

were recently on view at Nina Johnson in Miami as part of the exhibition “Narcissus”—are not always cooperative. Following in the legacy of artists such as Judy Chicago, Nicola L., Miriam Schapiro, and Alina Szapocznikow, Stout’s works subvert the space of the domestic, renouncing stale notions of beauty that take the female form as a given. Buxom caricatures stand in as furniture, their eroticisms flashing like epithets to their own mislabeling. These static pantomimes thumb their noses at tradition.

In *Narcissus Chandelier*, 2017, ceramic bodies are connected by gray ligaments to fashion a lampshade. Extruding from the bulb at the chandelier’s center, the figures—who bare knobby breasts and prominent genitalia and are variously sculpted from pink, periwinkle, salmon, and pewter clay—evoke a Maximalist style. Stout pares down the body to a homely set of Play-Doh-like forms, a DIY tactic that can

be interpreted as a revolt against highbrow artifice. Cuteness here begs us to assume a simpler relation to commodities, one in which we afford them leeway as a formal category without direct valuation. These objects could be taken as pseudoprimitivist sculptures, but they are in fact the result of Stout’s savvy deployment of lessons borrowed from contemporary art discourse—although she puts them in service of promoting a new kind of hybrid production, neither totally rarefied artwork nor high-end furniture.

This sly figurative play offers a feminized index of individual fantasy (resonating with the gendered reception she was subjected to when she participated in the television show *Ellen’s Design Challenge* in 2015 and ultimately won the competition). The works lend fluency to abstraction, even as they make some compromises toward

usability. For Stout, who takes the trope of functionality in furniture as an easy target, scanty articulation is the cleanest way to draw a line to the grotesque. Take *Shelfish*, 2017, which gives lip service to use-value in borrowing the visual cues of a shelf—stacked surface areas—only to further the artist’s project of amoeboid abstraction. Two thin, uniform cylindrical beams propping up shelves quote the parsimony of modernist construction, while the sculpture’s performative proportions and rainbow papier-mâché exterior undermine the characteristic instrumental rationality of the movement. (The support also serves to keep the work structurally sound in a gesture that feels more voluntary than utilitarian.) Much in the way that auto-complete technology shapes the direction of a query, a design makes self-segregating predictions that affect, in real time, the possibilities of its interface. Foregrounding the work as a skeuomorph within the vernacular of furniture opens up and undercuts its prescriptive mandate, along the way stumbling through a freewheeling world that oscillates between figuration and ornamentation.

Staring at the uncanny scene unfolding in the gallery, one got the sense that each unique sculpture was prepared to meet the flesh of its taker. Two of the five lamps on display—*One Is Silver* and *And the Other Is Gold*, both 2017, a pair of erect women with metallic vulvas and nipples—appeared to smirk welcomingly at viewers. A viewer

could toggle a lamp “on” and consent to the performative gesture of the venereal imposition happening here. Elsewhere, one’s own image was reflected in *Narcissus Mirror*, 2017, which is flanked by two wonky ladies wantonly holding a central glass pane aloft with their rear ends. Roughly the shape of an ellipse, the mirror was carefully cut with a wavy outline, exaggerating its irreproducibility. The precision cuts read more as emotional incisions than material interventions, intending to create kinship between users living in a culture of heightened self-representation. That’s the thing: A piece of furniture, when viewed in isolation, is an amalgam of data sets, a corollary to the greater degree of consciousness designers have in targeting pockets of unfulfilled desire, an opportunity to transcribe unconscious cultural data differently and with more brevity. Such is the ethos of “Narcissus.”

