

MORGAN LEHMAN

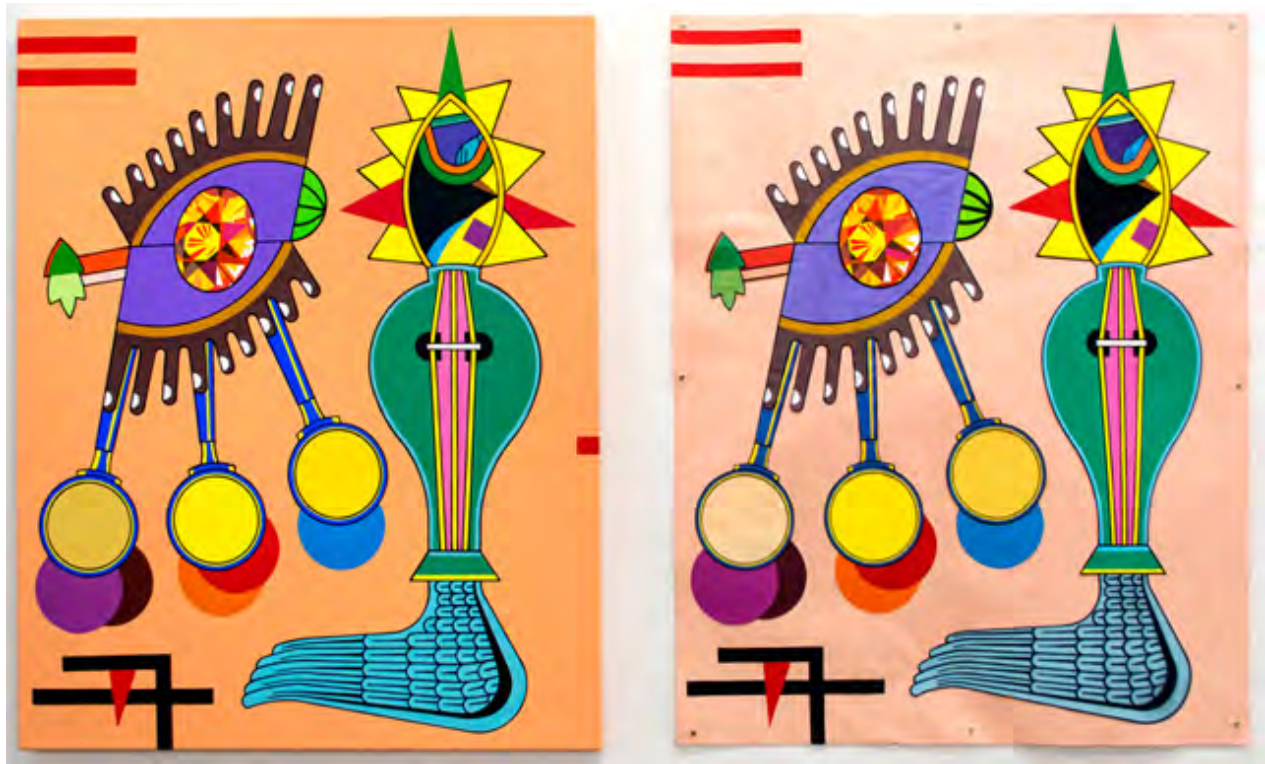
535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

Rough Collages and Finished Works Cut from the Same Cloth

by Patrick Neal on January 30, 2015



Left: Trevor Winkfield, "Duet" (2012), acrylic on linen, 37" x 31"; Right: Trevor Winkfield, "Duet" (2012), mixed media on paper, 37" x 31" (all images courtesy Morgan Lehman Gallery)

This past summer, while reading George Packer's book *The Unwinding*, I thought of the text as a collage; character studies, journalism, and history all overlapping to tell the story of America's unraveling. In fact, the expressive quality of collage across all manner of media, from literature and music to the visual arts, came to mind while viewing *Rough Cut*, an exhibition at Morgan Lehman Gallery that pairs artworks with the preliminary collages from which they are derived.

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Carrie Moyer, "Yes Rays (aka Sisters' Stamen)" (2013), acrylic on canvas, 72" x 60"

Curated by the art historian Jennifer Samet and painter Elizabeth Hazan, the artists in *Rough Cut* demonstrate the degree to which collage can act as a conceptual and formal progenitor for a painting or sculpture. Despite its simplicity, collage as a device can influence the mechanical and philosophical bearings of an artwork. Making good on this premise, there are a range of disciplines orbiting around *Rough Cut* that underscore the hybrid nature of so much art-making today, everything from architecture, cartography, textiles, and theater to social media, photography, and graphic design.

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Sangram Majumdar, "underwater electric greenhouse" (2014), oil on linen, 84" x 70"

Sangram Majumdar's large-scale painting is derived from a seamless digital collage further worked with marker, pastel, and charcoal. We can make out a jumble of plant fronds, directional flecks, and grounds, and are clued in by the title "underwater electric greenhouse" (2014). The painting, which plays on levels of perception, has the nocturnal, aquatic colors of a fish tank; viridian and cinnabar greens light up against a rich, waxy black. The underlying representational imagery has been flipped or inverted with negative and positive space given equal emphasis.

