

1: The Scene Changes - artnet Magazine

Feb 07, Â· Peter Plagens, now 76, has devoted most of his life to making paintings and writing about art. He will probably be best remembered for his stylish, cleareyed art criticism, which these days.

A Short, Amazing Life The work of Eva Hesse in the mids was crucial in leading sculpture out of the minimal forest of grids and boxes and back to the free-flowing river of intuition. Because she died tragically of a brain tumor in , at 34 , her sculpture resonates with a kind of heroism. It was the reawakening of the ancient Greek and Roman views of life that saw science, art and morality as inseparable parts of a whole. Renaissance artists who were real Renaissance men knew Plato and Pliny as well as paint. For them, beauty was no less objective than a fact of, say, botany. Andrea Mantegna circa , who grew up and began his artistic career in Padua, near Venice, was the quintessential Renaissance man: And his portraits, which resemble Spielberg Gremlins being frappeded in Cuisinarts, somehow look remarkably like their subjects. He painted on the unprimed side of linen, favored background areas of acid pink and hangover orange, and could rake a gob of red or white across a face or forearm as well as Goya. In short, Francis Bacon was a modern master. That she was born into genteel circumstance in Baltimore in and graduated from Bryn Mawr during World War II are only indirectly connected. Yes, Truitt is a grandmother who lives and works not in Soho but in Washington, D. Of course she writes well, having published two critically praised memoirs, "Daybook" and "Turn" But what really marks her as an orphan of the current cacophonous scene is her beautiful sculpture. Fifteen examples of it, dating from to , are the subject of a jewel-like exhibition, "Anne Truitt: With his selfless game and transcendent smile gone, the real action in pro basketball will increasingly take place off the court, in the form of salary wrangles, endorsement deals and racial squabbles. The Last Modernist Real human beings-certainly Parisian artgoers snuggled inside bright puffy parkas or with arms folded studiously across baggy sweaters-cut nice, wide, warm swaths through the world. Compared to them, the sculpted figures of the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti are almost nothing. They appear to embed in a wiry human anatomy all the spiritual paralysis that we inhabitants of the 20th century have wrought upon ourselves. Any reasonable viewer would conclude that Giacometti is a pessimist, that the esthetic cup he presents to us is half empty. Habitats-Installations and Constructions" through Feb. When a philharmonic plays Beethoven, a few brief program notes are the only barrier to esthetic pleasure. So why is modern art in a museum so subject to deadening didactics? Granted, lengthy wall labels and a definitive as in thick catalog are welcome in the case of a 17th-century Dutchman or ritual art from Oceania. But Stuart Davis was a straightforward, doggedly inspired modernist whose best paintings have a bright, crackling proto-pop style. The Young And The Tasteless What plays best in vanguardland these days is private life as public spectacle. Most of this is categorized, naturally, as performance art, but a few painters and sculptors have become quasi-actors, too. For the past several years, Jeff Koons, 36, has increasingly tailored his persona to match the cool, glitzy, vapid objects he makes. Unlike painting, which can be pushed only so far before it simply turns into something else, sculpture can be almost anything: But Puryear, 50, is such a poetically consistent artist that a survey of his work at the Art Institute of Chicago through Jan. In l, he threw a big orange curtain across a valley in Rifle Gap, Colo. Five years later, it was the mile "Running Fence" near Petaluma, Calif. Every Christo project rolls along with tales of the Bulgarian-Parisian-New York artist, now 56, winning over skeptical Jaycee types with his regular-guyness. Each time it nears completion, heartwarming stories start rolling in about dedicated students working for minimum wage and maximum enlightenment. And erstwhile philistines start coming around to the idea that, Hey, this just might be art after all. Dots, Stipplings And Daubs The greatest period in French painting consists, oddly enough, of sequels to its most original style, impressionism. Van Gogh extended its atmospheric paint strokes into the whorls of a violent struggle with his soul. Cdzanne stayed home, but he put bones back into landscape painting and pointed the way to the next great revolution, cubism. And then there was Georges Seurat, whom Degas called "the notary" because of his conservative dress and demeanor. Modernism is dead, so forget about minimalism getting any more minimal. Political art ends up preaching to the converted-and preaching is the key word here. Where to find inspiration? Why not dredge up all the

wonderfully fertile muck of the subconscious once again and splash it around? What about, in short, a revival of surrealism? The hallucinatory paintings and collages of Max Ernst have crisscrossed the The pupils dilate, the mind clears, the spirit lifts, peace comes. But only a little. Objects Of Affection When Robert Morris, one of the original honchos of minimal sculpture, appeared on a exhibition poster greasily bare chested, draped with a chain and wearing a Wehrmacht helmet, Lynda Benglis picked up the gauntlet. She placed a two-page ad in Artforum displaying herself nude, posing with a dildo. Editors fumed, angry letters rolled in, readers clucked, and Benglis won the battle of provocative publicity. And, since she began with such a strong reaction against sculpture with industrial right angles, could her art come up with an alternative for the long run? The answers, which can be seen in a traveling retrospective show, are mostly yes. This week the exhibition opens at the Contemporary Art

2: Home - Summer Village of Golden Days

Published to accompany the MoMA exhibit "High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture." Essays by John E. Bowlt, Lynne Cooke, Lorenz Eitner, Irving Lavin, Peter Plagens, Robert Rosenblum, Roger Shattuck, Robert Storr, and Jeffrey S. Weiss.

