

ART & DESIGN

In Art This Fall, Women Win in a Landslide

By HOLLAND COTTER SEPT. 16, 2016

(Asterisks indicate the critic's Top 10 shows this season.)

I can't predict results of the November presidential election, but I *can* tell you that women are going to rule the 2016-17 art season, with enough having solo museum shows to form an entire White House cabinet, and then some.

The bonanza has already begun with “A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant Garde, 1960s-1980s” at the Grey Art Gallery, New York University, a traveling retrospective look at the famed “topless cellist” who was, right up to her death in 1991, a daring artist and a visionary organizer of a passionately successful campaign for electronically-based multimedia art, which she helped to invent.

The Queens Museum has survey of another innovator in “Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Maintenance Art,”* a survey of an artist who has, since the 1960s, combined feminism, environmentalism and labor activism in private and public art projects, some done in her role as the New York City Department of Sanitation's official (though unsalaried) artist in residence. In the 1980s, she choreographed a ballet for garbage trucks. It was fantastic. (Sept. 18)

Caretaking as power: what a concept. It's also embodied in "Beverly Buchanan — Ruins and Rituals" at the **Brooklyn Museum**, a full-career look at an artist who invested much of her energy in reconstituting, in miniature, African-American vernacular architecture of the Carolinas and Georgia, where she grew up. At the time of her death last year, Ms. Buchanan's work, which includes painting and photography, had been out of the New York limelight for a while. The retrospective, which opens Oct. 21, makes a welcome return and serves as the kickoff event in "A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum," celebrating the 10th anniversary of the museum's radically smart **Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art**.

And an appetite for radical thinking is what prompted the collector **Virginia Dwan** to turn dealer in the late 1950s and early 1960s and promote Minimalism, Conceptualism and Earth Art, trends then considered on an avant-garde lunatic fringe. "Los Angeles to New York: Dwan Gallery, 1959-1971," which opens on Sept. 30 at the **National Gallery of Art** in Washington has work by dozens of artists — **Michael Heizer**, **Robert Smithson**, **Agnes Martin** — who were little known when Ms. Dwan was both selling and buying them, and who are classics now.

In line with the times, the Dwan galleries favored male artists, but also found room for women, Ms. Martin (1912-2004) among them. A major overview of that artist's abstract paintings, drawings and prints, "Agnes Martin"* will pulse through the great spiral of the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum** this fall and is certain to be one of the great shows of the New York season. By the time it opens on Oct. 7, the life's work of her near contemporary, "Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight," will be enlivening the walls of the **Whitney Museum of American Art** with sharp-edged forms and brilliant colors.

At 101, the Cuba-born Ms. Herrera is not only still very much with us but also still intensely productive. The same is true of the Japanese artist **Yayoi Kusama** who, at a youthful 87, will have an exhibition of her total-immersion "infinity mirror" installations opening at the **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden** in Washington on Feb. 23. They're some kind of selfie heaven, as are the enwrapping and enrapturing video works in "Pipilotti Rist: Pixel Forest"* at the **New Museum**, starting Oct. 26. Ms. Rist, a Swiss artist, has many international fans, including

Beyoncé, who seems to have adapted one of her best-known images in the video component of “Lemonade.”

Add to the season solo shows by Frances Stark (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Sept. 17); Françoise Grossen (Museum of Arts and Design, Oct. 18); Lygia Pape (the Met Breuer, March 21); Florine Stettheimer, early-20th-century New York’s czarina of culture, who arrives at the Jewish Museum in May, and the Guerrilla Girls at the Baltimore Museum of Art later this month (Sept. 26), and you have an unbeatable executive lineup.

This doesn’t mean that men are entirely out of the picture, though the most interesting shows are by figures who have, thus far, escaped museum overexposure. “Francis Picabia: Our Heads Are Round So Our Thoughts Can Change Direction”* at the Museum of Modern Art will let us take the measure of a European painter more often spoken of as influence than actually seen in bulk (Nov. 21). At the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, “John McLaughlin Paintings: Total Abstraction,” the ever-elusive Zen master of the West Coast sublime, floats, for a few brief months, into view (Nov. 13).

That museum will also debut “Renaissance and Reformation: German Art in the Age of Dürer and Cranach”* (Nov. 20), effectively a tribute to Martin Luther, the religious thinker whose “95 Theses” started the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago next fall. A more direct homage, “Martin Luther: Art and the Reformation,” at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Oct. 30), may well be even more specifically soaked in Lutheran soul.

Otherwise, big-ticket scholarly theme shows are less plentiful than in other years, though there are some. “Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven”* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Sept. 26) will be shipping in precious objects from hither and yon to project an image of a city that was global long before globalization. And given the current widespread cultural destruction in the Middle East, I look forward to seeing the historical reconstructive work that the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto will do in “Syria: A Living History” (opens Oct. 15).

Political realities are inseparable from art, which is often a direct response to them. This should be monumentally illustrated in two concurrent Philadelphia

shows: “Paint the Revolution: Mexican Modernism, 1910-1950”* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Oct. 25) and “World War I and American Art” at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art (Nov. 4).

And addressing the present, “Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter,”* organized by the architecture and design department at the Museum of Modern Art (Oct. 1), will propose practical solutions for housing the tens of millions of refugees adrift throughout the world, while “By the People: Designing a Better America” at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York (Sept. 30) will focus on homelessness at home.

No American artist has more incisively and movingly addressed this subject than the veteran West Coast photographer Anthony Hernandez, whose pictures of dispossessed people camping out under Los Angeles freeways are as pertinent today as when he took them in the late 1980s. He’ll be having a long overdue career retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (Sept. 24).

If economic class continues to be one of the most bitter flash points in American politics, race is, ever, the other, and never more so than in an election year marked by surges of xenophobia and instances of police violence directed against black citizens. Such violence is by no means new: An exhibition called “All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50” at the Oakland Museum of California (Oct. 8) documents its ubiquity half a century and more ago. It is intrinsic to a larger, complex story of what it means to be both black and American, and to be deeply and equally invested in both identities.

That larger story is told with panoramic subtlety in the exhibition “Kerry James Marshall: Mastry,”* a traveling survey devoted to one of our great contemporary history painters. It comes to the Met Breuer on Oct. 28, by which time one of the most important cultural events of the past several seasons will be a fait accompli: the debut, on Sept. 24, of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington.*

Designed by David Adjaye, an African-born British architect, it is built on the last available museum spot on the National Mall. Its display blurs, as it should, firm lines between artworks and artifacts, giving both equal significance as objects of our

moral attention. President Obama will formally dedicate the space. Whomever succeeds him in the White House should make it a first-stop call.

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