

Press Release

Hello America

Jennifer Bolande
Jessica Diamond
Tishan Hsu

Curated by Gianni Jetzer

27 March – 08 May 2021

When British writer J.G. Ballard published his novel *Hello America* in 1981 Ronald Reagan just had accomplished his first hundred days as President of the United States. The plot of the book develops around an ecological disaster in the year 2114. An expedition hoists the sails to investigate a presumably lost continent. In this subtle parody of American culture themes such as the threat of an ecological disaster provoked by the failure of liberalism anticipated the decline of a great nation. Today, after four years of a tumultuous presidency and the prevalent risk of a collapse on various levels the world is questioning America's potential to pursue its role as a global leader.

Coinciding with the publishing of Ballard's *Hello America* in the early 1980s a young generation of New York artists accepted the challenge to develop new art. Opposing figurative painting that had become the new big thing in Contemporary art, but considered by many as anachronistic, they were aiming to digest the mood fueled by cable TV and Reaganomics during a new rise of capitalism. Oscillating between the sheer brutal optimism of consumerism and fears of a Cold War resulting in an atomic attack, the early 1980s were of a similar fabric as Ballard's dystopian Science Fiction. The AIDS crisis that followed shortly after further enhanced this state of mind.

Jennifer Bolande, Jessica Diamond, and Tishan Hsu were artists belonging to a new scene, that kicked off in East Village galleries and alternative spaces to be later propelled into international careers. Their visionary work manifests the elan of a generation that was at once future driven but also critical towards the luster of late capitalism.

Amongst the most iconic pieces by Jennifer Bolande are her sculptures made from speaker cabinets—a critic once remarked that they are analogous to Koons' concurrent vacuum cleaners. Bolande undermines the heroism of stacked-up speakers by enabling them to perform in unexpected ways. The speaker pieces are simultaneously sites of projection, frames in a narrative, and models of entertainment itself. *Speaker II* conflates a cross-section of a speaker cabinet, a stage set with curtain and spotlights, and the gown of a disembodied performer. Bolande's use of photography such as in the installation *Cascade* emphasized the material nature of pictorial representation that is aligned with artists of the Picture Generation.

The wall drawings of Jessica Diamond contain declarations that have been described as accusatory tragicomedy. Her gigantic *I Hate Business* is an equivocal statement but at once ambivalent by the context of the art gallery where it is shown. That being said, it is a critique that looks so good that it seduces the viewer in a heartbeat making him/her complicit by enjoying its visual superficiality. Personal, handwritten, the letters seem as if painted by a gigantic hand that makes comments on the failures of the material world from an artistic perspective.

Tishan Hsu has developed a vocabulary that connects technology with the human body in unprecedented ways. His surfaces made of ceramic tiles or iron mesh evoke a topology of a flat grid that is often merging with biological references, photographs of bodies, or shapes that refer to mammals. In *Holey Cow* Hsu explores a sculptural space of flatness that somehow simultaneously elicits the sense of something organic and “real”, like a cow, in contrast to the more analytic, abstract space of a flat, grid, or beyond that a void or a hole, thus exploring a paradoxical experience of two seemingly opposite sensibilities. This turning away from the image to properties and attributes has been a key driver in the evolution of his work.

Biographies

Jessica Diamond (b. 1957, New York, NY, lives in New York, NY) received a BFA from the School of Visual Art, New York in 1979 and an MFA from Columbia University, New York in 1981. Diamond has participated in numerous international exhibitions, including *Aperto*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (1993); *Wall to Wall*, Serpentine Gallery, London UK (1994); *Sonsbeek 9*, Arnhem, The Netherlands (2001); and the *Biennale de Lyon*, Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (2015). Solo exhibitions include: *American Fine Arts Co.*, New York, NY (1989); *Galleria Massimo De Carlo*, Milan, Italy (1993); *Deitch Projects*, New York, NY (1996); *Ota Fine Arts*, Tokyo, Japan (1999); *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts*, Montreal, Canada (2002); and *El Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo*, Seville, Spain (2011). Noted group exhibitions include: *Infotainment* (1985) traveling exhibition; *Just Pathetic*, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (1990); *Yes Bruce Nauman*, Zwirner & Wirth, New York, NY (2006); and *The Snake*, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, OR. The artist is the recipient of several awards, including the National Endowment for the Arts Award in 1989, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship Award in 2000, and the Anonymous Was A Woman Award in 2004.

