in einer langen Tradition jüdischer Sozialisten. Ähnlich versuchen wir, jüdische Positionen zu entwickeln, die jenseits des Raums liegen, der Juden in der deutschen Gesellschaft eingeräumt wird – der Raum von Antisemitismus, Rassismus und Minderheitenpositionen. Wir fragten uns: Wie können wir die Grenzen dessen, worüber Juden in Deutschland sprechen können, aktiv erweitern? Die Künstler:innen in der diesjährigen Ausgabe von LABA sprechen über Patriarchat, Kolonialismus, Sexualität, Gender, Familie, Behinderung und vieles weitere. Wir bringen also universelle Themen ein, nur eben aus jüdischer Perspektive.

Die Beteiligten legen Wert auf die Verwendung von Sonderzeichen zur Sichtbarmachung aller Geschlechter.

LABA Berlin: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture.
Ausstellung bis 22. Oktober im Aufbau-Haus am Moritzplatz, Prinzenstr. 84.2. Das volle Programm unter www.laba.berlin.



THILO MISCHKE

Kolumne

„Freiheit“ ist zum Kampfbegriff geworden

„Naja, wir können keinen Feiertag haben, an dem die November-Pogrome waren.“

Der 3. Oktober fühlt sich für Ost-Berliner, wie meine Eltern es nun mal sind, wie ein christlicher Feiertag an: Man muss nicht arbeiten, super, aber persönliche Bezüge zum Tag existieren nicht.

„Wollen wir nach Wiepersdorf?“, frage ich meine Eltern an diesem orientierungslosen Montag. Die Wolken drücken sich herbstlich in die Straßen und schmiegen sich an die Dachstühle dieser Stadt. Die Stimmung ist wie am zweiten Weihnachtsfeiertag. Es riecht nur nicht nach Winter, weil sich keiner traut zu heizen.

Meine Mutter freut sich. Vater ebenso. Das Schloss Wiepersdorf ist für meine Familie wichtig, mehr als 60 Jahre lang wurde dort gearbeitet, gelebt, wurden Sommerferien verbracht. Das Schloss liegt bei Jüterbog. Im langweiligen, staubigen Süden Brandenburgs. Es war Unterkunft für Bettina von Arnim, für die Gebrüder Grimm, für die Kultur-elite der DDR und, nun ja, auch für Familie Mischke. Bis vor drei Jahren eine neue

Betreiberin kam, die meiner Familie und mir den Zutritt verwehrte.

Wir fahren trotzdem hin, setzen uns in den Garten und essen trockene Stullen, die meine Mutter in einer Plasteschale transportiert. Wir reden im Schlossgarten über früher. Und über Freiheit.

Der 3. Oktober ist ein Tag, an dem Deutschland die Freiheit feiern will, und ich denke oft über diesen Begriff nach. Über diese Freiheit. In den letzten Jahren ist „Freiheit“ zum Kampfbegriff geworden. Erst trieben die privilegierten Querdenkenden durch die Straßen und brüllten sich mit Schaum vorm Mund in die eigene Unfreiheit. Dann wurde der Krieg in der Ukraine zum Freiheitskampf Europas an der Ostgrenze hochgezogen. Dabei ist der Kampf in der Ukraine kein Freiheitskampf, sondern ein Kampf ums Überleben ukrainischer Zivilisten. Im Krieg geht es um Leben und Tod, nur wer nicht mitkämpft, denkt, Krieg sei ein Kampf um die richtige Seite. Die Zivilisten werden vergessen, weil es ja um diese Sache geht, die kaum zu verstehen ist. Freiheit.

Was soll diese Freiheit sein? Für wen gilt sie? Und wie nachhaltig ist der Kampf um eine Freiheit?

Natürlich waren die Bürgerrechtsbewegungen in den 80ern in Ost-Berliner Kirchen auf der Suche nach einer neuen Freiheitlichkeit, nach der Abschaffung der Einschränkungen, vollkommen richtig, sie wollten das Sterben an dieser Mauer beenden. Die Bürger sollten frei sein und das bedeutet: frei entscheiden können.

Doch wie sah diese Freiheit dann aus? Was war möglich, nach dem Fall der Mauer? Unvergessen sind die ängstlichen Gesichter der Angestellten unzähliger volkseigener Betriebe und Kombinate. Frauen und Männer, die in floralen (Frauen) und blauen (Männer) Dederonkitteln sofort verstanden, was es bedeutet zu bangen. „Was soll nun werden?“, war die Frage, die sich fast 17 Millionen Menschen vom 9. November 1989 an gefragt haben. Eine Antwort hatte niemand. Viele von ihnen hatten Vorschläge, wie diese Freiheit nun zu gestalten sei. Wie aus der DDR ein freies Land werden könnte.

Zugehört hat kaum einer, umgesetzt wurde nichts. Wer das nicht glaubt, muss nur in den Lebenslauf und in die Vorschläge der letzten Wirtschaftsministerin der DDR Christa Luft blicken. Was frei sein bedeutet, wurde plötzlich von außen bestimmt.

Wir spazieren durch die Wälder hinter dem Schloss Wiepersdorf, meine Mutter rennt vor, pflückt Pilze, mein Vater und ich spazieren nah beieinander und diskutieren diesen Freiheitsbegriff. Es ist ein schönes Gespräch, weil er von zwei Systemen berichten kann, weil er Vergleiche zieht. Weil er ein Linker ist, der sich im Heute wohlfühlt und nicht die DDR wiederhaben will.

„Was bedeutet für dich Freiheit“, frage ich ihn. Und er denkt nicht lange nach. „Alles, was mich im Kleinsten betrifft“, sagt er. „Ob es dir, deiner Mutter oder deinem Bruder gut geht“, sagt er. Und erklärt: „Alles darüber hinaus ist viel zu diffus.“ Dann hebt er eine Kastanie vom Boden auf, gibt sie mir und sagt: „Eine Wiepersdorfer Kastanie, ein Andenken an die Zeit früher. Als wir hier, im Schloss, noch übernachteten durften.“

In meiner Familie ist man sich unsicher einig: Der 9. November wäre, trotz seiner Mehrfachbelegung mit historischen Ereignissen, der bessere Feiertag gewesen. Dieser Gedanke wird jedes Jahr laut formuliert, und jedes Jahr widerspricht mein Vater:



Can Jewish Artists Transcend Germany’s Past?

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BY **DORIS H. GRAY AND DONNA SWARTHOUT** | AUG 29, 2023

In the mid-1990s, the Paris-based historian Diana Pinto hoped that the influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union would catalyze a fresh chapter in Jewish Europe. She envisioned a universal, non-Jewish public sphere that would stand for democratic values, in which Jews would interact as citizens in a pluralist context.

Perhaps nowhere has it been more difficult to enact this universalist vision than in Germany, where a commitment to remembering the horrors of antisemitism is cemented not only into the Jewish consciousness, but the national ethos. Yet today, many of Pinto’s ideas have been embraced by a cohort of Jewish artists unwilling to be confined to what artist Rachel Libeskind calls the “claustrophobic limbo” of Germany’s past.

Today, more than 200,000 Jews live in Germany. Some of these are descended from Holocaust survivors who [resisted pressure by Israel and world Jewry](#) to abandon the “bloodstained territory” of Germany after World War II, but most are immigrants from Israel, Russia, Ukraine and North America. About 100,000 of those are affiliated with the Central Council of Jews in Germany (CCJG), an umbrella group funded by tax dollars that takes care of administrative functions for the Jewish community, such as synagogues, reintroducing [Jewish chaplains into the army](#), and retirement homes. In addition to funding synagogue security and education through a central entity, as several other European countries do, the Central Council tends to set a certain tone culturally that some artists consider to be stifling.

Libeskind is the Creative Director of LABA Berlin, a synagogue-affiliated arts initiative that views ancient Jewish texts as an inspiration for contemporary artistic expression. When she does engage with the past, she does so creatively—in her view, too many Jewish public events consist of panelists sitting on a stage lamenting the rise of antisemitism, and speaking about the need to “never forget” to largely non-Jewish audiences. This April, with Ariel Efraim Ashbel, an artist from Tel Aviv who has been based in Berlin since 2011, Libeskind created a mobile Rites of Spring Passover walk through Berlin. Participants walk through historically significant but little-known sites, such as a memorial to Fritz Flato, a leader of Berlin’s homosexual movement in the 1920s who took his own life after fleeing Nazi persecution. By changing the context in which Jewish rituals are observed, the duo hopes to inform people’s narratives of history and identity.

Creative Directors Rachel Libeskind and Olaf Kühnemann at the final LABA Berlin exhibition in November 2022 at CLB Berlin.

Anna Adam, artist and creator of Germany’s Happy Hippie Jew Bus, believes that some German Jews feel attached to their established roles and identities as Jews, including the special status that sets them apart from other minorities in Germany. “The past should not be a sofa, but a springboard,” she says. Adam herself aims for her Jewishness to infuse a larger sense of community that is based on multiple markers of identity. As part of her work, Adam has built a “convert tunnel.” When visitors enter the tunnel, men go through a symbolic circumcision and women put on a wig as is the custom among some Orthodox Jews. Participants are encouraged to take on clichés associated with being Jewish and are asked how it makes them feel to be a Jew who embodies stereotypes. Adam then counterposes this against a diverse, often secular, Jewish identity. She says her light-hearted and humorous approach to Jewish themes is meant to provide a refreshing change for Germans whose main interaction with Jews has been through remembrance culture events.

The CCJG itself has also tried to introduce Germans to “live Jews” through projects like Meet a Jew, which introduces Jews around the country to groups of non-Jews for informal discussions. “For decades there have been confrontations with dead Jews, with the Holocaust and persecution, memorials and memorial days,” [Daniel Botmann of the CCGJ, who declined to be interviewed for this article, told Hadassah in 2019](#). “It’s far less comfortable for people to confront a living Jew, with a personality and individuality, feelings and convictions.”

The M.S. Goldberg. Photo courtesy of Peter Sauerbaum

Another unconventional project is the M.S. Goldberg Jewish Theater Ship, which anchors in Berlin’s Spree River and on the Wannsee Lake. “We need to have more lively discussions about Jewish life in Germany, but such discussions are not occurring within congregations,” says Judith Kessler, who is on the ship’s crew. “So we create a space for them in the artistic arena.” Peter Sauerbaum, the project’s director, agrees. “We are not primarily oriented toward the enormous losses of the past, but in our performances address the question: Where do we go from here?”

Kunstatelier Omanut is a Berlin-based art studio for Jews and others with disabilities. Judith Tarazi, who directs the studio, links the “special victim” status of Jews and people with disabilities. Kunstatelier Omanut is unique in Germany in that it caters to people with cognitive and/or physical disabilities while also opening its studio doors to people without disabilities. Everyone can join in to paint, draw, and make candles or mosaics. “In creating art together, we create communities of people with equal rights and standing in the larger German society,” Tarazi says. “It is individual pieces that create a beautiful mosaic.”

Top image: Kunstatelier Omanut, courtesy of Judith Tarazi.

Doris H. Gray is the author of four books, including Leaving the Shadow of Pain: A cross-cultural exploration of truth, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing (2020). Before becoming an academic at Florida State University and at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, she worked as a foreign correspondent from several African countries for the German Press Agency (dpa). She also holds an honorary professorship at Roskilde University in Denmark.

Donna Swarthout is the editor and coauthor of A Place They Called Home. Reclaiming Citizenship. Stories of a New Jewish Return to Germany (2018). She has been writing about Jewish life in Germany since moving to Berlin from the United States in 2010.

Arts Berlin Germany Holocaust Education

ONE THOUGHT ON “CAN JEWISH ARTISTS TRANSCEND GERMANY’S PAST?”

Lottie says: August 30, 2023 at 12:48 pm

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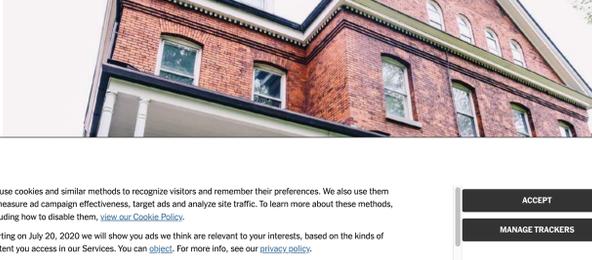
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ART REVIEW

On Governors Island, Art Interventions Are Everywhere

NADA House hosts 66 galleries, nonprofits and artist-run spaces arrayed in and around stately officers' residences. Expect the refreshingly unfamiliar.



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A painting by Matthew Kirk, presented by Fierman, New York, features a field of drifting hieroglyphs and marks, some of which reflect the artist's Native American background. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

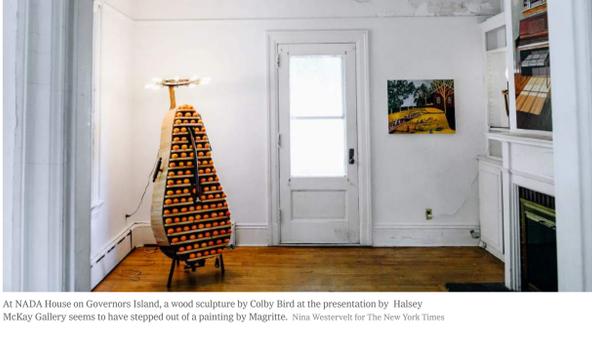
By Roberta Smith

May 6, 2021

If you want respite from the moneyed, big-name glamour of some of your larger art fairs, you can, in one little trip, leave it all behind; see some relatively untrammelled parts of New York and also revisit the way that many things in the art world begin — that is, in a D.I.Y., grass-roots situation, when people take things into their own hands. If you want V.I.P. services at this event, you'll have to bring your own; snacks and fluids are recommended and of course sensible shoes. The V.I.P. lounge is a huge greensward graced by tall, regal trees.

I refer to “NADA House 2021,” which opens Saturday on Governors Island in New York Harbor and runs through Aug. 1. It is not an art fair, technically, but it remains a lively, confab of art, artists, dealers and such organized by the New Art Dealers Alliance or NADA. To get there requires a short ferry ride from Lower Manhattan or Brooklyn. (The Brooklyn ferry runs only on weekends right now.) An eight-minute walk — past Castle Williams, a circular red sandstone fortification from the early 19th century — brings you to Colonels Row, a string of stately brick officers' residences. “NADA House 21” occupies five of them side by side, from 403 to 405 Colonels Row.

NADA was founded in 2002 by younger, mostly New York dealers, looking for mutual support and an art fair to call their own. In 2019 it staged a Gallery Open to coincide with Fair Week and its first “NADA House” show on Governors Island. Covid-19 caused the cancellation of the second Governors Island outing.



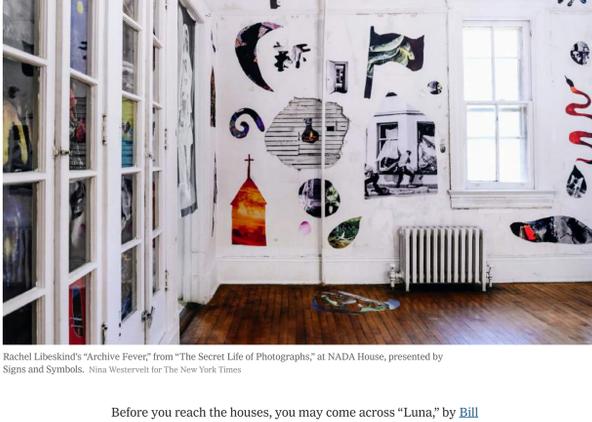
At NADA House on Governors Island, a wood sculpture by Colby Bird at the presentation by Halsey McKay Gallery seems to have stepped out of a painting by Magritte. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

The current “NADA House 2021” is offering work by more than 100 artists from 66 galleries, curators and artist-run or alternative spaces from the United States and around the world. (Many of the names here may be pleasantly unfamiliar.)

