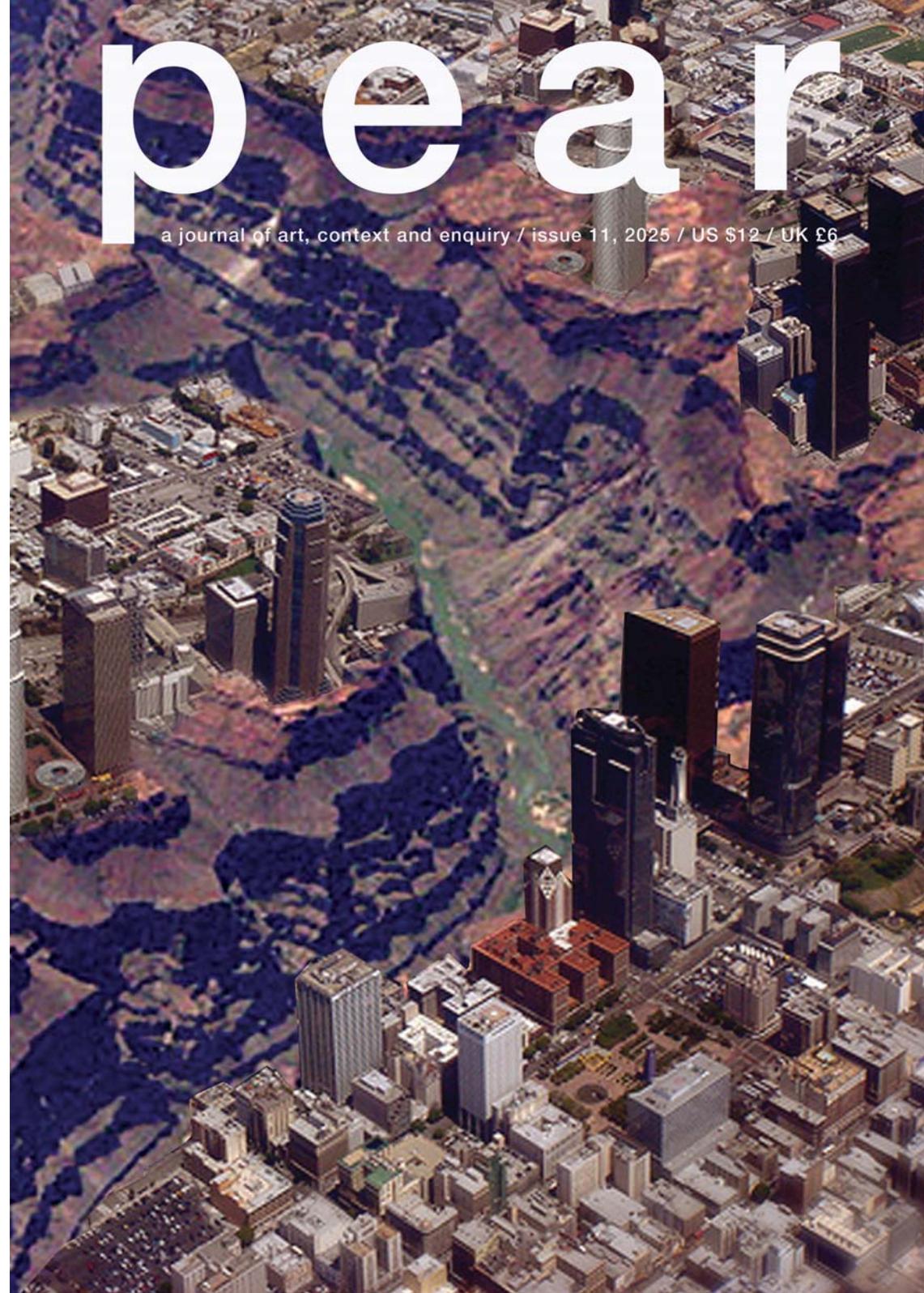


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Publishers
Pear
Editors
Josh Auchincloss
Marie Hourwich
Olga Zelman
Art Direction and Design
Ricardo Powell
Advisory Board
Todd Cross
David Destino
Joel Eppinger III
Dale Gooding
Valerie Kirshenbaum
Kenneth Mader
J.J. Melvin
Jacqueline Schardt
info@pearjournal.com

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cover image:
Dale Gooding, *The Granada Canyon*, 2024.

Editorial

Marie Hourwich

It is with great pleasure that we present the eleventh issue of *Pear Journal*. Having enjoyed the festivities of our tenth anniversary, it is business-as-usual for everyone at the magazine this year. As you may be aware, we moved to a new purpose-built office next door to Pear Museum in March and have been reaping the rewards of this new synergy ever since.

As if things couldn't get any better, there has been no shortage of exciting new art to cast our eyes over in the past year, not least that of the Pear International festival in LA, reviewed here by Alan D'Aresier, and the launch of the Krosch AirPear® QuickStop® Project Space Initiative which receives the attention of Zander Fackelmann in these pages. The theme of cultural tourism is carried on through Susan Sinden's analysis of creative administration guru Jayne Cumberbatch's ambitious plans to cement LA's place on the art map.

Mapping the developing world and following on from her earlier piece on the Pear Africa artists' group, Jacqueline Schardt offers an account of Pear's altruistic activities in South America and West Africa while, under the premise of our annual round table discussion, Olga Zelman is joined by Josh Auchincloss, Gerson Nicolosi and Patricia Ebbeson for a conversation on the implications of post-post racial politics.

Ambient music politico, Marcel Henry, discovers that Americo Burgheim is busy capitalizing on the recent, and devastating, outbreak of Probitas Jugis to make ingenious advancements of a sonic variety.

In the meantime, progressing in the domain of expanded publishing, Josh Auchincloss¹ provides a review of his own autobiography in an unprecedented step for art criticism.

Last but not least, and for want of a better linking sentence, art critic, Rita Birnbaum, examines the monumental work of J.J. Melvin and charts his meteoric rise to artworld prominence.

Having given you a taster of what follows, all that's left to say is that we hope you enjoy our latest offering and that it whets your appetite for the forthcoming cultural calendar.

¹ whose career hasn't suffered at the hands of Probitas Jugis due to his immunity apparently on account of his tender age.



Whether it's a personal loan or re-mortgage, Pear Art Bank can help you find the capital you need to purchase the art you truly desire.

Post-Post-Colonial Self-Improvement and the Arts

Jacqueline Schardt

As we navigate the third decade of the century, we can declare with great satisfaction that, thanks to Pear's endeavors in the area, the Middle East is now stable and its sordid history of tyranny firmly in the past. It is time to invest our energy and resources in West Africa and South America as we position the final pieces of the jigsaw of complete world harmony.

It is no coincidence that the artist group, Pear Africa, engaged in a three-year social services project in Malawi between 2019 and 2022 – the group was, in effect, an advance party for the installation of a radical new economy spanning South America and Africa. Consequently, by the year 2050, these two great continents will boast vibrant economies capable of trading on their own terms with the US and Europe.¹

As is widely accepted, cultural tourism plays a prominent role in the expansion of any ambitious new economy.² With the infrastructure already in place for the showcase of blockbuster exhibitions in Malawi,³ Pear has swiftly replicated the multi-purpose community center model in West



Above: Jayne Cumberbatch, *Peargea (Map of Target Areas)*, 2022.
Opposite: Ndulu Jaja, *Forbidden Fruit (Pear)*, oil on canvas, 2024.

Africa and South America. Between 2022 and 2024, a series of touring exhibitions brought these culturally impoverished areas up to date with developments in US art. The first exhibition, 'From the Vaults', which toured seven venues⁴ between April 2022 and January 2023, was comprised of the work of quintessential Pear Resident Practitioners – Todd Cross, (early) Emily Cullman, David Destino and Dale Gooding – while the second installment, 'Either Sell the Bridge or Buy a River'⁵ included the more challenging research-based practices of Americo

¹ It is vitally important that these economies do not grow to the extent that China's did in the early 21st century resulting in the embarrassing situation of Chinese companies setting up sweatshops in the US. Pear is confident that history will not repeat itself in this respect as the new South American and West African economies will be based on traditional US values such as respect and integrity.

² See S. Sinden, 'City Report: Los Angeles', in this volume, pp. 24-25.

³ See J. Schardt, 'Pear Africa: Social Services and the Avant-garde', *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 08, 2022, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2022, pp. 10-13.

⁴ Pear Museum, LA; Pear Museum of Latin American Art (PMoLAA), Long Beach, CA; Pear Bolivarian Cultural Institute (PBICI), Caracas, Venezuela; Peariloché Arts and Leisure Center (PALC), Patagonia, Argentina; Pear MetroCultura, Santiago, Chile; Pear Center for Health, Education and Culture (PCHC), Lagos, Nigeria; Pear DakART Central (PDC), Dakar, Senegal; and Yamoussoukro Community Center (YCC), Ivory Coast.

⁵ Staged between April 2023 and January 2024.

⁶ Staged between April 2024 and January 2025.

⁷ Pedlar Kane's work, *Ghost Plane Fleet Maquette* is a series of models based on the planes used as part of his epic contribution to Pear International 2025 (See Alan D'Aresier, 'The Death of the Curator-As-Auteur', in this volume, pp. 26-31). During the transportation of *Ghost Plane Fleet Maquette* from Pear Museum LA to Pear DakART Central (PDC), Dakar, Senegal, a series of what the Pear Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has identified as Mini Kimberly-Clark Cocktails (new-fangled improvised explosive devices supposedly developed by leftist terrorist suspect, Jason Hancock, in collaboration with the Artists' Liberation Sect) were discovered in the diaper disposal units of the restrooms of the miniature aircrafts within the cargo of the plane itself. Upon the discovery, the plane was forced to make an emergency landing in New York where it circled in an ad hoc manner above New York while awaiting permission to land. During this period of circling, the plane's presence in the Manhattan skies caused considerable unrest among citizens who feared a repeat of the numerous airborne terrorist attacks which have blighted the city since 2001.

Taking matters into his own hands, ex-ATA marksman, Tarek J'Arc, took the opportunity to demonstrate to the world that he'd regained his nerve after his botched contribution to Kay Partovi's *TT Wire* project. With the plane in his sights, J'Arc mistook the pilot for Jason Hancock, took aim and fired. Miscalculating the plane's speed of 147mph for 145mph, J'Arc's bullet entered the plane at its rear, puncturing the restroom door of one of the *Ghost Plane Fleet Maquettes* and activating a Mini Kimberly-Clark Cocktail which, in turn, set in motion a series of explosions involving the remaining eighteen maquettes. Incidentally, the destruction yielded by this turn of events could be equated with that potentially caused by one full-scale Kimberly-Clark Cocktail.

With the plane spiraling out of control with its rear in flames, the pilot received advice from Pear Force to attempt to bring the plane down in Central Park, the population of which was being sent to shelter in the adjacent Pear Gugg Museum.

Burgheim, Patricia Ebbeson, Ernest Eakins, Jimi Lopez, Danila Mkenya and Don Truman. The final exhibition, 'Pear Art Now',⁶ showcased today's foremost artists such as  Gibson Blocker, David Destino (again), Nancy Hood, Pedlar Kane,⁷ Ross Knowles, J.J. Melvin, Mark Zadikov and Sol Zimmerman.

After this crash course in US art, there was a chance for West African and South American artists to respond to what they had witnessed over the previous two years by contributing to the exhibition 'Osmosis' which is currently touring the same venues.

Here at the Peariloché Arts and Leisure Center (PALC), Patagonia, Argentina,⁸ we join 'Osmosis' at its third destination. The exhibition contains a core group of works which travel each leg of the tour, including Ndulu Jaja's (early-) Cullman-esque *Forbidden Fruit (Pear)*, Kwadz Asari-Dokubo's ode to Destino and the Melvinian *Space II* by Yaima Coñoepán. Some more ambitious artists have chosen to produce site-specific works at particular venues along the way. For example, Yaco Colpinueque has used the terrain of PALC to combine



While attempting to gain enough height to clear the Pear Gugg roof and land safely in Central Park, the pilot succeeded in sending the plane vertically skyward directly above the museum. With flames still projecting from its rear, the plane took on the appearance of a rocket but began to lose speed at the rate at which a rocket bound for space might expect to gain it. Having run out of steam, the plane appeared to stop in mid-air – for the length of time that a cartoon character might reasonably expect to pause for thought, having just walked off the edge of a cliff – and proceeded to deposit its cargo (including the remains of Kane's *Ghost Plane Fleet Maquette*) through the roof of the Pear Gugg and between the building's iconic spiral rotunda. At this point, a mass exodus of ex-Central-Park-goers was quashed by a wall of riot-gear-clad PearSecure personnel at the front entrance who explained to terrified families that they and their colleagues were under strict orders not to allow anyone within fifty yards of Central Park on account of an as-yet-undefined danger. Regrettably a young girl and her pet dog were shot dead by a guard when attempting to breach security.

Alas, the plane followed its cargo in through the Pear Gugg roof, putting a dampener on a successful day for the museum, a day during which it received its highest number of new visitors in recent history. Alas, these very visitors were deemed unable, on account of their mass expiration, to take up their callings as much-valued regular customers. This turn of events was compounded by massive structural damage, the likes of which hadn't been seen since the filming of *The International* in 2008, and capped off a spectacularly unprofitable day for the museum.

Readers may be interested to learn that a replica of Pedlar Kane's *Ghost Plane Fleet Maquette* was subsequently sent to Senegal via a cargo ship. A series of Pampers Bread Bins (new-fangled improvised explosive devices supposedly developed by Hancock in collaboration with the Artists' Liberation Sect) were discovered in the diaper disposal units of the restrooms of the miniature aircrafts within the cargo of the boat itself but this is another story.

⁸ PALC's strategic location, minutes away from the town of Peariloché and its international airport, make the venue the most attractive starting point from which visitors can get to know the region, play on the best golf course in Patagonia and enjoy its 1.235 acres of natural reserve situated on the site's wooded slope.

⁹ Argentina plays host to more golf courses than any other South American country. Immigrants from Europe brought the sport to the country in the late 19th century and, ever since, exclusive clubs and luxury resorts have incorporated some of the most interesting and challenging golf courses in the world.

¹⁰ In golf, a caddie is the person who carries a player's bag while offering advice and moral support. A good caddie is aware of the challenges and obstacles of the golf course being played, along with the best strategy for playing it. This includes knowing overall yardage, pin placements and club selection. A caddie is not usually an employee of a private club or resort. S/he is classified an 'independent contractor,' meaning that s/he is essentially self-employed and does not receive any benefits from his/her association with the club.

¹¹ These include helping the golfer to cheat by traversing the course before the round commences and scattering replica balls in all the places that the golfer has specified that s/he is likely to go astray during the course of the day. Caddies should also be familiar with the use of a hole in the trouser pocket to drop a replica ball through on the occasion that the golfer goes 'off-piste' in unexpected territory. A variation on this technique is the placement of a replica ball in a hand towel before pretending to dry one's hands while actually releasing the ball from the towel and onto the ground then exclaiming, 'Here it is, boss!'

aesthetics and politics in a challenging neo-land-art-meets-social-sculpture excursion. Colpinueque spent years working at PALC (formerly Arelauquen Golf and Country Club)⁹ as a caddie¹⁰ for the numerous businessmen, governmental officials and NGO representatives who frequented the course.

As is widely accepted, cultural tourism plays a prominent role in the expansion of any ambitious new economy.

Upon visiting the 'Pear Art Now' exhibition at PALC, Colpinueque was introduced to the progressive potential of contemporary art. Captivated by documentation of Dale Gooding's Gould Bay experiments of 2016, Colpinueque set about cultivating his own brand of performative intervention. Using all his experience as a caddie, he enlisted local youths to play the roles of caddies and infiltrate the elite circuit of PALC patrons. Once trained in the basics of caddying¹¹ these youths were assigned the task of befriending particular individuals and leading them into conversations about the (mal)practice of their specific organization, effectively entrapping them (with the assistance of FlyCam[®] equipment) over offences such as workers' rights infringements and tax evasion and common (yet legal) practices of an ideologically conflicting nature to those advocated by Colpinueque.