—Elizaveta Shneyderman

CHICAGO

Rebecca Shore

CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY

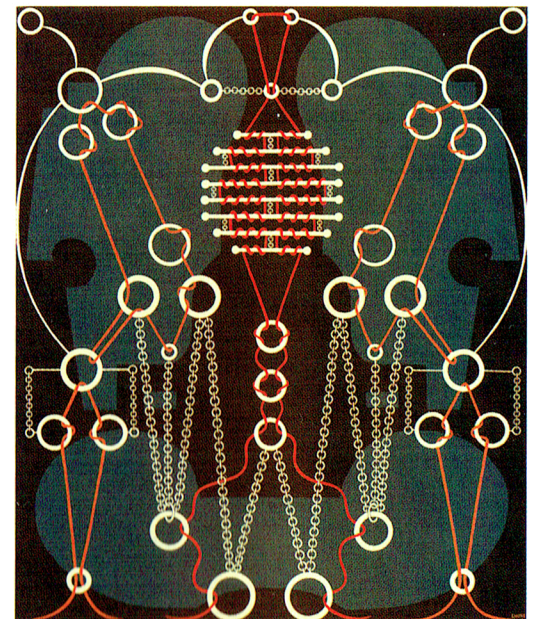
On an immediate level, Rebecca Shore’s paintings are impeccably rendered arrangements of ribbons, strings, hoops, chains, and the occasional tassel: They seem to collect emblems of decor, suspending them above and between bold monochromatic forms of a vaguely Victorian persuasion. (The artist’s maternal grandparents were born in the late 1800s, and their various home wares—candlesticks, saltshakers, and the like—left a lasting impression.) The patterns that emerge—each the result of Shore’s dedicated preservation of a consistent interval between her motifs—are visually captivating variations on symmetry, or asymmetry. A closer look at Shore’s fastidious constructions revealed moments of divergence. One ribbon’s curl is shorter than that of its (approximate) mirror image, while the almondine shape created when a string passes through a loop is larger on one side than on the other. Scanning the eight acrylic paintings and four gouaches on view in Shore’s recent exhibition at Corbett vs. Dempsey, which were rife with slight yet brilliant imperfections, the viewer was happily reminded that these bold, graphic works were made by hand.

The shapes, too, have histories that stretch out into the tangible world. Shore has amassed an enormous trove of silhouettes, tracings of images glimpsed in catalogues or quattrocento painting, among other wellsprings. Whatever the real-world source, the process of making these cutouts renders it anonymous. For Shore, this erasure of detail introduces a necessary degree of ambiguity into her compositional logic. With contents removed, only contours remain, and the shapes freely enter a new rationality. For instance, in *Untitled* (17–12), 2017, which hung on the gallery’s north wall, a diaphanous piece of fabric is strung through four rings, its folds exhibiting a crisply defined yet believable response to gravity. Additionally rung through white links are a thick lime-green string and black ribbon, which become faint as they

Rebecca Shore, *Untitled* (17-05), 2017, acrylic on linen, 24 × 20".



Katie Stout, *Shelfish*, 2017, metal, wood, resin, papier-mâché, 71 × 47 × 14".



pass behind the hanging gauze. Another work from 2017, *Untitled* (17–11), is imbued with a lyrical cadence by three horizontal bands of color—burgundy, mustard, and pale pink—which have been stacked to form a central column flanked on either side by cumulous fields of mint green. Inspired by medieval illuminated manuscripts, the bands subtly evoke the works of both Mark Rothko and Judy Ledgerwood, the latter a fellow Chicagoan who shares Shore’s interest in pattern but with a decidedly messier approach. Shore develops her compositions by collaging the paper silhouettes on a canvas or a board and seeing what works. Photographing her arrangements as they develop, she sometimes returns to a previously documented version. Then, once satisfied, she begins her freehand replication of the shape-landscape she has mapped out.

Together, the various elements collected in these configurations gently enhance the estrangement from their birth forms. Put another way, in the words of critic Amy Goldin, “pattern is basically antithetical to the iconic image, for the nature of pattern implicitly denies the importance of singularity, purity, and absolute precision.” Repetition engenders mutation. Each of the works on view resonated with the surrounding pictures, their commonalities eliciting a morphological link. This effect hinted at the influence of Chicago Imagist Christina Ramberg, who was Shore’s teacher at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The two remained friends after she graduated in 1981, spending countless hours quilting together and reveling in the ways they could innovate on standard quilt-block patterns while remaining engaged with the tradition and geometric inclinations of their craft. This penchant for re-creation was also a hallmark of Ramberg’s drawing process, which Shore has summarized as “systematically [going] through [and] varying an image, changing one thing, making it into something else, and then [hybridizing] it with another image.” Emerging from a similar working practice, the near-perfect yet joyfully human description of Shore’s accumulated forms seemed to glow with a measured optimism.

