

Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained

Jassi Kalo, Denver Kelley, and Ibn Casinillo

Hill Art Foundation

Reimagining David Salle's *Beautiful, Vivid, Self-contained* exhibit, we collaborated to curate one of the rooms using six different art pieces. The room that we will be curating is the main room on the third floor of the Hill Art Foundation. It has high ceilings, windows, and walls, and a wide space with the floor. Looking at the space itself, the room provides us with the opportunity to work with pieces of various sizes, considering how large the space is. In addition to that, we also have an opportunity to use works of different mediums; for instance, there is the possibility of including statues in the exhibit. However, there is a stained glass located on one of the walls of the room which provides us with both opportunities and limitations for the rest of the exhibit. On the one hand, the inclusion of the stained glass is a limitation because the curation of the space is inevitably in conversation with it and that must be taken into consideration. On the other hand, we have the opportunity to curate an exhibit inspired by composition and the messages drawn from the stained glass.¹ This is why we chose to reimagine this room. It gave us the opportunity to use the stained glass in conversation with the other pieces through which we found overarching themes of sexuality and humanity.

The pieces we have chosen are: Robert Colescott's *Untitled*, Giambologna's *Astronomy*, Doron Langberg's *Hari*, Kevin Beasley's *Untitled Slab (Concavity II)*, Salman Toor's *Two Citizens*, and Cy Twombly's *Solar Barge of Sesostris*. When entering the room, the first piece that will be seen, the centerpiece, will be Kevin Beasley's *Untitled Slab (Concavity II)* and to its right will be three other pieces.. From right to left, the three pieces are Doron Langberg's *Hari*, Giambologna's *Astronomy*, and Robert Colescott's *Untitled*, followed by the stained glass. To the right of the centerpiece are the other two pieces chosen for the exhibit. From left to right of the centerpiece, the two pieces are Salman Toor's *Two Citizens* and Cy Twombly's *Solar Barge of Sesostris*.

¹ Richman-Abdou, Kelly. "What Is Curating? See Why More and More People Are Interested in Becoming Curators." My Modern Met, August 1, 2019. <https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-curating/>.



Robert Colescott, *Untitled*, circa 1967. Acrylic on canvas, 78 3/4 × 59 inches (200 × 149.9 cm). © 2023 The Robert H. Colescott Separate Property Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of the Trust and Blum & Poe, Los Angeles / New York / Tokyo. Photo: Jenalee Harmon.

To the right of the stained glass is Robert Colescott's *Untitled*. *Untitled* represents the chaos of the human mind— the complexity of emotions. The frenzy of vibrant colors and earth tones show how nature and people interact. The piece represents the sense of confusion that comes with being uncertain about who you are. At the top of the painting there is a gray person looking down upon the other brown figures. The gray person lays on what appears to be a blue waterfall. The red tones towards the bottom are symbolic of anger. The black is the unknown. It is a void in the human spirit. As the viewer moves from this piece to the rest of the exhibition, it

is evident that a transition occurs from the human mind free falling to discovering peace.



Giambologna, *Astronomy*, cast early 1570s. Bronze, 15 3/8 x 4 5/8 x 6 inches (39.1 x 11.7 x 15.2 cm). Photo: Matthew Herrmann.

Giambologna's statue, *Astronomy*, sits between the paintings *Untitled* and *Hari*. The piece shows a bronze woman covering herself with her arms.² She gazes downwards in solitude. The sculpture is a representation of the constellation, Virgo. Virgo, the maiden of space, is known in western astrology to be the virgin. She represents a sense of purity and solitude. The sculpture represents depression and loneliness. *Astronomy* speaks to *Untitled* as being the isolation that

² The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "After a Model by Giambologna | Astronomy | Italian, Florence." Accessed May 9, 2023. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/203938>.

many undergo when they are trying to understand themselves. The mental mess underneath the pure and sanctimonious is seen in this part of the exhibition. The woman is also in conversation with the permanent stained glass art, *The Creation and Expulsion from Paradise* by Valentin Busch. Both pieces represent a perceived solace that may not necessarily be true.



Doron Langberg, *Hari*, 2022. Oil on linen, 18 × 24 inches (45.7 × 61 cm). © Doron Langberg.

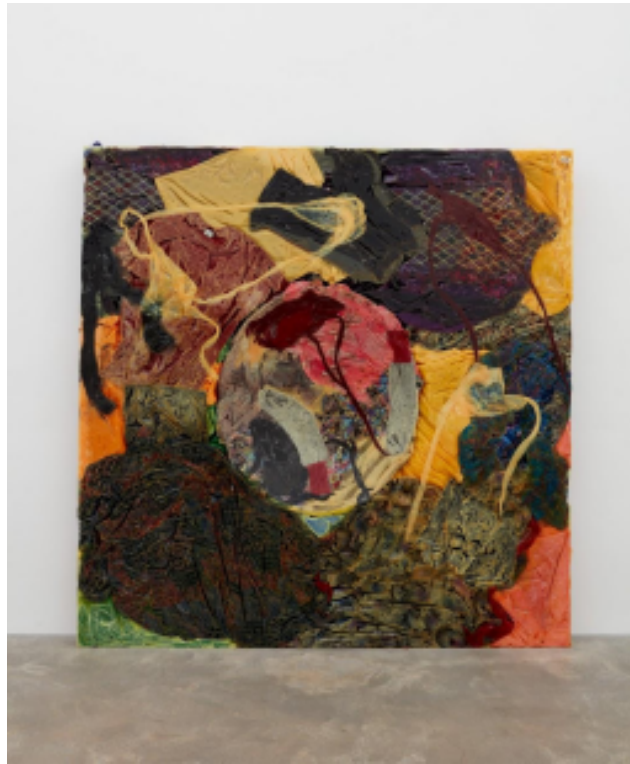
Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro.