Oil on canvas, 36 x 34 inches. Gary Snyder Project Space. A question for arcritical readers: Has a married couple ever had overlapping, solo exhibitions at separate galleries in Manhattan? If their case is indeed unique, then her exhibition at Gary Snyder Project Space and his at Nancy Hoffman Gallery, which overlap for nine days, is an item for the record books. The two were wed in and they share a painting studio in a barn in upstate New York. He was art critic for Newsweek from to , has received Guggenheim and NEA fellowships, and has shown with Hoffman since She is a professor at Hofstra University, writes for the Chronicle of Higher Education, and was recently the subject of a two-decade career overview at Scripps College in Claremont, California that will travel to the University of Montana in March. Peter Plagens, The Dim View: Mixed media on canvas, 80 x 60 inches. Courtesy Nancy Hoffman Gallery They bring disparate sensibilities to their painting practices. The abrasions in his paint surfaces are signs of happy accident and copious correction. He resolves his disorderly backgrounds by laying geometric elements on top of them. Using oils, she glazes her surfaces into a reproduction-defying shimmer, while enclosing her geometric shapes with a painted line that takes its soft, textured character from hard pastels. Her drawings, also on view at Gary Snyder, are constructed in the same careful manner, resulting in a smoldering intensity. My paintings reflect that sense of barely contained order. Hers assume more order from the beginning. Creative support takes the form instead of an occasional shoulder rub. Are there any problems with sharing a studio? I get myself out of there. February 10

â€” April 2, New York City, click to enlarge.

3: Rule: Peter Plagens | Local Exhibits | Exhibits

Peter Plagens. News. Summing Up Doom And Gloom Artists from that fading citadel of Soviet-style communism are everywhere these days in the most freebooting of all capitalist enterprises, the.

We were exiting his office in the SoHo iteration of his famous gallery in the loft building at West Broadway. At the time, SoHo was past its best-if-viewed-by date, and Chelsea, two neighborhoods farther uptown, was the livelier gallery venue. The vibe that early day was that Castelli was not going to relocate to Chelsea, that this was his finale. He still represented some of the best and most important artists in the world—Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Bruce Nauman, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others—but was his gallery still a living, breathing art enterprise, with an influx of younger, up-and-coming artists to complement the Castelli stable of mature and aging superstars? As Castelli answered, he spied a comely blonde in a very short skirt bent over a large drawing portfolio, which she was unzipping. Never mind that it would still be fresh to our readers, the piece quickly became discardable old news at the story meetings. The previous sentence is simply a de-romanticized description of the art-dealing business, one that I, as an abstract painter myself, depend on for a good deal of my living. Art dealers are, in the main, good and necessary people. Some dealers, such as Leo Castelli was, are very, very good at matching up the right impractical objects to the right rich people at the right time—that time being, in the popular parlance, ahead of the curve. Castelli did it first in with Johns, and for forty years thereafter his snowball Castelli was a record-setting mountain-climber in his youth just got bigger and bigger. In her biography of Castelli, *Leo and His Circle*: The results are decidedly mixed. Most of all, should we recall Leo Krausz, the young Assicurazioni Generali agent, who, as early as , started selling life insurance throughout the world? That Castelli came from a family of Jewish merchants, married into another one, and experienced a particularly fraught escape from the Nazis to arrive in New York in is crucial to what he became, but the inclusion of a lot of the more ancient history of Jews in Europe seems like, if not exactly filler, at least unnecessary panorama. How the Jews Invented Hollywood, they made the movie business. One of his assets was athleticism. Amid the exaggerations, the lies, the failures, the malaise, the delusions of grandeur, he laid the groundwork for his future identity. But first, Castelli had to go through the motions of being a junior banker. Paris afforded the couple, however, their first real dip into radical modern art. The other was having sex with women outside his marriage. The hawklike-handsome Castelli was reputed to be a great dancer. Ileana was in the infidelity game, too, partly because of a nervous breakdown caused by her feeling so much an out-of-place foreigner in the City of Light. The gallery was a big hit. The voiceover sums up the situation: Leo and Ileana enrolled at Columbia University, he in economic history, she in psychology. That address should resonate with followers of American art from the Abstract Expressionists onward, because it turned into the site of the original Leo Castelli Gallery and its early, most groundbreaking shows. Three months after Pearl Harbor, Castelli enlisted. Castelli was first put into the Military Intelligence Service and then included in a unit of the Allied Control Commission sent to Bucharest, a posting of not inconsiderable danger for an expatriate Jew in a hotbed of anti-Semitism exacerbated by the ever-present Russian secret police. Castelli made sergeant and returned to the States in MoMA under Alfred Barr. Accounts vary widely concerning what exactly Castelli contributed to that gnarly downtown extravaganza. But Castelli had gathered enough bona fides to—when the moment came—make his mark with the next big thing: A couple of semi-amazing facts: Presenting them as a Costa-Gavras—like drama in eight acts, she peeps up her biography considerably. By the time of the fateful Biennale, Ileana had divorced Leo via the ingenious gambit of buying property in the state of Georgia and suing him from there because she was, as a local landowner, entitled to. Castelli married again, the bride being a young upper-crust French woman named Antoinette Faissex de Bost, whom he met in either or , depending on whether you believe the photo caption on page or the text on Alas, she fell to heavy drinking when Castelli cheated on her, too—with his heart as well as his body. When he was downtown, she started drinking. Ileana was always the biggest threat, much more so than the young girls. In the end, Leo Castelli was a merchant of initially very hard-to-sell goods with more impact on American culture than expensive furniture, customized Rolls-Royces, or bespoke suits. And he believed, as good art

