

# Your Mind, This Moment

## art and the practice of attention

### Andrea Ackerman

Born 1952, Queens, New York  
Lives and works in New York

#### *Rose Breathing, 2003*

3-D computer animation with stereo sound  
34-second loop  
Museum purchase with funds contributed by  
the Collection Committee  
2007.15



In *Rose Breathing*, the delicate petals of a rose open and close in sequence with the slow measured intake and release of breath on the audio track. As the blush petals tenderly move, however, the image of the rose—pink and veined—also begins to resemble a beating heart. Andrea Ackerman has consistently used Maya, a 3-D modeling animation software, to enable her to create digital

fusions of distinct organic properties. Ackerman's work reflects her scientific background. She studied biophysics in college, and neuroscience in medical school, then trained and practiced as a child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst for years before turning to art. She is interested in the emotional, mental, and physical responses her work generates.

### Sam Tchakalian

Born 1929, Shanghai  
Died 2004, San Francisco

#### *Hole in One, ca. 1990*

Oil on canvas  
Gift of LaVona J. and George Y. Blair  
2004.39



In *Hole in One*, Sam Tchakalian's use of aquatic blue oil paints evokes the serene waters of the sea. The predominantly blue canvas displays the traces of his sweeping gestures that reach beyond arm's length, disrupted sporadically by bursts of white. Tchakalian's spontaneous energy and improvisation create a visually dynamic plane. His application of paint is thick and generous as he uses a palette

knife to articulate the surface. A leading figure of the West Coast Abstract Expressionist movement, Tchakalian created works driven by energetic impulse and the interplay of color to express the individual psyche.

### Jamie Brunson

Born 1955, Coronado, California  
Lives and works in Lamy, New Mexico

#### *Sura, 2002*

Oil and alkyd glaze on panel  
Museum purchase with funds contributed  
by Barbara and William Hyland  
2003.05



Jamie Brunson is a student of Kundalini meditation (a traditional Indian practice based on rhythmic and cyclical breathing). For her, painting serves as a meditative inquiry into the divine. An avid traveler, Brunson has photographed Mughal architecture in northern India and ornamental motifs in Morocco. She is fascinated by the incorporation of Arabic text in design. The title of her work

makes a similar reference; in Arabic, *sura* is the term for a chapter of the Qu'ran. In *Sura*, Brunson evokes a hazy visualization one might have behind closed eyes. At once geometrically flat and subtly atmospheric, her pattern joins together in mesmerizing, organic clusters that may seem to contract and expand hypnotically. Her paintings represent the meditative experience of their making; the repeated actions of her gestures prove to be a test of physical endurance that she likens to a trancelike state. Brunson uses full-body brushstrokes to layer the canvas first with oil paint and then meticulously applies transparent alkyd glaze, working quickly as it drips and dries.

### Tam Van Tran

Born 1966 Kontum, Vietnam  
Lives and works in Los Angeles

#### *Most Secret Butterfly, 2009*

Acrylic, staples, and colored pencil on paper and canvas  
Created in part with funds provided by the James Irvine Foundation  
Commissioned by the Council of 100  
2009.06



Tam Van Tran is a devout Buddhist; for him, nature alludes to meditation and the spiritual exploration of the potential of the human mind. In *Most Secret Butterfly*, Tran embraces chance and chaos. He starts by painting a piece of paper, cutting it into strips, then crimping or punching holes into the strips. Tran then reconnects the pieces using thousands of ordinary office staples. The staples offer support to the strands, yet warp the paper into a three-dimensional sculpture as it emerges from

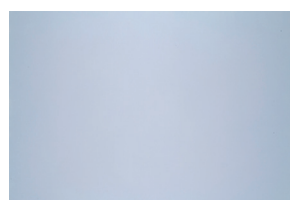
the wall. Tran blurs the boundaries between painting, drawing, and sculpture. Though he treats his materials casually, he extends to them the opportunity to redevelop and heal, as if he were stitching and bandaging a wound.