Jennifer Bolande (b. 1957, Cleveland, OH, lives in Joshua Tree, CA) received a BFA from Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, Halifax. She has had solo shows at *The Kitchen*, New York, *Artists Space*, New York, *Nature Morte*, New York, *Metro Pictures*, New York, *Margo Leavin*, Los Angeles, CA; *Kunstraum*, Munich, DE; *Kunsthalle Palazzo*, Liestal, CH; *MoMA P.S.1*, New York, and *Magenta Plains*, New York. Her work has been included in seminal group shows such as *Infotainment* (1985); *Mixed Use Manhattan*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, ES; *This Will Have Been: Art Love and Politics in the 1980s*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; *Deep Storage*, PS1, Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE; *Phot(o)bject*, Presentation House, Vancouver, BC. Recent exhibitions include *Desert X 2017* in Coachella Valley, CA; *Readymades Belong to Everyone*, Swiss Institute, New York, NY; *Brand New: Art and Commodity in the 1980s*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC; and *After the Plaster Foundation*, Queens Museum, NYC. A survey of her work, *Landmarks*, began at INOVA in Milwaukee, WI in 2010, and travelled to the ICA in Philadelphia, PA, and the Luckman Gallery, CSU, Los Angeles, CA. In 2012 a monograph on her work was published by JRP|Ringier. Bolande is a professor in the Department of Art at UCLA.

Tishan Hsu (b. 1951, Boston, MA, lives in New York, NY) spent his very early years in Zurich, then grew up in Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New York. He studied environmental design and architecture at MIT and received his BSAD in 1973 and M.Arch in 1975. While at MIT, Hsu studied film at the Carpenter Center, Harvard University. He moved to New York in 1979, where he currently resides. His first exhibition in New York was at Pat Hearn Gallery. Since 1985 he has shown extensively in the United States, Europe, and Mexico. Hsu has served as a board member of White Columns, New York, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He has

been a professor of visual arts at Sarah Lawrence College and a visiting professor at Pratt Institute and Harvard University. Tishan Hsu: Liquid Circuit, his first survey exhibition in the United States, was on view at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2020), and at Sculpture Center, New York (2020/21). Hsu's work will be included in the 13th Gwangju Biennale, Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning (2021). He will also have his first solo show at Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York that represents his work.

Gianni Jetzer (b. 1969 in Zurich, Switzerland, where he currently lives) is a prolific Swiss curator specializing in contemporary art. He has more than two decades of experience as director and curator of museum exhibitions in Europe, Asia, and North America. After having gained a reputation curating exhibitions at the Migros Museum in Zurich, he became Kunsthalle St. Gallen's Director in 2001. In 2006, he left his native Switzerland to become Director of Swiss Institute in New York, where he spurred significant growth in both outreach and reputation, eventually leading to the relaunch of the popular non-profit institution in a storefront space in the heart of SoHo. Since 2013, Jetzer has worked as an independent curator and, from 2014 on, as Curator-at-Large at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, where he has curated the group show *Brand New: Art and Commodity in the 1980s* focusing on the impact of commodity culture in the New York art scene of the 1980s.



Tishan Hsu
Holey Cow, 1986
M/M
189 x 257 x 71 cm
74 3/8 x 101 1/8 x 28 in



Jessica Diamond
I Hate Business, 1989
Flashe paint on wall
Dimensions variable upon installation
Edition 1 of 3



Jennifer Bolande
Cascade, 1987
Duratrans photograph
335.3 x 91.4 cm
132 x 36 in



Jessica Diamond
I Chart, 2017/2018/2021
Flashe and acrylic paint on paper
40.5 x 51 cm
16 x 20 in



Jessica Diamond
Elvice Alive, 1988/1989/2021
Flashe and acrylic paint on paper
40.5 x 51 cm
16 x 20 in



Jessica Diamond
T.V. Telepathy (Black And White Version), 1989/2021
Flashe and acrylic paint on paper
40.5 x 51 cm
16 x 20 in



Jessica Diamond
New Economic Shorthand: Totally Unequal, 1990/2021
Flashe and acrylic paint on paper
40.5 x 51 cm
16 x 20 in



Jessica Diamond
I Hate Business, 1989/2021
Flashe and acrylic paint on paper
40.5 x 51 cm
16 x 20 in



Jennifer Bolande
Cusp, 1985-2007
Black and white pigment print
162.6 x 68.6 cm
64 x 27 in
Edition 2 of 2



Jennifer Bolande
Conjunction, 1987-2020
C-Print
101.6 x 76.2 cm
40 x 30 in
Edition 2 of 2



Jennifer Bolande
Speaker I, 1986
Speaker cone, speaker cabinets, wood, paint, photographs,
spotlight directed at speaker
188 x 48.3 x 26 cm
74 x 19 x 10 1/4 in



Tishan Hsu
Pacemaker, 1989-90
Two "vehicles" - Steel, Rubber; Glass, Compound, Ink / Plas-
tic
100 x 48 x 64 cm
39 3/8 x 18 7/8 x 25 1/4 in



Tishan Hsu
Kitchen Highway, 1987
M/M
264 x 152 x 91.5 cm
104 x 59 7/8 x 36 1/8 in



Tishan Hsu
Vertical No. 1, 1986
M/M
94 x 115 x 132 cm
37 1/8 x 45 1/4 x 52 in



Jennifer Bolande

Speaker II, 1986

Speaker cabinet, fabric, wire mesh, wood

118.1 x 57.1 x 25.4

46 1/2 x 22 1/2 x 10 in



Jessica Diamond

Money Having Sex, 1989

Flashe paint on wall

Dimensions variable upon installation

Edition 1 of 3