eric stotik: fugue



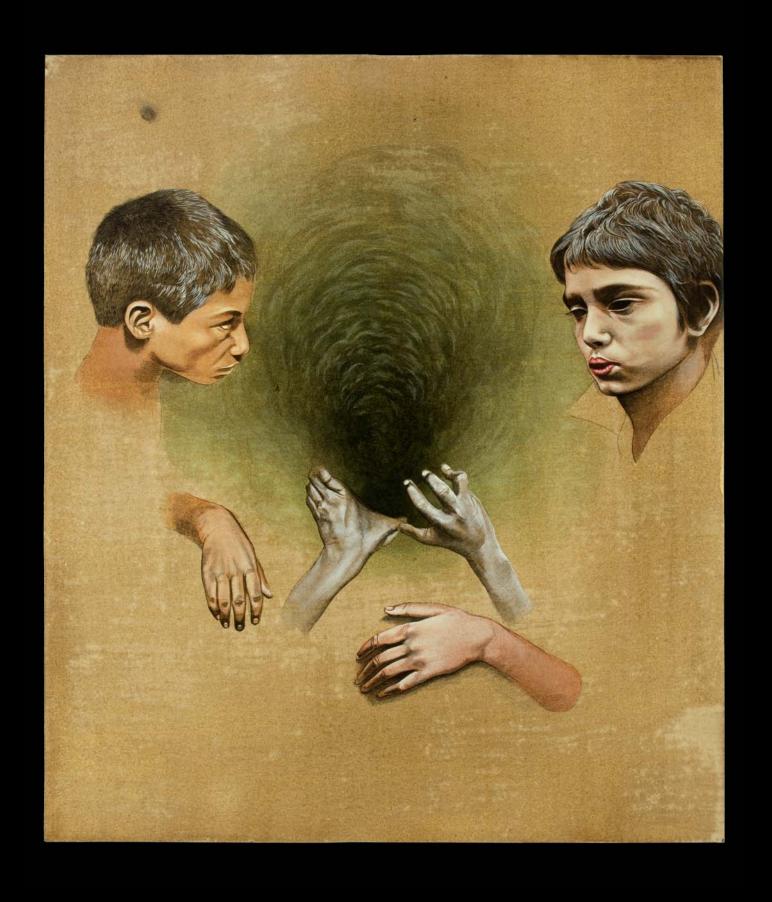
Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art Lewis & Clark College

September 8 - December 13, 2015

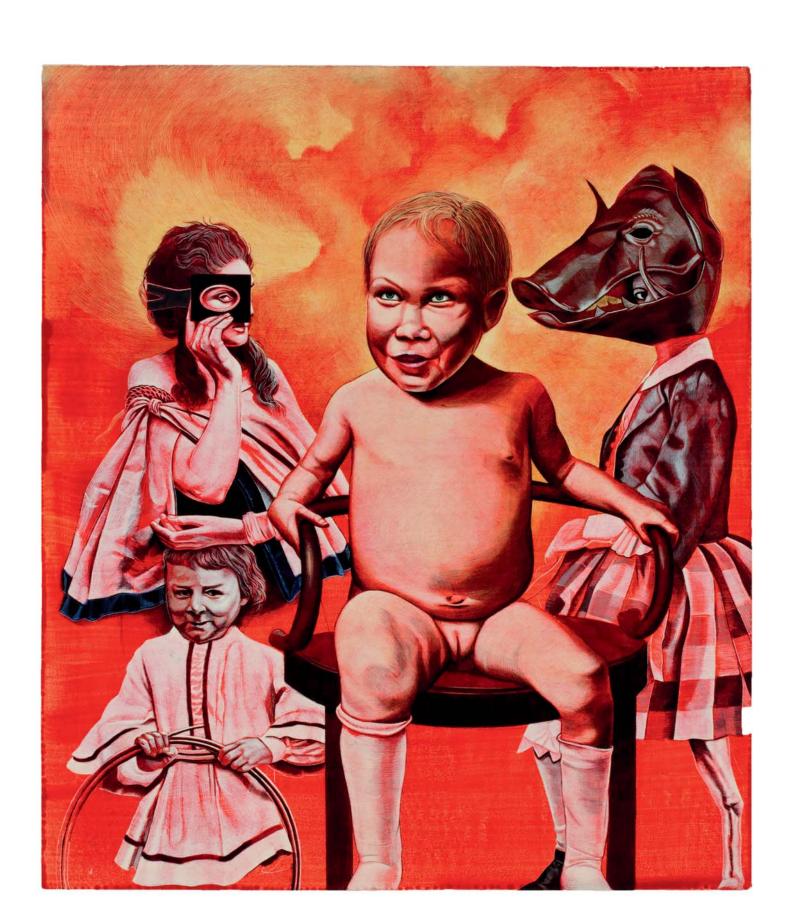


eric stotik: fugue

Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art Lewis & Clark College







Some Observations: Traveling in the Land of Eric Stotik

Entering the visual world of Eric Stotik is a bit like visiting a dense garden in late summer. Invariably, while strolling among the prolific trees and flowers, one unsuspectingly walks into the gossamer silk architecture of an orb-weaving spider. It is always a shock, always disagreeable... and it is generally accompanied by the sensation that spider thread against skin is just a whisper, an inkling, of the arachnid's unknowable world. That experience—of having drawn near to another reality without being fully invited into it—is a common reaction to Eric Stotik's work.

Stotik is an artist who resolutely defies classification: His technical skills are very nearly unparalleled. He is as comfortable painting an intricate universe on a five-by-three-inch card—a painting that fits in the palm of a hand—as he is working at a monumental scale, like that of the forty-five-foot panorama in this exhibition. His facility with materials is wide-ranging; his pen-and-ink drawings, intaglio prints, and acrylic paintings on canvas and linen (as well as all manner of found surfaces) suggest that Stotik has no particular artistic homeland. His work is figurative, mostly; surreal, often. His visual vocabulary dips into virtually all periods in the history of art; likewise it makes reference to literature and current events. Yet he is loath to entertain inquiries ("So what do the paintings *mean*?") to do with the content of his work. This essay cannot answer that unanswerable question, but in it, I hope to provide some insights into Stotik's work.

A Papua New Guinean Childhood: Like Every Place You've Never Been¹

Upon introduction to Stotik's paintings and drawings, one might reasonably conclude that he is possessed of a saturnine and melancholic temperament. In fact, his disposition is anything but. He is consistently personable, pleasant, humble, and—dare I say—even cheerful. He seems mildly perplexed when it's pointed out that much of his work is discomfiting or downright disturbing. When asked about particularly aggressive imagery (a bloody knife, say, or crucified bodies and hangings), he shrugs and counters, "Oh, you are concerned that my paintings are some sort of psychological indicator? Hmmm... I don't think so. To me, I use a knife to make dinner. Then I use a knife to eat dinner. If you associate violent implications with the image of a knife, that's your interpretation."

Stotik's was an exceedingly unconventional childhood, probably as far-removed from the mainstream American Saturday-morning-cartoon kid culture of the '60s and '70s as it was possible to be. He is the second eldest of four children, all born, and mostly reared, in rural Papua New Guinea. His parents, Esther and Carl, were Lutheran missionaries in the Enga Province, a rugged and mountainous region.² Stotik's father arrived there in 1950; he oversaw a community of lay preachers, taught school, and managed trade stores. In 1958, Esther, an unmarried nurse, arrived in the country. They married two years later and commenced to raise a family in their adopted home. Esther Stotik opened medical clinics wherever the family lived, mostly in response to the tendency the local tribespeople had of seeking medical treatment from her in her own home. At an early age, Stotik went to a nearby boarding school for his elementary education, coming home on weekends for family time; when they were older, the Stotik children were sent to boarding school in Australia. Of his own childhood, Stotik has said, "It was ideal—it was very rural, very little electricity, no heated water, and just wild. We could leave the house and walk up a river all day and play. It was like the movie Swiss Family Robinson, where this family lives in the jungle and the kids are free to play."³

There was more to growing up in Papua New Guinea—one of the few places on the planet where birds of paradise thrive—than the freedom and security that allow kids to run wild. Stotik's childhood bore witness to the complex tribal culture of that country. Esther Stotik explained to me that, as missionaries, the family was removed from traditional practices of tribal conflict and retribution. Nonetheless, they observed—from a distance—tribal disputes, which were adjudicated with bows, arrows, and spears. Another weapon in the arsenal of tribal vengeance, house-burning, was occasionally witnessed by the Stotik family.⁴

Stotik's painting studio is a small spare bedroom in his tiny but intriguing home in northeast Portland. During one studio visit, I spied a vintage black-and-white photograph on a book-shelf. Closer inspection revealed an indigenous Papua New Guinean woman, bare-chested, a toddler in her arms, a net baby carrier at her feet. The woman is nursing a piglet—a jarring image for a viewer in the industrialized West. "That's currency," Stotik explained, referring to the piglet, and told me that in Engan tribal culture, pigs are commodities, important mediums



of exchange. In fact, complex and (to us) arcane economic systems and annual festivals are built around pigs. Keeping a piglet alive and healthy is as important as doing the same for one's offspring, so interconnected are the tribespeople and their livestock. Stotik pointed out that the scene in the photo was not something that he saw every day as a child, but neither was it particularly unusual. Many viewers comment that they "see a lot of Papua New Guinea" in Stotik's work, but I sense that there is a subtler connection that makes his work seem provocative to the Western viewer. My point is that Stotik's youthful experiences imprinted in him a strikingly different visual vocabulary than that absorbed by most contemporaneous American children. Stotik, I postulate, is inclined to a different symbolic system than the rest of us.



Enga Province, Papua New Guinea, c. 1960-61

An Idiosyncratic Iconography

Stotik almost never titles his work, so as not to direct the viewer toward any specific interpretation. "My paintings are not narrative," he insists. While this may seem disingenuous, I think he means that he has no particular narrative planned when he sits down to start a new piece. When pressed about how he approaches his work, he explains that he has some task in mind when he enters his studio, maybe a very simple goal such as "start painting the sky," and from that point, the rest of the composition evolves. In this, I might argue that Stotik is practicing automatism—drawing or painting without conscious self-control or self-censorship, as the Surrealists did—by tapping into his subconscious in search of an alternate reality. But he does not put it in those terms, and in fact resists any sort of explanation or justification at all.

