

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Modern Painters  
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## Modern Painters Presents 25 Artists to Watch in 2014: Part 1 of 2

BY MODERN PAINTERS | DECEMBER 11, 2013



Rather than looking back over the previous 12 months in our year-end issue of *Modern Painters*, we prefer to look forward. In that spirit, we present our annual list of the brightest emerging artists. These international rising stars represent a broad cross-section of thematic concerns and material approaches. As in years past, we've asked a select group of more established artists, listed below, to nominate younger talents. We believe that artists are the best observers of their peers; and we are grateful for their insight and thrilled to share their recommendations with you.

With thanks to: Dove Allouche, [Shoja Azari](#), Faycal Baghriche, Marius Bercea, Tatiana Blass, Luis Camnitzer, N. Dash, Elmgreen & Dragset, Anne Hardy, [Rashid Johnson](#), Glenn Kaino, Bouchra Khalili, Chris Kraus, Jose Lerma, Eddie Martinez, Ulrike Müller, Shirin Neshat, Kambui Olujimi, Kaz Oshiro, Angel Otero, Alexis Rockman, Amy Sillman, Stanley Whitney, Alexi Worth, Rona Yefman, O Zhang

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## **Malin Arnell**

*Born in Uppsala, Sweden. Lives in Stockholm, Berlin, and New York.*  
“Wherever I am usually works as my studio,” says Arnell of her performance- and research-based work. “It can be in my or someone else’s bed, in the airport or by a kitchen table, in the streets or in a gallery space, in a black box, on a stage, or in a lecture room.” Arnell is a co-founding member of YES! Association/Föreningen JA!—a group that has organized actions at Berlin’s S-Bahn for the NGBK (Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst) in July of this year and at the CCS Bard Galleries in 2012—and her performances can last anywhere from half an hour to more than a month. The works invest themselves in an investigation of bodily experience and presence, something she’s currently researching for a Ph.D. at Stockholm’s University of the Arts.

Some hedge on the extreme: *Possession Principle, Flames of Protection*, at Detroit’s INCA Institute in 2012, saw the artist burn off all her body hair save that on her head with matches and write on the space’s walls and floor in chalk over a three-hour period. Others are more pensive: For *Untitled (Just Because Everything Is Different Does Not Mean Anything Has Changed)*, 2011, Arnell had 20 participants stand still in a public space for 15 minutes, later sitting elsewhere to write reflections on the exercise as a jumping-off point for a workshop and final performance.

In February she’ll show a new piece at the Museum of Arts and Design’s “Cheat Out To the Audience: Risk x Reward” exhibition series in New York. In May, Stockholm’s Weld Center will host a presentation of her artistic research, *My Body Remains the Enduring Reality—Participation Out of Bounds*. And June sees her return to New York for a group show at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts.

## **Ramon Miranda Beltran**

*Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Lives in San Juan, Chicago, and Brooklyn.*

Beltrán often prints found images and texts of political import—such as President McKinley’s address to Congress on the conflict that led to the Spanish-American War—on slabs of concrete reinforced with rebar, which he displays in stacks. He marries the ephemeral to the abiding, replacing the lightness of paper with the density of concrete. “My work addresses two groups of people,” the artist says. “The first, an incidental audience within the current system of contemporary art, those in the art-as-luxury-good business, and the second, a public I hope to cultivate and in whom I hope to foster a critical consciousness around questions such as, What is the status of a change-oriented politics in a society that already considers itself to be progressive?” His dual audience is reflected in the double nature of the work: It can

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be generously informative while at the same time confounding by withholding legibility (those immovable stacks, for instance). His own knowledge develops through the research process at the heart of his work. “By foregrounding this research,” he says, “I upset the hierarchy associated with traditional notions of didacticism and go beyond representation, as is frequently proclaimed by many contemporary practices, not for its own sake but to find a space where a truly progressive politics might be enacted.”

In March Beltrán will have a solo exhibition at the California Museum of Photography at UCR Artsblock, in Riverside, California.

