

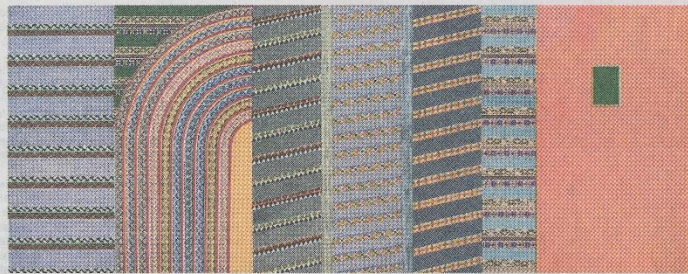
# The New York Times

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2021

ROBERTA SMITH | ART REVIEW



JOYCE KOZLOFF AND DE MOORE GALLERY



## Celebrating a Riotous Decor That Keeps Eyes Moving

A new exhibition at Bard looks back at the irreverent Pattern and Decoration movement.

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, N.Y. — What is art history made of? Everything that happened within a given period, location or style? Or is it just the best of what happened? These questions form an eternal opposition between inclusiveness and quality. They crop up — and sometimes openly conflict — in “With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972-1985,” a rich, if flawed survey at the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College.

In the mid-1970s, the irreverent upstart movement Pattern and Decoration, or P&D, was one of the first cracks in the Minimalism-Conceptualism hegemony. The other was “New Image Painting,” an abstraction-tinged figuration named for its exhibition at the Whitney in 1978. But New Image never really cohered. In contrast P&D, at least for a while, was something of an onslaught. It favored patterns appropriated from a global array of textiles, ceramics and architecture but also from previously disregarded Americana like quilting, embroidery and cake decoration. A self-identified group, it was deliberately formed, and named, by a core of sympathetic artists that soon expanded to include numerous like-minded sensibilities.

It offered ravishing alternatives to mainstream art in both New York and Los Angeles (it was biocoastal) and to the general manliness of modernism. It disdained divisions between Western and non-Western art; high and low and art and craft. It elevated women's work and included many female artists. It was casual and unpretentious, too easy to like perhaps, but also proof that there was art after Conceptualism's death-of-the-object stance.

P&D also had, for a while, its own champion, the art historian Amy Goldin (1926-1978), who advocated Islamic art as a source for contemporary artists. While at the University of California, San Diego, Goldin taught two of the movement's most prominent artists. One was Robert Kushner, who would start out in New York as a performance artist staging fashion shows of friends wearing lavish patchwork capes (and not much else) that he then started hanging on the wall; the exhibition sums up his progress in three works. Kim MacConnel meanwhile took to staining bed-sheets with exuberant designs, achieving a very unpainterly flimsiness. Echoing both Matisse and Hawaiian shirts, MacConnel's motifs also decorated sofas, side tables and lamps, as his environment happily attests here. Another avid proponent of the style was John Perreault (1937-2015), critic for The Village Voice and then The SoHo Weekly News, who organized “Pattern Painting,” the first large overview of P&D at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in 1977.

The movement also had its own dealer in



MARY GRIGORIADIS AND ACCOIA GRIFFIN FINE ART



JANE KAURMAN

Holly Solomon, who opened her commercial gallery on West Broadway in 1975, and exhibited many of its artists.

How does P&D look 40 years later? Less interesting for itself than for the permission it granted succeeding generations of artists who weave, quilt, sew and make pottery without a second thought. Just as the critic Robert Hughes once cruelly referred to Color Field Painting as “giant watercolors,” too much of P&D could be called “giant wrapping paper,” pattern for pattern's sake and lacks scale and punch.

The show has been curated by Anna Katz working with Rebecca Lowery, assistant curator for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where it debuted in 2019. They have opted for inclusiveness over selectiveness, leaving no stone unturned. It's only a slight exaggeration to say that the exhibition represents almost every artist who was in any P&D show anywhere. And there were many, according to the list in the show's catalog. Reading it, you can hear small museums across the country sigh with relief: Here was something that was accessible, visually pleasing and easily transported, after all that Minimalist sternness, blankness and weight.



