

## *Untitled (Purple Bottle)*, 2012

Amy Sillman

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THE OVERALL COLOR PALETTE OF BLUES, PURPLES, and grays highlighted with shades of yellow, brown, and green in *Untitled (Purple Bottle)* is representative of Amy Sillman's distinct and thoughtful approach to color. Upon close viewing, one notices brushstrokes that reveal the artist's process, such as the gray-green paint strokes over a section of pink salmon or the strong black lines near the bottom of the painting. Recognizable forms such as a blue and green bottle or pitcher coexist with the lines and blocks of color that distinguish this work, and the representational imagery dissolves in and out of the abstract lines and shapes.

Sillman's work is often characterized by an extended exploration of the formal principles of art, including such painterly concerns as figure, scale, and space. Yet her materials and processes are quite varied—she works in pencil, crayon, watercolor, and collage, creating cartoons, diagrams, prints, and, recently, iPhone and iPad drawings and animations. Drawing is at the core of Sillman's process; graphic gestures produce both light and heavy marks across her papers, canvases, or pages. An intuitive approach also informs her painting process, which can include multiple layers, constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing space.

Sillman acknowledges a wide variety of influences. Many commentators have noted similarities between her work and that of twentieth-century painters such as Philip Guston and Richard Diebenkorn, as well as with that of sculptor Eva Hesse. Sillman also has spoken of the importance of Henri Matisse's use of color, and Willem de Kooning's use of transition and change in pictures that include dissolving figures. She has said that two extended trips to India fostered an interest in art that was intimate, narrative, mythic, and beautiful, and a residency in Italy allowed her to explore the flat spaces and imperfect perspective of early Renaissance painting.

### Discussion Prompts

Research some of the artists or styles that Amy Sillman acknowledges as influential. What similarities and differences do you observe between the work of these artists and Sillman's work?

What type of mark-making do you prefer? (Types of mark-making include drawing, painting, print-making, collage, cartoons, digital animations, etc.) What artists and movements do you think have influenced you, and why?



**Untitled (Purple Bottle), 2013**

Amy Sillman

Oil on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Contemporary Friends, 2013 M.2014.26  
© Amy Sillman, photo courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London

## *Shoot the Coin*, 2013

Mark Bradford

MARK BRADFORD'S MIXED-MEDIA COLLAGE IS A large-scale, densely layered work. Though predominantly pale white and gray, it is punctuated with areas of black, pink, blue, orange, red, and brown alongside small fragments of text. While the work seems to reference an aerial view of streams, lakes, and inlets, it also appears rather atmospheric. The textured and distressed look of the canvas highlights Bradford's process of layering, scraping, and bleaching.

An interest in the divisions and intersections demarcating the natural and the urban environment underlies *Shoot the Coin*. The work is part of a series considering the history of the US interstate highway system. The system was championed in the 1950s by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had surveyed the nation's relatively ad-hoc road system as a member of the Transcontinental Motor Convoy of 1919 and later experienced the German autobahn system during World War II. In fact, the title for Bradford's series *Through Darkest America by Truck and Tank* comes from a chapter in Eisenhower's memoir. Bradford is particularly interested in how communities, including his own in South Los Angeles, have been divided by the highway system and the resulting physical and psychological impact on the community. Maps of highways, coupled with Google maps, were used as points of reference for this work, which plays with various changes in perspective and acknowledges how individual memories shape our understanding of place.

Bradford's work includes references to both politics and art history, and although the artist and many art critics refer to his work as painting, he is not a painter in the conventional sense. Instead he creates painterly effects by working with materials such as string, carbon paper, and billboard paper manipulated through drawing, layering, bleaching, caulking, sanding, and burnishing. His earlier works primarily used materials gathered from the urban environment, often incorporating posters advertising local businesses in his neighborhood.

Other works in LACMA's collection represent Bradford's range of materials and interests. *Biggie, Biggie, Biggie* (2002) combines paint, permanent-wave endpapers, Xerox copies of endpapers, and Bradford's interest in African American music and language (The title of the work is one of the refrains from a popular song by the rapper Notorious B.I.G.). *Carta* (2013) was inspired by a seventeenth-century book of maps and trade routes by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu.

### Discussion Prompts

What types of transportation do you use on a regular basis? In what ways does your point of view change during these trips? How does this impact your relationship to the places you travel through and to?

Take a walk in your neighborhood and make a list of the images, advertisements, and objects you see or find. What could someone conclude about your neighborhood based on your list?