Stotik is a both a sponge and an alembic, absorbing and distilling the peculiarities of history and of the human condition. He is deeply familiar with the history of art, and apt to appropriate style and subject matter from the ancients through nineteenth-century masters. Not surprisingly, he says that the work of the early Netherlandish painter Hieronymus Bosch has been and remains influential. Indeed, many of Stotik's paintings recall Bosch's macabre, nightmarish vision. The birdheaded humans and other chimeras, torture devices, fantastic structures, disembodied anatomical parts, and idiosyncratic perspectives to be found in Stotik's imagery share much with

The Garden of Earthly Delights, Bosch's masterpiece. Stotik's lush foliage details and deft drapery recall the Northern Renaissance paintings of Jan van Eyck and Robert Campin. His richly decorated borders, imaginary coats of arms, and other esoteric heraldry call to mind the marginalia of medieval illustrated manuscripts.

Attentive viewers will note specific recurrent motifs and themes in Stotik's work, some over the span of several years. One is that of the *Schandmaske*, or "mask of shame." This Germanic tool for public humiliation was used from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century; for example, if a citizen behaved swinishly, he would be forced to wear an iron mask in facsimile of a pig's snout. Variations on the themes of defacement and disfigurement also appear: Stotik frequently paints deformed, scarred, or mummified human heads, or faces which are concealed by a cut-out mask. It's my view that this is a sort of "Elephant Man" motif, emblematic of the self-reproof or stigmatization that we all inflict upon ourselves at times.

Stotik occasionally excerpts details from historic work, then transmutes them to fold into his own composition. For example, the apothegm *siet om of swijcht* ("be cautious or keep silent") appears in at least two paintings in this exhibition. It's taken from an inscription on an anonymous *Portrait of a Surgeon* (1569) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But Stotik is characteristically unforthcoming about what this phrase means to him, or what it signifies with respect to the paintings in which it appears. We can only speculate.

In one untitled painting in the exhibition, Stotik quotes directly from the nineteenth-century Mexican political engraver José Guadalupe Posada by appropriating an image of a woman shooting a pistol, but in Stotik's painting, the woman fires at an ancient-Egyptian figure, and is stenciled and spray-painted onto a discarded bank bag, investing the image with a street-art aesthetic. Goya's bats; Hindu and Egyptian gods and goddesses; Quetzalcoatl and other figures from Mesoamerican codices; Escher-like labyrinths; trench warfare and its victims à la Otto Dix; Dada-esque non sequiturs reminiscent of Max Ernst—all these and myriad other references and quotations pay homage to Stotik's artistic predecessors.

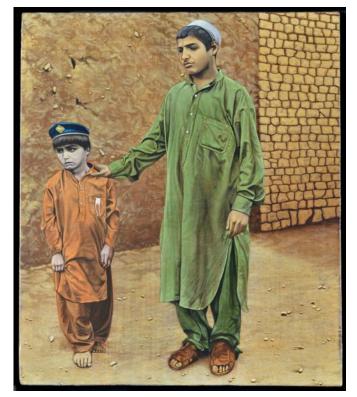
Inspiration comes to Stotik from sources other than art history, too. Music has always been fundamental to his creativity,

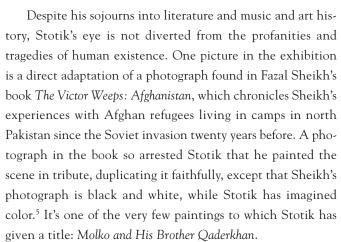


and he is a voracious reader. (He comes from a family of obsessive readers; books and reading recommendations fly between Stotik, his siblings, and their mother.) No particular through line connects the subject matter that piques his interest, other than genuine curiosity. At my first studio visit with Stotik, I asked him (as is my practice) what he was reading at the time; the answer was *The World of Ants: A Science-Fiction Universe*, a treatise on myrmecology written by a French entomologist and published in 1970.

A recurrent subject in Stotik's oeuvre concerns a visual sensation of the European theater during the two world wars. These are not quite pastiches—I'm not aware that Stotik is actually imitating specific predecessors. But the desolation, strewn corpses, and period uniforms justify the assumption. In these images especially, it strikes me that Stotik's true subject is in fact ambiguity: that is, a visual manifestation of the idea that none of us can ever fully know another person's reality. One painting in particular, in which a soldier sprawls on the ground, and another bends over him, grasping his shoulders, exemplifies this. Is it a depiction of a soldier helping his fallen comrade? Or is the scene sinister, one soldier finishing off the other? We are not told, and must come to our own conclusion—or not.







Typically, I find, Stotik's paintings refer to world events in a much more oblique way. In the exhibition is a small painting, not much bigger than a playing card, a portrait of the head of an infant. A strange inscription runs along the the bottom: FBIHTOILPAIL. The letters are an intertwining of the words *Bhopal* and *fitili*. Bhopal was the site of the 1984 tragedy in which a gas leak at a Union Carbide pesticide plant resulted in the world's greatest industrial disaster. *Fitili* is Russian labor-camp slang for the dying—or rather, the living dead. The word literally means "wicks," as in a candle wick, soon to be extinguished.⁶

But a visitor to *Eric Stotik*: FUGUE will find beauty as well. Not every painting seems to have emerged from the hand of the grim reaper: a miniature painting of birds is an unabashed celebration of avian splendor. An empty boat drifts from (or



toward?) shore at dusk. An imaginary archway of intertangled treetops leads to an infinite nothingness of blue sky. In Stotik's hands, the element of beauty is utterly subjective. Even when the subject matter is gloomy, or repellent, there is elegance to be found in such painstaking execution.

Methods and Materials

Equal to Stotik's ingenious and powerful imagery is his command of materials. His small paintings appear to have been painted with a single-haired brush; often his painted line is no more emphatic than his lines made with an etching needle. In fact, Stotik's paintings are more about drawing than the process of painting. Even in the largest paintings in this exhibition, there is a dazzling attention to detail and visual complexity. He mentioned to me once that he taught himself to paint the way he does by studying Theophilus's *On Divers Arts*. Somewhere inside this medieval how-to manual, buried within chapters on the grinding of pigments and the application of metal leaf, Stotik discovered a method for mastering the finest line.

It is clear that this artist has the manual dexterity and patience of a surgeon or a watchmaker. But as compelling as is Stotik's meticulous execution, I am equally fascinated by the nontraditional supports and grounds he sometimes chooses to paint on. In a painting of a vulture, for example, Stotik seems to have painted a sort of undulating, tea-stained backdrop for the scavenger, but a closer look reveals the surface to be used



cigarette papers: collected, smoothed flat, and adhered to a substrate to create a ground for painting.

He has been known to use scraps of found metal and all sorts of discarded materials, from the bank bag already mentioned to rice sacks, saw blades, a thrown-out sari, a turtleneck, a mechanic's rag. He paints on pages gleaned from old books, a leather book cover, marbled endpapers.

But what about scale? The consensus is that Stotik can create a universe within the boundaries of a single book page. This survey demonstrates that he is also a master at a far larger scale. The exhibition gives the audience the opportunity to experience two major works in the continuous panoramic view that

Stotik intended. The smaller and earlier of the two, painted between 1992 and 1994, is installed on the exterior of a circular kiosk, which the viewer circumabulates in order to view the entire painting.

Stotik began the more recent (and, at 5×45 feet, many times larger) panoramic work after he was awarded the Regional Arts and Culture Council's Individual Artist Fellowship in 2011. He determined he would use the fellowship funds on a specific project, and rented studio space where he could work on a large scale. The result, a tour de force in acrylic on paper, comprises eleven huge sheets which create a continuous land-scape without beginning or end.

The painting is displayed inside a specially constructed cylindrical space, its forty-five linear feet wrapped around the interior walls in an uninterrupted 360° vista, as it was meant to be seen: a latter-day take on the cycloramas of the nineteenth century, a sort of old-fashioned "virtual reality" experience. Two dimensions become three, making it impossible to take in at a single glance or from one vantage point. Thus, a fourth dimension—time—is added to the entirety of the experience. But unlike art forms—comics; the Bayeux Tapestry; medieval predella panels—in which narratives unfold in sequential images (as in film), the circular panorama—which has no fixed beginning or end—is a visual cross section of time. If a narrative is to be found, it must be extrapolated.

In this painting, the sky is boiling with clouds of red and blue smoke emanating from a conflagration at the lower edge of one section. Immersed, surrounded, we take in a vast land-scape of craggy mountains, a serpentine river in the distance, a thicket of lifeless trees and brush, a debris field—parts of the painting look like a tornado has swept through and littered great sections with detritus. The expanse is peopled by characters in various states of adaptation. Here and there, bits of disembodied human anatomy float in a dreamy netherworld, while a sci-fi mechanical feline with a bullet bandolier for a spine gazes directly at us. Is it hell? Is it a nightmare? Is it the Apocalypse? We are left to our own hypotheses.

When I asked Stotik why he wanted to create a 360° panorama, his reply was typically reductive: "Thought it was a good idea." Whatever motivating force drove him, I contend that the result is as close as we can get to an experience of inhabiting Stotik's universe.



Where does Stotik's work fit within the context of contemporary art? I am convinced, and have been for many years, that Stotik's is a unique voice. True, other contemporary artists work in a similar style: Sergei Isupov's fine-lined ceramic menagerie comes to mind, as do the early paintings of Alexis Rockman. Odd Nerdrum and Pieter Schoolwerth have been cited as Stotik's artistic compeers.9 At one studio visit, I showed Stotik an exhibition catalogue I'd brought with me of paintings by contemporary pop surrealists. I was curious to see what he thought about their technical proficiency and phantasmagorical, sometimes macabre imagery, and whether he considered these artists sympathetic with respect to his own sensibilities. Though his response was not exactly dismissive, it was clear the genre does not resonate with him. Indeed, the artificiality and smooth glibness of this voguish style is of no interest to Stotik. The artist with whom, I think, Stotik shares the most is the late Gregory Gillespie, who also quoted Old Masters without parody or sentimentality, and whose paintings manifest a haunted denseness similar to Stotik's.

Eric Stotik: FUGUE and this accompanying catalogue are not an attempt to explicate Stotik's work. The exhibition is a survey of creative output by an artist with tremendous and innate technical abilities, whose vision assimilates a mélange of sources spanning art history, literature, world affairs, his own formation—and, undoubtedly, his own subliminal impulses.

Linda Tesner
Director
Ronna and Eric Hoffman
Gallery of Contemporary Art
Lewis & Clark College

Notes

¹ An Air Niugini ad jingle.

