

About the Artists

Rochelle Feinstein (b. 1947, New York, NY) received a BFA from Pratt Institute in 1975 and an MFA from the University of Minnesota in 1978. Recent solo exhibitions include *On Stellar Rays*, New York, NY (2013 & 2011); *Higher Pictures*, New York, NY (2013); *LAB Space/Art Production Fund*, New York, NY (2009); *Momenta Art*, Brooklyn, NY (2008); *The Suburban*, Chicago, IL (2008). In 2014, Feinstein was included in the *Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Her work is in numerous museum and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Pérez Art Museum Miami. Feinstein was the 2012-13 recipient of a Radcliffe Institute Fellowship; other recent awards and grants include an American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Prize, *Anonymous Was A Woman* grant, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Fellowship, a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant, and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant. In 1994, she was appointed to the faculty at Yale University School of Art, where she is currently professor and Director of Graduate Studies of painting and printmaking.

Deborah Grant (b. 1968, Toronto, Canada) received a BFA at Columbia College, Chicago (1996), an MFA in painting from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia (1999), and completed residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1996); The Studio Museum in Harlem A.I.R. (2002/2003); Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito (2004); A.S.A.P. Residency in Mount Desert Island, Maine (2005). She has had solo exhibitions at The Drawing Center, New York (2014), Roebling Hall, New York (2006), Dunn and Brown Contemporary, Dallas (2007) and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles (2007 & 2012). Grant's work has also been included in the group exhibitions *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South*, the Studio Museum in Harlem (2014); *Agitated Histories*, SITE Santa Fe (2011); *After 1968: Contemporary Artists and the Civil Rights Legacy*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2008); *The Old Weird America*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2008); *Greater New York*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City (2005); and Thelma Golden's notable exhibition *Freestyle* at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2001.

Iva Gueorguieva (b. 1974, Sofia, Bulgaria) received an MFA from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. Gueorguieva has had recent solo exhibitions at such venues as ACME., Los Angeles, CA; Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA; BravinLee Programs, New York, NY; LUX Art Institute, Encinitas, CA; Angles Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Stichting Outline, Amsterdam, Netherlands; and Pomona Museum of Art, Claremont, CA. Her work is included in many public and private collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA. Her work is represented by Ameringer | McEnerly | Yohe in New York and ACME. in Los Angeles. She is the recipient of the Orange County Contemporary Collectors Fellowship Award in 2012, the California Community Foundation Mid-Career Fellowship in 2010, and the Pollock-Krasner Grant in 2006. Gueorguieva lives and works in Los Angeles.

Dona Nelson (b. 1947, Grand Island, NE) moved to New York City in 1967 to participate in the Whitney Independent Study Program. She received her BFA from Ohio State University in 1968. Over the years, she has had numerous, widely reviewed solo shows at galleries such as Rosa Esman, Michael Klein, Cheim & Read (all New York); including a mid-career exhibition at the Weatherspoon Art Gallery (Greensboro, NC). More recently, she was included in survey shows at Harris Lieberman, D'Amelio Terras, Mary Boone, Robert Miller, and Boston University Art Gallery. In 2014, Nelson was included in the *Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Her work has also appeared at institutions such as the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, New York University's 80WSE, Bard College, Apexart, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and the Aldrich Museum, and is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, among others. In 2013, Nelson received the Artists' Legacy Foundation Award. She was a 2011 Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant recipient, and she received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1994. She is a Professor of Painting and Drawing at Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia.



Deborah Grant, *Crowning the Lion and the Lamb*, 2013

Making Sense: Rochelle Feinstein, Deborah Grant, Iva Gueorguieva, Dona Nelson

Curated by Margaret Miller and Megan Voeller
September 26 – December 12, 2014, USF Contemporary Art Museum



Iva Gueorguieva, *Ghost of Water*, 2014. (detail on cover) All photos: Will Lytch/Graphicstudio

Acknowledgements

The ambition and scope of this exhibition was inspired by my conversations with the artists in the exhibition and with my co-curator Megan Voeller. Megan has made studio and gallery visits, and conducted insightful interviews with each of the artists published in the accompanying exhibition catalogue.

