

# TINA GIROUARD



Born in 1946, Dequincy, LA  
Died in 2020, Cecilia, LA

Born in DeQuincy, Louisiana in 1946, Girouard received a B.F.A. in Fine Art from the University of Southwest Louisiana in 1968 and moved to New York City in 1969 with the Louisiana-born saxophonist, composer and collaborator Richard “Dickie” Landry. Upon moving to New York, Girouard and Landry moved into an apartment at 10 Chatham Square in Chinatown with the painter Mary Heilmann. The trio’s home soon became a center of avant-garde art, music and performance in New York as well as a meeting ground for other Louisiana-born artists working in the Post-Minimalist scene, such as Lynda Benglis and Keith Sonnier. While living in New York, Girouard shaped many significant postwar avant-garde groups and art movements including: The Anarchitecture group; The interdisciplinary experiments in the lofts at 112 Greene Street; The artist-run restaurant FOOD in SoHo; and the Pattern & Decoration movement.

After a devastating studio fire in 1978, Girouard and Landry moved back to Louisiana and created a studio near Lafayette. From this new home, Girouard began connecting and collaborating with local artists in the region as a way of supporting Louisiana francophone culture. This eventually led to the founding of the Artists’ Alliance in Lafayette in 1986 and the establishment of the Festival International de Louisiane—an international festival that brought together music, dance, theater, visual and culinary arts from francophone Europe, Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean. It was during these projects that Girouard became interested and invested in Haitian art. In 1990, Girouard moved to Port-au-Prince, Haiti and established a studio there, which she kept until 1995. During that time, Girouard studied alongside Haitian artists and learned to make traditional vodou flags, collaborating extensively with Antoine Oleyant and Georges Valris. Girouard died after a stroke in April 2020 at her home in Cecilia, LA.

Girouard has an exhibition history that includes a 1983 mid-career retrospective mounted at the Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City, and international events such as the 1980 Venice Biennale, the 1977 Paris Biennale, 1977 Documenta VI and 1972 Documenta V, Kassel. Girouard’s work has been exhibited widely at galleries and museums including: Leo Castelli Gallery, The Kitchen, Walker Art Center, New Orleans Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Palais des Beaux-Arts Brussels, Holly Solomon Gallery, David Zwirner, the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, and the New Museum. Her work was recently on view in the exhibition *With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972 – 1985* curated by Anna Katz, originating at MOCA Los Angeles, which traveled to the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, NY. Girouard’s work is in the permanent collections of the Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Ludwig Forum fur International Kunst Aachen, DE; Rufino Tamayo Museum, Mexico City, Mexico; and Stedelijk Museum Actuele Kunst, Gent, Belgium.

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# IMPULSE

## Tina Girouard's Enigmatic Symbols Await Interpretation

Art - Oct 11 - Written By Theodora Bocanegra Lang

Tina Girouard has made a triumphant and mysterious return to New York, with simultaneous exhibitions at the Center for Art, Research, and Alliances (CARA), Anat Ebgi Gallery, and Magenta Plains, the latter of which is only a few blocks away from Chatham Square where the artist lived and worked in the 1970s. While in New York, she embarked on a number of luminous, ambitious, and communal projects—perhaps most famously FOOD, an eatery-cum-conceptual space she ran with Gordon Matta-Clark and Carol Goodden, serving up relational aesthetics with a side of gumbo.

Currently on view at Magenta Plains is a body of work practically unseen since its creation in 1980, shortly after the artist moved back to her home state of Louisiana following a fire that destroyed her New York space. Entitled *DNA-Icons*, this series of hanging screen-printed banners was produced in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. These works embrace and experiment with new ways of using contemporary textiles while furthering and complicating Girouard's interest in communal action and communication.





Though fabricated collaboratively, this series evidences a solitary and opaque process of ideation. Printed on each fabric panel is a kind of pictogram invented and awarded meaning by the artist. A small drawing called Pictionary (1979) acts as a legend for the motifs Girouard was creating at this time. Flitting between easy legibility and murky opacity, many of her symbols represent primordial features—things universally familiar: “earth,” “land,” “child,” and “death.” The forms of these symbols recall pictographic writing systems such as hieroglyphics. Some are straightforward, like the stacked waves of “water.” Others reference a post-industrial world: “fire” is three lit matches, acknowledging how a modern audience might access or encounter fire. “House” is an architectural floor plan, giving an aerial view of what looks to be a construction document. “Tina” uses the dots that make up the letters of the artist’s name in braille, though depicted visually. Drawing on myriad disparate strategies, she generates her own self-contained system.

Every square panel appears to be commercially printed quilting fabric, each with a different retro print. Some are polka-dotted; others have tropical patterns or collaged black-and-white glamor shots of Hollywood actresses. The symbols are screen-printed onto pre-printed textiles, indexing technologies of repetition and underlining the necessary reproducibility of signs that grant them meaning.





Many of the works consist of multiple panels; the symbols begin to string together, spelling out sentence fragments or thoughts. Across a dozen works, viewers are tasked with decoding Girouard's communications. Though her corner labels are certainly helpful, knowledge of each symbol's meaning seldom provides clarity. *Swamp, House, Conflicting Evidence*, a vertically arranged trio in black, yellow, and white variations, is inscrutable, echoed by a similarly vertical work in yellow and white—*Child, Conflicting Evidence, House*. Individual symbols are arranged and recontextualized like puzzle pieces, giving the impression of repeated attempts to express and obscure meaning.

Despite her self-titled symbol, it is unclear if this series is autobiographical. Though some works, such as *Water, Water, Water*, imply common understanding, others seem distinctly personal and specific to the artist. *Fire, House* may point to the fire that destroyed her New York home. Works such as *Child, Tina* clearly imply a story or relationship, but what is that story? *Child, Tina, Gonna Go, Conflicting Evidence* seems to elaborate on said story, adding enigmatic and sinister urgency.

The titular symbol, "conflicting evidence," is perhaps the most perplexing of all. Resembling the Rod of Asclepius—the snake-wrapped staff of medical meaning—it stretches diagonally across its fabric squares. What is the evidence? What conflicts? Walking through the exhibition at times feels like trying to solve a mystery. One gets the distinct sense that the artist, who passed away in 2020, is trying to communicate something, but without the artist herself as the mediating key, much information remains unknown. Instead, we trace a trail of breadcrumbs, following her shadowy presence, her own remaining conflicting evidence.

**Tina Girouard: *Conflicting Evidence* is on view at Magenta Plains, New York, until October 26th, 2024.**

*Two Coats of Paint*  
October 8 2024

# Two Coats of Paint

## Tina Girouard: In the realm of the possible



Contributed by **Adam Simon** / At some point, my IG algorithm sent me a clip of **Brian Eno** talking about how the term ‘**genius**’ should be replaced with ‘**scenius**’ because no artist works in a vacuum. Artists all come from some version of a scene, however small. Perhaps no one illustrates this better than **Tina Girouard**, who died in 2020 and whose work can currently be seen in NYC at two galleries, **Magenta Plains** and **Anat Egbi**, and at the **Center for Art, Research and Alliances** (CARA). During the 1970s, Girouard was instrumental in founding 112 Greene Street, which spawned **White Columns**, the maverick restaurant/art project FOOD, P.S.1, the Kitchen, and the **Anarchitecture Group**. Later, she also collaborated with artists in her native Louisiana and Haiti. Each of the titles of the three concurrent Girouard exhibitions expresses an aspect of her approach. “I Want You to Have A Good Time” at Anat Egbi and “Sign-In” at CARA directly address the audience and viewer, while “Conflicting Evidence” at Magenta Plains suggests something to be analyzed or pondered.



“Sign-In” is the most comprehensive of the three, a traveling exhibition billed as the first NYC retrospective of Girouard’s work, embracing film, performance, drawing, sequin, textile, and installation. The show at Anat Egbi, which represents her estate, focuses on her performances, and includes intermittent live ones amid diagrammatic drawings and photo documentation on the walls. The exhibition at Magenta Plains features her silk-screened pictograms on patterned material, the *DNA-Icons*, created in collaboration with the **Fabric Workshop Museum** in Philadelphia.





The Magenta Plains show grabbed my attention before I was aware that this was the artist that created FOOD with **Gordon Matta-Clark**, Carol Gooden and **Suzanne Harris** in 1971. FOOD is probably what Girouard is best known for, having garnered renewed interest as a forerunner of the unfortunately named **Relational Aesthetics**. The latter was more a catchphrase for describing socially engaged art practices in the 1990s than anything approaching a movement. FOOD was a restaurant in Soho, by and for artists because that's who lived there (illegally) in the 1970s. Although at times it seemed as much an artwork as a place to eat, it was primarily a restaurant. **Matta-Clark's film** documenting a day at FOOD shows Gooden shopping for striped bass at Fulton Fish Market, food being prepared, customers and friends dining, and bread being baked for the next day. There were other kindred restaurants around at the time. As a teenager, I worked at a macrobiotic restaurant in the East Village named The Paradox. Most customers sat at a long communal table, and conversations between strangers was the norm. **Yoko Ono** was said to have staged performances there.



Viewing images from “Conflicting Evidence” at Magenta Plains online, I didn’t at first realize that Girouard’s symbols, what she called the DNA-Icons, were silkscreened onto commercially produced patterned fabric. They looked to me like abstract paintings reminiscent of **Sigmar Polke**, the knitted works of **Rosemarie Trockel**, the pictograms of **Adolph Gottlieb** or more recently, certain works by **Charlene von Heyl** or **Jonathan Lasker**. It’s difficult to convey the impact of Girouard’s works. Her lexicon of symbols, with designations such as *Earth, Fire, Tina, Child, Conflicting Evidence, House, Death, Gonna Go*, are human scale with vibrant contrasting colors. They possess the decisiveness that comes with reduction. In all, she created over 400 distinct symbols, which she considered a universal language. Many of them can be seen in a display of drawings at CARA. The symbols are specific and personal in a way that distinguishes them from most signage and make them closer to aboriginal art or cave paintings that serve ritualistic or psychic ends. Yet, they feel consistent with contemporary Western art. This fluidity, a timelessness married to contemporaneity, makes them especially interesting. They bear enough of a resemblance to abstract painting that they seem to be nudging that genre out of its well-worn grooves. At the same time, Girouard was primarily a performance artist, and they feel performative.





The exhibition at CARA is essential viewing for an overview of Girouard's life and work. It includes an installation reflecting her idea of architecture as a form of social space, vitrines displaying working notes and documentation of performances, large-scale sequin pieces and the wall of drawings of her DNA-Icons.

Girouard loved to cook, for and with others. In that spirit, the performers that are restaging key performances at Anat Egbi add their own ingredients. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, **Erin Leland** performed *Sound Loop*, from 1970. Girouard's instructions have the performer counting off the numbers one through ten with long intervals in between and in the same manner constructing the sentence, 'I want you to have a good time'. Each spoken word or number is recorded and played back in a sound loop that grows increasingly discordant as the ambient sound in the room is magnified with each added loop. Leland added her own element, simultaneously sketching the audience on a pad she couldn't see, on an easel in front of her. The last performance will be by **Ken Castaneda** on Saturday, October 12, at 11 am.



Second-wave feminism informs Girouard's work, in which domestic materials predominate. Her first performances were versions of houses – *Hung House*, *Live House*, *Swept House*. Her work has appeared in museums around the world and at prominent art events such as Documenta and the Venice Biennale but rarely in commercial galleries. One senses that Girouard thought of art primarily as a means of engaging others in the myriad modes of thought, play, reimagining, and reinvention. This activity could take multiple forms across different mediums and occur in varied locales – not just downtown NYC but in Louisiana, where she was raised and returned to live in 1978 after a fire destroyed her New York studio, and in Haiti, where she lived and collaborated with Haitian artists including **Antoine Oleyant**, with whom she created the traveling exhibition, “Under A Spell.” Girouard dwelt in the realm of the possible. I can do this; we can do that.



*Magenta Plains: Tina Girouard, Conflicting Evidence, 2024, Installation View. Photo courtesy of the gallery.*





Artsy  
October 1 2024

ARTSY

# Pioneering Textile Artist Tina Girouard Is Finally Getting Her Due

Maxwell Rabb



Portrait of Tina Girouard in Cadeville, Louisiana, 1976. © The Estate of Tina Girouard, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of Anat Ebgi.

At just 25, Tina Girouard was already in the heart (or perhaps the stomach) of New York’s avant-garde. FOOD—the artist-run restaurant tucked away in SoHo that she founded in 1971 with fellow artists Gordon Matta-Clark, Carol Gooden, and Suzanne Harris—fed the whole spectrum of artists living in Lower Manhattan at the time, including those at the forefront of Post-Minimalism, Anarchitecture, and the feminist Pattern and Decoration Movement (P&D). The space transformed dining into a performative art, with culinary contributions celebrated by artists like Donald Judd, Robert Rauschenberg, and John Cage. “Pretty much the whole art community was coming in there at one point,” Girouard once told the New York Times.

Around this time, Girouard contributed to the beginning of 112 Greene Street, the experimental performance studio that became known as White Columns in 1979. Yet, despite her integral role at FOOD and 112 Greene Street, her legacy has rarely been spotlighted, perhaps due to her departure from New York in 1978 after a devastating studio fire. Returning to Louisiana, she continued making art on the margins until her passing in 2020 at 73.

Now, for the first time ever, Girouard’s pioneering work in performance, textile, text-based, and video art will be the subject of a comprehensive retrospective in New York at the Center for Art, Research, and Alliances (CARA). “SIGN-IN,” first staged at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art this summer, is curated by the New Orleans-based Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought and will be on view until January 12, 2025. Meanwhile, two New York gallery shows are running concurrently: “I Want You to Have a Good Time” at Anat Ebgi, on view until October 19th, and “Conflicting Evidence” at Magenta Plains, on view until October 26th.

## Girouard's early life

Born in DeQuincey, Louisiana, in 1946, Girouard earned a BFA in fine art from the University of Southwest Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana–Lafayette) in 1968. It was there that she met the Louisiana-born saxophonist Dickie Landry, whom she would later marry in 1971. Growing up in rural Louisiana, Girouard never strayed far from her hometown.

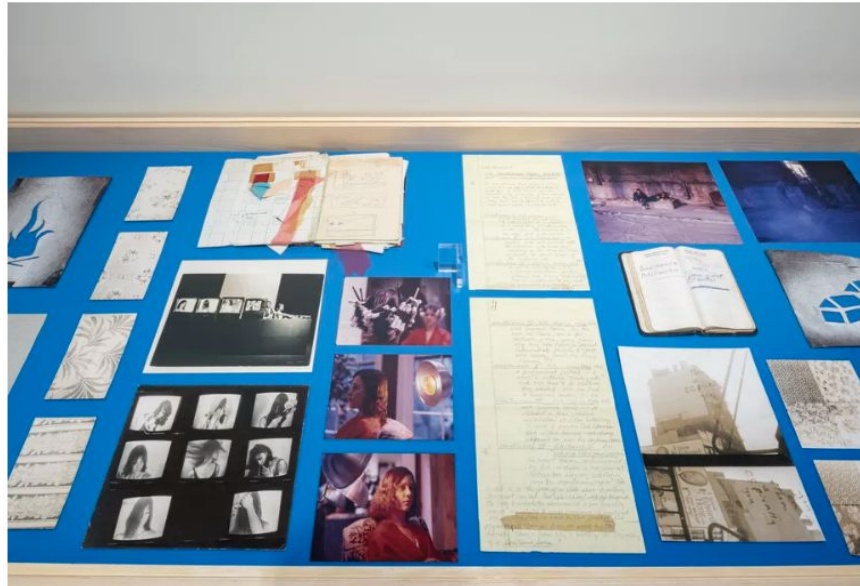
“Her commitment to the notion and the idea of maintenance is so foundational and fundamental to everything she’s doing,” said Andrea Andersson, founding director of the River Institute. Often, these experiences guided her performance pieces, such as her “Maintenance” video series (1970–76), where she performed daily domestic tasks such as cutting her hair or doing laundry.

“Frankly, it’s a rural imperative. You don’t just toss it out—you sew it, you mend it, you put it back into circulation,” said Andersson. “That was Tina’s operation across her practice: to take care of something and give it perpetually new life.”



Tina Girouard, *Visions*, 1977. Courtesy of Anat Ebgi.

## Girouard's social scene in New York City



Tina Girouard, installation view of "SIGN-IN" at the Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA), New York, 2024. Photo by Kris Graves. Tina Girouard Art © The Estate of Tina Girouard / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of CARA.

A pair of newly minted college graduates, Girouard and Landry moved to New York in 1969, settling into an apartment in Chinatown with painter Mary Heilmann. Their loft quickly became a hub for avant-garde artists, musicians, and performers, particularly attracting a community of Louisiana-born artists, including Lynda Benglis and Keith Sonnier.

While in New York, Girouard performed in projects for artists such as Richard Serra, Lawrence Weiner, and Laurie Anderson. Meanwhile, she started a series of installations she called "houses" — the first of which was *Hung House* (1971), first shown in her apartment and then at 112 Greene Street. This installation featured a two-story sculptural arrangement of detritus and abandoned belongings gathered from the building, emphasizing how the most modest materials can still create spaces where people can gather.





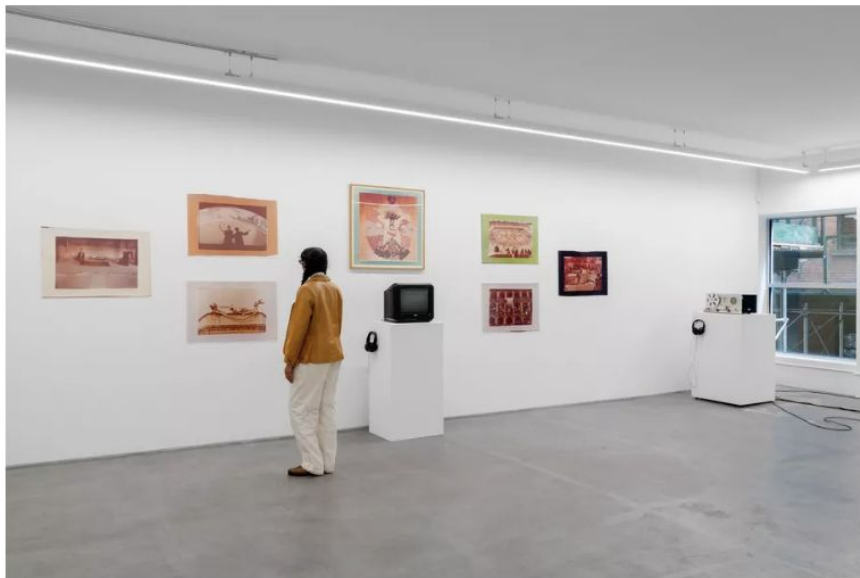
All the while, Girouard was working on her “Wallpaper and Test Pattern” textile series, challenging traditions around domestic labor and materials traditionally associated with women’s lives. Works from these series, such as the quadrant textile work *Screen 4* (1974–75), are on view at the CARA.

Then, in 1972, she mounted her first solo exhibition at 112 Greene Street, “Four Stages.” A standout piece from this exhibition, *Air Space Stage* (1972), which is currently on view at CARA, involved four sheets of patterned fabric suspended from the ceiling. Performers interacted spontaneously with the movable pieces, adjusting and manipulating them. In this work, Girouard applied innovative performance techniques to decorative textile work reminiscent of P&D founders Valerie Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff, with an architectural sensibility that echoed her close collaborator Matta-Clark’s explorations of space and structure.

## An underrecognized performance artist

Girouard was at the forefront of performance art from the moment she stepped into New York. One early example, *Sound Loop* (1970), featured a single performer speaking into a microphone to record sequences of numbers, words, and phrases on a tape loop. The recording process continued as the multiple rerecordings were progressively layered on top of each other until they merged into an indistinguishable density of sound. An archival video is currently on view at Anat Ebgi, which will be restaging the performance during the show.

“It’s not necessarily about this performance that exists only at that moment...but rather the structure—creating this idea of something that can be mutated, something that can shift, something that can be reperformed, something that can fundamentally change within parameters,” said Stefano Di Paola, partner and director at Anat Ebgi.



Tina Girouard, installation view of “I Want You To Have A Good Time” at Anat Ebgi in New York, 2024. Courtesy of Anat Ebgi.

It is perhaps *Pinwheel* (1977) that best captures Girouard’s ritualistic approach to performance art. Originally performed in 1977 in New

Orleans and restaged in 2019 at Art Basel Miami Beach, *Pinwheel* features four performers who create a stagelike environment in four quadrants using numerous yards of decorative silk fabric. Each performer follows detailed instructions written by Girouard, directing them to perform set rituals or manipulate objects within their quadrant. “She is constantly feeding back into her system the new things that she learned, layering with the things that she was perhaps gifted by birth and family and culture and region, and then assimilating new knowledge,” said Andersson.



Tina Girouard, *Grand Pass Partout*, 1977. Courtesy of Anat Ebgi.

## Late life, homecoming, and Haiti

A devastating fire destroyed much of Girouard’s studio in New York in 1978, prompting her and Landry to return to Louisiana. In the immediate years, Girouard staged her final show at [Holly Solomon Gallery](#) and performed at the Venice Biennale in 1980. She was honored with a mid-career retrospective at Museo Tamayo in Mexico City in 1983. Yet after these milestones, she received waning attention from the national art world, and she shifted to a more regionally focused practice.



In 1986, Girouard was instrumental in founding the Artists' Alliance in Lafayette and established the Festival International de Louisiane. This international festival amalgamated music, dance, theater, visual, and culinary arts from francophone countries—including Haiti. Girouard developed an affinity for the textile work of Haitian artists, so she traveled to Port-au-Prince. There, she met Antoine Oleyant, with whom she would collaborate to create works from sequins and beads, such as *Under a Spell* (ca. 1990).

Tragically, Oleyant passed away in 1992, which, in turn, deepened Girouard's ties to his community in Haiti. She kept a studio in Port-au-Prince until 1995, working alongside renowned sequin artists like George Valris and Edgar Jean-Louis, returning, in some ways, to the themes of her early P&D work.



