



View of a display case from the exhibition "Celebrating 60 Years: Painters & Poets," 2011; at Tibor de Nagy.

viewers that the cross-pollination of art forms included film as well. Burckhardt cast artists and poets in his films; Jane Freilicher, Rivers and John Ashbery starred in *Mounting Tension* (1951), for example, a comic send-up of the art world and psychoanalysis. Sharing the screening room were Grace Hartigan and Frank O'Hara's collaborative oil studies for *Oranges: 12 Pastorals by Frank O'Hara*, poems published by the gallery in 1953 with a famous cover by Hartigan. A collaboration between Rivers and Kenneth Koch, titled *In Bed* (1982), took up an entire wall with 52 numbered vignettes, scribbled notations, goofy cut-up illustrations and photos, and subtitles like *Snow in Bed*, *Preludes in Bed*, *Stones In Bed*, *Y Sick in Bed*. The exhibition offered an opportunity to examine small but arresting pieces whose titles express the general climate: *I'm Not Really Flying*, *I'm Thinking* (1964), for example, a 10-by-8-inch collage by Brainard and O'Hara.

Two seldom-seen works by the gallery's original financial backer, Dwight Ripley, are Kandinsky-like pen and colored pencil drawings on stationery. A rejection by Betty Parsons Gallery fueled Ripley's interest in supporting Tibor de Nagy, who, in turn (and much like Parsons), went on to represent, for the times, a much higher than average number of women. The gallery was relatively egalitarian: exhibiting and publishing, these friends of friends of friends were men and women, gay and straight; the artists were both figurative and abstract, and the poets groundbreaking.

The spirit of irreverence and camaraderie at the gallery was palpable, particularly

in the person of O'Hara, who feels especially present throughout the show. In a 15-minute, 16mm film, *USA: Poetry, Frank O'Hara* (by Richard O'Moore, 1966), the poet whom the dance critic and poet Edward Denby called "everybody's catalyst" describes Tibor de Nagy's early years. O'Hara says that a poet in the early 1950s might confess, "I don't like Yeats," and be met with a painter's response: "I know just how you feel, I hate Picasso." The unHINGING of "academic standards," as O'Hara describes it, represented by the New York School, paved the way for a burgeoning creativity, a period when poetry and art occupied the same space, and when art and words seemed to matter equally.

—Elaine Sexton

## DAVID HAMMONS L&M ARTS

David Hammons finds art where it lives and inserts himself as participant and provocateur. In 2007, that happened to be at L&M Arts, a gallery specializing in secondary market sales of 20th-century masters located in an Upper East Side townhouse. This past winter he returned to the elegant space, installing 10 large-scale paintings cloaked in tarpaulins, drop cloths, taffeta and a terrycloth towel, as well as one with an armoire pushed against its surface. One "painting" was in fact just an area of the white wall obscured with tattered and torn clear plastic sheets.

In these new works, the paintings peek out at edges and corners and through holes in the materials covering them, and



David Hammons: Untitled, 2010, mixed mediums, 108 by 84 inches; at L&M Arts.

many appear to be gestural abstractions that borrow the palette of de Kooning or perhaps of Guston. At first impression, they seem to have been randomly and rudely effaced, but it quickly becomes clear that the staged concealment allows for a kind of strategic composition of its own. Despite—and because of—the crudeness of the materials and the assaultive gesture toward the viewer, these are grand, compelling objects that Hammons has created, stately works with the dynamic physical presence to command a room. They evoke Alberto Burri's distressed, layered surfaces as well as the decrepitude and not-quite-suppressed violence of Arte Povera. One also thinks of Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning* (1953) and his white paintings, both of which mocked the exclusionary, heteronormative culture of Abstract Expressionism.

Hammons's oeuvre narrates an implicit race-based exclusion from the various movements that he has witnessed in his long career. Born in 1943, he participated in the aftermath of Abstract Expressionism and in Minimalism, Post-Minimalism, Conceptual art and appropriation, but all from the outside. This outsidership has taken the aggressive form of his urinating on a Richard Serra sculpture (*Pissed Off*, 1981). It has also taken the wittier and yet more subversive form of an untitled abstract sculpture from 1992, in the collection of the Whitney Museum, of wire-and-hair dreadlocks that poke out menacingly at viewers. More recently, in the 2007 show at L&M, Hammons and his wife, Chie

Stephen Vitiello: *Secondary Bell*, 2010, C-print, 16 by 20 inches; at Museum 52.



