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ALFRED JENSEN

In his "Number Paintings," Jensen does his best to relocate digits from their Western lodging in science to realms of mysticism, religion, and chance. Grids with bright-colored squares and hand-painted numbers recall minimalist systems and arcane mathematical equations but also reference concepts as diverse as growth-hormone research, the Mayan calendar, and Goethe's color theory. There's more than a little pretension involved in this kind of wide-angle pseudo-philosophizing, but the works here, created between 1960 and 1980, balance that with visual, painterly rewards. Thickly impastoed, gestural, and quirky, they remind us that painting can riff on mathematics and still engage the opposite side of the brain. Through Oct. 28. (PaceWildenstein, 545 W. 22nd St. 212-929-7000.)

GEORGE MACIUNAS

Maciunas (1931-78) is best known as a leading member of the sixties Fluxus movement. The charts, diagrams, films, documents, and atlases here bear some marks of Fluxus—particularly the lo-fi, D.I.Y. elements—but they also draw heavily on Maciunas's personal history and heritage (his mother was Russian, his father Lithuanian). The "Atlas of Russian History" is a painstakingly drawn series of history-book maps diagramming the progress of Russia starting in 7 B.C. Similarly, the "Biography Chronicing Activity Between 1939-1978" and "Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus" serve as conceptual self-portraits. Others, like his ancient-Chinese art-history outlines, look like final-exam study notes but function as simultaneously didactic and user-friendly art. Through Oct. 28. (Stendhal, 545 W. 20th St. 212-366-1549.)

JOE SOLA

For previous projects, Sola has jumped out of windows, been tackled by football players, and ridden a roller coaster with porn stars; here, he turns his attention to a seemingly benign medium, with a show titled "Let's Go Do Some Watercolor Painting." His small, washy pictures depict a bouquet of microphones, things one wouldn't want to step on (banana peel, rake, ketchup packet), and trophies and ribbons for also-rans and failures. Their low-tech deadpan irony is reiterated by a marvelously goofy video, made with the playwright Will Eno, in which Sola portrays an anodyne public-TV painting instructor who meets with an unlikely accident. Exuberance and humor, the laugh-inducing lurch of a surprise: Sola doesn't seem to see much difference between watercolor paint and the roller coaster. Through Nov. 14. (Bespoke, 547 W. 27th St. 212-695-8201.)

"SMALL SCULPTURE"

Size matters, but the real action here is in the relationships set up between objects, both present and absent. Robert Gober's hyper-illusionistic paint can cast in lead crystal and carefully colored recalls Jasper Johns's beer cans—although Johns is represented here by sculpture from a series of lighting fixtures cast in bronze. Vija Celmins's fur-lined box filled with Plexiglas puzzle pieces recalls Meret Oppenheim's iconic fur-wrapped teacup at MOMA. And Charles Ray's tiny "Handheld Bird," a painted steel sculpture of an avian embryo, recalls Brancusi's orbs. With so many points of reference bouncing around, the notion of size is practically inconsequential—until one takes into account how much can be accomplished when the pressure of creating something monumental is suspended. Through Oct. 28. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

Short List

DONALD BAECHLER: Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727. Through Oct. 28. KAREN KILIMNIK: 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121. Through Nov. 4. ALBERT OEHLER: Lühring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100. Through Oct. 28. KEN PRICE: Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through Nov. 4. MATTHEW RITCHIE: Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 212-627-6000. Through Oct. 28.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

LILLIAN BASSMAN

Bassman, one of the mainstays of *Harper's Bazaar* in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, shows new photographs that borrow freely from her past. The largest and most striking pieces here combine reworked fashion photos and closeups of flowers in elegant, exuberant diptychs. Bassman's signature style is intimate and impressionistic; using darkroom manipulation or distorting glass, she softens and abstracts her subjects, zeroing in on an essence that feels lush, liquid, and intensely feminine. A series of smaller flower photos, all made this year, work as vivid footnotes. Through Oct. 28. (Staley Wise, 560 Broadway, at Prince St. 212-966-6223.)

MARY MISS

Miss shows irregularly shaped black-and-white photo-collages that could be studies for the architectural sculpture and public-art projects that are her primary work. Her subject is usually a structure in the landscape—a partially collapsed pier, pilings in a pond, bleachers beside a tennis court—that she has multiplied and reconfigured into sprawling, imaginary spaces. The slatted wooden gates of a streamside fish trap proliferate madly until all sense of function has been obliterated. Using a Cubist-style, cut-and-paste technique reminiscent of Gordon Matta-Clark and David Hockney, Miss realizes the sculptural potential of the ordinary built environment and invites us to see through her eyes. Through Nov. 22. (Senior & Shopmaker, 21 E. 26th St. 212-213-6767.)

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

In its second week at City Center, A.B.T. offers two beloved Jerome Robbins ballets, the poignant shore-leave caper "Fancy Free," made during the Second World War, and the later dreamy rehearsal-studio baller "Afternoon of a Faun." Twice this week, in "Afternoon," Ethan Stiefel will embody the languorous, sexually vulnerable dancer who is awoken from his reverie by the approach of a nymph in practice clothes. Michele Wiles and the regal Veronika Part will dance in Balanchine's "Symphonie Concertante" (1945). And a mischievous Angel Corella steps into the role of the hipster cad in Twyla Tharp's "Sinatra Suite." Casts appear on the company's Web site. ♦ Oct. 25 at 7:30: "Symphonie Concertante" (with Wiles, Maxim Beloserkovskiy, and Part), "Glow-Stop," and "The Green Table" (with David Hallberg). ♦ Oct. 26 at 7:30: "Clear," "Afternoon of a Faun" (with Stiefel and Stella Abrera), "Sinatra Suite" (with Marcelo Gomes), and "Fancy Free." ♦ Oct. 27 at 8: "Glow-Stop," "Meadow," and "Rodeo." ♦ Oct. 28 at 2: "Clear," "Afternoon of a Faun" (with Stiefel and Abrera), Act II pas de deux from "Swan Lake," and "Fancy Free." ♦ Oct. 28 at 8: "Symphonie Concertante," "Meadow," and "In the Upper Room." ♦ Oct. 29 at 2: "Glow-Stop," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Sinatra Suite" (with Corella), and "Rodeo." ♦ Oct. 31 at 7:30: "Symphonie Concertante," "Glow-Stop," and "The Green Table." (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Through Nov. 5.)

SANKAI JUKU

In "Kagemi" (2000), the Paris-based Butoh company's fourth work to appear at BAM in a decade, everything is bathed in white chalk dust: the seven dancers' robes, their shaved heads, their mask-like faces—even the stage. The Japanese-born choreographer Ushio Amagatsu's series of seven startlingly beautiful tableaux was inspired by an ikebana arrangement, and a canopy of lotus leaves hangs above the dancers, echoing the movement below: floating, weightless, otherworldly. With a score by Takashi Kako and Yoichiro Yoshikawa. (Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 24 and Oct. 26-28 at 7:30 and Oct. 29 at 3.)