Above: FlyCam® footage of patrons of PALC at 'the 19th hole'.
Opposite: David Destino finds the going heavy on his way to a disappointing 79 in the opening round of the PALC Prom-Am.

Colpihueque's work manifests itself in the gallery context in the form of three hologrammatic reconstructions of conversations between the youths and the golfers, with youths playing themselves and Pear Resident Practitioners sportingly playing the golfers. In one remarkable scene, a group of three youths joins their golfing counterparts at the bar for a dose of their chosen opiate at the 19th hole.¹² The golfers – representatives of a corporation which shall remain nameless – talk about their plan to move factories elsewhere in light of spiraling costs in Patagonia. Colpihueque ensured that this information was immediately relayed back to local workers who then preemptively occupied their factories in a bid to 'capitalize' on this insight into a forthcoming industrial dispute.¹³

One conversation records a government official referring to the peso as 'Monopoly money.'

Over the course of the project, the youths became politicized as a result of direct experience of corporate arrogance and lack of respect for the local culture. One conversation records a government official referring to the peso as 'Monopoly money.'¹⁴ Sensing their infuriation at this sort of talk, Colpihueque taught the youths some art activist techniques he had acquired from studying the work of Danila Mkenya. Immediately,

the youths formed a group called the July 15th Movement and set about organizing a series of meetings followed by sabotage missions on the golf course. The most precocious of these occurred the night before the annual PALC Pro-Am event (on July 16th) which invites regular patrons of the golf club to rub shoulders with some of North America's finest professional golfers.



The group – which, conveniently, numbered eighteen – entered the course and, in a symbolic gesture, emptied the contents of a PearSprings® water cooler onto each tee-off area and re-planted each tee marker to face the former Mapuche community of Embalse Lago Peñuelas which is continually exploited for its mineral water resources and which Tom N. Aldrup, franchise owner of PALC, has recently acquired with a view to building a new golf course. Notably, this action caused no real difficulty for the golf club's high-level officials or its patrons (apart from their having to navigate soggy underfoot conditions in certain areas) as the green-keepers were sent out to realign the markers and replace the water coolers early in the morning, long before any of the VIPs arrived. Despite the intentions of the intervention, the artists could be accused of naivety given that their action inconvenienced the underpaid green-keepers to a greater extent than the officials and celebrities whom the artists were targeting. The youths' would-be subversive action amounted to business as usual for those targeted while the green-keepers were deprived of sleep (at no extra remuneration) the morning after a mammoth shift preparing the course for the most high profile event of the year.¹⁵

¹² In golfing circles, the clubhouse bar is known as the 19th hole.

¹³ Colpihueque himself was unable to contribute any further to the factory occupation as he was immediately flown off for a residency at Pear Vengeance, LA, on the back of the project.

¹⁴ 'Monopoly money' refers to the pretend money use in the popular board game published by Parker Brothers as opposed to suggesting that the Argentinean/Chilean peso holds a PearDollar®-like currency 'monopoly' on the world economic stage.

Another site-specific work was that of Roberto Fontecilla at Pear MetroCultura, Santiago. Since 2022, Pear has coordinated spaces for art in numerous Santiago de Chile subway stations. Local artists submit proposals on a rolling basis, while many exhibitions are curated with a view to offering the people of Santiago an insight into the international art scene. Fontecilla's *Periódico Patria* (Homeland Newspaper) used the transitory nature of an underground station to engage with the displaced Mapuche community of Embalse Lago Peñuelas which has found itself dispersed throughout Santiago following Aldrup's acquisition of its land. As part of *Periódico Patria*, Fontecilla produced a newspaper-style publication outlining the controversy surrounding the Aldrup affair. The free publications were distributed, for one day, by newspaper vendors outside the underground station, many of whom were actually from Embalse Lago Peñuelas and welcomed the chance to contribute to the project. Like the July 15th Movement's art activist intervention into the PALC Pro-Am event, *Periódico Patria* could be considered more of a poetic gesture than a political act. Ultimately, the limited circulation of the publication – distributed from one underground station compared with the major newspapers' ability to dispense from every station – ensured that only around a tenth of the people using the underground on that day actually received a copy of *Periódico Patria*.

Roberto Fontecilla used the transitory nature of an underground station to engage with the displaced Mapuche community of Embalse Lago Peñuelas.

While each of these projects undoubtedly deserves more attention than I have been able to give them, I had no intention of producing an exhibition review when Olga Zelman asked me to write this piece. So, returning finally to the matter of the development of culture in South America and West Africa beyond this specific series of exhibitions (pivotal as they are), it is important to note that, while Pear's attention was drawn to the Middle East in its 'final push' to deem the region politically stable, areas of South America had begun to show signs of both ultra-leftist and populist tendencies and were quietly descending into something tantamount to anarchy. With the region on the brink of committing to a disastrous socio-economic (anti-)model, it is clear that Pear's intervention in the area has come at a crucial time and that South America and West Africa have a great deal to offer in the way of progress in the next twenty-five years.

¹⁵ A matter of days after this action, several influential artists mysteriously disappeared. It is believed that the former owners of Arelaucuen Golf and Country Club arranged for them to be sniped by Assassinate to Accumulate (ATA) in an attempt to frame PALC for murder and leave the door open for a return to the golf and country club they dearly loved for so many years. Following Tareck J'Arc's dismissal after the *TT Wire* fiasco, ATA relied on inexperienced marksman, Jonathan Smith, who enthusiastically picked off at least twelve of his targets but also eradicated several innocent passers-by before being knocked off himself by a spiteful J'Arc who is now working on a freelance basis with a view to eradicating ATA's finest, one by one, à la mob enforcer, Carter, of Ted Lewis's novel, *Jack's Return Home*.

Meanwhile, on the site of Aldrup's proposed new Embalse Lago Peñuelas development, a curious crop-circle-like arrangement has appeared in the grass. Seen from above, a pattern of rapidly growing grass appears to read, 'NOT IN OUR NAME.' Perplexed by this, Aldrup and his associates eventually concluded that the remaining art vandals have been regularly urinating on these patches of grass in a bid to spell out their message. Sources close to the July 15th Movement say that, in fact, the group has buried the martyrs of the July 15th operation in a particular order in the knowledge that corpses excrete a chemical which, like urine, induces rapid growth of grass. Either way, Aldrup has since employed groups of youths to urinate comprehensively over the area so as to deem the message illegible.

This action, however, has, over time, cultivated an area of thick undergrowth which is an excellent habitat for the Patagonian woodpecker. As is commonly accepted, the woodpecker is the bane of the golfer's life and can drive the golfer to distraction while simply preparing for its next archery event – especially if this event happens to be the biggest of them all, the Plumalympics. During last year's PALC Pro-Am, Pear Force pilot, Dick Folan, infamously exclaimed in the direction of a patch of deep undergrowth, 'Stop pecking or I'm gonna have to break something.'

After an internal inquiry concluded that the woodpecker risk at the newly acquired site stood at 6.8, Aldrup took the decisive action of having the area excavated and reseeded. It is believed that contractors, Pear Xcav8®, slyly dumped the earth (and, unwittingly, the martyrs' bodies) in the garden of an unsuspecting Weaverville, CA, customer who is now facing multiple charges of first degree murder – combined with the lesser charge of intent to purchase a class-A inflatable doll – after the fugitive dog of the architecture critic Kermit Brine was found gnawing on human bones and sculptural remains in the Weaverville man's back yard. During the initial court hearing, the man denied purchase of the doll, claiming that it was in fact an artwork, but admitted that he couldn't say with complete certainty that he had not, at some point during his life, abducted a group of young South American intellectuals, murdered them in cold blood and buried them in his garden. The case continues.

The Future of Cultural Production in a Post-Post-Racial Society

A Conversation between Olga Zelman, Josh Auchincloss, Patricia Ebbeson and Gerson Nicolosi

Discussed: Post-Ethnicity/-Religion/-Nationhood/-Natal Depression.

Olga Zelman: Before we begin, I'd like to say a few words about the way in which we conduct ourselves during occasions such as these. An element of recorded discussions that I find intolerable is the standard introductory remark which mentions the participants' personal affairs. An example might be that Valerie Kirshenbaum has recently given birth and the Chair begins by congratulating her – in first name terms of course. This kind of gesture and its informal delivery is unnecessary, unprofessional and should be avoided at all cost. Nevertheless, I'm sure you'll join me in wishing Josh a very happy birthday.

Gerson Nicolosi: Happy birthday, big man.

Patricia Ebbeson: Happy birthday. Looks like you're no longer the baby of the artworld... I look forward to reading your revised autobiography – when's it out?

Josh Auchincloss: Thanks – *Still Getting Away With It* is out on April 12th and is available in all good PearBooks® Stores and online at pearjournal.com/shop/pear_books/pear_books.

OZ: Well, Josh, you might have been well-suited to our Self-Publicity in Contemporary Art Practice discussion a couple of years ago but you were at art school back then and today we're not here to talk about ourselves.

JA: I am *still* at art school, Olga.

OZ: Yes, we're all still at art school in some sense aren't we – always learning, oh yes, always learning.

JA: No, I'm *actually* still at art school.

[Pear Museum janitor, Jason Hancock puts his head round the door]

Jason Hancock: Just about to lock up here, guys, if you don't mind – our strike starts tomorrow and we're away to prepare the placards. [Hancock gesticulates towards an imaginary banner] 'The workers united will never be defeated.'

OZ: Strike?! Come on now, you hardly do any work at the best of times – you don't even bother getting the gallery doors open on time in the morning. Very well, have your strike but at least work your proper hours today – we've got serious work to do here.

JH: Sounded like you were talking about trivial stuff like birthdays, babies and that, no? No disrespect, but most of the *serious* work you do is a waste of taxpayers' money anyway.

[Zelman takes a deep breath]

OZ: To answer your first question, no, I was saying how I despise that kind of chat in a professional context and, in response to your second point, all I can say is that we think you're a philistine.

GN: Speak for yourself, Ollie, I think the guy's got a point. He gets \$20 an hour to clear up after us while we get \$200 an hour to talk about birthdays and babies.

OZ: Speak for *yourself*, Gerry, I'm on \$360K per annum and work like a Pear AquaLand,[®] Namibia, shark bait vendor.¹ Anyway, it seems like you and young Jacob have struck up quite a friendship and, since your buddy seems to have plenty to say about politics, perhaps we should invite him to join in the discussion.

GN: Yeah, big time, big time.

JA: I'm not a political person – would you mind if I gave this a rain check? I've got a lot of preparation to do for my performance.

PE: Where's your performance, Josh?

JA: It's in Theatre 2 at 7pm on Friday January 16th – I'll be signing copies of a draft of my autobiography afterwards – hopefully catch ya there. Ciao.

OZ: I fear we're drifting into that orange-worthy personal domain I'm so allergic to.

GN: [whisper] Never end a sentence with a preposition, Ollie, you should know that.

OZ: [whisper] That's up to the transcriber to decide – anyway, it's common practice when speaking informally.

GN: [whisper] I thought you were allergic to informality.

OZ: Yes, well, let's get back to business. Josh, you are excused – Jacob, please take the birthday boy's place at the table. So, you're obviously not happy with pay and conditions at Pear Museum – what kind of measures would you suggest?

JH: It's Jason... Well, some kind of participatory model whereby everyone gets involved in every aspect of the workings of the museum.

PE: That reminds me of Rena da Serraf's performance when she cleaned the museum throughout the course of the exhibition as a means of highlighting such division of labor.

JH: With all due respect, ma'am, we're talking about reality here, not tokenistic, pseudo-altruistic postpostmodernism. We carry out menial tasks day after day – Da Serraf supposedly did it for one month and, actually, after a few days she gave us a few extra dimes to do it for her – it was all a pretense.

PE: But I know Rena personally – she's one of the most honest people in the world.

JH: Well, I've still got the Dime Bars to prove it – they were out of date if you must know... The guy Burgheim must've offloaded them after he raided the museum shop and ended up with candy coming out of his confused mind. What I'm trying to say is that Da Serraf wouldn't give us cash-money if her *Horizontal Structure* (2024) depended on it. Incidentally, don't you think *Horizontal Structure* would have been a more appropriate title for the work when she slept with Kenneth Mader in the name of art? Anyway, perhaps she is one of the most honest people in the world *now* after coming down with Probitas Jugis, but, in those days, she was Dime Bar personified – all sweetness on the surface but pretty crunchy in the middle.

PE: I had no idea Rena'd caught PJ.

JH: With all due respect, that's because artworldlings only keep in touch superficially in case there comes a time when your *friend* can help further your career – there is no real warmth there, it's pretty sad. Burgheim ended up finding solace in the gallery itself – the poor guy ended up certified.

PE: Rena and Rico are both good, good personal friends of mine. Anyway, his show was *called* 'Certified' – he wasn't actually certified.

JH: You're confusing fiction with reality again, ma'am – last time you were mistaking Da Serraf's cleaning hoax for real labor and this time you're mistaking Burgheim's sectioning under the Mental Health Act for an artwork. I'm aware that philosophers have said in the past that artists are workers and are exploited like the rest of us. That's all very well but, in which case, there needs to be solidarity between artists and janitors and I'm afraid I don't see any evidence of this. Only three weeks ago, when we were striking over the usual issues, Pedlar Kane crossed the picket line to collect work that was, no doubt, about to be shipped off across the world on another cultural colonial mission – Senegal I think he said at the time. I did talk to him, and he seems like a decent guy deep down but an apolitical rat nonetheless.

Whether you guys are unaware of what's going on or whether you're going along with the pulling of wool over people's eyes, I don't know. If this strike fails like the last one, I think I might apply for the curator's job when Kirshenbaum comes down with her obligatory post-natal depression and see what I can achieve from there.

OZ: We've hit personal territory again – back off guys. Let's return to the question in hand... I seem to remember you saying that you'd like to see some kind of Holistipatory economic system put in place. Well, you won't find me cleaning a restroom; I'll tell you that for nothing.

JH: *Participatory*, ma'am. The Holistipatory category is yet another postpostmodernist construct which offers people nothing more than tokenistic involvement in supposedly deciding their own fate. And, I'll have you know, you'll find me cleaning a toilet every day of the week. Why shouldn't I get involved in curating and why shouldn't you do a bit of manual labor every so often?

OZ: Pah, you're having a laugh right. You, curating? You don't know the first thing about curating.

JH: You probably don't know the first thing about menial labor but you could learn, just as I could learn to curate. One of the reasons you're a curator and I'm a janitor is because of a strategically-planned schooling and higher education system in which 20% of the population is molded into a coordinator class to whom the 80% – who are prepared for an anti-career of menial, brain-numbing tasks – are entrusted.

GN: Well, Jason, I think you're simplifying things a bit with the whole 20-80 thing but I see what you're saying and I think something has to be done.

OZ: Gentlemen, if you think that something has to be done then I wish you all the best in doing it but now we really must address the topic of today's discussion. While our discussion in *Pear 10* looked back at ten years of *Pear Journal*, here we must focus on the future; not just the future of the magazine but that of culture as a whole. In the past two years, LA has seen racial, religious and ideological tensions come to a head in a way that hasn't been seen for some time. Gerson, would you like to start by providing a historical context with regard to the history of racial tension in LA? Actually, we've run out of time so it remains for me to thank Gerson, Patricia, Josh and our inadvertent participant, Justin.

JH: Jason.

OZ: Yeah, probably.

¹ Incidentally, Arthur Gauger and members of PearStunts® act as stunt doubles for many PearAqua® bait vendors and, curiously, Gauger cannot swim.