dealers do, in his artists and their art. But he was a merchant nonetheless. But with merchants, the fascination rapidly wears off after the store is secure, the brand established, the famous customers in place, and the receptions dependable limo destinations.

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By Peter Plagens On 12/26/04 at PM. Share. News. These days she works on drawings influenced by aerial maps and architectural plans, then leaps to those canvases in which a silica.

By Peter Plagens I used to make lots and lots of very small collages that had in them--in addition to paint, bits of plain colored paper, and image fragments--words and parts of words. The collages with visible, or partly visible, strips of names I called, as a series, "Brotherhood of Artists. And since I made so many of them over the years--there are probably between six and seven hundred packed into boxes, of which the "Brotherhood" series constitutes maybe a quarter--the roman numerals for each one soon got enjoyably ridiculous. Quantitative second place among the collage titles goes to "I Have No Credentials. There are only two human intellectual enterprises objectively and universally worthwhile--physics i. Stunningly elaborate and wonderfully distracting and palliative bullshit at times, but still bullshit. The reason why this dubious insight present here only for me to describe, not to argue as a debate proposition has stayed with me is because, even at the bullshit end of the spectrum of human endeavors, I appear to myself to be more devoid of "credentials" than the usual denizen of the arts. Mine are in art, not science. And my highest is an M. None of this three or four years of advanced rigorous classwork, reading competence in three languages, two or three more years writing a huge dissertation, followed by an exhausting defense of it for me. This is also a matter of cowardice because, on the tenth-grade "Iowa Test of Educational Development" that we all took back then, I landed in the Never taking calculus or trigonometry resulted from being afraid and lazy. Now, when I read those popular-science books about the origin of the universe or the nature of black holes, I have to skip the pages with the funny-looking symbols on them. This debility has, however, one salutary political effect: As I walk by I often think, "Let them in, kick me out. For somebody who purports to be a critic in the arts--let alone a critic of the arts--this is well-nigh unfathomable, maybe even unforgiveable. My son in L. Perhaps this stuff skips generations; my father played some schoolboy trombone and wrote a few reviews for Downbeat. The only cushion for me in this is that so much commentary on music never comments on the music in the music. Finally, I am below D-minus weak in those areas that traditionally marked one as learned. I never studied Latin or, heaven help me, ancient Greek , I know near-zilch about the Bible though in my childhood the family Bible was one earned by me for perfect Sunday school attendance, first through fifth grades , and I can quote but a few scattered lines of Shakespeare, and those with the utmost inaccuracy. Sculpture--all that welding and cantilevering--and ceramics kick wheels! I still stretch and gesso my own canvases something just about any doofus can do , but lack of a woodshop bids me have the strainers made by a local carpenter and delivered. And those collages with which I opened this confession? Scissors, white glue, a matte knife known more pungently as a "case cutter" when I worked in a supermarket in college and a metal straight edge. Ripley" sort of way. March 6,

5: Plagens-Leo Castelli and the New World

Peter Plagens, "Bright Lights." Newsweek (26 March): Summarize 4. Matisse is the best painter ever at putting the viewer at the scene. He's the most realistic of all modern artists, if you admit the feel of the breeze as necessary to a landscape and the smell of oranges as essential to a still .