It was still a work in progress when I visited twice this week, with rooms waiting for dealers or artists to show up. What is already there to see is enough to compel me to return to see what finally lands.

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The art is everywhere, in front halls, kitchens and pantries, in rooms once used for living, dining and sleeping. A collective that calls itself Turn On has decorated all the light switches. These quirky interventions, which crop up frequently, are always a welcome sight.

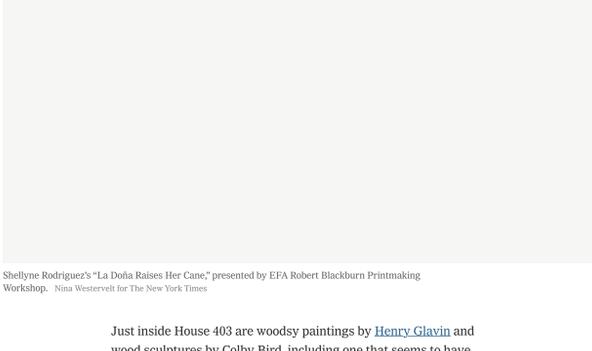


Rachel Libeskind's “Archive Fever,” from “The Secret Life of Photographs,” at NADA House, presented by Signs and Symbols. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

Before you reach the houses, you may come across “Luna,” by [Bill Saylor](#) (of Magenta Plains gallery), an engaging outdoor sculpture that cleverly accommodates his improvisational painting style with a panoply of graffiti-like phantasms on five thick, white panels that converge like an eccentric kiosk.

On the porch of 405A, a big painting by [Matthew Kirk](#) (Fierman) may attract you with its field of drifting hieroglyphs and marks, some of which reflect Kirk's Native American background. The canvas, which is two-sided, is raw and unstretched and held aloft by a wood support on a base of bricks, cinder blocks, grass and a snail.

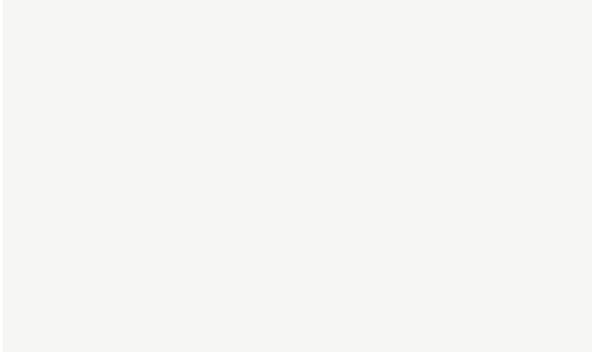
As you approach House 403, you'll hear “Isla a Isla” (Island to Island), six short pieces by sound artists and composers presented by Embajada, a gallery in San Juan, P.R., starting with a percussion piece by Eduardo F. Rosario that sounds like a well-tempered wind chime.



Shellyne Rodriguez's “La Doña Raises Her Cane,” presented by EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

Just inside House 403 are woody sculptures by [Henry Glavin](#) and wood sculptures by Colby Bird, including one that seems to have stepped out of a painting by Magritte (Halsey McKay).

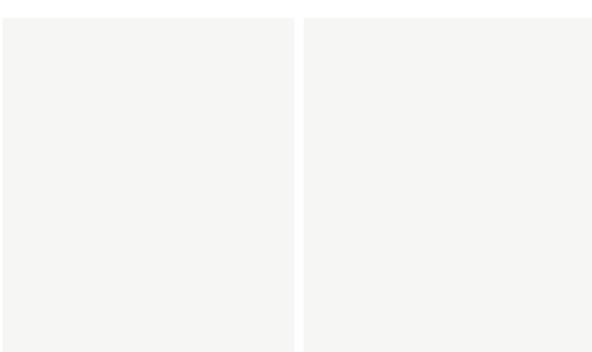
The upstairs landing is dominated by the muscular realism of Shellyne Rodriguez's “La Doña Raises Her Cane” (EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop). In a feat of 3-D trompe Poel, Pablo Gómez Uribe (Proxyco) has turned a small room into a workshop with a chaotic pile of bricks and an orderly line of bisected ones, meticulously made of sheets of wood. All are palpably weightless, even the sledge hammers covering one wall. In another room, the veteran artist [Ken Grimes](#) gives a full sense of his illustrational style and his obsession with science-fiction and things extraterrestrial, paying homage to figures like Carl Sagan and Arthur Clarke ([Ricco/Maresca](#)).



Work by Ken Grimes, presented by Ricco/Maresca Gallery. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

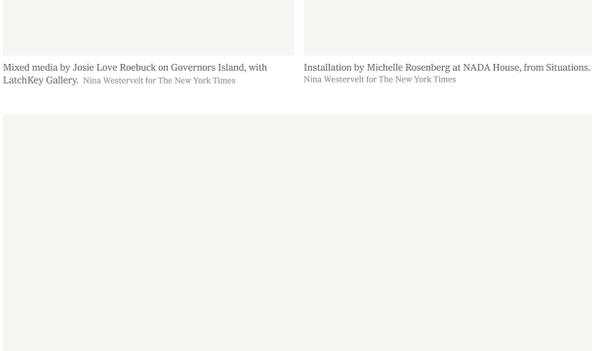
At 404A, a cloak room furnished with works in wood by Quintin Rivera Toro includes a bench, available for use, titled “This Almond Tree Will Save Our Country” ([Zawahra Alejandro](#)). Textiles speak loudest here. [Kira Dominguez Hultgren](#) (Eleanor Harwood Gallery) has nearly overwhelmed one room with riveting textiles. The monumental “No Dogs Allowed,” a fan-shaped structure of cord and thread nominates this artist as the heir to Sheila Hicks.

Across the hall, [Josie Love Roebuck](#) (Latchkey Gallery) does similarly riveting things with embroidery, patchwork and paint that yield big wall hangings. “Magnificently Willful” celebrates her hair, its long strands cascading from the painting onto the floor like a curtain. [Nikholis Planck](#) (Magenta Plains) has lined part of the hallway with intriguing little paintings — executed on egg-size ovoids. Upstairs, Michelle Rosenberg (Situations) has converted a closet into a magical wonderland of discarded brushes wittily refurbished with colorful bristles.



Mixed media by Josie Love Roebuck on Governors Island, with LatchKey Gallery. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

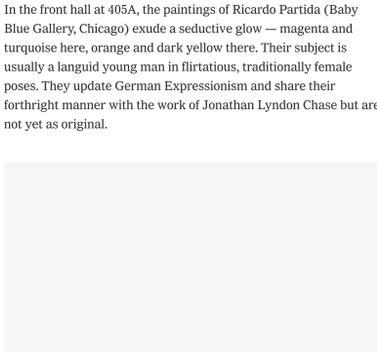
Installation by Michelle Rosenberg at NADA House, from Situations. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times



The “Swimming Room” with balls of chalk, by Ana Bidart with José Bienvenu Gallery. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

At 404B, the front hall, a gauntlet of the vigorous sign-like paintings of the outsider artist [Willie Jinks](#) (Shrine) exudes a creative freedom beside which much junk around it pales. Ana Bidart's “Swimming Room” has covered the floor with a plastic board of vivid blue, leaving substantial balls of chalk for visitors to draw with ([José Bienvenu Gallery](#)). Two cryptic videos are recommended: The poetic “Halo Nevus” by the Welsh-Gambian artist [Tako Taal](#) alternates mysterious narrative scenes with close-ups of flooding water, accompanied by mesmerizing music (Patricia Fleming Gallery). Evan Mast's “Landscape #2” is a 9-minute filming shot of the streets and alleys of Taiwan, whose concentration on parked, shrouded motorbikes does in fact conjure mountains (Brackett Creek Exhibitions).

In the front hall at 405A, the paintings of Ricardo Partida (Baby Blue Gallery, Chicago) exude a seductive glow — magenta and turquoise here, orange and dark yellow there. Their subject is usually a languid young man in flirtatious, traditionally female poses. They update German Expressionism and share their forthright manner with the work of Jonathan Lyndon Chase but are not yet as original.



Paintings by Ricardo Partida at the NADA exhibition on Governors Island. Presented by Baby Blue Gallery, Chicago. Nina Westervelt for The New York Times

In the dining room, the artist Rachel Libeskind (Signs and Symbols Gallery) has dotted every surface of a large room with cutout images for “Archive Fever.” It's an airy walk-in collage, immersive and buoyant, like a Joan Miró painting reimaged by Hannah Hoch.

At 405B, Johannah Herr (Geary) creates a meditation on banana republics in Latin America and their propping up by the United States. It features striking tropical wallpaper centered on portraits of Latin American dictators; a colorful rug, replete with guns, greenbacks, and the Chiquita Banana logo and a remarkably readable poster that grimly traces the 1954 coup that ended Guatemala's first democratic government.

“NADA House 2021” shows an organization evolving into a hybrid of exhibition and art fair. It remains a vital clearinghouse, reminding us how much the larger art fairs leave out, exposing grass roots everywhere.

NADA House 2021

Saturday through Aug. 1, Governors Island, 403-405 Colonels Row; [212.594.0883](#); [newartdealers.org](#). Open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. For ferry schedules and details about getting to the island: [govisland.com/visit-the-island](#).

Rachel Libeskind

06.02.2017 17:42 Uhr

Die Kunstgläubige

Das Jüdische Museum führte die Familie nach Berlin, wo Rachel Libeskind aufwuchs. In New York tritt sie nun mit eigenen Werken aus dem Schatten des Vaters. VON LUKAS HERMSMEIER



Religion und Familie. In ihren Bildern, Installationen und Erzählungen kommt Rachel Libeskind immer wieder auf diese Themen... FOTO: POLA ESTHER

Das härteste Kunstpublikum? Eine Gruppe pubertierender Privatschüler, die von ihrer Lehrerin nach Unterrichtschluss in eine Ausstellung gezerrt werden. „Los, fotografiert ruhig und fasst die Dinger an“, sagt die Künstlerin Rachel Libeskind, die an diesem Nachmittag auch ein bisschen Pädagogin sein muss.

Ein freundlicher Befehl zum Nichtlangweilen. Die Mädchen und Jungs nähern sich zaghaft dem Tisch, auf dem sich „die Dinger“ stapeln: Bücher aus Beton, 30 Kilo schwer, rau, kalt, unlesbare Klumpen. Die Teenager fahren mit den Händen über die Oberflächen, niemand traut sich zuzupacken. Ist ja schließlich Kunst. Rachel Libeskind steht daneben und schaut genau hin. Eine der seltenen Gelegenheiten, ihr Publikum zu studieren.

„**Holy Trash**: My Genizah“ hat Libeskind ihre Ausstellung genannt, für die sie vom Center for Jewish History in Manhattan beauftragt wurde. Weil Schriftstücke mit dem Namen Gottes nicht einfach weggeworfen werden dürfen, haben viele jüdische Institutionen ein riesiges Archiv: die Genisa. Also wühlte sich die 27-Jährige durch und entdeckte Bücher in hebräischer Blindenschrift.

„Für die allermeisten Menschen unmöglich zu lesen. Ich wollte es noch unmöglicher machen“, erklärt Libeskind den Schülern. Sie legte die Werke in einen Holzbehälter, übergoss sie mit Silikon, zog die getrocknete Negativform ab und füllte gefärbten Beton hinein. Heraus kam ein Friedhof der Literaturskulpturen, der jetzt in der großen Halle des Center for Jewish History ausgestellt ist. Holy Trash, heiliger Müll.

Was passiert mit den Büchern nach der Ausstellung?

Ein typisches Rachel-Libeskind-Projekt: **Archive durchsuchen**, **Gegenstände bearbeiten**, Geschichte transportieren. „Ich liebe Dinge“, sagt sie – ein Satz, der so banal wie reif erscheint.

Es sind mal Bücher, mal Dias, mal Teppiche, mal Koffer, die Libeskind zum Gegenstand ihrer Kunst macht. Sie ist fasziniert von Traditionen und Bräuchen, eine künstlerische Genealogin, und springt dabei von Plattform zu Plattform. Vor ein paar Monaten führte sie eine Live-Performance in London auf, im Sommer produzierte sie ein Video für ein Event in der Frankfurter Commerzbank-Arena, dazwischen lief eine weitere Ausstellung in einer New Yorker Galerie. Im vergangenen Jahr trommelte sie für Bernie Sanders und heiratete im Sommer ihren Freund, einen Immobilienentwickler, der aussieht wie der junge Trotzki.

Die braven Schüler sind mittlerweile aufgetaut, stehen im Kreis um Libeskind, die mit ihren 1,52 Metern wie so oft die Kleinste im Raum ist. Übersehen kann man sie nicht. Das liegt an dieser Körperspannung, die hat sie vom Gewichtheben, dazu der fokussierte Blick, die rasenden Worte, die amerikanisch weißen Zähne.

„Was passiert mit den Büchern nach der Ausstellung?“, fragt ein Mädchen. „Dann sind hoffentlich alle verkauft“, antwortet Libeskind. Ein paar Tausend Euro kostet jede Skulptur. Als die Kuratorin sie bittet, von ihrem Werdegang zu erzählen, legt Libeskind los: die Jugend in Berlin, der Umzug nach New York, ihre Großeltern, die den Holocaust überlebten, das komplizierte Verhältnis zum Judentum, ihre Zeit in Harvard. Ihren Vater, den großen Architekten, erwähnt sie nicht.

Sie ist mit ihrem Vater "on the same page"

Ja, **dieser Name. Libeskind**. Der steht nie ganz allein, ist weltweit mit Assoziationen beladen. Aber nirgendwo so sehr wie in Berlin und New York. **In der einen Stadt baute Rachels Vater Daniel das Jüdische Museum**, in der anderen entwickelte er den Masterplan für das neue World Trade Center. In der einen Stadt wurde Rachel Libeskind groß, in der anderen erwachsen. Und wenn sie so von ihrem Leben zwischen Richtfesten und Umzügen erzählt, dann meist in einem Deutschenglischhybrid. „Wir sind super on the same page“, sagt sie über ihren Vater, was natürlich heißen soll, dass sie auf derselben Wellenlänge liegen. „Ich bin eigentlich deutsch. Aber eigentlich überhaupt nicht“, sagt Libeskind – auf Deutsch.

Man kann Libeskins Ausstellung als Mini-Rebellion gegen ihre Erziehung deuten. „In meiner Familie waren Bücher heilig. Bloß nicht die Seiten knicken, bloß nicht bekleckern, bloß nicht fallenlassen“, erzählt sie. „Was ich mit den Büchern gemacht habe, ist maximale Misshandlung.“ Beton gegen das Knicken und Kleckern.

Libeskind kam im Frühjahr 1989 zur Welt, da lebte die Familie noch in Mailand. Ein paar Monate später gewann **Daniel Libeskind** mit seinem Entwurf „Between the Lines“ den Wettbewerb für das Jüdische Museum, die Familie zog nach Berlin. Für Rachel Libeskind war das Jüdische Museum wie ein Familienmitglied. Wenn ihre Mutter Nina Führungen durch den kalten Rohbau gab, lief sie mit. Die Familie lebte in Charlottenburg, Rachel ging in Zehlendorf auf die zweisprachige JFK-Schule, wo sie von der britischen BBC als Cartoon-Sprecherin gecastet wurde, als Stimme der Hauptfigur in der britischen Sendung „Marvellous Milly“. In dieser Zeit entwickelte sie eine Leidenschaft für die Malerei und eine Aversion gegen die Bundesjugendspiele. „Ich war so superklein. Ich habe mir sieben Jahre hintereinander ein Attest geholt.“

Auf ihre Kindheit kommt sie immer wieder zurück, es hört sich nach einer Mischung aus Pippi Langstrumpf und Truman Show an: abenteuerlich, privilegiert. Und ein wenig verstörend. „In meiner Familie war es nicht erlaubt, sich zu langweilen“, sagt sie. Lies was! Mal was! Beschäftige dich! Bloß keine Gleichgültigkeit, kein Stillstand, keine Mittelmäßigkeit. Die Urlaube verbrachte die Familie in barocken Kirchen und nicht am Strand.

