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## Ghada Amer

American, born Egypt 1963

### **LES FLÂNEUSES, 2008**

Acrylic, embroidery, and gel medium on canvas

Courtesy Cheim & Read, New York

Ghada Amer uses embroidery—a medium typically associated with women’s domestic life—to create images that frankly explore aspects of female sexuality. She “draws” with thread, creating complex networks of lines, in which erotic images are partially concealed. In this work, Amer juxtaposes pornographic-magazine photographs of sexualized women against images of Disney’s *Snow White*. By bringing together two female stereotypes, Amer illustrates how women have been marginalized.

Web site: <http://www.cheimread.com/artists/ghada-amer>

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**Neil Jenney**

American, born 1945

**Atmosphere, 1978**

Oil on panel in artist frame

Courtesy Barbara Mathes Gallery, New York

In this work, Jenney isolates a section of open sky with a heavy black frame, which functions as a window for the view he presents. The luminous, softly blended colors recall the radiant skies of Hudson River School landscapes by nineteenth-century artists such as Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. But Jenney's painting, with its conspicuous label and frame, reminds viewers that even representational views of nature are mediated by the artist's point of view. The act of framing and labeling this haze of warm and cool colors transforms an abstract color study into "atmosphere."

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pwHi>

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## Alfred Leslie

American, born 1927

### **Einstein's Secret, 1958–61**

Collage

Private collection, Minneapolis

During the 1950s, Alfred Leslie, along with his contemporaries, Joan Mitchell, Al Held, and Grace Hartigan, was considered a second-generation Abstract Expressionist. The term describes artists who were building on the expressive painterly vocabulary of Willem De Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, and others of the New York School. *Einstein's Secret* is typical of Leslie's forceful abstract paintings and collages of this period. It combines painted and torn papers tacked to the back of a stretcher frame. The artist left gaps that expose parts of the stretcher bars and braces to remind viewers that they are looking at an object rather than into an illusion.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pwTn>

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## Yoshitomo Nara

Japanese, born 1959

### **Wendy on the Stilt, 1998**

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

Yoshitomo Nara's cartoon-like *Wendy on the Stilt* creates an initial impression of youthful innocence. His style is characteristic of the Japanese Pop Art movement that emerged in the 1990s. While Nara's flat colors and sharp outlines adhere to a long tradition in Japanese art, his subject is decidedly contemporary. Wendy's oversized head and simplified body seem naive and childlike, but her scowling expression and angrily flashing eyes belie her innocence. Nara's work is both a celebration and critique of Japanese pop culture, adopting its "cute" style, while simultaneously hinting that innocence is mere fantasy. Wendy is isolated and seems frustrated with the tiresome task of playing on a stilt. This undercurrent of discontent acknowledges the complexity of modern life and allows Nara to connect with viewers who are far removed from childhood.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1px3N>

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## **Peter Saul**

American, 1934

### **Policeman on W.C., 1964**

Oil on canvas

Collection of Peter and Sally Saul

Peter Saul's work is characterized by provocative imagery and ambiguous moral messages about power and humiliation. Here he portrays a policeman as a cartoonish figure in a blue uniform, with drooping eyes, lolling tongue, and a massive cigarette. Saul irreverently places him on a toilet, degrading his official authority.

Though the vulgarity of Saul's images has kept him largely on the fringes of the Pop Art movement, he has recently been championed by younger artists who admire his belligerent approach to social issues. He finds that provocative topics make good subjects because they interest viewers. "I think the picture that has problems is more interesting to look at," Saul said. "I want to see the sexist and racist ones first when I go to a museum. Usually, there aren't any."

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pxdB>

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**George Schneeman**

American, 1934–2009

**Tom Clark, c. 1968**

Acrylic and collage on canvas

Collection of Katie Schneeman

Painter George Schneeman has been called “unfairly obscure,” but he never really cultivated the limelight. He grew up in Minnesota but began his career in New York during the late 1950s. He preferred to work quietly, and often collaboratively, in the company of a close-knit group of friends that included poets Ted Berrigan, Anne Waldman, Ron Padgett, and Tom Clark, the subject of this portrait. Mostly self-taught, Schneeman was deeply influenced by Italian art, with which he became familiar while stationed in Italy with the U.S. Army. His paintings evoke the simple shapes, shallow pictorial space, and soft, translucent colors typical of Italian frescoes. However, the sitter’s garish necktie and hairstyle, as well as the Pall Mall cigarette box, mark the painting as a product of postwar, 1960s America.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pxpU>

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## **Jesús Rafael Soto**

Venezuelan, 1923–2005

### **Cuadrado Malva, 1985**

Pigment on wood, metal

Collection of N. Bud and Beverly Grossman

Jesús Rafael Soto created kinetic art, in which two- and three-dimensional elements produce visual effects that change as the viewer moves. Unlike the mobiles of Alexander Calder, which physically move with changes in the environment, Soto's works move optically. Here, the interaction between the suspended metal rods and the lined background produces optical vibrations. The viewer can alter these effects by changing his or her position, thus becoming a creative participant rather than a passive observer. In this way Soto also extends the painting's effect into the dimension of time.

