

CRAIG OLSON

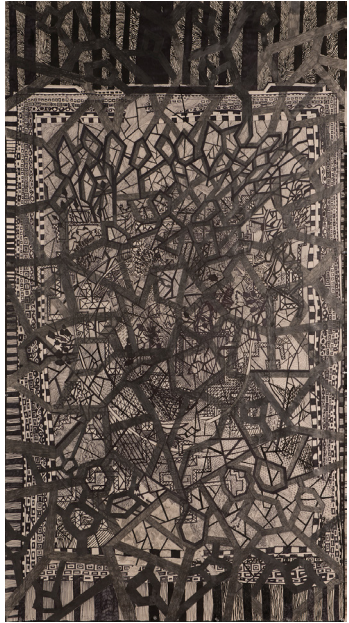
ON THE TRICKSTER – WHERE HERO INSTALLS FENCES AND SCREENS TO CONFINED AND CONTROL, TRICKSTER TEARS HOLES TO LET THE WILD IN, OR OUT, AS THE CASE MAY BE. AS TRICKSTER ARTISTS WE SEEK A MENTAL/VISUAL FEEDBACK LOOP THAT ERODES THE ASSUMPTIONS AND PRETENSIONS OF FORMAL AESTHETICS REVEALING A BEAUTIFUL AND DANGEROUS WILDERNESS OUTSIDE.

Bio – Craig Olson is an artist and writer engaged in images, language, and the silence of snowy fields. He lives and works in Minnesota.



JOSH WELKER

ON THE TRICKSTER – THE TRICKSTER PARADIGM, FOR ME, IS A FUNCTION OF EQUILIBRIUM. IT WORKS BOTH ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL LEVEL TO PUSH AND REFINED HUMANITIES ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL OF THE DISPARATE VARIABLES THAT MAKE UP OUR WORLD. IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING IT LOOKS LIKE INNOVATION. THROUGHOUT ART HISTORY YOU CAN WITNESS IT AS PERIODS AND STYLES FLOW FROM ONE INTO THE NEXT. I TEND TO NOT STICK WITH ONE THEME FOR TOO LONG BECAUSE I GET BORED. THIS DRAWING “DIVINIZATION OF PASSIVITIES” IS A SORT OF YEAR LONG JOURNAL I MADE AT HOME IN BETWEEN COOKING DINNER, CLEANING, AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES. THINK I HAD ONE OF MY KIDS IN ONE HAND THROUGH AT LEAST A QUARTER OF THE DRAWING. THE TITLE IS TAKEN FROM ONE OF TEILHARD DE CHARDIN’S IDEAS THAT EVEN THE “PASSIVE” OCCURRENCES IN OUR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO OUR INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.



Bio – After studying sculpture and theology in his hometown of St. Louis, Josh received his MFA at UT Austin. He has won first place in Dave Bown Projects and first place in Saatchi’s Abstract Showdown. He shows his work frequently. Presently, Josh is teaching sculpture and ceramics at Taylor University.

SEAN FOLEY

ON THE TRICKSTER – PICTURES ARE TRICKSTERS. NO MATTER WHAT THEY “REPRESENT” THEY ARE NEVER “THAT”. THEY’RE NEVER FIGURATIVE BECAUSE THEY’RE ALWAYS ABSTRACT. SO, THEY’RE SOMETHING MORE THAN OR DIFFERENT THAN THE SUM OF THEIR PARTS. THEY’RE LITTLE MONSTERS.



Sean Foley is a painter who lives and works in Worthington, Ohio and Limington, Maine. He received his B.F.A. in Painting from the Herron School of Art and his M.F.A. from The Ohio State University. He has taught at the Maine College of Art as an Associate Professor and Chair of Painting, and The Ohio State University as a Visiting Associate Professor.

His colorful and energetic installations of paintings, shaped panels, and wall drawings suggest a “suspended animation” akin to a Looney Tunes skirmish. These carnivalesque works relate to his on-going interest in concepts of the grotesque and monstrous as a way to know the history and practice of painting.

He has shown nationally at Anna Kustera and Mary Ryan Gallery in New York, Irvine Contemporary in Washington DC, and Allston Skirt Gallery in Boston. Museum shows include the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA), DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA, the Portland Museum of Art (ME) and the Academy of Arts and Letters in New York.

Recently he was awarded residencies at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva Island, FL and a three month residency in the Kohler Iron and Brass Foundry through the Kohler Arts / Industry program in Kohler, WI. Foley has also been an artist in residence at Bemis, Fine Arts Work Center, Headlands Center for the Arts, and the Vermont Studio Center. He has received awards from the Golden Foundation, the Portland Museum of Art and is a recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship.