Iva Gueorguieva talked about her teacher, friend and mentor, Dona Nelson and introduced me to Deborah Grant who was one of her classmates at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia. I have known Rochelle Feinstein for more than 20 years and hosted a painting exhibition she co-curated with Shirley Kaneda in 1995 titled *Re-Fab: Painting Abstracted, Fabricated and Revised*.

I want to thank the lenders to the exhibition and cooperation of the artists' galleries: Steve Turner at Steve Turner Contemporary in Los Angeles; Randy Sommer and Robert Gunderman at ACME. in Los Angeles; Miles McEnerly at Ameringer | McEnerly | Yohe in New York City; Candice Madey at On Stellar Rays in New York City; and Thomas Erben at Thomas Erben Gallery in New York City.

I continue to be appreciative of the talent and dedication of the USF Contemporary Art Museum faculty and staff in organizing and preparing our programs. Alexa Favata, Don Fuller, Peter Foe, Shannon Annis, Tony Palms, Vincent Kral, Amy Allison, Randall West, and David Waterman facilitate every aspect of exhibitions including funding logistics and installation, educational opportunities and outreach events, and media promotion and catalogue design. The installation staff of Eric Jonas, Ville Mehtonen, Andrea Tamborello, Ian Foe, and Jeremiah Mosley, with interns Kyra Hipp and Sara Miller, is also recognized for their assistance.

Most of all I thank the artists: Rochelle Feinstein, Deborah Grant, Iva Gueorguieva, and Dona Nelson for their patience, intelligence and generosity in supporting and inspiring *Making Sense*.

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Margaret Miller

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Making Sense

Margaret Miller, Director, USF Institute for Research in Art

Making Sense brings together four artists from different generations known primarily as painters: Rochelle Feinstein, Deborah Grant, Iva Gueorguieva and Dona Nelson. They each have distinct styles and voices but share extraordinary care and commitment to their process and have extended the language of painting into new realms, creating a framework for “making sense.”

Artworks are brought together in an exhibition so that they may cohere and accumulate meaning and offer an ineffable experience through comparison and contrast. In *Making Sense*, viewers are invited to examine the diverse creative processes of these four highly productive and dedicated women and to understand how they make sense of current cultural and personal conditions. Overlaps and coherencies emerge. Each pays homage to and reflects on the modernist lexicon of form without being confined by any traditional methodology. Meaning is evoked through the syntax of form, space, color, materials and sources. The circumstance of adjacency in the exhibition provokes the viewer to consider the ways in which the artists make translations and construct meaning using the physicality of their materials and the juncture of their sources, actions and thoughts. The paintings and objects selected for the exhibition are actively in dialogue with one another.

Rochelle Feinstein

Rochelle Feinstein has consistently engaged the challenges of painting and the personal and cultural conditions that inspire making and meaning. It is difficult to pin a style on her—her practice eludes categorization. Feinstein’s work is witty, intellectual, capricious and filled with contradictory tropes. Her subjects and materials are wide ranging, and nothing seems to be off limits.

Included in the exhibition are a series of newspaper drawings titled *How Was Africa?* based on Feinstein’s five-week residency in Accra, Ghana, during April-May 2012 (a smARTpower Residential Fellowship jointly offered by the Bronx Museum, the U.S. State Department and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts). Feinstein chose to go to Ghana because it was the first country to experience post-colonial self-governance after declaring independence from Great Britain in 1957. She liked the idea of being immersed in the



Rochelle Feinstein, *Research Park Project: Ea*, 2014 (detail below)

production of art, the history of a place, and the opportunity to consider the effects of the emergence of global capitalism.