CYNTHIA CARSON





ROBERT ZAKANITCH AND WHITNEY MUSEUM



FAITH RINGOLD AND ACA GALLERIES/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

to squeeze regularly spaced, unusually tactile little flowers across the walls of a gallery here. Wielding a big, loaded brush, Zakanitch created opulent enlargements of the more demure wallpaper he remembered from his grandparents' house. Kozloff's ambitious riffs on Islamic art using silk and canvas remain too close to their sources; these patterns were intensified by mosaic in her public works of the late 1970s and '80s; her current P&D adjacent paintings may be her best.

Miriam Schapiro, who, like Kozloff, helped formulate some of the basic tenets of P&D, looks good in the catalog but is represented by "Heartland," a horrible painting from 1985. Something earlier and better should have been chosen, although a blown-up detail of "Heartland" makes a fabulous endpaper in the catalog. Better works include a quiltlike painting made with stamped motifs by Susan Michod; Merion Estes's "Primavera," a fountain of pink brush strokes; and Mary Grigoriadis's luscious paintings of giant, and archaic, architectural details. The Doric capital of "Rain Dance" reminds us that when first made, Greek temples were brightly painted.

Adding verve to the proceedings are relevant works by briefly aligned '60s art stars: Lucas Samaras, Frank Stella, Billy Al Bengston, Alan Shields and Lynda Benglis, who is quoted saying "I was never really part of their gang."

The show is least predictable and more rewarding as it ventures further afield, for artists whose efforts were related to but not usually part of the gang because, for one thing, they were not white. While Howardena Pindell's work has been present in P&D shows almost from the start, other relatively new additions include the efforts of Al Loving, Sam Gilliam, William T. Williams, Emma Amos and most of all Faith Ringgold. In 1974, Ringgold painted bright geometries inspired by African Kuba cloth on narrow canvases and then, looking to Tibetan thangka, extended them top and bottom with — apparently — pieces of ersatz tourist blankets, sewn and appliquéd by her mother. They must be the most assertive scroll paintings you'll ever see.

With configurations like this, a sleeker, less diluted "With Pleasure" emerges. Ours is a period of vital rediscovery of artists from the recent and distant pasts, but they don't all deserve rescue from the dustbin of history.

Pattern and Decoration was pushed aside by the 1980s onslaught of Neo-Expressionism and Pictures Art. Yet, the example it set is more alive than ever, especially with so many non-Western artists drawing on their own craft traditions. A survey of P&D's reverberations is by now too large to be encompassed with a single exhibition.

#### With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972-1985

Through Dec. 11 at Hessel Museum of Art at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.; 845-758-7598, ccs.bard.edu.



© THE CENTER FOR CURATORIAL STUDIES, BARD COLLEGE; OLYMPIA SHANNON



ROBERT KUSHNER AND HESSEL MUSEUM

Early enthusiastic essays by Goldin and Perrault are included in the show's handsome catalog, a veritable P&D handbook with a handsome cover derived from Jane Kaufman's "Embroidered, Beaded Crazy Quilt" (1983-85), which comes across here as among the movement's few masterpieces. Katz approaches her subject from every angle, its relationship to feminism, multiculturalism and the counterculture, as well as its (now questionable) cultural appropriation and even its underlying debt to Minimalism (the use of repetition and the grid).

The six other essays include one by Lowery that focuses on a little-known site of P&D goings-on in Boulder, Colo., that especially nurtured the ceramic artist Betty Woodman, one of the movement's mainstays. Her glazed deconstructions of vase-sconce combinations here have, like MacConnel's efforts, an impeccable sense of color and scale.

Other standouts at the Hessel include tributes to wallpaper by Cynthia Carlson and Robert Zakanitch. Carlson has recreated her 1981 installation "Tough Shift for M.I.T." by once more taking up a pastry tube





INTERNATIONAL A4-9

## Mystery in Australia Mountains

The high country of the south is "remote and beautiful and unpredictable," a place where visitors can be swallowed up without a sound. PAGE A6

NATIONAL A10-17

## Math of Infrastructure Bill

A Congressional Budget Office estimate confirmed suspicions that the sprawling \$550 billion legislation would end up adding billions to the deficit. PAGE A12

## Phoenix Police Under Scrutiny

The Justice Department will look at whether officers discriminate against minorities, use excessive force, retaliate against peaceful protesters or mistreat homeless and disabled people. PAGE A12

BUSINESS B1-5

## Missing the Podium on Ratings

The pandemic has cut into NBC's viewership for the Olympics, typically a festive television event, contributing to complaints from advertisers. PAGE B1

OBITUARIES B16

## Labor Boss With Political Clout

Richard Trumka rose from the Pennsylvania coal mines to the corridors of power as the president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. for the last 12 years. He was 72.