² Esther Stotik was kind enough to allow me to interview her on August 3, 2015. Information regarding Stotik's childhood in Papua New Guinea was generally gleaned from this visit in addition to conversations with the artist

³ Anita Malhotra, "Interview with Eric Stotik," *Artsmania* (blog), December 22, 2013, http://artsmania.ca/2013/12/22/interview-with-eric-stotik/.

⁴Mrs. Stotik speaks of Papua New Guinean culture with both reverence and affection. She notes that, despite the tribal violence, the indigenous population of PNG is exceedingly humanitarian—that no one in the tribal community goes hungry or lacks for a decent place to sleep.

⁵Fazal Sheikh, The Victor Weeps: Afghanistan (New York: Scalo, 1998), p. 172.

⁶ Applebaum, Anne. Gulag: A History (New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 334.

This painting was made shortly after the death of Stotik's mother-in-law.

⁸ Portland once had its own cyclorama. It was located in a large cylindrical building on the blocks bounded between Third, Fourth, Pine, and Ash. The Portland Cyclorama Company was established in 1887; the 360° scene illustrated the battle at Gettysburg (http://www.cafeunknown.com/2010/11/cyclorama-it-appears-on-peripheral-in.html).

⁹ Jon Raymond, "Eric Stotik." Artforum, January 2011, pp. 227-228.





Broken Breath

Ismet Prcic

Sometimes you wait in a queue at a Fred Meyer deli counter near closing time, because that's when they have discounts on that day's prepared foods, and a man in front of you, a man with a pair of Green Beret dog tags hanging down at his chiseled forty-five-year-old abs, turns to you like a neighbor would and lovingly shares that he's there to buy broccoli and cheese, man, broccoli and cheese, that whoever came up with broccoli and cheese together in a single dish really showed up for work that day. You never forget that phrase: Somebody really showed up for work that day.

Now, in writing about Eric Stotik, you finally get to use it. Every piece of art Eric makes is a testament to the fact that that he shows up for work every day. Art is work. Work that some "regular" working people think comes really easily to artists. Work that a lot of people think is done in leisure or that it doesn't take any time away from the artist's loved ones, fun, sleep, porn, whatever floats your boat.

But art is work, and in the United States of America it is often thankless work. No other profession or job demands you make something without compensating you for the time you needed to make it. And even when it's finished there is no guarantee of compensation.

Yet *artists make art* in spite of this—sometimes because of this—and in Eric we have one of the best.

Eric paints on discarded auto mechanics' rags, stiffened by who knows what kind of chemical poisons, and transforms them into images of outrageous beauty. He paints on artfully flattened Pabst Blue Ribbon and Mountain Dew cans. Anything he touches seems to get transformed to show you what it really wants to be, exposes a hidden life you never knew existed. His paintings, like human children, come into your life grand and gorgeous, or nerdy and thin, but you can't not look at them; they are too real, no matter how they enter. You can't not admire them for who they are in the flesh, in front of you; you can't not acknowledge that they are right there in purity, in beauty, in the world. They are alive.

You have to take notice of great art like this. It's not an invitation. You just have to.

We, humans, we have to look at art.

I remember a fight I had with a friend of mine who, during the Bosnian war when he was only seventeen, was the breadwinner for his family, and who looked upon my involvement with an avant-garde theatre troupe as privileged, bourgeois. Our clashes at paint-thinner-sniffing parties were legendary. At one of those, once, he removed his Doc Marten boot, used its heel to bang a nail into the wall of an acquaintance's parents' apartment, and declared:

"This represents the real world."

He then took my flannel shirt and hung it on the protruding nail.

"This represents art," he said. "The shirt needs the nail to hang from, to exist."

It took me a minute, but at length I retrieved my shirt from the nail and asked my friend what was the point of having a nail in the wall if you had nothing to hang on it.

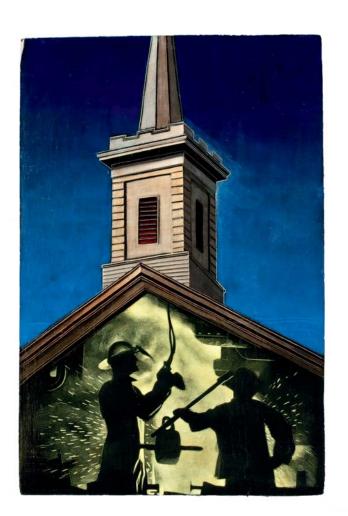
Eric's pieces enter the rooms of our mind differently every time: they sometimes come in woo-hooing, American-gas-hog-huge and entitled; or they weasel their way in through a side hatch, or creep out of wood-paneled crawl spaces; or they go almost unnoticed at first but somehow end up lingering in our brains like a goddamned melodic hook from our teen years we keep on claiming we're embarrassed to have listened to "back in the day."

Eric doesn't always give his paintings and illustrations titles because he believes that if you have to explain an image with a bunch of symbols on a piece of paper, why have an image in the first place? His images are named only when they seem to ask for a name, it seems.

For instance, he makes an untitled drawing that most people assume is a portrait of a man wearing a floppy hat. It's only when we look at it for a long time that we realize that half of what we thought was the man's face is actually the face of a dog, and all we can see from then on is the damn dog, and we cannot but immediately start to question our own eyes. How did we not see it right from the start?

We're human and humans are pattern-seeking animals. We see THATERE SI AWOSME written on a whiteboard, for example, and our brain unscrambles this nonsense to read THEATRE IS AWESOME. The chaotic reality is thus changed by the way we see it—by the way we interpret what we see—into an orderly, meaningful, un-chaotic illusion that we treat as if it is real. After all, our eyes are fallible and only "see" selectively—in terms of what we know, of what we want, of self-preservation, of our biases, etc.—yet we trust them all the time. Let's not even talk about the fallibility of our human brains. Eric's work, though, constantly challenges our eyes and brains in this way.





What humans are always looking for is more meaning, more understanding—even to the point of projecting meanings and narratives on someone's else's art. Samuel Beckett once wrote that "a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough." It reminds me of an installation I saw some years ago at an art museum in London, in which a silent video monitor showed a barechested man, apparently screaming at the top of his lungs. A pair of headphones was attached to the set. Viewers of the piece would approach the screen and don the headphones, only to discover that they, too, emitted no sound. Footage of a screaming man was, is, enough.

One of my favorite paintings of Eric's is a small one. It depicts a sort of "Temple of Universal Persuasion" with a prominent steeple, geometrically perfect and simultaneously particular and generic. But we are somehow privy to what's going on inside it, as if, like Superman, we have X-ray vision and can see through its walls.

And what we can observe inside the building is that there's work being done. Men in goggles and old-school hazmat suits are toiling away at some secret, important work. In a few square inches, this painting achieves what a book would take hundreds of pages to do. Astonishing.

But now I come to the drawing that spoke to me on the deepest level and inspired the poem that concludes this essay. The image is a visceral punch, a nightmarish dreamscape in black and white, showing piles of corpses drawn in an almost

comic-book style. But unlike comic-book art that comes in sequential panels to tell us a narrative, this drawing keeps on going and going. It's all one panel. As our eyes travel from left to right time seems to slow, as happens to humans when we are in peril. It breaks our breath, stops it.

I had a similar response when I saw Beckett's stage piece *Breath*, probably one of the only plays without actors. The curtain rose on a stage "littered in miscellaneous rubbish" (per Beckett's stage directions); there was the sound of "an instant of recorded vagitus"—a birth cry—then the amplified sound of someone's slow breathing, followed by a second, identical, cry. It lasted half a minute and then it was over, but it stopped me in my tracks, as good art should.

I am from Bosnia. I recently had to see all the old slogans of NEVER AGAIN at the twentieth-anniversary observations of the Srebrenica genocide, when over eight thousand Bosnian Muslims were massacred, their wives and mothers ethnically cleansed. But slogans, like bumper stickers, don't settle in us, don't rip us to shreds or make us forever remember. Throughout history people have repeated their variations on NEVER AGAIN, yet generations of humans keep on doing it over and over again.

Eric's drawing is what will stay with me after all the slogans are forgotten.

Ismet Prcic is the author of the novel *Shards*, which won the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction, an Oregon Book Award, and other awards. He co-wrote the screenplay for the feature film *Imperial Dreams*, which won the Best of Next Audience Award at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

Brokenness, neither bad—just brokenness—nor good, just a lust. A given.

For we were broken back in heaven, when we knew just not-brokenness.

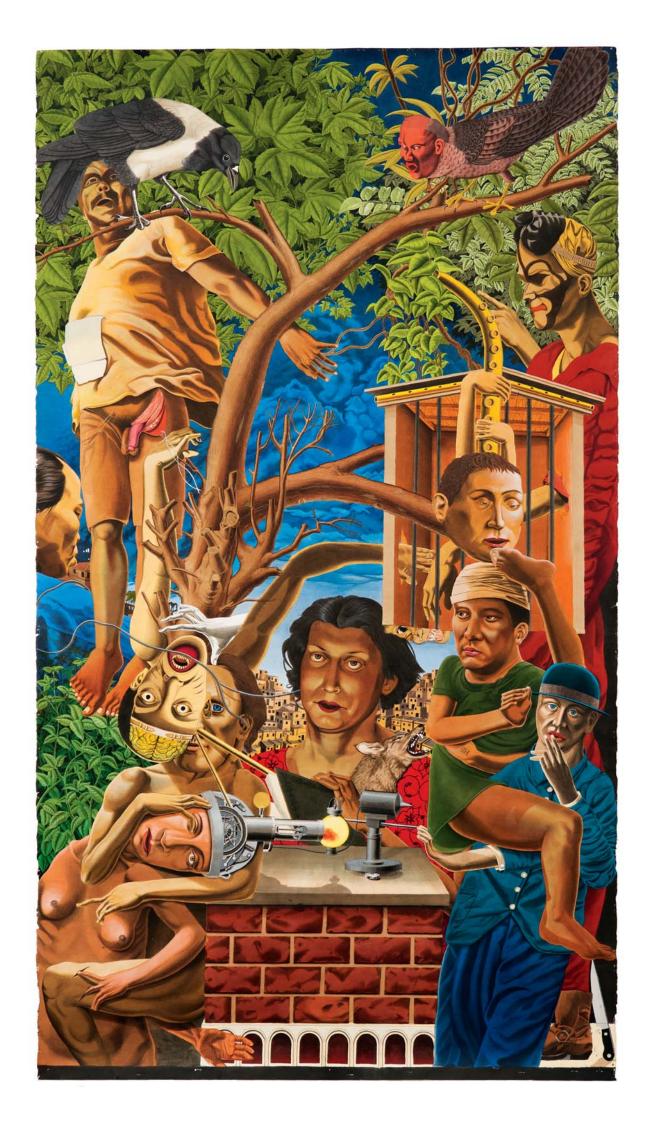
Then,
just
a lust to break
out
of heaven,
to break,
be broke
n.

