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Contrasting Methods Activate Contessa Gallery's Art Southampton Presentation

Less than a week after the July Fourth fireworks have faded over Shinnecock Bay, Cleveland-based Contessa Gallery will bring renewed energy to Long Island, New York, with a vibrant booth at Art Southampton. Featuring works by a multitude of artists, both domestic and international, Contessa's exhibition focuses on two conceptually distinct approaches to art-making: one a sedate examination of material, emotion, and technique, the other an exuberant celebration of kitsch and Americana.

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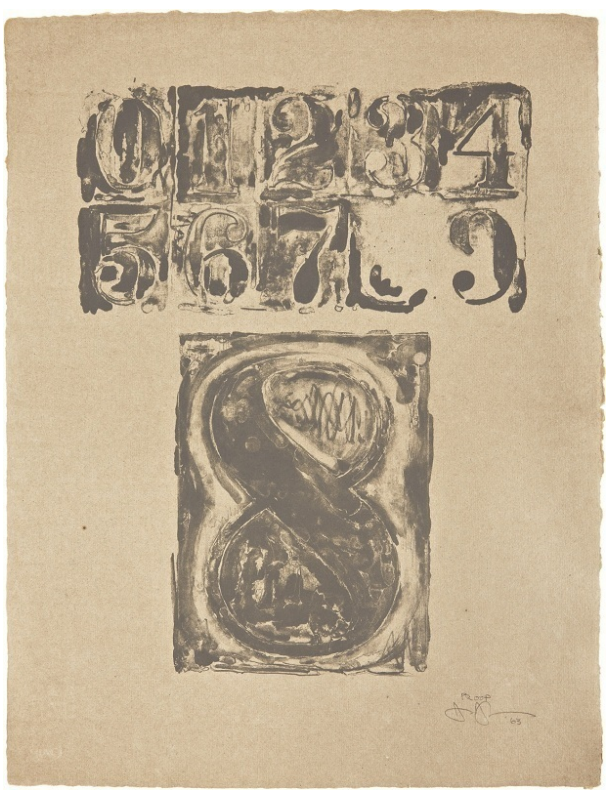


Jasper Johns
0-9: Plate 8, 1963
Contessa Gallery

Prominently featured are works by Hanneke Beaumont, Jasper Johns, and Thomas Scoon, all of which share a somber, thoughtful aura as well as a limited palette of greens, golds, and browns. Scoon's sculptures in cast glass and granite, while objectively abstract, are referred to by the artist as "figures," an appropriate designation when viewed alongside the bronze characters cast by Beaumont. While clearly approaching the subject matter of the human form from different angles, the works share an emotional reverberation achieved through subtle manipulations in posture and compositional balance. Similarly, Johns's print evokes an introspective state through experiments in rhythm and formal harmony, in one of the many iterations of his canonical "0-9" series begun in the 1960s.

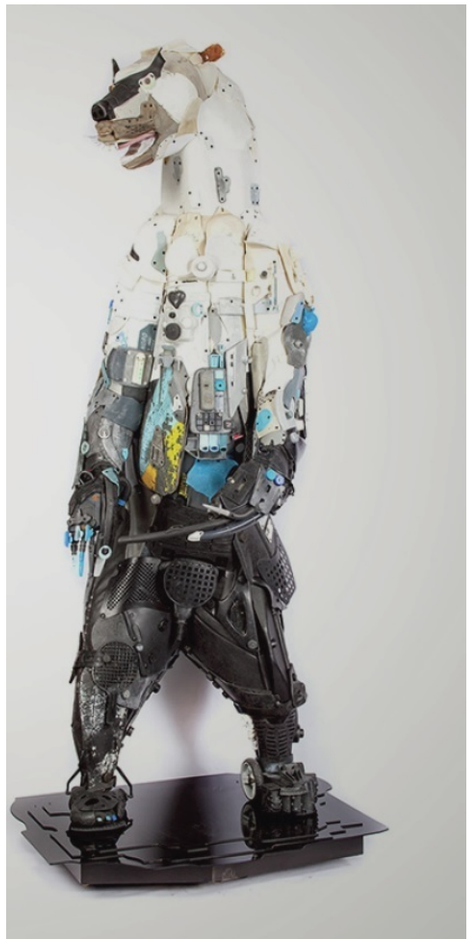
Thomas Scoon
Between Us: Figure 2, 2011
Contessa Gallery