Josh Auchincloss

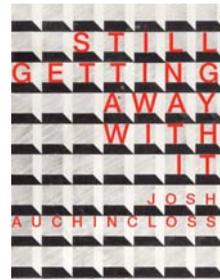
Still Getting Away With It

Reviewed by Josh Auchincloss

The epic autobiographical project, *Still Getting Away With It*, the definitive version of which was published by Op Pear Cit in April, chronicles the work of Josh Auchincloss¹ as a writer, editor, performer, and book designer. Throughout the lengthy chapters, Auchincloss focuses primarily on his enviably lofty status in the contemporary artworld while deliberately sidestepping his personal life altogether.² Auchincloss's unconventionally active part in the project (he employed one of his clones as ghost writer in an attempt to get to the core of his own psyche) collapses the usual designation of roles in the autobiographical process, creating not only a prolific production model but also a self-reflexive discussion that starts with print and form. The foreword, penned by Auchincloss, muses on his contribution to language-based visual art that is invested in 'the expanded field of the word, in the expansion of language – its malleability in the hands of a master but the inevitable existence of a breaking point, whether it be the falling apart of the language or the master himself.'³

Auchincloss focuses primarily on his enviably lofty status in the contemporary artworld while deliberately sidestepping his personal life altogether.

An open understanding of the autobiography, as a device that should be used as more than a vehicle for the transmission of information, goes some way to outlining Auchincloss's approach to book



design. Reading the foreword, one is reminded of Ricardo Powell's complaint about a certain US sans serif: 'All information that comes out in Gibson Sans is saying the same thing: it's telling you that this is multicultural, this is diverse, this is post-racial.'⁴ Printed words are never obediently transparent; even when designed to be neutral, typefaces have agendas too.

Curiously, Auchincloss employs a range of typefaces, even within the confines of one sentence, as a means of escaping the standardized and professionalized practice of the creative industries. At the same time, and with a view to neutralizing any anticipated Powell critiques (with regard to personal agendas as opposed to those of the typefaces), Auchincloss delegated the editing phase of *Still Getting Away With It* to five participants of the Pear Resident Practitioner Program (PRPP) for a four-week period.

Temporarily re-titling the book *The Whimsically*,⁵ the young practitioners covertly added a body of their own research, made in preparation for the imminent 'Pear Art Now'.⁶ Confusingly, *The Whimsically* phase is bracketed chronologically by a 'rough and ready' version of the autobiography (2024) and the definitive version (2025), which includes a record of the 'Whimsically' part of 'Pear Art Now' and proof of the attendant contingencies of exhibition-making. This three-part publication-exhibition model lingered, as Auchincloss's work often does, on both the circulation of stories and the unpredictable processes of bringing collaboration to visibility.

¹ One shall resist the temptation to write in the first person as it has recently come to one's attention that, although endorsed by the artworld, use of the first person is frowned upon in the academic arena and can lead to one's work not being taken seriously.

² Due to an unflinching commitment to one's work, one has no personal life of which to speak. Any apparent social activities are strategically geared toward the furthering of one's career through networking. One regards friends (other than those who may be capable of providing one with exhibitions or publishing deals in the future) as a gratuitous burden one could well do without.

³ J. Auchincloss, *Still Getting Away With It*, (Los Angeles: Op Pear Cit Press), 2025, p. 7.

⁴ R. Powell, 'Typeset for Great Cities', in *Subsequent Stage: The LA Issue*, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2023, p. 45.

⁵ *The Whimsically* refers to Cesc Hanskilder's short-lived weekly publication in which both *Shop* (2018) and *Over Mars* (2020) were serialized; the point in the novelist's career at which, as Powell noted, he was 'the editor of his own works.' (R. Powell, 'Introduction', in R. Powell (ed.), *Religious Art at a Crossroads*, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2023, p. 5.)

⁶ 'Pear Art Now' is a traveling exhibition currently showing alongside 'Osmosis' throughout South America and West Africa. See J. Schardt, 'Post-Colonial Self-Improvement and the Arts' in this volume, pp. 4-7.

Auchincloss's autobiography similarly relocates the institutional exhibition space to the pages of independent publications; he also reversed this by applying the processes of selection and editing to public events. As mentioned above, an unfinished version of the book was self-published in early 2024 by Auchincloss with Op Pear Cit co-director Sol Zimmerman (working together under the name, Shanty Phoncom), and took the unconventional form of a week-long festival held at the Pear Vengeance exhibition space in LA. A year later, at Pear MetroCultura, Santiago, the pair also expanded Hanskilder's novella *On a Whim* (2021) to incorporate a play, library and film program. In April this year, as part of 'Sixty to Eighty', PICA

London's six-month-long 80th birthday exhibition and event series, Auchincloss organized *Back from the Dead* (2025–ongoing) to celebrate what would also have been Hareth Szeeglub's 80th birthday⁷ with an evening of talks and screenings concerned with languages other than speech and text. Framed within an exhibition that looked to the future and the past, the event marked a reflective shift in the production of the autobiography from analytical self-reflection to performative enquiry.

In *Kermit Brine: My Part in His Downfall* (2025), performed at Pear Museum in January this year,⁸ Auchincloss reprised Kermit Brine's

⁷ Curator and alleged serial artist killer, Hareth Szeeglub, was in the process of finalizing arrangements for TT5² when he died as an indirect result of Probitas Jugis. Rendered one hundred percent honest by the disease, Szeeglub simply could not live with himself after what he had done to certain creative practitioners. On April 4th, Szeeglub made an emotional confession in the private section of pearjournal.com in which he confirmed that Gibson Blocker's death came about as part of an elaborate attempt to profit from sales of the deceased artist's hallowed hologramatic projection, *Freedom in a Box*. A matter of hours after members of the Monday Club became aware of the news, Szeeglub was found, by an unsuspecting cleaner, lying prone in the basement of Mark Zadikov's *Showroom* next to David Destino's long-missing *Cyber-Virgin III* on J.J. Melvin's *Bed of Nails* with Elizabeth Unger's *Bag For Life* over his head and Jimi Lopez's *Love Potion No. 9 (After The Clovers)* in his stomach.

Following this shocking turn of events, no replacement curator was appointed (before his death, Szeeglub had written a suicide note stating that a new curator should not be appointed in his absence) and participating artists were left to fight it out for supremacy. Initially, the artists strived to show solidarity with those who had been manipulated and, in some cases, executed by Szeeglub, with the idea being to turn the media tables on the art establishment (whose duty it was to protect the deceased curator's dignity) and expose him as Blocker's killer. The artists moved swiftly to secure the rights to *Freedom in a Box* through the Art for the People Scheme and a Pear Art Bank interest-free loan with the (somewhat ironic) intention of using the proceeds to publicize the dangers of the curator-as-auteur. From such seemingly noble beginnings, tensions arose within the group, with several splinter organizations forming and things quickly taking a turn for *Lord of the Flies* via the Situationist International and *Animal Farm*. Any money secured by factions through the sale of *Freedom in a Box* started to be used for wining and dining supposedly radical guests (admittedly, as Blocker would have wished) as opposed to being used for the common good or being invested in defense apparatus against the imminent retort by the art establishment. As a result of the artists' implosion, Pear Museum was able to gloss over Szeeglub's misdemeanor by launching a massive PR campaign which ensured he was written not only into art history but also into world history.

J.J. Melvin's colossal hologrammatic statue to Szeeglub was erected in Times Square, New York, thus symbolizing the coming of age of the artworld and recognizing art's influence on the economy. At the same time, and with Szeeglub's suicide note having been subject to a cover-up, the artists profiting were accused of having killed the curator in a revenge mission and were demonized as terrorists standing in opposition to the freedom of art to generate capital. The museum PR campaign also linked these artists to the radical janitor, Jason Hancock, and the Artists' Liberation Sect.

PearPolice[®] was commissioned by Pear Museum to launch a man hunt for Szeeglub's supposed killers with a view to a public burning in Times Square in the shadow of Szeeglub's statue. Regrettably for Pear Museum, the statue has suffered numerous acts of vandalism. The angry artists are dismayed that the curator has been honored with a statue when it is they who have sacrificed their autonomy time and time again for the good of the over-arching exhibition narrative. Having been blown up several times, allegedly by the Artists' Liberation Sect, the statue was eventually transferred to Los Angeles and placed under supervision in Pear Museum.

The statue's creator, J.J. Melvin, has been branded a scab by these artists and has received numerous death threats. Having turned down the opportunity of sanctuary at CARCASS, branding it 'the belly of the beast,' he currently has to be accompanied by six PearSecure[®] bodyguards when venturing beyond the confines of his Beverly Hills villa.

⁸ It is believed that one came down with a bout of stage fright only moments before one's performance and used one's POEPS[®] to transmit a fake bomb threat to Pear HQ so as to bring about the evacuation of the building and the postponement of the performance. Coincidentally, shortly after the evacuation was complete, the Szeeglub sculpture in the Pear Museum lobby was destroyed as part of a terrorist attack rumored to be the responsibility of the striking museum janitors and the Artists' Liberation Sect. The bomb, dubbed the Kimberly-Clark Cocktail was a lethal combination of babies' feces (riddled with Probitas Jugis after dissenting janitor, Jason Hancock, had spiked the Pear Museum café's Babyccino[®] dispenser using a slow-release mechanism over a sustained period in a long-term revolutionary bid to render the bourgeoisie completely honest and therefore unable to keep up the deceit of the capitalist project) and shards of glass. Hancock developed the idea after salvaging some material from the 'take-down' of the recent TT5² exhibit in the Pear Museum foyer during which a full-to-the-brim receptacle of putrefied baby's diapers was found lodged behind a temporary wall which had been ill-advisedly erected in front of the unisex restroom. Incidentally, the smell interfered with other artists' works throughout the museum and those in question took the decision to ask the organizers to dismiss J.J. Melvin (creator of the offending work). Ironically, Shirlee Brumley's exhibit *Gone But Not Forgotten*, which had recently been acquired by the museum and takes decomposing flora and fauna as its subject matter, was given glowing reviews in the media on account of the pungent smell (produced by Melvin's exhibit as opposed to her own). With Brumley receiving widespread acclaim for her exhibit, Melvin decided to sue on account of olfactory property infringement.

Meanwhile, during 'take-down', janitor Hancock bottled the sought-after substance and, while using a small quantity to produce ad-hoc explosive devices, stashed the remainder with a view to using it as bargaining power during forthcoming negotiations with Pear Museum officials over pay and conditions. In his famous speech on the picket line of the PMoCA having fled the scene of the Szeeglub statue bombing, Hancock (brandishing five ounces of baby feces in a PearMart[®] eco-shopping-bag) uttered the immortal words: 'While we clean this kind of crap up day after day, I recently heard Olga Zelman say that you'd never find her cleaning a toilet. Well, well, well, comrades; look who wants their hands in on the shit now' before being blow-torched down à la John Carpenter's *The Thing* by PearPolice[®] in front of an array of fellow strikers and museum visitors and scabs who had been evacuated as a precaution following the bombing at Pear Museum earlier in the day.

After the dust settled on this gory episode, Pear launched a competition in search of the best amateur footage of Hancock's demise. The winner, 13 year-old Thom Jennosa, who captured the extraordinary turn of events on his Pearpod[®] while kicking the flaming terrorist in the testicles, had his video broadcast on pearjournal.com and was offered a place in the 2026 Pear Documentary Film Festival which he accepted on the condition that he had his outdated Pearpod[®] upgraded. At the time of going to print, Pear officials and the artist are still in negotiations but it seems clear that Jennosa will play some part in the festival and that the artworld will be seeing a lot more of this young man in the future.

eponymous lecture to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the piece. The original lecture comprised thirty stories which chronicled Brine's self-destructive behavior. Rather than an ironic replication of a lecture, focusing on the vicissitudes of performance and personal memories, Auchincloss's performance kept close to the sentiment expressed in Brine's essay 'How Pear Came to be Absurd': 'Instead of the possibility of emancipation, we are faced in life with the unique incongruity of each occasion.' Any script necessarily has future performances in mind, making provisions with stage directions and lighting cues, but the transcript's smallest claim is to be an accurate record. With this in mind, many of Auchincloss's performances dwell on the forward-facing moment at which printed documentation, rather than a script, is brought to life again.

As confirmed by *Still Getting Away With It*, whether by coincidence or dint of publishing trends, few of Auchincloss's literary sources originally emerged fully formed: Hanskilder's *On a Whim*, for example, first appeared as two short stories in *The Whimsically*, while Brine expanded *Kermit Brine: My Part in His Downfall* from thirty to one hundred stories, adding *Pearcussion*[®] before the recording was released in 2025. As part of the holistic autobiography that is *Still Getting Away With It*, in 2024 Auchincloss performed sections of Gibson Blocker's mammoth *The Making (and Breaking) of Pear* (published in 2022, although first serialized by Ricardo Powell and Zander Fackelmann in the *Pear Literary Gazette* in 2016), while *Views from Over There* (2023) is Auchincloss's serialized rewriting of Mark Zadikov's socialist dystopia *Views from Nowhere* (published in 2015, but first serialized

Each of Auchincloss's autobiographical projects is set in opposition to the more recent sense of graphic design as a streamlined industry of branding agencies and viral strategy analysts.

in the journal *Pear Today*), in which the original is translated into a speculative history of the forthcoming century. (It should be noted that Zadikov saw his own effort as a corrective to the lineage of Zamiatin, Huxley, Orwell, Vonnegut and Forbis); Auchincloss's transposition is a second readjustment, sketching out a new anti-guide for design and education practices.

Zadikov's LA-based Vengeance Press was, of course, largely responsible for kick-starting the independent press movement, and, as Sol Zimmerman points out in *The Things of Language* (2024), when design first emerged as a distinct activity, designers often cast themselves as socially engaged idealists. Each of Auchincloss's autobiographical projects is set in opposition to the more recent sense of graphic design as a streamlined industry of branding agencies and viral strategy analysts. In his performances and related portfolio of publications Auchincloss triumphantly opens out the 'act' of publishing so that it becomes a self-critically social endeavor.

The Launch of Krosch AirPear[®] QuickStop[®] Project Space Initiative

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Departure Lounge 18 May 16th 2025

Zander Fackelmann

Leafing through *Pear Journal*, contemplating the latest whims of the artworld while savoring a glass of Pear Chateau Cheval Blanc 1975[®] (PCCB75[®]) in the Air Pear[®] Club is not the exclusive experience it used to be. Despite being perched at the bar next to one of LA's most prolific superstars en route to hanging her next New York show,¹ one cannot help but feel that much of the Club's clientele are ignoramuses merely along for the ride. This mob is set to make way for a new and cultured jet-setting elite, ushered in by the inauguration of the Krosch AirPear[®] QuickStop[®] Project Space (KAPQUS[®]) which calls for the printed page to be discarded and refreshments to be laid aside as one accesses authenticity through exposure to the work of the world's most exciting contemporary artists.

While rooted in the tradition of cultural tourism and firmly tied to the Art for the People Scheme (A4P),² the KAPQUS[®] initiative also thrives on the history of the airport as the spiritual home of the contemporary artist while de-mystifying this myth on behalf of the viewer. In the six months leading up to each exhibition, artists are accommodated in the hotel of the airport³ in which they are to exhibit and spend time responding to the setting⁴ while, during the installation period, passing travelers gain exclusive access to the artists' working process as the exhibition begins to take shape.



LAX hotel and restaurant.

¹ Here, 'show' could alternatively read, 'forty-something-year-old artist who is tarnishing curator's reputation by producing predictable work for her to peddle in order to support his young family.' (Hanging being the operative word.)

² A4P is designed to make it easy and affordable for everyone to buy contemporary works of art. A4P aims to put the arts at the heart of everyday life. One of the ways it does this is to encourage people to live with art they love. A4P wants to help artists live by their creative output and support galleries which sell high quality contemporary art. By taking art into the public sphere, KAPQUS[®] provides a foil for the private arm of the initiative which aims to locate art in the home.

³ Every Pear artist holds a CreditArt[®] which offers them unlimited access to room service, the bar and all of the hotel's facilities. The CreditArt[®] scheme is financed more or less directly, through loan interest being paid to PearBank[®] by the numerous developing corporations of the world which Pear has supported so staunchly in the past.