Web site: [http://www.jr-soto.com/fset\\_intro.html](http://www.jr-soto.com/fset_intro.html)





## Cy Thao

American, born 1972

### **The Hmong Migration, 1993–2001**

Selection of nine paintings from a series of fifty  
Oil on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Cy Thao's *The Hmong Migration* is a cycle of fifty paintings chronicling the migration of Southeast Asia's Hmong people, a saga that goes back thousands of years. The nine panels on view here concern the Hmong's relationship with the United States. As U.S. allies during the Vietnam War, the Hmong were targets of Communist persecution when American forces withdrew. Many Hmong were forced to leave their homes in Laos and cross the border into Thailand, where they were held for years in refugee camps. Many were later resettled in the U.S. Thao said, "I want the series to educate the younger generation, to have some closure with the generation that went through the war, and hopefully to become a historical document for generations to come."

Thao's cycle was inspired by tapestries or "story cloths," such as that by Ka Zoua Lee (also on view in this gallery), which she embroidered while living in a Thai refugee camp during the 1970s.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pxKL>





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**Atul Dodiya**

Indian, born 1959

**Each Father Lost—III, 2004**

Mixed media

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

*Each Father Lost—III* is one of a series of works Atul Dodiya constructed after his father died. The title comes from a poem by Gieve Patel, and the framed watercolor features the poetic text of *Foresight* by Nissim Ezekiel. While *Each Father Lost—III* is a personal expression of grief, the title implies the work encompasses and honors all departed fathers.

The evocative, sepia-toned artwork includes objects from Dodiya's past—a photograph of his friend and a bronze lion sit atop a curtain-rod ornament, while an old radio is affixed to the wall.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1py9i>

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## Ed Ruscha

American, born 1937

### **HOT, RIP, STOP, 1987**

Oil on canvas

Collection of the artist

Set against an atmospheric background of layered blue paint, the white words "HOT," "RIP," and "STOP" in Ed Ruscha's painting draw immediate attention. In what context would these words make sense? Like Pop artists Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, Ruscha is known for incorporating text into his visual work. Early in his career he created images that naturally contained words: cityscapes featuring the "Hollywood" sign and California gas stations complete with all their signage. Eventually, Ruscha began removing words from their contexts, placing them against backdrops of solid color or unrelated images. When asked where he finds his phrases, Ruscha said, "They come out of mystery, the mystery of the brain. To try to explain is a fruitless effort."

Web site: <http://www.edruscha.com>

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## **Ka Zoua Lee**

Hmong, born Laos

### **Village Story Blanket, c. 1980**

Cotton, silk, synthetic; appliqué and embroidery

Gift of funds from Ellen and Sheldon Sturgis 84.7.1

The bold, beautiful colors and detailed embroidery of Ka Zoua Lee's *Village Story Blanket* are immediately compelling. Close inspection reveals figures engaging in various tasks, such as picking corn and plowing fields, bustling around one another across the entire blanket. Lee's image of life in a traditional Hmong village is not only a vibrant work of art, but also an important historical document. During the Vietnam War, many Hmong people were forced to leave their homes in Laos. As U.S. allies during the war, the Hmong were targets of Communist persecution when American forces withdrew from the area. While living in refugee camps in Thailand, many Hmong women embroidered story panels as a way to supplement family income and share their experiences. Their subjects range from Hmong folklore to life in Laos, to the trauma of fleeing their homes.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pysq>

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**Sigmar Polke**

German, born 1941

**Untitled, 1977**

Acrylic on paper

Collection of Gordon Locksley and George T. Shea

Appropriating imagery from the mass media has been a staple of Sigmar Polke's artistic practice since the 1960s. Here, against a blurred background, he has overlaid the repeating motif of a cowboy with an illustration of a gun-toting gangster at the center of the composition. This mode of layering imagery creates an indeterminate space filled with cultural fragments. In the midst of this undefined space, the viewer is left to decide who is the hero and who is the villain. By juxtaposing images and techniques, Polke not only creates ambiguity, but also demonstrates his irreverence for traditional painting methods and materials.

Web site: <http://ow.ly/1pyzt>

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