Tina Girouard, installation view of "SIGN-IN" at the Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA), New York, 2024. Photo by Kris Graves. Tina Girouard Art © The Estate of Tina Girouard / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of CARA.

## A legacy on the periphery

In the year leading up to her death, Anat Ebgi presented "A Place That Has No Name: Early Works," the first solo exhibition of Girouard's work in Los Angeles—and the last presentation before her passing. Subsequently, she was featured in "With Pleasure:



Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985,” originating at MOCA Los Angeles.

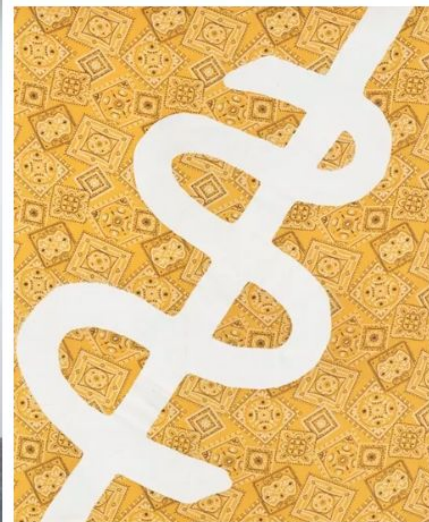
Yet Girouard’s legacy has been tough to pin down, perhaps due to her work in varied media and ever-evolving performances.

“[Girouard] will never quite fit into one little space, no matter how much people might want to do that to her,” said Di Paola.

Throughout all the shifts in her life, one constant in Girouard’s work was its communal spirit. Her final years might have been spent on the periphery, away from the mainstream, yet her work is linked to some of the most experimental movements in performance and textiles of her time.



Tina Girouard, installation view of “SIGN-IN” at the Center for Art, Research and Alliances (CARA), New York, 2024. Photo by Kris Graves. Tina Girouard Art © The Estate of Tina Girouard / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of CARA.



Tina Girouard, *Child, Conflicting Evidence, House*, 1980. Courtesy of Magenta Plains.

“[Her work] is both absolutely drenched in Louisiana cultural knowledge, and it is as rigorous and layered as all of her peers — as conceptual as Gordon Matta-Clark’s practice or Lawrence Weiner’s practice,” said Andersson. “All of her collaborators’ practices are layered with Tina’s knowledge. She was there.” ■

Observer  
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# OBSERVER

ARTS • ART REVIEWS

## A Lexicon of Evidence: Tina Girouard at Magenta Plains

The late artist's 'DNA-Icons,' never-before-seen fabric works, shed light on the re-invention of signs and language.

By [Stephen Wozniak](#) • 09/30/24 11:22am



An installation view of "Tina Girouard: Conflicting Evidence" at Magenta Plains. Image courtesy of Magenta Plains, New York

Sometimes, the language we're culturally assigned doesn't do the job intended. Sometimes, words don't add up to the many thoughts that define who we are and the relationships we share. And now, in an age when we're engulfed by the sheer proliferation and profane alteration of diverse data, communications and imagery, wouldn't it be nice

to fundamentally express what we think and feel and--most importantly--be heard clearly? It seems like such a straightforward request with a simple solution. But it isn't.

A few decades ago, I imagine that artist Tina Girouard faced the same question and, like her near-peer Matt Mullican, sought answers. While Pictures Generation artist Mullican focused on knowledge systems, perception and representation in his gigantic, flat, universal-icon wall art, Girouard instead used simple symbols related to women's daily life, work and home in her installations, which mixed live public performance with real objects in here-and-now, multidimensional space. She was always directly involved—in body, mind and spirit—expressing her commitment to the act of making, as much as to the evidence that her act gave birth to. She often seemed to leave some part of her personal experience, like traces of DNA, in that work. This was equally true in her wall art.

**“Inventing vocabularies has been and remains my mode of art making.” — Tina Girouard (1946-2020)**

In early 1980, just three blocks from the Magenta Plains gallery where they currently hang in *Tina Girouard: Conflicting Evidence*, Tina Girouard created her never-before-seen fabric works, the *DNA-Icons*. As a socially forward, multidisciplinary artist, Girouard strove to create a new lexicon that could appeal to and be comprehended by broad swaths of regular folk. Importantly, she used everyday domestic materials in her art—from linoleum flooring to cast-tin ceiling tiles—that most of us recognize.

In the current show, Girouard's base material is commercially printed fabric. With this medium, the artist applied modest, simplified—though adroit—screen-printed images. In one work, *Land*, a large, silky fabric square with blue and yellow, herringbone-like zebra striping, she applied a bold letter *M* in the center. Underneath each pointed crest lie a few thick, horizontal bars that brace the zig and zag of the figure. Together, they form the hieroglyph for a mountain range: so simple, so strong. They declare no detailed narrative but instead reiterate the staccato *M*s of the background pattern. As such, they display a like-minded, like-bodied continuity of figure to ground, of member to tribe.

In another work, *Child, Tina, Gonna Go, Conflicting Evidence*, Girouard places spare symbols on different fabric backgrounds that—following the title—run clockwise in a square configuration. The first, in the upper left quadrant, is her very yellow, block-headed, signature *Child* with arms in runner formation, which sits on a piece of fabric with



black and white images of classic 1950s Hollywood television and film stars--from Lucile Ball holding a ventriloquist's dummy to Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's Monster.



Tina Girouard; *Land*, 1980, Pigment on commercially printed fabric, 36 1/4 x 36 1/4 in./92.1 x 92.1 cm. Image courtesy of Magenta Plains, New York. Photography © Courtesy of the Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

To the right of this is a yellow, black and white, vertically striped square of floral fabric topped with eight screen-printed, burnt-orange circles--some nearly adjoined, others solo--that correspond to *Tina*, the artist. Below this is a colorful, exotic, tropical island print--also from the mid-twentieth century--coupled with Girouard's applied symbol for *Gonna Go*, an on-the-move, humpbacked, spine-covered creature. Finally, in the lower left lies a square featuring yellow, gray, black and white circles with more vertical stripe



patterns. Atop this is the artist's symbol for *Conflicting Evidence*. A flowing yellow shape with a straight line bisecting its writhing curves, the glyph is reminiscent of the symbol for the serpentine, primordial creator of life, Damballa, from Haiti, where the artist later lived and worked on several of her series with local artisans.



Tina Girouard, *Child, Tina, Gonna Go, Conflicting Evidence*, 1980; Pigment on commercially printed fabric, 69 3/4 x 70 1/2 in. Image courtesy of Magenta Plains, New York. Photography © Courtesy of the Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

Tina Girouard titled her multipaneled works consistently so audiences could more easily read her core lexicon of symbols. But what do they accomplish together—in this formation, on these fabrics—in *Child, Tina, Gonna Go, Conflicting Evidence*? In many

ways, the piece feels like autobiographical shorthand, a method of reviewing roots. The retro media personalities and narratives from Girouard's formative youth that are featured in the *Child* segment of the work could inspire that child to cavort about or drive her to run from on-screen myths towards tangible earthen realities. The paired and single dots of the *Tina* segment might represent cooperation or independence, respectively-- or many other interpretations implied by the infinity of circular forms. The *Gonna Go* animal spines suggest comic book motion lines, living up to the square's title, indicating swift primal movement.

Then there's *Conflicting Evidence*, the last square in the work, featuring the voodoo snake. The interesting thing about this particular archetypal symbol--the benevolent life generator--is that, while this version was originally from Benin in West Africa and later used in Caribbean religious healing practices, snakes were often independently featured in other religious traditions as an evil underworld power, *as well as* a symbol of fertility, life and rebirth--and tied to such Catholic and Judaic prophets as St. Patrick and Moses. Does the difference in the ways various religions use snake imagery make for conflicting evidence? Does this final square represent the generator of the entire cycle we see in the work: a child who learns and breaks from widely accessible cultural stories, develops her personal identity and pairs up within a group, eschews convoluted civilization to find her primal nature in a pastoral setting and finally, perhaps, offers us the god within her, generating life as a provident artist--just like the Damballa? It was the common use of time-honored symbols that Girouard was interested in exploring, combining several from her own updated, re-tooled lexicon in a single piece like *Child, Tina, Gonna Go, Conflicting Evidence*--unified formally by color and pattern--and often revealing contradictory but *coexisting* myths we share around the world and across cultures.

While paring down her language to the barest of visual headwords, Girouard also focused on the unavoidable primary elements that make up this practical life on earth. Immense pieces like *Water, Air, Earth, Fire* and its on-view compatriot *Air, Earth, Water, Fire* point to those respective essentials so integral to the human experience that without them, perhaps, we tell no stories, make no art, see no beauty. *Air, Earth, Water, Fire* intriguingly presents these basic symbols--each with its own titular meaning--directly over lush floral prints, as if to perhaps say that it is they that enable this other natural splendor to bloom. Is one the foundation for the other? Maybe they hold equal footing for us. Or do the human-created symbols--in which we frequently invest too heavily--override or supplant the actual nature represented in the backgrounds?





Tina Girouard, *Air, Earth, Water, Fire*, 1980; Pigment on commercially printed fabric, 137 1/4 x 34 1/2 in./348.6 x 87.6 cm. Image courtesy of Magenta Plains, New York. Photography © Courtesy of the Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York

Many other great works in this show at Magenta Plains are worth a solid, sustained gander that also point to essential operating procedures, materials and stations in life from which we are made. They are laid out in two entire, dedicated floors of the gallery, a testament not only to the scale of the work but its revelation and great importance today, some 40-plus years after its creation.

If you can make it down to Chinatown, be certain to take in all the evidence, read the signs and find your roots.

**“Tina Girouard: Conflicting Evidence” is at Magenta Plains through October 26.**



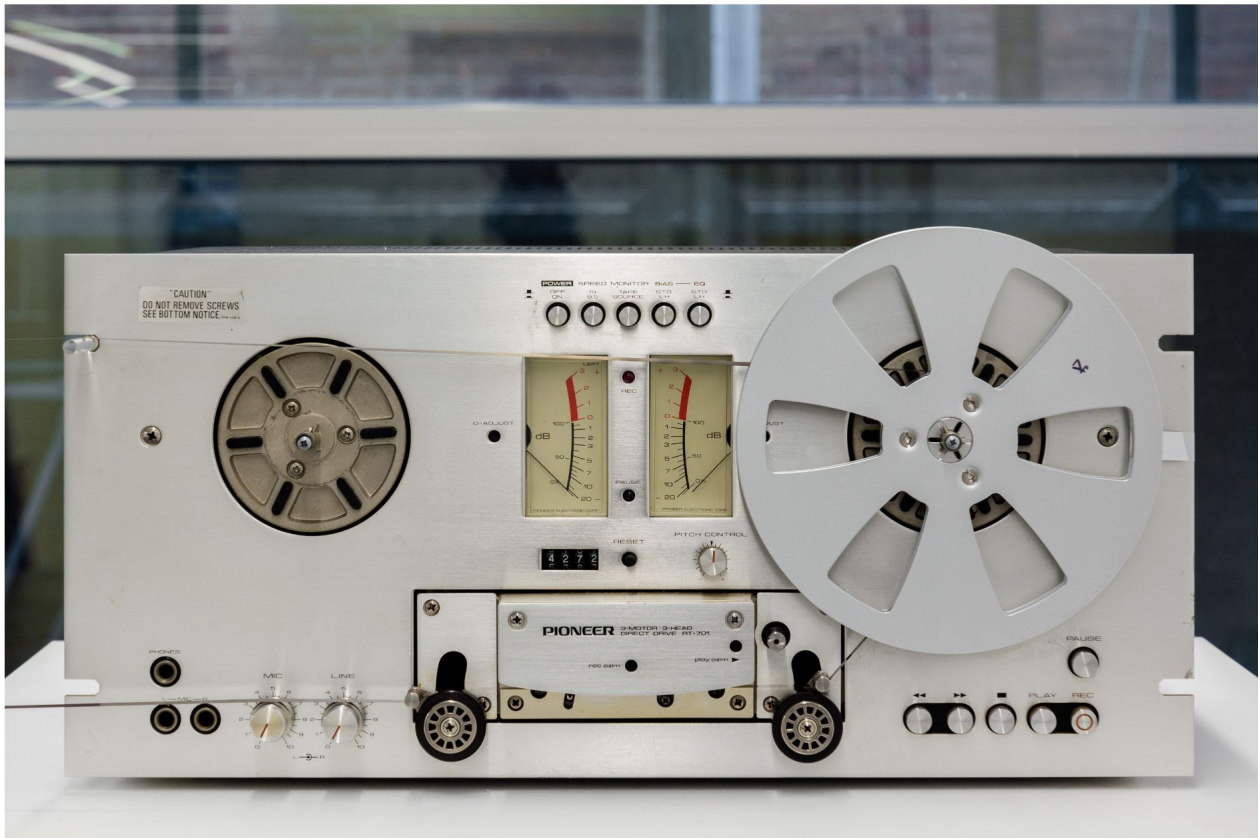
*Flaunt*  
September 2024

# FLAUNT

## TINA GIROUARD | 'I WANT YOU TO HAVE A GOOD TIME'

ART IMITATES LIFE AND ART IS THE ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

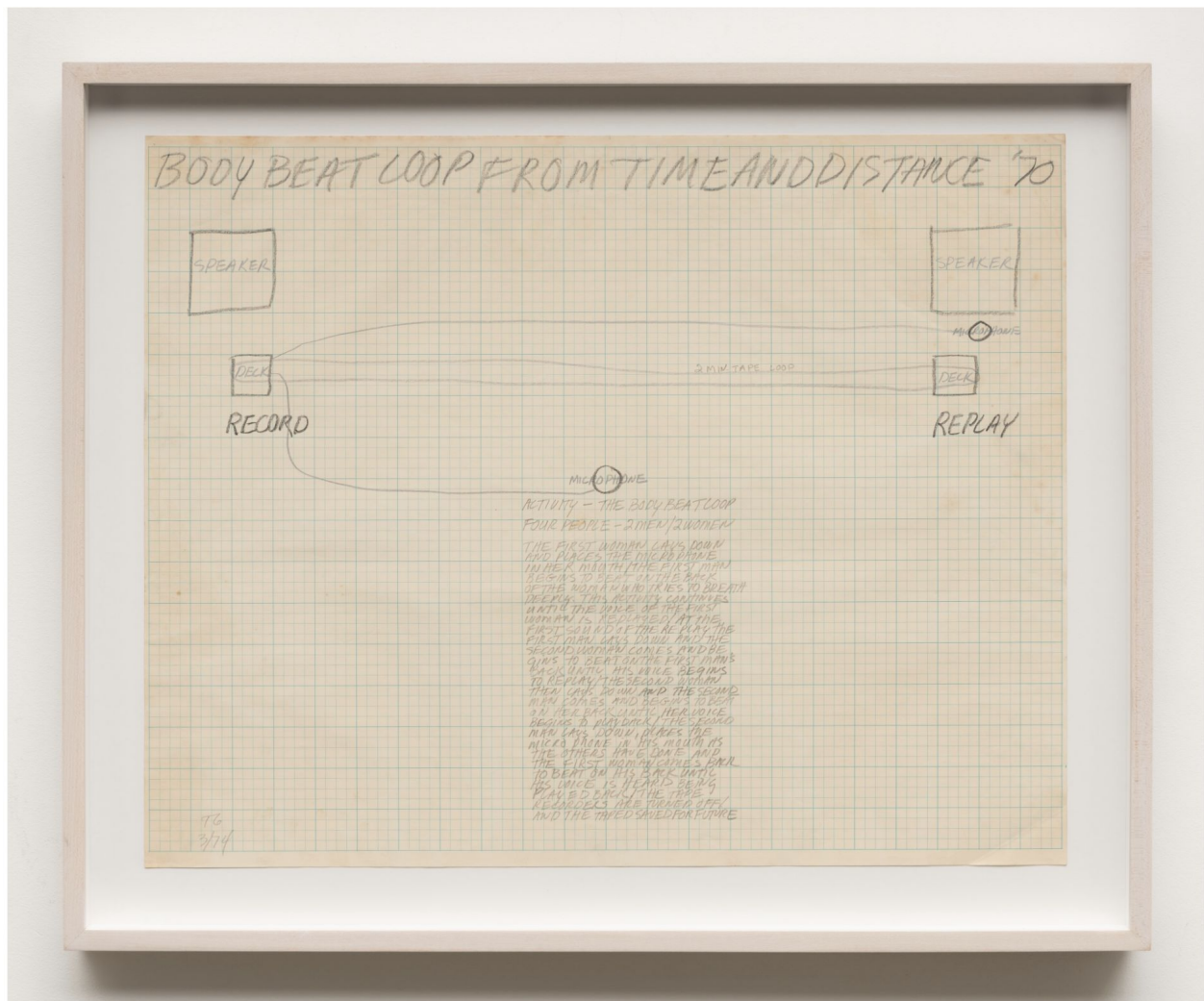
*Written by Isa Luzarraga*



Images courtesy the Estate of Tina Girouard and Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles / New York. © Estate of Tina Girouard, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Video and performance artist Tina Girouard was a trailblazer of the SoHo art scene in the '60s and '70s, with 1970 marking one of her most historic performances, *Sound Loop*. In honor of Girouard's second solo exhibition at the Anat Ebgi gallery in New York City titled *I Want You to Have a Good Time*, *Sound Loop* will be restaged as the centerpiece of the artist's collected works. Girouard's trademark use of layering and seriality as an approach to world building is on full display throughout the exhibition.

The performance of *Sound Loop* features a single performer speaking into a microphone to record sequences of words on a tape loop, eventually re-recording different phrases on top of previous takes. The result is a density of aural space, where individual speech tracks become indistinguishable. Drawings like "Live Body Beat" (1974) surrounding the demonstration depict the "score" for Girouard's earlier performances of *Sound Loop*. The artist's eccentric outlines exhibit how she would often leave the interpretations of a piece up to the audience to dissect.



"Body Beat Loop From Time And Distance '70" (1974).

Graphite on graph paper.

Framed 21" x 26" [HxW] (53.34 x 66.04 cm).

*I Want You to Have a Good Time* aptly embodies Girouard's playful spirit, urging viewers to step away from the self-serious conceptualism of the 70s art scene — a gaiety she maintained until her passing in 2020. Girouard's exhibition history extends decades, including a mid-career retrospective mounted at the Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City in addition to events like the 1980 Venice Biennale and the 1977 Paris Biennale. Her work was displayed at museums worldwide, like the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles and Palais des Beaux-Arts Brussels.

In 2019, the Anat Ebgi gallery collaborated with The Kitchen and additional curators to restage another of Girouard's historic performances, *Pinwheel* (1977). This historic presentation was followed by *A Place That Has No Name: Early Works*, the artist's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles, also held at Anat Ebgi in 2020. This marked the final showcase of Girouard's work before her passing.



"Visions (New York)" (1977).  
Chromogenic print.  
Unframed 20.1" x 30" [HxW] (51.13 x 76.2 cm).

Nevertheless, Girouard's vigor and creativity lives on in *I Want You to Have a Good Time*. The exhibition will be at the Anat Ebgi gallery in New York City until late October.



*The New York Times*  
September 5 2024

# The New York Times

FALL PREVIEW

## Art Exhibitions That Don't Look Away From the Rocky Realities

Here in New York but still in a Southern vein, the [Center for Art, Research and Alliances](#) is presenting “[Tina Girouard: SIGN-IN](#),” an important retrospective of the Louisiana-born artist who died in 2020 (Sept. 20-Jan. 12, 2025). A [SoHo scene figure in the 1970s](#) who collaborated with Vito Acconci and Gordon Matta-Clark, Girouard exited the scene to return to the South at a time when this meant a withdrawal from view and opportunity. In fact she continued to work, notably in textile and sequin, including for several years in Haiti. This show, initiated by the [Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought](#) and first presented earlier this year at the Ogden, stitches back her full story.

Forbes  
September 1 2024

# Forbes

LIFESTYLE > ARTS

## Highlights Of A Busy September 2024 Arts Calendar In New York City By [Chadd Scott](#)

New York may never sleep, but summer feels like nap time. At least in the art world. Culture shakes off the doldrums following Labor Day, roaring into fall, its busiest time of year.

**Tina Girouard** (1946–2020) became a central figure in the avant-garde art scene in 1970s New York alongside peers like Gordon Matta-Clark, Lynda Benglis, and Mary Heilmann. [The Center for Art Research and Alliances](#) presents the first comprehensive retrospective in New York for the artist September 20 through January 12, 2025. The artist's first NYC gallery exhibition since 2012 simultaneously takes place at [Magenta Plains](#).

When New York started veering towards the commodification of art in the 80s, Girouard abandoned the city to safeguard the integrity of her artistic practice. She returned to her home state of Louisiana and later set up a studio in Haiti, working with local artists. For this reason, many of her later works have not been seen, and Girouard—though highly influential on generations of artists to come—remained uncelebrated.

The free exhibition presents film, performance, drawing, sequin, textile, and installation, together with archival photographs, scores, and preparatory notes.

Artforum  
June 2024

# ARTFORUM

REVIEWS NEW ORLEANS

## Tina Girouard

Ogden Museum of Southern Art

By Lauren Stroh



Tina Girouard in collaboration with the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, *Conflicting Evidence*, 1980, sewn fabric panels with pigment, overall 12 × 9'.

*Anarchitecture*, a term Gordon Matta-Clark coined for a movement that experimented with disassembling traditional architectural designs and concepts—and that was subsequently adopted as the name of a group of like-minded artists—describes a coterie that, in some ways, was a real boys' club. Constituted of Herculean feats that defied physics and practicality, the collective's output was often destructive: Think blown-out windows, collapsed buildings, and homes made uninhabitable. Take *Splitting*, 1974,



for which Matta-Clark cut a house in half and set it back on its foundation to exaggerate the white space between, emphasizing the physical limits of materials under stress and a desire to divorce himself from the mundane trappings of the American Dream.