⁴ One of the key aims of the project is to re-socialize the group of artists which has been infected with Probitas Jugis. KAPQUS[®] project manager, Cat Andrews, is receiving regular updates from Americo Burghheim at CARCASS[®] and as soon as he deems a particular artist fit to begin work again, they will be sent to one of the KAPQUS[®] venues to acclimatize and, after six months, will be ready to exhibit and, thereafter, lead a full and active life.

Upon entering Departure Lounge 18 of LAX, shortly after Air Pear® CEO, Brad C. Harrison, had cut the ribbon and smashed the obligatory bottle of Louis Pear Cristal Champagne 2018 on the midriff of a nearby plane, privileged guests of KAPQUS® encounter an impressive array of specially-commissioned Pear Hologramatic Projections®, installations and sculptures.

Among the most engaging of these is Nancy Hood's traditional hologramatic projection, *Miss Texas*. Based on airport FlyCam® footage⁵ of a departure lounge riot involving disheveled mothers traveling home from a controversial-result-yielding Texan beauty pageant, the projection shows the mother of eleven year-old winner and hypertrichosis sufferer, Nina Foley, defending her daughter against incensed mothers who claim the result was a positive discrimination publicity stunt⁶ that has brought the 'profession' into disrepute. The original FlyCam® footage shows irate maternal figures brandishing obscene placards, and, due to the potential offence one placard in particular may have caused⁷ to travelers passing through the departure lounge, Hood was advised by officials to alter the text in the post-production stage of the hologram.⁸

Ultimately, frustrated with this censorship, Hood decided to take the work in a new direction, manipulating the image to allude to Arthur Gauger's recent fall from grace.⁹ This enforced, yet imaginative, treatment says the hologram of its authenticity as a document of social relations, and,



Nancy Hood, *Miss Texas*, Pear Hologramatic Projection® (still), 2025

therefore, of its neo-realist credentials, but Hood has succeeded in ascribing new meaning to the work and, in doing so, ushers the project beyond the domain of dubious instrumentalized smoke-screening and into the realm of the uncanny. To deflect attention away from such provocative sentiments and onto recent artworld events could be seen as an act of self-indulgence but, ultimately, Hood understands that it is beyond her remit to champion the (supposed) truth and that art is at its most cutting when it eschews half-truths in favor of semi-fictions.

⁵ The FlyCam® carrier insect had been steered into the pageant winner's beard in an attempt to offer PearSecure® guards first-hand experience of any potential crime. A similar device, the KestrelCam® – which has been developed by radicals of the Cavernopolis settlement, beneath the streets of LA, as a means of monitoring goings-on above ground – was dealt a major setback recently when their two patrol kestrels were inadvertently placed in captivity while on a routine circular above Pear Park. Reports suggest that an excitable zookeeper, under the instruction that there were only two American Kestrels in existence and that the captor of either one of them would receive two free tickets to PearAqua®, Namibia, took the opportunity to win the trip of a lifetime (and a spare pair of tickets to sell on PearBay®) and coaxed the birds down onto his glove with a famous line from British social realist kestrel-based cinema history. Incidentally, footage recorded by the kestrels in their cage at PearZoo® has since been used by underground artist, Sarah Luxemburg, in an ironic look at zoo visitors. Here, the humans become the subjects of the animals' gaze in a clever inversion. It is believed that this work will premiere at Pear Art Fair 2026 as part of the Gauger Gallery's inaugural showing and, indeed, the first showing by a gallery from Cavernopolis. Shortly after Luxemburg had gathered sufficient footage, she and the KestrelCam® pioneers programmed the kestrels to attack the keeper when he took them out of their cage at feeding time and escape into LA to gain further insights into the workings of the city. The birds spent a full week in captivity and managed to uncover some serious cases of cruelty to animals, a disturbing example being the zookeepers' positioning of a portrait of former US president, George W. Bush, on the back wall of the chimpanzee cage in a deliberate and malicious jibe.

⁶ Only one in a billion people are believed to have hypertrichosis, the medical term referring to a condition of excessive body hair, and no-one with the condition had ever won a beauty pageant before Foley's exceptional performance.

⁷ One of which read, 'Join the Circus You Werewolf Scum.'

⁸ to read, 'Join the Circus: You're Very Welcome.'

⁹ 'Join the Circus: High Wire Position Vacant.'

¹⁰ In reference to Argentinean artist, Oscar Bonoy's *La Familia Obrera (The Proletarian Family)*, 1968, in which the artist exhibited a son, mother and father on a pedestal in a gallery, paying the latter exactly twice his hourly rate as a die-cutter, Truman paid the two soccer clubs, and all other companies involved in the staging of the match, twice their weekly wage bill not to take part in the match. The clubs in question have since been suspended from the league and Truman has used this as an opportunity to see how long the project can last without the fans noticing that the teams no longer play matches.

¹¹ Circus acts included Arthur Gauger walking a tight rope between the north and south stands with only a randomly-placed bouncy castle as insurance in the result of a fall. For the first time in his career, Gauger did fall from the tight rope but, in what can only be interpreted as divine intervention, came careering down onto the lone bouncy castle. Tragically, he crushed a small child on impact before being catapulted back skyward where he landed on the wing of a re-construction of an 'Oiseau de Proie' ('Bird of Prey') pioneer-era canard biplane, which was performing an organized flyover as part of the 120th anniversary of Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont's seminal invention and the recent saving of the near-extinct American Kestrel. (Flyers advertising the kestrel celebration were taken out of circulation when it was learned that the last remaining kestrels in existence had escaped the clutches of the now infamous ex-species-savior zookeeper and that the kestrel was, again, considered endangered.)

The case of the small child has sparked one of the most complex legal cases the US has seen since the Assassinate to Accumulate (ATA) versus Basteney cigarette-induced inadvertent counter-euthanasia of Virginia Vanderschmidt case of 2022-2024. Pear has been unable to offer the family compensation as the small child was actually not quite small enough to be permitted access to the bouncy castle in the first place. A post-mortem confirmed that the small child had been squashed to within regulation size by Gauger's impact but the child's medical records show that, before impact, he was an inch too tall to be allowed access to the bouncy castle and had, therefore, breached corporation regulations by entering. The family then

Also dealing with notions of truth is Don Truman who presents *The Spectacle of the Society*, a gigantic sports stadium video-board displaying edited footage of a Pear League soccer match of October 2024 between Pear Galaxy and Chicago Pear at the Pear Depot Center, LA. Truman has removed the actual players and officials from proceedings¹⁰ leaving only bouncy castles, fairground rides, circus acts,¹¹ quad bike displays and occasional aircraft flyovers.¹²

The Spectacle of the Society casts one's mind back twenty years to Paul Pfeiffer's series of videos, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, in which the artist digitally removed players from Pear League basketball footage in an attempt, among other concerns, to draw attention to the audience and its relationship with court-side advertisements. Truman's actual removal of the supposed spectacle itself (in reality, as opposed to at post-production stage) would have been unthinkable in 2004¹³ but, in today's multi-faceted entertainment industry, action on the field of play is just one of the many attractions that hold the spectators' attention.

In *The Spectacle of the Society*, Truman employed the cameramen, who were already contracted to cover the Pear League action, to capture non-action on the field and action off it.¹⁴ A fascinating aspect of this experiment is the observation that none of the off-field entertainers dare to venture onto the hallowed, yet empty, turf. Where genuine cultural expression once manifested itself in the form of sporting competition, we are now presented with a haunting vacuum in the midst of circus-like mayhem. The camera also focuses on the spectators' expressions, and Truman positions these images beside pictures of spectators attending an actual soccer match from the past, staged at the same venue. There is no means of distinguishing between the two sources apart from through the identification of subtle differences in certain crowd members' hair length¹⁵ and levels of sweat.

The Spectacle of the Society is a timely reminder of the strength of our entertainment industry. Truman proves that companies such as the Pear League have diversified sufficiently to survive a

made the counter-claim that the child's medical records did not take account of his recent loss of the legs from the shins downward during rehearsals for his part as a stricken kestrel's stunt double in Kay Partovi's *π Wire* hologram (premiered at T75th in LA) which meant that he was, in fact, within regulation height before mounting the bouncy castle and, as such, full compensation should be awarded. This claim proved futile as, ultimately, Pear was bound by the official medical records and, since these afflictions had not been uploaded onto the child's account at the time of the accident, the company was legally powerless to help the family.

Pear did offer a gesture of goodwill in the form of two free tickets to Pear Aqua®, Namibia, which the family declined as they'd coincidentally found two free tickets on the floor outside the kestrel enclosure of the zoo beside a bloodied zookeeper and assumed that Pear must be giving the things out indiscriminately. The family was, needless to say, insulted in the extreme. As the child had been contracted out by Frank Bernstein's School of Ultimate Neo-Method Acting Bliss® (SUNMAB®), the family is currently pursuing the avenue of compensation from Mr. Bernstein not only for the child's severed legs but for his subsequent expiration. Days before his own planned death as part of a stunt for Pedlar Kane's *Ghost Plane* project, Bernstein stated that, on expiry, the child had entered the realm of ultimate neo-method-acting bliss (and the school had therefore delivered on its stated mission) and could now impeccably play the part of a dead child, alongside Bernstein himself playing a dead adult, in *Ghost Plane* for which there would be considerable degree of kudos accrued by the family. When Bernstein joined the child in the realm of ultimate neo-method-acting bliss, the family was left feeling wholly cheated as Bernstein, in the stress of the filming process, forgot to secure the child's job on *Ghost Plane* before falling from the aircraft and, in doing so, left SUNMAB®'s management in disarray and unable to deal with compensation requests. At the time of writing, the family is attempting to discredit SUNMAB® in the media and expose it as a sinister death cult as opposed to the school of ultimate neo-method acting bliss that it claims to be.

¹² There was also an impromptu 425ft flyover by Pear Force personnel on a test flight in preparation for Pedlar Kane's interactive artwork, *Ghost Plane*. The crowd was more alarmed than impressed by this as the mammoth aircraft threatened to clip the top of the stadium while blowing Gauger off his high wire.

¹³ Admittedly, it is still unthinkable in the context of Pear League basketball. Soccer, on the other hand, is so profoundly unpopular in the US that one of the few times the crowd paid even the slightest iota of attention to action on the field was during FIFA World Cup 1994 when Carlos Valderrama of Colombia played in a Gillette-sponsored charity match wearing a Speedo-manufactured Pierluigi Collina wig. The only player – other than the great Pelé and, perhaps, George Best – ever to make an impact in the US for his soccer ability was Kenny 'The Good Doctor' Deuchar who played for Real Salt Lake in the early 2000s. During the same period, proto-Destino-ite, David Beckham, made an impression on the field-side face-painting scene.

¹⁴ Such action included the pinning of various tails on various donkeys and the flight of juggling balls and Frisbees. It is curious to note that the history of the Frisbee would appear to have come full circle as spectators can often be seen tossing and catching empty pie tins.

¹⁵ Nina Foley made her off-field entertainment debut as part of PearCircus® and was mistaken, by architecture critic, Kermit Brine, in his review of the event, for another performer from the previously-recorded match. This led Brine to comment that, with regard to the individual's hair growth, the time between the match and the anti-match was, perhaps, considerably longer than the artist cared to admit. Brine went so far as to accuse Truman of opportunistically awaiting the club's natural demise (rather than halting it in full flow) before staging the soccer-less match. Truman, in turn, retorted by issuing an edited version of his video which captures Brine in the Pear Corporate Box looking inebriated to say the least and singing protest songs along the lines of:

*They didn't teach you that in PearSchool®
Where they don't discuss the rule
Pear will kill you if you get in its way.
If you're not serving wealth,
Then you best protect yourself.
Coz Pear will kill you if you get in its way.*

Brine's assessment of Truman's work was thoroughly discredited as a result and his antics placed him in yet another precarious position with regard to his employment at Pear. Following his plea of diminished responsibility during the infamous Dog Trial, it is alleged that Brine covertly checked himself into CARCASS® in a desperate attempt to escape the (allegedly literal) tortures of the legal system.



Don Truman, *The Spectacle of the Society*, Pear Hologramatic Projection (still), 2025

downturn in popularity of any one of their products (in this case, soccer). This observation brings up to date economist Jean-Baptiste Say's 18th century analysis of production and consumption. Say conveyed the impossibility of a general crisis of capitalism and pointed out that, while isolated crises could, and did, occur (e.g. real wages could fall in relation to inflation and, effectively, deem certain products unnecessary or undesirable), the simple solution was not to print money but to produce more goods.¹⁶ While Marx attempted to discredit this assertion in the mid- to late-19th century,¹⁷ the ability of capital to reformulate itself under even the most challenging of economic conditions was illustrated by the birth of Pear Corp during the Very Great Depression of 2008-15 and the company's capacity to, almost single-handedly, guide civilization through those troubled waters.

While Truman illustrates Pear's ability to banish fears of 'inevitable' general crisis, Pedlar Kane takes up Marx's countryman and philosophical descendant, Theodor Adorno's suspicions about the centrality of the culture industry to a thriving economy. As part of the KAPQUS[®] experience, Gate 18a functions as normal with regular flights leaving for New York and Chicago, while Gate 18b has been temporarily incorporated into Pedlar Kane's performative multi-media tour de force, *Ghost Plane*, which takes the public on a journey to a time when a 'budget' airline reigned as the

undisputed tyrant of air travel. Entering this quintessentially Holistipatory construction is like buying a ticket for the ghost train and plunging into a world of metaphysical illusion, where one must forget earlier notions of holistic or participatory art or even the nature of creativity itself.

For the purposes of Kane's project, KAPQUS[®] has funded a comprehensive re-construction of the company's fleet, employing actors to play the roles of the cabin crew and recruiting Pear Force personnel to imitate pilots and engineers. PearStunts^{®18} has been contracted to provide enhancements and simulations of the effects of turbulence while in the air with stunt(wo)men instructed to throw themselves around inside the cabin on a whim.¹⁹

Gate 18b is attended by faux-staff who direct visitors to the aircraft and carry out company protocol such as communicating policies such as 'no liquid containers to be carried onto the plane' and 'shoes must be discarded before boarding the plane and a new pair must be bought from our friendly staff once the "fasten seat-belt" sign has been turned off'.²⁰ The plane itself is very similar to those used as part of the Air Pear[®] Decadence Campaign²¹ but is adorned with suitably convincing yellow and blue branding. The in-cabin environment has been made to feel as authentic as possible although the artist has relied on approximations of the forms of musical entertainment, if any, employed by the company.

Kane explains that:

Pear Museum of Transport's records of in-flight entertainment from this period are sketchy to say the least. However, it is generally believed that a combination of muzak from the likes of Gotan Project, Lemon Jelly and Moby was used to pacify passengers during the potentially traumatic experience of a budget flight. As no aural record of this kind of instantly forgettable elevator music exists today, I've resorted to a combination of some of Americo Burghheim's similarly Easy-Listening-like early work²² and his recent CARCASS project.²³



One of the *Ghost Plane* fleet of recreated aircraft.

As a reflection on budget airlines' infamous twenty-five minute turnaround time, the cabin is littered with discarded candy wrappers²⁴ and Babyccino^{®25} cups and technicians can be seen making last-minute alterations to the wings seconds before take-off.

The somewhat frantic experience of take-off is crucial to Kane's elaborate reconstruction. Here, the Pear Force personnel – disguised as pilots – have been advised to use intuition and reflexes to dive in between other aircraft on the runway in order to make the simulation as convincing as possible.²⁶ The landing is designed to be equally adrenalin-inducing, with the frantic dialog between pilot and co-pilot – adapted from transcripts of black box recordings of actual flights from circa 2006 – broadcast to the passengers throughout the cabin:

Co-pilot: You're gonna have to perform a go-around, buddy. I'd suggest climbing 3,000ft before beginning a new approach.