SPORTS B6-15

## A Bronze Worth Its Weight

The U.S. women's soccer team came chasing gold, but after a tough Olympic run, third place is still a "joy." PAGE B11



WEEKEND ARTS C1-12

## A Life Beyond 'S.N.L.' Laughs

A memoir by Cecily Strong isn't so much a recounting of her showbiz career as it is a candid unfurling of her life prompted by the pandemic. PAGE C1



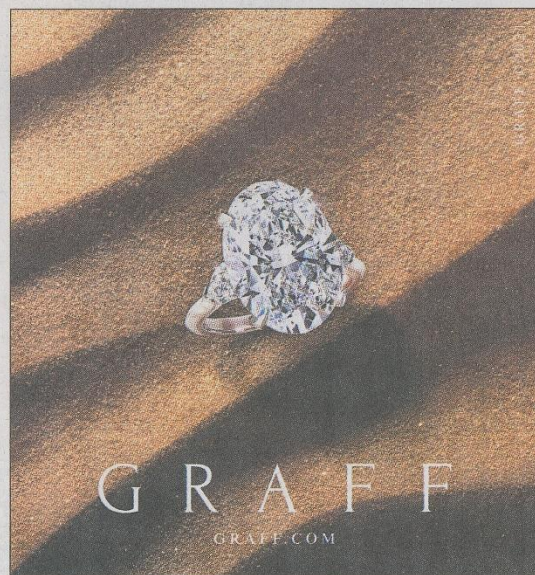
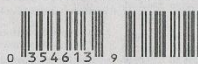
## Celebrating an Artistic Upstart

What became of the Pattern and Decoration movement's riotous décor? A Bard College exhibition looks back at an irreverent style and its brief yet prescient life. A review by Roberta Smith. PAGE C6

OPINION A18-19

David Brooks

PAGE A19



"All the News  
That's Fit to Print"

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## HOW CUOMO TEAM USED RETALIATION TO HUSH ACCUSERS

AIMING TO INSTILL FEAR

Report Details Strategies  
From Inner Circle and  
Outside Loyalists

By LUIS FERRÉ-SADURNI  
and JONATHAN H. BRONKOWICH

The governor's inner circle was in a frenzy: A former state employee had just publicly accused Andrew M. Cuomo of a yearslong sexual harassment campaign against her.

The group huddled in the State Capitol office of Melissa DeBona, the governor's top aide, and launched an effort to discredit the woman, Lindsey Boylan, collecting a box of personnel files filled with sensitive information that they thought would undermine her credibility.

Before they could leak the files to reporters, some names had to be removed. One of the governor's senior advisers hunted for White-Out with the help of an executive assistant — a woman who would later accuse Mr. Cuomo of groping her breast in the Executive Mansion.

That episode in December was just one of many details described in a damaging report from the New York State attorney general this week, which found not only that Mr. Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women, but that a cadre of his top aides and associates engaged in unlawful retaliation against one of the women — retaliation that frightened others into maintaining their silence.

The report laid bare how Mr. Cuomo had come to rely on a small band of advisers — not just his closest government aides, but also a handful of outside loyalists, even consulting leaders of groups dedicated to supporting gay rights and victims of sexual harassment.

Continued on Page A17

## State Assembly Starts to Weigh Impeachment

Governor Gets a Week  
to Offer His Defense

This article is by Michael Gold,  
Jeffery C. Mays and Luis Ferré-  
Sadurni.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has been given until the end of next week to submit evidence in his defense for a wide-ranging State Assembly investigation that seems headed for a vote on the governor's impeachment.

Charles D. Lavine, the chairman of the Assembly's Judiciary Committee, said on Thursday that the Assembly would soon consider "potential articles of impeachment" against the governor, the most vivid indication yet that the Assembly was moving quickly to impeach Mr. Cuomo, a third-term Democrat.