A lust to know how shit works "for real," with no apparatus to handle "for real," but yes apparatus to handle "real," roiling shit of life, and soil "real" hands, soul, ovaries, testicles, in the process.

In-betweenaries. In-betweenticles.

Thus:
broken,
brokener,
brokenest,
is in the cards
for all of us.
Always.

So do, break bread and into laughter, crack a smile, you broken piece of shit, why don't ya?



Good dreams are born of the flesh, not the mind.

Louis-Ferdinand Céline

In the most benign image the doppelgänger hovers near. A sense of unease, discomfort, of being measured. In the more violent images the challenge is direct; you are not being asked, you are being told.

Pigment, paper; can reflect dis-ease but they do not create it. It is for the perceiver to untangle. If the discord is internal, so too must be the resolution. The images that trouble reflect interior difficulties that have not been or perhaps can not be acknowledged. Not fear of the unknown, but fear of what we refuse to know.

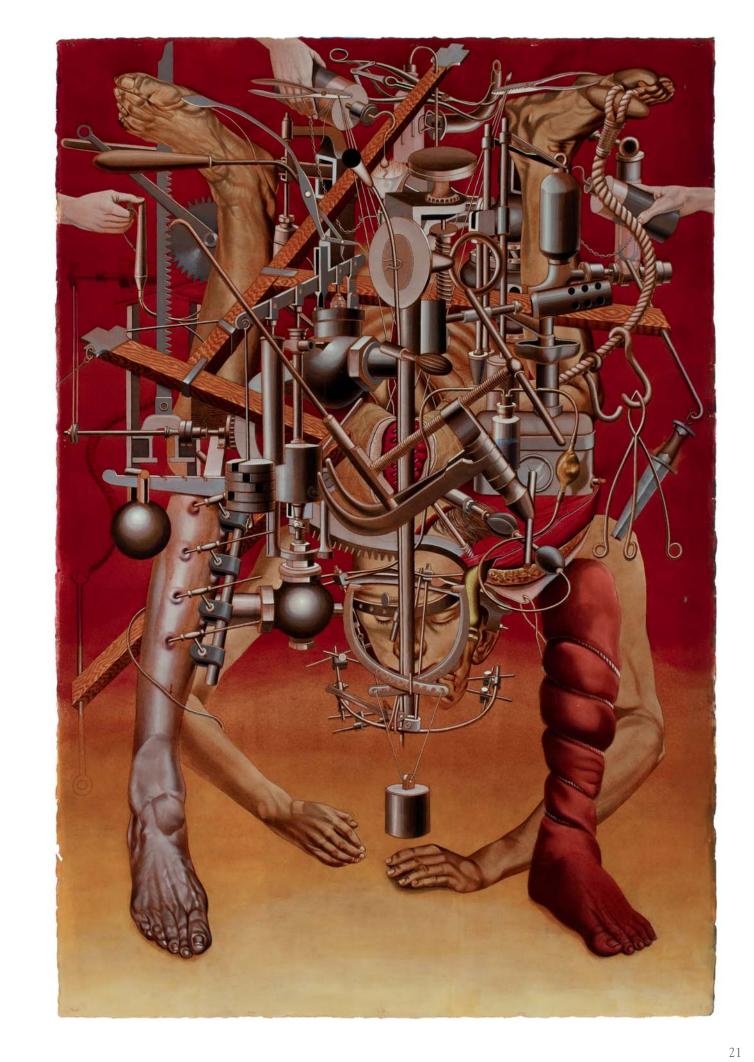
The dreamlike quality echoing Rimbaud's "ordered derangement of the senses" of this series of paintings is deceptive; it softens the blow. Though they appear almost outside of time, place or incident the images are of this world, in this moment.

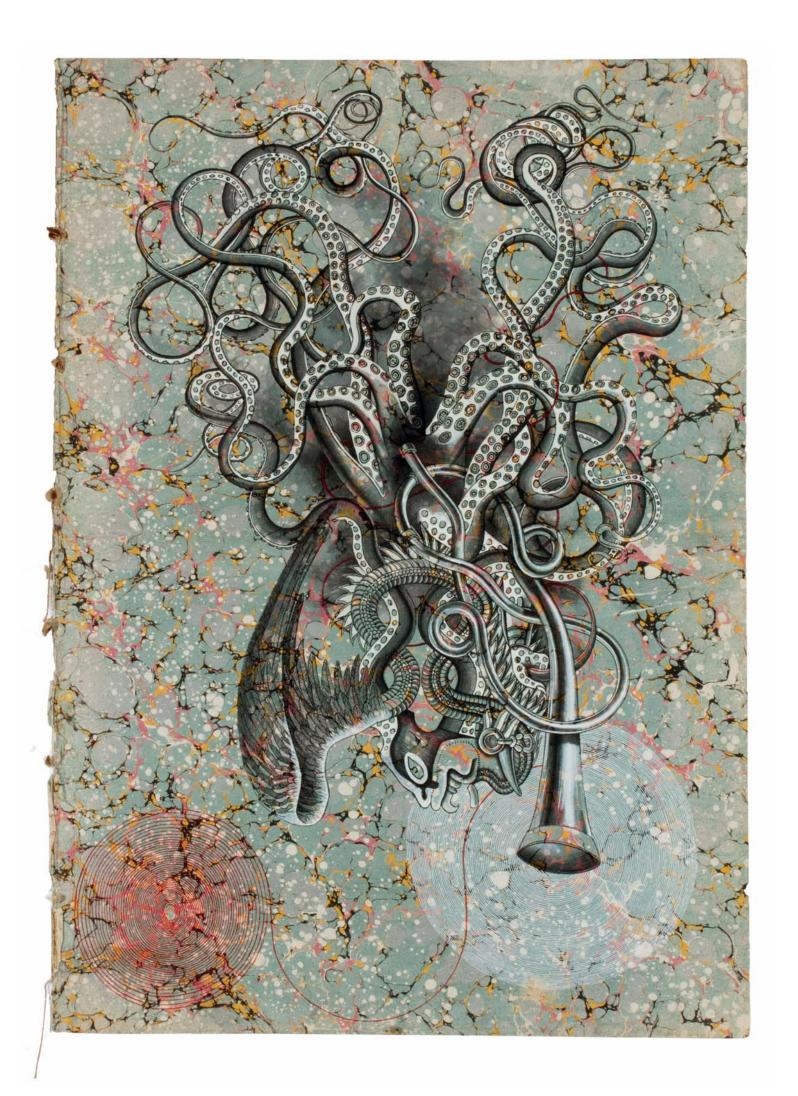
A lush yet crystalline portrayal, juxtaposition of beauty and violence and its aftermath; there is a desire for resolution, but this the work does not allow. Resolution can only be arrived at by deception, the desire to render these paintings harmless; they are not. The unease arises from an innate knowledge of complicity with what is portrayed. For this work, failure to disturb would be a failure in function.

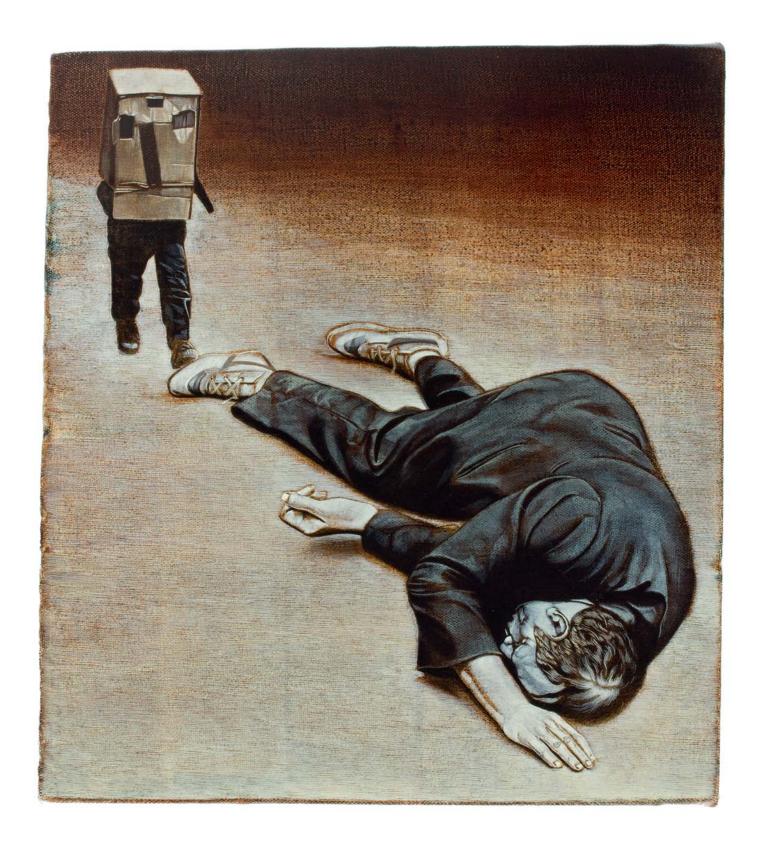
Beauty is here, but not alone.