In Ghana, Feinstein met artists whose traditions of creation and roles in society were unfamiliar. She listed conditions that influenced her project in an email to me in July 2014: The “cobbled together infrastructure of the city (roads, toxic waste dumping), dominance of Christianity, extreme poverty, presence of the sustained colonialist distinctions between craft and art, the incredibly rich tradition of language, poetry as performed, audiences participating not as a plan but as part of the tradition of spoken word, the utterly dominant roles that international governments, banks, corporations play in promoting art, the absence of venues for visual arts other than foundations.”

The title of the series, *How Was Africa?*, refers to a question frequently posed by people on her return to the U.S.—one that Feinstein found annoying because it asked her to assess an entire continent when she had a very specific experience in one country. Viewers can decode her drawings and a related painting as diaries of observations and commentary on events, that she layered on excerpts from actual newspapers. For example, on an issue of the *Daily Graphic (Ghana)* dated April 30, 2012, Feinstein addresses the reader (viewer) and gives a description of the history of the state-owned newspaper drawn from Wikipedia. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to take a copy of the altered newspaper.

In a series of unique painted prints she made at USF’s Graphicstudio in July 2014, titled *Research Park Project*, Feinstein selected figures of speech, phrases, or slogans from conversations and various media that have historical and vernacular associations and interlaced them with her expansive grasp of the language of painting. Feinstein, who chairs the painting and printmaking department at Yale University, wryly alludes to the nomenclature of academic institutions in the labeling of creative activity as “research” and points out Graphicstudio’s location in the USF Research Park. This new series has its roots in another project titled *The Enigma Project* (2012-13) that referenced an encoding device of the mid-1940s. In this series, she attempted to decipher the dense layers of visual language and subject matter that were intrinsic to her experience over a yearlong period.

Deborah Grant

The work by Deborah Grant selected for the exhibition is *Crowning the Lion and the Lamb* (2013). This complex large-scale work measures 6 x 16 feet on four Baltic birch panels. The underlying subject of this work is an imagined meeting between Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and a virtually unknown Black American folk artist, Mary A. Bell (1873-1941). For this project, originally commissioned by the Drawing Center in New York, Grant did extensive research on Mary Bell and studied her drawings at Yale’s Beinecke Library. Grant noted that Bell often depicted upper class white and beautiful Creole women and reflected in her work her desire to honor God as a devout Catholic. In a series of works made for The Drawing Center exhibition titled *Christ You Know it Ain’t Easy*, Grant brought together material from a variety of sources to create a non-linear narrative that examines politics, race, gender, sexual identity, religion, contemporary society and the history of art by interweaving elements from her own life with Mary Bell’s.

In 1996, Grant began using a process that she describes as “Random Select.” She uses a stream of consciousness method to transform and meticulously render appropriated images that she mines from multiple sources including icons, trademarks, words, phrases and images from art history. In graduate school, she rejected oil paint to avoid toxic fumes and began using paint pens that allow her to build up layers and

create an allover, dense style of drawing. Her inter-media approach includes drawings made on paper using acrylic, linen, wood and color pencil then cut and pasted onto wood panels.

In the central panel of *Crowning the Lion and the Lamb*, Grant depicts a dream that she imagines Bell had while confined to a mental hospital in Boston, in which Matisse appears at the end of her bed and discusses his cut-out or “scissors” works. The side panels focus on Bell’s life and religion and Grant’s own experience growing up in a Jewish community in Brooklyn; she weaves together Jewish and Christian symbols and embeds them in opposing artistic styles. The viewer may try and make sense of allusions and details only to discover that images often interact and contradict discovered meaning.

Iva Gueorguieva

I was first introduced to Iva Gueorguieva when her work appeared in the 2010 USFCAM exhibition titled *New Weather*. I was so impressed by Gueorguieva’s extraordinary ambition that I invited her to work in residence at Graphicstudio. Over several residencies she has produced print editions, monoprints and unique wall and totem sculptures that incorporate printmaking elements.

