



THE ART NEWSPAPER

The Long View, With a Title to Fit

By Linda Yablonsky, February 2019

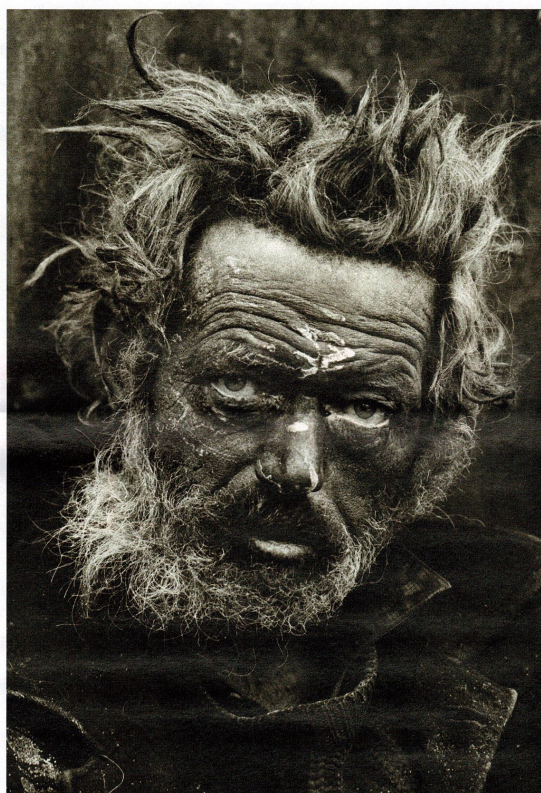


INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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REVIEW



Don McCullin,
Homeless Irishman,
Spitalfields, London
1969. McCullin is the
first living British
photographer to
have a major career
show at Tate Britain
© DON MCCULLIN

PHOTO SENSITIVE

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U. ALLEMANDI & CO. PUBLISHING LTD.

EVENTS, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS MONTHLY. EST. 1983, VOL. XXVIII, NO. 309, FEBRUARY 2019

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Stonehenge, Built by Immigrants"

T-SHIRT SLOGAN FROM JEREMY DELLER'S ARTS COLLECTION

New York: **Linda Yablonsky**

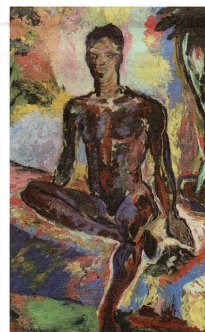
LINDA ON THE LOOSE



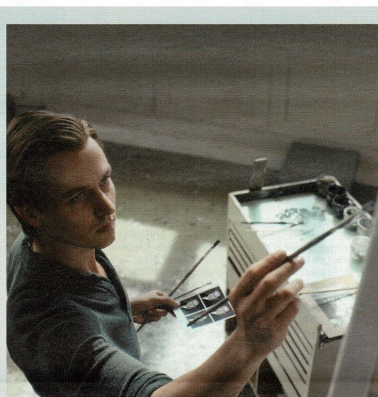
Standout portrait of a towering figure

★ "This show is amazing." I heard, from several people the moment I went inside God Made My Face: a Collective Portrait of James Baldwin (until 16 February), curated by the New Yorker writer Hilton Als at David Zwirner gallery. Thematic group shows can feel forced; this one isn't. Clearly, Als had access to material known mainly to scholars, including a standout portrait of Baldwin by his friend Beauford Delaney, as well as his letters, books and sketches, and archival photographs. Baldwin is a towering literary figure, but he was also a preacher and a political agitator who found a more enlightened home in Paris than in Harlem. It's his legacy as a gay man and a sexualized, social being that emerges from the biographical narrative unwinding here.

The show has two parts: Baldwin as a flâneur, and as a powerful voice for civil rights and the contradictions within black masculinity. This context deepens our understanding of Baldwin and a circle of friends that included Marlon Brando, Richard Avedon, Jean Genet and Langston Hughes. This isn't a show that a professional curator would have done, but it reaches into corners that need dusting.



Delaney's portrait of Baldwin, who addressed the contradictions of black masculinity



The actor Tom Schilling in the film *Never Look Away* that is based on Gerhard Richter's life

Richter film shows art as a healer

★ Despite the nosebleed territory his paintings occupy in the market, Gerhard Richter is not the likeliest of subjects for a commercial feature film. Outwardly, his life story lacks the depravity, flamboyance or madness that usually sells audiences on a bio-pic. *Never Look Away*, the latest film from the German director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, doesn't need sensational manifestations of creative genius to carry its water. It has some of the darker hours of history on its side, along with the redemptive power of art—the film's actual subject. Loosely based on Richter's post-war coming of age as an artist, and an adult vulnerable to love, the story begins with "Kurt Barnert" (the Richter character, played by an able Tom Schilling) witnessing the firebombing of Dresden as a child, growing up in the Soviet-occupied east, and then becoming a student of "Antonius van

Verten", aka Joseph Beuys, and Düsseldorf Art Academy studio-mate of a character modelled on Günther Uecker. Looming over the whole enterprise is Barnert's father-in-law, an unrepentant Nazi gynaecologist responsible for the sterilisation and extermination of innocents, played with chilling naturalism by Sebastian Koch.

Before a screening last month at the Museum of Modern Art, the Oscar-winning director of *The Lives of Others* (2006) tantalised his audience by saying that the most extreme scenes in the new film were all true. In fact, the whole thing exudes an unusual degree of authenticity. Interestingly, the dealer Anton Kern, the son of Georg Baselitz who happened to sit next to me, pronounced it "kitschy." (Later, he texted: "I guess it's closer to me—east/west traumatising.")

The long view, with a title to fit

★ If Banu Cennetoglu were to show her moving-image archive currently on view at Long Island City's SculptureCenter (until 25 March) in her hometown of Istanbul, she would risk incarceration. Its lengthy title—1 January 1970-21 March 2018 - HOWBEIT - Gully feet have got no rhythm - Kırkıboynuzu - AS IS - MurMur - I measure every grief I meet - Taq u Raq - A piercing Comfort it affords - Stitch - Made in Fall - Yes, But, We had a golden heart - One day soon I'm gonna tell the moon about the crying game—alone might test the patience of Turkish censors. But it befits the 128 hours and 22 minutes of film, video and stills that Cennetoglu shot over 12 years. Though unedited, it's surprisingly absorbing. In fact, the continuous stream of chronological but disconnected imagery—an elaborated dance party at Kurşunhane, the death of a child at a street demonstration—becomes as enveloping and contradictory as life itself.



A still from Cennetoglu's monumental, 128-hour long video

What's new at the Outsider Art Fair

★ Now that so-called Outsider Art has gone mainstream, the niche fair responsible for promoting it to the contemporary art market may have become a victim of its own success. The Outsider Art Fair's 27th edition seemed diminished from more robust presentations of years past, a stark illustration of how commercialisation can still the pulse of discovery. Outsider Art is now a hot commodity. Yet, at the fair's opening, I saw too many works I'd seen last year, and the year before, and the year before that. Or lesser versions of works by the same artists. New to me (with Dallas dealer Chris Byrne) was 32-year-old Kambel Smith, an autistic artist from Philadelphia whose painted cardboard, architectural constructions recreate prominent buildings in his hometown. They included a Philadelphia Museum of Art big enough to crawl through. It wasn't like anything else at the fair, which I hope will continue to cast its net wide, while sticking closer to its roots.



Kambel Smith with his scale-model Philadelphia Museum of Art



Stephen Kaltenbach

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