Eine Anekdote aus dem Winter 1999, Libeskind war damals zehn Jahre alt und der „Tagesspiegel“ hatte zu einem Weihnachtsgedichte-Wettbewerb aufgerufen, an dem auch ihre Schule teilnahm. Weil **Weihnachten** bei den Libeskins nicht gefeiert wurde, musste die Viertklässlerin ihrer Lehrerin erklären, dass sie nichts beitragen könne. Doch die Lehrerin blieb stur, und so verfasste Rachel schließlich ein Gedicht, in dem eine Schneeflocke langsam an einem Fenster vorbeischiebt und einer glücklichen Familie bei der Bescherung zuschauen muss. Die Schneeflocke ist nicht nur ausgeschlossen, sie weiß auch, dass sie sterben wird, sobald sie den Boden erreicht. Für das Gedicht wurde Libeskind später ausgezeichnet, mit Preisverleihung in der Gedächtniskirche.

Sie wollte einen eigenen Weg zu ihrer Religiosität finden

„Ist das nicht eine unfassbar düstere Geschichte? Aber mir geht's gut, keine Sorge“, sagt die 27-Jährige und lacht kurz

und heftig. Am 9. September 2001 feierte das Jüdische Museum Eröffnung. Doch ein anderes Ereignis, nur einen Tag zuvor, war noch viel prägender. Die Zwölfjährige feierte Bat Mitzwa, was für ihre atheistischen Eltern befremdlich war. „Rachel war schon immer ein unabhängiger Charakter. Insofern passte die Entscheidung zu ihr. Sie wollte mit der Familientradition brechen“, sagt ihre Mutter Nina heute.

Rebellion in Form einer Bat Mitzwa? Sie habe einen eigenen Weg zu ihrer Religiosität finden wollen, sagt Libeskind. In ihrer Familie gab es 33 Rabbis. Um 1900 war es ihr Urgroßvater, der im Namen Liebeskind das E strich. „Er wollte nicht, dass die Leute denken, dass wir deutsch sind“, erklärt sie. **Die Eltern ihres Vaters überlebten den Holocaust** und wendeten sich komplett vom Judentum ab. „Sie sahen in der Religion die Wurzel all ihres Übels.“ Rachel Libeskind weiß immer noch nicht, ob sie religiös ist. „Aber ich weiß, dass ich ein großes Problem mit der Rolle der Frau im Judentum habe. Ich möchte meinen Feminismus nicht für die Religion opfern.“

Sie wirkt älter als 27, wie sie da, bei einem nächsten Treffen, so sitzt, in ihrem Studio, einem großen, hellen Loft, in Bedford-Stuyvesant tief in Brooklyn, eine Camel zwischen den Fingern, im Hintergrund läuft Nina Simone. In einer Ecke stehen Schaufensterpuppenköpfe, in der anderen eine graue Samtcouch, in der Mitte ein riesiger Holztisch. An der Wand hängen sechs Teppiche, die jeweils ein unterschiedliches Bild der Beschneidung Jesu Christi zeigen: ihre nächste Ausstellung. „Ich bin von der Geschichte um die heilige Vorhaut besessen“, sagt Libeskind.

Sie ging auf die Saint Ann's, wie Lena Dunham und Vito Schnabel

Wäre es nach ihrem Vater gegangen, wäre auch sie Architektin geworden. Doch das wollte sie nie. „Man ist so abhängig von anderen. Ich habe meinen Vater leiden gesehen“, sagt sie. Ist es Druck, eine Libeskind zu sein? „Nein, ehrlich gesagt nicht. Es ist vor allem ein Privileg.“ Wenn man Rachel Libeskind nach ihrem Lieblingsgebäude fragt, sagt sie deshalb auch ohne zu zögern: „Das Jüdische Museum.“ Sie sieht ihre Eltern regelmäßig, und sie streiten sich regelmäßig. „Sie sind ältere, weiße, reiche Leute, die in New York leben. Sie haben ein anderes Bewusstsein, zum Beispiel, was den alltäglichen Rassismus betrifft.“ Es sei für sie außerdem schwierig gewesen, anzusehen „wie die Architektur meines Vaters an Radikalität verloren hat. Er ist kommerzieller geworden“.

2003 war es wieder ein gewonnener Architektenwettbewerb, der die Familie Libeskind umziehen ließ. Dieses Mal New York City, das neue World Trade Center. Auf der Saint Ann's, einer kunstorientierten Privatschule in Brooklyn, das für seine Celebrity-Eltern und hohe Gebühren bekannt ist, fühlte sich Libeskind wohler als in Zehlendorf. „Man hat uns wie Erwachsene behandelt.“ Schauspielerinnen **Lena Dunham**, Kunsthändler Vito Schnabel und Modedesigner Zach Posen haben hier ihren Abschluss gemacht. Anschließend belegte Libeskind Französische Literatur in Harvard, bis ein Professor sie fragte, warum sie nicht Kunst studiere. „Ich habe gesagt, dass ich nicht im Schatten meines Vaters stehen will. Und der Professor meinte: Das ist kein guter Grund.“ Das saß. Sie wechselte das Hauptfach und machte 2011 ihren Abschluss in „Visual Arts“.

Noch eine Camel, dann zieht Rachel Libeskind ihren rechten Ärmel hoch. Von der Schulter bis zur Armbeuge zeichnet sich eine kurvige Narbe ab. Ein Skiunfall in der Schweiz vor vier Jahren. Sie lag da im Schnee, der Oberarm zersplittert, fast besinnungslos, und starrte ins Blau. „Ein erhebener Moment.“ Neun Monate konnte sie kaum arbeiten, danach begann sie mit Gewichtheben und hörte nicht mehr auf, es wurde eine Sucht. Typisch, dieser Drang, dieser Zwang.

„Lies was! Mal was! Beschäftige dich!“ – würden ihre Eltern sagen.

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Rachel Libeskind, *Desire to Collect*, 2019, collage on Japanese paper with fabric hardener and acrylic airbrush pigment, 33 x 24".

Rachel Libeskind and Carmen Winant

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

102 Forsyth Street

June 2–July 28, 2019

The announcement for [Rachel Libeskind](#) and [Carmen Winant](#)'s show tells us that the artists “practice feminism and motherhood,” as if these were optional items on a menu of exercise regimens. Yet both of them do attempt to grapple with the historic packaging and narrativization of women's bodies and psyches.

Winant's memorable installation at the Museum of Modern Art last year, *My Birth*, 2018, required the viewer to pass through a long hallway plastered with pictures of newborns, pregnancies, and women in labor.

Here, her collages focus on found material about “embodied treatments”—such as dance or scream therapy, marketed to wealthy, white, middle-aged women—which are chaotically assembled but neatly framed. Jostling for attention are cutout images and handwriting in graphite, ink, charcoal, and crayon. The aesthetic calls to mind the torn pages of a searching teenager's diary (*Target Practice* [all works 2019] includes the headings “COMMUNICATION” and “FEELING”) or sketchbook notes from an aspiring art student (“Remember: no one likes to be seen or looked at in unflattering ways!” scolds *Hologram for living*). Often combining reclined nude subjects and snippets of reassuring instructions, the matter for her compositions could have come from guides to shooting portraits or sex manuals for beginners.

The images in Libeskind's collages were taken from an unnamed vintage board game whose pieces included men's and women's faces sliced into separate features. *Desire to Collect*, with its comparative columns of lip, nose, and eye shapes, introduces the dark tinge of a eugenics study. The other works are rather hallucinatory, full of psychedelic airbrushing and asymmetrical compositions. More playful than Winant's pieces, they also lend an undeniable air of paranoia to the show. Together, the artists attempt to reassemble so many fragmented bodies, to relieve some of their pain—but this work is never complete.

— Mira Dayal

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DISCOVER THE ALHAMBRA COLLECTION

FORBES > LIFESTYLE > ARTS

Multi-Media Artist Rachel Libeskind Reveals the Art of Packing in 'The Traveling Bag'

Adam Lehrer Former Contributor
I write about New York's art gallery system and museum structure.

Updated Jun 10, 2015, 05:02pm EDT

This article is more than 9 years old.

Art makes life more beautiful. What would life be without our favorite films, novels, paintings, and records? Dreary, to say the least. That being said, we too often forget of the beauty, relevance, and wonder of the rituals and objects that we engage with on a daily basis. That is why it is so important to understand the work of an artist like Rachel Libeskind, who forces her audience to re-think the significance of and find the beauty in even the most mundane of experiences.

Libeskind is a New York-based multi-media artist merging visual, performance, and installation art who has shown work in Paris, London, Milan, Rome, Austria, Lithuania, and New York. As the daughter of famed architect Daniel Libeskind, who is responsible for the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site, she was exposed to and allowed to think about art from a very young age.

Libeskind will be performing her new piece, *The Traveling Bag*, from June 10 to 20 at the Hotel Chelsea (the performance leads into a show co-penned by Patti Smith and Sam Shepard entitled *Cowboy Mouth: Young Artists at the Chelsea*, for tickets click here). Libeskind was raised by parents who "traveled more than they ever stayed in one place," according to her. Thus, her fascination with the rituals of the mundane manifests here in the form of the suitcase, and its packing and unpacking. I linked up with Libeskind over E-mail to discuss the piece and the ideas behind it and her artistic output.



Rachel Libeskind, photo by Valeria Palermo

Forbes: Seeing as your work holds aspects of visual and performance art, do you know which form grabbed your attention first? Or was all creative expression always a part of your world view?

Rachel Libeskind: I started performing music and was a professional voice-over actress as a child in Berlin. I have always made images or sculptures, collected objects, and loved art. During the self-consciousness of adolescence, I chose visual art in lieu of performance. It was not until I was commissioned to perform at the Festival in Spoleto in summer 2014 that I rediscovered the beauty of live making and live performance. I feel lucky that the persistent ghosts of performance keep pestering me.



Scenes from 'The Traveling Bag'; photo by Lana Barkin

Forbes: You might be sick of being asked about your father, Daniel, and I apologize if that's the case. But being that he is the architect that he is, did that allow you to be exposed to art and creativity at a younger age than most?

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RL: I owe the freedom I feel in my creative expression to my father. He also instilled in me a deep passion to keep pushing the boundaries of art in a cultural context. Growing up, I was exposed to all of the art and media you could ever want a child to see. Vacations were spent in baroque churches, not the beach. Tests were administered to see if I had truly understood what [Piet] Mondrian's work was about, much to my 12-year-old chagrin. I think the most profound artistic trait I inherited from my father was to challenge and defy mediocrity, at whatever cost.



Scenes from 'The Traveling Bag'; photo by Lana Barkin

Forbes: You've said that your process is all about experimentation; do you ever have a plan of where your work is going to take you, or do you just work and see where it goes?

RL: I start with a framework and that delineates the form and context of the work. Experimentation is important, but personal structure is everything. It's a balancing act: being free to experiment without losing sight of what you want to create. Working with theater, film, and music forces me to rethink the roles of the visual artist.



Scenes from 'The Traveling Bag'; photo by Lana Barkin

Forbes: In your upcoming show *The Traveling Bag*, what initially drew you to the idea of the suitcase and its subtext?

RL: I grew up abroad and the suitcase has been a totem in my life. Travel, exile, immigration, emigration; these are the themes that have distilled themselves in my life. I see the legacy of the 20th century lives as encapsulated in a suitcase (one of my heroes, Tadeusz Kantor, once profoundly said "Suitcases are the bearers of memory"). The notion of having 'stuff,' of taking it with you, unpacking it; these are fundamental elements of modern life. Through performing, I am investigating the ritual of the bag. One of these days, when I have done enough research, I will write a book with all of my findings.



Scenes from 'The Traveling Bag'; photo by Lana Barkin

Forbes: From the looks of *The Traveling Bag* and its press release, it seems to carry an influence from Russian writers like Kafka and Nabokov, have you always been drawn to these writers and if so what do their works mean to you?

RL: Absolutely. Kafka and Nabokov are two of my favorite writers. I am a pure-breed Eastern European Jew (In fact, I just got a Polish passport). My blood runs thick with the legacy of post-realism in art and the magical images of Kafka. There is an Eastern sensibility to the suitcase, certainly for Jews, as they were continually being re-located and forced to move. Writers from the East like Dostoyevsky, Gombrowicz, Kantor, Kundera, and Chekov are interested in the dark magic within the mundane. Their work has always spoken to me.

Forbes: Do you consciously attach meaning to inanimate objects in your work or is this just a natural working of your brain?

RL: I think all objects have their own souls, even those that are mass-produced. I think all objects are auratic (**Note: term derives from a philosophy developed by German philosopher Walter Benjamin, "auratic perception"**) and each object holds its own meaning and place in the cultural context. I am not consciously attaching meaning to them. I aim for that meaning to be revealed to me in some way, much like a primitive woman looking for an omen. I work with a lot of found materials, and I often allow that process of finding things to steer the direction of the work. I like to imagine I am just a medium for the ghosts of these objects to poke through the opaque layer of the past, into our present.

Forbes: You've said a skiing accident lead you to ponder your place in the world, do you think that without that injury and its caused isolation you would be the artist that you've become?

RL: I shattered my right humerus on a mountain in Switzerland in January 2012. While laying on the mountain in dramatic pain, I watched the clouds and fog lift to reveal the snow-covered peaks and perfect blue backdrop of the Alps. I think this experience was a true encounter with "the Sublime." The combination of deep pain and profound natural beauty changed something inside me. As a right-hander, I was unable to work for the following 9 months. I was forced to read and think and live a much slower life. It awoke a lot in me, things I think I am still seeing for the first time today.

Forbes: Your work seems to vary between confrontation and expression of love, do you think that an expression of love should or can still be confrontational?

RL: Definitely. Love, like hate, is a confrontation. It is a violent act of vulnerability. The mediation of love and confrontation has revealed itself to be one and the same. I am an impossibly ambivalent person, constantly being swayed between the expression of love, and the confronting of it.

Forbes: Would you argue your work is more cultural or biographical, or does it have to be either of those things and can it be both?

RL: I would hope both. Rather, I think they are the same. The culture I inhabit and the culture I create are deeply biographical. I am as interested in the biographies of my past lives and the cultures that exclude me just as much as I investigate that which is familiar.

Forbes: Like you, I also have great interest in my Jewish heritage and the Jewish experience, but I am personally atheist, are you religious in any traditional sense or are you more just fascinated with the history and culture of Judaism?

RL: I am the first woman on either side of my family to have been Bar Mitzvah'd. My grandparents, who were holocaust survivors, were rigorously anti-religion. It was not until they had passed on that I was 'allowed' to have a religious education. I am interested in Judaism from all perspectives: culturally, spiritually, and especially ritually. Candidly speaking, I feel excluded from the religion because I am a woman, a fact that angers me but is also funny and ironic. I come from a rich lineage of famous talmudic thinkers and Rabbis. I'd like to locate myself in this legacy, despite its efforts to negate my presence. I am proud to be a Jew today, whether or not I prescribe myself to a set of religious codes.

Forbes: What is your own personal definition of "beauty?"

RL: Beauty is ugliness! Beauty is the unexpected magic. Beauty is fleeting and terrifyingly permanent. Beauty is emotional. Beauty is in flux.