View of Liz Lerner's exhibition, showing *After Red Desert*, 2011, vinyl sticker, and (right) *6*, 2010; at Tanya Bonakdar.

Hammons, draped antique mannequins in expensive fur coats, the backs of which were painted and singed.

The recent show not only alluded to race-based exclusion from the canon of painting—painting “died” in the 1970s without any African-American having been legitimated in its various movements (outside social realism)—but also addressed the social history of the gallery as an institution. The 19th-century townhouse was itself made the subject. Hammons’s signature appeared not on the paintings but directly on the gallery wall, marking the white space and turning it back on itself, conjuring the stable of white male 20th-century masters found there most days.

—Kirsten Swenson

## STEPHEN VITIELLO MUSEUM 52

Stephen Vitiello’s show “More Songs About Buildings and Bells” drew on two earlier projects by the musician and sound artist, both made in New York.

In the gallery’s front room, five wall-mounted speakers emitted a composition of bell sounds. Church bells, bells from the Aqueduct Race Track, bicycle bells and cat collar bells are mixed with environmental sounds like birdsong and traffic. Titled *Bell Study #2* (2010-11), it comprises some of the 120 “field recordings” Vitiello made in and around New York for *A Bell For Every Minute* (2010), his long-term installation on Manhattan’s High Line. Vitiello offers some visual accompaniment: at the very front of the room, a pair of photos

taken at the Good Stuff Diner (showing a counter bell next to a receipt pad) and the New York Stock Exchange (a bright red “secondary bell” button with a gavel alongside it) provide the most direct clues as to source material. It is up to the listener to identify the rest of the bells, allowing the work to be colored by memory of past sound experiences.

The show’s other major work, in the gallery’s back room, was the video piece *World Trade Center Recordings: Studio View* (1999-2011). In 1999, Vitiello was an artist in residence for six months as part of the World Views program of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Over six months, Vitiello, from his studio on the 91st floor of Tower One, took videos of the views and made sound recordings that captured the crack and thrum of the building’s movement (including those caused by the strong winds of Hurricane Floyd in 1999). Shot through the tall glass windows—where Vitiello affixed contact microphones for his recordings—the video shows lower Manhattan, the Hudson River and adjacent New Jersey as day fades into night.

In the series of edited clips on view, varying from several seconds to a few minutes in length, the camera charts the sunset bleeding into the water, zooms in on a water taxi bobbing at the dock and follows the traffic on the New Jersey side of the river. On the soundtrack, one hears the droning vibrations of the building itself, layered with city sounds and traffic.

Vitiello has said that his World Trade Center project was on his mind when he prepared for the High Line work. As

installed at Museum 52, *Bell Study #2* informed the piece made from the WTC recordings of more than a decade ago, though not intentionally: from the back room, the strongest tones of bells could be heard through the thick curtain that divided the small space. Considering Vitiello’s relationship with the towers, *World Trade Center Recordings: Studio View* carries a deeper poignancy—enhanced by the emotional connotations of ringing church bells—now that the buildings are gone.

—Kimberly Chou

## LIZ LARNER TANYA BONAKDAR

Even when you’re standing right in front of them, Liz Lerner’s new sculptures are hard to see. Whether shimmering and gossamer or pitch dark and black-hole dense, they challenge both optical and kinesthetic grasp. The first piece one encountered on entering this exhibition—Lerner’s debut with Bonakdar, and first solo show in New York since 2003—was an untitled painting in tempera on paper (all works 2010 or 2011). Extending a little from the wall, like most of the wall-hung objects shown, it seemed to be composed of thin paint strokes suspended in air. A slash of sun-warmed brown along the paper’s bottom edge suggests a landscape, and hints at the conceit unifying the show, which (the press release reveals) took Michelangelo Antonioni’s 1964 film *Red Desert* as a point of departure.

Even without that information, the works brimmed with narrative interrelationships. A murderous-looking blade made of ceramic glistening with bloodred