

loral purple. The latter work's geometry carves illusionistic space. We seem to be gazing down—plunges into the depths. Vasarely is reaching for '9-88, implies, and the infinite is terrifying, even *Metagalaxie*, 1959-61, he is reaching for the mystery of the universe. Terror and numinosity, that great voyager in infinite space, seems of lost gods. *Quasar-Kek*, 1971, another masterpiece. A quasar is a quasi-stellar radio source. Do the serious celestial phenomena? Or are the gods to know. Exploring the heavens, rhythmically his visionary, cosmological art, he fathoms the living work bespeaking the puzzle of the beyond.

—Donald Kuspit

er LERY

group exhibition, "Dress the Form" contained contributions from nearly thirty individual artists collaborative and found efforts. In an exuberantly red in part by the catholic formalism of Henry, Hudson, New York, coordinating artist Nancy further collapse the differences between professional and formal, and—especially—functional intended that the show's objects be considered apparent qualities rather than for any attending and the result was a refreshingly unburdened collage of ideas of work, value, and the visual swirled and snow globe. A more-is-more strategy always risks it, but here the exercise of curatorial intelligence sh.

main body of the show via one of her own sculpture-reception area and Dawn Cerny's silk-screened and er in an interstitial hallway, Shaver also contextualized with a flurry of framed quotations. These included (TASTE CAN'T HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT ART is) (IT'S A BAD MISTAKE TO GIVE A PEJORATIVE "DECORATIVE") alongside the artist's own straight-tion (FROM HENRY I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO USE OF COLOR, SHAPE, AND TEXTURE, AS WELL AS HOW AR REVEAL ITSELF AMID A QUANTITY OF DISPARATE statements were indubitably on point, but the gesture though mild, still felt out of place in a gallery.

space featured Shaver's *Quilt*, 2016, a wall-filling drawings, paintings, photographs, and collages that touch of sculptures and found objects. The most, if only for their relative dominance and consistency Shaver for which she upholstered and assembled to suggest improvisations on a children's conque Rubik's cube, or an unusually homespun game ptures by Beka Goedde had a similar appeal. Cast decorated with enamel, chalk, acrylic, and silver leaf, colored arrangements also deal in a handmade not-where, a stack of porcelain bowls by Heather-Anne tuckets and boxes from Henry. There was also a ll table, a plastic dinosaur . . .

t of wall-based works appeared haphazard at first, larities and repetitions here too that just about pre-ning from collapsing under its own weight. Again,



View of "Nancy Shaver," 2016. Photo: Adam Reich

Shaver's solo works enjoyed the lion's share of the real estate; many were takes on the block sculptures, in which variously colored and patterned dress fabrics are pulled taut over clusters of small, chunky stretchers—think early Yinka Shonibare. Intimately related were Adriana Farmiga's charming watercolors of the same decked-out blocks, while standouts by other artists included a woodblock print by Annette Wehrhahn that diagrams, in deadpan style, the ins and outs of interpersonal communication, and a set of gently experimental abstractions by Joyce Robins that ease glazed and painted clay into a variety of unexpected formats, from flat panels to pockmarked balls. Finally, Shaver's project proposed a uniquely relaxed way of looking: Just dive in.

—Michael Wilson

"MAMI" THE KNOCKDOWN CENTER

Organized by Dyani Douze and Ali Rosa-Salas, "MAMI," an exhibition of work by five artists and one collective—all woman-identified artists of color—was an "offering" to the water deities known as Mami Wata. Often depicted as half-female, half-fish, Mami Wata were central to the precolonial matriarchal spiritual systems of West and Central Africa. Their image eventually spread to the Caribbean via the slave trade, and they are worshiped throughout the African diaspora today. Mami Wata are power incarnated: They reign over fertility, sexual desire, and material wealth, but are also capable of inciting flooding, drought, and impotence. They are harbingers of healing or destruction, and their power is reflected in the history of their diasporic circulation.

This premise prompts an unexpected question: Is goddess feminism making a comeback? Matriarchy, fertility, and the (quasi-utopian) promise of a peaceful prehistory appealed to many feminists in the 1970s. But like many of the truly radical strategies of the second wave, goddess feminism had unfortunate limitations. The universalized archetype spoke to a predominantly white worldview in which specific histories were elided and racial difference erased. Mami Wata, by contrast, are flexibly gendered, pointedly racialized, and inextricably linked to histories of domination. The work in "MAMI" dealt with a set of concerns, methods, and media as multifarious as Mami Wata themselves. (The show's programming—which included double Dutch, DJ sets, line dancing, healing workshops, and a marketplace—was similarly ambitious.)