Perhaps this is what sets the Louisiana-born Tina Girouard (1946–2020) apart from her contemporaries in the Anarchitecture group. Where others focused on material anarchy and disrupting the normative politics of urban spaces and private property, Girouard undertook the “women’s work” that underwrites this territory, illuminating everyday domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, grooming, decorating, and homemaking as gendered performances via art.

In “Tina Girouard: SIGN-IN,” her first major retrospective at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans—organized by the Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought—Girouard serves as both muse and maker. Her career trajectory resembles the plotline of “Cinderella”: In a suite of photographs documenting her 1971 installation/performance *Swept House*—part of curator Alanna Heiss’s “Brooklyn Bridge Event,” a temporary exhibition that appeared beneath the titular structure—we see the artist sweeping dirt from under the steel supports of the overpass alongside a crew of local children. Elsewhere in this show, we watch her debone a chicken at the de facto soup kitchen for SoHo artists, Food, which fed thousands for next to nothing (or for free) between 1971 and 1974. In archival footage, Girouard hand-washes silks bequeathed to her as a dowry by her mother-in-law for *Maintenance III: Sewing, Washing, Wringing, Rinsing, Folding Solomon’s Lot*, 1973. In 1978, however, after a decade of living and working in New York, the artist returned to Louisiana to convert a former convenience store into a shared house and studio with her husband (and fellow anarchist) Richard Landry. A scrapbook of photographs in this presentation chronicles the building’s transportation to the couple’s property in Cecilia, a poetic gesture that underscores anarchitecture’s potential for rehabilitation as well as decline.

Also on display in “SIGN-IN” are Girouard’s works on paper, archives, and personal letters; of particular interest are her serial codices of pictographs made by different cultures, accompanied by her own renditions of them. These symbols make up the prototype for a universal language composed of simplified line drawings, which anticipate the artist’s interest in world heritage and cross-cultural exchange.

Most easy to love are the artist’s experiments with decorative arts from the 1970s, in which she repurposed linoleum, wallpaper, textiles, and other types of home decor for unabashedly gaudy and girly collages. These materials were not costly or *recherché*; they are easily sourced goods that were plentiful and cheap. One also gets the sense that these works were made without much irony, unlike her peers’ gendered critiques (e.g., that of Lynda Benglis, also from southwest Louisiana, who ironically detoured the tropes of pornography with her own body in a purchased advertisement that appeared in this magazine in 1974, creating an art-world schism). Considering the period during which these collages were made, concurrent with the emergence of radical feminism, Girouard has been largely excluded from the canonical art discourse. Her work prioritizes a familiarity with suburban and rural cultural norms over those found in more urban settings. The art focuses on communal harmony and shared social practices, illustrating the pleasures and aesthetic beauty inherent to hosting or homemaking, e.g., creating kinships through ritual.

Domestic labor makes up the lives of most Cajun women in Louisiana, where Girouard was born, lived, and died. These works cleverly draw attention to the financial realities that underwrite both artmaking and women’s labor, invoking one of anarchitecture’s chief aims: to cut away from material excess, greed, and overconsumption by repurposing ready-made patterns and designs. Girouard does so in order to make home a place we’d want to return to, the site of a happily ever after.

*e-flux*  
April 10 2024

## e-flux Criticism

# Tina Girouard's "SIGN-IN"

Cat Kron



Tina Girouard, *Pinwheel*, 1977. Photo documentation of installation and performance. Filmed and performed for the exhibition "Five From Louisiana" at the New Orleans Museum of Art, 1977. Image courtesy of the Estate of Tina Girouard and Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York.

Performance art offers its viewer what other visual forms can't: a direct address in real time. Yet in the years that follow its realization, the medium is susceptible to misremembering, or worse, indifference; its curators frequently resort to displaying a work's discards in an effort to recreate the experience of its unfolding after the original audience has, quite literally, moved on.

When it comes to Louisianian artist Tina Girouard, much of the imagined audience was never there in the first place. Girouard's difficult-to-classify performance work—she remains best known within the art world for her collaboration with Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark on the restaurant-cum-happening FOOD—transpired primarily in downtown New York in the 1970s, and until recently almost none of it trickled down to the Bayou, an unfortunate fact given how prominently the region figured in her own artistic mythology. The artist's method of repurposing the same materials in performance after performance inadvertently complicated the task of future curators and archivists who might hope to recreate specific iterations.





View of Tina Girouard's "SIGN-IN" at Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, 2024. Photo by Alex Marks.

Foremost among her props were eight twelve-foot lengths of floral-printed silk, on which she bestowed the typically mythical-sounding name "Solomon's Lot," and which she used in many of her performances throughout the 1970s. These function as both physical supports in the works' choreography and a symbolic throughline for them. All eight of the textiles were unboxed for this posthumous retrospective, the artist's first. They are strung from rods which hang from the ceiling with four sheets to a wire; one set hangs perpendicular to the floor, the other hovers at an acute angle to it. The resulting pair of pastel banners presides over the fifth-floor gallery.

Curated by the Rivers Institute's Andrea Andersson at the Ogden Museum, "Tina Girouard: SIGN-IN" traces a narrative from the artist's early improvisational performances to her later, meticulously embellished textiles, which the "Solomon's Lot" materials serve to bridge. Part of her wedding dowry, the set of silks was named for an uncle of Girouard's partner Richard "Dickie" Landry, with whom she moved to Mary Heilmann's Chinatown loft in 1969, shortly after graduating from the University of Southwest Louisiana. Both artists had Cajun heritage, and each summer Girouard continued to visit her family home in Acadiana, the state's southernmost region, where she sourced the materials that would become the lynchpin of her performances.<sup>1</sup>

Girouard first used the Lot textiles in the movement *Air Space Stage* from the quartet *Four Stages* (1972), a suite of architectural installations made using rudimentary building materials to be activated by performers. She sited the installations and performances at 112 Greene Street, the gallery/incubator run by Matta-Clark. For *Air Space Stage*, Girouard attached four of the Lot silks to the lofted ceiling, where they functioned as an upper frame for the activity—improvised balancing and swinging on hanging slats and two-by-fours—performed by the participants. The fabrics would resurface in works throughout the seventies at then-nascent New York performance venues including the Kitchen and the Clocktower. They traveled with Girouard to Kassel for Documenta 6, where the artist performed *Camouflage* (1977), in which two players washed a length of one of the fabrics in the Fulda River—a gesture that echoed the artist's taped performance of herself washing, rinsing, and wringing the cloths in *Part III* (1973) of her video suite *Maintenance* (1970–76).



View of Tina Girouard's "SIGN-IN" at Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, 2024. Photo by Alex Marks.

Girouard's conscientious handling of these fabrics, informed by her work at the vanguard of the Pattern and Decoration Movement, was at once infused with the ritual motions of domestic labor and with a treatment of the "Lots" as bodies to be cared for. As well as the "Lots," human players circulated in and out from piece to piece, in keeping with Girouard's notion of hospitality.<sup>2</sup> The "Solomon's Lot" textiles were given a "grand finale" in *Pinwheel*, performed at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1977, before being officially retired. For *Pinwheel*, Girouard and three other performers placed the silk strips in a cruciform, which they then proceeded to embellish over the course of the hourlong performance as an overhead camera looked on and recorded. Here at the Ogden, this footage is projected onto the floor of the smaller gallery, with chairs upholstered with patterned textiles creating an intimate gathering space around the projection.

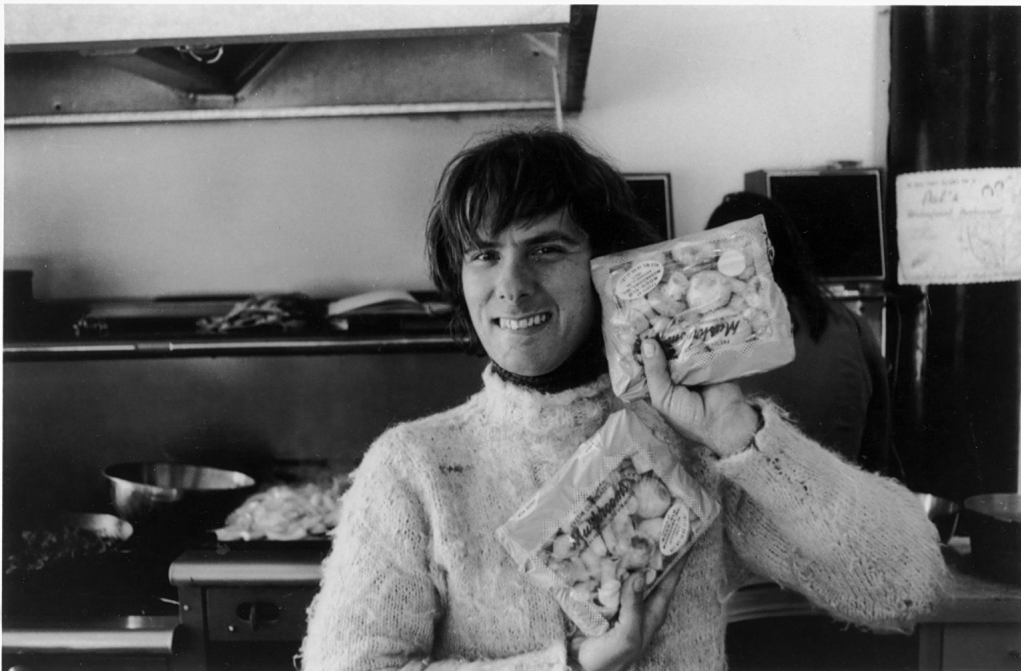
That Girouard's performance work is finally being recognized in Louisiana is fitting. It's also corrective. She returned to her home state permanently in 1978 following a studio fire in New York; in the years following *Pinwheel*, she moved toward works made of cloth, rather than performed with it. In the latter half of her life she was better known locally for textiles and graphic prints, the sort of seemingly anodyne art familiar to locals as décor from family doctors' offices. Yet rather than proof of a downward trajectory from youthful experimentation to conservative middle and later works, these pieces were a logical continuation of Girouard's investment in the Pattern and Decoration Movement she had helped galvanize, convinced that the borders between decorative and fine art are permeable. The Rivers Institute has done the painstaking work of reconstructing the timeline of Girouard's performances, and has satisfyingly re-sited them in the context where they gestated. But one could sense the "Lots" straining against their tethers, waiting to be reanimated on their native soil.



*Autre*  
August 24 2022

# AUTRE

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT: GORDON MATTA-CLARK'S RESTAURANT FOR ARTISTS CHANGED THE CULINARY DISCOURSE →



In 1971, artists Gordon Matta-Clark, Carol Goodden, and Tina Girouard opened FOOD, a landmark New York restaurant on the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in SoHo. In the urban wilds of a not-yet-fully developed or gentrified Lower Manhattan of the early '70s, FOOD was a revolutionary laboratory for fresh sustainable cooking and unusual culinary collaborations. Artists like Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage created meals at FOOD. Although never realized, Mark di Suvero had plans to serve dishes through the windows via a crane—he would then instruct diners to eat with tools such as hammers and screwdrivers. As a hub for young artists in the nascency of their careers, the menu was affordable and simple, which created a unique atmosphere of camaraderie and community. Although FOOD, in its original incarnation, only lasted three years, the restaurant became a fabled institution and paradigmatic lesson for the possibility of food at the intersection of art.





## FOOD

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TUESDAY - FRIDAY 11:30 A.M. until MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY 11:30 A.M. until 3 A.M.

SUNDAY SPECIAL GUEST CHEF NIGHT 7 P.M. until 11 P.M.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: WE DO NOT YET HAVE A LIQUOR LICENSE OR A WINE AND BEER LICENSE SO PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN LIQUOR.

OUR MENU CHANGES EVERY DAY. HERE ARE SOME SAMPLES.

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stock soup UTD	lamb and squash stew
mushroom and barley soup	beef and vegetable stew
carrot soup	rabbit stew with prunes
black bean soup cuban	used car stew
navy bean, beer and cheese soup	liver dumpling stew and alka seltzer
fish chowder	chili
borscht with sour cream	bouillabaise
gazpacho	shrimp and chicken gumbo
suimono	

DINNERS are one thing each night--a main course with vegetables, salad and dessert.

velvet chicken in satin sauce	canary pudding
acorn squash with mint	winter fruit salad
raw mackerel with wasabi sauce of wasabi, saki & soy	bananas flambé
Japanese New Year's dish	Mustar Day gingerbread
mock chicken drumsticks or city chicken	lumberjacks
creamed sorrel	hotnails
yams baked in honeybutter	quakers
stuffed tongue creole	apple apricot sauce with almonds
anchovy onion pie	
baked marrow bones	
roasts, pot roasts, curries	
macaroni maruzze with blueberries	
seviche	
peruska - perig for our vegetarian night which is Tuesdays	
fig, garlic and anchovy salad	
corn and flour tortillas	

SUNDAY SPECIAL GUEST CHEF DINNERS are.

DRINKS

fresh squeezed orange juice  
apple juices  
fresh vegetable juices  
coffee - we are trying several kinds and styles  
teas  
milk

PRICES - 50¢ - 75¢ for soup with bread \$1.25 - \$1.50 stew with bread  
\$3.00 for dinner \$5.00 Sunday special guest chef night dinner  
we have \$10 books of meal tickets on sale at FOOD for only \$9.50

*Artforum*  
October 2021

# ARTFORUM

## PATTERN RECOGNITION

Lynne Cooke on the Pattern and Decoration movement

By Lynne Cooke ☿

**IN AN APPRECIATIVE 2016 REVIEW** of new work by Valerie Jaudon, critic David Frankel noted that the Pattern and Decoration movement, of which Jaudon was a prominent member, had long been held in disrepute. “In the early ’80s,” Frankel wrote, “I remember a colleague at *Artforum* at the time saying it could never be taken seriously in the magazine.”<sup>1</sup> In retrospect, what makes this dismissal so striking is that, in the mid-’70s, *Artforum* contributed significantly to P&D’s emergence into the spotlight, publishing key texts by its advocates along with numerous reviews of its shows. Amy Goldin’s “Patterns, Grids, and Painting” (1975) and Jeff Perrone’s “Approaching the Decorative” (1976) were among the early touchstones for P&D’s heterogeneous cohort, riled by the unmitigated critical support for diverse ascetic and masculinist tendencies pervasive in the painting of the moment. However, by the mid-’80s, eclipsed by newer developments—the Pictures generation, neo-geo, et al.—P&D was increasingly coming under fire for positions now considered controversial: for the purported essentialism of its versions of second-wave feminism, for a naive advocacy that masked acts of Orientalizing and primitivizing, for cultural imperialism. More fundamental “problems” largely went unnoted, including a lack of the kind of conceptual depth expected of cutting-edge practices: In their commitment to the decorative, P&D artists prioritized surface over subject matter, the former serving primarily as a vehicle for sensuous effects. Not least, the art world’s entrenched sexism fostered the occasion for its denizens to belittle and sideline a movement renowned for the dominant role played by women in its genesis and trajectory.

Until recently, the disparaging assessment offered by Frankel's colleague largely prevailed. Consider the Fondation Beyeler's ambitious exhibition "Ornament and Abstraction: The Dialogue between Non-Western, Modern and Contemporary Art," which opened in June 2001 to coincide with that year's edition of the prestigious Art Basel fair. The sprawling survey ranged from Gauguin to Mondrian to then-new art stars such as Peter Kogler. Surprisingly, given its subject, the show included no works by artists associated with the P&D movement.<sup>2</sup>

The sea change began in 2018 with the opening of the first of four major P&D-centered shows that would tour in Europe and the United States over the next three years. Each exhibition shone a different light on the last of the strategically organized art movements of the twentieth century, yet common to all was a significant representation of women. The first of the quartet, "Pattern and Decoration: Ornament as Promise," debuted at the Ludwig Forum in Aachen, Germany, and was drawn from the holdings of the Peter and Irene Ludwig Foundation, whose namesakes avidly collected this work on visits to New York in the late '70s. In the version of the show installed at Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, curator Manuela Ammer homed in on thirteen artists, most of whom were cornerstones of P&D's extensive, loose, and shifting cohort, their works running the gamut from painting, sculpture, ceramic tiles, and multimedia installation to performance and video. "Pattern, Decoration & Crime," which originated at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, featured twenty-eight artists, including several Continentals—Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Simon Hantaï, and Claude Viallat—whom the organizers felt shared "formal concerns" with their American peers. In their titles, both exhibitions reference Adolf Loos's seminal and infamously misogynist and colonialist polemic "Ornament and Crime," published in Vienna in 1908. While Loos and Ammer agree that ornament is superficial—or, to use the former's term, "degenerate"—Ammer assigns a positive value to the queer and feminist identities that found such propitious conditions in ornament's decorative excess and gendered coding.



Curiously missing from the two American shows was a willingness to think outside heteronormative categories and binary gender relations. Focus on feminist positions came at the expense of ways in which certain of these works may be read as queered. Similarly, the workings of the masculinist privilege that ascribes riskiness to male artists' engagement with decoration while demeaning that of their female counterparts go unexplored.

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**Each of these exhibitions shone a different light on the last of the strategically organized art movements of the twentieth century, yet common to all was the representation of women artists.**

Rambunctious and opulent, “Less Is a Bore: Maximalist Art and Design,” at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, embraced not only '70s designers and artists—notably, Lucinda Childs, Nathalie du Pasquier, Sol LeWitt, Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi, and Ettore Sottsass, all contemporaries of the original P&D coterie—but expanded their roster to include subsequent generations. Fleshing out curator Jenelle Porter's capacious vision of “maximalism” were works by a miscellany of those whom she viewed as its current exponents, Polly Apfelbaum, Tord Boontje, Leigh Bowery and Fergus Greer, and Haegue Yang among them. In total, some forty-four divergent players assumed walk-on parts in a dense, upbeat, high-voltage installation.

By contrast, “With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985”—which originated in 2019 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, before traveling to the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York—focused on the movement’s prime years while extending the time frame back to 1972. Thus the organizers emphasized California progenitors such as *Womanhouse*, staged at CalArts, where Miriam Schapiro was then teaching along with Judy Chicago. That fall, Goldin, who would become the movement’s most committed supporter and apologist, began a New York–Harvard commute to attend classes on Islamic art by revered scholar Oleg Grabar. In naming the show, curator Anna Katz put into play an unresolvable ambiguity that ultimately cleaved her project. The exhibition’s title opens to two distinct readings. In one, the subject is the P&D movement within the larger context of American art between 1972 and 1985; in the other, the subject is broadly thematic: decoration and pattern in American art during the given time frame. At the Hessel Museum, where works by artists originally associated with P&D are indistinguishably mixed in with those of nonaligned contemporaries and precursors under a series of generic subheadings, the second reading prevails. The accompanying publication, by contrast, clearly performs the first. Katz’s introductory essay, together with the newly commissioned scholarly texts and ancillary materials, concentrates on the movement.



View of “Pattern and Decoration: Ornament as Promise,” 2019, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna. Foreground: Tina Girouard, *Air Space Stage I, II*, 1972/2019. Photo: Stephan Wyckoff.

That said, Katz's recuperative agenda—the rehabilitation of an unjustly neglected artistic phenomenon—is at the same time threaded through by a corrective impulse. Reflecting today's urgent issues, she enlarges the fluctuating network of original participants to include artists who “would've, could've, or should've” been part of it—had they not, like ceramist Betty Woodman, lived largely away from the coastal centers and self-identified as craftspeople. A similar fate awaited those who, like William T. Williams, created abstract paintings that, while indebted to Islamic visual traditions (a determining preoccupation of many P&D artists), nonetheless fell outside the purview of its exclusively white protagonists. Katz's broad brush raises the possibility of additional blind spots. Why not, for example, amplify the sartorial forays of Schapiro and Robert Kushner by adding Katherine Westphal's gorgeous hand-printed paper kimonos? These were standouts among the experimental works made by textile artists in both California and New York exploring forms of wearable art in the '70s and '80s. Though preoccupied with vernacular and historic craft traditions, P&D evinced scant interest in the ascendant postwar studio-craft movement then attracting widespread public attention. Critic Barbara Rose speculated that snobbery was the basis for the disregard fine artists showed their professionally trained counterparts in the applied arts.<sup>3</sup> But in the case of P&D artists, anxiety about their works' status and by extension their own professional standing may have contributed to a reluctance to be aligned with their natural allies, contemporary practitioners delegitimized as “minor.”

Kim MacConnel, an early P&D member, recently characterized the diverse affiliate as “like minds with an astonishing array of differing interests.” By expanding those already loose networks to accommodate current ideological concerns, “With Pleasure” risks distorting the heady mixture of reactive, contingent, and necessarily partisan perspectives motivating the movement's formation, even as each member pursued her own artistic agenda. Arguably, what's needed at this moment is something more than redemptive and remedial curatorial approaches that situate P&D artists within larger frameworks, whether of progenitors, of contemporaries, or of legatees who broadly shared the movement's diverse aesthetic preoccupations. Fundamental to its recuperation is a historically framed granular parsing of its central aesthetic preoccupations—above all, the slippery and highly subjective concept of the decorative.



**IN LATE 1974**, spurred by what Jaudon described as their frustration with the narrowness of the criticism of the day, a small, intergenerational group of abstract painters began meeting in downtown Manhattan lofts. Inclusive, exuberant, and colorful, their often newly minted aesthetics were patently at odds with the austere reductivist abstraction then dominant. Challenging the narrow, medium-specific issues regnant in painterly discourse, they drew on modes of decoration found in both the great non-Western cultures of the past—above all, Islamic traditions of abstract patterning—and humble vernacular and domestic crafts gendered as women’s work. Excited to recognize others with like-minded concerns but apprehensive of the critical opprobrium they anticipated, they discussed with Goldin the advantages of framing themselves as part of a movement. Key to their thinking were lessons learned from the women’s movement, with which several were personally involved: the tactical value of group endeavor, collective action, networking, and consciousness-raising. In 1975, what soon became known as Pattern and Decoration jelled in a series of public convenings: artists panels, talks, and a gallery show organized by one of their own, quilter Jane Kaufman, tellingly titled “Ten Approaches to the Decorative.” Critical recognition rapidly followed, along with market validation. By decade’s end, group shows had appeared in public and private venues across the nation; others were taking place in Europe. Sales rocketed, such that many core members became preoccupied with managing their escalating careers. Seemingly, they no longer had time to get together. By the mid-’80s, the group’s momentum had stalled.