Each new body of work produced by Gueorguieva explores new territory and offers breakthroughs in form and color. Her understanding of the language and formal structures of painting bring her turbulent and provocative imagery under tension and control. Her approach



Iva Gueorguieva, *Switching House*, 2014

to abstraction requires a sustained gaze and rigorous interrogation to detect images that may be of repressed or erased memories, or projections of a future apocalypse in which outside forces bring all that we have known into a new arrangement.

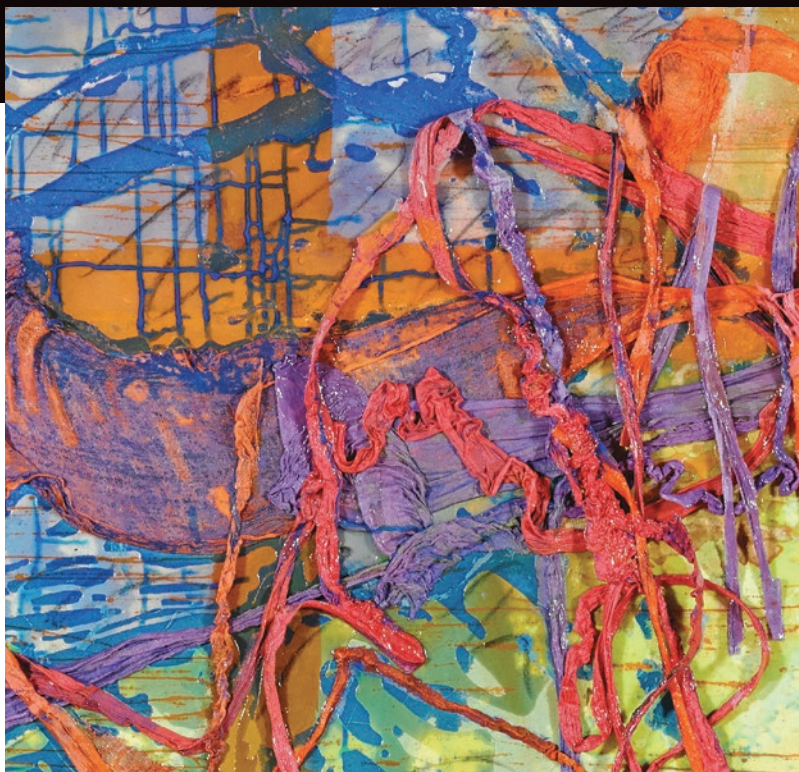
Gueorguieva’s process is one of layering both her choice of mediums and ideas. This process may explain Gueorguieva’s willingness to push the boundaries of painting and printmaking in the work she produces at Graphicstudio. The layering and accumulation of printed paper and fabric attached to a welded steel structure made from found material is the basis for *Switching House*, a wall sculpture measuring 60 x 100 x 17 inches. The protrusions and dark voids are ominous and suggest the fierce relief sculptures of Lee Bontecou, yet they are tempered by a complexity that negotiates the space of the graphic elements in combination with the sculptural forms, evoking transition and movement in space and time.

Ghost of Water is a large diptych with each panel measuring 120 x 70 inches that explores separate and distinct representations of space and time, with one panel in a restricted palette and the other with more color. The diptych format allows for a visual center, a “zip” (to use Barnett Newman’s term) where boundaries or opposing forces in each arena come together and energy dissipates, creating a mash-up of contradictory events. In a conversation during August 2014, Gueorguieva described some of the influences that underpin *Ghost of Water*. She explained that the painting responds to the violence of our mastery over nature and, specifically, to the ongoing controversies over the Los Angeles River and its concrete channels that control the flow of water. While working on this painting in her L.A. studio, Gueorguieva heard bulldozers removing trees so that new ones could be replanted in a prescribed order to make a new park in the L.A. River flood plain.