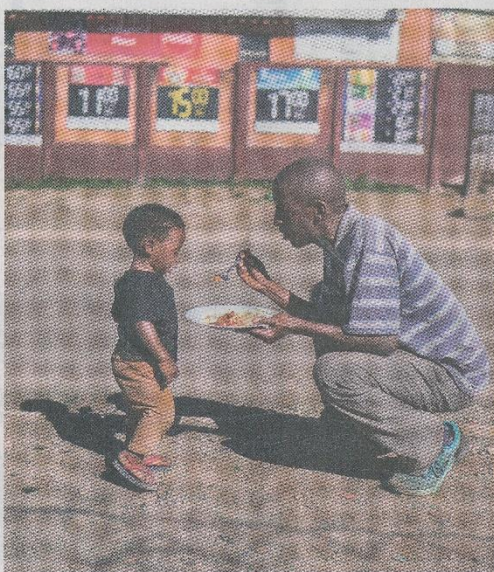
The statement underscored how much Mr. Cuomo's fortunes have changed since a report from the New York State attorney general's office this week concluded that Mr. Cuomo had sexually harassed nearly a dozen women. Mr. Lavine said that the investigation was "nearing completion."

Mr. Cuomo was also stung on Thursday by the defection of two more prominent left-leaning organizations, with a union that represents health care workers asking Mr. Cuomo to step down, and a major fund-raising platform for liberal politicians saying it would no longer process campaign donations to him.

With Mr. Cuomo offering no indication of an imminent resignation, his fate seemed to lie with the State Assembly, whose Democratic leadership held an emergency video meeting on Tuesday, hours after the report was released.

Behind the scenes, lawmakers expressed significant disagreement, scuffling over how quickly to move against the governor. Many of the 50 or 60 lawmakers who spoke favored quickly drafting articles of impeachment based

Continued on Page A16



Sharing a meal provided by a community center in a village near East London, South Africa.

## No Job, No Food: Virus Deepens Global Hunger

By CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM

EAST LONDON, South Africa — Even as thousands died and millions lost their jobs when the Covid-19 pandemic engulfed South Africa last year, Thembekezi Sishi, a single mother, was able to feed her family with the steady support of her father, a mechanic at a Mercedes plant.

When another Covid-19 wave hit in January, Ms. Sishi's father was infected and died within days. She sought work, even going door-

Over 270 Million Who  
Live Hand to Mouth  
Are Pushed to Edge

off by Covid-19, now deep into its second year, has battered millions of people like the Sishi family who had already been living hand to mouth. Now, in South Africa and many other countries, far more

phase of a hunger crisis, jumped to 41 million people currently from 34 million last year, the analysis showed.

The World Food Program sounded the alarm further last week in a joint report with the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, warning that "conflict, the economic repercussions of Covid-19 and the climate crisis are expected to drive higher levels of acute food insecurity in 23 hunger hot spots over the next four months," mostly in Africa but also

Late Edition

Today, mostly sunny, warmer than recent days but not too humid, high 88. Tonight, partly cloudy, low 72. Tomorrow, clouds and sunshine, high 86. Weather map is on Page A20.

## BIDEN ROLLS OUT PLAN TO SHIFT U.S. TO ELECTRIC CARS

KEY TO CLIMATE AGENDA

New Pollution Rules Aim  
to Ramp Up Sales of  
Plug-In Vehicles

By CORAL DAVENPORT

WASHINGTON — President Biden on Thursday announced a multistep strategy aimed at rapidly shifting Americans from gasoline-powered cars and trucks toward electric vehicles — a central part of his plan to reduce the pollution that is heating the planet.

Mr. Biden is first restoring and slightly strengthening auto mileage standards to the levels that existed under President Barack Obama but were weakened during the Trump administration. The new rules, which would apply to vehicles in the model year 2025, would cut about one-third of the carbon dioxide produced annually by the United States and prevent the burning of about 200 billion gallons of gasoline over the lifetime of the cars, according to a White House fact sheet.

The administration next plans to draft even more stringent pollution rules for both passenger vehicles and heavy-duty trucks that are designed to compel automakers to ramp up sales of electric vehicles.

"There's a vision of the future that is now beginning to happen, a future of the automobile industry that is electric — battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric, fuel cell electric," said Mr. Biden, who announced the plan from the South Lawn of the White House before an array of parked electric vehicles, including the Ford F150 Lightning, the Chevrolet Bolt EV and a Jeep Wrangler. "The question is whether we'll lead or fall behind in the future."

Mr. Biden's actions amount to an attempt to overhaul a major American industry in order to better compete with China, which makes about 70 percent of the