Pilot: No way, man, this baby's landing in four minutes and twenty seconds.

Co-pilot: What are you doing?!... Dick, you're over the operating limit – we can't tilt any further!

Pilot: Shut up and hold tight, Stan.

Co-pilot: You're losing height drastically.

Pilot: That's the plan.

Co-pilot: But... we're 425ft from the ground – that's the f*cking Pear Depot Center up ahead – you're gonna have to climb to clear it...

Pilot: Switch that ground prox alarm off or I'm gonna have to break something, Stan.

Co-pilot: It won't go off – I think it's trying to tell us something.²⁷

While this kind of talk generates all manner of commotion in the cabin, airport officials viewing proceedings from the ground feel secure in the knowledge that these pilots are some of the most adept in the Pear Force and that the probability of a serious incident occurring is lower than during a budget flight of old.²⁸

While occupying experimental territory at the cutting edge of the Holistipatory Movement, *Ghost Plane* can also be read from an

entertainment industry perspective as the ultimate simulation experience, unmatched by the most exhilarating of PearLand[®] rides. In terms of a critique of the history of air travel and as a celebration of Pear's eradication of human error and introduction of completely safe travel,²⁹ *Ghost Plane* is an extremely potent piece of work.

A fascinating aspect of the piece is the relationship between scripted and choreographed performance and crucial, life-saving (or otherwise) actions which have very real consequences. Undoubtedly, the choreographed episodes themselves do have ramifications while the real-time, intuitive actions take on a poetic slant in the performative context. After numerous near-death experiences on the first day of operation and with Kane keen to see the project through to its logical conclusion, we appear to have traversed the point of no return. Ultimately, the crash itself will be the moment at which the dialectic between naturalist performance (cries of terror) and real-time actions (cries of terror) pales into insignificance or, perhaps, comes to mean absolutely everything, especially with respect to the man to whom this entire project is dedicated and the manner in which he met his untimely end.

The undoubted poignancy of Kane's *Ghost Plane* has inspired publicity-seeking trouble-maker Danila Mkenya, to continue her challenging, critical practice by intervening into the project in typically astute fashion. Mkenya has compiled data relating to the cultural origin and attire of passengers who are searched by security personnel at US airports. The data reveals that those of Middle-Eastern descent are 32% more likely to be searched than those of African origin,³⁰ while those of African origin are 45% more likely to be searched than those of North European descent. It is also noted that those dressed in casual or scruffy clothes are 51% more likely to be searched than those in business attire. Mkenya has directed the security personnel to attempt to redress the balance by striving to make those of apparent North European origin 45% more likely

¹⁶ See R. Rogers, *Said Say*, (Los Angeles: Pear Press, Economic Truth Series), 2020, pp. 84-120.

¹⁷ See K. Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, (Los Angeles: Pear Press, Economic Truth Series), 2020, pp. 70-124.

¹⁸ which counts Arthur Gauger and Wendy Huddleston as members.

¹⁹ The paralyzed neo-method-acting guru, Frank Bernstein, has also been hired to simulate a dead person if need be. Bernstein has proposed a change of script which involves his falling from the aircraft at a moment of (supposed) extreme turbulence in a bid to enhance the authenticity of the experience. He has indicated that his body, once peeled from the surface of the Earth or plucked from the depths of the sea, should be donated to the project in order for him to play a dead person in a subsequent performance as his capacity to play dead persons relies on his being dead.

²⁰ Such information was found in the Pear Transport Museum, LA, and studied rigorously by the actors playing the parts of staff.

²¹ The Air Pear[®] Decadence Campaign responded to the dramatic decrease in air travel followed by the introduction of online translocation software by ascribing a nostalgic element to the notion of air travel and playing on the romance of its decadent slowness.

²² Kane means no disrespect to Burghheim here – Easy Listening is clearly the new Thrash Disco. For an appraisal of Burghheim's seminal muzak excursion, *Auction House Jazz EP*, see J. Schardt, 'Pear Africa: Social Services and the Avant-garde' in *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 08, 2022, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2022, pp. 10-13.

²³ Pedlar Kane, personal correspondence with the artist, 2025. While those receiving treatment for PJ (namely the majority of the population of the artwork) experience the music in slowed down terms – just as the musicians themselves experienced it – those not undertaking the course of medication (that is, mainly, unsuspecting members of the public) are subjected to its high-tempo brutality. As a result, many members of the public have a distinctly unfavorable view of the project and warn others against it. As such, the use of Burghheim's *CARCASS Sessions* has inadvertently assisted the organizers' drive for customer exclusivity by attracting bourgeois artworldlings and repelling the majority of the population.

²⁴ Referred to as 'sweet' wrappers in Europe.

²⁵ A drink, for children, made with espresso coffee and frothed hot milk, sometimes topped with powdered chocolate or cinnamon. Not to be confused with Babychino[®] – smart-casual pants for kids.

²⁶ This also serves to maximize the number of customers passing through the simulation.

²⁷ A transcription of pilot/co-pilot dialog recorded during an opening night performance.

²⁸ Although this is hardly reassuring.

²⁹ This high watermark in the history of travel will be reached when translocation software becomes affordable to the general population by the end of the year.



Daniela Mkenya, *Let Them Feel Some Pain* (documentation), 2025

to be searched than those of African descent while making those dressed in tailored suits 51% more likely to be searched than those wearing jeans and a t-shirt, and so on. This approach is problematic in that its logistics rely on the subjectivity of the security personnel and, perhaps more worryingly, its conceptuality and morality could be considered flawed due to the discriminatory nature of the action. Mkenya has refuted these claims by stating that:

This piece mimics the operations of airport security firms who are themselves highly immoral – their day-to-day decision-making is based on subjective judgments and amount to discrimination as can be seen by the results of my research. As such, Let Them Feel Some Pain employs this mode of operation but strives to invert the outcome. Some might say that two wrongs don't make a right but it's not about one or two wrongs, it's about hundreds of years of oppression and trying to put this degree of injustice into perspective. As far as I'm concerned, if you subscribe to the notion of revenge, we've got generation after generation of wrongs to implement before those of the American empire can be laid to rest.³¹

The notion of revenge would appear to be a primitive one from which we in the enlightened world seek to distance ourselves. It is, therefore, highly dubious that an educated woman like Mkenya entertains such ideas. Having said this, the artist should be commended for her commitment (in the Frankfurt School sense) if nothing else.

It is clear that engagement is a key concern of the KAPQUS® initiative and, while the individual artistic contributions of this particular incarnation are undoubtedly engaged, the project's overarching ethos of inclusion and commitment to a more cultured experience of travel stand out as its defining feature. It is important to remember that KAPQUS® spans the breadth and depth of the developed, and developing, worlds with franchises in forty-eight countries.

KAPQUS® comes at a crucial time for the air travel sector as translocation software seemed to have deemed the airplane an archaic structure.

KAPQUS® comes at a crucial time for the air travel sector as the introduction of translocation software seemed to have deemed the airplane an archaic structure. The recent Air Pear® Decadence Campaign certainly encouraged people to start using airplanes again but also led them to believe that flying was more of a nostalgic gesture than a functional or efficient part of contemporary culture. With the advent of KAPQUS® comes the appreciation of air travel as a legitimate mode of transport and the reinstatement of the missing link in the landscape of cultural tourism.

³⁰ Incidentally, this continued fixation on the Middle East shows that PearSecure® has not yet adapted its policy in light of the recent success of the mammoth civilizing project conducted by Pear in the area. Africa and South America are now considered more of a threat to civilization than the Middle East although these areas are currently being addressed through an extensive cultural initiative. See J. Schardt, 'Post-Post-Colonial Self-Improvement and the Arts', in this volume, pp. 4-7.

³¹ Daniela Mkenya, personal correspondence with the artist, 2025.

Burgheim the Prophet: An Inadvertent Musical Yardstick Projected from the Emergency Exit of a Whale-like Former Gymnasium

Marcel Henry

Americo Burgheim emerges from the overbearing quasi-fascistic rural castle that houses the newly-founded Contemporary Artists' Rehabilitation Center and Stabilizing Scheme (CARCASS) deep in Angeles National Forest. In the aftermath of the outbreak of Probitas Jugis (PJ),¹ scores of the world's foremost artists have been admitted to CARCASS to undergo intensive treatment in an attempt to allow them to return to professional practice.



After a turbulent two years spent in and out of hospital with an unrelated mental condition,² Burgheim was appointed director of CARCASS with a view to utilizing personal experience of mental illness to counteract the epidemic currently strangling the artworld.

Burgheim was appointed director of CARCASS with a view to utilizing personal experience of mental illness to counteract the epidemic currently strangling the artworld.

One of Burgheim's initial tactics at CARCASS has been the introduction of a radically Holistipatory music project for inmates. With a wealth of



Left: CARCASS building, Angeles National Forest. Above: CARCASS staircase.

experience in the experimental and mainstream music industries and several high- and low-profile releases behind him, including the seminal *Auction House Jazz EP* (2022),³ Burgheim set about turning the immaculate CARCASS gymnasium into a recording studio.⁴ While housing some of the most up-to-date production and broadcasting equipment, the studio has taken on a thematic structural element in keeping with the organization's acronym. Burgheim has transformed the dome into a voluminous whale-carcass-like chamber. The gym bars lining the walls, which used to be draped with sweaty sport-art visionaries, appear like colossal ribs against which the inmates' musical output ricochets.

One month since the transformation of the gym and Burgheim's orchestration is sweeping the airwaves in a fashion similar to that of the

¹ PJ is a condition which renders its victims absolutely honest and true to their word. Due to a drastically high percentage of artworldlings coming down with the disease compared to the rest of the population, it is believed that there has been a strategic biological attack – some say that and/or Folk Art: Weaverville are responsible and that they contaminated the flour used in the durational performance *Bread Bin* during Penny Fortinberry's pseudo-philanthropic contribution to T55.

² Perhaps his best-known work, *Certified*, had a profound effect on the artist's mental condition. The ground-breaking piece involved the artist spending all day and all night of his touring exhibition confined to his allocated gallery space. The experience brought about a seemingly irreversible shift in the artist's personality which resulted in him actually being certified. He has since made a remarkable recovery and is proving to be an able director of the CARCASS program.

³ See J. Schardt, 'Pear Africa: Social Services and the Avant-garde,' in *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 08, 2022, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2022, p. 11.

⁴ This plan has been implemented despite protests from the self-proclaimed sport-art pioneers Ben H. Ghuttin, Marc Naseunoton and Don Truman who have been forced to exercise their new 'Movement Movement' outdoors.

psychotomimetic assault on consciousness⁵ that led to his appointment. With the finishing touches to the new studio having been made, Burgheim quickly assembled a group of inmates, introducing them to his musical concept and encouraging them to propose alterations and additions. He then nurtured them towards the common goal of producing a substantial body of work. He describes the arrangements as 'organic' and the performances as that which 'only they, or should I say "we", in our current mental state, could grasp.' Burgheim continues: 'It is well-documented that we found ourselves in this condition due to the recent biological attack. The psychotropic antidote seems to have had a side effect that slows the experience of reality down for us and in doing so has allowed us to produce this unique sound.'

Burgheim orchestrated a musical panorama of dynamic peaks and troughs, with delicate textures careening into bursts of exuberance.

With this logic in mind, Burgheim orchestrated a musical panorama of dynamic peaks and troughs, with delicate textures careening into bursts of exuberance. What seem like flaws are, arguably, part of the grander charm: the straining for higher notes, wobbly rhythms and disjointed transitions. None of these 'mistakes' undermines the purity of the delivery, the boundless élan of the singing, and the overall poignancy. The absence of an audience gives these recordings a paradoxical intimacy while the gentle chiming of the Pearcussion[®] imparts otherworldly atmospherics. The PearCymbals[®] crash just after the plane leaves the runway. The parts de-synchronize then miraculously converge as if the artists had taken opposite routes round the gallery and met at the magical centerpiece.

Yet, beyond the dodgy beats and colliding Pearcussion[®], these captivating performances bear repeated listening to yield ever deeper pleasures. *The CARCASS Sessions* echo Martin Calvo, Paula Sarvis, Manuel Götttsching and Brian Wilson. They conflate elements of Thrash Disco, Fascist Lullaby and Gravestep while reflecting the charming 'defects' of Outsider

Music. Burgheim observes that 'the inmates value enthusiasm far more than perfection.'

Despite this attitude, there is undeniable sophistication in the performances and the arrangements by Burgheim are dazzling by any standard. From a cloistered whisper the songs erupt into chamber orchestral majesty. Burgheim's layered craftsmanship is economical; instruments reverberate at peculiar moments then disappear while nothing is overdone and showboating is avoided. The inmates play as a team, cooperating, blending, and demonstrating a



respect for the compositions. Purity and a rejuvenated innocence permeate these works. It is more than a hall of rambunctious contemporary artists hollering with abandon – there is a collective voice.

Beyond the dodgy beats and colliding Pearcussion[®], these captivating performances bear repeated listening to yield ever deeper pleasures.

The CARCASS inmates have not performed these songs to generate cash flow, score a record deal (although there may be some irony here) or achieve fame. There is no pretense – only musical fervor. The songs reflect the hopes, fears, and fantasies common to us all: love and longing, exultation, and dismay.

Enhancing the allure is a supernaturally chills-down-the-spine recording presence. With two PearMics[®] and a limited supply of post-digital mixing equipment in a rehabilitation center gym – and no punched-in bum-note fixes – Americo Burgheim has forged a sound that studio pros shell out a million dollars to capture. The natural reverb of the gym is canyonesque. It is an alternate-universe realization of Martin Calvo's *Symphony for the Deranged*. Think of these post-alleged-biological-attack artworldlings as the inadvertently visionary spawn of the Terrorist[®] and the Savior.⁷

Among the highlights, *Long-Haired Letch from LA* with its tremolo-infused guitar, soda bottle decrescendo, and restrained vocal intensity, ranks as a work of naïve genius. The electrifying Thrash Disco workout, *Antiseptic Wipe* (originally performed by Disco Asphyxia) sung by stunningly poised recent arrival, Rena da Serraf, is heart-wrenching. *Sun Bed Junky*, a 2016 underground⁸ anthem by off-the-radar Gravestep duo, ultra-leftist, Jo Bochnak, and former supermarket worker, Harry Lake (and covered by Arthur Gauger and the Miners), is a curious choice by any measure. There's aching vulnerability on *Monday No More (Gibson is Gone)* and disarming counterpoint on *Medicinal Fake Bake*. The CARCASS inmates can also rock – with floor-shaking tremors on *Pine-Striped Denim*, the pounding pulse of *Throb* and thunderclap downbeats on *Rodeo Cameo*.

It is touching to hear confused contemporary artists sing from their hearts. *Autonomy or Death* is about being lost in the shallow world of dealers and ambitious curators; the protagonist of *Small Pond* is a boastful Neo-Holistipatory practitioner who is contemplating his next stretching of art's

boundaries, *Sell-out* is an ode to commercial disenchantment while the haunting *Dawn Raids* is Burgheim's personal lament.⁹ Yet, the vocals are true, the feelings genuine, as if the antidote to PJ has yet to take hold, leaving the inmates' experience of reality distorted by the side effect while their physiology remains in the grip of infection.

In reviewing this piece of work, I sampled the remedy in order to be able to experience the work as the musicians do – the effect was disappointing and points towards the fact that much of the hype surrounding this release has come about as a result of those listening to it not being on the drug and therefore hearing something staggeringly high tempo and energetic, the likes of which have never been heard before.¹⁰ The audience slowing down simply brings things back down to earth and de-mystifies the workings of an otherwise incredible performance.

The key to ascertaining whether this recording is, in fact, revolutionary or merely a 'happy accident' may lie in the keeping, or otherwise, of the side effect secret. Alas, this may prove rather difficult given the rapid spread of PJ and the equally relentless distribution of its antidote. Perhaps we should enjoy the critical success of this work while it persists as, once the critics begin to grasp the illusions of their own chemical imbalances, this piece of muzak may be reduced, like Burgheim's early work, to the thankless task of pacifying customers of Pedlar Kane's *Ghost Plane*.