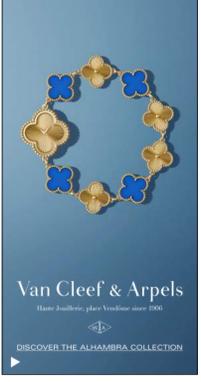
Adam Lehrer is an artist, writer and curator based in New York. Prior to moving to New York, Lehrer thought he'd be an investigative journalist working at local newspapers in Tucson, AZ and... **Read More**

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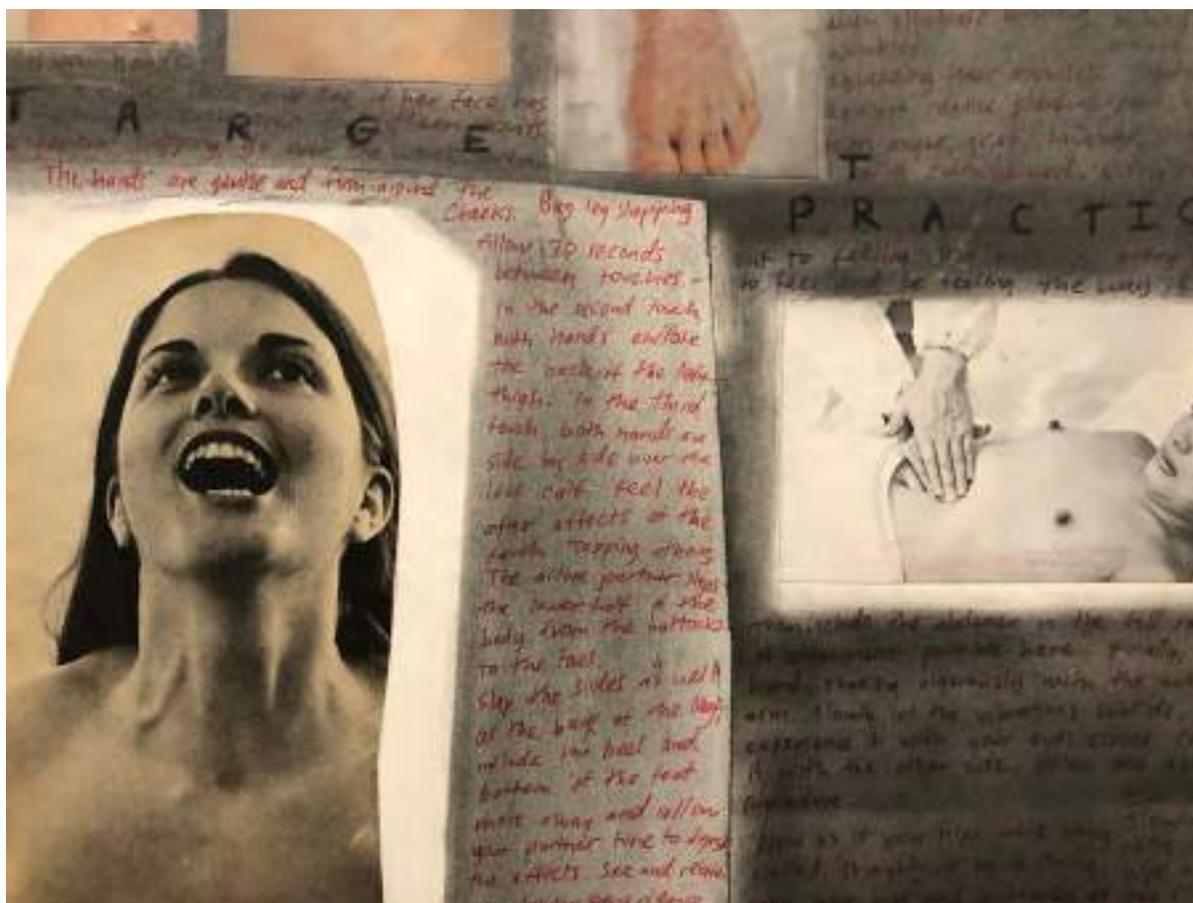
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AnOther

Collages Exploring What Womanhood Means Today

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY / IN PICTURES



Carmen Winant, Target Practice, 2019 (detail) © Carmen Winant; Courtesy of the artist and signs and symbols, New York.

New collages by Rachel Libeskind and Carmen Winant are on show in New York, exploring a dialogue between the two artists' feminist viewpoints and explorations of the female body

JUNE 04, 2019

TEXT Belle Hutton

Collage is an important medium for artists **Rachel Libeskind** and **Carmen Winant**. Though it is just one facet of their oeuvres – Winant is a writer and artist, her work often straddling the realms of photography and photo-montage, and Libeskind works in performance art, painting and sculpture – collage is employed by both to study womanhood.

A freshly opened exhibition in New York, lengthily titled *sensation-sensitivity-creativity-productivity-communication*, shines a light on this aspect of their work, showing how each uses collage as a tool for “social disturbance”. Created from a feminist viewpoint (“feminism is a filter through which I live my life,” Winant told Sophie Bew in *AnOther Magazine A/W18*), their art stems from an interest in the female experience – both individual and universal, historic and contemporary.



GALLERY / 10 IMAGES

sensation-sensitivity-creativity-productivity-communication

Like previous work by Winant, her three new collages centre on found imagery depicting women engaging in a particular activity. Last year saw the Ohio-based artist exhibit *Lesbian Lands*, a piece that focused on the first female-owned commune in the US, created in 1976 by the Oregon Women's Land Trust; *Looking Forward to Being Attacked* brought together images of women practicing self-defence; and 2018's *My Birth*, which has become one of Winant's most recognised works, saw her paste over 2,000 photographs of women in childbirth on two walls of New York's MoMA. For *sensation-sensitivity-creativity-productivity-communication*, Winant's interest is in images of healing processes – specifically therapeutic treatments, like dance therapy, contact therapy, and scream therapy. Overlaid with her own illustrations and handwritten text, the resulting images question if and how we can view the notion of healing and restoring. The text reads as lyrical, descriptive and carefully instructive at once: “The hands are gentle and firm around the cheeks... Allow 30 seconds between touches. In the second touch, both hands enclose the back of the left thigh,” goes a small section.



Rachel Libeskind, Tenacity of Purpose, 2019
© Rachel Libeskind; Courtesy of the artist and signs and symbols, New York.

Libeskind, who was born in Milan, raised in Berlin and is now based in New York, has looked to the natural world, and specifically rocks, to form her new works. Among new collages, three small rock-like sculptures, painted in kaleidoscopic colours, are also on show. The found imagery in her collages are cards showing sections of anonymous faces that were used as pieces of a board game from the 1950s, the aim of which was to create an entire face from these individual features.

The work plays with proportion: lining up mouths and noses underneath giant pairs of eyes, and layering these facial features over bright, rock-shaped backgrounds. A dialogue between natural shapes and contrived faces, Libeskind's working process also offered a contrast, as she created the collages on super-light paper itself reinforced with fabric hardener. In her wider practice, Libeskind's work moves fluidly between techniques and media. "There is something to be said for the female ability to push boundaries in what media is and what mediums are," she has previously said. "Historically, paintings are a very male thing. I think in some ways, either consciously or unconsciously, I'm responding to that."



Carmen Winant, Hunger, 2019

© Carmen Winant; Courtesy of the artist and signs and symbols, New York.

The works by Libeskind and Winant featured in *sensation-sensitivity-creativity-productivity-communication* offer thoughts on identity, and how bodies are literally, figuratively, and willingly touched, torn and spliced. They make for poignant viewing in light of recent restrictions placed on women and their reproductive rights in the artists' country; work like this with a feminist agenda feels particularly valuable. "I see so much progressive work, activist work and intellectual work existing across all platforms and I think it's really amazing," Winant said in AnOther Magazine A/W18. "I guess I do wonder about the trendiness of feminism... I feel as though it always needs to be a radical force. I feel optimistic about it but I also feel really troubled."

sensation-sensitivity-creativity-productivity-communication is at *Signs and Symbols, New York*, until July 14, 2019.



January 24, 2018

Rachel Libeskind seems to do it all. office spoke with the artist at her studio, an airy Red Hook space full of half-finished art ideas, the result of a brain that moves too fast to keep up with itself. Windowsills and shelves are stuffed with books on theory and following magazines, and little trinkets mingle with pieces of garbage found on the street, the abandoned cardboard box a Katy Perry blowup doll came in is more of a treasure than the product itself.

A silicone ice cream cone melts on a coffee table the visitor is afraid to sit a drink on. In her hands, brass hymns are immortalized in concrete, delicate lacy handkerchiefs are imprinted with embroidery — upon closer inspection, you see that the misleadingly dainty letters spell out the signatures of famous world dictators, Trump included.

Interview by Casey Tracy
Performance photos by Bridget Hoot, Lisa
Model courtesy of Rachel Libeskind



We then try to provide a complex, detailed context for a so-called 'the human condition' with a set of three girls, dressed in white robes, sitting on the floor, their heads tilted back, their hands clasped in prayer. The girls are dressed in white robes, their heads tilted back, their hands clasped in prayer. The girls are dressed in white robes, their heads tilted back, their hands clasped in prayer. The girls are dressed in white robes, their heads tilted back, their hands clasped in prayer.



Do you feel a responsibility to be political in art? Does it add to the sense of urgency to produce?

To be sure, it is a capitalistic world, and we are in a capitalist world, which does not only help to shape our social organization, but also our culture. However, it is not my intention to always make work that is so political. The politics of my culture and the topics I choose to investigate, are so much more political enough. To make work that asks people to look at the world they inhabit, or the future they represent, is political. I feel a sense of urgency to produce work that really makes people see all their immediate problems in a new way.



You mentioned the way painting is in a different realm outside other forms of art, why do you choose to engage with both painting and these other mediums? What was the process of learning these different methods of creating, how much was taught in school vs figured out along the way?

Of all of the mediums I use, painting is the only one I "learned" in school. I choose to engage with all the mediums I can because I don't want to limit myself. New mediums mean new techniques, which means new ways of conveying new ideas. My work is informed by the many mediums I like to play around with. To me, providing viewers with different forms that all speak to a single topic is a way to access more people, and more parts of them. Video is a fluid, familiar language we all now speak and understand. Video gives the viewer an immediate entrance into my visual world, and (hopefully) serves as a key for people to look back to when they feel confused or perhaps lost in my strange world they have entered. The paintings serve a similar purpose, paintings themselves are windows into another world — whether you are a well-versed consumer of art, or someone with little exposure to contemporary work, paintings are accessible as a form and give viewers a negotiating ground to examine some of the signs and symbols in the greater work.



What led to you to engage with performance art? When I think of performance art, I tend to picture this feminine/feminist trajectory, with artists like Marina Abramovic, Laurie Anderson and Carolee Schneemann. How much do you think you align/depart from this tradition?

Performing has an immediacy for the artist that no other form offers. It is flexible and immediate and strange, and forces the artist performing to confront their own selves as makers and as narrators for a larger story. Performing for me also gives me another vehicle to share my ideas — another context to explore how people react or feel about different topics, visual cues and symbols. Women are always performing in society. To be “a woman” is not a biological distinction, but rather a performative one. The way we are conditioned to dress, to smile, to cover our mouths when we laugh too hard, to walk, to strut, to bat our eyelashes, to kneel, to be modest, to be sexy, to be desirable, to be easy-going, and so on and so forth. Our lives as women are full of a constant, shifting performance. I think that is why women show up as performance artists, ready to go, having trained their entire lives in the performance of self.

Check out some more of Rachel's recent work, from her show at NYC's [New Release Gallery](#) in October 2017, below.

ARTREPORT

Artist Rachel Libeskind's new performance examines the legacy of Stalin

The artist Rachel Libeskind will be presenting the world premiere of *The Day The Father Died*; her latest performance and installation featuring video, sound, poetry sculptural elements, work on paper and paintings, which will take place on Wednesday, November 29th at 524 West 19th Street in Chelsea, from 6:30-8:30pm.

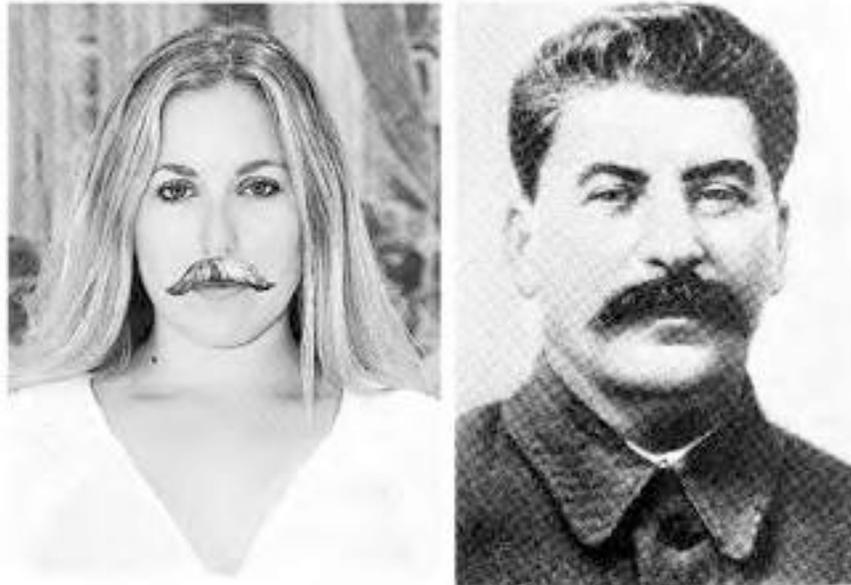


From the same artist who did the original piece titled “*The Travelling Bag*” and the revival of “*Cowboy Mouth*”, Libeskind once again proves she isn't afraid in using the body as a vehicle for personal exploration. Through this performance, Libeskind will combine imagery and poetry, while utilizing a direct performative action and playful irreverence in process and application of image, text, paint, and ink on canvas.



Curated by Mitra Khorasheh within Tanja Grunert gallery, *The Day the Father Died* will explore the death of the Soviet leader and dictator Stalin. By investigating the uncertain relationship between authority and social reality, the performance will seek to frame this moment in history from a female perspective in present time. Through a personal journey which explores Libeskind's past in relation to her grandparents but also to her present, we will be invited in a historical and autobiographical journey, exploring both the death of this historical figure and Libeskind's

attitude in dealing with death as a symbol for this iconic figure. This performance serves as a commentary on the infantilization of society under an authoritarian father-leader paradigm, and as Libeskind's father recalls the confusing day when Stalin's death arrived – delayed through moans and weeps but whispering triumphs that the Vozhd had finally died. “And you have sent a black snowstorm over Moscow” ...



Snowstorm or blizzard, New York should be ready to experience the world premiere of this performance and decide for themselves what death means for this historical figure who attracts all sorts of commentaries, ambivalence being at the core of it all.

- Juliana Steiner, November 23, 2017

Art World

Editors' Picks: 18 Things to See in New York This Week

Artist talks with Michelle Obama portraitist Amy Sherard and Devan Shimoyama are among this week's highlights.

Sarah Cascone, November 27, 2017

Wednesday, November 29–Sunday, December 3



Rachel Libeskind's *The Day the Father Died*. Courtesy of the artist.

11. "Rachel Libeskind: The Day the Father Died" at Khorasheh + Grunert
Brooklyn artist Rachel Libeskind's new performance and installation piece centers on the death of one of the 20th century's greatest villains, Josef Stalin. Libeskind traces her own lineage to the Gulag, where her Polish Jewish parents met, to explore the dictator's fraught and complex legacy.

Location: Khorasheh + Grunert, 524 West 19th Street

Price: Free

Time: Performance/premiere, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

—Caroline Goldstein

Relative Values: The World Trade Center architect Daniel Libeskind and his daughter, Rachel

The World Trade Center architect Daniel Libeskind, 70, and his daughter, Rachel, 27, an artist, talk about the Holocaust, strict rules at the dinner table and why there is no such thing as boredom

©Gabriel Peprand

January 8 2017, 12:01pm
The Sunday Times



Rachel and Daniel at the family home in Manhattan

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Rachel

Growing up in 1990s Berlin, I felt I was living under the cloud of history. My grandparents were Polish Holocaust survivors and our house was five blocks away from Hitler's bunker. And Dad always made sure I was aware of the history surrounding us. He'd point to a building and say: "That's where the Final Solution was plotted." It was intense. It was unavoidable.

Dad won his first competition the year I was born. It was to design the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It took 12 years to complete and I basically grew up in his studio. I'd go in and out after school and just keep myself busy. Best of all, I loved making things — I loved destroying things too!