He is also an Independent Curator and currently organizing a large thematic group exhibition on “Wonder” with Denise Markonish at Mass MoCA opening in 2016. Other curatorial work includes the Wexner Center for the Arts and the Temporary Public Art Program in Portland, ME.

PETER ACHESON

ON THE TRICKSTER – PAINTING IS ONE OF THOSE PRACTICES THAT CAN TAKE YOU OUT OF THE GARDEN, OUT OF THE CITY WALL. A BLANK CANVAS PLACES ONE AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE UNKNOWN AND HOW ONE RESPONDS TO BEING THERE FOCUSES A LENS ON ONE’S FREEDOM. NO ROADSIGNS, NO PATHS, NO TRAILS. JUST THE UNFOLDING MOUNTAINSIDE WITH ROCKS, LEAVES, GROWING AND DOWNED TREES, AND THE LICHENS, MUSHROOMS, AND BUGS THAT FEED ON THEM. THIS IS BABA YAGA’S HUT, THE FOOD CHAIN. PERHAPS NOT A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO BE BUT FULL OF REWARDS FOR THE ADVENTUROUS.

Bio – Peter Acheson lives and works in the Hudson River Valley of upstate New York, formerly dairy and mill country returning to forest or weekend homes. He is a painter as well as skilled in the Japanese arts of cloud and moonwatching.



HANNAH BARNES

ON THE TRICKSTER – THE ANCIENT BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHER NAGARJUNA WAS KNOWN FOR HIS IDEAS ABOUT EMPTINESS, OR SUNYATA. HE HAS BEEN CALLED A ‘TRICKSTER PHILOSOPHER’ BECAUSE OF HIS STYLE OF REASONING, WHICH FREQUENTLY SHIFTED FROM ONE LOGICAL TOOL TO ANOTHER WITHOUT REGARD FOR CONSISTENCY. NAGARJUNA WANTED TO SHOW, USING ANY MEANS NECESSARY, THAT ALL VIEWS ARE EMPTY. HIS PRIMARY CONCERN WAS FREEDOM; TO PRIVILEGE LOGICAL CONSISTENCY WAS TO MISS THE POINT AND REMAIN TRAPPED IN VIEWS. – I FIND A SIMILAR FREEDOM IN PAINTING’S CAPACITY FOR TRICKSTERISH INFIDELITY. LIKE LEWIS HYDE’S ‘POLYTROPIC’ TRICKSTER, PAINTING THRIVES ON WILINESS, SHAPE-SHIFTING, AND STUBBORN IRREDUCIBILITY. UNCONCERNED WITH VIEWS OR ALLEGIANCES, PAINTING CAN OPERATE OUTSIDE OF SYSTEMS, CATEGORIES, AND LAWS OF CERTAINTY. IT CAN BE INCONSISTENT AND UNFAITHFUL. IN MY PAPER PROTOTYPES SERIES, I AM CREATING SMALL DRAWINGS UNDER THE MISNOMER OF ‘PROTOTYPES’ – DRAFTS OR MODELS OF SOME IMAGINED FUTURE VERSION. THE ‘PROTOTYPE’ LABEL CREATES A COVER OR CAMOUFLAGE FOR THE IMAGES AND ALLOWS ME A DEGREE OF FREEDOM IN MAKING THEM. THE DRAWINGS ADOPT A VARIETY OF (OFTEN CONFLICTING) PICTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS, MOTIFS, AND LOGICS. LIKE NAGARJUNA’S TRICKSTER LOGIC OR HYDE’S ‘POLYTROPISM’, THE DRAWINGS HAVE NO REAL ESSENCE OR SHAPE OF THEIR OWN, BUT ARE MORE LIKE FRAGMENTS.



Bio – Hannah Barnes was born in Massachusetts and resides in Indianapolis, IN. She creates work that draws on a familiar vocabulary of abstract forms and tropes to explore the nature of meaning and indeterminacy within abstraction. She received an MFA from Rutgers State University of New Jersey and is an Associate Professor of Painting at Ball State University.

BEN LA ROCCO

ON THE TRICKSTER – PAINTING DOESN’T SAY WHAT PAINTING IS ART DOESN’T SAY WHAT ART IS WE SAY WHAT WE ARE, THOUGH WE KNOW NOT THE TREE DOES NOT SAY WHAT THE TREE IS THE ROCK DOES NOT SAY WHAT THE ROCK IS THE WORLD DOES NOT SAY WHAT THE WORLD IS

THEREFORE:
THE TRICKSTER IS PAINTING
THE TRICKSTER IS ART
THE TRICKSTER IS THE TREE
AND THE ROCK
AND THE WORLD

THOUGH WE SAY THAT WE ARE NOT

BEN LA ROCCO, 10–2014



Bio – Ben La Rocco’s house in Brooklyn fell down last night. And every part of it vanished into the earth around him and his family. In the night, before anyone woke, he rebuilt it exactly as it was, every brick and beam. And there it stands, proof of the probability of the impossible.