Clusters of red color paint the canvas of a vulnerable and rebellious spirit. An unclothed woman lays nonchalantly with her arms over her head in shades of red.³ Her positions can interpret a strong angst to invoke rebellion. The spots of cool blue imply rage is not an emotion exhibited in the painting, but rather showcases calm and love overtaken by rage. *Hari* by Langberg is a piece that allows one to encounter the work with a sense of empathy and relatability. The audience is meant to feel the connection of warm to vibrant. This piece, alongside others curated in the exhibition space, may be said to “recognize” each other through

³“Doron Langberg.” Accessed May 9, 2023.

<https://rubellmuseum.org/miami/miami-exhibitions/2022-23-miami/97-miami/exhibitions/1461-doron-langberg-2022-23>.

their color schemes and repetition of red. The red symbolizes the humanity in each piece. Red represents a multitude of emotions including rage and love. The works all depict various human feelings that juxtapose each other.



Kevin Beasley, *Untitled Slab (Concavity II)*, 2018. Housedresses, kaftans, t-shirts, socks, du-rags, altered garments, polyurethane resin, 82 1/2 × 80 1/2 × 5 1/2 inches (209.6 × 204.5 × 14 cm). © Kevin Beasley.

Courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Jason Wyche.

To the right of the Langberg painting is Kevin Beasley's *Untitled Slab*. This is a piece collaged together of various types of clothing. The colorful array of fabrics create a friendly and familiar feeling for the visitors to relate to. The idea of clothing represents vulnerability and a sense of agency because despite the expectations that may come from society, we have the power to choose what we wear and how we wear it. The choice to put this work in conversation with Doron Langberg's *Hari*, gives the visitor a question to ponder on how clothing is viewed in society. While Langberg's *Hari* is portraying a sense of vulnerability through the explicit nakedness of the woman, Beasley's piece highlights it through the implications of the freedoms behind clothing.



Salman Toor, *Two Citizens*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 48 × 60 inches (121.9 × 152.4 cm). © Salman Toor. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York. Photo: Farzad Owrang.

To the right of the centerpiece is Salman Toor's *Two Citizens*. This oil painting depicts an intimate moment between two men holding hands. While he portrays half of their bodies in a reserved manner using their clothes, the other half is more revealing with the depiction of their naked bodies. As a painter, Toor is known for portraying images of queer men.⁴ In this particular painting, he largely uses warm tones to evoke the warmth that is shared between the two men, emphasizing their shared intimacy. However, he also presents a sense of vulnerability throughout the piece. This is shown in the way one of the figures is looking at their intertwined hands and the other is looking away, highlighting a sense of apprehension but also, anticipation.

⁴ "Salman Toor - Artists - Luhring Augustine." Accessed May 2, 2023. <https://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/salman-toor#tab:thumbnails>.



Cy Twombly, *Solar Barge of Sesostris*, 1985–88. Acrylic, wax crayon, and graphite on paper, 58 3/4 × 51 3/4 inches (149.2 × 131.4 cm). Credit © Cy Twombly Foundation. Photo: Matthew Herrmann.

To the right of Salman Toor's painting is Cy Twombly's *Solar Barge of Sesostris*. This multimedia painting, which was part of the continuation of his ten part project named *Coronation of Sesostris*, is a depiction of a ritual vessel used by the sun god of Egyptian mythology to transport souls to the afterlife. In this piece, Twombly's use of distinct colors and lines highlight the links that exist between people. These links are what draw people to one another which leads to the creation of intimate relationships that transcend even the course of life. This directly connects to Salman Toor and his ability to represent vulnerable bodies and create a connection between them in order to embody the truth behind sexuality and love.

David Salle's *Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained* explores juxtaposition which is how works

of art are said to “recognize” and be in conversation with each other.⁵ The multiple number of artists and their different mediums of art add a unique element to the show. The way in which each piece is carefully curated is to showcase an overall theme. Robert Colescott’s *Untitled*, Giambologna’s *Astronomy*, Doron Langberg’s *Hari*, Kevin Beasley’s *Untitled Slab (Concavity II)*, Salman Toor’s *Two Citizens*, and Cy Twombly’s *Solar Barge of Sesostris*, are the pieces we chose to put in the large exhibition space on the third floor of the Hill Art Foundation. These pieces have themes of humanity and sexuality that all tie together to create a familiar tone.

⁵ Hill Art Foundation. “Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained.” Accessed May 9, 2023. <https://hillartfoundation.org/art/exhibitions/view/beautiful-vivid-self-contained/>.

Bibliography

Richman-Abdou, Kelly. "What Is Curating? See Why More and More People Are Interested in Becoming Curators." My Modern Met, August 1, 2019.

<https://mymodernmet.com/what-is-curating/>.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "After a Model by Giambologna | Astronomy | Italian, Florence." Accessed May 15, 2023.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/203938>.

"Doron Langberg." Accessed May 15, 2023.

<https://rubellmuseum.org/miami/miami-exhibitions/2022-23-miami/97-miami/exhibitions/1461-doron-langberg-2022-23>.

"Salman Toor - Artists - Luhring Augustine." Accessed May 15, 2023.

<https://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/salman-toor#tab:thumbnails>. Hill Art

Foundation. "Beautiful, Vivid, Self-Contained." Accessed May 15, 2023.

<https://hillartfoundation.org/art/exhibitions/view/beautiful-vivid-self-contained/>.