Boredom in our house was unacceptable. According to Dad, it didn't exist, life was too interesting. If I was bored, it meant I wasn't working my brain hard enough. I can remember visiting galleries with him and him saying: "You need to count to 100 in front of each painting." I'd then sit down and he'd say: "You must stand up in order to think properly."

We moved to New York when Dad won the competition to design the master plan for Ground Zero. I was 14 and my parents let me decide which school I would go to, but they were sceptical when I chose the only school in the city that didn't use a grade system. Dad wanted me to go to the UN school, so I could continue using my German. Mom wanted me to go to a Jewish high school. In the end, they accepted my decision.

Studying at a "hippie school", I developed a love of art, which actually meant I became much closer to Dad. But we didn't speak about everything ... We never spoke about boys or who I was dating. Feelings in general were off the table, and that would frustrate me, but it was probably a reflection of Dad's own upbringing.

“
After the war, Dad's father
returned home to Poland, where
he found the rest of his family
had perished

Dad's parents were both Polish, but when the Nazis invaded, they fled to the Soviet Union. His father was taken to a camp in the Volga, his mother to a gulag in Siberia. They met in

Samarkand and, after the war was over, returned to his dad's hometown, Lodz, where he discovered the rest of his family had perished . My father grew up in that town, a town where he was beaten up for being Jewish.

Towards the end of high school I wanted to go to Harvard, but I didn't tell my parents I'd applied. I knew Dad was opposed to that kind of uber-competitive, WASPY Ivy League world. Also, they probably wouldn't have wanted me to apply in case I failed. But I got in and it was a big shock. My family actually thought I was lying.

It was while I was at Harvard that I started doing art, and it was one of my teachers who recommended I switch from French literature to art. I told him I didn't want to live in Dad's shadow and, thankfully, he told me that wasn't a good enough reason. In the end, I switched and have been doing art ever since.

Dad is my most honest critic and he can be devastating. When I get criticism from him, I feel the full force of his authoritative opinion. When I get praise, it just feels like another guy's opinion.

Earlier this year, I got married to Adam, who first met Dad at his 65th birthday. We all got hammered at a restaurant in New York and by 3am we were smoking cigars with the chef. Our wedding was in Rome and, as a present, Dad commissioned the avant garde composer Jörg Widmann to write a piece of music for us. Jörg flew in his sister Carolin to perform it.

These days, Dad has softened and I'm closer to him than ever. Most people think he's a bit crazy, and it's true, he's kind of nuts. But I just hope people see, as much as I do, what a beautiful and thoughtful person he is underneath.



In 1991 in Berlin, in front of a model of the Jewish Museum

Daniel

You could say that I parented by benign neglect. When Rachel was born, I'd just won a competition to design my first building — the Jewish Museum in Berlin — and I was working flat out. My wife, Nina, worked alongside me. We didn't have a baby-sitter or a nanny, so it meant Rachel just spent a lot of time with us at work.

Moving to Berlin wasn't easy. Both my parents and Nina's parents were Polish Holocaust survivors, and when we told them, they could not understand how we could live anywhere in Germany ...they almost disowned us. To be frank, if we were out with Rachel and people looked at our little Jewish girl, even I'd sometimes feel a shiver running down my spine.

But it was a time of enormous change. The Berlin Wall had just come down and a new generation of architects and artists was emerging and, as we moved from one city to another, Rachel became many things — a Berliner, an Italian, a quintessential New Yorker, a Jew. And what I love about her is that she's always embraced all those cultures.

In our free time, we'd always travel to different cities to visit cathedrals, galleries, architectural sites, but I never encouraged her to be an artist, she just took it all in. She also has a natural talent.

Rachel is our youngest — we also have two sons, and when they were growing up, we had rules at the dinner table that Nina and I didn't talk about work and the children didn't talk about school. This was so we could talk about philosophy, theology, science, world events... and get out of the compulsion to be too self-absorbed.

To be honest, I was negative at first about Rachel becoming an artist. I thought it would be too difficult. I was also worried about the kind of life she'd have. I actually wanted to be an artist myself, but my mother, in her Hasidic wisdom, told me to become an architect instead. She thought I might be too poor to buy a pencil if I was an artist, but I'd always be able to draw if I became an architect.

The fact Rachel persisted and became an artist had nothing to do with me, but I'm so glad she did. I love her work, it's so inventive. I'm an honest critic and I can be harsh, but I think she's brilliant.

I've learnt so much from Rachel's openness to the world. As Shakespeare says in one of his sonnets: "Keep my drooping eyelids open wide, Looking on darkness which the blind do see." That's her, and when she walks into a room, it lights up. That's just the kind of person she is.

THE DESIGNS OF DANIEL LIBESKIND

- ◆ Jewish Museum Berlin, completed 1999
- ◆ Imperial War Museum North, Manchester, completed 2001
- ◆ World Trade Center master plan, New York, under construction
- ◆ Crystals at City Center, Las Vegas, completed 2009
- ◆ Reflections at Keppel Bay, Singapore, completed 2011
- ◆ I Tower, Toronto, completed 2016

Rachel Libeskind's work can be seen at continiartuk.com



The July group show has become an art-world standby, but it remains a nimble platform for galleries eager to introduce new artists during the summer slowdown. This season, Artsy traversed group exhibitions across New York, on the lookout for exciting work made by young artists who haven't yet had their big breaks.

Below, we highlight 15 creatives whose work spans mediums and interests—from a photographer challenging racial profiling, the issue at the crux of the Black Lives Matter movement, to a painter who channels a passion for the magical worlds of Super Mario 64 into dreamy canvases. While some of the artists have mounted smaller solo presentations in the past, we expect their standout displays in this summer's group shows to launch their careers to new heights.

Rachel Libeskind

b. 1989, Milan. Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

On view at:

“Summer Reading” at Fortnight Institute, 60 East 4th Street, Jun. 23–Aug. 11
“MINERVA,” Cuevas Tilleard Projects, 142 Henry Street, Jun. 8–Jul. 10.



Portrait of Rachel Libeskind in her studio, July 2016. Photo by Vera Compoj.

For Libeskind’s July 6th performance at Cuevas Tilleard Projects, the artist assumed the role of a sprightly art historian specializing in paintings that feature Christ’s foreskin (“the holy prepuce”). Reproductions of the masterpieces being discussed, printed on tapestries at Walmart, surrounded her as she questioned why the Catholic church has attempted to hide these works—and underplay their savior’s circumcision. The answer, she reveals: to cover up Christ’s Jewish beginnings. Across her multimedia practice, Libeskind excels at this sort of cheeky social criticism, drawing provocative lines between historical and contemporary pain points surrounding religion, identity, and gender.



She calls herself a citizen of the world and travels with her suitcases from one place to another. She is obsessed with objects and transforms them into pieces of art. **Rachel Libeskind** is a young artist, trying to change the masculine dominance in the art industry by delivering powerful messages to the society through paintings, performance and interesting collages.

Who is Rachel Libeskind?

Rachel Libeskind is first an artist and second a woman. That's actually not my idea; I stole it from Louise Bourgeois, who is my favorite artist of all time, who always said that she is first an artist and second a woman in terms of the feminist movement. Rachel Libeskind is a citizen of the world because I don't actually have any really strong tie to any specific national identity. I have three passports and I lived in five cities in my life. I am not from anywhere, I am a 21st century identity in that way. Rachel is obsessed with the end of the world which is called the study of eschatology. She is very sensitive and also very strong, somewhere between those two things.

How did you decide to become an artist?

I had a childhood where I was exposed to huge amount of art in special ways. At that time when I was a kid, I didn't really appreciate it, because I was not allowed to watch television or get bored, it was not an option to be bored ever. If I said to my parents I am bored they would say "go read a book or go draw a drawing". So from a very young age I filled my time constantly with drawings and with installations that I used to make with my dolls. As I became older I rejected a path of an artist because my father is a very well-known architect and I was very concerned as a teenager that I would always be in his shadow. But actually I have to thank my professor from Harvard University, who helped me change my mind. I took a painting class in my second year just for fun and the professor told me "You are really good at painting, why are you not pursuing a carrier as an artist?" I told him I didn't want to spend my whole life in the shadow of my father and he said it was not a good enough reason. Actually that was the first time anybody ever said that to me and that was the moment when I thought you are right, that's not good enough reason and that was I think the moment I switched my path. I graduated from the University six years ago. Nevertheless, I went to Harvard —a school which promises the great future and a best job in the world— the economy in US was so bad, that after the graduation we were all unemployed. So I said perfect, this is a great opportunity to work by myself since I can't get a job anywhere else. (laughs)



How does your 'starchitect' father, Daniel Libeskind, influence your work? Do you often get criticized?

My father is the only person who is completely honest with me about my work. I mean he is the only person I have that kind of relationship with, where I know that when he criticizes me or likes what I did, he is telling 100% of the truth and that is a very special thing, what you can't get from other people. It is really hard to recreate that relationship. Our style and our aesthetics are very, very different. Like completely different worlds but what we are interested in is very overlapped so we share a lot, we spend a lot of time on the phone, talking about books, about ideas, about music. My

dad is an incredible genius of music in my opinion and he keeps on feeding me with those external sources like literature and music, even though I am a grown up. I have witnessed how difficult his career has been, as being an architect is much harder than being an artist, because you are constantly at the mercy of not only critics but also city planners, engineers and local governments. When I was a child, we used to live in Berlin for the building of the Jewish museum that took 13 years to build. I mean that's crazy if you realize how long that is, so maybe that's why I did not become an architect myself. My dad is an architect but he is definitely an artist to me.

You make interesting collages using old photo albums, pictures from Life magazine and old newspapers. How did you come up with the idea of making collages?

For me making collages is like sketching. The pieces I make always begin with the object I find. My work is more kind of anthropological, it's never about me wanting to paint a figure, me wanting to paint a landscape or me wanting to tell a story about my life. Specifically, it always begins first with an object that I find, that is mostly ephemeral, and kind of magical because these objects put themselves in the world and then I discover them. There is something to me that is deeply tragic about the incredible output we made until very recently, until everything happened on the screens, there was so much waste of aesthetic, there was so much effort put in the advertising, magazines and photography. There is so much ephemera, and beautiful material that exists in the world that is totally forgotten and unappreciated. This is always where my interest begins. The collage is a very powerful tool where two or three unrelated images are put together and reconstruct their original meaning. That is why I call it sketching, because it is always like a first step to me in figuring out what the project is about, what I am trying to say. It is also quite political because of the act of choosing where I might put an image from 1980s porn magazine next to 1930s children's book on Mussolini, next to East German vacuum cleaner add. I am making things up and am creating unexpected connections between aesthetic, history, culture and the society.

Tell me about your exhibition *The Wild West*. What was it about?

It was a show that I did in the gallery which is now closed. The title *The Wild West* was like a play on a fetishized American term that refers to a period in American history, when invaders murdered native people of this country, before America was coast to coast. It refers to the period of the 19th century when the settlers were invited to come and take as much land as they could, which is obviously a sort of American brand of imperialism. But it's not only that, *The Wild West* was also about my life. In one year I will be 28, meaning that I'll have spent 14 years in Europe and 14 years in America. Having grown up in Berlin which is really East and then having moved to New York which is really West as a teenager, was sort of a strange experience. It was a whole new world for me. In Berlin, I was in the closet, I did not want people to know I was Jewish, I did not want to be discussed, I didn't want to reveal my identity because I felt very vulnerable as a child, it was something that I did not want to go through. And when I moved to America it was the opposite, you have so much more cultural capital in New York City if you are Jewish, you are immediately instilled in the cultural society here without having to do anything. America has much shorter memory of the history than Europe, which allows American culture to always move forward and pretend that it does not know anything, which is very rare in the scope of European bureaucracy. So *The Wild West* was all about the levels and privileges of westerners.

"I think women were not taken seriously as artists for a long time because they were not taken seriously in doing anything."

Where did your performative art start from?

Before going to the University, I actually studied Opera for about 15 years, I thought for a long time that singing was what I wanted to do with my life. I played the piano, I played the French horn and I was performing a lot. Later, I sort of put it all away, and decided I did not want to be an Opera singer and that I would not look at it again. Almost three years ago, I was invited on a festival di Spoleto in Italy to perform. I thought it was a joke but when I arrived there, I came up with this whole installation with suitcases and sounds. I had to perform in this beautiful 13th century old castle in Umbria and I thought: "Shit, how did I get myself in here?" There was no way out, I had to push myself, but as soon as I started performing, the old knowledge, the art of working with the audience, and many years of my childhood that I had spent by the piano, instead of playing football or hanging out with my friends, all of a sudden made sense and came back to me. There I realized that performance is a very important part of my life, an immediate form of art you can't deny. The perception and the opinion of the audience is happening right there in front of you and that's a very special thing to me. As an artist I always want my work to touch people and I want my work to be engaging. The exciting thing about performance is that you have powers when you perform and you can get your ideas across in a very efficient way. The performance I did in Spoleto is called *Travelling bag* and it is about suitcases, movement, immigration, emigration, exile, travel, holiday, materials, objects, ownership and the way we treat the things around us, that in some case represents who we are.

Apart from painting and performing you also work on books. How different is it? What's your favorite book?

I love books, they are the most secret objects to civilization. The first book I wrote and illustrated is called *The Kinder Kalendar* 1933, a book of poetry and drawings. Currently, I am having a show up in New York at the center for Jewish history which is like a crazy achieve, where I represent my books made from concrete. I am obsessed with books and am constantly working on them. The reason I love books is that they are kind of crossover objects between poetry, literature, art and information. Books are one of the ancient human objects and I am fascinated by. My favorite kind of books are medieval manuscripts where the information happens in the margins, which are used for commentary. For example, in the Jewish Bible the text is written in the middle of the page and then over centuries the commentary would be written around, in the margins. I appreciate these kind of details. The book I really love, is Federico Fellini's *Book of dreams*, which is full of incredible, magical images. I consider this book as one of the best in the world.



What do you think about the women's role in the art industry nowadays?

Everybody who has an access to the information knows that women have been totally left out of the art world and art market for a very long time. I think women were not taken seriously as artists for a long time because they were not taken seriously in doing anything. When you are a female artist you have to be double as good and you have to work twice as hard to be in the same league as the men around you. When you look at the statistics of the museums around the world and even the most progressive and interesting museums in New York City or in London, where there is expected a deeper understanding of feminism and history, you still have a very low percentage of works made by women. For me in America, in 2016, this issue is more about race, there are not enough black female artists and that bothers me. We have a lot of work to do, inclusion is very important and especially in New York, where things become exclusive real quick. I should say that I am lucky, having graduated from Harvard University, because when you are a woman and when you are an artist, people expect you to be pretty stupid, people don't want to listen to an artist, and definitely to female artists, so Harvard is something that I can put on the table and get the attention I need. Overall, I don't want to make work about being a woman, I want to make work about the experience of the humanity and that transcends whether you have a penis or a vagina.

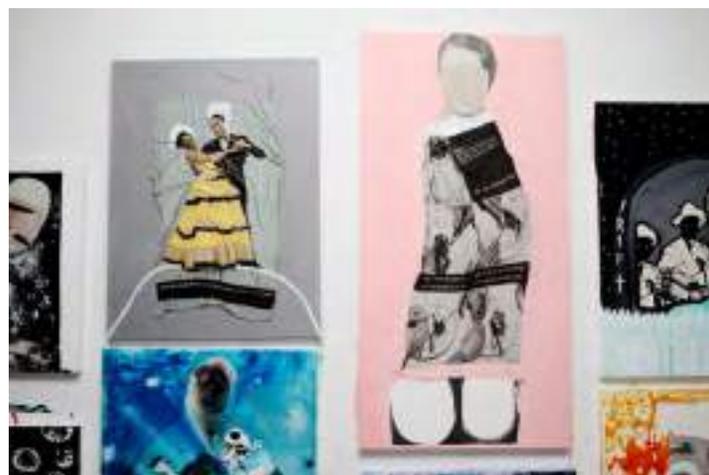
How does New York influence your work and where is your studio located?