(All Burgheim quotes from personal correspondence).

⁵ i.e. the PJ epidemic.

⁶ i.e. 🐉 and/or Folk Art: Weaverville.

⁷ i.e. PearQuest[®], the arts agency currently administering Joel Eppinger III's hurriedly-produced antidote through strategically-placed PearSprings[®] water coolers.

⁸ Literally underground in Cavernopolis.

⁹ *Dawn Raids* refers to the scavenging missions Burgheim undertook to sustain himself while confined to his gallery space as part of *Certified*.

¹⁰ David Destino, who is immune to PJ due to his chronic fluctuating body temperature, is reportedly an admirer of the CARCASS Sessions.

J.J. Melvin: From Human Mist to Superhuman

Rita Birnbaum

The Creator (2025) appears before you like an unexploded bomb, rust-colored and swollen and oddly submissive. Forged from fifty-eight tons of PearSteel,[®] J.J. Melvin's new sculpture at the Pear Museum (a site-specific installation strangely set to travel)¹ presents three discrete and non-synchronous faces to museum visitors: the first, snub-nosed and sheer; the second, conical and rocket-shaped; the third, a yawning mouth leading into the structure's interior, a nod to Americo Burgheim's lavish CARCASS recording studio.

According to Melvin, one of *The Creator*'s principal aims is to demonstrate, translocation-portal-like, a negative internal space larger than a positive exterior space. This goal is advanced through a tactical program of illusion borrowed from Burgheim's gym-cum-studio at CARCASS.

Like the new studio, *The Creator* as a whole is not visible from any single point; each side presents obstructed views so that the work is difficult to imagine holistically. One possible source of inspiration here is the well-known Christian parable about the procession of partially deaf men being introduced to different parts of Joy Allison's *Songs of Joy*,² and arriving at radically different conclusions about the nature of the work – it's a piece of New York no-wave, says one, feeling the arbitrary pounding of the bass drum; a serialist neo-birdsong extravaganza, says another, feeling the deliberately sparse synthesized chirping; John Cage's most minimal arrangement says another, unable to hear or feel a thing due to the acuteness of his condition.

Melvin himself would likely reject this interpolation. At one of the conferences organized to mark *The Creator*'s unveiling, he fiercely rounded on the popular concept of 'Holistipatory art'. Turning to face his curators at the Pear Holistipatory Art Initiative (PHAI), who struggled to come up with a plausibly holistic or participatory defense, Melvin fiercely challenged their institutional role, claiming that their work 'puts Holistipatory artists into a de-

activated portal whose internal space is, as in the pre-translocative era, infinitely smaller than the outside,' insisting that 'if there is an avant-garde, there is neither a Terminart avant-garde nor a Post-Digital avant-garde, and by definition there could never be a Regressionist avant-garde: there is only one avant-garde.'

The quarrel between the medium-specific and the non-medium-specific is a venerable topic in contemporary art discourse³ as elsewhere, but interesting in this case was the clear exposure of the structures supporting the war of ideas. The Iranian-born, LA-based, half-Wicca, practising Sufi, Melvin finds himself sincerely moved to champion non-medium-specificity against all and every diminishing specialization. Meanwhile, curators alight on an ideological platform and move to commission artists like Melvin on an ethnic basis. Hence we arrive at the paradoxical position of a non-medium specific artist laying siege to the specialist arena provided for him.

The tortuous ironies of this state of affairs notwithstanding, Melvin himself seems to have largely escaped from the Holistipatory anti-portal. In an intriguing example of symbolic literalism, the sculptor's objects have ballooned in parallel with his reputation over the past year, the fragile works of his early career giving way to monumental extravaganzas like London's *THIS IS A PVC CHAISSE LONGUE* (2024),⁴ and Chicago's *PearSteel[®] Gould Bay 1:100* (2025).⁵

This remarkable transition from obscure, intellectual sculptor obsessed by narrow aesthetician's interests, to international icon has not occurred without some criticism. Perhaps among the dangers that lurk here are the twin perils of becoming a trademark Pear artist or, worse still, an imitator of trademark Pear artists. When an artist develops a signature style, as Melvin has now plainly done,⁶ the problem becomes that one may begin to regressively counterfeit it.⁷ There is some hint of this with the Pear Museum installation, which Melvin freely admits recycles already-employed ideas. At the same time, however, further issues of discursive caricature also develop.

Running alongside this danger of regression, there is the possibly greater peril of ethno-pop-cliché. The experiential intent of his current practice makes Melvin particularly vulnerable to this charge, which is levied by hostile critics and sympathetic supporters alike. With the intellectual content of *The Creator* to be found only in a portentous and rhetorical register – as a thing larger on the inside than on the outside, impossible ever to envision entirely etc – Melvin could well be accused of superficial tendentiousness. Under the lights of this logic, an unfortunate aromatherapeutic discourse of 'spiritual' and 'transcendent' seems to dog Melvin the exotic. At another point in the press conference, his sensitive use of PearSteel[®] was contrasted with his monolithic monument to Hareth Szeeglub along the lines of a feminism contrasted to machismo.

Perhaps among the dangers that lurk are the twin perils of becoming a trademark Pear artist or, worse still, an imitator of trademark Pear artists.

To his credit, Melvin seems in some ways uncomfortable with the discourse surrounding him. At one point, speaking in reference to *The Creator*, he confessed his ambivalence in the face of the work's wildly popular public reception, referring to what he called 'the danger called PearLand.[®]' While those around him shed their integrity like sideshow snakes seduced by the bright lights of the spectacle, Melvin's suggested idea for a bulwark against the culture industry revolves around one word: 'decorum.'

(All Melvin quotes taken from the artist's contribution to the conference, 'Holistipatory Practice in a Post-Post-Ethnic Age' at Pear Museum, March 15th 2025.)



J.J. Melvin, *The Creator* (installation view), PearSteel[®], 2025.

¹ to South America and West Africa as part of the 'Pear Art Now' touring exhibition.

² See S. Sinden, 'Pear Art Fair, 2023,' in *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 09, 2023, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2023, p. 32.

³ For a useful discussion on the subject of (post-)medium-specificity, see L. Martz, 'If a Pearpod[®] screams in a white cube and there is no-one there to hear it, does it make a sound?' in *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 09, 2023, (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2023, p. 9, footnote no. 2.

⁴ Janine James is seeking compensation through PearCourt[®] as she claims this was her idea and that Melvin acquired it using POEPS[®]. Melvin has stated in court that he did not acquire any such information but, in producing the work, was merely parodying the predictable nature of James's practice. James then asked how Melvin could have known that a plastic chaise longue would be next in line for her famous 'THIS IS A' treatment. The judge then intervened by asking James if she had any proof of her plans to produce this work. James replied, 'No, your honour,' and the case was thrown out.

⁵ Dale Gooding is seeking compensation through PearCourt[®] as he claims this was his idea and that Melvin acquired it using POEPS[®]. Melvin has stated in court that he did not acquire any such information but, in producing the work, was merely parodying the predictable nature of Gooding's practice since he won the Pear Photography Prize for his spectacular account of the melting of Gould Bay. Gooding then asked how Melvin could have known that he was planning to reproduce Gould Bay in PearSteel[®] on a 1:100 scale. The judge then intervened by asking Gooding if he had any proof of his plans to produce this work. Gooding replied, 'Yes, your honour,' and the case continued.

⁶ Although some claim he has taken on the multiple signature styles of his forebears and contemporaries through (ab)use of POEPS[®] – the jury is still out.

⁷ Here, it is interesting to note Melvin's open disdain for the Regressionists; perhaps their inability to progress strikes a raw nerve.

City Report: Los Angeles

Susan Sinden

'The source of _____ is in the _____ of a _____,'
(Seminal interactive online storytelling proverb, 2015).

Like many major cities in the post-digital age, Los Angeles is seeking to break away from its image of post-post-Fordist insecurity and obsolete technological decay. What exists in LA today is an empowering level of cultural awareness, one that is conferring a new identity onto a city that has long been associated with abandoned technology complexes and hashed attempts at regeneration. It has since succeeded in transforming itself into a vibrant cultural center.¹

One would expect a city with such a stable *genius loci* such as LA's to attract the attention of the New-York-centric arts media. Indeed, although LA's artistic community is the largest in the US outside New York, its flourishing contemporary art scene has received minimal coverage on the East Coast. Boosters of the Los Angeles art scene have long nurtured a dream: that the city's familiar icons – entertainment industry hologramatic projection reels, surfboards and palm trees – will be replaced by classier ones; that the smooth travertine of the Pear Center, the sharp angles of the Pear Museum of Contemporary Art (PMoCA), the swoop of the Pear Concert Hall will supplant the beaming rodents of PearLand[®] and their amphibious counterparts at PearAqua[®]II.²

In this campaign to persuade outsiders to think of LA as a cultural curiosity beyond sea, sand and Sufism,³ the art scene in LA has a new advocate. Or, rather, a familiar figure with a new mission. 'I've been here since 2016,' says Jayne Cumberbatch, who, despite lingering traces of a New York accent, is a significant contributor to the LA art scene, 'and the changes in our cultural landscape over these past two decades have been quite dramatic.'



Jane Cumberbatch

'Along with the fact that there wasn't a top quality place to eat in LA⁴ and now we have our own cuisine,⁵ there's been a similar transformation of our cultural life,' she says. 'But, beyond Kenneth Mader's self-financed efforts, there hasn't been a cohesive effort to push this vision worldwide.' To help spread the word and lure cultural tourists, Cumberbatch has been charged with developing and launching a new nonprofit organization called MeccART.[®] It is being funded by the Pear Foundation and was sparked by a report on arts funding and its economic impact produced last fall by Mader's New York gallery. The report concluded that since the erection of J.J. Melvin's majestic sculpture of the late Hareth Szeeglub in Times Square, the mass media, and hence the population, had begun to see the production, protection and consumption of artistic concepts as part of the very fabric of the American Dream.⁶

'The remit of this new entity,' Cumberbatch says while reclining in her Pear Art Fair headquarters,

'will be to market and enhance the perception of Los Angeles as a cultural destination and to create a comprehensive, creative way to market the arts of Los Angeles Corprostitutionality both domestically and internationally.'

Cumberbatch goes back a long way with the local art scene. From 2015 to 2018, she and her husband – actor, director and novelist, Cesc Hanskilder – served as producing directors of the Pearplex. In the years before her 2021 appointment to the Pear Art Fair as Head of Sponsorship, she worked with the cultural finance agency, Pear Art Bank, and was consulted by the Pear Endowment for the Arts.

This is a campaign to persuade outsiders to think of LA as a cultural curiosity beyond sea, sand and Sufism.

As one of the city's longest-surviving arts administrators, she is entirely comfortable with concepts like 'revenue streams' and verbs like 'incentivize.' At this point, she says, her intention is to forge a comprehensive plan and seek funding sources beyond the Pear Foundation,⁷ with the goal of letting a staff of two or three – a considerable degree of outsourcing for such a renowned perfectionist – take over at the end of July 2026. Cumberbatch notes that 'administration is as an art in itself. I always strive to keep up-to-date with conversations on aesthetics and modes of production etc. What I'm trying to say is that if Auchincloss can allow a bunch of students to edit his autobiography then surely I should be seen to be relinquishing some control here at MeccArt[®] too.'

⁷ The potential synergy between MeccArt[®] and the ultimate cultural tourism brainwave, Krosch AirPear[®] QuickStop[®] Project Space Initiative, is seemingly irresistible. Don't be surprised if the two new organizations embark on a long and fruitful partnership.

⁸ Eppinger III is in constant contact with Arthur Gauger who continues to provide POEPS[®] intelligence reports on the Cavernopolis society's scientific developments. The underground community has recently made considerable steps forward in the realm of miniature fake leg design and Eppinger III has been quick to provide the civilized world with an officially patented (and enlarged) version for widespread use.

⁹ It is alleged that the Destino sculpture, which the artist formerly known as Emily Cullman stole and began to use as a voodoo doll, has been sold to an unsuspecting elderly man in the Weaverville area. The *Trinity Journal* reported in January last year that 'widower Mr. Buddy West (73) bought the sculpture from a local art gallery (believed to be Folk Art: Weaverville as it is the only art gallery in Weaverville) thinking that it was a blow-up doll and when he discovered that it had four arms and no actual orifices, threw it in the attic.' If allegations of voodoo tactics on the part of _____ are legitimate, it would seem that the sculpture was stored in the attic for the duration of that summer as Destino himself was bedridden from May to September with an extremely high temperature. It follows that Mr. West then cleared out his attic in the Fall of 2024 and placed the sculpture in an outhouse as Destino suffered an extreme and lasting drop in body temperature from October 2024 to April 2025 which resulted in the inset of gangrene and the need for the attachment of a Joel-Eppinger-III-pioneered prosthetic foot after one of Destino's was amputated allegedly through necessity but, in reality, for the purposes of his career in an attempt to emulate the feat of the late great amputee, John Fare, his Terminaristic descendant, Gibson Blocker, and former architecture critic, recent self-lobotomist and smothered CARCASS inmate, Kermit Brine. A limited edition Pear Hologramatic Projection[®] of the amputation will be available through the Art for the People Scheme very shortly. The Pear Bureau of Investigation (PBI) is currently considering the possibility of foul play but, if the hypothesis regarding the sculpture's voodoo quality is sound, and the sculpture remains in the outhouse throughout the summer months, Destino's body temperature should return to normal and the artist should be able to return to doing what he does best – generating publicity – before too long.

Relinquishing control or not, MeccART[®] will be lean and mean, she says, with an annual budget of just \$100 million – much of that dedicated to selective POEPS[®] transmissions, media ads, online pop-ups, research and the development of new technology: 'With a view to generating some publicity around the initiative, we have secured the services of scientist Joel Eppinger III.⁸ As always, David Destino – while not busy experimenting with newly developed treatments for his chronic fluctuating body temperature⁹ – is committed to producing art using Joel's new techniques.' Cumberbatch confirms that MeccART[®]'s aims are sweeping:

The average duration of a trip to LA is three days: to put things somewhat crudely, this entails one day at the beach, one day at PearAqua[®]II and one day at the PearMart[®] on North Figueroa Street (although I've heard that it's gone downhill). Those people should be doing something at night. And imagine the economic impact if they stayed a fourth day and went to a show at the Pear Concert Hall, an exhibition at PMoCA or an audio-visual dance performance at the Pearplex.

Last year, PearTours[®] reported 76.3 million visitors to Los Angeles, about half from outside the corprostitutionality. 'Generally speaking,' Cumberbatch says, 'we know that a little less than 22% are what are called cultural tourists.' That compares with 52% in New York, which drew about 100 million visitors in 2024. Cumberbatch continues:

Why is that important? Cultural tourists spend more and stay longer. It's important to the economic engine of the region. According to a study at Pear Uni[®]II, they spend an average of \$620 more per trip than their uncultured counterparts. Besides the direct income taken in by arts venues from ticket sales, the related spending – restaurants, hotels, shopping – can be enormous.

¹ See K. Brine, 'Pear-Shaped Spectacle: Winston's Alien Invasion in L.A.', in *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 07, 2021 (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2021, pp. 16-18.

² German treasures feared lost underwater on the south-west coast of Africa in the late 19th century have recently been exhumed and transported to the depths of the North Pacific Ocean off the west coast of the US to form part of the deep sea diving wonderland, PearAqua[®]II. The original PearAqua[®], which is situated in the submerged portion of south-western Africa, expects a delivery of jewels specially created in LA as part of this cultural exchange.

³ While LA has long considered itself to be beyond the realms of religious tension, the rise of a neo-Wicca-Sufi sect (said to be led by artists _____ and J.J. Melvin) has reinstated the city as a place of interest for budding theolo-tourists.