### Anne Appleby

Born 1954, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Lives and works in Jefferson City, Montana

#### *West I, 2002*

Oil and wax on canvas  
Gift of Paule Anglim  
2012.04.01



The four cardinal directions serve as a basis for Native American cosmology and spirituality, a subject of interest for Anne Appleby. Appleby spent a fifteen-year apprenticeship in Montana with an Ojibwe Indian elder from whom she learned how to observe nature patiently. From her experience

there, she began to reflect upon the fragility of nature and the passing of time. Appleby's seemingly monochromatic works reward similar patience. In *West I*, Appleby evokes the west—symbolized by the color blue—through subtle, overlapping gradations of varied, translucent hues. As one focuses on the surface of the canvas, the subtle application of oil and wax becomes increasingly apparent, revealing Appleby's diligence.

### Ranu Mukherjee

Born 1966, Boston  
Lives and works in San Francisco

#### *Tree of Life (Schinus molle), 2012*

Ink on cotton and silk on wood dowel  
Gift of Barbara and William Hyland  
2012.07.01



In the boughs of the Peruvian pepper tree, cherries, oranges, and pears of past orchards intertwine with solar panels that symbolize the present tech industry in San Jose. Thus is Ranu Mukherjee's tree of life a symbol for the region. Deeply connected to the sun's energy are the economic and social histories of the valley. The orchards once drew harvesters here, and today the tech industry has brought in a new workforce. Mukherjee explores notions of contemporary nomadism and the experience of repeated relocation for work, for school, or for right of asylum. Here, she digitally prints her tree of life onto traditional Indian sari fabric. By combining a textile from her own cultural traditions with new digital printing technology, she emphasizes the interplay between past and present practice. Hung from the wall, the sheer, weightless fabric recalls a thangka, a Tibetan Buddhist painting on cotton or silk that usually depicts a Buddhist deity, scene, or mandala. *Tree of Life* provides the viewer with a new point of contemplation.

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### Mineko Grimmer

Born 1949, Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture, Japan  
Lives and works in Los Angeles

### *Mahogany Music Box, 1989*

Mixed-media construction  
Gift of Katie and Drew Gibson  
2012.08.13

### Performance schedule

Tuesday through Sunday, 12:30 to 3:30 PM



Mineko Grimmer, through sound, punctuates silence. In *Mahogany Music Box*, Grimmer suspends a frozen pyramid of stones over an apparatus made of wood, bamboo, and guitar strings. As the pyramid melts, water and stones fall onto the base, causing the strings to vibrate. The indeterminateness (will one, two, three, or more pebbles fall at once?) places the viewer in a hyper-alert state, on the edge of silence and deliberate but

random sound. In the 1990s, Grimmer collaborated with John Cage, the experimental composer best known for his work *4'33"* (1952) in which he highlighted the absence of intentional sound. Like Cage, Grimmer riffs on the notion of sound guided by chance.

### Chris Fraser

Born 1978, Long Beach, California  
Lives and works in Oakland, California

### *Emmanuelle, 2013*

Glass microspheres, plate glass, aluminum disk, and LED light  
Museum purchase with funds contributed by the Council of 100  
2014.02



Chris Fraser is interested in the physiology of human sight. When one stands parallel to the glass surface of *Emmanuelle*, there is a halo of light, but any motion will bend, break, or even invert the shape into an altogether different manifestation. Through his understanding of light refraction and the mechanics of sight, Fraser creates optical effects that are constantly in flux. As one's vantage point of the work changes, so does the perception of the optical effect. The work itself is the same, however an LED light shines on a surface of glass microspheres, plate glass, and aluminum. Fraser considers the viewer an active participant in his work. For him, to give to the viewer the pleasure of experiencing his or her own intimate bodily awareness of sight and motion is an act of generosity. As Fraser describes, "Open one eye and light becomes image; open both and it becomes space."