New York is the greatest city in the world and also the hardest place to live in, because nothing stops here. As an artist, it is very important for me to have a balance between super busy, constantly moving environment and finding a quiet space to curve out my thoughts and inspiration. New York is an electric place. There are so many incredible museums, amazing shows, talks, installations, performances that stimulate you all the time but you cannot go see every fucking show, it could make you crazy and obsessed with the art world in a way that is toxic, so you have to be careful. NYC is the greatest art buffet in the world but it comes at a price. As an artist you have to try to filter stuff, not to be overstimulated, over exaggerated. My studio is located on the frontier of the new neighborhood, right on the edge of the city. It looks over the Marcy Project that is a low income housing project which was a center of crack epidemic in 1980s and is also famous for Jay-z, who comes from this neighborhood. It's not dangerous to live here anymore as it's now gentrified and many artists have moved here because it's cheap.

Are you working on any new project we should look forward to?

In fact I am. I am working on a project that has to do again with the suitcases, I am planning to install suitcases as a public art in Europe. I am also working on a new much longer performance piece that is more like a theatre play and has to do with nationalism and identity. I am returning to painting, which I have not done for two years and I am making a book about the US election, Donald Trump and women. I have lots of things to do, 2017 will be an interesting year.





Words
Nino Gabisonia

Photos
Pola Esther

<http://www.theprotagonistmagazine.com/art-1/the-circumcision-of-christ-and-modern-oblivion-by-rachel-libeskind?rq=rachel%20libeskind>

THE
PROTAGONIST
MAGAZINE

FASHION STAGE & SCREEN ART PLACES NEWS ABOUT STOCKISTS

The Circumcision of Christ and Modern Oblivion by Rachel Libeskind

Written by Wanda De Rosa



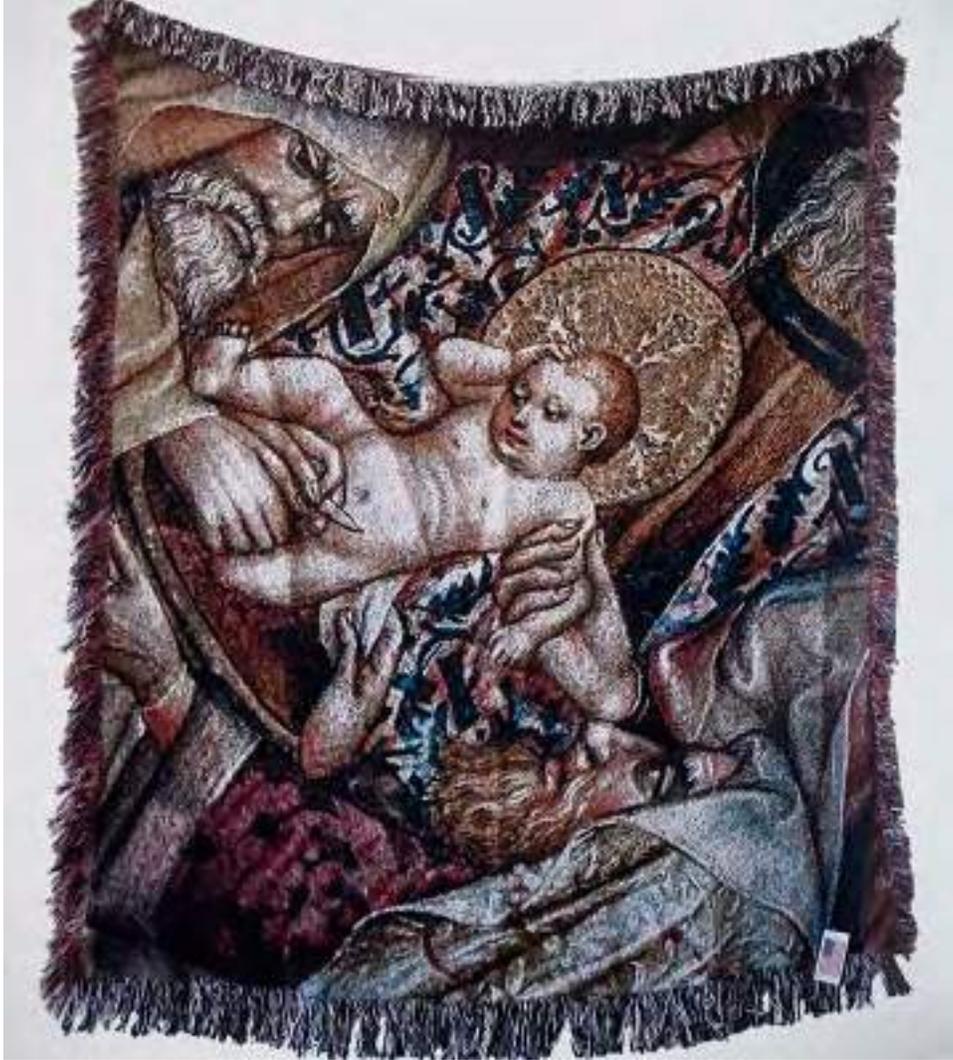
Rachel Libeskind at Contini Art UK on the night of her exhibition opening

Despite gaining notoriety through performance, Rachel Libeskind has rapidly emerged as a multidisciplinary artist. Youngest daughter of the architect Daniel Libeskind, starting from an itinerant eclectic upbringing between Milan, Berlin and New York, Rachel's work reflects her extensive curiosity of both historical subjects and contemporary media. Eternally fascinated by religious relics and medieval depictions of Christians rituals and after years of research her interest comes to surface shaped as a multifaceted visually powerful exhibition. The Circumcision of Christ and Modern Oblivion is her first exhibition in the UK showing digitally printed tapestries with renaissance paintings of one of the most controversial events of the life of Christ.

Bypassing the religious matter, the subject analysed is clearly mundane rather than spiritual; it openly bridges both Jewish and Christians beliefs in order to create an impact for those just discovering this relatively unknown aspect of Christ's life.

One of the core points of the display is to channel the viewers attention towards a modern replica of ancient artistic depictions of Christ's circumcision. Using contemporary and "ready-made" media like WalMart's custom tapestry prints and fake roman nails bought on ebay to hang them, isn't really a reference to mass production: "Personally I don't really care that they [the prints] were made at WalMart but when some people find out, they think it's like a great joke on the American mass market." Libeskind reveals this in conversation with Contini Art exhibition curator Diego Giolitti, then adding "I left on those little American tags that they come with which say, "Made in the USA"... I've continued to push this idea and even used eBay to source the nails that I want to hang the tapestries with." From Libeskind's past experience and artistic approach, it becomes clear that the "mass market joke" is only a further interpretation given to a work based mainly on exploiting ordinary modern tools in order to re-tell an ancient story. With collages having been one of her first expressive media, Libeskind's choice for tapestry results in a natural evolution of her early artistic approach into something that a wider public may appreciate in multiple forms: "This work is not necessarily wall bound- so if somebody wanted to have it draped on an object, they could have it like that. If somebody wanted to have it as a blanket or something like that, they could also have it that way, even though that's somewhat absurd." Rachel herself uses the word "absurd" to describe the way in which her art may find a place in daily life, yet it somehow also reflects the atmosphere and the kind of attention her tapestries draw from their audience.

The Circumcision of Christ and Modern Oblivion can be seen at Contini Art UK, 105 New Bond Street, until 31st of October 2016.



The Circumcision of Christ (Anonymous), 2016

Tapestry made by digital loom,

One of a kind,

157x127 cm, 60x50 in

For more information visit www.rachellibeskind.com and www.continartuk.com

Events and Parties

Patti Smith's Play Is Staged by Art World's Next Generation at Historic Chelsea Hotel

Eileen Kinsella, June 13, 2015



David Andrew Laws and Annie Fox performing "Cowboy Mouth" at the Chelsea Hotel. Photo: Lana Birkin.

Last night at the legendary Chelsea Hotel, dozens of guests, including artnet News, were treated to a traditional Spanish tapas dinner at neighborhood staple El Quijote followed by a performance of Patti Smith and Sam Shepard's play "Cowboy Mouth," produced by James Danner (see Norman Seef Shares His Most Famous Works in Patti Smith-Inspired Show).

The short, surreal play, which Smith and Shepard penned while holed up at the hotel, during their torrid love affair in the 1970s, fittingly took place in a cavernous ground floor space, a mere stone's throw from the room in which it was written, and where the two are said to have passed a typewriter back and forth to collaborate.



Artist Rachel Libeskind performing The Traveling Bag.
Photo: Lana Barkin

Multidisciplinary artist Rachel Libeskind (and daughter of famed architect Daniel), who also served as art director for the production, delivered a wordless but intriguing performance piece *The Traveling Bag*, immediately preceding the play.

Both her performance piece and the play will be repeated nightly through June 20, followed by a changing line-up of musical performances.

The three-part evening event is the brainchild of Amanda Hameline and Rebecca Feinberg, founders of Young Artists at the Chelsea, a group of artists from numerous disciplines—theater, music, dance, visual and performance art — working to create together and influence each other. "Cowboy Mouth" marked its inaugural production (artnet Worldwide is a sponsor).

Feinberg and Hameline said the idea for the group was born over glasses of whiskey at Hameline's kitchen table in Brooklyn one evening this past fall, while they were both lamenting the lack of a solid post-collegiate artist community.



The poster for "Cowboy Mouth" at the Chelsea Hotel.
Photo: Eileen Kinsella

Feinberg had just finished reading Smith's memoir *Just Kids* and was inspired by the Smith's recap of her life and circle of friends and lovers, most notably the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. A copy of the book was in each guest's goodie bag. Smith also has a new memoir coming out titled *The M Train* (see Patti Smith's *The Resilience of the Dreamer Celebrates the Rockaways*).

Also in attendance last night was photographer Edward Mapplethorpe, brother of the late artist Robert Mapplethorpe.

The play's associate producer and sound designer, Lillith Glimcher, who attended Harvard with Feinberg and Hameline, was in attendance with her father Marc, director of Pace Gallery, and his fiancé Fairfax Dorn, co-founder and artistic director of Marfa. turned up for the dinner and performance, as did his parents Arne and Milly Glimcher, making dinner feel like a family affair—one that we happily crashed.

10 Things to Do in New York's Art World Before June 12

By [Paul Laster](#) • 06/08/15 5:40pm



Rachel Libeskind to perform at the Hotel Chelsea. (Courtesy: Hotel Chelsea)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

Performance: *Cowboy Mouth*: Young Artists at the Hotel Chelsea

Way back in 1971, Sam Shepard and Patti Smith were lovers, and collaborators, penning the piece *Cowboy Mouth* from Smith's hotel room at the legendary Chelsea. It's performed here as the center of a 10-day festival of art and music featuring almost impossibly good-looking young artists and musicians. A piece by Rachel Libeskind entitled *The Traveling Bag* is another highlight of the fest. This opening night is invitation-only, and the 11th is a \$275-per-ticket benefit, but \$40 tickets for *Cowboy Mouth* are available throughout the run.

Hotel Chelsea Storefront Gallery, 222 West 23rd Street, New York, 8 p.m.

The New York Times

10/11/2015

Rachel Libeskind: A Performance Artist Blossoms

10/11/2015



Rachel Libeskind's work has evolved from fine art to performance.

Credit Peter Pabón for The New York Times

Age 26

Hometown Born in Milan, spent her childhood in Berlin and her high school years in TriBeCa.

Now Lives In Brooklyn Heights in a recently renovated one-bedroom apartment. She also keeps a work studio in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Claim to Fame Ms. Libeskind is the youngest child of the architect Daniel Libeskind and is coming into her own as a performance artist who has shown throughout Paris, London, Rome and New York. Her medium includes operas, multimedia installations and provocative collages. Being the daughter of a starchitect has its privileges. "I tagged along with my parents and got to see cities and projects that my dad was really involved in," said Ms. Libeskind, who

speaks five languages and holds passports from the United States, Canada and Poland. "My parents would plop me down and say, 'We'll be back in six hours, enjoy.' "

Big Break Last June, Ms. Libeskind performed an original work titled "The Traveling Bag" at the Chelsea Hotel as part of a much-discussed revival of "Cowboy Mouth," a 1971 play by Patti Smith and Sam Shepard. In "The Traveling Bag," Ms. Libeskind is in her bedroom packing and unpacking her suitcase. She examines items and places them back in their spots, then takes some out and packs them again. "It's a performance work that uses the vessel of the suitcase and the action of packing and unpacking to deal with issues of migration, movement and the past," she said.

Latest Project Ms. Libeskind is creating a multichannel video installation to serve as the backdrop for “American Gothic,” a four-part opera that weaves together four stories of American identity. The opera runs Oct. 21 to 23 at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn.

Next Thing Beginning Nov. 20, Ms. Libeskind will present a book titled “Shipwrecks” at Seaport Studios, alongside a small installation. The piece examines ship routes in New York Harbor. “Slaves and sugar are the main topics,” she said.

Female Artists Ms. Libeskind’s work has evolved from fine art to performance, inspired by such artists as Marina Abramovic, Carolee Schneemann and Laurie Anderson. “If you look at big performance artists, they are women,” she said. “There is something to be said for the female ability to push boundaries in what media is and what mediums are. Historically, paintings are a very male thing. I think in some ways, either consciously or unconsciously, I’m responding to that.”



ARTIST RACHEL LIBESKIND SHOCKS AND AWES

Mary Logan Bikoff
10/18/12 at 08:30AM

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While you may not have heard of Rachel Libeskind, you most likely know her father, Daniel Libeskind, the architect behind the ever-rising Ground Zero site downtown. But Rachel, an ambitious, intense and feisty artist, is embarking on a career that looks like she'll be known in her own right. At her way-downtown studio near Trinity Church, where, incidentally, her father has a studio as well, we recently found her eyeball-deep in collage material, books, magazines, reclaimed junk and paint. She is excited.

"I like to think that my process is just experimentation," she says. "That's my favorite thing about art, is experimenting. It's like an adventure every day when you've decided to do something new, and like 99 percent of the time you fail but one percent of the time you make something really great."

Libeskind is a multimedia artist, who works on canvas and paper, as well as wood, found objects, moss, toothpaste and photos, all of which take up large amounts of space in her sun-filled workshop. She begins telling me right away about some of her artistic breakthroughs -- a recent skiing accident in Switzerland that badly injured her right arm and left her howling in a huge expanse of snow to ponder her life's purpose, and her undergraduate thesis from Harvard (she graduated last year), which was a series of paintings made with toothpaste on a scanner.



Already Libeskind has a lot of projects on the horizon and under her belt. In the spring, she exhibited at the young Chelsea post-postmodern gallery Hansel and Gretel Picture Garden, and she was a part of a group show in East London in May. From October 15 to 21, her works will be in Paris at a salon at Galerie Z'Archer as a part of a program that introduces emerging New York artists to Paris and vice versa. She's also gearing up for a residency at the esteemed Watermill Center on Long Island, where she, along with Hansel and Gretel Picture Garden and the Street Corner Society, will produce a haunted hayride experience called NightScapes. It's an adaptation of Elie Wiesel's Night, in which the artists subject the audience to discourse between the American fall horror tradition and the Holocaust. It also involves pagan rites, satanic rituals, the rural landscape and bones.

"The idea is actually pretty radical," she says. The open house on November 11th, as well as an event on Halloween, will most likely not be for the faint of heart.

But then, none of Libeskind's work is. It is bold, daring, often explicit, challenging and controversial. She has a whole body of work exploring the topic of Christ's foreskin. In college, she produced an unconventional version of Hamlet that elicited boos from the audience for its irreverence. And then there's the Holocaust hayride... She certainly doesn't shy from conflict, but at the same time, her attitude is not at all contentious. Libeskind has a lot of loves. She loves the scanner. She loves Gerhard Richter. She loves America. She loves Europe.