⁴ Pear apologizes in advance to everyone at PearCuisine[®] who have so tirelessly given their time and effort (some their lives, in the case of those committed to the production of PearExo- and Endo-Cannibalistic[®] delicacies) since 2015 to making some of the most exquisite cuisine in LA.

⁵ Pear apologizes in advance to those citizens of an Armenian, Chinese, Ethiopian, Filipino, Native Indian, Japanese, Korean, Mexican, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Thai or other origin who consider their traditional cuisine to be that of LA.

⁶ For an analysis of these findings, see M. LeBeau, 'De-Constructing the Mader Report: Art and the American Dream,' in *The Pear Journal of American Dream Studies*, (Chicago: Pear Uni[®] IV Press), 2025, pp. 34-37.

Cumberbatch would like to double LA's 22% of cultural tourists, which would take the city considerably closer to the status of New York. 'We would be adding five billion dollars to this economy,' she says. 'That would be huge. It would have a massive, colossal impact.'

Indeed, the push for cultural tourism has long obsessed philanthropist, Kenneth Mader, and has become an increasing concern among his arts organizations. But that does not mean that the phenomenon is universally adored. Last March, for instance, Pear considered doing away with the Pear Cultural Affairs Department of Los Angeles for budget reasons but was persuaded to save a slimmed-down version as a cultural tourism agency – namely MeccART.⁹

Even then, smaller arts organizations complained. For example, Sol Zimmerman, co-director of Op Pear Cit, said the new initiative had come at an unfortunate time given that Cultural Affairs had already been downsizing. 'The tourist promotions will focus on large, mainstream organizations that have the wherewithal to lobby for funding,' he said in April.

'I have no problem with LA being a cultural tourist capital,' Kelvin Cooper, publisher at Op Pear Cit Press and an adjunct professor at Pear Uni[®]II, said this month. 'The concern I have is that this puts the translocation portal before the software, so to speak. Cultural tourism is important, but we should be supporting institutions themselves as opposed to propping up a façade of wellbeing which only serves to mask this lack of grassroots investment. I could do a lot of great stuff with \$16 million as far as creating culture here is concerned, not to mention the extent to which my art initiatives could improve people's health and lift the poor out of their poverty.'

Moreover, Cooper contended, the city's art scene is already world famous. 'There's a generation in Los Angeles that still thinks we have to present ourselves as a cultural capital. This new nonprofit's belief that we need to promote the city indicates a lack of confidence on the part of the people behind it – and a lack of understanding that things have changed over the past ten years.'

⁹ Not since 1821-1840 has there been such a proportion of Mexicans in LA. This time around, their goal is to enjoy and learn from the civilized culture of the US rather than attempting to impose their own.

¹¹ The Neo-Californian Ideology is a mix of cybernetic online cloning, telepathy software, mono-corporate economics and counter-culture radicalism and is promulgated by magazines such as *Pear Computer Graphics and Applications Journal* and *Pear 2020* as well as the books of Joel Eppinger III, Kelli Keny, and many others. The new faith has been embraced by spiritualist computer nerds such as 🐼, slacker students, thirty-something capitalists, hip academics such as Kelvin Cooper, futurist bureaucrats like Jayne Cumberbatch and even the CEO of Pear Corp. himself. As usual, Europeans have not been slow to copy the latest fashion from the US. While a recent PearTours[®]/Pear Worldwide report recommended adopting the Neo-Californian mono-corporate model globally to build the 'IP-Super-Highway', cutting-edge artists and academics have been championing the 'post-human' philosophy developed by the West Coast's emancipatory cult. With no obvious opponents, the global gateway appears to be open to the Neo-Californian Ideology.

Cumberbatch is undeterred. In addition to her enthusiasm, she has gathered a vast quantity of raw data. For instance, the premier foreign source of LA visitors last year was Mexico,¹⁰ with almost 4.5 million, followed by Canada (1 million), Japan (884,000) and the UK (632,000).

Still, she hasn't yet determined whether most *cultural* tourists are coming from the Eastern US or Europe or Mexico, or what is needed to lure more. 'I don't think we know what other people's perceptions of Los Angeles really are beyond their devotion to the Neo-Californian Ideology.'¹¹

One thing she says is clear is that technology should have a major role in her new endeavor. She points to the effectiveness of websites such as www.pearjournal.com, which not only advises visitors on cultural events but offers guidance on transportation. Promoting arts tourism in Los Angeles, she says, takes a different kind of effort than it would in cities such as London or Rome. 'Their cultural assets have been selling themselves for generations. We have a lot of catching up to do in terms of telling our story.'

'I could do a lot of great stuff with \$16 million, not to mention the extent to which my art initiatives could improve people's health and lift the poor out of their poverty.'

Cumberbatch says she's not aware of another place like Los Angeles – a relatively new city with an image not firmly tied to the fine arts – that's trying to orient itself as a cultural destination. 'There are no role models,' she says. 'This is absolutely breaking new ground. But if not us, then who?'

(All Cumberbatch quotes from personal correspondence.)

The Death of the Curator-As-Auteur

**Pear International (a.k.a. Pi '25) (a.k.a. Π5²)
Los Angeles, April 11– 25, 2025**

Alan D'Aresier

Pear International (known as 'Pi' or 'Π') is a biennial festival which points to an art map spattered, in a Pollock-like fashion, with metaphorical bloodstains from skirmishes between curatorial tyrants and artistic martyrs. Curated by the late Hareth Szeeglub – who understood Los Angeles well enough not to foist upon it any overarching curatorial framework – the festival's theme was 'centered on ideas of religious diversity – examining the changing nature of faith, the evolving landscape of belief and the boundaries of its communication in a post-post-racial world at one with telepathy.'¹

¹ Hareth Szeeglub, Π5² press release, April 3rd 2025.

² Art Idol '25, which was broadcast on pearjournal.com, followed the audition process as, at various locations around the US, hopefuls presented their work before four judges (David Destino, Valerie Kirshenbaum, Kenneth Mader, and Josh Auchincloss). Besides the successful try-outs, the poorest 'artists' (in terms of ability as opposed to social status) were often aired due to their obvious lack of talent or presense. Poor artists often faced harsh criticisms from many judges, mainly David Destino (whose controversial rants also made him famous on Art Idol's precursor, Euro Curo). The judge's reactions often extended from disgust to open laughter.

With auditions wrapped up, the series moved to the Pearplex, where further performances saw the judges decide on a group of fifty. Unusually, this was the final point at which the judges had direct control over the contestants' fates, as the remainder of the results would be driven solely from viewer voting. Stage 3 of the contest took place in a conventional visual media studio. The fifty contestants were split into five groups of ten, each of which would present one artwork for the judges – many contestants relied on live performance at this stage to create a spectacle worthy of progress in the competition. Each judge offered their opinion, and, at the end of the show, the online pole opened for votes. Later the same evening, a live show (the initial one having been pre-recorded) followed in which the results were revealed, the top two individuals earning a place in the final ten.

For Art Idol '25, a wildcard round was added, an addition that originated on Euro Curo, in which the judges selected ten rejected contestants who were given a second chance. In this special edition, one contestant was selected by the viewer vote – Nancy Hood – and one – Ross Knowles – chosen by the judges. This meant that the next stage began with twelve contestants, rather than the ten in Art Idol '24.

The final stage relocated to a far more lavish visual media set, where all remaining contestants performed live.

Most editions of Art Idol have had a theme, with contestants being required to perform work from a particular movement or artist (no original works were performed at any stage in the competition). Neo-Pagan-Sufi artist, J.J. Melvin, was so adept at imitating Eastern European Body Art of the early 1960s that he progressed to the final, where he planned to perform Gibson Blocker's legendary *Freedom in a Box* only to be censored – as the result of a protest by the coordinators of the Art for the People Scheme, who owned the rights to the piece at the time – and was asked to perform Blocker's earlier *Invisible Cinema* from PearDoc[®] 2022. Again, the judges offered comments, but the results were decided by viewer voting. A live results show was broadcast later in the evening, but, this time, the artist with the lowest number of votes was eliminated, the remainder continuing to the following week, until only the winner remained.

Exceptions to the usual format were limited. In Art Idol '18, Josh Auchincloss was promoted to the live shows when Emily Cullman dropped out. Auchincloss was third in the group in which Cullman had won her place. Also, the first two live shows of Art Idol '22 saw two contestants leave in order to rebalance the numbers after the addition of the two extra performers from the wildcard show.

Since its inception, Π has been founded on the work of the many artist-run initiatives, small galleries and motivated individuals who fuel the city's art scene as much as the larger, more official infrastructure. Π has always extended beyond the confines of Pear Museum and the city's commercial galleries to inhabit derelict and renovated lesser-known sites. The program in 2025 broadened this policy with an increased investment in these spaces – and in individual proposals from the Art Idol contest² – effectively acting as a support mechanism for the art community to attempt twice as much as usual, with everything opening at the same time and with equal billing. It's hard to imagine other biennial organizers putting such trust in a local art scene. Alongside this growing platform were five large scale projects presenting newly-commissioned work by international artists. There was also a series of major new works commissioned by key venues across the city.



PMoCA

As part of Szeeglub's short-lived contribution to Π5², the inmates of the Contemporary Artists' Rehabilitation Center and Stabilizing Scheme (CARCASS) were invited to send artistic instructions for Szeeglub and his assistants to realize at PMoCA. However, somewhat controversially, the majority of artists decided to boycott the project³ with CARCASS's only meaningful artistic contribution being Yaco Colpinueque's similarly dissenting, yet arguably more legitimate, critique, entitled *Vanguardism*.

On April 17th, in an elaborate Holistipatory action, Colpinueque is alleged to have smothered a lobotomized former architecture critic and suspected CARCASS interloper – rumored to have contracted chronic Probitas Jugis through a Zelig-like process of osmosis while in residence – before launching himself out of a bay window with a PearSprings® water cooler in hand and proceeding to walk thirty miles to install the cooler in the middle of South Vermont

Avenue to the adulation of the local population who had gone without water for over a week after supplies were diverted to PearAqua® in a desperate attempt to ensure that the new Octopus's Garden® ride opened on schedule.⁴ It is important to note that Colpinueque's gesture was, effectively, symbolic as, once the initial batch of water ran dry, PearSprings® had no obligation to deliver fresh barrels to the cooler's new address as Colpinueque had failed to inform the company of its change of circumstances within the designated period of time. Irrespective of this, the work was intended to draw attention to the personal, cultural and political sacrifice the artist's father made when he was coerced into allowing PearSprings® to source water from his Embalse Lago Peñuelas settlement in Chile in 2016. At any rate, due to his enforced residency at CARCASS, Colpinueque was unaware of the well-publicized water shortage in parts of LA and mistook the reverence for an acknowledgment of his nod to Matei Bejenaru via Ken Kesey and Woody Allen.

³ The protest presumably came about as a result of the artists' enduring disdain for the 'dictatorship of the curatoriat' and their newly-found honesty and forthrightness brought about by the Probitas Jugis epidemic. The action took the form of each artist being allocated a Π-affiliated curator to whom they would send their instructions. Each read: 1) Construct and erect a cast of David Destino's three-dimensional Oldenbergesque enlargement of Emily Cullman's reproduction of Adam's middle finger. 2) Sit on it and swivel.

⁴ Thankfully for all concerned, the ride opened on schedule. The ceremony was deemed a great success by PearAqua® officials who admitted that Joel Eppinger III's attempts to resuscitate a cryogenically frozen Ringo Starr in time for the event (an attempt which only succeeded in reviving the ex-Beatle's right arm (with which the *Thomas the Tank Engine* star nevertheless, and to his credit, managed to wield the peace signal)) was not in vain as they were secretly dreading the thought of listening to Starr taking the opportunity to promote his latest single, *Liverpool Isn't That Bad*. Incidentally, normal water service returned to South Vermont Avenue a day later.

⁵ In an act of desperation following a week without water, occupants of the new PearHomes® development drank the contents of Dale Gooding's *Gould Bay Maquette in the Form of a Glass Paperweight #2, #3, #5 and #6* (2015-16) resulting in the sculptures requiring a rehydratory trip to RePear Central®. As a consequence of *Gould Bay Maquette in the Form of a Glass Paperweight #2, #3, #5 and #6*'s absence, the *Untitled (Conqueror Smooth Satin)* series (2021) by Patricia Ebbeson blew off Allen Jones's *Table* (1969) and was inadvertently used as a piece of toilet roll by the illegally trespassing (non-guide-)dog of recalcitrant architecture critic, Kermit Brine. The damage to *Untitled (Conqueror Smooth Satin)* has proven difficult to remedy and the dog has since been held accountable in lieu of the prosecution of Brine who pleaded 'diminished responsibility' brought about by PMoCA's overly liberal complimentary wine policy.

⁶ which was generated by the Mount Washington Earthquake of 2015.

⁷ The day the Mount Washington Earthquake struck, there was a Martyr Dome action taking place on Granada Street. The revelers, who were 'reclaiming' the streets against the construction of the Cruise Freeway, ironically found themselves claimed by the streets as the earthquake tore Garvanza apart. Hundreds of radicals died while a minority survived to build the notorious underground settlement known to those above ground as Cavernopolis. It is suspected that, in the weeks and months following the earthquake, the survivors scavenged for goods from the North Figueroa Street PearMart® which was dragged down with them. It is believed that, over the following ten years, the radicals, and presumably some supermarket workers, have set about reconstructing the remains of high-rise buildings, water pipes, trees etc – which were also sunk into the ground as a result of the earthquake – in a bid to create a society based on their radical (and otherwise) beliefs. Apparently, a tanning salon fell into Cavernopolis during the earthquake and, according to intelligence reports, inhabitants take it in turns to use the sun beds medicinally to compensate for their complete lack of exposure to the sun's natural rays.

⁸ It is interesting to note that Partovi has recently been recruited by Kenneth Mader's New York gallery while her counterparts, Marguerite Gruin and Coretta Meyes, have been overlooked. Needless to say, Gruin and Meyes are disgruntled by this decision and Partovi's apparent lack of integrity in accepting the arrangement. It is believed that Gruin and Meyes have been taken under the wing of  who has a wealth of experience of the fickle nature of the artworld. It is rumored that the artist formerly known as Cullman has assimilated the two artists' identities into her symbol and that the group has engaged in activities of a neo-Pagan-Sufi nature in alliance with J.J. Melvin.

⁹  has claimed to have contacted Arthur Russell in a recent séance who denies any part in the incident stating that the last time he acted upon the living world was during a DJ performance by Jimi Lopez at PICA London in which Lopez was attempting (unsuccessfully) to mix between *Is It All Over My Face* and a piece of contemporary post-punk-disco-not-disco. Russell allegedly whispered in Lopez's ear, 'We gave this one an irregular tempo to keep DJs of the era on their toes – you can probably pick up a bootleg these days that's been dumbed down for easy mixing.'

PMoCA, offsite venue, South Vermont Avenue

PMoCA also presented Mark Zadikov's ambitious project at the newly developed PearHomes® apartments on South Vermont Avenue. Here, Zadikov transformed one of the showrooms into a functioning art gallery, accumulating a substantial quantity of art works which either resembled household objects or previously enjoyed the status of 'household object' before being claimed as art. *The Showroom* included Ernest Eakins's *Neo-Realist Kaleidoscope (Window)* (2025), *THIS IS A WARDROBE* and *THIS IS A CHAIR AS WELL* (both 2023) by Janine James, Ernest Eakins's *R. Mutt Centenary Edition* (2017), Dale Gooding's *Gould Bay Maquette in the Form of a Glass Paperweight #2, #3, #5 and #6* (2015-16),⁵ Allen Jones's *Chair, Table and Hat Stand* (1969) and Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) and *Bottle Rack* (1914). Through this project, Zadikov straddles the boundary between artist and curator while drawing much-needed attention to the housing market at a difficult time for the sector.