## **Michael Berryhill**

*Born in El Paso, Texas. Lives in Brooklyn.*

“I’m thinking mainly about light as a means of activation of the image, or a way to seduce,” says artist Berryhill, whose canvases pulse with a hard-to-define luminosity. “The way my paintings look is the result of a reliance on invention instead of observation—because I found out what the image is, or I understand it, by making it.” This goes a long way toward explaining Berryhill’s eccentric subjects: fictitious architectural structures, luridly colored masses that might be perversions of the form of Rodin’s *Thinker*, still-life tableaux rendered less still by frantic, kinetic patterning. He explains the genesis of one work, *Egyptian Swing*, 2012, by noting that his initial impulse was to depict “a tumor doing a pole dance. And while I was working on it, it took on this pharaoh headdress pattern, which made me think of Egypt. And I was working on it during the Egyptian Spring uprising—this is a pretty typical chain of events for my process.” Another painting, *Elephant Mouse Hole*, 2012, was birthed from a similarly nonlinear burst of inspirations: a drawing of an abstract shape that assumes the contours of an elephant; the memory of the so-called Elephant Rock in Berryhill’s hometown of El Paso.

As someone working within a fairly traditional format—and creating paintings that are objects in their own right, not footnotes to a larger conceptual project—Berryhill is comfortable considering the fate of his medium. He’s inspired by the work of his peers (people like John McAllister and Josephine Halverson) as well as those whose work or legacy he admires from afar (Charline von Heyl, Peter Saul, [Tal R](#), [Philip Guston](#)). “Painting may be in and out of fashion,” Berryhill says, “but like a vampire, it’s undead, and can’t be killed. It may be sickly and old-looking from time to time, or may be all sexy and seductive, but either way it’s here for good.”

## **Julius von Bismarck**

*Born in Breisach am Rhein, Germany. Lives in Berlin.*

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Though just four years off his MFA from Hunter College and still under the tutelage of [Olafur Eliasson](#) at the Institute for Spatial Experiments, Von Bismarck has exploded in prominence over the past year, with shows in Berlin, Paris, and New York, an intervention at the Venice Architecture Biennale, and a secure place on the tip of every Berlin art scenester's tongue. His practice, which mixes a keen interest in the natural world with high-tech execution and a heavy wink, is characterized by actions and interventions followed by photographic documentation.

A recent work, *Forest Apparatus*, 2013, for example, saw Von Bismarck, his Berlin gallerist, Alexander Levy, and a group of friends hike into a nearby forest to install a fake birch tree. The resulting photographs look initially like banal nature scenes of the Tumblr-esque variety. That is, until one sees the fake's spiny top, which throws a conceptual elbow that questions nature's veracity altogether. In another, *Unfall am Mittelpunkt Deutschlands* (Accident in the middle of Germany), the group placed a totaled VW Golf—colloquially known as Germany's most popular car—as if it had crashed into a tree that was planted in 1991 in the country's center to mark reunification. It quickly drew notice in the local papers, which speculated on the whereabouts of what was presumed to be a seriously injured driver. Von Bismarck came forward later to reveal the trick.

The artist notes that these works and others—like the pair of lights he installed at Art Berlin Contemporary in September, which swung via computer program in accordance with naturally occurring wave patterns—are inherently, often prohibitively, expensive undertakings and that many more ideas have been scrapped for this reason, as well as for their illegalities, and the sheer risk of bodily harm. Still, it's no exaggeration to say that anticipation is high for what he'll concoct next.

## **Julien Bouillon**

*Born in Forcalquier, France. Lives in Nice, France.*

When the city of Nice bid to be European Capital of Culture 2013, Bouillon suggested the demolition of several buildings on the Côte d'Azur as an artistic intervention. Like Nice's European ambitions, his project never came to fruition, but it remains indicative of the mischievous knowingness of this self-described heir of Conceptual and post-Conceptual art. Bouillon adds decidedly formal concerns to the strategies of his predecessors, tackling pictorial and spatial issues in his sculptures, two-dimensional works, and publications. "If there is a general idea running through my work," he muses, "it's the display of different media and how they exist within the global context of culture's industrialization."

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The artist's ongoing "Photographies" series delves into painting "in the age of mechanical reproduction." Small pictures often referring to landmarks of the medium are executed, photographed, and destroyed. The final artwork is the blown-up version of a lost original, "trapped like an insect within larger conceptual apparel," explains Bouillon. The colors of the walls and floor are deployed to raise wider questions: "How is painting shown? What is a museum?" Bouillon also grapples with technology, often through photography. The yet-to-be-printed magazine DSCN, and its forerunner, DCIM, 2008, gather hundreds of snapshots, all by the artist. By nodding at the traditional photography book as well as at contemporary modes of production and distribution, such as Facebook, DSCN and DCIM explore the radical transformation of publishing since the arrival of the digital age.