"I love the world. I'm a world-loving person," she says.

Libeskind, who is Jewish, grew up in Berlin, until she moved to New York just before high school, when she started at St. Ann's, the elite Brooklyn private school for freedom-loving, arty academics. In Berlin, her father was working on the provocative Jewish Museum Berlin. Her grandparents were Holocaust survivors. These things alone are reason enough to understand her fascination with the Jewish experience, but then, she is just as enamored with Christian iconography -- not just Christ's foreskin but also medieval crosses and Catholic symbology. Right now, though, she's focusing on a "Jewish project." She recently came across a family tree that includes 33 rabbis and had an awakening to her rabbinical family history. She points to some sketches on the wall, the beginning of what will be 33 portraits of them all. If it works out, she hopes to exhibit it in the spring.

Other favored topics include technology, historical pop culture, Americana, sex, gender, race. But it's all ultimately about Libeskind herself. It's what she's intensely interested in, what she devotes tons of time to researching. Her studio includes shelves of books on these topics, a mini library. She collects junk upstate and makes it into mobiles or reformed totem poles. It is piled neatly around her studio. But more than anything, she is a "digital hoarder."

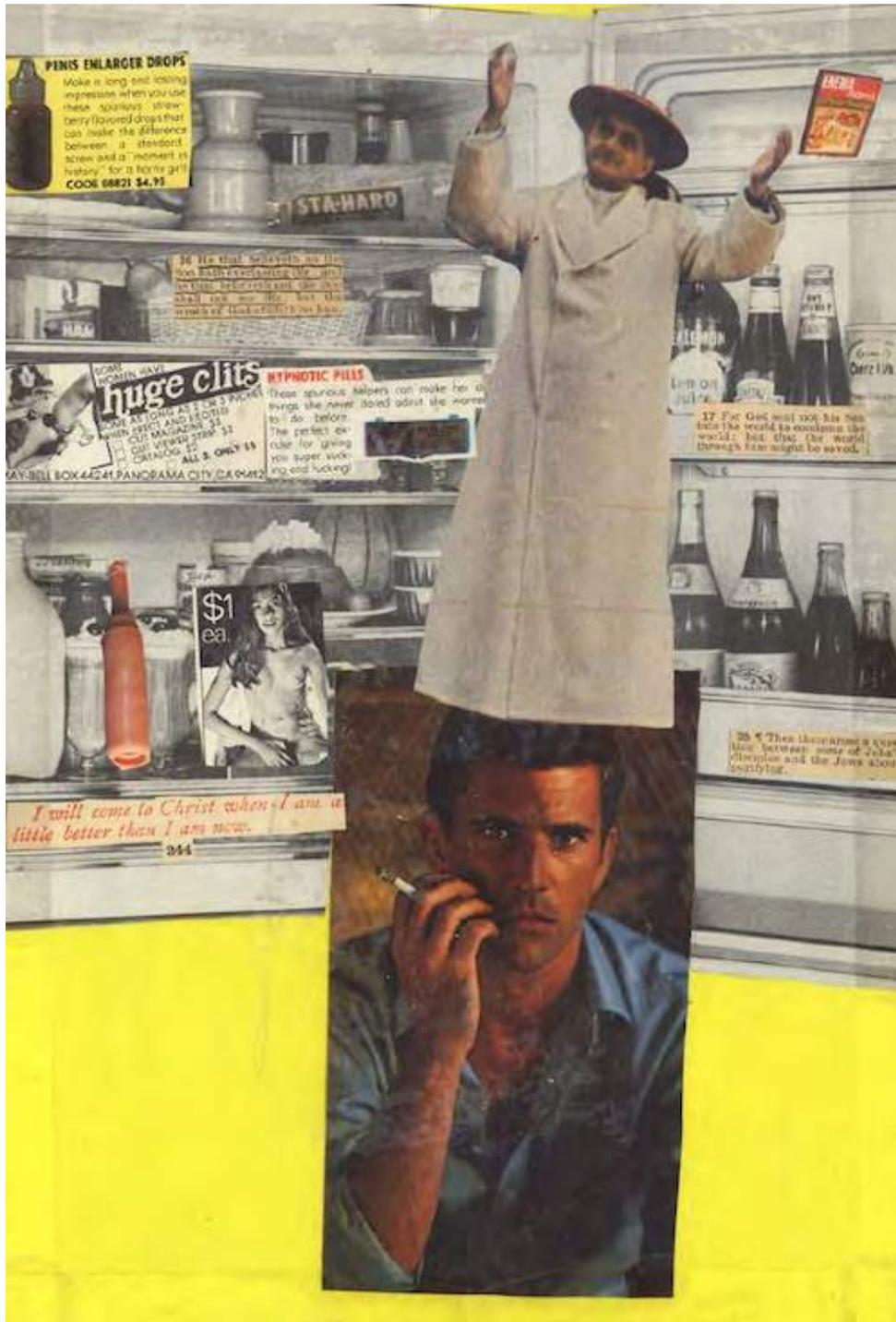
"My Internet footprint is probably a super dirty footprint," she laughs. "I just scour the Internet, just on blogs on like...breast implants or something bizarre like that. I have no fear. I love the Internet for that reason." She collects more than a thousand images online a month -- lots of nudes, lots of Nazis, but plenty of other stuff too -- and some will become pieces of a narrative in her artwork.

Libeskind likes to "maintain a healthy distance from the quote unquote art world." She doesn't want to be classified or reduced. Her work has been referred to as post-postmodern, the definition of which may imply a shift away from irony in art, but she shies at any sort of label like that.

"I'm a little more fluid. I think a lot of people look at my work and think, 'S&M and Bugs Bunny-- are you being ironic?' And I'm like, 'Sure, if you want me to be.'" She smiles and shrugs. "The meaning is in the eye of the beholder, not in my brain."

Rachel Libeskind's NightScapes can be viewed at the Watermill Center on November 11. She also is part of an exhibition at Gallery ZÃ¼rcher, Paris, from October 15 to 21.

Portraits of the artist by Lana Barkin. Artwork images courtesy of the artist.





COLLECTOR DAILY RATING



ON VIEW

[Rachel Libeskind, Transparent Things](#)

September 7, 2022 - October 29, 2022

[Signs and Symbols](#)249 East Houston Street
New York, NY 10002

OTHER LINKS

[Rachel Libeskind artist site](#)[Rachel Libeskind - Instagram page](#)

Rachel Libeskind, Transparent Things @Signs and Symbols

By [Loring Knoblauch](#) / In [Galleries](#) / September 22, 2022

JTF (just the facts): A total of 10 photographic works, displayed unframed against white walls in the single room gallery space. All of the works are scanned collage on stretcher bars, soft PVC, and staples, some with additional painted silicone, acrylic paint, printed foam, and superglue. Physical sizes range from roughly 16x12 to 65x47 inches, and all of the works are unique. (Installation shots below.)



Comments/Context: When artists really dig into their chosen processes, actively testing the limits of what they can achieve, sometimes unexpected innovations emerge from the persistent experimentation that open up whole new white spaces for exploration. Rachel Libeskind has been working with image collage for many years now, initially mixing in elements of performance and installation, and more recently trying out new ways to present layered fragments of imagery. A few years ago, she was intermingling pictures of body parts, at first mostly gathering shards of faces, and then later mixing images of antiquities with pictures from 1970s-era men's magazines.

Flatness seems inherent to the structure of photo-collage, as images are appropriated, assembled, and reorganized in a single plane, generally in dialogue with each other – what sits “behind” or “underneath” their visual conversation typically isn't the point, except as a substrate to hold everything together. But Libeskind's new works upend this traditional collage logic, introducing transparency as a compositional variable. In her “Windows” series, the collages are initially composed on a flatbed scanner and printed out on various kinds of plastic sheeting; the resulting sheets are then stretched over wooden stretcher bars (like the kind that hold canvas for paintings), creating works that show through to the structure underneath in the areas that lack imagery or that are so light (like skies in landscapes, or areas of white in certain pictures) that they appear essentially clear. And while this might seem like a relatively straightforward incremental artistic progression, it's actually more of a fault line, given Libeskind's previous efforts, as the transparency (and partial visibility of the scaffold underneath) radically transforms the available compositional possibilities of the collages.

“Windows: Eve (and the tree)” shows off Libeskind's newfound powers most elegantly. The central image in the collage is a dark tree form, the black trunk and branches reaching out from the center toward the corners; the white negative space behind the tree is left clear, making the wooden struts underneath visible and creating a complex connection between the natural curves of the tree and the hard edged geometries of the stretcher, both in wood. To this interplay, Libeskind has added a single yellow apple (hovering near the trunk in the collage) and a female nude printed on spongy mesh and attached to the front of the work, adding layers of additional physicality and transparency. Seen as one integrated artistic statement, the Biblical Eve and the apple story comes through with unique clarity, with the apple strangely seductive, the woman demurely humble (to the point of near invisibility), and the tree looming large and imposing against the framework underneath.

Libeskind adds more compositional complexity in another strong work, “Windows: A Day in the Life”. Here she integrates half a dozen disparate images, with obvious awareness for how contrasts of light and dark would be amplified by the transparency of her process. Robert Frank's image of a blowing flag in Hoboken anchors the bottom of the work, with the flag strips and open windows creating pass through visual opportunities. In the area above, Libeskind links a dense swarm of birds, a toilet bowl, an off-kilter one-way street sign, and an upside down face, with the birds connecting to the tile on the floor of the bathroom, and the matched curves of the toilet seat and face then echoing a set of three dark eggs (or ovals of some kind). The look down into the toilet bowl is particularly effective given the transparent backing, as the picture creates the appearance of looking through the collage and down into the bowels of the plumbing, which is framed by the stretcher bars.

The wooden undercarriage provides a similar layer of interruption in “Windows: Elvis (Hound dog)”, where the cross form of the struts divides the rock star's partially transparent face. A boldly striped image holds down the lower left of the composition, while the upper part gathers several images in unexpected tonalities and textures, including a man up on an electrical pole (but upside down and negative), a natural image of grasses, a ghostly man washed out by a flare of light, and the negative space between two curved objects (in reversed tones). Libeskind's works don't seem to have a rebus-like puzzle code to be unlocked, but instead pull our eye around the surface, following formal and structural links; the transparency effects both integrate these ideas, and use the bars to divide and frame certain fragments.

Most of the rest of the works on view find Libeskind testing out the further possibilities of her transparency discovery. She tries out a literal image of a window, aligning it with the stretcher bars underneath, and experimenting with bright overpainting to disrupt the blocks of the panes. She uses the emptiness of cloudy skies as another pass through element, connecting darker horizon lines and landscape forms. And she plays with visual metaphors of eyes and seeing, using the transparency to variously layer and obscure. Libeskind has also noticed that the visible edges of the stretchers create a strong framing device, which has led her to explore the spatial dynamics of empty edges and centers, pulling away from the edges to break from the bonds of strict rectangularity. The transparency similarly rebalances the sense of depth and thickness of the collages, giving different frontal attachments and physical additions more potential for jarring displacement.

Agglomerations of appropriated imagery (much of it photographic) have an undeniable connection back to Pop Art, but Libeskind's compositions feel less about recontextualizing celebrity or consumer culture, instead opting for more formal and allegorical investigations. Mostly, this show feels reaching and exploratory, with the artist leveraging the key transparency breakthrough in a range of alternate directions, searching for what clicks. There's certainly more to be found, so perhaps these early efforts will later be seen as a pivot point, where the collage road forked and a new path was taken.

Collector's POV: The works in this show are priced between \$4000 and \$12000, based on size. Libeskind's work has little secondary market history at this point, so gallery retail likely remains the best option for those collectors interested in following up.

Read more about: [Rachel Libeskind, Signs and Symbols](#)LEAVE A COMMENT 

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JTF (just the facts): A total of 7 photographic works, generally framed in white and unmatted, and hung against white walls in the main gallery space and the entry area. ... [Read on.](#)

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"All The World: J"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther



"From Auschwitz to Aruba"

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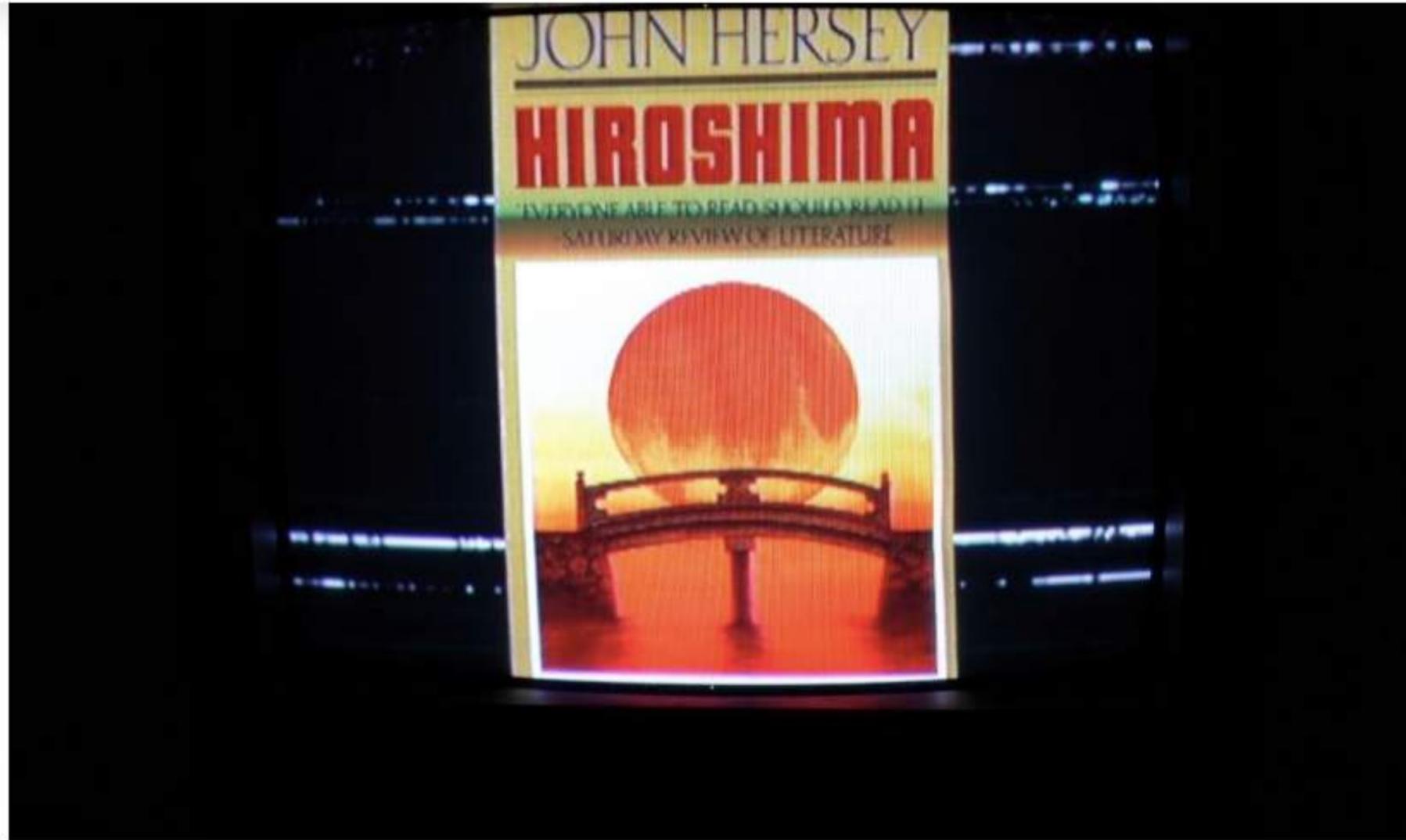