In this by-now-codified account, their galvanizing feelings of anxiety are regularly restated. In fact, there was remarkably little substantive or sustained art-world resistance to their recursive vision of painting’s expansive domain.<sup>4</sup> By the time the P&D movement was underway, art that engaged with the decorative and with abstract-adjacent forms of pattern was widespread, if largely absent from critical discourse.

In 1970, Frank Stella, the preeminent abstract painter of the moment, had predicted as much in the catalogue to his first retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art. "My main interest," he noted with reference to his most recent works, "has been to make what is popularly called decorative painting truly viable in unequivocal abstract terms." Stella nonetheless immediately qualified his revelation: He meant "decorative . . . in a good sense," he explained, instancing Matisse, whose manifestly ornamental *papiers découpés* were then garnering unprecedented acclaim.<sup>5</sup> If there were "good" versions of decorative, then there must be "bad," but what those were Stella left unmentioned. To the mandarin theorists who championed his art, the work of P&D painters likely embodied the latter, but they typically refrained from making any accusation: Silence can be an effective tool of dismissal. However, for other exponents of '60s purist abstraction, such as Perrone, who rapidly changed course, the writing was on the wall. Their wholesale embrace of P&D suggests that recent variants of hard-edge geometric and systems-based abstraction had been found wanting: etiolated, insular, hollowed out. Were this not the case, how else to account for the movement's critical and commercial success virtually from the outset?

In 1979, legendary curator and art-world influencer Harald Szeemann traveled to New York to check out for himself what in Europe was touted as the latest manifestation of the avant-garde. Though much impressed by its preponderance of women artists, Szeemann immediately recognized that P&D was far from transgressive, or even subversive, in an era that had spawned radical forms of expression in photography, video, film, performance, and Conceptual art. Excepting Tina Girouard, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, and Ned Smyth (whom he doesn't mention in the article he wrote on returning home), the movement's protagonists never abandoned painting as their primary reference point. Thus, far from signaling a substantive break with the immediate past, P&D represented a return, Szeemann concluded, to the kind of "relaxed" art of abstracted forms arranged decoratively on a flat surface that Matisse had propounded as long ago as 1908 in his "Notes of a Painter."

Barely two years after writing that seminal text, Matisse visited a groundbreaking exhibition of Islamic art in Munich; the encounter would trigger for him a lifelong fascination with that greatest of decorative cultures. His epiphany was far from unique. Countless others—from Klee and Kandinsky through Stella and P&D initiators Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff—would follow in his wake. In his 1979 text “The Decorative Impulse,” Perrone claimed that the P&D cadre was drawn to Islamic art as part of a “constant attempt by artists to drive art out of its antisocial tower and back into the everyday world.” That goal would be realized literally by Jaudon and Kozloff, whose aspirations to create public art and architecture led to commissions for civic plazas, the New York subway system, Amtrak stations, and corporate campuses.

By the dawn of the new millennium, the repeated and sustained engagements by Western artists with Islamic art across the previous century made clear that the narratives of modernist art history could no longer be written without consideration of abstraction’s ongoing intersections with pattern and decoration. “Far from being a repository of outmoded traditions, [ornament] has played a constitutive role in modern art,” Markus Bröderlin concluded in his 2001 introduction to *Ornament and Abstraction*. That said, the interrelated concepts of decoration, ornament, and pattern are anything but universal, monolithic, and fixed. Whether made by a viewer or by the artist, the judgment that an artwork is decorative is qualitative, ideologically freighted, and inevitably shaped by context. And while pattern is typically put in the service of decorative impulses, exceptions may be found even within the precincts of the P&D community, as seen in the art of Tony Robbin. In the large-scale paintings suffused with lyric color that he produced in the ’70s, Robbin modeled overlapping multidimensional spaces by melding and layering patterns appropriated from Japanese art and architecture, and elsewhere. In the ’80s, he furthered these complex optical explorations by way of computer programming. Decoration was anathema to his endeavor.



When casually employed today, the term *decorative* may still serve as a shorthand slur. Yet it carries little real weight, and not only because the richly nuanced ways in which the decorative consumed artists and critics throughout the modernist era are undeniable. The efflorescence over the past two decades of art practices incorporating textile materials and techniques, predicated on issues of patterning and ornamentation, has largely dispelled any residual negativity. Disappointingly, none of the contributors to the catalogues of these four shows follow their predecessors' examples or, with the benefit of hindsight, systematically tease out the operations of those ubiquitous if elusive concepts in searching detail. Each publication reprints articles from the heyday of P&D by leading advocates Goldin, Perrault, Perrone, Szeemann, et al., together with artists' statements old and new. Since much of this material is readily available online, its foregrounding suggests a shared conviction that authoritative formulations and interpretations continue to reside in the hands of the movement's progenitors.

“

**The interrelated concepts of decoration,  
ornament, and pattern are anything but universal,  
monolithic, and fixed.**

The catalogues consequently fail to build on the few scholarly contributions that challenge long-held accounts. In an essay on Jaudon published in 1996, Anna Chave demonstrates that continuity and indebtedness are as evident in the artist's nuanced work as rejection. A decade later, in a second important text, Chave explored the significant groundwork laid in the late '60s by a band of “outlaw” women artists with overlapping concerns, among them Lynda Benglis, Louise Fishman, Harmony Hammond, Ree Morton, and Howardina Pindell.<sup>6</sup>

P&D's long eclipse in mainstream art-historical narratives may explain not only the tenacious grip of formative interpretations but also the lack of in-depth, fine-grained studies of principals such as Girouard, who died last year and whose work commands increasing attention. Her distinctive mode of legitimating decorative practices involved the use of found lengths of vintage fabric, which she manipulated into provisional architectural structures for the performance of dance and ritual ceremonies. Somewhat of an outlier in the P&D community, Girouard was immersed in circuits around Gordon Matta-Clark, artists' group Anarchitecture, and New York alternative space 112 Greene Street. A close reading of her singular work and career would productively complicate the critical dicta that position P&D as a self-propelling polyglot ensemble fixated on contesting a hegemonic painting discourse.



Tina Girouard, *Lie No.*, 1973. Performance view, 112 Greene Street, New York, September 1973. Tina Girouard. © Tina Girouard/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

The relative dearth of recent scholarship that drills down on P&D's primary artists and issues makes it difficult to weigh its legacy. How, for example, to distinguish its impact on later generations from the broadly based cultural trend that Porter dubs maximalism? How might its prescient navigating of questions of identity illuminate contemporary explorations of subject positions based in race and gender? Neither definitive nor exhaustive, these four reprises of the hitherto better-known-about-than-known movement are nonetheless a welcome sign of change. Finally, the door has been cracked open.

*Interior Design*  
August 2 2021

## INTERIOR DESIGN

### Highlights from 'With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985'



Installation view of "Fringe." Photography courtesy of Denny Dimin Gallery.

Writing wall labels for an exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2016 led to curator Anna Katz's discovery of an American art movement from 1970s. "After completing a Ph.D. in contemporary art, I was astonished to have never heard of Pattern and Decoration and some of its key artists, such as Kim MacConnel," she tells *Interior Design*. The first thing Katz embarked on upon becoming the museum's in-house curator the following year was an exhibition that would put the influential but somewhat forgotten movement back on the map.



“With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985” opened at MOCA in October, 2019 with a display of around 50 artists whose work between early 1970s and mid-’80s defied the era’s male-dominated minimalism with interpretation of craft and decorative techniques, “while using abstraction with forceful presence,” according to the curator. The show recently traveled to the Hessel Museum of Art at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, to emphasize the movement’s exchange between East and West Coasts as well as to continue the conversation around Pattern and Decoration (also known as P&D)’s influence on artists who insistently use craft today.

“When I visit young artists’ studios, I see how craft has become a tool to talk about marginalization and value,” Katz explains. P&D’s unsung motto of “more is more” echoes in contemporary artists, who according to the curator, believe “what’s considered unnecessary is necessary; over the top, just the right amount;” and “irrelevant, relevant.”

She had initially planned a show that would perhaps reflect the P&D movement’s “sharp edge of a wedge,” but her three years of research and visits to many attics and storage facilities led her towards an expansive direction. Besides the movement’s critical figures, such as Cynthia Carlson, Joyce Kozloff, Kim MacConnel, and Miriam Schapiro, artists who have not necessarily been considered a part of P&D also made the cut. “I am not claiming Lynda Benglis or Al Loving were a part of the group, but there is a tremendous crossover between the core artists and others’ overturning of hierarchies of western art tradition which gerrymandered to exclude anyone except white and male.”

Fabrics with bright sequins or gaudy-colored ceramics may now prevail contemporary art galleries, “but that was not the case back then,” Katz reminds, noting that the show offers perspective on why the current norm was so radical at the time while recovering important artistic voices.

This very connection between the past and present prompted the Denny Dimin Gallery in Manhattan to organize the ongoing group exhibition, “Fringe.” “Some of our gallery artists, including Amanda Valdez, Justine Hill, and Future Retrieval, are unabashedly influenced by the 1970s movement,” says founder and partner Elizabeth Denny. “There are many new conversations to have about the role of the artist in terms of gender and identity that many of the P&D artists were having, which are still so important today.” “Fringe” includes 12 contemporary artists who adapt craft techniques, including sewing or floral arrangement, to deliver statements on race, identity, and gender. Artist Justine Hill, who also assisted Denny in organizing the show, sees the show as an opportunity to expand on a major influence on her work, “and bring that interest out of the studio to think about my peers through a P&D lens.”

*Interior Design* has picked highlights from the Hessel Museum of Art at CCs Bard’s ongoing exhibition, “With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972-1985,” in addition to a few from “Fringe” in Manhattan.

**Tina Girouard, *Maintenance III*, 1973**



Tina Girouard, *Maintenance III*, 1973, Video (color, sound) 27 min. Courtesy of the artist's estate.

This 27-minute projection zooms onto Girouard's lap while she tends a group of floral fabrics which she inherited from her uncle, Sullivan. Throughout the video, she rinses, sews, and folds the materials while the radio in the background plays content that ranges from the time's popular tunes, advertisement, and political updates. A song from Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of The Moon* album is followed by a car dealership advertisement, and we eventually hear the most recent development in the Watergate hearings. "That big 'a-ha' moment is critical about the movement's queering of not only contemporary art but the broader authority," says Katz. The topics' relevancy to the present, particularly a few years ago during the curator's research for the show, is further striking.

Artforum  
Juy / August 2020

# ARTFORUM

## Tina Girouard

Anat Ebgi | Culver City

By Tausif Noor



View of "Tina Girouard," 2020.

On a visit to her native southwestern Louisiana around 1970, Tina Girouard inherited eight lengths of patterned 1940s silk from her mother-in-law, who had been given the material by a relative named Solomon Matlock. Rather than sew the material into wearable garments, Girouard decided to integrate the fabrics into her practice in New York City, where she had moved two years prior. Measuring three feet by twelve feet each, the Solomon's Lot fabrics, as they came to be known, are saturated in pastel tones and festooned with variegated floral and botanical patterns. When juxtaposed, as Girouard noticed, the textiles create formal and conceptual harmonies in color, scale, and content. To further unify her installations made with the fabrics, Girouard produced linoleum and wallpaper with similarly vertiginous designs and built movable screens using some of the fabrics.

Those partitions served an alternate purpose at the artist-run institution 112 Greene Street, where they were used as theatrical props and stage dividers by artists and performers such as Suzanne Harris and Gordon Matta-Clark. Girouard was a founder of the space, as she was of the nearby Clocktower Gallery and the artist-run restaurant Food; soon after her move to New York, she had become instrumental in the burgeoning avant-garde SoHo scene. In recent years, those alternative venues have been celebrated—not without a pervasive and perhaps misplaced nostalgia—in commercial and museum exhibitions.



Girouard's first solo outing in Los Angeles, "A Place That Has No Name: Early Works," was also the last during her lifetime; the artist passed away in April, at the age of seventy-three. The show focused on pieces she had displayed at 112 Greene Street in the 1970s and offered a glimpse of the artist's expansive practice, which includes painting, video, performance, and design. For the installation piece *Air Space Stage*, 1972, the artist draped four of the Solomon's Lot materials, in canary-yellow, pastel-pink, and deep-green palettes, across the gallery's ceiling to form a vibrant horizontal canopy in the white cube. Across the room, the floor-bound work *Blue Hole*, 1971, composed of four rectilinear pieces of linoleum arranged into a square, drew attention to the variations within and between the two works' similar surface patterns while emphasizing their material distinctions in weight, positioning, and transparency. Toward the front of the gallery, *Screen 4*, ca. 1974–75, brought such distinctions further to the fore: Girouard had stitched together square sections of fabric in varying opacities to form a floating grid that hung vertically at eye level from the ceiling.

Taken together, these three works functioned as a provisional architecture that gave the sterile gallery the familiar air of a domicile—a feeling enhanced by nearby wall-bound assemblages of patterned wallpaper made during this same period in the '70s. Such pieces situated Girouard within that decade's Pattern and Decoration movement, with which she would become strongly associated via her inclusion in John Perreault's 1977 exhibition "Pattern Painting" at New York's P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center (now known as *moma ps1*) and in the more recent, wide-ranging survey of the movement at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, during which this exhibition was on view.

What distinguished "A Place That Has No Name" was its subtle demonstration of how Girouard synthesized her conceptual and material interests through iteration and collaboration. A series of oil stick-on-paper sketches in four-by-four-inch grids, each framed and matted, employed colorful lines, dots, and geometric arrangements laid atop one another, highlighting the rhythmic repetition and nuanced variation that unite Girouard's work. For the film *Test Patterns*, 1973, looped on a nearby CRT monitor, the artist distended and tessellated images of flowers, oversaturated in hues ranging from indigo to hot pink, mimicking vibrant afterimages that linger on the retina.

Another monitor played documentation of *Grand Passe Partout*, a performance for the 1977 Paris Biennale, for which Girouard enlisted performers in a highly stylized dance that incorporated similar floral fabrics. Pairs of dancers clutched the short ends of lengths of fabric and glided across the courtyard of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris in a ritualized pas de deux, eventually intersecting with the other duos to arrive at a maypole-like configuration. Echoing the visual effects of *Test Patterns*, the performers' movements transposed into real space the elaborate, nuanced experiments with color, pattern, and technique that defined Girouard's artistic practice for five decades.

Ocula  
July 31 2020

# OCULA

## Tina Girouard's Elevated Patterns

Arriving in New York in 1969 from Louisiana, where she was born in 1946, Tina Girouard helped pave the way for SoHo's experimental scene of the 1970s, becoming a founding participant of, among other institutions, PS1 and Creative Time.

Girouard's multidisciplinary practice was defined by a resourcefulness and collaborative spirit that engaged with the boundaries of art-making in order to subvert them. This spirit, the artist explained in a 1973 interview with *Avalanche* magazine, originated from being in contact with jazz and blues musicians back home.

Girouard moved to New York after completing her BFA at the University of Louisiana Lafayette. She shared a Chinatown loft with fellow Louisianan Richard Landry, where the Philip Glass Ensemble would regularly rehearse, becoming a focal point for the downtown artist community.

In 1971, she co-founded the cooperative restaurant Food with Gordon Matta-Clark and Carol Goodden. What originated as a place to exchange ideas soon became a vital nexus for artists and communities in the area, providing employment, a site for performances, and, of course, nourishment, with meals offered by the likes of Donald Judd and Robert Rauschenberg, whose assistant, Hisachika Takahashi, served raw mackerel and wasabi sauce.

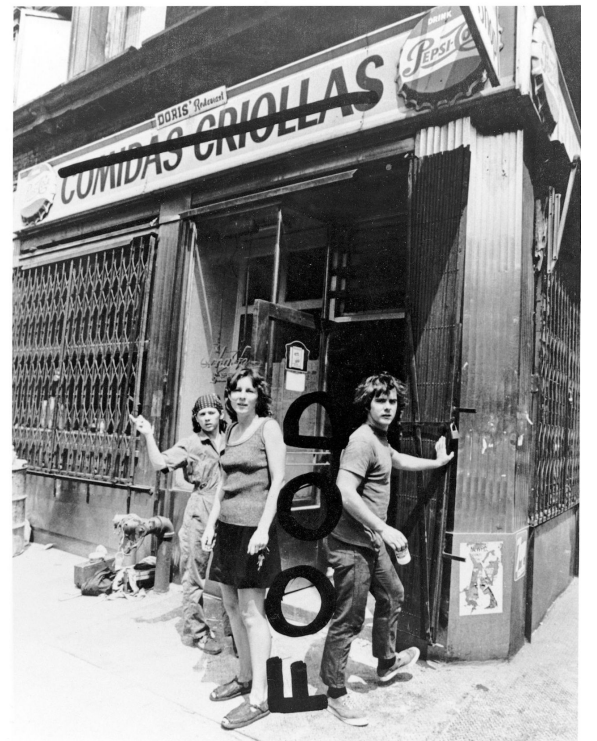
From Food, Anarchitecture was born—a movement helmed by Girouard, Matta-Clark, and Goodden, alongside Laurie Anderson, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaum, and Richard Landry. Less focused on architecture than it was on social space, artists worked with peripheral and disused sites to draw attention to the 'voids and failures that paradoxically glue together the built environment'; an approach exemplified by Matta-Clark's building cuts.<sup>[1]</sup>



ARTIST PROFILE  
**Donald Judd**  
[VIEW BIO, WORKS & EXHIBITIONS](#)



Tina Girouard, *Air Space Stage* (1972). Exhibition view: Tina Girouard, *A Place That Has No Name: Early Works*, Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles (22 February–13 June 2020). Courtesy Anat Ebgi.



Tina Girouard, left, with Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark in front of Food, their artist-run restaurant at the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in SoHo in 1971. Credit: Richard Landry, alteration by Gordon Matta-Clark, via David Zwirner, New York.



Girouard's early performances similarly activated peripheral space in works such as *Swept House* (1969). Staged beneath the Brooklyn Bridge in an event curated by Clocktower Gallery founder Alanna Heiss, Girouard swept the architectural outlines of a house into the floor, incorporating garbage from the site into its plan, such as a discarded stove to symbolise a kitchen.

Located one block away from Food was 112 Greene Street Gallery (now White Columns), which artist Jeffrey Lew and dancer Rachel Wood opened in an old rag salvaging factory in 1970, offering another site of experimentation for artists such as Spalding Gray, [Alice Aycock](#), Laurie Anderson, Chris Burden, and [Richard Serra](#). Experiments varied: Charles Simmons covered all 4,000-square-feet of the basement floor with clay; Matta-Clark jack-hammered the entire concrete floor to expose a room-sized section of earth; on another occasion, Vito Acconci was enclosed in the space with a rooster, with Girouard assigned to capture the animal.

Girouard exhibited some of her earliest work at 112 Greene Street: performances and installations that articulated the architecture of the space, including *Air Space Stage* (1972)—four sheets of patterned fabric suspended from the ceiling to create a space within a space, their shades changing the light of the room depending on the time of day.

*Air Space Stage* was recently included among Girouard's early works in the late artist's solo exhibition [A Place That Has No Name: Early Works](#), at [Anat Ebgi in Los Angeles](#) (22 February–13 June 2020). The piece is indicative of Girouard's use of patterned and ordinary materials, such as fabrics, wall paper, or linoleum, which she combined into basic rectangular or grid structures while asserting their eclectic surfaces—an accessibility of form that pointed to the artist's 'desire to communicate to a mass audience' using the language of repetition, which 'is common in industry and thus in life.'

[2]



ARTIST PROFILE  
**Richard Serra**  
[VIEW BIO, WORKS & EXHIBITIONS](#)



Tina Girouard, *Air Space Stage* (1972). Exhibition view: Tina Girouard, *A Place That Has No Name: Early Works*, Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles (22 February–13 June 2020). Courtesy Anat Ebgi.



22 FEB–13 JUN 2020  
**Tina Girouard**  
*A Place That Has No Name: Early Works*  
Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles  
[VIEW EXHIBITION](#)



Performance view: Tina Girouard, *Live House*, 112 Greene Street, New York (May 1971). Courtesy White Columns.



Repetitive patterns also informed Girouard's performances, such as the strokes of the broom in the aforementioned *Swept House*, and in the later *Pinwheel* (1977), originally staged at the New Orleans Museum of Art as part of the 1977 exhibition *Five From Louisiana*, which included work by [Lynda Benglis](#), Richard Landry, Robert Rauschenberg, and Keith Sonnier. Four performers, each representing personae characterised as animal, vegetable, mineral, and other, enacted a ritualistic language devised by Girouard using objects and patterned silks. The performance was restaged in 2019 at [Art Basel in Miami Beach](#) by Anat Ebgi in collaboration with The Kitchen.



CONVERSATIONS

Lynda Benglis

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While associated with Post-Minimalism, Girouard's use of textiles also situated her in the Pattern and Decoration movement, founded by Valerie Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff, which made use of loaded, decorative surfaces to react against the restraint of male-dominated modernism.



PHOTOLOGS

Meridians at Art Basel Miami Beach

[VIEW MORE](#)

Art critic Holland Cotter described Pattern and Decoration as 'the last genuine movement of the 20th century' in 2008.<sup>[3]</sup> He was responding to the exhibition *Pattern and Decoration: An Ideal Vision in American Art, 1975–1985* at the Hudson River Museum—a legacy that is currently being revisited at the Hessel Museum of Art in the exhibition *With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985* (26 June 2020–28 November 2021), of which Girouard is part.

