

PATRON

ART / CULTURE / DESIGN



HAUTE HISTORY:
Fashion & Architecture
on Strait Lane

Dining with Paula Lambert
Designed in Dallas



PICTURESQUE PLACES

September brings a new exhibition season to area art galleries—*Patron* checks in with four.



Top: Esther Pearl Watson, *Granddad Gave Us His Old Truck*, 2017, acrylic and foil on wood panel, 5 x 7 in. Courtesy of the artist and Webb Gallery. Below: Bryan Florentin, *Accretion (bleached witch's hat)*, 2017, mixed media, 72 x 34 x 37 in. Courtesy of the artist and Kirk Hopper Fine Art.

With autumn in the air, the art season gets underway. Naturally the galleries of North Texas mark the turning of the season with openings far and wide. Given our multitude of galleries, it's impossible to make it to all of them. But an autumnal art road trip might be in order, and *Patron* previews four notable upcoming, at Dallas's Galleri Urbane and Kirk Hopper Fine Art, Webb Gallery in Waxahachie, and Cydonia in Fort Worth.

First stop is Monitor Street's Galleri Urbane, with two solo exhibitions opening on September 9: Gallery One hosts Sidney Mullis: *Preservation of Forgetting*, and Gallery Two presents Melinda Laszczynski: *A Hole A Post A Moon*. These mark the first Galleri Urbane solo exhibitions for each, and it's a marvelous pairing.

Sidney Mullis, based in State College, Pennsylvania, is known for her performance-based video works, sculptures, and interactive objects, but with *Preservation of Forgetting*, the focus is sculpture.

Mullis's timely art continues to be concerned with gender, desire, intimacy, and sexuality, and her abstract, abstruse works seduce viewers into her unique vision. The show's title piece, *Persuasion of Forgetting* (2017), is a towering kitchen sink of a conundrum. The artist's materials list reads, "objects that I found, objects that I stole, objects that I needed to get rid of, sea salt, papier mâché, fabric, wax, wood (5 x 5 x 9)," and there's a comic absoluteness to the sculpture's gulping presence.

Houston-based Melinda Laszczynski is a self-described "compulsive collector of things that have potential," and her *A Hole A Hole A Hole* is evidence of that—her recent paintings, sculpture, and works on paper all show her singular hand. "Melinda's is a very different aesthetic from Sidney's," gallerist Ree Willaford observes, "but they have this same process of layering and gluing and finding and adhering. I think it's going to be a really nice balance between the two women—I'm excited."

On to Deep Ellum, where Kirk Hopper Fine Art has been casting its long shadow on Commerce Street since 2011. *Accretion/Churn*, a solo show by photography-based artist Bryan Florentin holds forth in the gallery from August 19 through September 23, followed by Floyd Newsom's solo exhibition, *The Things I See*, running from September 30 through November 4.

Historically, the fallibility of memory and the poetry of flux haunt Bryan Florentin's creative vision. His work is steeped in contradictions—appearances versus realities, containers versus contents, and visual records of a scene versus later visual records

of the same scene, chronicling the collision of past, present, and future. This recent body of work involves photography-grounded pieces, and *Accretion (bistrot with a hat)* is a large-scale mixed-material 3D piece.

Houston's Floyd Newsom, painter and printmaker, returns to KHFA with *The Things I See*, his second solo show there. Newsom is known for his stunning West African-infused palette, recurring symbology of fish, birds, kites, ladders, dogs, and the paradox of his guileless compositions. "It's what I like about his work," Kirk Hopper says. "It's spontaneous and childlike." But lurking beneath that surface guilelessness are larger issues, often ominous and unavoidable—politics, world events, the drift of cultural currency—swirling together with a stealthy, quiet urgency that demands viewer reckoning. Newsom's epic *After the Storm* CNN is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Heading south to Waxahachie, just off the square (literally and metaphorically), Webb Gallery is a one-of-a-kind destination. Outsider art, fraternal lodge art, carnival collectibles, antiques, and more, it's a dizzying eye-feast. The gallery inhabits two floors of two 1902 storefronts, and the ambience is apt—it's a congress of wonders, the elephants' graveyard of folk art. The Webbs, Bruce and Julie, are the Wizards of Odd.

September 17 marks the opening of **BLACKHOLE BACKFIRE**, a solo exhibition of work by Esther Pearl Watson, one of Webb Gallery's most celebrated, and bestselling, artists; it runs



Melinda Laszczynski, *Moon Skin*, acrylic, spray paint, glitter, and paint skins on panel, 12 x 9 in.; Melinda Laszczynski, *Disco Lemonade*, acrylic, spray paint, and paint skins on panel, 14 x 11 in. Courtesy of the artist and Galeri Urbane.



Clockwise from top left: Trish Tillman, *Waves and Tides*, 2016, vinyl, wood, embellishments, 32 x 37 x 1 in. Courtesy of the artist and Cydonia Gallery. Floyd Newman, *The Bus*, 2005–2017, gouache, ink on paper, and Mylar, 12 x 10 in. Courtesy of the artist and Kirk Hopper Fine Art. Micah Lexier, *7 Pieces in 3 Versions*, 2015, 21 laser-cut 16-gauge cold-rolled steel on plinth, 26 x 26 x 8 in. Entire work consists of 21 separate parts, divided into seven piles, stacked three high. Courtesy of the artist and Cydonia Gallery.

through December 17. Watson's art is autobiographically grounded, and the thumbprints of her unconventional upbringing and backstory are all over her work. "Half of her paintings are her real-life experiences," Bruce Webb explains. "Some are about the fantasy flying saucers that her dad was always dreaming of, and then some are these pastoral scenes...she's taken all of those 'truth is stranger than fiction' stories of her childhood, and that's the fodder for her paintings. In a way, it's partly a therapy for Esther Pearl."

One highlight of the exhibition will certainly be Watson's enigmatic mural, *Pasture Cows Crossing Indian Creek, Comanche, Texas* (2014). The 10' by 13' painting was previously displayed in the atrium of the Amon Carter. The *BLACKHOLE BACKFIRE* opening on the 17th will also feature live music from Texas's swing *avant-garde*, Ginnay Mac and company.

From Waxahachie out 287 to Fort Worth, the road trip ends at Cydonia, one of the city's newest art destinations. Gallerist Hanh Ho originally opened Cydonia in Dallas back in 2014, but moved the gallery to Fort Worth earlier this year. The space is comprised of two galleries, each with its own unique character, but the sleek, inviting, contemporary feel knits them together.

Homecoming, a collective show, opens on September 9, featuring works from four artists: Canadians Micah Lexier and Michael Dumontier, New Jersey-based Emi Winter, and New Yorker Trish Tillman. It's a diverse group, but the thematic underpinning makes for a compelling show. "The idea of home is so powerful," Hanh Ho observes, "and I think some people equate the idea of home with the idea of love. With *Homecoming*, there's this idea of renewal and return."

Ho notes that Toronto-based Micah Lexier has attained hero status in Canada, influencing a generation of artists. His unpretentious moorings are evident in the video projection and 2D and 3D works here. "Artist's artist," Michael Dumontier's minimalist pieces have a primitive poetic purity that engages imaginations. Trish Tillman's wall-mounted sculptural works have a totemic aspect, her choice of materials so subjectively personal as to suggest self-portrait. And Emi Winter is American by way of Oaxaca, raised there by her anthropologist parents. Her two woven rugs fuse pre-Columbian tradition with abstract elements, reinforcing the timeless, seasonal resonance of homecoming. **P**