Hanneke Beaumont
Bronze #105, 2010
Contessa Gallery

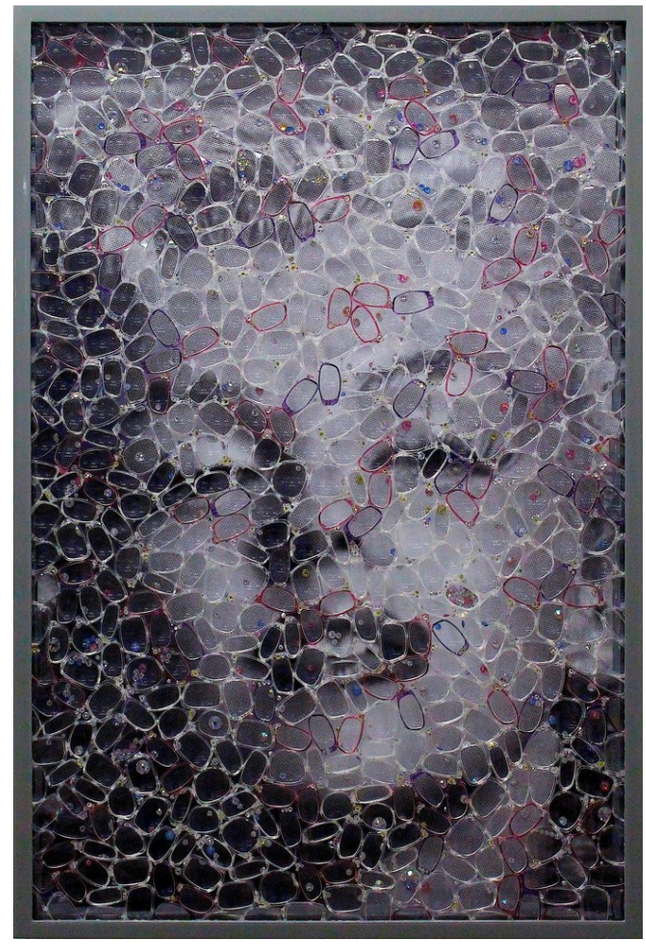
The remaining pieces on view, by Mr. Brainwash, David Datuna, David Drebin and Gilles Cenazandotti, are loud and raucous—but simultaneously complex. While none of these artists is American-born, each has appropriated the imagery and material of the culture in humorous, sometimes flagrant reimaginings of the everyday.

Mr. Brainwash
Mickey
Contessa Gallery

Masterfully self-aware, Mr. Brainwash and Drebin remix the languages of ubiquitous contemporary imagery. Mr. Brainwash continues the mashups of street art, high art, and Pop he was made famous for in the Banksy-directed film *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, while Drebin takes the noirish photographic style and melodramatic copy popular in fashion imagery to extreme levels in his digital prints and neons.



Gilles Cenazandotti
Polar Bear , 2015
Contessa Gallery



David Datuna
Viewpoint of Millions: Star Dream, 2015
Contessa Gallery

Datuna and Cenazandotti focus their sculptural works on the buildup of material, using nontraditional media to create recognizable forms. The menacing loom of Cenazandotti's polar bear is nullified as one notices that the character is literally made of innocuous found objects "from the sea." Datuna's American flag and Marilyn Monroe glitter are layered with eyeglasses and Swarovski crystals, allegorizing an outsider's attempt to see these American icons more clearly.

"The lenses symbolically express individual identity, illusion, perception, fragmentation, and unification," the artist has explained. Both pieces are part of his "Viewpoint of Billions," an interactive series that was recently shown at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.

Contessa at Art Southampton gives a wide range of options, allowing room for interpretation of work that can resonate on many levels depending on the viewer. Offering a little something for everyone, the booth truly exemplifies the gallery's "collector-oriented" mission.

—K. Sundberg

Visit Contessa Gallery at Art Southampton 2015, July 9–12, 2015

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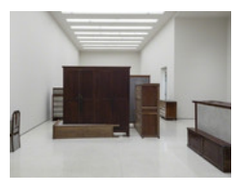

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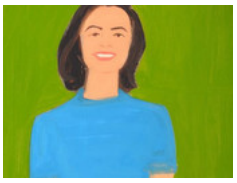

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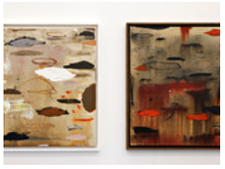

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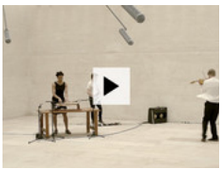

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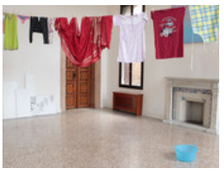

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