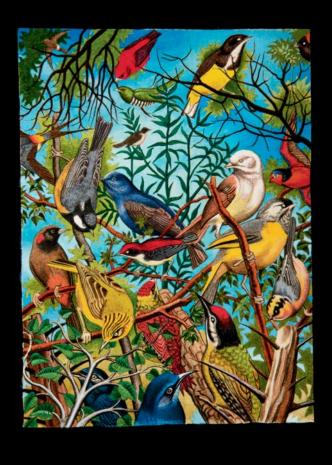
Terrance J. D. Linn



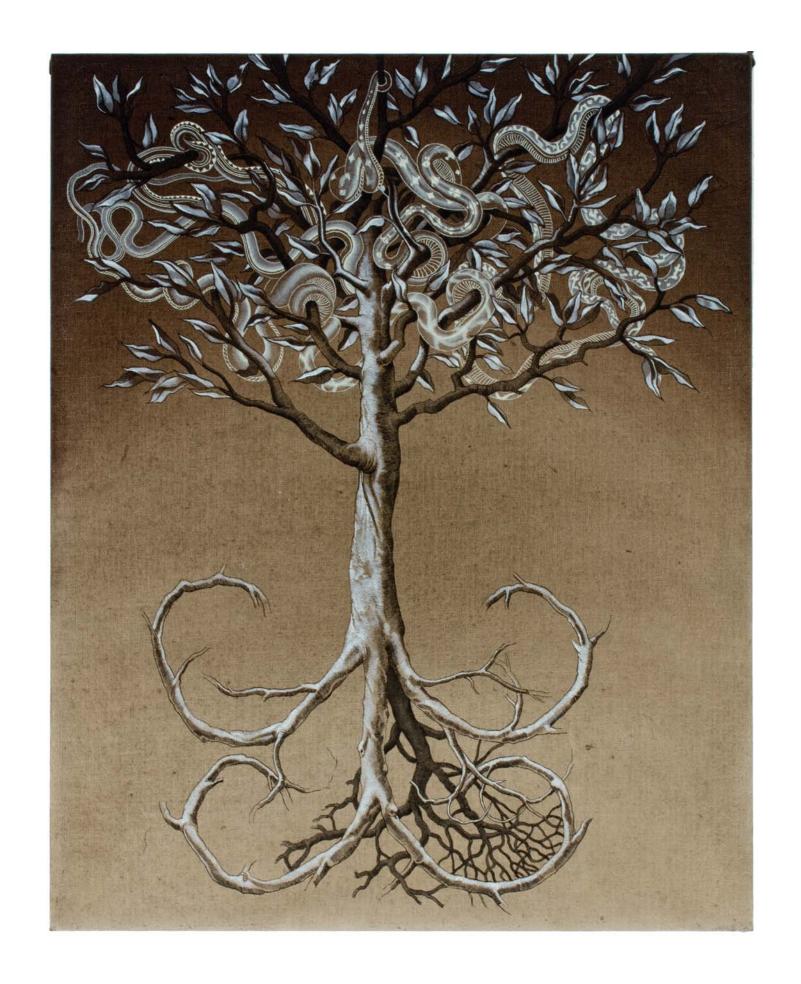


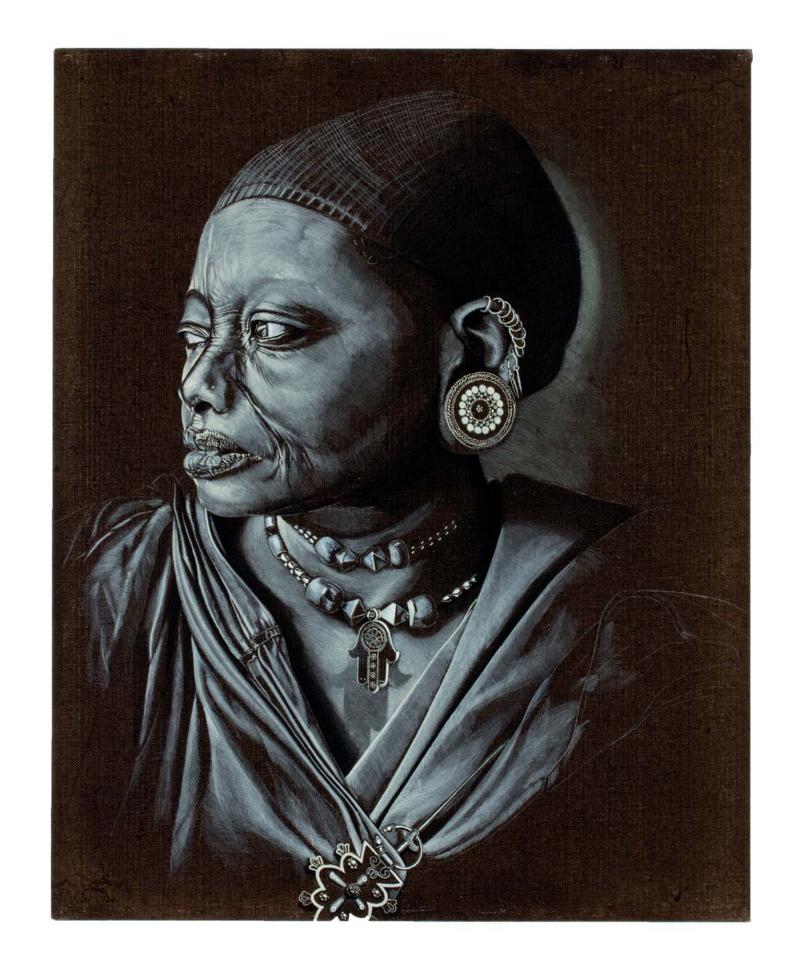


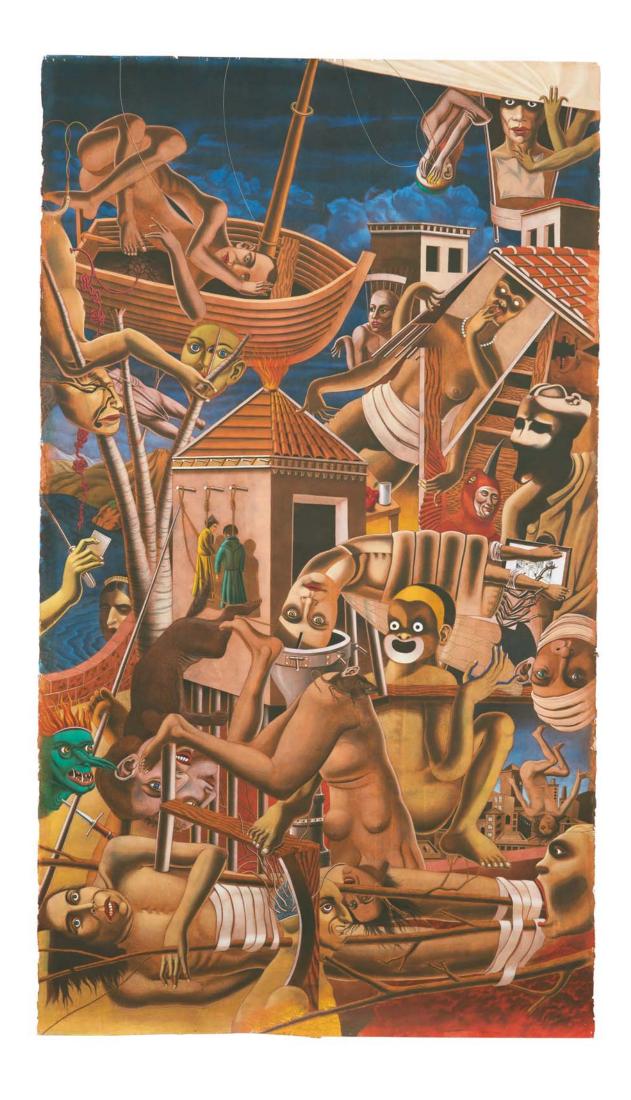


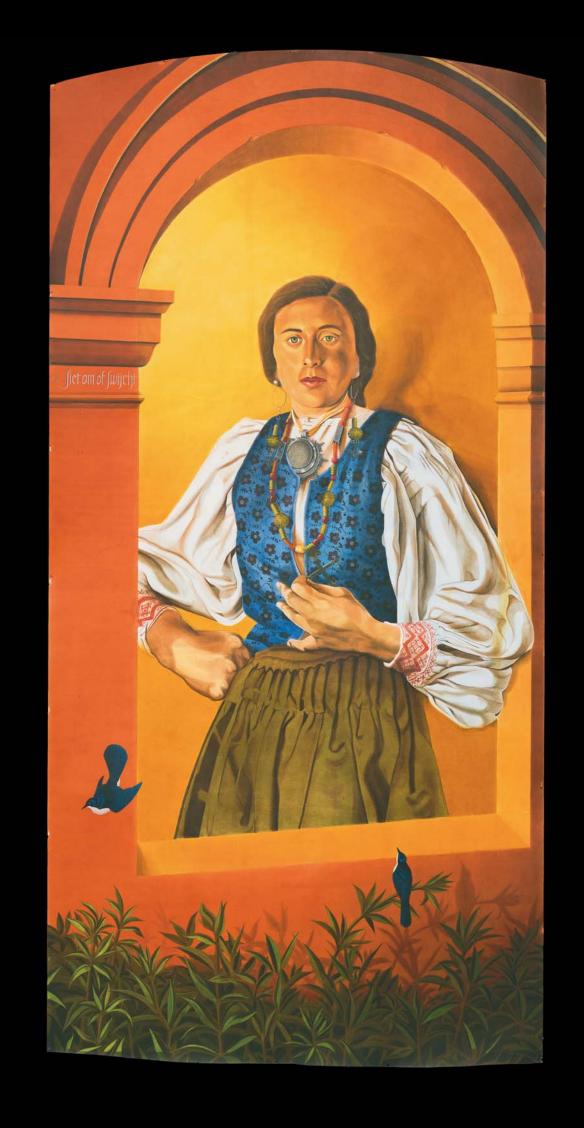


















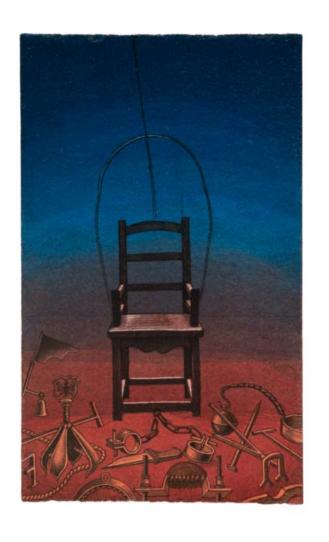












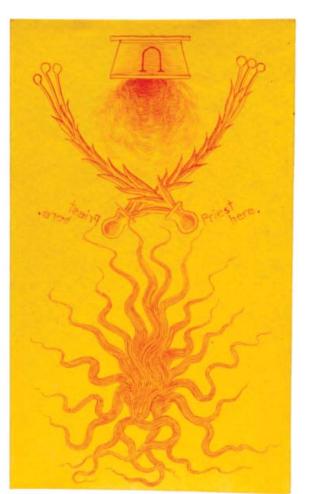




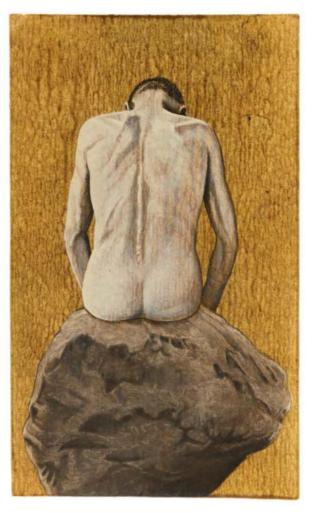


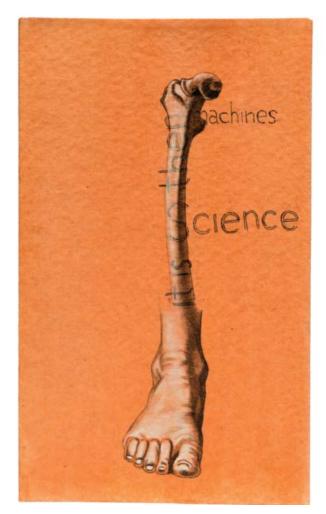