Manhattan at Mid-Century Knopf, In fact, the first time I saw the metropolis in concrete flesh was in the summer of A college buddy and I age 19 and junior-to-be at Southern Cal were doing a low-budget imitation of the television program Route In Manhattan, my friend and I stayed at the YMCA for a couple of nights and mostly went to bars -- one could drink legally in New York at 18 -- before heading south to D. Two and a half years later, I was back, with a Volkswagen full of fellow Syracuse University graduate students. From that time until I finally moved to Manhattan in , I made maybe 30 short trips to New York, mostly to update myself on the galleries and check in with Artforum, to which I hustled most of my early art criticism. The city always seemed to me to be hard, intense, colorless and scary. I cleaved to the middle of the street and, wearing a leather jacket and stocking cap, tried to look as little like a muggee and as much like a mugger as I could. The mean streets so ugly and threatening to red-staters are bee-yoo-tee-ful to people like Perl and me. But he is a dyed-in-the-wool New Yorker. In a New York steadily hemorrhaging manufacturing jobs, the "many young men [who]. Or the wickedly witty, devilishly handsome, and outrageously talented de Kooning. Or perhaps even Jackson Pollock himself, when he was in town from The Springs in the Hamptons, drunk and stirring up shit at the Cedar Tavern. And conspicuously successful careers were indeed had. Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg got richer than de Kooning ever dreamed of. Then he bought a big chunk of Texas where he could display, in hoped-for perpetuity, the art of his friends. Though this geometrical expansion of the market for new art over the last 40 years does have its problems e. Grade inflation in modern art history these days is not, apparently, confined to the classroom. Rare in American art? To squeeze the likes of Blaine and Bell into a crucial chronicle like New Art City, some gratuitous diminishment of truly great artists is necessary. On de Kooning, Perl sics Louis Finkelstein, another pretty good figurative painter. For Finkelstein, de Kooning had foresworn "all discipline save the experience itself. Jasper Johns presents him with a much bigger obstacle. Johns creates enigmatic, discreetly Duchampian, and ultimately very influential art as early as On Johns, Perl drops his most lethal adjective: Not Ashbery or Finkelstein this time, but Fairfield Porter. For him, the ones who were to carry on in the immediate aftermath of Manhattan at mid-century would have completed the lessons of looking at de Kooning, studying with Mercedes Matter, and imitating Fairfield Porter, Nell Blaine or Leland Bell. Then they would have taught -- less for livelihood than to serve and protect that "heart and soul of artistic New York" -- younger artists who would repeat the process with slightly different personnel. Perl is on semi-firm historical ground here. So did the Surrealists. So did a lot of guys who tiptoed into the Cedar Tavern as graduate students, eventually got jobs teaching painting in state universities, and tried to maintain a fellowship of brushy figurative painting and domesticated Abstract Expressionism. None of it worked. The art world went merrily on its own raucous, messy and amoral way: Sure, most of it is bad art. But a little of it is very good, and a few pieces qualify as works of genius. Pedagogical genealogy is, at best, an erratic determinant of good contemporary art. I think many of its esthetic judgments, however, are bad. Ultimately, art or certainly what R. Kitaj calls the "painting-drawing modernism" part of it comes down to taste. I think the Studio-Schoolism -- "Everybody out of the observational drawing pool and into the locker room for some still-life painting sit-ups before we let you have free exercise! For his part, though, Perl regards its current predicament as nothing less than the Thermopylae of contemporary art. He stands, of course, with the embattled Spartans. He stands a little too closely to them. Perl has not been shy about plugging and reviewing exhibitions at, and artists connected to, the Bowery -- a computer search will provide you with enough individual instances to see the problem. My own sense is that this kind of member-of-an-embattled-small-circle mentality should be avoided by art critics, especially those with the moxie, erudition, and forthrightness that Perl otherwise possesses. Maybe Perl and I live in different worlds, but it turns out that some of the best artists I know are pretty much jerks. This essay first appeared in The New

England Review.

6: Modern art and popular culture : readings in high & low - ECU Libraries Catalog

Golden days / Peter Plagens; The last cause / Roger Shattuck. Other information. Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index. ISBN. (pbk.).

7: Peter Plagens - IMDb

Contents: High and low before their time / Irving Lavin -- Subjects from common life in the real language of men / Lorenz Eitner -- Picasso, collage, and the music hall / Jeffrey S. Weiss -- Cubism as pop art / Robert Rosenblum - - A brazen Can-Can in the temple of art / John E. Bowlt -- No joy in Mudville / Robert Storr -- The independent group / Lynne Cooke -- Golden days / Peter Plagens.

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