Ben La Rocco is a painter known for each exhibition that he does looking different from the one before.

LIV AANRUD

ON THE TRICKSTER – I INVITE THE TRICKSTER INTO MY WORK, CONJURING HER BY CUTTING HUNDREDS OF PIECES OF FABRIC... I NEED TIME TO GET MY STORY STRAIGHT... WHAT IS IT THAT I’M ASKING FOR? I NEED AN OFFERING – THE FLOOR BECOMES A PALETTE OF NEATLY PILED COLORS (THIS SHOULD PEAK HER APPETITE.) HE SPEAKS TO ME FROM BELOW THE SURFACE IN THIS KIND OF RAMBLING RUN ON SENTENCE OF STITCHES. I WAIT FOR THE RHYME, THE DOT AND THE LINE VINE, AND TIME AND THE WORK TURN SLOWLY. THE TRICKSTER AND I FLIP THIS WORLD TO AND FRO, BACK BECOMES FRONT, AND THEN BACK AGAIN. A TRAIL OF SCRAPS KEEP ME CIRCLING, AND NOW I’M HUNGRY TOO. UPSIDE DOWN AND SIDEWAYS, MY ARMS STRETCH TO REACH SOME CONCLUSION. RECOGNITION COMES SLOWLY AND ONLY WHEN MY EYES ARE GIVEN BACK TO ME.



Bio – Liv Aanrud earned her B.F.A from the University of WI, Eau Claire, and her M.F.A from Rutgers University. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

JAMIE POWELL

ON THE TRICKSTER – A TRICKSTER DEFIES CONVENTIONS, BREAKS RULES TO UNCOVER TRUTHS, AND OFTEN EMPLOYS HUMOR.....THAT PRETTY MUCH SUMS UP MY ENTIRE PRACTICE AND PROCESS AS AN ARTIST.

MY PROCESS IS A PHYSICAL ONE. IT INVOLVES, CUTTING, CONSTRUCTING, TEARING APART, RECONFIGURING PAST WORKS. IT EXISTS IN THE LIMINAL AREAS BETWEEN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, MALE AND FEMALE, FINISHED AND FALLING APART. THE TRICKSTER IS A FORCE OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION, OF UNRESTRAINED IMPULSE RUNNING WILD. THIS IS WHAT I DO IN MY STUDIO EVERYDAY.



Bio – Jamie Powell is an artist, curator and educator. She received her MFA and the Paul Robeson Emerging Artist Award from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. She has received grants from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Vermont Studio Center and Pratt Institute. She has exhibited extensively over the last eight years including: FLUXspace in Philadelphia, Soil Gallery in Seattle, Parallel Art Space in Queens and Garis & Hahn in New York. She teaches painting and drawing at Pratt Institute, the Dedalus Foundation and for the Studio In A School Foundation in New York.

CHRIS MARTIN

ON THE TRICKSTER – WE THINK WE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON BUT WE DON’T. COYOTE. CLOWN. FOOL. TRANSFORMATION. SUDDEN UNEXPECTED INSIGHT. OR NOT.

Chris Martin was born in Washington, DC, in 1954, and has lived and worked in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, since the 1980s. He is represented by Anton Kern Gallery in New York City, David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles, KOW Gallery in Berlin and Rodolphe Janssen Gallery in Brussels. His work incorporates all kinds of material: glitter, newspaper, carpet scraps, macramé and vinyl LPs.

For a 2011 solo exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Martin installed three 26-foot-high paintings in the atrium. He was also the subject of a 2011 exhibition at the Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, and he participated in the three-person exhibition XXXL Painting at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam in 2013.



A GAP IN THE SCREEN:

TRACKING THE TRICKSTER THROUGH MYTH AND ART

NOVEMBER 14TH - DECEMBER 12TH, 2014

OPENING RECEPTION: NOVEMBER 14TH, 6PM-9PM

"WILD FOX BARKING IN THE MOONLIGHT" LECTURE AND PANEL DISCUSSION BY PETER ACHESON AND CRAIG OLSON

"TRICKSTER, TRICKSTERISM, AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN: A CULTURAL CRITIQUE OF TRICKSTER APPROPRIATION" LECTURE BY JOE RICKE

ENCOUNTERING TRICKSTER

Thoreau said "Civilization is an orchard apple, nature is a crab apple". Everything in the Universe is natural, but not everything is wild.