Pearplex

One Saturday in August 2024, Polish actor and stuntman, Arthur Gauger, attempted to walk between the precipices of Los Angeles's Granada Canyon.⁶ He stepped boldly into space, sliding his feet forward, one after the other, on a cable slung between the rock faces, more than a hundred meters above the subterranean sprawl of Cavernopolis.⁷ Gauger's high-wire walk was captured from several viewpoints by post-digital pioneer, Kay Partovi,⁸ while Gauger was also provided with a lightweight PearCam® to record his journey and offer an extra dimension to the resulting hologrammatic projection, entitled *Π Wire*.

It was a warm, sunny day with a light breeze – conditions were ideal for the forthcoming events. Despite this, fifty meters into his journey, Gauger hesitated; the view from his PearCam® records the severe recoil of the wire and a sideways tremor, as though the cable were being plucked by an almighty cellist.⁹ At this point, Gauger immediately began to reverse, gingerly making his way back towards safety, feeling behind him for every step. As the stricken funambulist reached the halfway point of his retreat, Partovi could be heard shouting questions frantically in his direction and, although her words cannot be deciphered, they provoked sporadic replies of, 'Yes!.....Yes!..... Yes!'¹⁰ At this point, in part due to the tension being experienced, by both artist and performer, the

¹⁰ Allegedly, as an uncanny result of the recent open-air screening of Ken Loach's social realist film, *Kes*, in Pear Park, the (admittedly small) American Kestrel population of the park which, only a week ago, had been so captivated by their species's unexpected media exposure, emulated their film star hero (action shots of the kestrel in *Kes* were played by a young Frank Bernstein) and took Gauger's protracted exclamation as a cue to perch on his shoulders and along the eight yards of his balancing pole. As the influx of birds settled, Gauger froze and looked left then right, providing PearCam® footage reminiscent of that yielded by Hitchcock's visionary techniques employed in *The Birds*. With a dozen kestrels perched on either side, Gauger was weighed down to the extent that the ends of his long, drooping pole provided him with a center of gravity below the wire, giving him more sense of balance than a person might achieve while hanging from the wire.

As a novice in the world of funambulism, Partovi did not realize that the birds had inadvertently assisted Gauger in his, now rejuvenated, quest and, at this point, took the intuitive step of calling upon Assassinate To Accumulate (ATA) head marksman, Tareck J'Arc, to pick off the birds with his Bi-Barrel SniPear®. (A Bi-Barrel gun was necessary so as to eradicate the birds two at a time and maintain the balance of the pole and Pole). Here, the reference to Noah's ark is quite explicit. Even one of the planet's most experienced marksmen had to show exceptional levels of concentration as the cable bounced up and down under the weight of Gauger and the kestrels. (Incidentally, Gauger and the Kestrels has since been adopted as the name of a Cavernopolis band, previously known as The Miners, who play in a variety of underground venues.) Just as J'Arc took aim, Gauger received a Pear Online Extra-Sensory Perception (POEPS®) Alert informing him that these were the last remaining American Kestrels in existence. On receiving this news, Gauger lifted his arms and exclaimed, 'Don't shoot' and, in doing so, broke J'Arc's previously unflinching concentration which resulted in him lifting the butt of the SniPear® a fraction of a millimeter, which was enough to send the bullets towards Gauger's marginally raised shoulders and the kestrels' unsuspecting shins. Consequently, Gauger and the kestrels plummeted towards Cavernopolis and, just before potential impact, Gauger managed to activate his parachute. (It is alleged that, unbeknown to Partovi, New York gallerist, Kenneth Mader, had provided the funambulist with a parachute and directed him to settle in Cavernopolis with a view to setting up a gallery and, in doing so, gathering intelligence concerning the radical inhabitants' activity and potential to terrorize the civilized world above. Whether or not this allegation can be substantiated remains to be seen but, on his arrival, Gauger was greeted by the Cavernopolites with a windfall bird banquet of considerable proportions. While accepting the meal graciously, Gauger simultaneously transmitted a POEPS® Alert to the Pear Society for the Protection of Birds (PSPB), which is incensed by the culling, and has deemed the American Kestrel extinct. Contrary to popular belief, two of the birds feared dead as a result of the *Π Wire* sniper attack only lost their legs and are being treated in the underground city by some radical bird lovers. Over a two month period, the underground community pioneered prosthetic legs for the birds. This seemingly benign procedure led to controversy at the 2025 Plumlympics as it was deemed that the birds had an unfair advantage in the speed walking event due to their powerful prosthetic legs, which actually bring both feet off the ground at once which is against the rules. Beyond controversy over the fake-legged competitors, the very fabric of the Plumlympics came under attack from the Birds Against Regeneration (BAR) group. BAR claimed that the Plumlympics is a pretext to *improve* the natural habitat. Genuine regeneration, according to BAR, benefits local birds; when 'regeneration' means displacement it is little more than a land grab. On the outskirts of Boston, the construction of the Treetop Village displaced a chirping class neighborhood. In Chicago, the Plumlympics provided the opportunity to convert Forest Glen public nests and bird baths, the oldest such facilities in the US, into mixed use development and to displace low-income birds (mainly of African American origin) from the down-branch area. In total, about 1,600 public nesting units were lost. The trees were situated on prime nest estate, near PSPB HQ and opposite the bird market. This process resulted in an influx of bourgeois birds from up-branch areas. Consequently, local shops began to stock organic worms that were beyond the price range of the chirping class birds and so on.

Pear sources can reveal that during the first week of his stay in the subterranean community, Gauger discovered a remarkably developed, if not conventional, society which could boast an art movement that had collectively preserved the body of Frank Bernstein (who plummeted between the cliffs of the Granada Canyon earlier in the year having fallen from a plane) as they appear to hold him in high esteem on account of his undoubted contribution to neo-method-acting. As a testament to this respect, the radicals plan to remove him from his tomb and place him round the table at AGMs.



PearCam® footage of Gauger in the early stages of his act.

footage becomes quite unreliable¹¹ and, as such, Partovi has resourcefully edited it into more of an abstract hologram than a documentary account. While the sudden change of format is quite confusing for the viewer, it does aptly represent the dizzying turn of events.

A fall is only a fall and, as a metaphor for Emily Cullman's *Adam and Eve Tempted by the Pear*, a botched high-wire act cannot fail.

Premiered at $\Pi 5^2$, the hologram brings to mind Kermit Brine's impromptu scaling of the flagpole at the Pear Museum on its opening night in March 2021.¹² Ironically, Brine's alcohol-fuelled death-defying flamboyance stood him in better stead than Gauger's considered and painstakingly rehearsed professionalism.¹³ Standing in the middle of Partovi's four-screen installation in the Pearplex, I asked myself, what if Gauger had not fallen? As it is, I have little doubt that Gauger's plummet makes π *Wire* more riveting. A fall, after all, is only a fall, in a business as risky as Gauger's and, as a metaphor for Emily Cullman's *Adam and Eve Tempted by the Pear*, a botched high-wire act cannot fail.

Brine's alcohol-fuelled death-defying flamboyance stood him in better stead than Gauger's painstakingly rehearsed professionalism.

Pear Vengeance, offsite venue at Pico Boulevards

Of the commissions made especially for $\Pi 5^2$, Brazilian hologramatist Nasha Welmills's is the most poignant. Music echoes through an empty space in a warehouse near Pico Boulevards acquired by Pearplex. In the basement, a looped hologramatic projection shows Funk Carioca band, Poder, singing about 'Student Y', a young Brazilian female raped and murdered in LA in 2023, whose body was hidden under the floor of Los Angeles California Temple of The Church of David Destino of Latter-day Saints on Santa Monica Boulevard. The song is played twice, the first time sung by lead singer, Thiago Sperafico, the second by a naked, unnamed actress. Much of the time, the actress doesn't bother to mime as she crouches before the camera. Her nakedness is somehow less disturbing than the emptiness of the space. The music rises through the floorboards. That's it. What really works is the dynamic between the hologram and real space, the emptiness and how sound fills it, what is visible and what is hidden.¹⁴

Folk Art: Weaverville, offsite venue at W. Olympic Boulevard

Folk Art: Weaverville's contribution to the festival introduced a peculiar dialectic between the unconventional and the traditional. Penny Fortinberry's *Bread Bin* used a (traditional) baking recipe to make an (unconventional) artwork which involved the distribution of the resulting cakes. *Bread Bin*, which explored the interactions of the viewer within the installation space, involved a kitchen being set up in the gallery's allocated offsite venue with visitors and passers-by invited to become involved with baking cakes, drinking

tea and sharing recipes and stories. The kitchen was decorated with traditional furniture handcrafted by Folk Art: Weaverville's foremost artisans while, each evening, the space was transformed into an informal concert venue in which musicians Rex Wagoner and Jackie Strait (guitars) and Cobra Corrie and Omokok Clark (pedal steel) accompanied Fortinberry singing country music classics.

Pear Museum

Finally, let us consider the centerpiece of $\Pi 5^2$. Commissioned by Pear Museum, J.J. Melvin's *Invisible Cinema (After Blocker)* saw the artist recreate his earlier recreation (for Art Idol '25) of Gibson Blocker's *Invisible Cinema* (2022). Against a wall in the foyer of Pear Museum, Melvin installed a replica of the concrete chamber used in his performance in the final of the Art Idol contest. For the duration of the festival, the artist enacted brutally extreme forms of self-defilement which were unseen, yet sensed in many ways, by his audience. Blocker's original piece could be considered the quintessential example of art activism, with replicas of the chamber installed at the East Executive Avenue visitor's entrance of The White House Museum, Washington DC; outside Westminster Hall, The Museum of UK Parliament, London; and the visitor drop-off point on Parliament Drive at The Parliament of Australia Museum, Canberra. Blocker used the (then) newly developed Pear Online Temporary Clone Translocation® (POTCT®) software, to transmit the performance simultaneously to these locations as a way of drawing attention to the plight suffered by innocent citizens at the hands of the Bush administration in the early part of the century. It is also interesting to note that, as POTCT® was in the early stages of development, and the project required the translocation of a clone to a very precise area, it could not be guaranteed that each clone would position itself inside its designated chamber. As a result, the Westminster Hall clone performed its obscenity in full public view, thus adding considerably to the urgency of the

action.¹⁵ Melvin's interpretation, which confines the spectacle to Pear Museum, has borrowed more of the sentiments of martyrdom and, ultimately, the hunting down of celebrity status from Blocker's *Freedom in a Box* than the political engagement of *Invisible Cinema*.



J.J. Melvin, *Invisible Cinema (After Blocker)* (view before installation of front wall), 2025.

Conclusion

It is interesting to note the varying degrees to which the individual artworks stand up to the festival's proposed theme of 'religious diversity' and 'the boundaries of communication in a post-racial world'. PMoCA engages with 'the evolving landscape of belief' through its exploration of the displaced Mapuche community of Embalse Lago Peñuelas, Arthur Gauger's fall during the Pearplex's π *Wire* is an undoubted reference to the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Pear Vengeance's project concerns a murder victim buried under a church, Folk Art: Weaverville's kind distribution of cakes could be viewed in the spirit of 'love your neighbor as yourself' while Pear Museum's re-staging of *Invisible Cinema* is a bit of an anomaly. Ultimately, it becomes apparent that artistic quality and autonomy of sorts defines these works. Unbeknownst to him, the late Szeeglub has allowed the artists to break free of his overarching narrative and, in the process, pulled off a top-notch biennial.

¹¹ It has been jibed in the alternative art press that Partovi developed Parkinson's disease halfway through shooting the material. This remark is disrespectful to Partovi and to those with Parkinson's disease and reminds us of the double-edged sword that is today's media freedom as advocated by Pear Corp. Although it is frustrating and, at times, offensive to read such demeaning journalism, we must continue to tolerate it as censorship only adds fuel to the fire. If, as suspected,  is responsible for this remark, it comes as a surprising act of petulance considering that  has recently been selected to represent Pear Museum at the Pear Art Fair for the first time in four years.

¹² See S. Sinden, 'Concept, Delegation, Production: Three Parallel Voices on the Art of Todd Cross', *Pear: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry, Issue 07, 2021* (Los Angeles: Pear Press), 2021, pp. 32-33.

¹³ This brings to mind comparisons between sporting achievements of the past (for example, Northern Irish

footballer, George Best, was known to have bottles of beer thrown at him from the stands and his reaction was to drink the beer, throw the bottles off the park and get on with the game) and today's strict nutritional regimes, the focus on athleticism over ability and the use of new technology to make things easier for the players.

¹⁴ Halfway through the first week of $\Pi 5^2$, the mainstream press revealed that the Pearplex had not consulted the victim's family apart from through a token letter sent in retrospect via the Brazilian Embassy. This resulted in an uprising of the Downtown Brazilian community and the sabotaging of the exhibit. This attack is not believed to be in any way connected to the well-publicized Szeeglub sculpture vandalism.

¹⁵ It was not long before a member of PearPolice® arrived to place the obligatory police hat over the clone's bloody crotch before leading him away and allegedly subjecting him to acts of torture which the clone laughed off as harking back to the archaic methods endorsed by former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair (a contemporary of George W. Bush). It is then said that, in an act of charity, the clone drew the police's attention to such contraptions of the 16th century as the Scavenger's Daughter which compressed the body to the extent that blood was forced from the nose and ears. It is believed that, upon providing such information, the clone was released from custody and offered a post as special advisor. It was one of Gibson Blocker's last wishes that his clone should turn his back on secretive police work and return to the field of Body Art where he could be of great service. Alas, this was never to be and the clone's career in the PearPolice® has gone from strength to strength with the recent high-profile invention, in collaboration with Joel Eppinger III, of the POTCT® Pot (also known as the Deep Brain Thrombo) which uses translocation software to project the victim around the globe to such an extent in such a short period of time that blood is forced from the brain.

Contributors

Josh Auchincloss

At twenty years old, Josh Auchincloss has become one of the youngest people to publish two autobiographies. *Still Getting Away With It* is available in all PearBooks® stores.

Rita Birnbaum

Rita Birnbaum is a freelance writer living in San Diego. She has recently published 'From Minor to Major', a text on the San Diego alternative art scene. She is currently working on the monograph of J.J. Melvin, which has a working title of *From Intellectual Eccentric to Populist Protagonist* and will be published by Pear Press early next year.

Alan D'Aresier

Having spent several years as chief arts editor of *Newspear*, Alan D'Aresier harbors ambitions to leave art behind and retreat into pig farming in a nod to 20th century Russian architect, Berthold Lubetkin.

Zander Fackelmann

Zander Fackelmann received his B.A. with honours from PearUni II,® in Creative Interdisciplinary Studies. He is currently assistant director of Pear Ministry of Culture and Sport at PearUni II. An expert in sport-art, he edited the accompanying publication to the mid-career retrospective of Ben H. Ghuattin, *It's Only a Game* which is available from all PearBooks® stores.

Marcel Henry

A specialist on ambient music, protest song and informaskat (an informative strain of skat singing), Marcel Henry is Professor of Post-postmodern Studies at Pear Academy of Music in Los Angeles. He has been writing about music and theory since the mid-1990s.

Jacqueline Schardt

Jacqueline Schardt is Director of the Core Program, a post-graduate artist and critical studies residency program affiliated with the Museum of African and Amerindian Art, Detroit. Her area of study is Post-postmodern and Post-post-contemporary art, literature, film and theory. She has completed papers on the use of Post-post-structuralist thought and archival practices in the visual arts.

Susan Sinden

Over the past three years, Susan Sinden has co-founded and served as Creative Director for Pear PD, a post-digital media studio, and online marketing agency, Pear Worldwide. Her book, *This Is Not Magritte*, is available exclusively at http://www.pearjournal.com/shop/pear_books_pear_books.html

Pear Documentary Film Festival 2026

March 23 - April 22

Featuring

Josh Auchincloss

Patricia Babcox

Dianne Beachy

Americo Burgheim

Shirlee Brumley

Ernest Eakins

Dale Gooding

Thom Jennosa (t.b.c)

Jimi Lopez

J.J. Melvin

Danila Mkenya

Kay Partovi

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