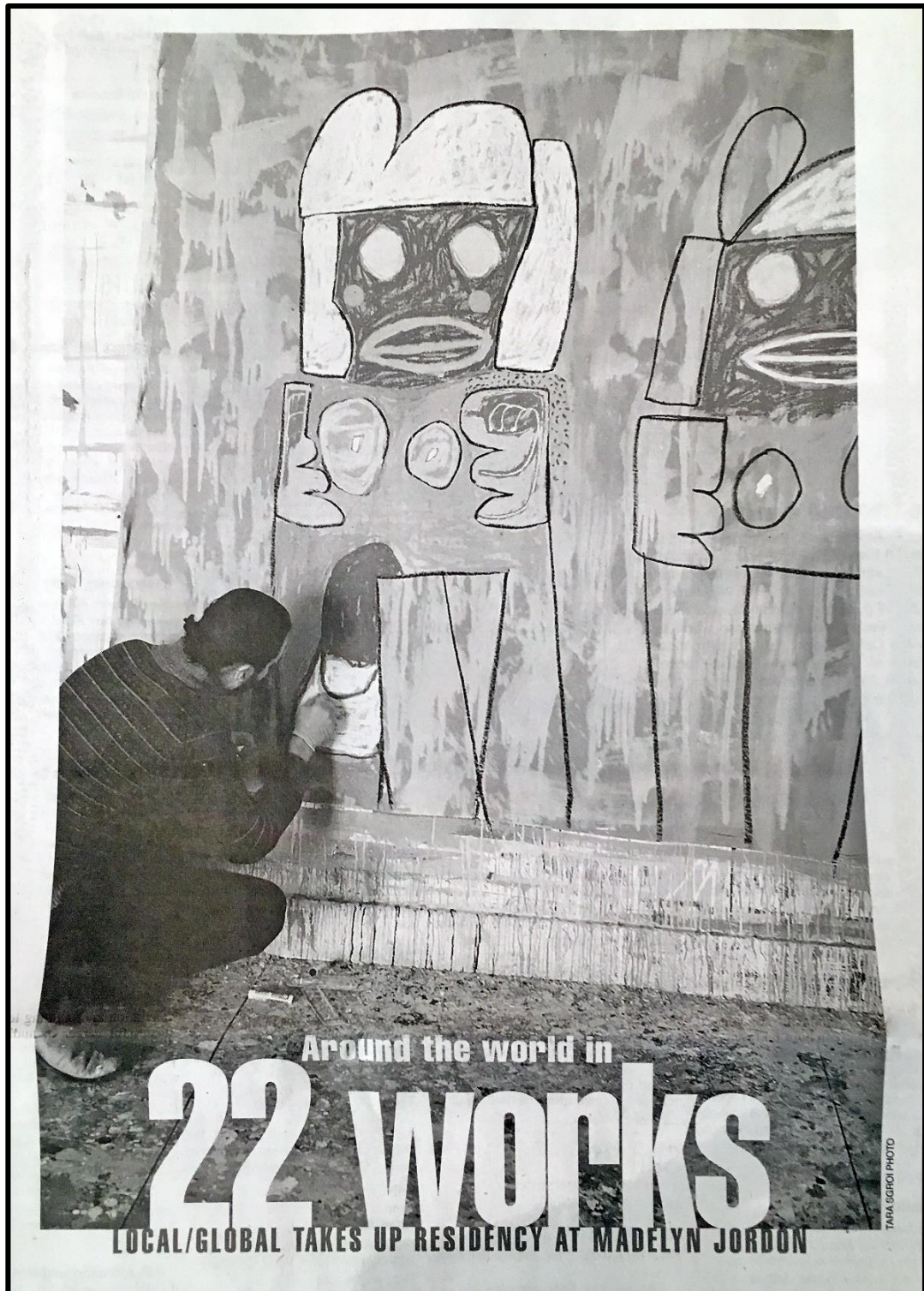


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THE SCARSDALE INQUIRER

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By DANIELLE RIVERA

The world used to be a bigger place. 'Tis the wisdom of both Captain Barbosa of the famed Caribbean-traveling Disney pirates, and the newest exhibit at Madelyn Jordon Fine Art.

The collection, featuring a flurry of local and international artists, runs through Feb. 24 and explores the changing landscape of art in the U.S. and worldwide.

"It's interesting how the art market has changed so much," featured artist Adam Handler said. "It used to be so focused around New York, and then it spread a lot in L.A., and now it's so global. I have collectors in Israel, Lebanon, Argentina ... the internet, especially social media, has really kind of altered the way people are viewing art."

Handler, who has lived in New York his entire life, said globalization usually benefits artists whose goal is to reach as many people with their content as possible.

