

CREATIVE GROWTH

DAN MILLER

Born 1961 in Castro Valley, California
Creative Growth Art Center, 1992-present

Dan Miller's artwork is composed of obsessive overlays of words and imagery that often build to the point of abstraction. Each work contains a written record of Miller's interests in hardware stores, lightbulbs, electrical sockets and familiar people, however only a few words are identified in its final stage. Largely nonverbal, Miller was taught at an early age to write words and numbers in order to communicate. This became the primary influence on his artistic practice, transforming text into graphic elements, and employing an abstracted visual language as a tool of inquiry and expression.

Miller has had solo exhibitions at White Columns, Andrew Edlin Gallery, and Ricco Maresca Gallery in New York, Galerie Christian Berst in Paris, and Diane Rosenstein Gallery in Los Angeles. His work was selected for the Venice Biennale in 2017, and has been included in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art; Smithsonian American Art Museum; Berkeley Art Museum; The Museum of Everything, London; Gavin Brown's enterprise, Rachel Uffner Gallery and Partners & Spade, New York; Gallery Paule Anglim, Jules Maeght and 836M, San Francisco; Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami; John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan; Galerie Christian Berst and ABCD, Paris. Miller's work is included in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, American Folk Art Museum, Berkeley Art Museum, Mad Musée, and the Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne. Miller's work is also included in the private collections of David Byrne, Cindy Sherman, Maurizio Cattelan, Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, Thea Westreich and Ethan Wagner, Nicolas Rohatyn and Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, Andy and Kate Spade, among many others.

JOHN HILTUNEN (ALUM)

Born 1949, Sturgis, Kentucky; died 2020
Practiced at Creative Growth 2003—2020

In his early years in the Creative Growth Studio, John Hiltunen focused primarily on rug making, wood work, and ceramics. Hiltunen's iconic collage work became a consistent artistic pursuit after participating in Paul Butler's "Collage Party" in 2007. His clever juxtapositions, which combine animal and human subjects derived from fashion and natural history magazines, are provocative in their humor and yet earnest in intention. Hiltunen practiced in the Creative Growth Studio until his death in 2020.

Hiltunen enjoyed wide-spread recognition for his collages, and developed a large body of work. His work was included in more than thirty exhibitions in just ten years, including *John Hiltunen +1*, organized by Matthew Higgs in 2012 at Paule Anglim Gallery, and a solo exhibition in 2017 at Good Luck Gallery in Los Angeles. Hiltunen received the prestigious

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Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award in 2013, and Books for All Press published a monograph of his work. His work is included in Cindy Sherman's personal collection.

"I've never seen a bad collage by John. He was so gifted with these juxtapositions. He was one of the great collage artists of the modern era, along with [Kurt] Schwitters and Hannah Hoch. He had this extraordinary skill, talent, with what seemed to be quite limited materials, quite a reductive palette."

- Matthew Higgs, Director of White Columns

LATEFA NOORZAI

Born 1960, Kabul, Afghanistan
Has practiced at Creative Growth since 2012

Latefa Noorzai, a native Farsi speaker and immigrant to the United States, quickly established her studio practice at Creative Growth despite obstacles of communication and cultural navigation. Noorzai's tenacity is demonstrated in her bold portrait paintings inspired by a plethora of source material. Her strong and stark outlines, rendered with immediacy, provide loose structure for the heavy and confident brush strokes that permeate her figures with dynamic expression and presence. A master of color, Noorzai paints figures that are, like herself, bright, mercurial, and undaunted by the gaze of others. Noorzai's work is included in Hannah Rieger's permanent Art Brut Collection and was nominated for Outsider Art Fair's Art Absolutement Award in 2019.

LAUREN DARE

Born 1977, Oakland, California
Has practiced at Creative Growth since 2011

Lauren Dare's multi-layered abstract drawings are completed with a characteristically active and gestural process. Filling the page to the edge with high viscosity ink, Dare layers dense, sweeping collections of lines that exercise the full range of motion in her wrist and arm. Dare describes these frond-like forms as "trees," and sometimes interrupts them with clusters of circles, achieved in the same vibrational hand. Simultaneously organized and frenetic, her line work flows and crashes like waves, creating an energetic visual texture. Whether she's working in bright color or monochrome, Dare has a captivatingly sophisticated sense of depth and composition.

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NICOLE STORM

Born 1967, California

Has practiced at Creative Growth since 1995

Nicole Storm has been working at Creative Growth for 27 years, and has recently expanded her practice to include immersive site-specific installations. Storm's latest exhibition at White Columns in New York was named one of the best Gallery Shows of 2021 by Roberta Smith in the New York Times.

For Storm, the process of creation is paramount to the final painting. Storm doesn't simply sit or stand while working – she walks the building, rides the elevator, and hides in corners, carrying her work around as she adds layers and detail to her paintings. This is a key component of her process, and its ambulatory nature functions as a way for her to gather and harvest visual information and work through her ideas. Although Storm is not performing for anyone, watching her work is akin to watching a contemporary performance piece – she hums, takes breaks to dance, engages others in conversation, and then suddenly decides to move her artwork and clipboard to another location. The peripatetic nature of her process is the work itself and what we have are the remains. Storm favors vibrant hues and likes to incorporate many layers of washes under and over her 'notes'. She moves seamlessly between mark making with paint markers to painting with a brush, working and re-working the surface until she feels it is finished. As a natural progression of her creative process, Storm has begun directing the installation of her work for gallery exhibitions. Hanging work from the lighting grid, layering her paintings on the wall, spreading on the horizontal and vertical planes, and weaving everything together by painting on and around the works, her installations become active environments that continually evolve and become her new studio.

