

FLASH ART



Kahlil Joseph, *Wildcat (Aunt Janet)*, 2016. Video still.

Three-channel video installation with dirt from Grayson Rodeo, Oklahoma. B/W HD video. 7' 53".

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ART. 1, COMMA 1 LO/MI



02> Courtesy of the artist.

a Belgian antique dealer caresses a nineteenth-century Nigerian object, enthusing over it with such lines as, "This is a gem of an item." Ojo's work speaks to the fetishization of commodity via objectification; for instance, the artist's photographs more closely echo the stylization of a fashion photo shoot than performance documentation. In this subtle balancing act of assemblage and imagemaking, where does one then place *House Call*, a serving cart parked in the entrance to the gallery, replete with an antiquated oil lamp and a rectal speculum? Projecting notions of servitude, treatment, and inspection, its presence intentionally disturbs the equilibrium that Ojo has created throughout the rest of this thoughtfully composed show.



other great asset is that curator Ingrid Schaffner has not tried to do *too much*, has not fallen for the grab-bag approach that seduces so many overeager curators desperate to dress up their biennials as something other than big group shows mounted only because it is time to. I count no fashion labels, imprints, project spaces, or graphic design studios on the comparatively short artist list, no overarching theoretical apparatus or radical political pretensions, no offsite venues in or around Pittsburgh. (I say this as someone who likes fashion, loves radical politics, and runs a project space.)

Or, by the terms of *The Guide*, the exhibition has "traveled light," and with so little "cultural baggage"

4 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL 57th Edition, 2018

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh
By Eli Diner

"Museum joy" is the slogan of the latest edition of the Carnegie International. If that sounds a little cute, that's because it is. But... it also isn't. Allow me to explain.

The exhibition did occasion fanciful trimmings and quaint branding: a typeface that is mannered yet playful, and a little blue handbook simply called *The Guide*. Modeled on a fin-de-siècle pocket travel guide, the book abounds in whimsy and effortful anachronism – marbled endpapers, spaces set aside for you to make your own drawings, and other stabs at arousing re-enchantment (e.g. "to approach the exhibition with confidence, travel light. Burdensome cultural baggage comes in all forms, from fanny pack to portmanteau"). It can be safely stuffed in your "museum joy" canvas tote and discarded.

Which is not to say that there is no joy in Pittsburgh; the exhibition actually lives up to its motto. Biennials, I think you'll agree, have a pretty low ceiling, and so the first thing to be joyful about here is that this isn't a biennial. They say the next one will be in three to five years. The show's

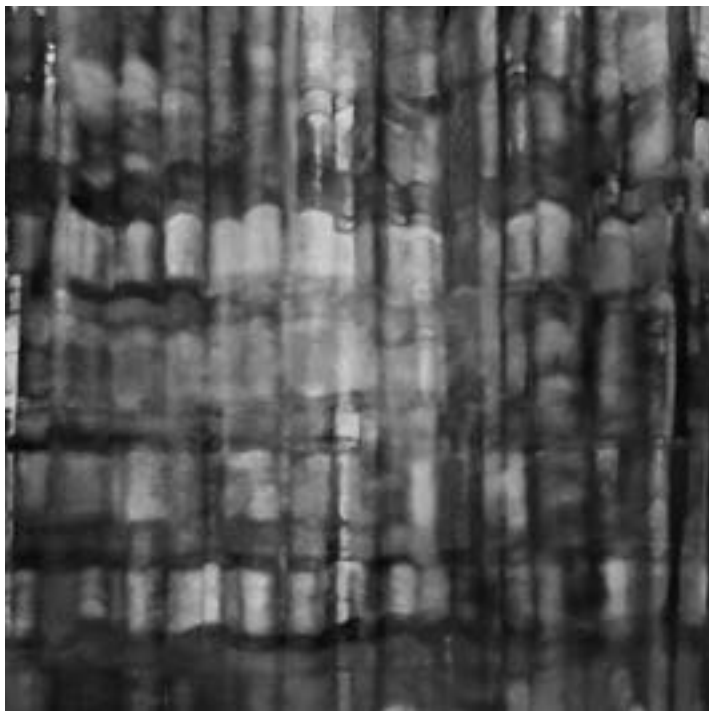
the museum itself comes to the fore. It helps that the work in many cases has been dispersed throughout the Carnegie's vast collections: Karen Kilimnik's paintings look very happy to be in the neoclassical section of the decorative arts wing; so too Jeremy Deller's videos on tiny screens inserted into domestic dioramas in the Hall of Miniatures. But a museum is not just a collection, and the roomful of Jessi Reaves sculptures is just as much about the building's faded cork floors and weird linen wallpaper. If a little down at the heels, the Carnegie also can't help but exude a history of robber-baron noblesse oblige. Encyclopedic and provincial, it swallows the international exhibition whole. Hunting down a particular work in the show, who but a reviewer wouldn't be distracted by the Hall of Gems, a Raoul De Keyser, a plaster cast of a Gothic facade, or the purple walls of the Hall of Architecture?