Curated by Anna Katz and Rebecca Lowery, *With Pleasure* represents the first full-scale scholarly survey of the Pattern and Decoration movement. The show travelled to Hessel Museum of Art from The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, where it was staged between 27 October 2019 and 18 May 2020.

Girouard's work in the exhibition, *Wall's Wallpaper III* (1974), is composed of four rectilinear strips of Biedermeier wallpaper with differing patterns—a revision of the repeated, rectangular planes of minimalism that refuses the habitual function of wallpaper while maintaining its charmed floral surface. The effort connects Girouard's work to those of the approximately 50 exhibiting artists in *With Pleasure*, including Joyce Kozloff, Kim MacConnel, and Miriam Schapiro, whose practices leaned unapologetically into kitsch and gaudy designs in order to undermine perceptions of art forms coded as feminine, domestic, or ornamental.

Girouard's practice was equally pluralistic, and upon returning to Louisiana after a fire devastated her studio in 1978, her practice extended outwards. In 1980, she participated in the Venice Biennale, having shown in the Paris Biennale, Documenta VI, and Documenta V the decade before. Through the '80s, she helped found Artists' Alliance in Lafayette, and later spent time as director and president of the Festival International de Louisiane, where she became acquainted with the arts of Haiti. This encounter led to Port-au-Prince, where she kept a studio from 1990 to 1995.

Finding kinship with her birthplace of Louisiana, Girouard said that she lost her head and her heart in Haiti. She collaborated with Haitian artists such as Edgar Jean-Louis to create sequined and beaded voodoo flags, a selection of which were shown in an exhibition at New Orleans Museum of Art in 2019, co-curated by Nicolas Brierre Aziz of the Haitian Cultural Legacy Collection and NOMA's Katie A. Pfohl. She later authored the book *Sequin Artists of Haiti*, which honoured 12 flag-makers from Haiti, including Sylva Joseph and George Valris.

From playing a central part in New York's art scene, to wandering the 'Louisiana swamps and Voodoo societies in Haiti',<sup>[4]</sup> Girouard was an artist who evolved wherever she went. As she said in one 1982 interview, 'I believe one's life is made up of many parts, and that you get your world view or philosophy by adding up these parts.'<sup>[5]</sup>—[O]



Tina Girouard, *Orion and Koko* (c. 1990s). Sequins and beads on fabric. 52.07 x 52.07 cm. Courtesy Anat Ebgi.



Tina Girouard, *Wall's Wallpaper III* (1974). Exhibition view: *With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985*, MOCA Grand Avenue, Los Angeles (27 October 2019–11 May 2020). Courtesy MOCA Grand Avenue. Photo: Jeff McLane.

*Active Cultures*  
July 2020

## Active Cultures

# We Called Her General Girouard

Jonathan Griffin



An ad, printed in the Spring 1972 issue of *Avalanche* magazine, trumpeted in boldface type 'FOOD'S FISCAL FAMILY FACTS'. Most of the readers of *Avalanche* would, it was assumed, be at least part way familiar with FOOD, the restaurant opened in SoHo by artists Gordon Matta-Clark, Carol Goodden, Tina Girouard, Suzanne Harris, and Rachel Lew a few months earlier. It was already a fabulous success, and the Downtown art scene was tight knit in those days and more or less identical to *Avalanche's* readership. Also, FOOD was the only decent restaurant in the neighborhood.

Column one of the notice broke down FOOD's total income (\$63,000 in investment and \$104,120.72 in gross sales) and expenditure (food, dry goods, salaries, laundry, etc.—all the mundane requisites for running a restaurant). Happily, the figures for income and outgoings matched exactly, to the penny. Columns two and three inventoried the constituent parts of the operation: a list of materials, as if FOOD were an artwork, which in some senses it was.



By the end of the list I am in love with this family, before I even know who they are. There follows a paragraph of well over a hundred names, beginning with the founders and progressing through every person associated with the restaurant within the first few months of its existence. A few of those names are familiar to me—Phil Glass, Bob Rauschenberg (both *sic*), Keith Sonnier, Robert Altman, Ed Harris (the actor?), Mr. Peanuts—but most are not, even to Google.

"4 1/2 tons various flours for bread  
16,000 oranges squeezed  
379 lbs rabbits stewed  
1,690 lbs celery chopped  
3,050 lbs carrots juiced"

The list soon gets weird:

"4,081 chickens succumbed  
708 lbs fish fucked  
1,554 lettuce heads  
15,660 potential chickens cracked"

It eventually degenerates into what seems to be a succession of fond in-jokes, listing "dogs asked to leave" (47); "bottles of champagne disappeared" (15); "keys lost" (3 3/4 lbs); "closing orders from health department" (1); "rebellions" (2 — "The Dishwasher Rebellion of Feb. '72" and "The Radio Rebellion of May '72"); "floods by Marco" (5), "made up Social Security numbers" (7); "people needed to get it together / keep it together" (213); and, finally, "free dinners given" (3,082).

Tina Girouard, the artist who died in April of this year, was not the most famous name attached to FOOD, nor even one of its original founders (Goodden and Matta-Clark, then a couple, came up with the idea, and enlisted help and investment from Harris and Lew before they dropped out and Girouard stepped in). In the famous photograph of Goodden, Matta-Clark, and Girouard standing outside the restaurant, which they adapted for the first FOOD ad in *Avalanche*, Girouard's birdlike frame is literally overshadowed by Goodden, who stands in front. Nevertheless, she toiled at the very epicenter of FOOD. Jane Crawford, Matta-Clark's widow (he died of cancer in 1978), describes her as "the nuts and bolts" of the operation. "They called her 'General Girouard,'" she says.

Girouard was, by all accounts, always at the heart of things, even if she did not necessarily seek to be the center of attention. She was a giver: by temperament a host and cook. When she and her husband, the musician Dickie Landry, arrived in New York City from Louisiana in 1969, they found a spacious loft on Chatham Square, in Chinatown, which they shared with painter Mary Heilmann. Artists and musicians passing through town would crash there, and the Philip Glass Ensemble (of which Landry was a member) would rehearse. Some of them might have lived there, too. Girouard cooked, and people would just show up.

When, in 1970, the artist Jeffrey Lew founded with Matta-Clark the alternative art space 112 Greene Street, in SoHo, Girouard was naturally involved. Crawford estimates that there were perhaps 300 people living in SoHo at that time, and most of them were artists, of one kind or another. They needed somewhere to gather. 112 Greene Street hosted exhibitions including architectural interventions by Matta-Clark as well as performances orchestrated by Philip Glass, dancer Trisha Brown, and experimental theater group Mabou Mines. It totally reimagined the pre-existing models for art or performance spaces. As Girouard later recalled, "We preferred to make our own arena, not the museums or the galleries."

The Downtown denizens of New York's art scene had a place to hang; now they needed somewhere to eat as well. SoHo was still mainly industrial, so its existing restaurants were mainly daytime luncheonettes. Goodden has recalled that, like Girouard, she often found herself catering for the flash mobs of friends who gathered at her table in the evenings. "No one had any money in those days, so if anyone had any money they would cook," Crawford told me. When Goodden received a significant inheritance, she decided to share it by investing in a restaurant. (Also, she would no longer be expected to provide food for free, even if she eventually did anyway.)

FOOD opened on the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in October 1971. It was never designated as an artwork in name—except in as much as everything Matta-Clark leant his creative energy to could be considered an artwork—but it was designed as carefully and intentionally as any of his sculptures or installations, even if that design ran counter to economy and efficiency. He and Goodden chose wooden cabinets, despite the difficulty in keeping them clean, and tiled floors, despite the discomfort of working on them all day, and an open kitchen—one of the first restaurants to do so. They eschewed a dishwashing machine in favor of a real person, visibly present in the space, who would hand-clean dishes and earn a wage. The entire organization was tailored to artists who might need only occasional work, often at late notice, even if it meant that staffing schedules were a challenge.

For Girouard, whose work at this time moved fluidly between installation and performance, to provide food and facilitate communality was entirely consonant with her art and her cultural identity. In 1971, she began a series of 'Houses'—first at 10 Chatham Square, where *Hung House* was a two-storied sculptural arrangement in the middle of the open-plan space of detritus and abandoned belongings from around the building. *Swept House*, in May of that year, was made for curator Alanna Heiss's "The Brooklyn Bridge Event," its walls consisting simply of neat rows of dirt swept on the ground. Today Girouard is perhaps best known for her work with patterned bolts of fabric and wallpaper, assembled into space-defining rectangles on the floor or the ceiling. Food didn't specifically feature in Girouard's works, but home-making (and home un-making) was an ongoing preoccupation.

In some recollections, FOOD is described as a health-food restaurant, ahead of its time, using produce from small suppliers and simple, high-quality ingredients. (Chez Pnisse in Berkeley and the Moosewood collective in Ithaca were roughly contemporaneous, though the chefs at FOOD claim to have known little to nothing about them.) In others, it is the more outlandish meals that are remembered, particularly the special Sunday dinners cooked by invited artists. Matta-Clark once served a meal he titled *Alive*, which included oysters and hard-boiled eggs filled with live brine shrimp.

The food Girouard cooked was, of course, influenced by Cajun and Creole cuisine, and was hearty and filling. Stews, soups, and gumbos were all regular offerings. Over time, Crawford observes, the portion sizes at FOOD became less generous, as it struggled to turn a profit. After a year and a half, the three original founders drifted away from the enterprise, burned out with the stress and too tired to devote themselves to their respective creative endeavors. It survived in name for many years more, but it was never the same restaurant again.

Though there were a few other artists with Cajun roots in the Downtown scene of the time—Sonnier (who has also just passed away), Lynda Benglis, and Rauschenberg amongst them—Crawford says that Girouard carried her culture in a way that marked her as different. She hesitates to use the word "exotic". "She was very stylish, in her own way," Crawford says. "She would go with the flow. She could always manage situations flexibly, like Gordon—they both believed that art should be able to accommodate life."



Artforum  
June 1 2020

# ARTFORUM

## TINA GIROUARD (1946–2020)

By Jessamyn Fiore

**TINA GIROUARD** inspires. I do not mean inspiration as a kind of soft note in one's own monologue of self-discovery but rather as a call to action. Tina inspires because she calls one to the challenge of living fully. With Tina, creative energy poured into every act of being human, of being alive, of being—cooking, eating, dancing, talking, making, laughing, crying, loving.

### FOOD

Tina fed people. I remember being around ten years old and watching Tina make a big pot of gumbo in our loft on Twentieth Street. The ritual of cooking, in Tina's hands, was a kind of mystical experience, one that in being slow and deliberate offered time for our conversations and her stories—about people and art I had never dreamed of, my imagination boiling over with the possibility of life becoming this full, vivid adventure. I remember the chicken feet sticking out of the pot—they were for enhancing the flavor, she told me. It seemed at once so elemental and exotic, like a magic potion brewing.

The scent would get caught in the wind and draw people to her. They would all just show up and begin swirling around her pot, as if she had summoned them there. There was always a party when Tina came through town, with music playing, friends dancing. The gumbo was the center point, filling bowls, then stomachs.

What I witnessed was a ritual that began well before I was born. In 1969, Tina moved from Louisiana to New York City and into a building in Chinatown's Chatham Square with Richard Landry and Mary Heilmann, where the Philip Glass Ensemble would regularly rehearse and performers passing through the city would crash. Fairly quickly, her kitchen became the epicenter of a budding art scene. Her meals drew people in, binding together artists as community, giving them a structure around which they could socialize and collaborate.

In 1971, together with Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark, Tina opened the restaurant FOOD, which was a kind of sister space to 112 Greene Street. FOOD gave jobs to those who needed them, fed the neighborhood, and hosted food art performances. It has been a source of creative inspiration for generations since. In Matta-Clark's film about the restaurant from 1972, it's clear that Tina was at the heart of FOOD, just as she was at 112 Greene Street and the Anarchitecture group.



Photograph of video performance artwork *Maintenance I*, 1970. © Estate of Tina Girouard, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



Still image of Tina Girouard from *Food* by Gordon Matta-Clark, 1972, 16 mm film transferred to HD video, black and white, sound, 43 minutes.



*We cooked—it's part of our nature. I'm a rice farmer's daughter and that was one reason we moved to Chinatown. Rice and gravy, and the price was right as well! There were always people there. It was like some cosmic thing. I'd be cooking and as I was making certain dishes, I would think, "I bet so and so is going to show up..." Back then you didn't know—you just rang the bell, you would just yell in the street. —Tina Girouard*

## HOUSES

*I do not make a distinction between art on a wall and a performance.*

When I was invited in 2010 to curate an exhibition and edit a book about 112 Greene Street at David Zwirner, the first interview I wanted to conduct was with Tina. Having grown up hearing so many stories about downtown New York in the early '70s, I dreamed of putting together a narrative oral history for the book that captured the voices of the artists involved. My mother and I flew down to Louisiana to visit Tina at her home in Cecilia, where we spent hours talking and looking through her archive.

Tina's artworks and performances embraced art and life as one, always inviting others to join in, as participation made the work—the work was lived. She began by making a series of "houses" in 1971. *Hung House* was the first, made in the Chatham Square building. She collected all the stuff around the apartment left by guests from rehearsals and parties, and pulled it together into a house, composed of two floors (the second was a platform suspended from the ceiling). The second work, *Live House*, was a kind of extension of *Hung House*, done at 112 Greene Street. She asked others to join her in using materials that evoke domestic space and ritual to create rooms. Goodden made "the back porch" in the basement by stringing up a hammock and putting live crickets between two screens in the window, so you could listen to the chirping while lying down. The third iteration was *Swept House*. Made under the Brooklyn Bridge as part of *The Brooklyn Bridge Event*, curated by Alanna Heiss, the work involved sweeping architectural outlines in the dirt and using on-site garbage—a thrown-away stove anchored the kitchen, for example.

During our 2010 conversation—parts of which were published in the resulting book—Tina described how the local street kids ended up becoming her performers:

*TG: I'm from Louisiana so take me to the water, you know? We were right there in Chinatown and found out very quickly about the fish market and the base of the Brooklyn Bridge. We'd go picnic there, we'd go hang out there . . . It was a beautiful place to be, so yeah, all I needed was a broom.*

*JF: So you swept?*

*TG: You know when you're kids? We all made houses by just piling up sticks. Or maybe that's just me, maybe everybody didn't but I sure did. To do these outlines as a kid I remember if I made a room and somebody went to step over this line of dust you were like, "No, no, no!"*



Polaroid of Gordon Matta-Clark, Tina Girouard, and Suzanne Harris, c. 1975.

*The kids in the hood, they were attracted to me and they started bringing me food. They thought I was a bum or street person and so they started helping me cause all the other guys had hammers and they were making noise and there I was sweeping. .*

*So when the event happened the kids were my performers . . . The kids helped me and they would not have come to see this—to experience this—if they hadn't recognized me as someone like themselves, you know?*

All of her later works in New York grew out of this series—artworks that were continually transformed by participants and visitors. Tina's houses transcend traditional architecture—they weren't constructed with walls and doors and windows, but rather they were defined and activated by the people who occupied them, the rituals and stuff of living together.

House is a performance. House is communal consensus in space that "this is a house."



## LANGUAGE

After the 112 Greene Street exhibition opened in 2011, Tina gifted me a pencil-on-paper drawing with a series of nine symbols arranged in three rows of three, which she made in 1979, one year after moving back to Louisiana from New York. She told me she wanted to create a universal language that everyone could understand. Some of the symbols are figurative, while others are slightly more abstract but still relatable—geometric lines and shapes, abstract assemblies that evoke limbs, water, or wind. The inclusivity of her work in the New York years—the constant bringing together of people as a means of universal communication—would later be expressed in this hieroglyphic system, which she would layer in both physical artworks and in performance.

Dazzling. It is a word that must be used to describe the large sequin flags Tina made in collaboration with a community of Haitian artists in the 1990s, when she set up a studio in Port-au-Prince. Visually dense yet shining bright, these works layer coded language with imagery of flora and fauna, Vodou and Christian religious iconography, playing cards, instruments, guns, the four elements, patterns, explosive colors, and more. The sequins and beads glisten, busy and swirling like the rush of great conversation, explosive laughter, stamping feet to drumbeats. Tina's connection to Haiti began in Lafayette, Louisiana, where she was a founding codirector of the Festival International de Louisiane, in 1987. Artists were invited from Haiti to participate, and she began visiting Haiti herself. On one trip to the capital, she met a kindred spirit, Antoine Oleyant, and they began collaborating on "Under A Spell," a project that eventually resulted in a substantial exhibition of the same name that opened at the CAC New Orleans in 1993 and traveled widely. Oleyant died suddenly in 1992. In the aftermath of this loss, Tina embraced his community and they embraced her. She lived and worked in Port-au-Prince for long stretches of time, collaborating on works with accomplished sequin artists such as George Valris and Edgar Jean-Louis, and even published a definitive book on the subject, *Sequin Artists of Haiti* (1994).

When I was fifteen years old, my mother and I visited Tina in Port-au-Prince, a trip that completely blew my young mind. Tina moved seamlessly through the city, where we were welcomed warmly and introduced to a great many artists and thinkers, too. Jean-Louis, a Vodou houngan, took us on a tour of the city cemetery, showing us the brightly painted tombs, teaching us Haitian history, pointing out the places of white and black magic rituals. At the Hotel Oloffson, I remember vividly lying on a bed outside on the balcony, listening to the city noise bubble up beyond the garden wall. A Rara band would march past in the night, the music fading up, then down into the din of life surrounding us.

I will never be able to divorce the presence and energy of Tina from this experience of life as astonishment. She opened up the world to me. She stirred the pot to feed us, danced the rhythm to move us, built the house so we all could be together, and generated the language so we could all join in the great conversation.



David Bradshaw and Tina Girouard in Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans, c. 1995. Photo: Robert Fiore.



Tina in studio with Grand Bois in Haiti. © Estate of Tina Girouard, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



New Orleans Museum of Art  
May 13 2020

**NOMA**  
New Orleans Museum of Art

## A curator's tribute to Louisiana-born artist Tina Girouard



Tina Girouard created elaborately beaded Vodou flags in collaboration with Haitian artists.

*Tina Girouard, a Louisiana-born artist who became a key figure in the New York art scene of the 1960s and '70s, died on April 21 at age 73. Born in 1946 in DeQuincy, Louisiana, Girouard frequently focused her art on Francophone cultures in her home state and beyond. In the 1990s she worked in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, among local artists and wrote a book on the use of sequins in Haitian art. She also crafted sequined works of her own that pay homage to Vodou flags honoring spirits known as lwa. "Something within us all is unknowable and unchangeable," she once wrote, adding, "Life and death form a whole as we flow along our mystical voyage—a delicate, solo dance." Girouard's most recent exhibition at NOMA, *Bondye: Between and Beyond*, featured sequined prayer flags inspired by twelve lwa (spirits) of Vodou. Curator Nic Aziz shares his thoughts in this tribute to the artist.*

Throughout much of the eighteenth century, rebellions swept across the Caribbean and South America. Enslaved Africans, often allied with free people of color, were constantly fighting for the abolition of slavery and freedom from colonial power. Ironically, these rebellions were often influenced by British and French seamen who shared news of insurrections in other locales, most notably the French Revolution. The common bonds between the oppressive experiences of these seamen and the enslaved Africans created unique bonds—to the point that many Africans during this period buried seamen who died on these islands in their cemeteries.



While the end of slavery was the primary goal of these rebellions, there was another arguably even more harmful transgression whose eradication was significant to the insurgents—race. As formerly enslaved Africans began to take control of Saint-Domingue (now known as Haiti) at the end of the eighteenth century, and word of this uprising began to spread throughout the Caribbean and the world, the rejection of societies being rooted in racialist ideologies spread to other nations. In his book *A History of Jamaica*, originally published in 1807, author Robert Renny references a song that was frequently sung in the streets of Kingston in 1799:

One, two, tree,  
All de same;  
Black, white, brown,  
All de same:  
All de same.

This song-based example of an egalitarian society free of racial hierarchy is one that would eventually be attempted, but unfortunately never fully realized due to many of the deeply damaging ramifications of race's creation. Race is a construct that, since its inception, has impacted nearly every aspect of human existence. Its effects have led present-day scholars, such as Professor Barbara J. Fields, to extensively study the phenomenon and create new fields of study and terms such as "racecraft." While many of us can acknowledge the illusory nature of race, due to its implications, particularly over the last four hundred years of human history, we must simultaneously acknowledge its complex impact on how we have and continue to exist.

When I was asked to co-curate Tina's exhibition of Vodou prayer flags with Katie Pfohl toward the end of 2018, the concept of "race" was at the forefront of my thinking. I was somewhat familiar with her artistic practice, but I was much more familiar with the fact that she was an artist of European descent making Haitian flags. As a Haitian-American, and someone who has done extensive Haiti-centered work in New Orleans since 2015, my curiosity was naturally piqued. Curating this exhibition provided me with an opportunity to learn more about my culture and this specific aspect of Tina's practice as an artist while also creating space for me and our museum visitors to explore complex issues related to race, culture, and appropriation.

From these initial inquiries, I believe that there were two particular curatorial decisions that improved the exhibition's efficacy. The first was the exhibition's name, which was altered to *Bondye: Between and Beyond*, in an effort to illuminate Haiti's deeply underdiscussed influence on New Orleans and the world. "Bondye" is regarded as the supreme being within the Vodou religion, a religious practice whose roots exist in modern-day Benin and arrived in New Orleans largely with an influx of migrants following the end of the Saint-Domingue Revolution in 1804. Second was the development of a program at NOMA that would give our community the opportunity to engage in a discussion around the more controversial aspects of the exhibition, such as cultural appropriation. This became a panel discussion held in March 2019, entitled "Considering Cultural Exchange," which was an extremely rich conversation around appropriation, exchange, and collaboration. Despite these and other curatorial aims, there were still criticisms of the exhibition. Some of these critiques were warranted, however I believe that their existence in our collective conversations affirmed the power of art. "Great art," as I have come to learn, has the ability to spur questions and dialogue from the viewer—and in this case the story behind the work created just as many, if not more, of both.