SUSAN JANOW

Born 1980, San Francisco, California

Has practiced at Creative Growth since 2003

Susan Janow approaches her drawings with a methodical and meditative focus. Beginning with an open hand-drawn grid, she meticulously fills in each shape with fine lines that resemble faintly moving curtains when complete. This process of intensive crosshatching is precise and introspective, as Janow works with unbroken focus. Her compositions never quite fill the page, leaving a span of charged negative space underneath the grid. Although she prefers to draw primarily with black ink, at times Janow substitutes or includes blocks of color with intuitive choices. When working sculpturally with ceramic tiles or wood, she maintains her linear rhythm while exploring other patterns and forms. Each block or tile is painted with a distinct design of dots and dashes, which read like nuanced barcodes of color when composed en masse.

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A multimedia artist, Janow's practice is expansive. She works with ink, ceramic, collage, woodwork, and textile, and she is widely recognized for her video work. Janow writes, directs, and often stars in her own short films created in Creative Growth's Digital Media Lab. Her seminal work "Questions?" positions Janow facing the camera and looking ahead silently, while her own voiceover shifts between standard interview-like questions and personal inquiries. The viewer is left to reflect not only on their own responses, but the enigmatic motivations of the enquirer herself. Janow's video work is in the permanent collection at the Brooklyn Museum and her work on paper is in the permanent collection of the Centre Pompidou.

RON VEASEY

Born 1957 in Las Vegas, Nevada
Creative Growth Art Center, 1981-present

An early participant in Creative Growth's programming, Ron Veasey's work has evolved in technique and scale in his four decades in the Studio, but his fundamental interest in the human form as a vehicle for color and line remains central to his practice. Whether a sloping neck or a glancing eye, Veasey's carefully considered portraits are completed methodically and with great intention. Veasey slowly and steadily moves through the stages of image selection, outline, color choice, and then painting. His inspiration comes from fashion magazines or books of photography, and he can take hours or days to identify the perfect muse. Veasey begins a new piece in pencil, paring his subject down to essential detail and often omitting the background in favor of charged color fields. Committing his linework to paper in black marker, Veasey's interlocking abstract shapes make up the figure and articulate facial expressions. Veasey uses vivid hues of acrylic paint to flood every plane with unidimensional color, including his signature yellow eyes and teeth. The result is an image that is at once graphic and sculptural - a distillation of color and form that allows the viewer to focus on the gesture of a stare. The gaze of the portrait becomes the fundamental subject of the work, unflinching in its connection with the viewer.

TERRI BOWDEN

Born 1962, California
Has practiced at Creative Growth since 1993

Terri Bowden's early work consisted primarily of albino animals and people—an interest she developed while attending programs with other legally blind people. Her limited vision has a direct influence on her interpretation of reality, resulting in a vibrant application of color that adds both dimension and complexity to her work. Her figures were rendered in sketchy black lines with starkly blank backgrounds or burst with colorful makeup and pastel wigs. At times, Bowden chose to include stiff and oversized hands and feet that could be webbed. Whether it was reimagining Robert Plant, Michael Jackson, or a generalized winking punk rocker, Terri's ability to capture the nuances of human expression extended

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far beyond the photos she used for reference. Bowden's recent practice has shifted almost exclusively to digital work, using an iPad to alter photographs and create AR architecture. There is a through line from her earlier work to the more recent digital 'makeovers' of historical figures, celebrities, and rock stars that demonstrates a very sophisticated artist's evolution. Bowden often carries 'friends' with her (life sized mat board cutouts) to Creative Growth on BART from her house, to which she attaches her digital portraits. These friends are also given makeovers complete with glam punk hair and makeup, and have oversized hands and feet attached. Bowden consistently enforces a sublime aesthetic that transcends conventionality, one that she often describes as 'dented.' Bowden's work is included in the permanent collection at the MADmusée in Liege, Belgium.

YING GE ZHOU

Born 1978 in Guangdong, China
Creative Growth Art Center, 2010-present

Ying Ge Zhou was born in Guangdong, China and came to Creative Growth in 2010 with a strong aptitude for drawing and painting. Whether she works from fashion magazines or her imagination, Zhou creates enigmatic portraits rendered in simple lines, and suffused with watercolor. Zhou has developed a highly-skilled ability to bring static images to life with her vibrant and elegant portraits that evoke movement and emotion. She often plucks lines of text from magazine pages, lending an element of unexpected humor and irony to her graceful compositions; for example, "Hot Mess" and, "Safe, Secure, Discreet." Her latest work combines this portrait practice with dreamlike images of figures floating amongst teapots, flowers, and imaginary buildings. And, in a recent expansion of her practice, Zhou has been combining paint and embroidery on fabric to bring texture and dimensionality to her signature style.