Dona Nelson

Dona Nelson has been painting seriously, by her own description, since she was twelve years old. Her paintings exude an imposing richness that requires attention and compels the viewer to move in space and time to unravel her process and get to the meaning that accumulates. As the viewer moves around the freestanding canvases and examines the textured surfaces and forms, gestures and marks invite surprising discoveries of confounding traces of images as underpinnings and overlaps. Her experiments are informed by chance with serendipitous relationships and intense stains of color.

While Nelson has been influenced by place, particularly when living in New York City, where she made work in response to architecture and urban noise, today she lives in Philadelphia and says the energy of the work comes from the paintings themselves. The idea of each painting generating itself and the production of two-sided paintings came to



Dona Nelson, *Orangey*, 2011 (detail above left; reverse below)



Exhibition Checklist

ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN

End of Roll, 2013
enamel, acrylic on canvas
72 x 48 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and On Stellar Rays, New York, NY

How was Africa?, 2012
14 drawings, 14 x 17 in. (each)
Courtesy of the Artist
and On Stellar Rays, New York, NY

Q. How was Africa?, 2013
3 works: newsprint, acrylic, oil on canvas;
archival digital print, mounted on Sintra, pastel;
newspapers
82 x 110 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and On Stellar Rays, New York, NY

Research Park Project: Dd, 2014
hand-painting and screenprint on canvas
80 x 71 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

Research Park Project: Ee, 2014
hand-painting and screenprint on canvas
80 x 71 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

Research Park Project: Gg, 2014
hand-painting and screenprint on canvas
80 x 71 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

Untitled #1, 2013
oil and graphite on canvas
45 x 38 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and On Stellar Rays, New York, NY

DEBORAH GRANT

Crowning the Lion and the Lamb, 2013
oil, acrylic, enamel and paper on birch panel
72 x 192 x 2 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA

IVA GUEORGUEVA

Demolition, 2014
acrylic, collage and oil on linen
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe, New York, NY

Exhilarated Gods, 2014
acrylic, collage, wood cut and photogravure
collage on paper
60 x 90 in.
Courtesy of the Artist and ACME., Los Angeles, CA

Ghost of Water, 2014
acrylic, collage and oil stick on canvas
diptych, 120 x 70 in. (each panel)
Courtesy of the Artist
and Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe, New York, NY

Meeting at an Island, 2014
acrylic, collage and oil on linen
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe, New York, NY

Stomper, 2014
acrylic, collage and oil on linen
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe, New York, NY

Switching House, 2014
lithography, direct gravure, softground,
soapground, aquatint and monoprinted fabric and
paper on welded steel frame with steel panels
60 x 100 x 17 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

Tending, 2014
acrylic, soapground etching, collage and oil on linen
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Ameringer | McEnery | Yohe, New York, NY

Tree Hold, 2014
60 x 90 in.
acrylic and collage on paper
Courtesy of the Artist and ACME., Los Angeles, CA

Undone Man, 2014
cyanotype, drypoint, aquatint and aquatint
on fabric and epoxy with hand-painting on
welded steel frame with steel panels
66-1/2 x 29 x 24 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

Vessel and Horse, 2014
softground, drypoint, aquatint and lithography
on fabric with hand-painting on epoxy and
welded steel frame with steel panels
26 x 17 x 12-1/2 in.
Published by Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa, FL

DONA NELSON

Division Street, 2013
acrylic on canvas
57 x 52 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, NY

Orangey, 2011
dyed cheesecloth and acrylic paint and
mediums on canvas
83 x 78 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, NY

Rain, 2013
cheesecloth and acrylic on canvas
76 x 80 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, NY

Shoe Painting, 2011
acrylic and muslin on canvas
59 x 56 in.
Courtesy of the Artist
and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, NY

The 21st of July, 2010
acrylic and painted cloth on canvas
72 x 126 in.
Courtesy of the Artist