Tina's dedication to Haiti was unceasing from her first moments engaging with the country. After twenty years of researching Haiti's connection to her native Louisiana, she traveled to the country for the first time in 1990. In her book, *Sequin Artists of Haiti*, she refers to an almost immediate love and desire to live and work there after only several days traveling through Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. Through her travels, she was able to learn about the beauty and technical aspects of the sequin art practice while also noticing the practice's deficiencies due to a lack of both artist credit on works and the dearth of women sequin artists.

Just before leaving Haiti during this first trip, Tina visited the renowned Hotel Oloffson where master sequin artist Antoine Oleyant had a studio at the time which was known as "Atelier Simbi." In her account of the meeting, Tina reveals that she "froze" upon entry as she was struck by one particular piece, "a spectacular rendering of a bull." This bull was Bossou, the Iwa (Vodou spirit) who releases earth's bounty as the master of agriculture. Tina purchased the Bossou piece and used it to propose an exhibition of Antoine's work for the 1991 Festival International in Lafayette where she served as the president of the board of directors. At the festival, Antoine apparently greatly admired a "good luck" hat that Tina wore and right before he left Lafayette for New York to continue showcasing his works, Tina put the hat on Antoine's head and said "see you in Haiti." This small gesture of respect and admiration would become Tina's first official artistic exchange with Antoine and the larger Haitian community.

When Tina revisited Haiti later that year and returned to Antoine's studio, he welcomed her by wearing the lucky hat, which he had since decorated with sequins. He had also created another one for himself and the two artists began collaborating to create work that blended Western images from Tina's life experiences with Haitian imagery from Antoine's. As Tina wrote in her book: "Never intending to appropriate a traditional Haitian art form, my desire was to come to a point of collaboration naturally. Open to sharing our separate ideas, techniques, and cultures, we wanted to achieve that goal spontaneously by working side by side." The beauty in this intent and exchange is paramount—and it led to Tina establishing her own studio and spending the next five years in Haiti working with other master sequin artists such as Georges Valris and Edgar Jean-Louis. They would create Vodou flags that I would have the honor of curating for display in NOMA's Great Hall nearly twenty-five years later.

The stories that emerge from this period of her artistic practice could simply be described as "exceptionally human"—and this exceptionality is something that I felt deeply during my time working on the exhibition and the two times that I met her. —*Nic Aziz*

*The New York Times*  
April 28 2020

# The New York Times

## *Tina Girouard, Experimental Artist in 1970s SoHo, Dies at 73*

She was a founder of Food, an influential artist-run kitchen in Manhattan, and a member of the alternative art space 112 Greene Street.



Tina Girouard, a risk-taking artist from Louisiana, performed at an international arts festival in 1978 in Graz, Austria. She and others explored ideas of architecture, the body, community and urban space in the midst of a New York City falling into ruin. The Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Tina Girouard, a risk-taking artist from rural Louisiana who played a catalytic role in the 1970s SoHo art scene in New York, helping to found the experimental gallery [112 Greene Street](#) and the artist-run restaurant Food, died on April 21 at her home in Cecilia, La. She was 73.

Amy Bonwell, a niece, said the cause was a stroke.

Arriving in New York City fresh out of college in 1969, Ms. Girouard plugged almost immediately into the performance, dance and conceptual-art circles that, fueled by their tumultuous times, were reshaping the art world.

In 1971, for a group show organized by the curator [Alanna Heiss](#) on a condemned pier beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, Ms. Girouard presented “[Swept House](#),” a spartan performance and ephemeral sculpture in which she used a broom to shuffle dust into lines depicting the floor plan of a house.

The work dovetailed with that of other artists at the time — among them [Gordon Matta-Clark](#), Joan Jonas, [Vito Acconci](#) and Alan Saret — who were exploring ideas of architecture, the body, community and urban space in the midst of a city rapidly falling into ruin.

Ms. Girouard saw such art as a form of radical speech. “We really wanted to change America,” she said in [2010 in an interview](#) with the curator Jessamyn Fiore. “Or maybe it’s that we wanted to hold on to the true nature of what we thought America was or should be.”

In addition to performance, Ms. Girouard used found and inherited fabrics, wallpaper and floor coverings to create installations, work that came to be part of the renegade mid-1970s movement known as Pattern and Decoration.





Tina Girouard, left, with Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark in front of Food, their artist-run restaurant at the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in SoHo in 1971. Richard Landry, alteration by Gordon Matta-Clark, via David Zwirner, New York

And she was among the early adopters of video technology. In “Tape-Video Live,” a 1972 performance at the Leo Castelli Gallery, she and three other dancers played with the spatial and temporal jigsaw combinations of live, live-broadcast and previously recorded dance movements.

Cynthia Marie Girouard was born May 26, 1946 in DeQuincy, La., in the southwest part of the state, and grew up with five siblings on a rice and cattle farm in an unincorporated community so small that it had no name. Her mother, Yvelle Marie (Theriot) Girouard, was a special-education teacher, and her father, Whitney Lewis Girouard, was a farmer who later taught agricultural engineering.

At the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) Ms. Girouard met Dickie Landry, a saxophone player, composer and later a member of the Philip Glass Ensemble, and fell in with a group of musicians who had deep Cajun roots. In a conversation in [the art magazine Avalanche](#) in 1973, Ms. Girouard said that living around jazz and blues musicians instilled in her a conviction that art was, at its core, collaborative.

In the winter of 1969, she and Mr. Landry drove to New York City and soon, along with the painter Mary Heilmann, moved into a near-derelict building in Chinatown at 10 Chatham Square. It soon became a bunkhouse for dozens of artists and musicians over a fevered six years.

“We could have struck a match and the whole building would have burned down — it was a dump,” said Mr. Landry, who married Ms. Girouard in 1971. “But then again, Tina and I had two entire floors for \$500. Everything was very revved up. Tina just fed off of that. We all fed off of each other. We ate together and played together and some of us slept together.”

Ms. Girouard and other Chatham occupants were among the cross-pollinating members of 112 Greene Street, an improvisational art space in SoHo that the sculptor Jeffrey Lew and his wife, Rachel Wood, a dancer, opened in 1970, along with Mr. Saret and Mr. Matta-Clark.

Ms. Girouard joined forces with Mr. Matta-Clark, Caroline Goodden and Suzanne Harris to found the restaurant [Food](#) in 1971, at Prince and Wooster Streets, envisioning it as a kind of culinary performance space and service-industry employment agency for artists.

The restaurant pioneered now-common dining innovations like seasonal ingredients, an open kitchen and an internationally eclectic menu. It served sushi before most New Yorkers knew what that was, advertised as “raw mackerel with wasabi sauce.”



The space lasted not quite three years in its original incarnation, done in partly by its determination to avoid conventionality at all costs. In a [short 1972 movie](#) about the restaurant, “Food,” shot partly by [Robert Frank](#), Ms. Girouard can be seen rolling and passing a joint in the kitchen as she tries to figure out who will take a Sunday breakfast shift. In an interview with [The New York Times in 2007](#), she said, “We put our hearts and souls and butts into that place.”

Her New York years, however prolific, did not last long. Ms. Girouard returned to Louisiana in 1978 and there, with Mr. Landry, bought an old general store and moved it to the small town of Cecilia, about 15 miles northeast of Lafayette. After they divorced in 1991, Ms. Girouard worked for several years in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, making traditional sequined-and-beaded voodoo flags with Haitian artists.

In addition to her niece Ms. Bonwell, she is survived by her siblings Gloria Nell Girouard Bonwell, Barbara Cecile Girouard Martin, Norman Wade Girouard and Jacqueline Anne Girouard and a sister-in-law, Billie Johnson Girouard.

Ms. Girouard’s work was included in “[With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art, 1972-1985](#),” which opened last fall at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. A recreation of one of her most important performances, “[Pinwheel](#),” from 1977, was presented last year by the Anat Ebgi gallery at Art Basel Miami Beach.



After leaving New York, Ms. Girouard spent time in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, making sequined-and-beaded voodoo flags like this one with Haitian artists. The Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York. by Photo by R. Alokhin, via The New Orleans Museum of Art

Ms. Girouard’s “Walls Wallpaper,” 1971. She used fabrics, wallpaper and floor coverings, work that came to be part of the renegade mid-1970s movement known as Pattern and Decoration. The Estate of Tina Girouard/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.



*Burnaway*  
February 2 2019

# BURNAWAY

## Tina Girouard, 1946 – 2020 Written by: Daniel Fuller



Tina Girouard, *Pinwheel*, 1977. © 2019 Tina Girouard / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Tina Girouard was born in DeQuincy, Louisiana, in 1946. In the 1960s and 70s, she maintained a studio in New York's Chinatown and actively participated in some of the earliest shows of video and performance art at now iconic independent spaces still operating today: 112 Greene St. (now White Columns), the Clocktower, PS1, Creative Time, Performance Art, and the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia. In 1971, Girouard teamed up with Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark to open a space that would both feed and give jobs to artists working in a then desolate SoHo. FOOD was a restaurant-via-art installation, it was a community, and most of all, it was a complete and total work of art. After ten years in New York, a substantial fire devastated Girouard's studio, which resulted in her move back to Louisiana.





Tina Girouard, *DAMBALA*, 1991; sequins, beads, fabric, 43 by 72 inches.

There have been deep ties between New Orleans and Haiti since 1804, when the city's population doubled, welcoming 12,000 formerly enslaved and free people of color who arrived following the twelve-year Haitian Revolution. Those influences and bonds are still palpable. In 1990, Girouard took a studio space in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and dedicated herself to producing her first book, *Sequin Artists of Haiti*, which was published in 1994. The book focused on the St. Louis family: Sylva Joseph, Edgar Jean-Louis, and George Valris, artists who make sequined prayer flags for communal gatherings, offerings, and rituals tied to Haitian Vodou.

The flags celebrate Vodou's multicultural roots, representing its blending of West African, French and Spanish Catholic traditions, and, of course, Haitian spiritual practices. From 1991 through 1995, Girouard collaborated with Antoine Oleyant and several others to create large beaded and sequined Vodou drapos. Together, they created Girouard's "Iwa" series, unifying Haitian symbolism with Louisiana influences. Her exhibition of these flags, *Bondye: Between and Beyond*, was on view at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2019 and was easily one of my favorite exhibitions of the year. Girouard's work posits an interconnected world grounded in creativity that invites us to consider how we exist between different communities.

Tina Girouard has died at the age of 73.

Artforum  
April 24 2020

# ARTFORUM

## TINA GIROUARD (1946–2020)

American artist Tina Girouard, whose multimedia conceptual practice was infused with symbolism, narrative, and strains of post-Minimalism and Pattern and Decoration, died on Tuesday at her home in Cecilia, Louisiana. She was seventy-three years old. A pivotal figure in the 1970s SoHo art scene and its alternative spaces—such as 112 Greene Street and the restaurant FOOD—Girouard’s work included performances such as *Pinwheel*, 1977, in which the artist acted as both director and performer. That nearly hour-long piece, featuring three other collaborators, was set in a stage with hanging, silk-patterned fabrics, and unfolded as each player ritually performed their personae (*animal, vegetable, mineral, and other*). Originally presented alongside work by Lynda Benglis, Richard Landry, Robert Rauschenberg, and Keith Sonnier at the New Orleans Museum of Art’s 1977 exhibition “Five From Louisiana,” the work was restaged at Art Basel Miami Beach last year.

Girouard was born in 1946 in DeQuincy, Louisiana. After studying at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, she moved to New York in the late 1960s, where she shared a loft in Chinatown with Dickie Landry and the Philip Glass Ensemble. There, she helped nurture a downtown ethos of collaboration. From 1971 to 1974, together with artists Gordon Matta-Clark and Carol Goodden, she ran FOOD, a conceptual performance and artwork offering her milieu both sustenance and a gathering place in SoHo. She also collaborated with artists Laurie Anderson, Deborah Hay, Terry Riley, Richard Serra, and Lawrence Weiner, among others, and was a founding participant of spaces such as the Anarchitecture Group, Clocktower Gallery, Creative Time, the Fabric Workshop, Holly Solomon Gallery, and PS1.



“It’s a live performance and I use the same kind of form—there are repeated objects, and the difference here is that people are performing them into place, a kind of ritual placement,” Girouard said in a 1982 interview. “I believe one’s life is made up of many parts, and that you get your world view or philosophy by adding up these parts.”

Girouard returned to Louisiana in 1979. In 1983, she was the subject of a midcareer retrospective at the Museo Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City, and her work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale (1980); the Paris Biennale (1977); and Documenta, Kassel (1972 and 1977). Her work is held in the collections of the Hessel Museum of Art, the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College; the Institute of Contemporary Art, the University of Pennsylvania; the Ludwig Forum für International Kunst; the Museo Rufino Tamayo; and the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst. “With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985,” curated by Anna Katz and currently on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, features her work and will travel to the Hessel Museum of Art in June.



ARTnews  
April 23 2020

# ARTnews

## Tina Girouard, Freewheeling Artist of 1970s New York Scene, Is Dead at 73



Tina Girouard.  
COURTESY ANAT EBGI

Tina Girouard, a key figure of the New York art scene of the 1970s, has died at the age of 73. A representative for Los Angeles's Anat Ebgi gallery, which shows Girouard's work, said the artist died of a stroke.

Girouard was well-connected in SoHo, which in the '70s was pushing art in new—and weird—directions that placed a special emphasis on time-based gestures and lofty conceptual gambits. Alongside her art stretching across multiple mediums and movements, she helped nurture the New York art community by supporting various significant alternative art spaces.

Among them was the gallery 112 Greene Street, which she founded in 1970 along with a group of artists including Gordon Matta-Clark and Suzanne Harris. Because the gallery was artist-run (the space it occupied was owned by sculptor Jeffrey Lew), artists were given greater license to enact boundary-pushing artworks that, to the casual onlooker, may not have even been perceived as art at all. For one show at the gallery, Alice Aycock hauled in pounds and pounds of sand. For another, Vito Acconci enclosed himself in the space with a rooster that escaped—with Girouard enlisted to go catch the animal.



Tina Girouard, performance documentation of "Other" from *Pinwheel*, 1977.

©2019 TINA GIROUARD/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ANAT EBGI

The anti-commercial spirit of the art staged at 112 Greene Street paralleled Girouard's artistic sensibility. Among her early pieces was *Swept House* (1969), a performance staged under the Brooklyn Bridge as part of curator Alanna Heiss's outdoor exhibition "The Brooklyn Bridge Event." For it, the artist used a broom to push around dust, ultimately shaping it loosely into the form of a domicile's floor plan. Another later work, 1977's *Pinwheel*, involved four performers arranging themselves along a structure divided into quadrants, with each actor symbolizing animals, vegetables, minerals, and other entities. Throughout the piece, which was restaged last year at Art Basel Miami Beach through Anat Ebgi and the Kitchen, the performers enact bizarre rituals.



Girouard's most well-known work was a collaborative one that has lived on in SoHo lore. In 1971, with Matta-Clark and Carol Goodden, she opened FOOD, a short-lived restaurant in SoHo. The eatery was designed as a living, breathing conceptual artwork, and it was forward-thinking. As noted in an *ARTnews* survey of **"Masterful Uses of Food in Art,"** the menu offered sushi at a time when it couldn't easily be found in New York. "Pretty much the whole art community was coming in there at one point," Girouard **told the *New York Times*** in 2007.

Girouard is also well-known for her involvement in Pattern & Decoration, a movement that relied on the use of "low" materials associated with femininity, such as fabrics and beads, as a riposte to the male-dominated Minimalism of the era. Her work is currently included in "With Pleasure: Pattern and Decoration in American Art 1972–1985," a survey of the movement on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles.

Born in 1946 in DeQuincy, Louisiana, Girouard frequently focused in her art on Francophone cultures, and she even worked in Port-au-Prince after having traveled to Haiti during the '80s. During the '90s, she integrated herself into the local community and wrote a book on the use of sequins in Haitian art. With artists there, she also crafted sequined works of her own that pay homage to vodou flags honoring spirits known as *lwa*. "Something within us all is unknowable and unchangeable," she once wrote, adding, "Life and death form a whole as we flow along our mystical voyage—a delicate, solo dance."



Tina Girouard, *Wallpaper*, 1971.  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ANAT EBGI



Artforum  
June 2013

# ARTFORUM

"Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, Tina Girouard: 112 Greene Street Years"  
Written by Zachary Cahill



**View of "Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, Tina Girouard: The 112 Greene Street Years," 2013.**

Strip away the thick nostalgia that lards our collective memory of the art scene tied to SoHo in the early 1970s, and the vital attributes of the exhibition "The 112 Greene Street Years" at Rhona Hoffman Gallery shine through with a revelatory freshness. This is in large measure because curator Jessamyn Fiore (the daughter of Gordon Matta-Clark's widow Jane Crawford) has opted to focus on the collaborative working relationships that existed between Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, and Tina Girouard, thereby keeping faith in the substance from which much of our present-day romanticized mythology of the time period derives.

By counter intuitively giving equal weight to each artist (and not solely focusing on the well-known male of the trio), the exhibition presents each of the artists' work on its own terms, even as it provides the vivid atmosphere of the art's context. Throughout the show there is a lightness of touch and commitment to whimsy, as well as something like a nonconformist politics of play—a taste of which can be found in Matta-Clark's *Open House*, 1972, a film that documents a quasi-architectural installation in a Dumpster along with a group performance in the rain with umbrellas that occurred on the day of the opening. All of this suggests another mode of being in the world together, an alternative to the dominant sociopolitical paradigms of a time scarred by the Vietnam War and racial strife.

Defying gravity in her film *Flying Machine*, 1973, Suzanne Harris suspends herself and another participant off the ground by an intricate pulley system, engaging in a trapeze artist-like dance. Tina Girouard's linoleum floor piece and fabric screens combine ornamental floral patterns with a Minimalist compositional logic that feels almost more than contemporary, despite the fact that their motifs have an air of the anachronistic about them, evocative of early-twentieth-century wallpaper and the Victorian-era art of pressed flowers. In a 1973 interview in *Avalanche* (quoted in the press release), Girouard stated, "I want [art] to be still breathing." Here in Chicago, almost a half a century later, it is.

Rhona Hoffman Gallery  
1711 West Chicago Avenue  
June 14 – August 9, 2013

*The New York Times*  
May 10 2013

# The New York Times

## Food Matters | When Eating and Art Became One



*Richard Landry, courtesy of the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark and David Zwirner, New York/London*

Tina Girouard, Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark outside FOOD, before its opening in 1971.

A few months before the artists Carol Goodden and Gordon Matta-Clark opened their restaurant-slash-art installation, FOOD, on the corner of Prince and Wooster Streets in New York City in the fall of 1971, they roasted a pig beneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Alanna Heiss, who would soon found P.S.1, installed work by Matta-Clark, Carl Andre, Sol Le Witt and Keith Sonnier in a raw, junk-filled space. On nearby Pier 14, Philip Glass performed and the year-old avant-garde theater company Mabou Mines staged a Samuel Beckett play. The artist Tina Girouard, who would cook at FOOD during its nearly three-year run, helped out with the hog. “The pig burnt on the outside,” she recalled, “and raw on the inside.”



Even so, the notion of eating fresh food communally — as both an artistic and gastronomic statement — struck a chord. SoHo needed a good restaurant. Artists needed a place to gather. And Goodden was sick of spending all her money on dinner parties. In 1971, you didn't have to be Keith McNally to open a restaurant downtown. "We were all doing it," recalled Girouard, then well known in downtown circles for her Chatham Square loft parties, "because we wanted to." FOOD was fueled by artists' desires.

From the Dutch master Abraham Van Beyeren's *louche*, luminous lobster (circa 1650) to the Pop artist Claes Oldenburg's sculptural plate of French fries and ketchup (1963), there has always been a link between art and food. But the notion of calling soup performance and bread installation and considering that butter might be a significant component of a total work of art? Or the idea that bones from dinner could be made into accessories and passed along as parting gifts after dessert (which Matta-Clark did)? That kind of thinking felt fresh, and anchored an idea that is still playing out in the art world and in buzz-worthy restaurants that seem to open practically every week.



*John Berens/FriezeA* tribute to FOOD at this year's Frieze New York.

Rirkrit Tiravanija began his career in 1990 by cooking pad thai for gallery-goers at Paula Allen Gallery, and his work has continued to feature large helpings of tom ka soup and Thai green curry ever since. In 2011, Phoebe Washburn built a wood-and-plastic fort called “Nunderwater Nort Lab,” set it up at Zach Feuer and served lunch. Last year at Frieze, Gavin Brown (Tiravanija’s gallerist) and Mark Ruffalo served up sausages to protest fracking. Meanwhile, in the restaurant world, every new establishment seems to be angling to become somebody’s clubhouse — a for-profit hangout for a targeted clientele where everything and everyone is served with intention. On occasion, that clientele still includes artists, though not in SoHo. But a few years back, before Roberta’s became *Roberta’s*, the only people there were Bushwick artists who wanted to take a break from their studios across the street to eat pizza with like-minded company. They needed the restaurant. The restaurant needed them. For a minute, Roberta’s was FOOD.

The continuing relevance of this generation-old idea is the reason this year’s Frieze Art Fair is paying homage to FOOD with a four-day reincarnation of the establishment. (A Roberta’s pop-up is nearby.) Goodden and Girouard are both cooking. Goodden is making some of the restaurant’s famous soups (cauliflower and watercress, and Spanish-style carrot). Girouard is taking another stab at that pig roast. The artists Matthew Day Jackson, who was born in 1974, and Jonathan Horowitz, who was 5 when FOOD opened, are cooking as well. “I was interested to see what it would mean to bring FOOD back in 2013 and see what happens when food and art intertwine,” said Cecillia Alemani, the curator of the Frieze Projects program, which includes FOOD. “Many contemporary artists look at food with the same eyes Gordon Matta-Clark did, as malleable, simple ingredients that, in the right hands, can be magically transformed into something completely different. Which in the end is what art does.”