## **Chris Bradley**

*Born in New Jersey. Lives in Chicago.*

Experimenting with three-dimensional trompe l'oeil, Bradley translates rectangular cardboard sheets, stained pizza boxes decorated with nuggets of gum, and other real-world detritus into sculptures in aluminum, steel, concrete, and other materials. His pieces are both whimsical and technically astute, like *Composition in Blue, Red, and Yellow (Tack Face)*, 2011, which appears to be a childish smiley face made by sticking colored pushpins into a wall (the tacks are actually made of painted bronze). Bradley achieves realistic effects through uncommon means, summoning the appearance of grease or tape by using paint. "What drives me to work with everyday, mundane subjects is a faith that within each thing is a latent narrative or meaning," the artist says, "as if there is more to be seen, something that easily goes unnoticed unless one squints an eye. Surrounding everything familiar is an invitation to depart to a more foreign perspective. It's in this alternate view that I spend most of my time." This slightly slanted way of looking at the world results in pieces like those in Bradley's "Semi" series, which re-create a familiar image (the rectangular back of a tractor trailer, say) using wood, paint, and items from the hardware store, occasionally feigning the appearance of temporary graffiti scrawled into the seemingly dusty surface by a stranger's finger. One group of sculptures from 2010–11 explored ideas of landscape and place—a pair of faux palm trees sticking out of Modelo cans, balanced on a cinder block, and titled *Havana*—as well as the tricky verisimilitude of materials (avocados cast out of bronze; planks of wood that are actually, well, just wood). "I'm interested in making things so that they communicate at the same level as the actual things," Bradley says. "The mix of replicated elements in different materials with actual things—as in a bronze potato chip with an actual beer can—speaks to my relationship with materials, and my

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personal agenda and value of things in the world. Sometimes you just have to let a beer can be a beer can.”

## **Matthieu Clainchard**

*Born and lives in Paris.*

“I really don’t see forms in art and forms in the real world as separate,” says Clainchard. “For me, the two are completely intertwined.” Based on color charts of the kind used in filmmaking and photography, his large wall painting *TE233*, 2012, brings to mind the history of modern art and hints at something darker: the omnipresence of norms and society’s ever-greater push to standardization. For the series “Normaliser,” 2010, the artist shot images featuring the red-and-white bar placed as a warning on building sites. He then reworked them with Photoshop so that the colored strip is identical in every single picture, highlighting the image’s artificiality—and, by extension, that of most images around us. “This was an attempt at subject-less photography,” Clainchard explains. “These pictures have an object, but no subject. It’s also perverting the norms, trying to escape from them.”

Hearing about the scandal at the Fondation Vasarely in Aix-en-Provence—which involved the artist’s heirs fighting over the disappearance of several hundred artworks—Clainchard produced wall-painted replicas of the lost pieces. “It was a little act of revenge,” he says, “reintroducing works to the public domain that had been stolen.” In this Robin Hood-esque gesture, there might be nostalgia for modernism’s democratic ideal—an ideal endorsed by Vasarely himself, who designed the logo for car manufacturer Renault in the late 1970s. Clainchard drew this logo with a pressure washer on the façade of Paris’s Cité Internationale Universitaire. Although creating the ghostly piece merely entailed removing grime, it addressed the history of geometric abstraction, Conceptualism, architecture, and industry with remarkable efficiency.

## **Fernando Corona**

*Born and lives in Mexicali, Mexico.*

“Street art in Mexico is barely starting to get the recognition that the movement deserves,” says Corona, whose large-scale murals have graced public spaces from Albuquerque to London, as well as such institutions as the Corcoran College of Art + Design in Washington, D.C. “When it’s on the street, I try to give the mural a connection to the community that it’s in, and the context in which I live always shows up in the work. I invite people from the community to work on the piece, even if they have no arts training. I’m not trying to make a definitive statement: I like the murals to have multiple meanings and to represent localism in a global manner.”