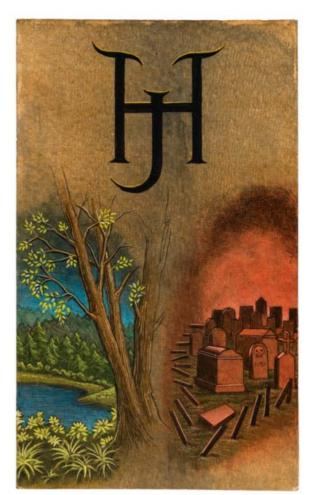


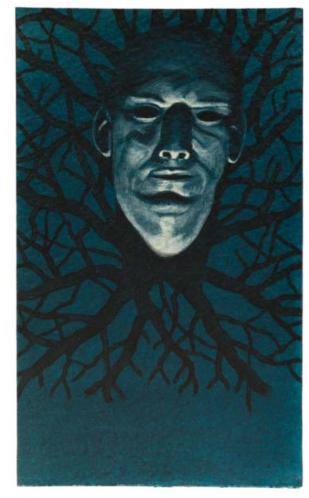










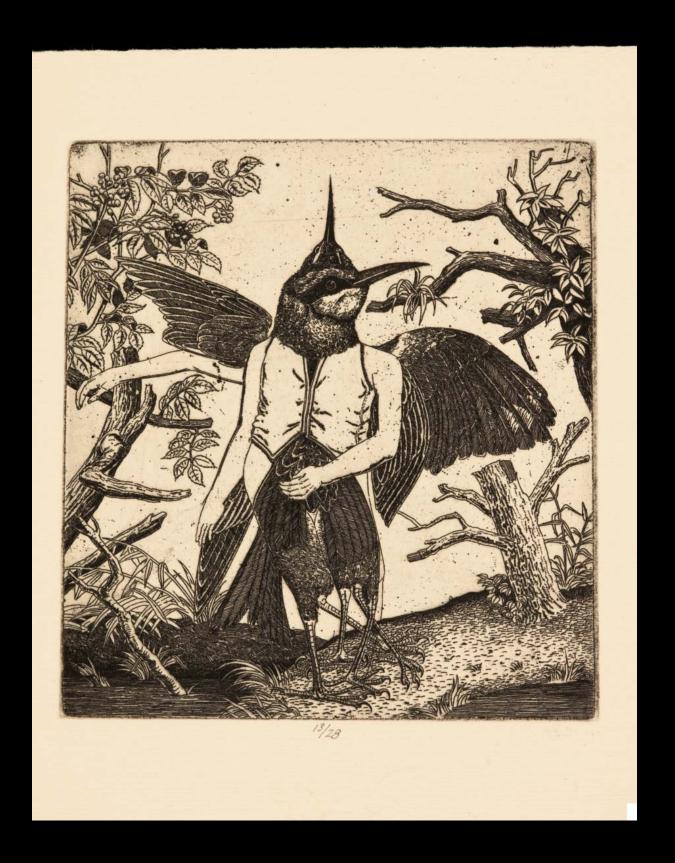




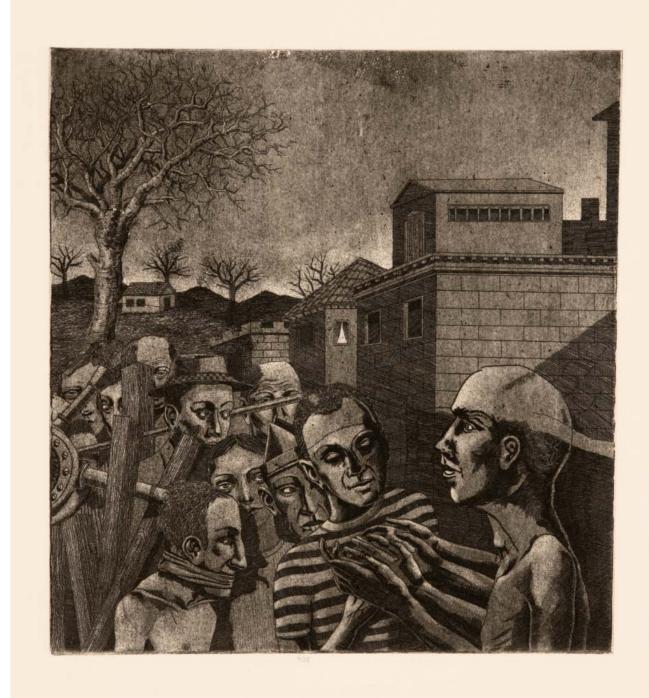


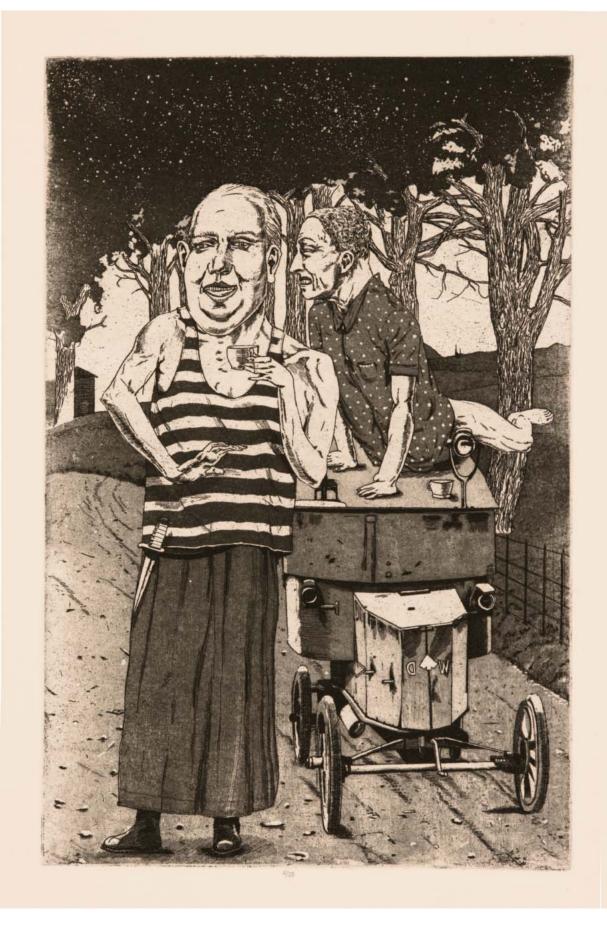


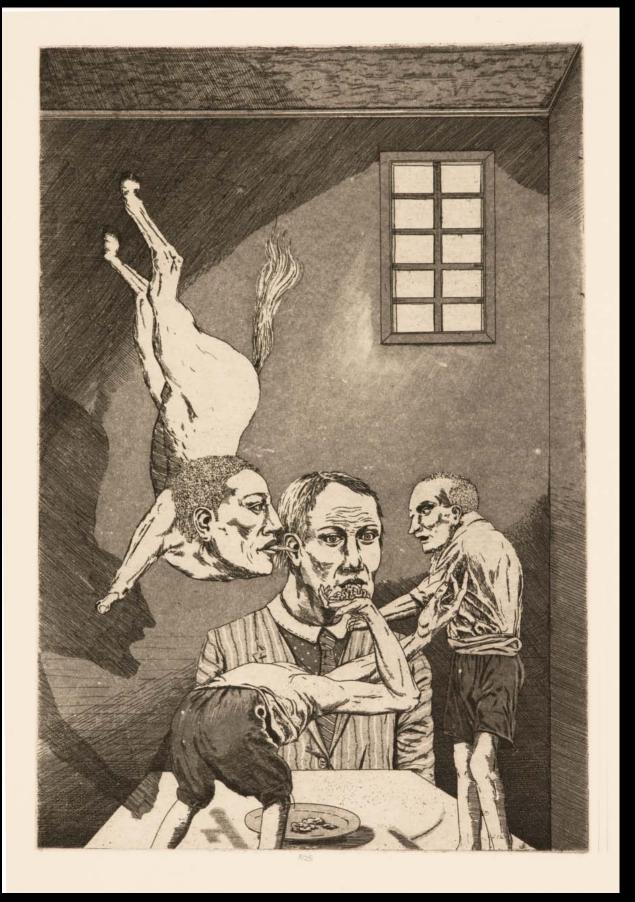












eric stotik: fugue

Checklist of the Exhibition

Unless otherwise indicated, all works are untitled, and are courtesy of the artist and Laura Russo Gallery, Portland.