"While New York is still one of the centers of the art world, that's rapidly changing," he said. "The art market is now exploding in Europe ... and especially in Asia. Having ... the internet just makes it so much [more] accessible in reaching a whole other population, [which] was almost impossible for young artists 15, 20 years ago."

Fellow spotlight artist Catherine Howe agreed, saying the beauty in art is the way it both communicates and transcends time, place and cultural context.

"Art is ... something that makes me aware that we're all kind of the same," she said. "In a way, it just makes me feel more connected to the larger thing than any local thing could possibly do, which is important for someone who grew up in a very ordinary American ... suburban family."

Howe's family was staunchly practical, she said. Her father and brother were both engineers, and the expectation was she would follow suit, pursuing a career in the world of STEM.

And she did, at least for a little while.

Howe entered college as an engineering major, a pursuit that only lasted one semester before she came to terms with her mounting attraction to art.

"It was always there ... but it just seemed like a very floozy occupation to declare one an artist," Howe said. "The kind of family I was raised in just couldn't possibly see it as a viable way to go, because it's crazy ... It has to be a very passionate, all-consuming desire to put aside all the very realistic concerns one would have."

While Howe's family eventually came around to her chosen career, "it's been a very long learning curve," she said. "Going home has always been interesting. I'm definitely the black sheep of the family."

Still, she carries no regrets. Today, she is a professor on the graduate painting faculty at the New York Academy of Art, where she leads a seminar on contemporary art.

"Sometimes I wish I could just be in my studio all the time," she said of teaching, "but it certainly keeps me on my toes."

Howe's featured piece at Madelyn Jordon is one of her signature mica paintings, which offers a whimsical play on traditional still lifes.

Mica is an earthy pigment that appears to change color when exposed to different light.

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PHOTO COURTESY ELISABETH CONDON

Above, Elisabeth Condon; "Hashtag Skyline;" 2014; glitter, ink and acrylic on linen; 39 x 39 inches.

Top, Handler said he enjoys working primarily with oil sticks.

"It's really like a big crayon that's made out of oil paint ... It allows me to channel a very raw, almost childlike energy."

22 works

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"It's almost like alchemy," Howe said. "It's very shifting and ethereal and kind of magical, and then the image is painted in white in a kind of three-dimensional relief paint, very sculptural, thick paint."

Howe's painting style has evolved exponentially. In the first few years after she graduated, she focused primarily on overt, politically charged feminist imagery, "kind of lampooning art history examples that were, of course, male-dominated, patriarchal ... and turning them on their heads."

Over time, Howe said she began "painting in code," exploring the same themes in more nuanced, expressionistic ways.

"As you get older, you ... gain a lot of confidence and security in your own voice," she said. "The need to point outwards to what others have done became less urgent. [What I'm doing now] is more internalized, a more poetic, more nuanced version of the female gaze, or female gesture."

Uber creative Elisabeth Condon has done her fair share of art experimentation, too.

At age 10, she began studying privately with German painter Renata Zerner. The pair tackled sculpture and portraits, among other mediums, in the artist's sunlit Westwood apartment.

Years later, Condon felt pulled toward one of Zerner's more unusual painting techniques: pouring.

Zerner introduced Condon to pouring with food coloring, and it soon became Condon's favorite medium, eventually moving to watercolor and acrylic on a large scale.

Condon's paintings overlay suburban aesthetics with 1970s glam rock, Yuan Dynasty scroll painting and postwar abstraction. She works primarily in acrylic, glitter and Chinese ink.

Her travels have taken her from New York to L.A. to Shanghai, and her art reflects those cross-regional influences.

"Los Angeles in the 1960s was light-drenched, filled with bougainvillea, ice plant, scrub-covered hills and modernist buildings," she said. "Every version of landscape — mountains, ocean, desert, city — lay within several hours' reach. It is a city of neighborhoods, multiple perspectives and dissolution of form under strong, white light. In New York, grids, volumes and material predominate."

In 2014, Condon spent six months on residency in Shanghai at the Swatch Art Peace Hotel. Glitter was available in large plastic bags from local shops, and Condon found it was "the ideal expression of a city where skyscrapers are illuminated in LED lights flickering like films." There, Condon began pouring ink into paint, creating a soft marbling effect and darkening her palette.

With Condon's host of influences, the nuances of the exhibit's title aren't lost on her.

"As people confront the issue of national identity, the title Local/Global begs definition," she said. "Though a westerner, scroll painting feels more immediate to me than western figuration. Does that make me international or local?"

Gallery owner Madelyn Jordon said such cultural overlaying is exactly the point.

"The objective of this exhibition is to provide a platform for cross-cultural aesthetics," she said. "Social media, forums, blogs and/or videos offer a boundary-less flow of dialogue, transforming how art is made, exhibited and collected ... Today's art world embodies a mélange of cultures that speaks for our global age."

The gallery, at 37 Popham Road, is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit madelynjordonfineart.com or call 723-8738.