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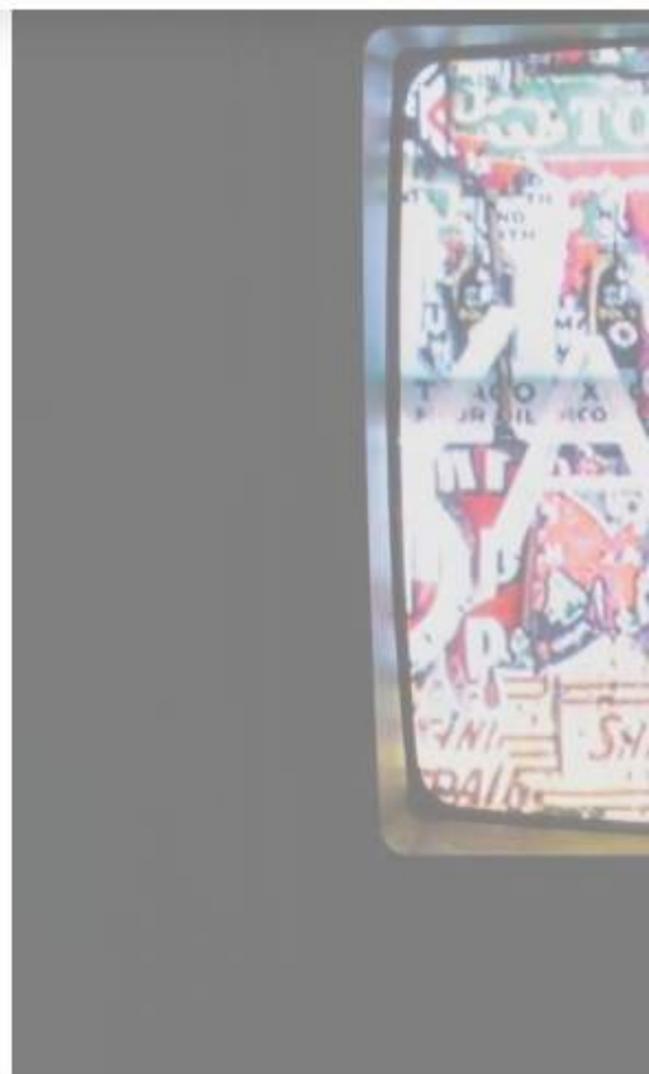


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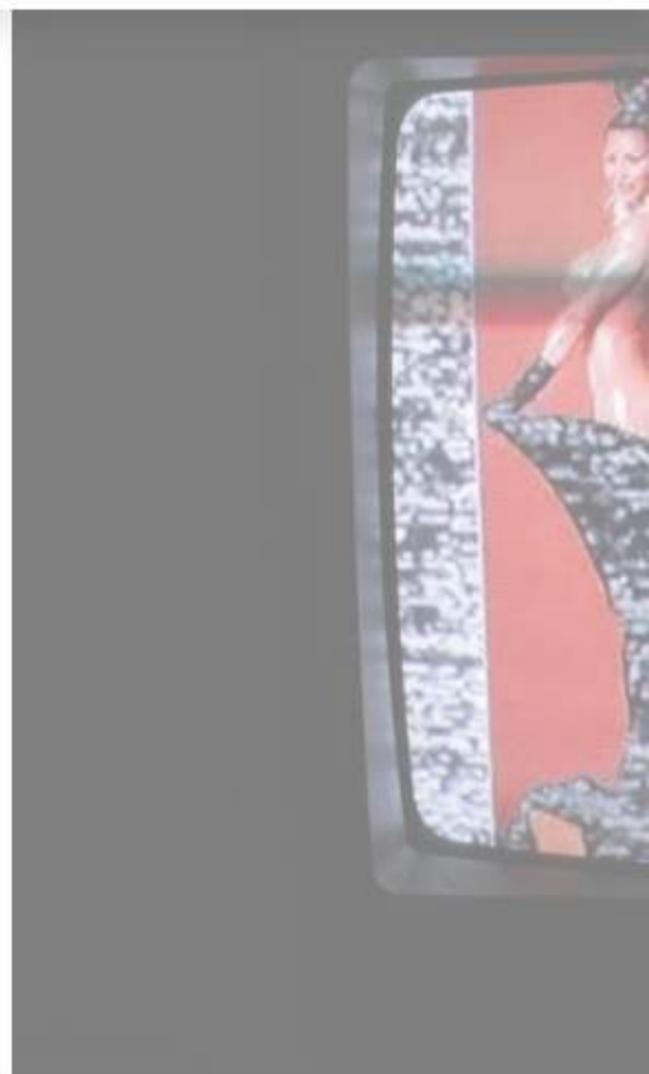


"20th Century Rubble Fragment"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther

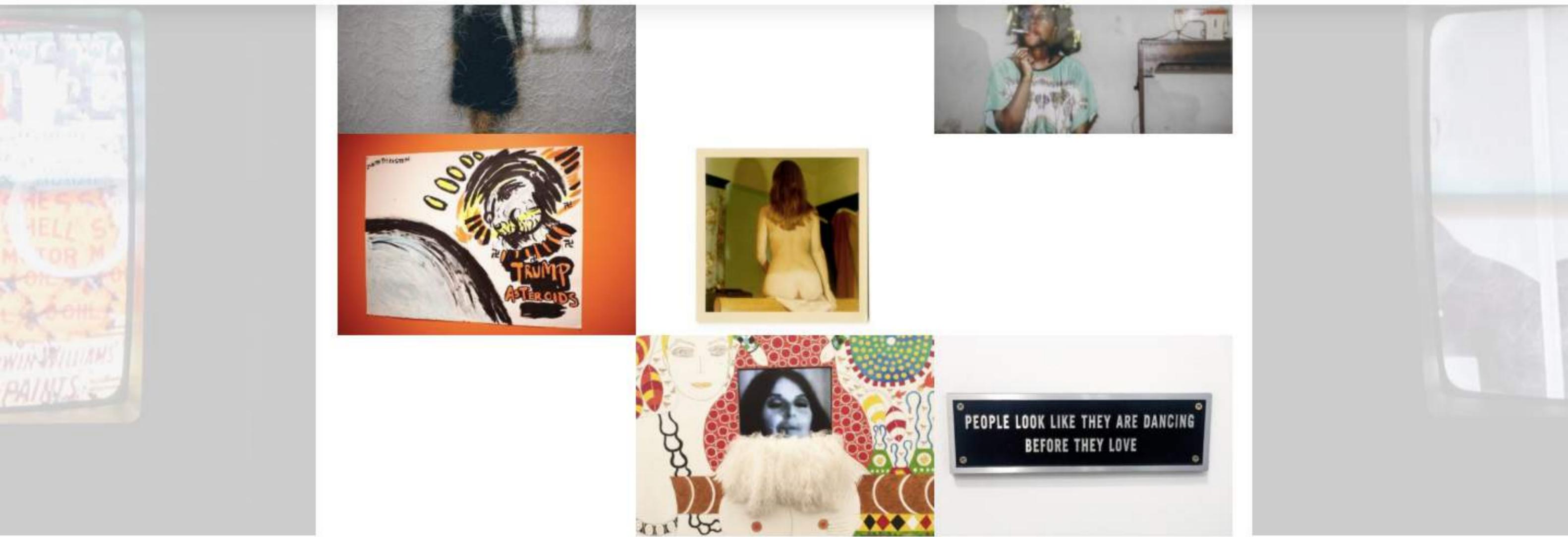


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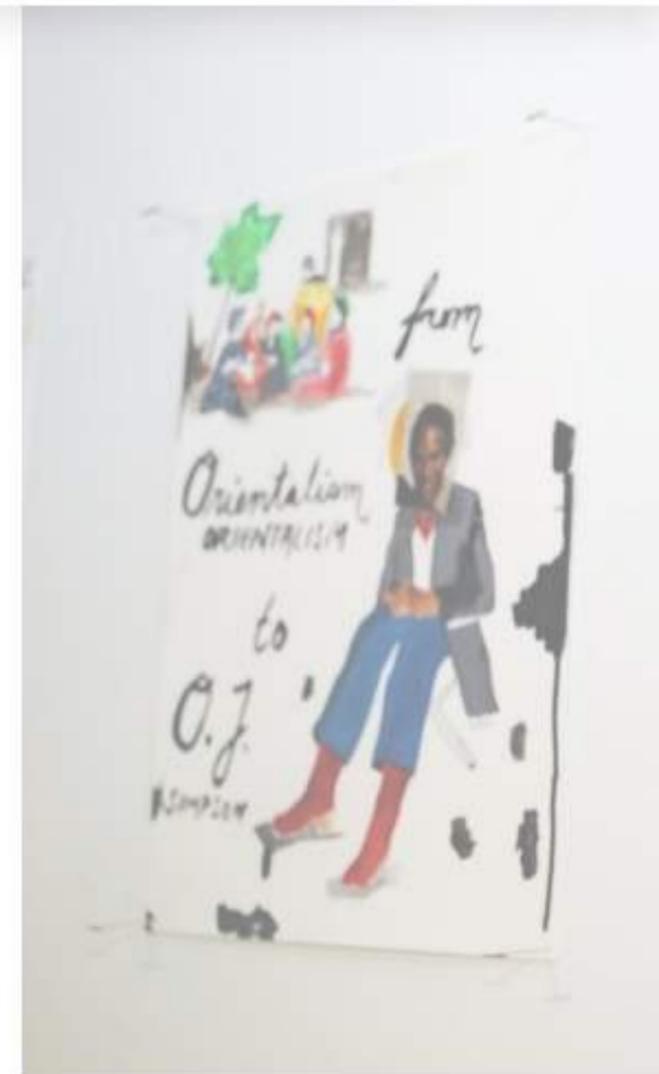


"1946 / Today"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther

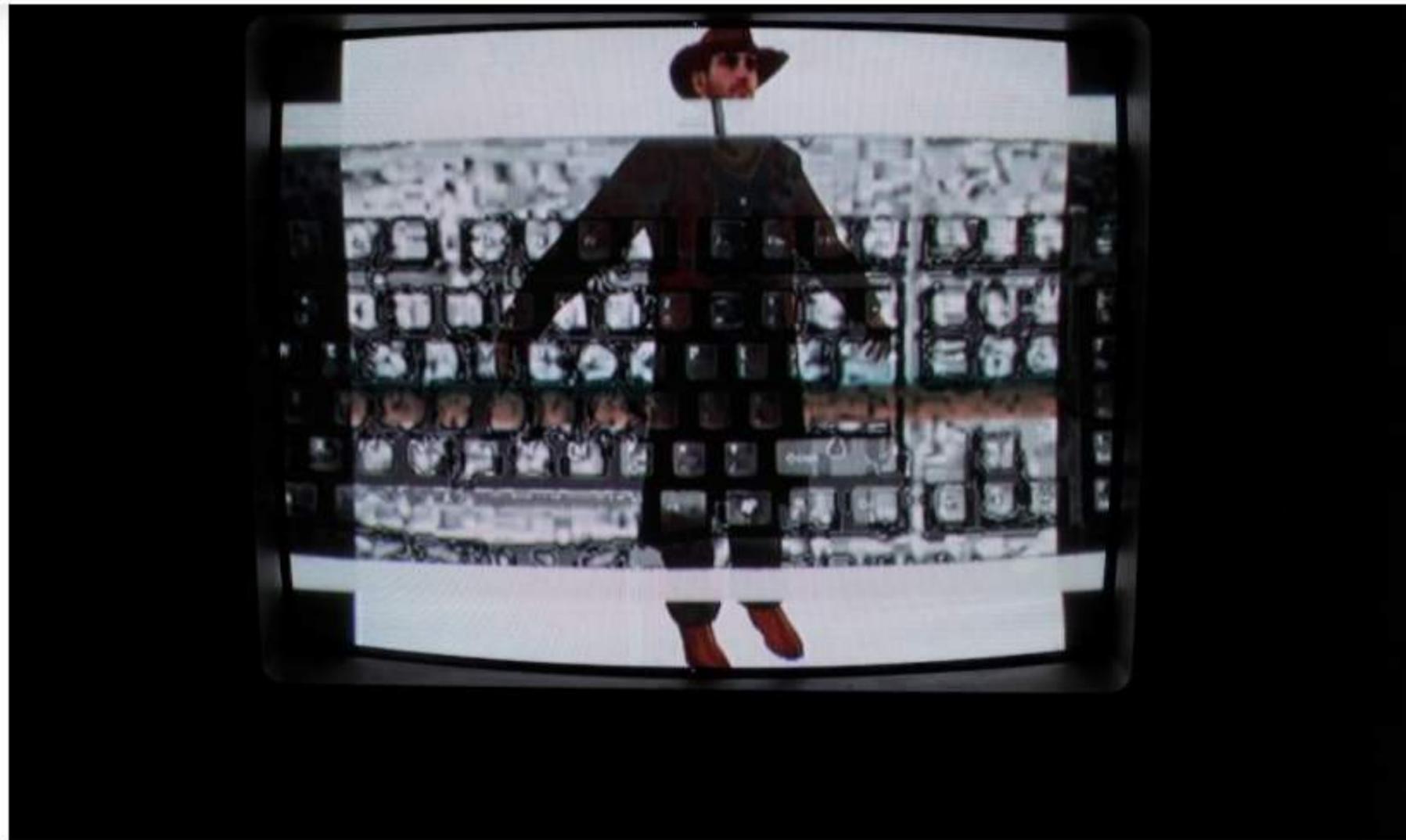


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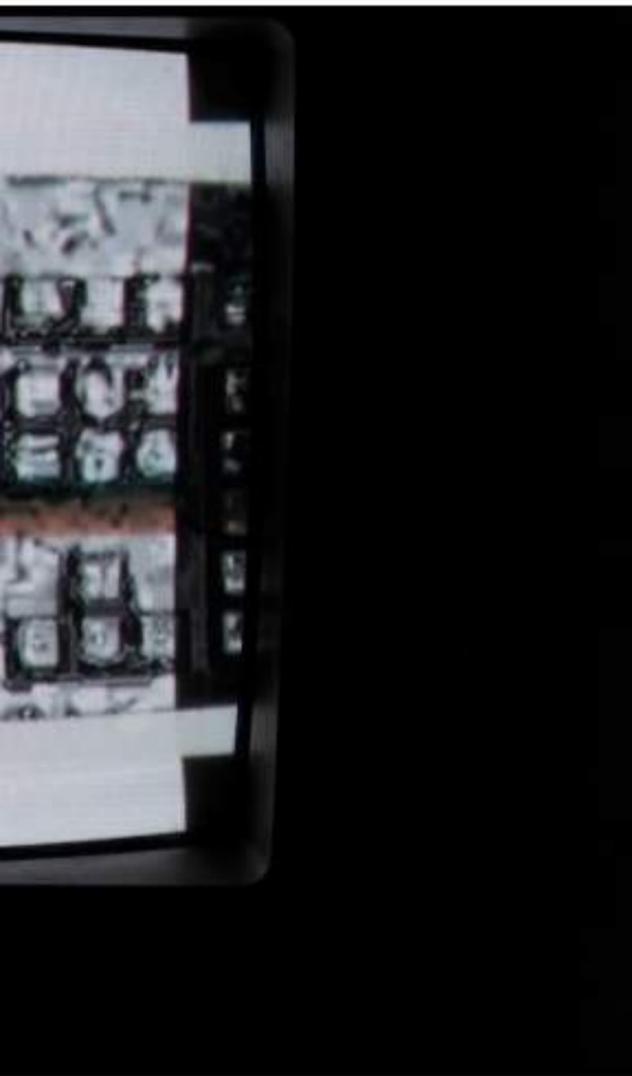


"1946 / Today"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther



"All The World: Q"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther



"The Former World"

RACHEL LIBESKIND "STUCK IN THE SHTETL" SOLO EXHIBITION AT NEW RELEASE, NEW YORK

On view until November 5th 2017, at *New Release Gallery*, 60 Mulberry Street, New York.

Photo Pola Esther