*Hyperallergic*  
August 18 2012

## HYPERALLERGIC

### 112 Greene Street: The Soho that Used to Be

"It is rather inspiring," writes Peter Schjeldahl in the *New York Times*, "that in an hour of political crisis this art (despite its makers' eschewal of revolutionary postures) has arisen to make possible a project like 112 Greene Street." The year is 1970. The place is Soho, until recently known as the South Houston Industrial District. Here an unemployed artist can buy a six-story cast-iron ex-rag-picking warehouse, and huge chunks of sheet-zinc cornice can lie abandoned on the sidewalk at a demolition site until another artist bribes the garbage men to drive them to his studio. Sculptor Jeffrey Lew owns the six-story building at 112 Greene Street, where the eponymous exhibition space and workshop is taking shape. Alan Saret, who lives a block away, has joined in to get the gallery (extremely loosely) organized, and it is here that his piece "Cornicing," slung from the ceiling, becomes the sort of art that inspires the young critic.



Installation view of "112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970-1974)" at David Zwirner Gallery, January 2011



Saret tells the story of the cornices in 112 Greene Street: The Early Years, 1970–1974, edited by Jessamyn Fiore. Half oral history and half exhibition catalogue, Fiore's book follows a show she curated last winter at David Zwirner, which prominently featured 112's celebrated alumnus, Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978), along with Saret, Richard Nonas, **Tina Girouard**, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Larry Miller, and Richard Serra. The show is lushly documented in the book. In addition, Fiore has interviewed nineteen artists, including Lew and all of the living exhibition participants but Serra, weaving their reminiscences into an episodic narrative. Fiore comes by her interest organically; she ran a nonprofit space, Thisisnotashop, in Dublin. Moreover, her parents, filmmakers Jane Crawford and Robert Fiore, belonged to the 112 circle, Crawford by way of her first marriage, to Matta-Clark. Fiore has an insider's feel for her subject, and her book is an evocative addition to the archive on downtown scenes — especially since the comprehensive oral history 112 Workshop/112 Greene Street: History, Artists & Artwork (New York University Press, 1981), edited by Robyn Brentano and Mark Savitt, has long been out of print.

It's easy to see why oral history is the favored mode. These people did wild stuff some forty years in the past. A few got famous. A few, like Matta-Clark and Harris, died young, and have been posthumously canonized or not (Harris's oeuvre is ripe for reinvestigation). Some left New York decades ago, and some live in the same lofts they renovated under the 1971 artist-in-residence law. Almost all continue to make art, and they remain bracingly nonrevisionist about their shared experience. Their voices nuance a still-evolving historiography, just as their sculptures, films, and performances helped to define post-Minimal and post-Conceptual practice. Nevertheless, part of what fascinates about 112 Greene Street, and sister endeavors like FOOD restaurant and the collective The Natural History of the American Dancer (both discussed by Fiore's interviewees), is the sense that no single interpretive strategy, not even that of first-person witness, totally explains how it all happened. It's a synergy of flukes that makes and breaks utopia.

Consider, for starters, the almost unimaginable ubiquity of big, cheap spaces, and lackadaisical police and buildings-department oversight, in what was already the most important art city in the world. Art-markets hadn't yet learned how to sell what the emerging sculptors, dancers, musicians, and photographers were producing. Lew lined up a couple backers for 112, from whom he demanded lump sums and strict noninterference; Carol Goodden founded FOOD with her modest inheritance. The real currency, however, was collaborative experiment. "I have an anarchistic nature," Lew declares. "I'm an anarchistic phenomenon." Other blithely anarchistic institution-builders created Avalanche magazine, the Performing Garage, The Kitchen, Mabou Mines, the Grand Union, the Poetry Project, Artists Space, and the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, shortly to become P.S.1. This DIY economy of scale guaranteed that people with skills and tools would be on hand to pitch in when one needed them, and enthusiastic audiences would turn up day after day, night after night. Borrowing an ethos from the counterculture yet jettisoning radical political objectives, the downtown artists could feel confident that they were furthering societal transformation while allowing themselves rambunctious aesthetic freedom; as Schjeldahl's comments demonstrate in passing, revolution was not their aim, but it wasn't not on their minds. Mary Heilmann tells Fiore, "Most of us came to 112 as bohemian outsiders and almost Marxists — against capitalist culture." Bill Beckley puts it this way: "We were all friends then. Some of us were male, some female, some hetero, some gay, some both, or all three, but that wasn't the issue. The issue was art [...] We were negating much about modernist aesthetics, but at the same time we believed that what we were doing was new, and that there was still a possibility of the new."

112 Greene Street: The Early Years is rife with era-defining anecdotes. Everyone involved, for instance, remembers George Trakas's "The Piece that Went Through the Floor" (1970), a timber-and-glass structure that punched through from the rough street-level gallery to the even-rougher basement. Lew "freaked out," Trakas reports cheerfully, but the fact that, at 112, one could carve up the very architecture set the tone. 112 was the place where Matta-Clark — soon to become, himself, building-cutter extraordinaire — planted a flowering sapling under grow-lights in the basement ("Cherry Tree," 1971). Alice Aycock brought in thousands of pounds of sand, to be randomly sculpted by industrial fans she'd scavenged on Canal Street ("Sand/Fans," 1971), and Harris and Rachel Wood made dances by bouncing off huge sheets of rubber stretched between the Corinthian columns that gave the ratty space its elegant profile ("Rubber Thoughts on the Way to Florida in January," 1971).

Vito Acconci locked himself in a tiny room with a fighting cock ("Combination," 1971), which escaped, and had to be trapped by **Girouard** — whose own piece "Four Stages" (1972) was used as a frame for Mabou Mines performances. It was in the basement, likewise, that Leo Castelli, in sports-coat and loafers, was detained as a "hostage" during the performance "Prisoner's Dilemma" (1974), an experiment with live-feed, multi-channel video that was masterminded by Serra and Robert Bell, with Spalding Gray and G.H. Hovagimyan playing hooligans pitted against each other by the cops.

Eventually 112 got stable funding, and evolved into a normal exhibition space. (White Columns, in Chelsea, is its lineal descendent.) The Greene Street building enjoyed another life in the eighties and nineties as a recording studio, first operated by members of the Philip Glass Ensemble — who had belonged to the coterie from the beginning — and later serving artists from Public Enemy to Sonic Youth. Fiore concentrates, however, on the intense first phase. Was it really anarcho-Marxist? Sort of. Was the art-world transformed by it? Subtly, and not in exclusively anti-careerist ways. "We actually made galleries stronger than they ever were — precisely because we were doing the kind of things that people didn't necessarily understand," muses Acconci. "We formed the 80s without realizing it." Personal fallout was dramatic too. Wood, a dancer and a key figure at FOOD, moved to Vermont in 1976:

"I left New York because the very people I cared about were on a "death path," you know? Because the way they were living was so extreme and it seemed like they had disregard for their own lives. They were going to die, and I didn't want to stick around for it. And then Suzi died, Gordon died. There was a feeling during this time that it just couldn't go on forever. And we really had had such a rich and full experience."

No utopia, after all, holds out forever against assimilation and crack-up. But is the story of its "rich and full" early years enticing, urban-mythical? Inescapably. 112 "was just a room, a big room where anything could happen," Highstein says to Fiore. "It was a time when artists believed that every new work was going to change the world. We actually believed the works we were putting up had the power to change everything — that everything was being reinvented. It sounds really strange today, but we really believed it."

*Pelican Bomb*  
September 7 2011

## PELICAN BOMB |

# Anything but Decorative: Robert Gordy and Tina Girouard

BY **BENJAMIN MORRIS**



TINA GIROUARD, ANIMALS, B, 1984. SILKSCREEN ON COTTON. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

To fully apprehend “Patterns and Prototypes,” the exhibition of works by Robert Gordy and Tina Girouard on view at the Contemporary Arts Center, an old schoolyard game is surprisingly useful. Take a word—any word will do but a personal favorite works best—and repeat it over and over until it begins to lose its sense, the sheer act of its repetition gradually untethering it from its referent in the mind. Continue to utter it until it has lost all meaning whatsoever and has become a mere sound. The effect is jarring: words floating free of their concepts, sounds hovering aimlessly above the objects with which they once danced.



Jarring, yes, but instructive. By inviting us to reconsider the relationship between words, sounds, structures, and concepts, this little game offers a readily available opportunity both to approach certain boundaries of understanding and to return from them, once the dust has cleared and the word for “table” has finally, after an hour or so, regained its legs. These boundaries make a startling appearance in “Patterns and Prototypes,” explored in diverse and striking ways by both of the artists on view.

The show, occasioned by the 35th anniversary of the CAC, aims to honor Gordy and Girouard's involvement in the early development of the Center in the 1970s and '80s. Presenting about two dozen works by each artist during roughly that time period (Gordy from 1963-1985 and Girouard from 1971-1989), it provides a snapshot of each of the artists' work during a critical moment not just for his or her own development but also for the Pattern and Decoration movement, of which they were both a part. Rejecting both Minimalism's austerity and the reigning modernist proscription of all things “decorative,” the movement's leading figures—Robert Kushner, Valerie Jaudon, Joyce Kozloff, and Miriam Schapiro—were largely based in New York and California, with their activity reaching its crescendo in the late '70s and early '80s. (Girouard had moved to New York from Louisiana in the 1960s, while Gordy worked in New Orleans for much of his life until his untimely death in 1986.)

If texture serves as a gateway to sensuality, and sensuality the invitation to feel the body, then Girouard's work offers a powerful contrast. In Gordy's most challenging works, the canvas implies a landscape of endless forms, a proto-erotic arcadia populated by infinitely many armless humanoids or scarlet-tipped hounds. For Girouard, however, the edge of the canvas is less a voyeur's window than it is a mirror, in which the viewer must confront his or her own political and social identity. She incorporates softer lines and textures, muted colors, the use of stenciled figures, and a private language of symbols and archetypes that over time becomes a form of provocation. Featuring such diverse materials as cloth, rags, strips of wallpaper, beads, sequins, and worked steel, her textures liberate the patterns she explores from the tyranny of the two-dimensional space, and extend those explorations into arenas ungoverned by mathematics or computation. Her work from this era is grounded in political and social awareness, with the subject matter ranging from the AIDS epidemic to space exploration to domesticity and gender roles. Girouard has claimed in an interview that the word “decoration” rarely emerged within the movement itself; the artists of the time thought of themselves as being interested chiefly in patterning. “We were all activists,” she said. “We were just expressing our ideas and our beliefs with whatever materials we could.”

Hence the works on display in the center of the gallery—Conflicting Evidence, 1980—which rework their fabrics into the form of flags. While the large-scale works such as OK, I Hope, 1984; Road Kill, 1984; and Fast Work, 1988, are undoubtedly overwhelming, her smaller, more modest silkscreens, such as Clear, Monument, Fiery Gift, Moon Mother, Tee Pee with Spirits, 1980, offer important insights into the nature of her exploration. In a piece hanging at the entrance to the show, Pictionary, No. 9, 1979, Girouard outlines a private visual language in which she works—a glyph-like code, partly inspired by the code of International Symbols. This language emerged, she has said, in response to the imposition of meaning from outside sources: a resistance to a false sense of nostalgia for “simpler times” that her early viewers and critics frequently assumed, and that she never intended for any of her work. Such a private grammar can usefully control meaning; it can also, however, expand it. For in pieces such as Clear, Monument... Girouard is subtly training the eye to see through the canvas, and thus to see around it: back into those domestic, social, and political contexts, the spaces where injustices, inequalities, and transgressions perpetuate themselves.

Self-imposed constraints have occupied aesthetic movements as diverse as the Martian poets of the 1970s led by Craig Raine, and the Oulipo writers of the 1960s onward. Constraints can challenge writers and artists, readers and viewers to reconsider their notions of artistic engagement. Crossovers between forms, materials, and genres are not uncommon; Ezra Pound's poetry inspired by Chinese pictograms is as much a continuation of a tradition as Xu Bing's contemporary landscape canvases inspired by the same.

The opportunities for such engagement are fertile, and like the works in “Patterns and Prototypes,” limitless. Contrary to their label, however, Gordy and Girouard's works are anything but decorative: they engage the viewer in profound and electrifying ways, they invoke a time period of national uncertainty (the space race had been won, but the arms race remained a standoff), and in their harnessing of this nervous energy they offer important implications for the viewer courageous enough to entertain the notion that the limit of understanding in any domain is the first one worth exploring. This includes our many apprehending selves, themselves infinite in nature: as cognitive beings, as embodied beings, and as political beings. To wit: the thought experiment noted above that recreates that sense of exploration may not be necessary to appreciate the show, but for those who are game to try it, it works best with one's own name.

“Patterns and Prototypes” on view through September 25, 2011 at the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans.

*The Advocate*  
August 2011

## THE ADVOCATE

# Review: Patterns and Prototypes at CAC

D. Eric Bookhardt



Longtime curator and Prospect New Orleans founder Dan Cameron has a knack for putting art in context, and this Tina Girouard and Robert Gordy expo at the Contemporary Arts Center is right on the money. Both artists helped shape the direction of American art, yet both became overshadowed. In the late 1960s, Girouard and fellow Louisianians Lynda Benglis, Dickie Landry and Keith Sonnier, helped to launch post-minimalism in New York as a way of injecting sinuous, fluid lines into minimalism's stark rigidity. She and New Orleans native Kendall Shaw also were seminal influences on the Pattern and Design, or P&D, movement in New York in the early 1970s. But one of the greatest P&D painters of all, Robert Gordy, remained in New Orleans until his death at age 52 in 1986. Blending deco patterning with expressionistic and psychedelic flourishes, Gordy produced some of America's more charismatic paintings and prints of the period, and this show provides a welcome window on his and Girouard's accomplishments.

Girouard replaced minimalism's hard edges with soft sinewy fabric and symbolic content as we see in her large *Conflicting Evidence* tapestry. A seasoned performance artist, she also collaborated with Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass and many others who were part and parcel of her exotically patterned life. Many of her and Gordy's works look timeless and vital today while reminding us of Louisiana's major, yet often overlooked, influence on modern American art history.



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2011

Arqpress

## The field and the table: Rosalind Krauss's 'expanded field' and the *Anarchitecture* group

“Tina Girouard recalled how  
““Each person had his own area of interest. I was interested in the idea of psychological scale in architecture [...] The idea of the crossroads interested Richard Nonas and Jene Highstein – where streets met, what hallways do. Their interest in entranceways of buildings influenced me – wanting to stop people who were just passing through. Dicky Landry and Suzie Harris dealt with the acoustics of space. Suzie was teaching sensory awareness, and both of them would try to diagnose the basic sound that any room makes.””

The *Anarchitecture* group emerged in the early 1970s in New York. Although it has become somewhat synonymous with the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, it had a broad membership of equally significant artists, including Laurie Anderson, Tina Girouard, Carol Goodden, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaum, Richard Landry and Richard Nonas among others.<sup>1</sup> Philip Ursprung's recent catalogue essay sets out some of the complexities that accompany any attempt to understand the group's internal dynamic, and the problematic conflation of its collective activities to the work, or at least to the ideas, of Matta-Clark.<sup>2</sup>

While mindful of Ursprung's various qualifications – and despite Mark Wigley's wry observation to the effect that with increasing *Anarchitectural* evidence comes greater difficulty in understanding the group's interrelationships<sup>3</sup> – it is seemingly a relatively straightforward art-historical task to situate *Anarchitecture* within the New York arts scene of the 1970s, particularly within the artistic community of SoHo, or more particularly still within the developments that took place in Greene Street or in the collective *Food* restaurant.<sup>4</sup> It is also relatively straightforward to demonstrate architecture's thoroughgoing role in the group's interests, working processes and collective output. Tina Girouard recalled how:

*Each person had his own area of interest. I was interested in the idea of psychological scale in architecture [...] The idea of the crossroads interested Richard [Nonas] and Jene [Highstein] – where streets met, what hallways do. Their interest in entranceways of buildings influenced me – wanting to stop people who were just passing through. Dicky [Landry] and Suzie [Harris] dealt with the acoustics of space. Suzie was teaching sensory awareness, and both of them would try to diagnose the basic sound that any room makes.<sup>5</sup>*

And it is also fairly straightforward to trace the return of such architectural adventures back into the careers of each particular artist within the group.

Leaving these observations to one side, I want to explore aspects of the ongoing difficulties that can still be felt when attempting to account for their

contribution to the field of architecture more broadly. Manoeuvring through the accepted 'facts' about *Anarchitecture*, it is less clear what they *did* as a group: there was no clearly articulated collective goal for *Anarchitecture* beyond its role as a forum for individual artists to explore ideas and issues. According to Tina Girouard, 'We would sit around tables at restaurants and bars throwing out ideas'. Although this was a throwaway remark, *Anarchitecture* can be pulled back to a number of tables that I would like to discuss here as a means of throwing out a few ideas about what *Anarchitecture* might give back to architecture (beyond the 'anti-'). Reading their modus operandi alongside the more explicit, roughly contemporaneous, and far better known art-historical method of Rosalind Krauss's 'expanded field', this article will introduce *Anarchitecture*'s own catalogue of work, and compare their approach to setting out a field for architecture with Krauss's broader project.

It will go on to compare these with other accepted fields and related processes that set out to delimit the education and practice of an architect, such as the well-known account offered by Vitruvius, or the more recent prescription of professional and regulatory bodies such as the RIBA and ARB.<sup>6</sup> It will suggest that the implications of *Anarchitecture*'s 'field' not only expose aspects of traditional architectural operations that are not usually revealed to the uninitiated, but that they also raise questions regarding the authority of the discipline itself and the ways in which it expects its products to be received and judged.

### First tables: the invite and Krauss-Klein

*Anarchitecture* had one exhibition at 112 Greene Street, New York City, which ran between 9 and 22 March 1974, and which was subsequently published in *Flash Art* in June of that year. According to one of the group's members, Richard Nonas, '[t]he *Anarchitecture* show was totally dull, the promise of *Anarchitecture* never happened'.<sup>7</sup>

I will discuss this totally dull show in the next section. Here, it is worth making a few introductory remarks about the *Anarchitecture* group by dwelling on the invitation to that show [1]. It is our first

Artforum  
January 2011

# ARTFORUM

REVIEWS NEW YORK

## “112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970–1974)”

David Zwirner/Salomon Contemporary



Gordon Matta-Clark, *Open House*, 1972, still from a film in 16 mm transferred to DVD, 41 minutes.  
From “112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970–1974).”

112 Greene Street helped catalyze SoHo in the 1970s. The artist-run gallery occupied a building owned by Jeffrey Lew, with Gordon Matta-Clark as resident imp and impresario; artists and dancers working there comprised a friendship circle that was also a post-Minimal Who's Who. Like that of any legend, the history of this wild incubator—where site-specific, collaborative artmaking bloomed—poses curatorial problems now. Whose memories get sanctioned? How can re-created objects, archived ephemera, and grainy video in commercial white cubes capture what participants loved: no-holds-barred play?

Two shows, separately conceived, told parallel versions of the story. Both were inside jobs. “112 Greene Street: A Nexus of Ideas in the Early '70s,” at Salomon, was curated by Ned Smyth, who joined the party in 1971 when Keith Sonnier and Dickie Landry picked him up hitchhiking. “112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970–1974),” at Zwirner, was organized by Jessamyn Fiore, whose mother, Jane Crawford, was married to Matta-Clark. Together, the exhibitions showcased nineteen artists, without overlap. Fiore's project was framed as a Matta-Clark exhibition “with” works by Tina Girouard, Jene Highstein, Larry Miller, Richard Nonas, Alan

Saret, Richard Serra, and Rachel Wood. This somewhat awkward foregrounding of a single—albeit brilliant—denizen of 112 shifted in Smyth's show, which presented one or two pieces each by Alice Aycock, Joan Jonas, Dennis Oppenheim, Smyth himself, and others.

Fiore's show was more expansive, and perhaps truer to the spirit of the place. It was also, perforce, more elusive. Girouard's four-panel canopy of flowered fabrics, *Air Space Stage*, 1972, and matching floor-work, *Lie-No*, 1973, consisting of four lengths of flowered linoleum, begged to be activated by live bodies, though it wasn't clear how. Saret's *Four Piece Folding Glade*, 1970, a quartet of tall wire bundles, seemed inconsequential propped in a corner, though the industrial-garden motif rhymed with rough-hewn components in Nonas's serial array *Blocks of Wood (Light to Dark, Dark to Light)*, 1970, as well as with Matta-Clark's pulsatile "Energy Tree" drawings, 1970–74. It wasn't that Fiore's installation should have pushed these connections; the missing link was not formal relationship but an experiential urgency that has dissipated like perfume. Thus the most telling part of "The Early Years"—though not the best looking—was film and video. Matta-Clark's *Open House*, 1972—a film documenting a slapstick dance in a Dumpster parked on Greene Street that he had fitted with partitions and doors—made particular sense juxtaposed against Wood's films of performances by the improvisatory group the *Natural History of the American Dancer*. (In the same vein, one missed the video—a collaboration with Juan Downey—that accompanies Matta-Clark's *Fresh Air Cart*, 1972. The two-seat contraption with umbrella and oxygen tank was on display, but Matta-Clark did not conceive it as static sculpture; it was a street-performance prop.) Other rare film footage captured Harris's *Wheels/Flying Machine*, 1973, exuberant, equipment-based dances utilizing giant gears and aerial harnesses. Serra's video *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 1974—in which an amused yet wary Leo Castelli (Serra's dealer) is the guest in a mock game show masterminded by Serra himself—hints at 112's role in the tight-knit art world of the era. It was gallery as antigallery.