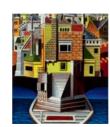
Front Gallery



2013 Acrylic on marbled book endpaper 26 x 20 inches



2013 Acrylic on paper 5 x 7 inches



Acrylic on cotton 14.75 x 13 inches

2011 Acrylic on canvas 14.75 x 13 inches



2011
Acrylic on canvas
15 x 13 inches
From the collection of
M. Howard Weinstein



2011 Oil on canvas 13.75 x 11.75 inches



2013
Acrylic on canvas on board
22 x 18 inches



Acrylic on canvas 15 x 12.75 inches From a private collection



2011 Acrylic on sari 14.75 x 13 inches



2011 Acrylic on handkerchief 13.75 x 11.75 inches



2013 Acrylic on canvas on board 22 x 18 inches



Yaguá Ovy 2011 Acrylic on Arches paper 21.25 x 21 inches



2011 Acrylic on canvas 12.5 x 11.5 inches From the collection of Nancy and George Thorn



2011 Acrylic and spray paint on bank bag 13.75 x 11.75 inches



Quetzalcoatl 2013 Acrylic on paper 60 x 40 inches



2011 Acrylic on canvas 14.75 x 13 inches



2011 Acrylic on turtleneck shirt 14.75 x 13 inches From the collection of Karen and John Hoke



2011 Acrylic on wood panel 13.75 x 11.75 inches

Front Gallery



Acrylic on wood panel 13.75 x 11.75 inches



Acrylic on wood panel 9.75 x 5.5 inches



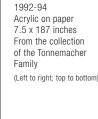
Acrylic on wood panel 8 x 5 inches



Molko and His Brother Qaderkhan 2007 Acrylic on canvas 15.5 x 13.5 inches From the collection of Aileen Wyse



Ink on paper 7.5 x 55 inches



Main Gallery













Acrylic on cotton 13.75 x 11.75 inches



Acrylic on wood panel 8 x 5 inches



Acrylic on cigarette paper 8 x 3 inches
From the collection of William McL. Ittman, Jr. and Andrew Kerr III







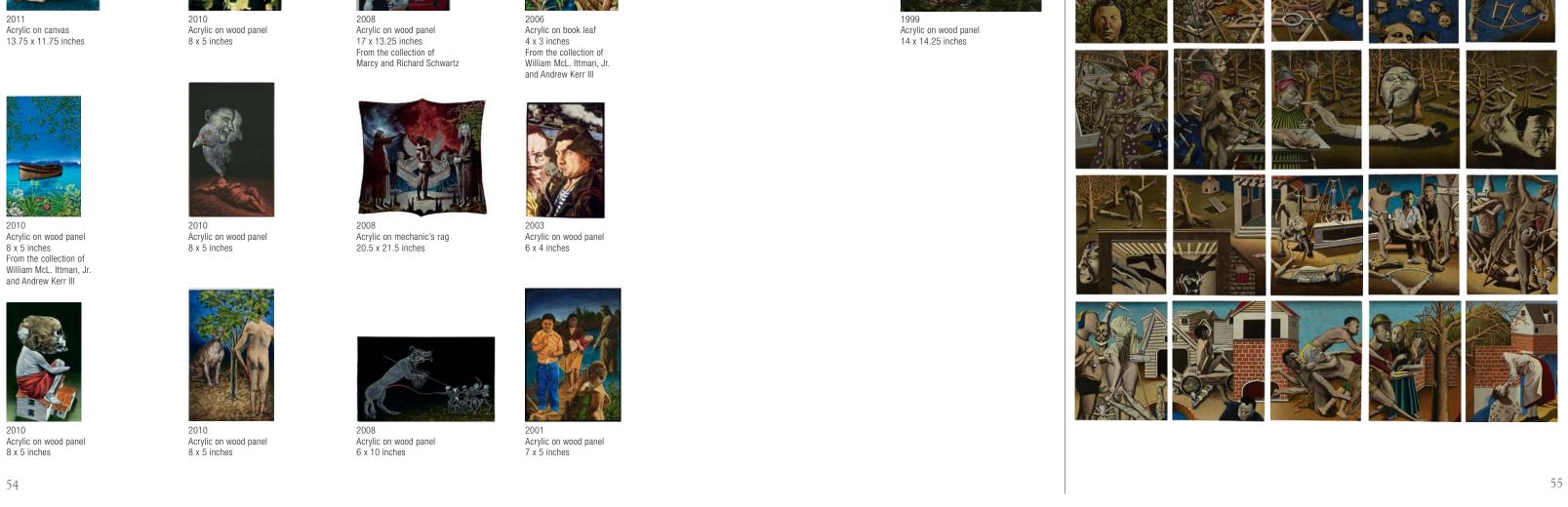
5 x 3 inches From the collection of Aileen Wyse

Acrylic on paper





2010
Acrylic on wood panel 8 x 5 inches
From the collection of
William McL. Ittman, Jr.
and Andrew Kerr III



Main Gallery

2013 Acrylic on paper 5 x 45 feet



Main Gallery



Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 91.5 x 51.25 inches



Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 71.25 x 51.25 inches



Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 89.75 x 51.25 inches



2000 Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 90.25 x 51 inches



2000 Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 87.25 x 42.25 inches



2000 Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 99 x 42 inches



2000 Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 86 x 42 inches



2000 Acrylic on Arches watercolor paper 89.75 x 42 inches

Back Gallery (southwest corner)





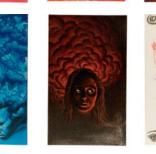
































Back Gallery (northwest corner) 19 intaglio prints (random order)



Etching and aquatint Image: 8.5 x 8 inches Sheet: 15 x 11 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint Image: 8.75 x 6 inches Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 7.5 x 5.5 inches



Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 10 x 6.5 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 11 x 7 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint Image: 16.75 x 5 inches Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint

Image: 6 x 4 inches

Edition of 25

Sheet: 7.5 x 5.5 inches

Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches Edition of 25





Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 7.5 x 5.5 inches Edition of 25



Image: 6 x 9 inches

Edition of 28

Sheet: 9 x 11 inches

Etching and aquating

Edition of 25

Image: 8.75 x 6 inches

Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches

Image: 5.25 x 5 inches Sheet: 7.5 x 6.5 inches Edition of 28



Etching and aquatint Image: 9 x 6 inches Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches Edition of 25

Image: 6 x 4.5 inches

Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches

Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint Image: 6 x 4 inches Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches Edition of 25



Image: 6 x 4.5 inches Sheet: 7.25 x 5.75 inches Edition of 25



Etching and aquatint

Image: 6 x 4.5 inches

Sheet: 11 x 7.5 inches

Edition of 25

Image: 10 x 7.5 inches Sheet: 14.75 x 11.25 inches



Born

1963

Education

1985 BFA, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR

Solo Exhibitions

2015	Eric Stotik: Fugue, Hoffman Gallery at Lewis & Clark
	College, Portland, OR
	Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR

- 2013 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2011 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2010 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago, IL
- Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2004 PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- Aaron Packer Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2002 Drawings and Paintings, Clatsop Community College, Astoria, OR
 - Tantric Drawings, Indus Books, Portland, OR
- 2001 PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR Esther Claypool Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2000 PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR Esther Claypool Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1998 PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- Intaglio Prints, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- 1996 PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
- Susan Cummins, Mill Valley, CA
- Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR
- Jamison/Thomas Gallery, New York, NY Paintings, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
- Jamison/Thomas Gallery, New York, NY
- Paintings, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
- Jamison/Thomas Gallery, New York, NY
- Myth and Magic, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR

Group Exhibitions

- 2015 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2013 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2012 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR Interlopers: Works on Paper, Evoke Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM
 - Trust: PNCA Alumni Exhibition, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR
 - Simply Red (2), Pioneer Place Mall, Portland, OR
- 25th Anniversary Gallery Group Show, Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2009 Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR

- 2009 Celebrating PNCA at 100: An Exhibition of Alumni Artists, Laura Russo Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2008 The Collector's Eye: Contemporary Art from the Leo Michelson Collection, Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR
 - Choice Cuts: Works from Private Collections, Mark Woolley Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2007 Northwest Coast Invasion: Geographic Proximity / Obsessive Coincidence, Packer Schopf Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2006 Charles Seluzicki: 30 Years as a Fine Press Printer, Collins Gallery, Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR
 - Contemporary Kiln-Glass: A Survey of Works from the Bullseye Connection, 1980 to the Present, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston, TX
- 2005 3rd Around Oregon Annual, Artcentric Artshop, Corvallis, OR
 - War Drawings, Visual Arts Center, Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, OR
 - Around Oregon, Corvallis Art Center, Corvallis, OR
- 2004 The Third Mind: Collaborations by Eric Stotik and Tom Cramer, Aalto Lounge, Portland, OR
 - Art at War, Aldo Castillo Gallery, Chicago, IL
 - Water World, South Bend Regional Museum of Art, South Bend, IN
 - Found in Translation, Bullseye Connection Gallery, Portland, OR
 - Gender in Conflict, 24th Annual Gender Symposium, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR
- 2003 Bibliocosmos, Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery,
- Reed College, Portland, OR Core Sample: Reallegories, Belmont Factory, Portland, OR
- 2002 Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR
- Multum in Parvo, Monarch Sculpture Park, Tenino, WA 2001 Politicrux, Disjecta, Portland, OR
- Carved Paintings: Collaborative Works by Eric Stotik and Tom Cramer, Indus Books, Portland, OR
 - Salon de Refuses: An Exhibition of Works Rejected by the Oregon Biennial, Groundswell Gallery, Portland, OR
- 2000 Group Show, Lyons Wier, Chicago, IL Physical Manifestations, PDX Contemporary Art,
 - Portland, OR Figuration, Jill George Gallery, London, England
 - Northwest Print Invitational, Davidson Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1999 Century of Northwest Printmaking, Lucia Douglas Gallery, Bellingham, WA
 - Within/Without, Archer Gallery, Clark College, Vancouver, WA
 - Lyons Wier Gallery, Chicago, IL
- Summer Group Show, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR
 - Here and Now, Tidbit Gallery, Portland, OR

59



Image: 11 x 7.5 inches Sheet: 6 x 4.5 inches Edition of 25

- 1998 Betty Bowen Award 20th Anniversary Exhibition,
 Washington State Convention Center, Seattle, WA

 Texas National 98 Exhibition, SFA Gallery at Stephen F. Austin
 State University, Nacogdoches, TX
- 1997 In the Spirit: Contemporary Art and Religious Tradition, Legion Arts, Cedar Rapids, IA Introductions: New Work, Linda Hodges Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1996 The Tool Show, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art,
 Portland, OR
 - Invitational Drawing Show, Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, OR
 - Mythic Narrative, Palo Alto Cultural Center, Palo Alto, CA Willamette Valley Juried Exhibition, Corvallis Art Center, Corvallis, OR
 - Fire and Ash, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR Spirit & Ritual, Lizardi/Harp Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1992 On a Small Scale, Susan Cummins Gallery, Mill Valley, CA Sign of the Cross, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR Dreams and Shields: Spiritual Dimensions in Contemporary Art, Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, UT
- 1991 Expressive Visions and Exquisite Images, Richard Brown Baker Collection, Meadow Brook Gallery, Oakland University, Oakland, MI
- Compulsion, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, New York, NY
- 1990 Faces, Figures, Gestures and Signs, Oregon Art Institute, Portland, OR
 - Art of the Contemporary Triptych, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
 - Sum of the Parts, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, New York, NY
- 1989 Kansas Fourteenth National Small Painting, Drawing, and Print Exhibition, Fort Hays State University, Hays, KS
- Small Works, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1988 Facts of the Imagination, Washington State University, Pullman, WA
- 1987 Oregon Biennial, Oregon Art Institute, Portland, OR
 The Figure, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
 Body Hell, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
 Oregon, Washington, Juried Exhibition of Art, Maryhill
 Museum of Art, Goldendale, WA
- 1986 Small Paintings, Small Works on Linen, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1985 Hot Summer, Black Magic, Jamison/Thomas Gallery, Portland, OR

Awards

- 2011 Fellowship Award in Visual Arts, Regional Arts & Culture Council, Portland, OR
- 2005 Jurors' Award, Around Oregon, Corvallis Art Center, Corvallis, OR
- 1997 Artist in Residence, Gordon Gilkey Center for Graphic Arts, Portland Art Museum

- 1996 Jurors' Award, Willamette Valley Juried Exhibition
- 1995 Art Matters Grant
- 1994 Betty Bowen Memorial Award, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA

Selected Collections

The City of Portland, Oregon

The Hallie Ford Museum, Salem, Oregon

Reed College, Portland

The New York Public Library

Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Paris and Genoa

Daimler Benz, Berlin

The Portland Art Museum

Portland Community College, Rock Creek Campus

The University of Oregon, Eugene

Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan

Yale University Gallery, New Haven

Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington

Monarch Sculpture Park, Tenino, Washington

Commissions and Projects

Sustainable Forestry Initiative, public service announcement for Chel White Films, Inc., 2002.