**Shoot the Coin, 2013**

Mark Bradford

Mixed media on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with major funding provided by Andy Valmorbidia,  
with additional support from Sotheby's M.2014.62

© Mark Bradford, photo by Ben Westoby, courtesy White Cube

## ***Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two Point Perspective with Guidelines)***, 2012

Analia Saban

ANALIA SABAN'S *EROSION (GEOMETRIC CUBES WITHIN Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines)* is a painting on canvas, yet the canvas lifts away from its circular frame, giving the work a sculptural quality. Visible brushstrokes record the process of applying acrylic to the canvas, yet the texture of the work approaches that of delicate, burned lace. This burned lace effect is due to Saban's use of a laser-cutting machine. The artist begins by drawing on the canvas, and then applies paint in differing areas of thickness. Once this is done, she puts her resulting painting through the laser-cutting machine, after which the parts of the canvas with the thickest layers of paint remain intact and the areas with lighter applications of paint appear charred.

Saban is known for her interest in exploring the artmaking process itself and in pushing the boundaries of specific materials, questioning genres, and blurring the distinctions between different mediums. For example, she has scraped still-wet photography prints in order to experiment with the development process and the materiality of photography, and has unwoven paintings in order to create sculptural forms from their threads. For the latter works, she says, "Usually we think of painting on a canvas. It was interesting to think of painting as pigment on thread." *Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines)* is emblematic of her interest in laser-burning paper and canvases. Sculptural paintings combine organic and technological elements while exploring traditional notions about art through her

reference to two-point perspective, which is closely associated with art created during the Renaissance. Other works by Saban in LACMA's collection include *Layer Painting (CMY): Flowers* (2008), *Study for Paint (Wet)* (2011), and *Kohler 5931 Kitchen Sink #2* (2013). In each of these works Saban's interest in exploring materials, techniques, and processes is visible. For *Study for Paint (Wet)* she sealed a painted canvas in a clear plastic bag in order to preserve the look of the wet paint. Inspired by the abstract geometries that are part of everyday life, she has created *Kohler 5931 Kitchen Sink #2*, a model of a kitchen sink in marble placed on canvas and hung vertically on the wall. These works embody Saban's interest in how one's expectations of a medium can be complicated through exposure to the object's materiality or fabrication.

### **Discussion Prompts**

This painting seems to resemble burned lace. What other associations does this work evoke for you? Do you think these associations are intentionally generated by the artist? Compare your associations with those of your peers. Are they similar? Do any surprise you?

In this work, Analia Saban combines a new technology, a laser-cutting machine, with the traditional art historical concept of two-point perspective. Create your own unique work of art that combines modern technology with traditional art forms or concepts.





**Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines), 2012**

Analia Saban

Laser-sculpted acrylic on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of Jennifer Hawks and Ramin Djawadi, and Candace and Charles Nelson M.2012.124

© Analia Saban, photo © 2014 Museum Associates / LACMA

## *Cell: Interlocking Construction*, 2010

Rachel Lachowicz

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**A**N ELEGANT, COMPLEX, AND COMMANDING SCULPTURE, this work is composed of more than thirty transparent Plexiglas geometric shapes, each filled with a different shade of blue eye shadow. The work references both the history of abstraction and the way individuals, especially women, use makeup to package themselves and the image they present to the world.

*Cell: Interlocking Construction* was made from a three-dimensional sketch that was created by placing abstract cardboard shapes over the surface of a ten-foot paper reproduction of Kurt Schwitter's work *Merzbau*, which hung on the wall in Rachel Lachowicz's studio. (Schwitter's *Merzbau* refers to the immersive environment he created by incorporating sculptural elements such as grottoes, columns, and found objects into his family home in Hanover, Germany.). Revealing the significant roles appropriation and homage play in her work, Lachowicz states, "I want to come near things, but I want these things to mutate to become their own hybrid that recognizes interlocking relationships."

Known as a conceptual sculptor, Lachowicz has created many works that explore art of the past, most of which was made by men. Adopting makeup as her primary sculptural medium, she has used humor and a feminist perspective to comment on the exclusion and misrepresentation of women artists in art history. Seeing makeup as a component of her artmaking, she creates all of her own pigments in her studio. *Untitled (Lipstick Urinals)* (1992) is another work by Lachowicz included in LACMA's collection. Recontextualizing Marcel Duchamp's classic *Fountain* (1917), it also references the bronze sculpture *Fountain (after Marcel Duchamp: A.P.)* (1991) by Sherrie Levine, another artist known for appropriation. By deliberately

repurposing male artists' forms, Lachowicz questions assumptions about materials, gender, and authorship.

### Discussion Prompts

Makeup can have many associations. It can be used for female beautification, for a kind of mask or war paint, as a tool for seduction, and/or as a multi-billion-dollar consumer commodity. How do these multiple, and perhaps competing, definitions of makeup influence your understanding of this work?

Choose a work of art that is meaningful to you. Think about the materials the artist used and the message he/she was trying to convey. Next, create a new artwork by putting the artwork you chose in a new context or by re-creating it with different materials. How has the meaning of the artwork changed with the change in setting and/or materials?



**Cell: Interlocking Construction, 2010**

Rachel Lachowicz

Pigment, cosmetic compound, Plexiglas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

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