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Corona's street works mix figurative and abstract elements; his massive mural on the façade of the IIC Museo UABC in Mexicali, *The Street Is Looking at You*, layers vibrant geometric structures atop multicolored human faces, their eyes staring out intently at the surrounding city. A wall painting he made this year for a show at Kunstverein München is more surreal: We see a drummer wearing a pig mask; a heavily tattooed young man with exposed buttocks, his hands clasped behind his neck; a monochromatic bird's nest harboring colorful jewels. (Corona says that the subjects are "mainly some local Mexicali characters, including my girlfriend.") Chris Kraus, who curated Corona in a 2012 exhibition at Artists Space that focused on the art center Mexicali Rose, considers his murals to be "conceptual painting that takes place outdoors, in public spaces."

## **Ramsey Dau**

*Born in La Cañada, California. Lives in Los Angeles.*

"My work is really about tension," says Dau, a largely self-taught painter who also runs his own L.A.-based design studio. "The tension between modern and primitive, between the simple and the complex. Between clean, bold geometric and messy abstraction. Between creation and destruction, commercial and fine art. When these opposites are brought together in one piece, a feeling of balance forms that I just find really interesting." As befits an artist whose day job requires the ability to produce work for varying clients, from Volcom clothing to Specialized bicycles, Dau's output has an uncommon versatility. He has painted small, highly detailed street scenes of the urban landscape—kung-fu studios or the El Chubasco bar in Echo Park—as well as neo-Pop canvases that combine politically charged text—shout-outs to Grover Norquist and Ruth Bader Ginsburg—with images of Homer Simpson and Mickey Mouse.

Recently, he's been exploring the interplay between found imagery—much of it black-and-white photographs of African art pieces, culled from a volume in a secondhand bookshop— and his own language of line and shape. This has resulted in collages, collaged paintings, and paintings in which the original source photographs are reproduced in acrylic. "I've been working on simplifying my work, limiting my color palette—neutral grays, simple shapes," Dau says. "I'm also playing with a layout aesthetic influenced by my years as a graphic designer: grids, simple geometrics, the power of negative space. Even the geometric shapes that I use are not meant to be perfect. I might use a ruler to get dimensions down, but I eyeball most of it. I like that these things are handmade: A slightly off square is so much more interesting than a perfect computer square. It brings a new tension to the work: between obsessive attention to detail and perfection, and nonchalance, simplicity, and naïveté." That productive strain between

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opposites is exemplified by paintings like *Cactus Garden 01*, 2013, in which a rude burst of spray paint shoots across an otherwise cleanly delineated composition, and *Marfa on Mushrooms (Donald Judd Box)*, 2013, which transposes a sleek Minimalist structure with a looping noodle of speckled color that wouldn't be out of place on a 1980s skateboard deck.

## **Ymane Fakhir**

*Born in Casablanca, Morocco. Lives in Marseille, France.*

The rituals Fakhir puts under scrutiny in her photographs often pertain to her Moroccan heritage. As she says, she uses photography “like a sociologist.” In her breakthrough series “Le trousseau,” 2005–09, Fakhir looks at the pile of objects—jewelry boxes, sheets, slippers—accumulated by her mother for the day her daughter would marry. Faced with this overflow of maternal devotion, she chose a clinical method of analysis: Each item is shot individually against a white background. They constitute a portrait of the woman Fakhir was meant to become, a woman who never came to be. The artist never used the objects. Beyond autobiography, the images tenderly question the contemporary relevance of certain traditions, taking stock of a way of life bound to disappear.

Similar concerns are found in Fakhir's first set of videos, *Handmade*, 2011–12. Again, the protocol is extremely strict. The five pieces all show the hands of her grandmother engaged in simple culinary gestures: preparing couscous or breaking a sugarloaf. The hands perform elusive choreographies, drawing invisible abstractions in the foodstuffs they manipulate. This ability to combine cultural hyper-specificity with the purely formal is perhaps Fakhir's greatest strength. Examples abound in her “Socles” series of empty cake plinths. On its own, each of these domestic structures, meant to hold confectionery, has a striking sculptural quality. They also function as supports for the imagination. Just as the North African women hidden in harems turned into bewitching odalisques in the minds of the 19th-century orientalists, these cakes and the festivities they stand for are rendered all the more lavish by their absence. Fakhir's pictures thus operate on two levels: the seen and the fantasized.