### Gail Wight

Born 1960, Sunny Valley, Connecticut  
Lives in Berkeley and works in Stanford, California

### *The Fix, 2016-ongoing*

Abalone, epoxy, lacquer, and gold dust  
Courtesy of the artist



Through kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken ceramics, Gail Wight seeks to heal weather-torn abalone shells by binding them together to create a never-ending form. Wight states that she wishes *The Fix* to grow monstrous. For her, the idea of the monstrous relates to the sublime, indicative of both beauty and terror. Wight collects abalone shells during her visits to Stillwater Cove

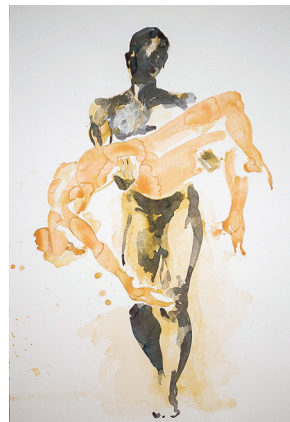
she mends the shell fragments together, she is mindful that abalone—in particular white and black abalone—are on the endangered species list. Moreover, abalone is associated with healing. In crystal healing, the chakras represent the centers of spiritual power in the human body. Abalone is related to the first three chakras and is believed to help with anxiety and stress and also relieve the heart. Visitors are invited to touch and feel the surface of the work. Please note that though the work is sealed, some materials used in the binding process may contain allergens related to poison oak.

### Eric Fischl

Born 1948, New York  
Lives and works in Sag Harbor, New York

### *Untitled, 2001*

Watercolor on paper  
Museum purchase with funds contributed by the Acquisitions Committee  
2013.10.03



In 1995 – 96, Eric Fischl produced a number of paintings while in residence at the American Academy in Rome. His father had recently passed away, and Fischl found himself deeply moved by his immediate surroundings of Christian art and architecture. In *Untitled*, Fischl revisits these paintings via watercolor. The image of the nude man holding the limp body of the woman offers a gender role-reversal of a pietà, the depiction of Mary cradling the dead body of Jesus. Fischl's effortless brushstrokes highlight presence and spirit, transience and immortality. The figures are at once

faint yet vivid—an effect produced by the interaction of the watercolor with the paper—and thus emulate the fragility of both life and death. The tender, loving scene between two mortals plays out against the empty whiteness of the sheet.

### Lesley Dill

Born 1950, Bronxville, New York  
Lives and works in New York

### *Poem Wedding Dress, 1995*

Newspaper, thread, and ink on cloth  
Edition 12 of 20  
Gift of J. Michael Bewley  
2015.07.08



On Lesley Dill's fortieth birthday, her mother gave her a book of Emily Dickinson's poems. Dill said of her experience, "I wasn't slow enough in my mind at that time to read poetry." In response to the nineteenth-century American poet's writing, Dill began to practice meditation and has incorporated Dickinson's poetry into her work. The text that appears in *Poem Wedding Dress* comes from Dickinson's "The Soul has Bandaged moments – (360)," and the dress takes after Dickinson's wardrobe. A spinster, the nineteenth-century American poet lived in rela-

tive isolation writing poetry, most works never read until after her death. In Dill's hands, illegible and scattered upon a women's dress, the words evoke a ghostly presence. The dress represents the body, but the words give the body voice—together generating an experience of sound as well as a visual presence. The source of *Poem Wedding Dress* comes from Dill's original performance of *Dada Poem Wedding Dress* in 1994, which honored women victims of AIDS at a benefit held at Webster Hall in New York. The performer's dress was stripped off by her "bachelors" only to reveal her nude body printed with the same words; the performance emulated the experience of those women affected, or stripped, by the AIDS crisis. Language in Dill's work reveals the intimacy of interior thoughts unspoken.

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

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through Sunday, August 27, 2017

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