The archetype of the trickster is wild. It is instinct rooted in our animal selves, prior to layers of language and other skills of civilization such as gardening and tending goats inside fences. Perhaps civilization, with city walls, economies, class structures, universities and museums can be viewed as language's work in the world: classifying, categorizing, subdividing, organizing. Language is the cart, but what of the horse?

Trickster is always here. As evidenced by its continuous reoccurrence throughout history, it is a permanent structure of the world psyche. It is coupled with its polarity, systems theory, in dynamic equilibrium like poles of a magnet. Hermes/Apollo; moon/sun; wild/domesticated. So it is always present with its own wild energy. Not a strictly human creation.

To open oneself to Trickster is to penetrate a larger-than-human mystery. It requires the demotion of intention, of goal oriented thinking, of the strategizing brain. Rushing to work, we can't find the car keys, or the car gets a flat. The events of the day take a left turn. We wait for the tow truck by a cornfield with no cell service, entertained by gangs of cawing crows.

It is said that the world now functions under the aegis of two dominating myths: psychological development and bottom line economics. We have come to view life as a journey toward a goal, be it wealth or psychic wholeness. The myth states that we are developing selves; born as blank slates, suffering through childhood, then unraveling the complexes accumulated through that suffering in middle age as part of the quest to find out who 'we really are'. Our participation in the economic myth is mandatory. Both the drug dealer and the CEO of Exxon believe this system. The belief that money states value is engrained worldwide to the point that it has become unconscious and thus we no longer think to question it.

What has this to do with painting? Painting is one of those practices that can take you out of the garden, out of the city wall. A blank canvas places one at the crossroads of the unknown and how one responds to being there focusses a lens on one's freedom. No road signs, no paths, no trails. Just the unfolding mountainside with rocks, leaves, growing and downed trees, and the lichens, mushrooms, and bugs that feed on them. This is Baba Yaga's hut, the food chain. Perhaps not a comfortable place to be but full of rewards for the adventurous.

Bob Dylan, a great cultural trickster hero himself, wrote as the refrain of the 60s anthem Like A Rolling Stone, "How does it FEEL?" How does it feel to swim in very cold water in out of the way places? How does it feel to leave the security of home? How does it feel to look closely into the eyes of your lover or pet and realize how independant they are of you? The reward for experience IS EXPERIENCE! Encountering trickster brings a renewed sense of big sanity, of having your feet beneath you, of weaving through the city and out again with confidence and most important, style.

PETER ACHESON

FLIPPING THE TRAPS OF CULTURE

Any experienced coyote knows the only reasonable response to a trap is to dig it up, turn it over, and defecate on it. It's an offering to the trapper's pride, a stain on the assumptions of rational authority. By confusing the roles of predator and prey, the coyote keeps things interesting, reminding us we're not the only beings with a sense of humor. Whether it's trap or trick seems decidedly foolish. It's the slippages in between that count. Shall we call it art?

Trickster is by nature contradictory and ambiguous. In world mythology he represents the dynamic power of the total psyche to disrupt programmatic order. He is a deity who constellates the negative or upsetting aspects of action by breaking through established rules and morals. Both a creator of order out of chaos and a destroyer of order which seeks to repress creative primal energies, an animal being and a spiritual force. He is a living contradiction through which the chaotic, wild energies of creativity flow. Trickster alternately outrages, disgusts, charms, disrupts, rebukes, and humiliates (or is humiliated by) the community of people and animals he encounters. Yet, he is also a creative force transforming their world, sometimes in bizarre and outrageous ways, with his instinctive energies and cunning.

Where Hero installs fences and screens to confine and control, Trickster tears holes to let the wild in, or out, as the case may be. As trickster artists we seek a mental/visual feedback loop that erodes the assumptions and pretensions of formal aesthetics revealing a beautiful and dangerous wilderness outside. It's where the swamp and the frozen lake are twinned with the high ideals of aesthetic projection and formal arrangement. Their union birthed a strange mutation of art and life, schooled in paradoxes and incongruities, failures and humor. The specters of high modernist thinking are present in this project from the beginning. Without their ghosts this transformation of material ideas isn't possible. Divination is only realized when some small part of the divined is allowed to enter. A little touch of evil for the greater good, or vice versa. It's in the contingency of these claims that this work lives, outside the traps of culture that claim aesthetic authority. In navigating this brumous borderland, illusion sinks below the threshold of consciousness and appears as truth, and we learn to flip the traps of culture with reflection rather than reflex.

CRAIG OLSON

CURATED BY SUZIE DITTENBER