—Lina Kavaliunas

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

“Future Shock”

SITE SANTA FE

For the inaugural exhibition in SITE Santa Fe’s revamped and expanded space, director and chief curator Irene Hofmann took her inspiration from Alvin Toffler’s best-selling book *Future Shock* (1970), borrowing its title for her exhibition. The book casts the rapid change induced by technological development in the first world’s postindustrial age as a disease—a deadly malady with which we as humans must come to grips. As with conceptions of history, epistemological change is at the heart of any futurity; changes in knowledge supersede the invention of new devices and herald shifts in the way humans relate to one another and to their environment.

The exhibition reinforces a teleological conception of the future and posits futurity as a placeholder for generalized ideas about the extinction of species (including *Homo sapiens*), scientific advancements, changes in human relationality, and the impending completion of economic globalization. Some of these points are made with works that feel rather dated, such as Andreas Gursky’s large-scale photographs of prerecession stock markets: *Chicago Mercantile Exchange*, 1997, and *Kuwait Stock Exchange*, 2007. Alternately, Andrea Zittel’s “Panel Dress Series,” 1995–98, a modest installation of apron-like smocks and simple sheath dresses, stands apart from much of the other work in the exhibition in its quiet assurance that when the future does come, it will

likely be everyday concerns such as clothing ourselves that will determine larger choices we make as we move through this new, presumably postapocalyptic world.

Like much artwork that engages with science and technology, some of the works in “Future Shock” highlight the gulf between the disciplines of art and science instead of bridging it. Lynn Hershman Leeson’s *The Infinity Engine*, 2013–17, which explores the implications of genetic engineering for medicine and agriculture, is steeped in science to the point where a deft handling of media and aspirations toward aesthetic pleasure get sacrificed for didactic messaging. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and Krzysztof Wodiczko’s immersive installation *Zoom Pavilion*, 2015, utilizes an early version of facial-recognition technology that attempts to detect interpersonal relationships among people in crowds. The work is a tour de force commentary on the surveillance state and relies on the pleasures of self-recognition for its payoff.



There is an old adage often attributed to iconic baseball catcher Yogi Berra: “The future ain’t what it used to be.” Much of the most successful work in the show inspires a kind of affective attraction to ideas about futurity by poignantly invoking the past. For instance, a selection of set pieces from Tom Sachs’s “Space Program” series, 2007–, revel in a childlike engagement with moon-landing and cosmic-travel fantasies, looking not so much to the future but to a bygone image of the United States as a world power. The installation gives the appearance of a garage in which a dad-genius has been tinkering with spare car parts and other bric-a-brac. Dario Robleto’s *Setlists for a Setting Sun* (*The Crystal Palace*) and *Setlists for a Setting Sun* (*Dark Was the Night*), both 2014, take as their subject the wonders of sound-recording technologies. Collections of precious ephemera and mementos represent the fascination attached to events such as the launching of the Golden Record into space in 1977 aboard the *Voyager 1* spacecraft. And Alexis Rockman’s *New Mexico Field Drawings*, 2017, created specifically for this exhibition, depict some of the titular state’s indigenous species, such as the extinct *Edaphosaurus* and the rare White Sands pupfish, and incorporate locally sourced organic materials. Perhaps without intending to, “Future Shock” shows us how much the future used to mean to us in the past, and how those past conceptions of the future have in turn shaped our present.

—Chelsea Weathers

View of “Future Shock,” 2017. Andrea Zittel, “Panel Dress Series,” 1995–98. Photo: Eric Swanson.