Cover art for numerous compact-disk and vinyl recordings since 1991.

Press and Publications

- Adams, Anne. "First Thursday Picks," *Portland Monthly*, June 30, 2010, online.
- Albiani, Rebecca. "Deborah Lawrence and Eric Stotik at Esther Claypool Gallery," *Artweek*, Vol. 31, No. 3, March 2000.
- Allan, Lois. "Eric Stotik at PDX Gallery," Artweek, September, 1996.
- ———. "Eric Stotik at Jamison/Thomas," Reflex, May/June, 1990.
- Ashbery, John, and Eric Stotik. *The Kaiser's Children* (Portland, OR: Charles Seluzicki Fine Books), 1997.
- Atiyeh, Meagan. "Found in Translation," *The Organ*, No. 10, March/April 2004.
- Boas, Pat. "Reviews," Art Papers, West Coast, November/ December 2004.
- ——. "Reallegories' at Belmont Factory," Artweek, December/ January 2003–2004.
- Bowie, Chas. "Arts Rodeo," Portland Mercury, September 4, 2003.
- Camper, Fred. "Dreams of Dislocation," *Chicago Reader*, Vol. 33, No. 11, December 12, 2003.
- Cantor, Allyn. "Eric Stotik: Paintings," *Preview*, April/May 2009, p. 62.
- ———. "Eric Stotik: Recent Paintings," *Preview*, September/ October 2010.
- Ellertson, Karrin. "Eric Stotik," Portland Mercury, February 15, 2001.

- ----. "Eric Stotik at PDX," Willamette Week, March 28, 2000.
- "Eric Stotik," Blur Magazine, Vol. 2, No. 9, July 1994.
- "Fall Preview: Pacific Northwest," art ltd, September/October 2010.
- Gragg, Randy. "Present-tense Art Conjugates Past and Future," *The Oregonian*, September 1996.
- ———. "A Day in the Life of the Apocalypse," *The Oregonian*, Sunday, May 15, 1994.
- -----. "Stotik's Daily News," The Oregonian A&E, June 22, 1990.
- Hicks, Bob. "Eric Stotik Enters the Long Stretch," Oregon Arts Watch, September 15, 2013, online.
- ——. "Delve into Diverse Art World," *The Oregonian*, December 1, 2011.
- ——. "First Thursday Marks 25 Years of Gallery Walks," The Oregonian, October 6, 2011.
- *Interlopers: Works on Paper* (exhibition catalogue), Evoke Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM, 2012.
- Johnson, Barry. "Catching Up with Eric Stotik," Art Notes, Regional Arts & Culture Council, March 2012.
- Klein, Elisa. "First Thursday Harvest Abundant for Fall," *Portland Society Page*, September 10, 2013, online.
- Lake, Eva. On-air interview, ArtFocus, KBOO FM, Portland, OR, April 7, 2009.
- Lambert, Lisa. "The Accidental Allegorist," Willamette Week, February 14, 2001.
- Maldonado, Victor. Trust: PNCA Alumni Exhibition (essay), Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR, 2012.
- "The Mower: Fear / Angst Issue" (illustrations), Memoria Pulp, Überlingen, Germany, 1993.
- NW Gallery Art Magazine, May/June, 1990.
- Olson, Scott. "Hot Summer Black Magic," Events Magazine, August 1985.
- "The Portland art-scene walkabout," nw drizzle, August, 2004.
- "Pulse," art ltd, November/December 2011.
- Raymond, Jon. "Eric Stotik," Artforum, January 2011.
- Row, D.K. "Mark Woolley Presents 'Simply Red (2) at Pioneer Place," *The Oregonian*, April 12, 2012, online.
- ——. "Artist Selections Steer Clear of Fringe," *The Oregonian*, January 24, 2011.
- ——. "First Thursday Art Walk Puts Best Foot Forward," The Oregonian, September 2, 2010.
- ——. "Wincing and wondering at Eric Stotik's vision," *The Oregonian*, April 12, 2009.
- ----. "Critic's Picks," The Oregonian, April 2, 2009.

- ———. "A collector's obsession with the local," The Oregonian, August 4, 2008.
- ——. "Theater of the macabre," *The Oregonian*, D.K. Row, July 30, 2004.
- ----. "Shows of Note," The Oregonian, July 16, 2004.
- -----. "Not So Lost in Translation," *The Oregonian* A&E, March 2004.
- —. "Unearthing a Scene," The Oregonian, October 19, 2003.
- ----. "Beyond the Theatrical," The Oregonian, November 1998.
- Salon de Refuses (exhibition catalogue), Groundswell Gallery, Portland, OR, 2001.
- Sawyer, Ted. Found in Translation (exhibition catalogue), Bullseye Glass Co., Portland, OR, 2004.
- Seluzicki, Charles, and Eric Stotik. *The Emperor* (Portland, OR: The Beaverdam Press), 2008.
- Speer, Richard. "Contemporary Northwest Art Award Finalists," Willamette Week, February 2, 2011.
- ——. "Laura Russo Gallery," Willamette Week, September 1, 2010.
- Stotik, Eric. Cover art, Willamette Week Restaurant Guide, 2001.
- ———. Cover art, Mississippi Mud, Issue 36, 1989.
- Tucker, Nathan. "Sept. First Thursday Gallery Guide," *Portland Monthly*, September 5, 2013, online.
- "Tuesday (6)," The Oregonian A&E, February 2, 2001.

Director's Acknowledgments

The first time I saw a painting by Eric Stotik, it was in a biennial juried exhibition of Oregon and Washington artists held at the Maryhill Museum of Art in the Columbia Gorge. Stotik's small painting won second place. The year was 1987, just two years after Stotik earned his BFA from Pacific Northwest College of Art. The story goes that William Jamison—the sorely missed contemporary art gallerist, impresario, and advocate for folk and outsider art—had gone to the BFA thesis show at PNCA the year that Stotik graduated, and immediately signed Stotik into the Jamison/Thomas Gallery stable, a testament to Stotik's exceptional promise.

This exhibition afforded me the justification to investigate an artist whose work I have admired for decades. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Eric to curate this survey, and for his willingness to allow me to probe into his mysterious paintings, drawings, and prints.

Thank you to Ismet Prcic for his essay, a response to Eric's work based on Prcic's own experience surviving the Bosnian war. Thank you also to Terrance J.D. Linn for his comments. Their words enrich our experience of Stotik's work. Special thanks are due to Esther Stotik for spending time with me and telling me about her family's experiences in Papua New Guinea.

Once again, I am indebted to Robert M. Reynolds and Letha Wulf for the design of this publication, and to Geri Spohn of Bridgetown Printing. Anne Connell—I cannot thank you enough for your skillful editing. I always learn so much from you

I thank Martha Lee and the staff of the Laura Russo Gallery for substantial assistance in securing loans for this exhibition.

Such an expansive survey would not have been possible without the generosity of those collectors who have been willing to lend their works by Stotik for the purpose of assembling this exhibition. Thank you to Karen and John Hoke, William McL. Ittmann, Jr. and Andrew Kerr III, Marcy and Richard Schwartz, Nancy and George Thorn, the Dr. David Tonnemacher family, M. Howard Weinstein, Aileen Wyse, and an anonymous collector. For their support of Eric's career and their willingness to share their works with the rest of us, I am grateful.

Mark Johnson was the lead preparator and installed the exhibition along with Graham Bell and Susan Griswold. Thom Ross built the extraordinary structures which enable us to view Stotik's panoramic paintings as they were intended. As always, the Lewis & Clark College Facilities Services crew provided essential assistance. Thank you, Richard Austin and Leon Grant.

Finally, I express my profound gratitude to two important regional resources whose generous support has made this catalogue possible: The Ford Family Foundation and the Regional Arts and Culture Council. Both organizations are dedicated to the celebration and preservation of our region's visual arts culture. We are deeply indebted to your generosity.

Linda Tesner

Artist's Acknowledgments

Eric Stotik thanks the following individuals for their support of this exhibition:

Tammy Stotik

Esther Stotik

Martha Lee

Ismet Prcic

Terrance J. D. Linn

Linda Tesner









eric stotik: fugue

September 8-December 13, 2015

Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art Lewis & Clark College 0615 S.W. Palatine Hill Road Portland, Oregon 97219

© 2015 Lewis & Clark College

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage system, without written permission of the publisher.

Exhibition curator and author: Linda Tesner Essays: Terrance J. D. Linn, Ismet Prcic Editing: Anne Connell Catalogue Design: Reynolds Wulf Inc. Robert M. Reynolds, Letha Gibbs Wulf Photography:

Bill Bachhuber: cover gates, pages 1–4, 6 (top), 7, 10–11, 16 (bottom), 20–27, 52, 63 Robert M. Reynolds: pages 8, 9a, 12–13, 14, 16–17 (top),

18, 28–51 Esther Stotik: page 6 (bottom)

Printing/Prepress: Bridgetown Printing Bindery: Oregon Bookbinding Co.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

eric stotik: fugue