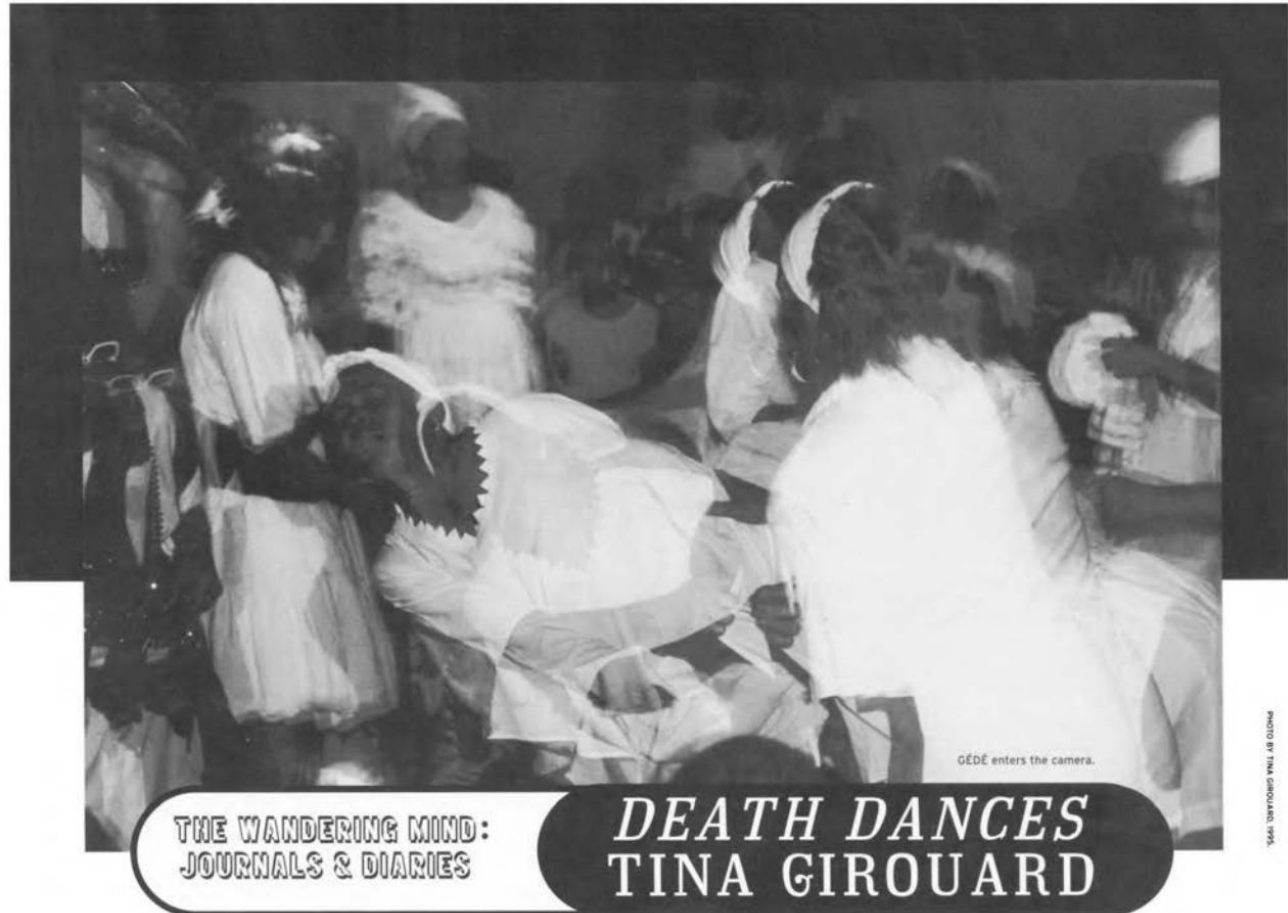
Smyth's show was more serious, and more normal. Mostly large-scale sculpture leavened with a few paintings, plus photos of and sketches for performances, it demonstrated how welcoming 112 was to women, with big works by Aycock, Jonas, Mary Heilmann, Susan Rothenberg, and Jackie Winsor, along with smaller contributions by Louise Bourgeois and Carolee Schneemann (both of whom showed there once, in 1974 and 1977, respectively). Smyth also included as a kind of centerpiece a strong revision of George Trakas's 1970 installation *The Piece that Went Through the Floor*. Documentary photographs show how this construction of heavy beams extended through the floor into the basement at 112. At Salomon, Trakas reconceived it as *Through the Looking Glass: The Piece that Went Through the Ceiling*, 2011. The timber platform was topped with mirrors angled at the gallery's windows, so that a viewer gazing up saw snowy ground five stories below reflected, floating. Once upon a time, say 112 alumni, such witty perceptual surprises were ubiquitous. That's a difficult vibe to historicize. But the 112 experiment remains potent in part because it was never meant to join the canon.

DAVID ZWIRNER/SALOMON CONTEMPORARY



BOMB  
April 1996

# BOMB



GÉDÉ enters the camera.

THE WANDERING MIND:  
JOURNALS & DIARIES

DEATH DANCES  
TINA GIROUARD

PHOTO BY TINA GIROUARD 1994

#### PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI 1994

Off the Rue Macajoux in Bel Air, a labyrinth of footpaths meanders through a maze-like tangle of hovels. Once a hilly forest of homes and gardens that overlooked Port-au-Prince and the vast, horseshoe bay of La Gonave, Bel Air is one of Port-au-Prince's worst slums — solid walls of shotgun style dwellings without even an alley between them. At crossroads, the corridors widen to mini-plazas where cooking, washing, laundry, bathing and social gatherings occur. In 1918, the St. Louis family moved to Bel Air, and after becoming a Vodou priest around 1920, Ceus "Tibout" St. Louis built his temple in 1946. Always filled with elders and children — a combination home for the aged and day care center — the turquoise and orange temple bears the scars of broken walls, leaky ceiling and a cement hard, packed-earth floor that testifies to 50 years use as a Vodou family house and site of thousands of Vodou rituals and celebrations. Today, a big healthy black goat with a purple satin sash around its horns is tied by the altar.

Societe Lececoule Jour Malonge, the name of the St. Louis Vodou family/society translates from Kreyol to mean "people who go with the flow live longer." I became friends with Tibout while interviewing him

about the origins of Haiti's sequin arts. Our mutual respect grew over time, and after being pressured to initiate into the Vodou society, Tibout finally pronounced me a "Mambo of Art" — telling the rest of the family that I was already one of his "Fey" (leaf) on the tree of the society. After his death, his widow Carmen became the leader of the temple, and honored me by asking that I become "President," the one who raises money for the three major ceremonies that must be performed annually to keep the temple a legitimate home for the Lwa' (saints or spirits).

The first GÉDÉ I sponsored was for Tibout, in 1994, after his death at 92. Today's ceremony is dedicated to Allison Miner, a founder of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage festival. She brought music, dance and merriment to millions, and was now fighting cancer and due to undergo a bone marrow transplant in November — GÉDÉ month. On leaving New Orleans for Haiti, I asked Allison to give me something very close to her to take along for the ritual. She handed me a porcelain statuette of the only American Indian saint, St. Catherine Tekakwitha. Looking around, I spotted some socks on the floor. Allison laughed at the literalness of an object "close to you," and allowed me to wrap the statue in the

socks as her essence to be delivered to GÉDÉ.

Vodou ceremonies have been evolving for hundreds of years. In the Caribbean island of Haiti the liturgy, dance, song, persuasive drum rhythms, and the art, architecture, costume and decor of Vodou temples are ingrained in the consciousness from infancy to old age. The finesse of an experienced Vodouist is to maintain a balance between uncontrolled possession and open communication between the spirit apparition and all present, an equilibrium between personal control and abandon (uncontrolled possession resembles a seizure). Mambos and Houngans are most adept at walking the tightrope between physical and metaphysical worlds — they see and live in both worlds, performing spiritual and aesthetic feats. So natural and essential is the performance that it compares to a virtuoso jazz concert. Vodou celebrants spontaneously improvise seemingly wild departures without ever abandoning the baseline of the ritual performance.

From last year's GÉDÉ ceremony for Tibout, I know the goat has been ritually preened for seven days and will be sacrificed. A few will partake of blood from the testicles for ancestral procreation. A Houngan will then go around the temple making the

Art in America  
July/ August 1977

# Art in America

## Report from New Orleans You Can Go Home Again: Five From Louisiana

BY LUCY R. LIPPARD

Lynda Benglis, Tina Girouard, Richard Landry, Robert Rauschenberg and Keith Sonnier were all born and/or raised in Louisiana, and this show, organized by William Fagaly at the New Orleans Museum of Art, was a festive homecoming as well as an esthetic event. New Orleans art critic Luba Glade saw it as a "loud 'Yes' to the ever-present question of whether creative people from the land of magnolias, red beans and gumbo can make it to center stage in the great big art world out there." while *Vogue* burred that the "Cajun Crowd" or the "Bayou Bunch" were the life of the art-world party. Indeed, at the opening there were flambeau carriers twirling torches in the night and a good old-fashioned dancing party with a Cajun band afterwards. The artists' families and imported friends added to the spirit of triumphant return (to which I was particularly susceptible, I guess, since I too lived part of my childhood in Louisiana).

In addition to the large room each art-

**Author:** Lucy R. Lippard is an art critic and former Louisianian. Her most recent book is a monograph on Eva Hesse (N.Y.U. Press).

*If there's a common sensibility among the artists in "Five from Louisiana," it has something to do with life style, plus a certain flamboyance with the use of multi-media, of performance, of color, of light and fabric.*

ist had for his or her art, everybody except Rauschenberg had something else going on as well. Benglis collaborated with her former art teacher at Newcomb College, Ida Kohlmeyer (one of New Orleans' better known abstract painters), in an "environmental sculpture" which practically stole the show. They filled the museum's high-ceilinged entrance room and stairway with giant papier-mâché heads from Mardi Gras floats, some of them grotesque caricatures of famous figures whose raw necks they trimmed with bright tissue-paper ties and collars. A few days before the opening, Girouard and three others performed her opulent, relaxed, colorful piece called *Pinwheel*,

which was preserved in the exhibition as a color videotape and a cloth canopy sculpture. A circular ground ritually created from "Solomon's Lot" (eight lengths of patterned silk left in her mother-in-law's attic by a salesman relative) was the quartered arena for *Pinwheel's* series of allegorical activities involving the categories of male and female; the four directions; past, present and future; different speeds; the elements; red, green, black and white; and animal, vegetable, mineral, along with a technological, abstract "other" performed by the artist and representing "disembodied control." The piece related to Girouard's *Costumed Portrait* series; to her concern with role-playing, transformation, and their relationship to place; and to her interest in food as art—and as adjunct to art and life. Landry gave a "Quadraphonic Sound Delay" concert, described as a "vortex of sound circling" the performance space. Sonnier had a double room with one of his "long distance" sound pieces operating in it; his films were shown, and a changing video program with work by all the artists also ran each day.

After all this, the art objects, clearly

Lynda Benglis in collaboration with Ida Kohlmeyer: *Louisiana Prop Piece*, 1977, mixed mediums.



Tina Girouard: *Pinwheel*, performed by Girouard, Mercedes Deshotel, John Geldersma and Gerard Murrell.



and airily installed, seemed very much museum pieces. Sonnier had made especially for the space a neon diptych which was just plain beautiful; its reversals and contrasts of light/dark, transparent/opaque, up/down, soft/hard (all achieved with just glass, black paint and neon bands) proved that he remains one of the very few artists working with light who can come up with results that are emotionally and esthetically satisfying rather than merely spectacular. Rauschenberg showed several pieces from the sensuous and luxurious *Hoarfrost* series, and two large combines—one, *Opal Reunion*, made especially for the show. It included reflective surfaces, a winged disc, an oar, a spider web and other images associated, I gather, with his home state.

Landry's contribution brought all of his work together for the first time: music, video and what he called "Video Facets"—drawing/photographs which incorporated all the permutational and perceptual concerns in his use of the other mediums. His major visual piece was a huge photo-grid of hands performing a 1969 clapping piece called *1,2,3,4*; you can almost hear it while you look. ("When I was studying the flute, or clarinet, or saxophone," Landry told Philip Glass in the catalogue, "the teachers would say, 'Stand in front of the mirror and look at your hands, or look at your

lips, because that's how you correct yourself! If there are mistakes, you can see them.'") Girouard showed colorful, direct stencil prints (she recently exhibited them at Holly Solomon), as well as the *Pinwheel* canopy sculpture that was my favorite. Benglis' room soared with two series of "knots," which I have never seen look as good as they did here, in a somewhat warmer space than usual, spotlighted, with the labels way down near the floor so the whole wall was free for the pieces to move in. The copper series, titled *7 Come 11*, quite outshone the cast aluminum one, making the latter seem somewhat leaden. Metallized over screening, cotton bunting and plaster, the copper knots retain a grainy surface that catches the light. The eleven forms simply took off in a virtuosic performance, each seeming to have a separate "personality" but working together like a highly disciplined dance troupe.

The exhibition's catalogue came in the form of a newsprint rotogravure supplement to the Sunday New Orleans *Times Picayune*, which has an estimated readership of almost a million, and it was sold at the museum for a dime—surely one of the great bargains of all time. It included reproductions of the works and interviews or brief essays on each artist (among them an uncharacteristically vapid Tennessee Williams on Benglis). In Sonnier's interview, Calvin Harlan,

mentor and teacher at the University of Southern Louisiana (which Sonnier, Girouard and Landry attended), said that his Cajun students were the most interesting he'd had: "You had a Southern upbringing but with a difference; yours is a region within a region. You all had humor and a lot of confidence. . . . The Cajuns have an unbelievable amount of sensitivity and skill in the kitchen, on the farm, in the dance halls, but very little visual culture to speak of. However, once that artistic tendency is tapped, the results are amazing . . . what I call the 'Louis XIV touch'—you know what I mean: the 'Grand Manner.' From the very beginning you seem to have had this ability to take almost anything lying around and transform it effortlessly into something worth looking at."

Although Benglis and Rauschenberg are not Cajuns, this is as good a place as any to locate what does seem to be a common sensibility among the five. I realized in the back of my mind that it had something to do with life style, a certain flamboyance, with the use of multiple media of performance color, light and fabric. Maybe, as Girouard says of her own piece, it is "somehow connected with Mardi Gras, where people masquerade." In any case, all these artists are able to use their own pasts and those of others without self-conscious nostalgia and with high esthetic spirits. □



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*The Times Picayune*  
January 1977

# The Times-Picayune

## FIVE FROM LOUISIANA



LYNDA BENGLIS

TINA GIROUARD    RICHARD LANDRY

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG    KEITH SONNIER

NEW WORK

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NOMA Supplement to the Times-Picayune, January 30, 1977

# TINA GIROUARD

An Interview by LIZA BÉAR  
At WBAI Radio Station, New York, Oct. 27, 1976

## TWO TREES IN THE FOREST

PART I  
I announce:

"This is Liza Béar at WBAI, New York, with Radio WAVE, an artists' program. Tonight's guest is Tina Girouard. We're doing this show live with a Cajun audience: potter Mercedes Dashotel, sculptor John Galdersma, and photographer Gerard Murrell. We've brought some things with us to Studio A: a table cloth from Louisiana, six red apples, chutney, walnuts, grape juice, Wasser brot, crisp rye bread, Danish cheese, carrots, Marco's home-made bread, Tina's juke box, and a willing spider plant. In the background you should be hearing... you should be hearing... you should be hearing a tape of barnyard clucking sounds recorded at Indian Bayou. It's unusually hectic here at BAI; there are people in all the adjoining studios; we're going to try to cool down and take it easy.

I've just returned from Toronto, Tina from Geneva. I'm conscious of place and transition, airplanes and congestion. I have very little voice. Tina's given me some notes on her piece *Swiss Self*, a solo performance at a Geneva gallery. I read out her list of props which I translate from French and then I formulate what I want to know...

Liza Béar: When you go to other places to do works, do you feel a need to redefine yourself in terms of that place?

Tina Girouard: Well, *Swiss Self* was a current self-portrait taking place in Geneva... I'm interested in reality and in making reality stronger, and one way of doing that is to bring things from the place into the piece.

LB: How did you go to present yourself to the Swiss?

TG: Well, as myself in their place. I used Swiss money because we think of Switzerland as the bank of the world. And a cowbell, because that's very special to Switzerland. The Swiss bell their cows for the Alps, and this bell was more like a church bell. It weighed about 15 pounds. I also used a scythe... I was staying in the country, and I got the bell and the scythe from the farmer down the road. They had something to do with me too... because they were from the farm.

LB: Did you grow up in the country?

TG: I grew up on a rice farm between De Quincy and Lake Charles, in the country, a place that has no name...

LB: What did the performance consist of?

TG: The only experience similar to it is a sand painting. I made a kind of effigy with the materials—there were also a lot of wild flowers, raffia, lengths of cotton from Louisiana, bamboo rugs, a washboard, a watch, a bar of chocolate—at the places where my head, my hands, my feet, and the erogenous zone (the other brain) would be. And then I laid myself out on it and sprinkled 10 kilos of Swiss money over the whole thing, as another layer of the pattern. I just lay there for a while. There was a video camera on the ceiling facing down, so the audience was also getting an overhead shot... The scythe was really important, because the portrait is a kind of life-death portrait.

LB: Uhuh... A lot of your work has been done with other artists. Could you say something about how



Costumed Portrait, 1974, Evelyn Jain Gi Lee Lei in the persona of Black Knight



Costumed Portrait, Terry D'Heilly as Mayan Runner

that developed? I know we both came to New York on the same day, July 28, 1969.

TG: Well, I'd come straight from undergraduate school in Lafayette, and within a couple of months of being in New York, I started working for other artists. I danced with Deborah Hay on and off for a year, and through her workshop I was introduced to Tina. She was the first person I met who had a studio.

LB: And during that first year I also got involved with the work of Keith Sonnier and Richard Serra. And of course, as I got a little more serious, I took a more active role... There's something about working with other people; you must spend some time in solitary concentration, and know who you are and what you have to do. But that can also narrow you down, and I'm always opened up by working with others.

particular collaborations? For instance, your *Bridge-Proposal with Barbara Dilley*...

TG: ... what came from that? I think my whole idea of portraiture. This is two years after the fact, and I realize that, in a way, Barbara and I were trying to make portraits of each other. I was trying to do it visually and she was trying to do it with activity.

LB: And did it work?

TG: Did it work? Well, of course it did. It worked very definitely for both of us, for a couple of years. And it was a real kind of nurturing new experience. Our first performance, incidentally, was at USL... The last piece we did, we collectively got a group of sixteen people together. About half of them were professional, and half had never performed at all.

LB: That was *Juxtaposed-Contained-Revealed at The Kitchen*, right?

TG: Right. We presented psychological portraits or persona projections. I worked closely with each person to develop an image of them using costume that released or revealed an aspect of their persona that they hadn't been able to... that hadn't come out in their life yet. We used geographic associations, characters from movies, that sort of thing. I wanted them to be perfectly comfortable. I didn't want them to be coast-hangers. And Barbara gave them something to do, a role to play... In that work, everything that had to do with space, what the performers and the performance area looked like, those were all my decisions. What happened during the performance was Barbara's.

LB: Have you ever gotten into a more active kind of dramatization?

TG: Of course. Last year I did a piece called *Scenes with four simultaneous scenes: Work, Rest, War, Sport*. Certain elements like the timing were abstracted—we had a timing rehearsal—we called it a race. But each person had to develop his scene alone, for the scene to be really theirs. I can only give the simple reduced idea, and all the details, the camouflage has to come from them. If you try to choreograph someone's every move, it becomes a rehearsed piece, a theatrical piece, rather than an experience in its own right. And I want my performances to be experiences.

LB: You don't think of them as improvisations though, do you?

LIZA BÉAR is President of the Center for New Art Activities, Inc. and is editor and producer of its contemporary art journal *Avantgarde*, founded in 1970. Born in Casablanca, Morocco, Ms. Béar studied Honours Philosophy at Bedford College, University of London (1961-1965) and was co-editor of the London publication *Circuit Magazine* before moving to New York in 1968. She has interviewed numerous artists for *Avantgarde*, including Carl Andre, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, Barry Le Va, Philip Glass, Jackie Winer, William Wegman, Chris Burden, Richard Serra, Vito Aczonci, and Keith Sonnier. Ms. Béar, who has delivered numerous lectures and presentations throughout the U.S., is currently working on her own videotape *Falacies* and a series of live programs for Public Television.

FIVE FROM LOUISIANA

“There's something about working with other people, you must spend some time in solitary concentration, and know who you are what you have to do. But that can also narrow you down, and I'm always opened up by working with others.” – Tina Girouard, *The Time Picayune*, 1977

Vogue  
January 1977

# VOGUE

## The Bayou Bunch

Not to be outdone by the regional pride of other states and cities claiming their own, the New Orleans Museum of Art has organized a really live show of five stylish native sons and daughters of Louisiana. The five—Robert Rauschenberg, Lynda Benglis, Richard Landry, Tina Girouard, and Keith Sonnier—are all newsmakers in New York; if they share anything, it is a droll wit, a talent for performance, and a totally unconventional attitude toward the boundaries between art and life—or, for that matter, art and anything else. In New York, the “Cajun crowd” is the life of the party; this month they are stirring things up back home with this New Orleans show of **Five from Louisiana**, which is on until March 27.—B.R.

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ARTnews  
February 1973

# ARTnews

**Tina Girouard** presented four "architectural" pieces at the 112 Greene Street gallery, designed to be activated by dance movement but effective on their own. Each "space-stage" piece proceeded from a different concept of material or location; "air" consisted of hanging sheets of printed cloth, "wall" of a careful arrangement of boards and slats leaning on the wall, "floor" of a series of pipes and planks hung at different heights, and "sound" of virtually invisible piano wire strung through the other pieces, as well as tapes of performances. All four sets were adjustable to the needs and desires of the various troupes that danced in them nearly every night of the show. Girouard's work is a logical and innovative step in the development of current art thinking and current dance thinking. Her preference for working with raw materials, arranged but not altered, immensely enhanced the pieces.

The desire to work with unrefined, "un-artistic" (or "pre-artistic") materials, allowing their natural properties to enrich the "artistic"

ARTnews

February 1973