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Left: Alexi Worth, “Leaf 1” (2015), acrylic on nylon mesh, 28” x 21”; *Right: Alexi Worth, “Leaf 1 Collage” (2014), Mylar, artist’s tape, felt tip marker, acrylic paint, 55 1/2” x 29”*

Both Majumdar and the painter Alexi Worth have conveyed a more overt figuration in their earlier work that they have since moved away from, and collage and stencil have helped take their work to a more open-ended place. Worth has adopted a process of spraying acrylic paint around stencils atop nylon mesh to arrive at pictures of grasping hands reaching up through fig leaves. His “Leaf 1 Collage” (2014) looks like the preparatory study for a piece from this series, “Woman on Tiptoe.” Nearby is a new painting “Leaf 1” (2015); mists of mint green or black create soft halos that allow one to see through the mesh to the back wall, producing shadows both real and illusory. His figures are ghostly white and layered sequentially from near to far, creating an effect of evanescence, like something slipping through the fingers.

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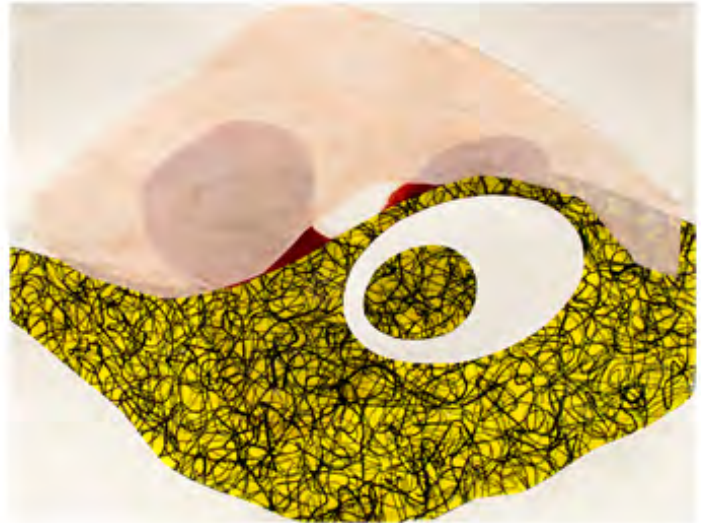


Left: Elizabeth Hazan, “Study for Parklands” (2014), mixed media on paper mounted on foamcore, 24” x 20”; *Right: Elizabeth Hazan, “Parklands” (2014), dispersed pigment on canvas, 24” x 20”*

More than once while viewing *Rough Cut*, I thought of the late *Studio* paintings of George Braque and the idea of a still life or landscape as a collection of multiple lived experiences — seeing what is in front of you as it’s remembered or as a symbol of a collective humanity, a simultaneity akin to atemporality that is now regarded as intrinsic to our virtual/digital existences. In this way, Elizabeth Hazan begins a painting with a simple black and white paper collage that is an aerial map done from memory. By introducing color and touch, this topography becomes animated into a mental landscape. The flat map lifts and hovers in front of you as a collection of abstract forms, a delicate play of mark making attuned to meditations on place.

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Left: Jennifer Sirey, "Fisher Loves Eggs" (2014), plate glass, blown glass, white wine, bacteria, water, vinegar, monofilament, waterboard, paint, 13" x 6 1/2" x 6"; Right: Jennifer Sirey, "Scrape Yeller" (2014), Mixed media on paper, 13" x 17"

Carrie Moyer's big, brilliant oil painting "Yes Rays (aka Sisters' Stamen)" (2013) is an orgasmic explosion of color and geometry. Her small cluster of graphic collages provide a foundation and source material likely gleaned from subliminal references to the body and queer culture. In an altogether different biomorphic vein is the sculptor Jennifer Sirey's glass vitrine filled with live bacteria in a liquid membrane. Titled "Fisher Loves Eggs" (2014), the piece is sort of a biological Brancusi where the wall between scientific research and artisanal craft has collapsed. Sirey fashions templates and collage at different stages of her process that are both precise schemes and abstract riffs.

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Left: Bryan Osburn, "Walking Shirt" (2014), oil on canvas, 30" x 40"; Top right: Bryan Osburn, "Untitled Collage #5" (2014), mixed media on paper, 12" x 8"; Bottom right: Bryan Osburn, "Untitled Collage #4" (2014), mixed media on paper, 12" x 8"

Amy Park and Bryan Osburn collage together the *isms* and idioms of art history to fashion their paintings. Park creates watercolors from photographs she takes of modern New York skyscrapers, editing and recombining her source material into blue and yellow syncopations inspired by glass and steel. Osburn's oil painting and collage maps a terrain that becomes a rich, crazy quilt evoking southwestern-styled palettes and textures.

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Amy Park, "NYC Collage" (2014), watercolor on paper mounted on dibond, 27 1/2" x 22"

With the exception of a small red bar on the image's right side, Trevor Winkfield's fleshy pink collage is identical to the final painting that accompanies it. Titled "Duet" (2012), it features two bizarre creatures in a spooning pas de deux, one radiant giving off light, the other seeing and magnifying. Winkfield's collage is where most of the mental and manual labor takes place, the morphing of forms like a rebus puzzle atop a fantastical gameboard. These two beings could serve as mascots for the invention on display at Morgan Lehman, heralding the light of the mind's eye and the gestation of the creative process itself.

Rough Cut continues at Morgan Lehman Gallery (535 West 22nd Street, Chelsea) through February 7.