Some of the most striking works on view explored the palliative and transformative possibilities of technology. Doreen Garner's installation *Untitled Dissection*, 2016, featured a graphic video of scalpels cutting

through flesh, spliced with endoscopic footage, displayed alongside assemblages of hair weave, condoms, jewels, zip ties, crystals, and pearls overflowing from eerily anthropomorphic forms. The technology at play here was that of corporeal control, but Garner's sculptures resist: Objects of desire, consumerism, and black culture overpower their containers, testifying to the oppositional power of the flotsam and jetsam of everyday life.

Salome Asega and Ayodamola Okunseinde in collaboration with Derek Schultz, *Iyapo Films* (012), 2016, video, color, silent, 1 minute 27 seconds. From the series "Iyapo Repository," 2015–, From "MAMI."



A video by Salome Asega featured the artist in a glittering, full-body spandex suit wrapped in tubes of bubbling water. The work is part of "Iyapo Repository," 2015–, a series produced with artist Ayodamola Okunseinde. Together they imagine possible futures for people of African descent through fictional objects: in this case, a suit that simulates the feeling of being underwater. Designed to heal the trauma of the slave trade, the piece anticipates a future in which centuries-old wounds are still fresh. Other works in "MAMI" deployed water imagery to equally powerful effect: Aya Rodriguez Izumi's *Offering*, 2016, comprises layers of metallic-blue tinsel, suspended from the ceiling in the form of a wave; and Nona Faustine's photograph *She Came to Me One Day*, 2012, depicts the artist's nude body at rest on large, jagged rocks at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean.

Johannesburg- and Tel Aviv-based MALAXA use "decolonial aesthetics" to explore the politics of digital representation. Their project *Exquisite.POC*, 2016—a stock image library of people of color, by people of color—took the form of a digital collage featuring search boxes with phrases such as BEDOUIN BABE WAITING FOR THE MOON #EID next to images of men and women in hijabs, pink wigs, dashikis, and hoop earrings. In her video *TFW Your Data*, 2016, Rodan Tekle layered the content of her YouTube, Twitter, SoundCloud, Snapchat, Dropbox, and Facebook accounts into a remixed self-portrait. Tekle stages her selfhood as a whirling eddy of data—a frenetic presence amid the internet's oceanic expanse—but not without respite. Like Mami Wata's power unleashed, moments of affirmation and serenity cut through the multimedia noise and were reminders of the radicality of stillness.

—Maya Harakawa

WASHINGTON, DC

Bettina Pousttchi

THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

Since the 2009 inauguration of its project-based series "Intersections," under the direction of curator Vesela Sretenović, the Phillips Collection has sought to establish a meaningful dialogue between its rich holdings

of modern art and the dynamic production. The series' most recent the Berlin-based artist Bettina Pousttchi, and the avant-garde legacy. Pousttchi's interventions into the architectural and exhibition spaces that host her art ignite conversations about the work passed down and memorialized. This was achieved through an installation of a small selection of black-and-white holdings of the museum's permanent collection.

Each of the five teetering sculptures between 2010 and 2014) was titled *Tatlin* (followed by the roman numerals which they were constructed). Pousttchi refers to and extend a conversation about the work of sculptural homages to the unknown Vladimir Tatlin. Flavin's neon "Tatlin" and conceptual legacies of Tatlin's *International*, 1920, employ materials that qualify and undermine the monument. This is similarly achieved in Pousttchi's to mundane but politically charged (sculptures). Ranging in height from the towers an almost human presence, the artist fabricated and assembled the appearance of having been a busy and funnel pedestrian traffic in the presences in the nation's capital movements of tourists circulating through American political and ideological spaces visible in political protests and marches from onlookers. Harakawa, of the avant-garde, Pousttchi's work of sculpture by activating the space between interior and exterior. Pousttchi's like exoskeletons render transparent internal cavities of their structure participating in a broader dialogue about sculpture's historical relationship to monumentality and its place in the social sphere. The incorporation of white neon tubes propped up the structure nods to Flavin's work of the monument as something permanent, replaceable, and inhumanly tech, and responds ambiguously to the question: Are these artifacts of a project that has retreated into the past or do they harness a power revealed in the future?

Pousttchi's small selection from the Phillips's permanent collection included a constellation of white photographs from the 1940s by a diverse cohort of international avant-garde photographers including Berenice Abbott and Alfred Stieglitz. But it was Pousttchi's position of Russian Constructivist and delicate sculptures, *Linear*