## **Ben Hall**

*Born and lives in Detroit.*

“Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the difference between a magic trick and a parlor trick—that is, the difference between the professional and the vernacular,” says Hall. “A lot of times, it seems when mechanics are revealed rather than obscured, sculpture has an increased opportunity for shared space, shared understanding.” His work is a “mix of found, fabricated, and handmade,” including, for

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example, *Rob a Credit Union and the Whip Won't Start*, 2013, which consists of a saguaro cactus wearing a plastic half-mask, arranged precariously atop a found-object pedestal that incorporates a snare drum, a bullhorn, and a cinder block.

Hall also runs Detroit's Russell Street Deli and has sold rare soul records, too, marking a certain level of lived urban engagement in the embattled city. Fittingly, his pieces have a political dimension: A 2010 geometric sculpture made of mirrors and wood is titled *Once Upon a Time in the Projects*, and *The Joys of Shopping From Home*, 2012, is a digital image capturing the items in a conceptual Amazon wish list. This is all part of a formal "strategy to de-stabilize everything." For Hall, "lots of objects experience a kind of fluidity of status as they get closer to the trash heap or technologically outmoded. I like to be that little piece of turf they hold on to before they slip off the cliff."

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## **Larissa Hammond**

*Born in Indianapolis. Lives in Portland, Oregon.*

Hammond's series "Terms and Conditions" is made up of partially redacted screenshots of personal Gmail exchanges: It's unclear who the correspondents are, but what we see retains an irreverent intimacy—a precursor to Miranda July's own e-mail-sharing project, perhaps, but untainted by the obfuscating lens of celebrity. Her enigmatic but warm practice—a series of equations, artist books, and a hole dug 20 feet across—are among recent undertakings—retains shades of the inscrutable conceptualism of her art-school mentor, Aaron Flint Jamison. "I use philosophy and math to arrive at the ideas, to wrap my brain around what something means, because I can't understand how things work any other way," she says. "Then I lock it into a form."

Hammond has been invited to contribute a project, in collaboration with Diane Cluck, to the second issue of feminist arts magazine *Girls Against God*, which launches this January at MOMA PS1. She is also developing a cataloguing schema for Portland's Personal Libraries Library as part of the Portland 2014 Biennial, which will involve arranging books "according to chord, as one might weave a story around a set of tarot cards, relating books to themselves as filtered through a not-so-central, faultily ephemeral reference point." Form, or the containers through which we access information, are an ongoing point of interest. "I become obsessed with a form like a website and ask myself, How do I let the form be itself and not use it to document something else?" she explains. "I personify everything, but I hate narrative."

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**Klara Hobza**

*Born in Pilsen, Czech Republic. Lives in Berlin.*

“My work revolves around self-imposed endeavors. For example, in 2010, I decided to scuba dive through Europe,” says Hobza of her most monumental challenge to date—and the latest from her geographically oriented, experimental practice. The dive, which she estimates will last between 25 and 30 years, will take her from Rotterdam to the Romanian city of Constanta on the Black Sea via the European continent’s three major rivers—the Rhine, the Main, and the Danube—all the while documenting “the humor that lies in our attempts and shortcomings.” The resulting works already span home videos of her prep, like *The Famous Banana Scene*, 2011, in which she learns to eat underwater, and still images taken along her route that are included in *Europaort*, 2013, to readymade sculptures such as *Von Köln nach Bonn* (From Cologne to Bonn), 2011, a pyramid of the 19 scuba tanks Hobza thinks she’ll need in the battle against the Rhine River’s current between the two German cities.

The Czech native honed her practice in New York as a DAAD fellow, beginning in 2002, and later in Columbia’s mfa program, from which she graduated in 2005. Moving back to Germany four years later, ahead of a show at the Galerie für Landschaftskunst, in Hamburg (she also shows at Berlin’s Soy Capitán), Hobza initiated *Departing America*, another waterlogged project in which she packed the contents of her Brooklyn studio onto a raft that she manned to the Port of New Jersey and then onto the Dublin Express bound for Hamburg. “I meant to show the Germans everything I had been up to during my years of living in New York,” she explains. Upon reaching the European port, “I hoisted my freight back onto the raft and brought it across the wild river Elbe, through Hamburg’s peaceful canals, and right up to the foot of the gallery building.”

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