5 KATE SPENCER STEWART Paintings

The Gallery at Michael's, Los Angeles
By Asha Schechter

In 2017, Michael's restaurant in Santa Monica (opened in 1979) experienced a bump in buzz when the late Jonathan Gold declared it "alive again" in a review of the new experimental menu by chef Miles Thompson.

5 Kate Spencer Stewart, *Kundalinimas*, 2018. Oil on canvas. 47x47in. Courtesy of the artist and The Gallery at Michael's, Los Angeles.
 6 B. Wurtz, *Three Umbrellas*, 1987. Wood, metal and steel picture wire. 27x36x1½in. Photography by Jonathan Velardi. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York.



About six months later, the Gallery at Michael's started exhibiting contemporary art in a room upstairs normally reserved for private parties. This isn't typical restaurant art, just as Thompson's *uni chawanmushi* isn't the steak and Caesar you'd expect at a venerable Westside place. The revamped menu and gallery both have a hard job - to stand out and blend in, to be "critical" in a context that refuses to disappear.

Kate Spencer Stewart responds to this situation in her show "Paintings" by assuming the role of a gentle antagonist. She situates the hazy, gray *Paladin Verb* (all works 2018) next to a window of the same shape and size and covered with brittle, peeling privacy film that matches the painting's obscuration and diffusion. Across the room are *Binary System (Theta A and B)*, two large canvases that take on similar notions of twinning and difference. They are mostly white, with a mix of smudgy and hard-edged yellow marks applied in roughly but not exactly the same places. They hang in a corner on perpendicular walls separated by a window of equal size. As your eye passes between them to parse their differences, you also register a set table and a view of the street; every glance here is met with material. Stewart installs *Untitled (Grail of Apathy)*, a thin, brushy application of graypinkish taupe paint on a square canvas, directly atop a built-in mirror, slightly wider than the painting. Glimpses of the room and our reflection deny us the

pleasure of getting lost in the surface. In a smaller back room we find *Sir Charles* in direct dialogue with a wall-mounted television. The gauzy painting of flowers wins out in this comic juxtaposition, but the television isn't on.

As the light changes and events come and go, the role of the paintings shifts. The work - which already has a barely there, almost unphotographable light touch - is an art show but can just as quickly fade into décor with the sliding of a dimmer switch or the rearrangement of a table. This is not to its detriment, but points to Stewart's knowing and coy relationship to the particularities of this space.

6 B. WURTZ
 This Has No Name

Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
 By Keith J. Varadi

For the past twenty-five years, B. Wurtz has been applying acrylic paint to the bottoms of aluminum pans in order to create geometric abstractions. Occasionally, he emphasizes words imprinted on the pans' undersides, for example DURABLE or SUPPORT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAN. Ironically, much of his work is flimsy, barely held together. This longstanding project - arranged in a salon-style installation - is the first body of work that visitors to the still-new ICA in Los Angeles come across in "This Has No Name," Wurtz's

