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SOCAL MODERNISM

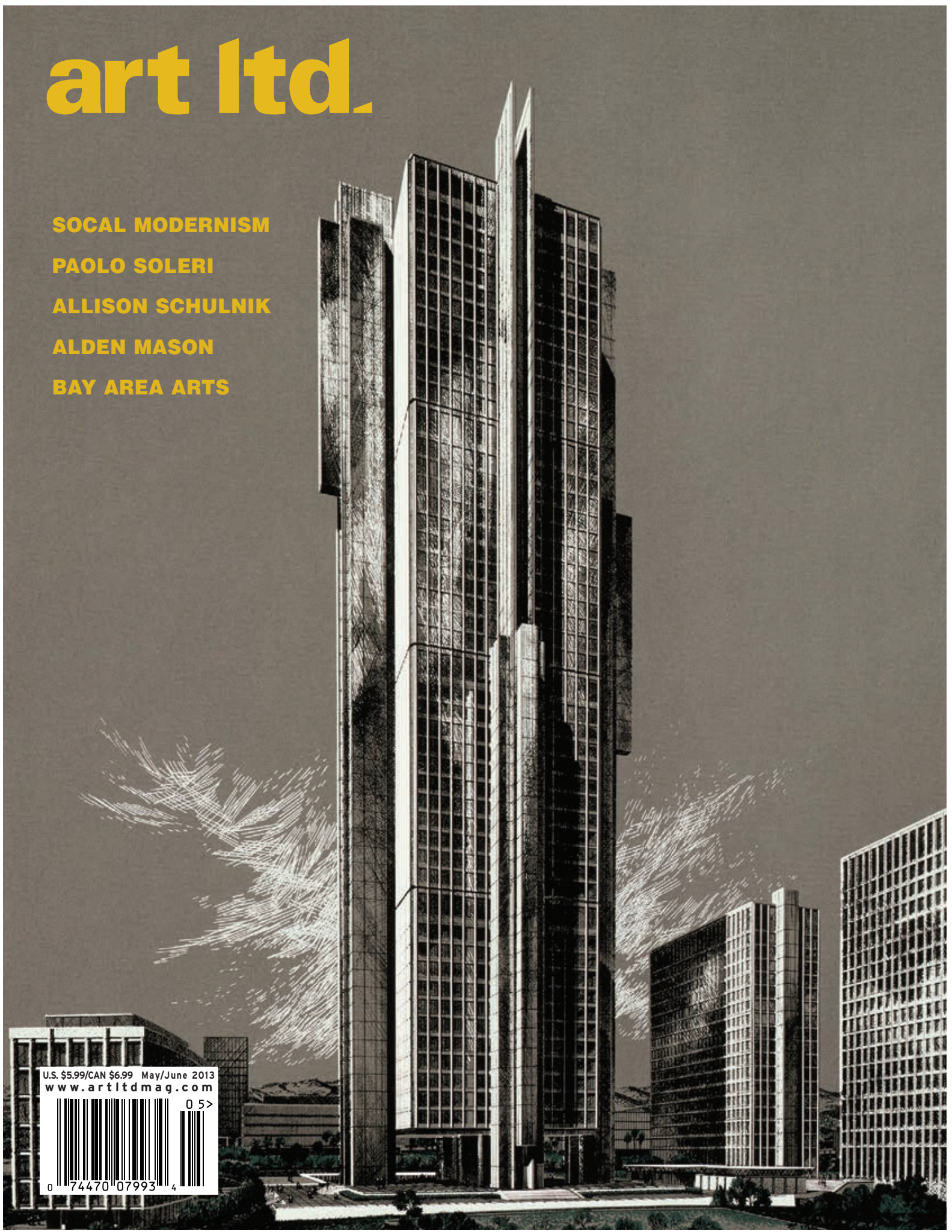
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BAY AREA ARTS

U.S. \$5.99/CAN \$6.99 May/June 2013
www.artltdmag.com





"VESUVIUS," 2013, **Cyrus Tilton**
PAPER MACHE, 38" X 24" X 20"
PHOTO: COURTESY VESSEL GALLERY

one, the exploitation of subaltern females by dominant males, through his appropriation of the story of Augustine, the star "hysteria" performer of *Belle Époque* Paris, and her Svengali, Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot of the Salpêtrière Hospital. The eminent founder of the field of neurology and an inspiration to the young Freud was also something of an impresario, it seems. His hugely popular Tuesday lectures included demonstrations of mania, megalomania, dementia, melancholia, paralysis and erotomania by Augustine and other female patients. Photographs of the women's performances were even featured in a special in-house publication, *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*. One scholar describes these events as "ritualized madness," and notes, drily, "A hysteric can be a living work of art."

Finzi's paintings of Charcot's star performer, the young, pretty Augustine, draw on these photographs. (He is, incidentally, a dermatological surgeon who has written recently about Botox and the two-way link between mood and expression.) Far from photorealistic, however, these paintings, done in pigmented epoxy resin, applied with needles and syringes, are loosely executed, recalling wet-in-wet watercolors, and somewhat ghostly-looking, as if materialized from ectoplasm: they verge on melting or dissolution. The speckled, granular textures and floral-bloom patterns trapped in the resin's vitreous layers suggest natural processes of flow and growth, while cracks in the resin deposits suggest the mutability and fragility of identity. If *Augustine (Normal State)* depicts its subject in a conventionally pensive pose, *Augustine (Lethargy)* reveals her contorted right hand, while *Augustine (Attitudes Passionnelles)* depicts her, hands upraised, perhaps in loose nightclothes, perhaps about to embrace her imaginary lover (or to pretend

to). Two paintings depict Augustine in a state of cataleptic rigidity provoked by sound (long before Botox came along to suppress frown-inspiring forehead wrinkles). *Photophobic Hysteria* depicts Augustine's aversion to bright light: closed eyes and a tilted head. Even dubious science, like bad religion, can inspire good painting.

—DeWITT CHENG

OAKLAND **Cyrus Tilton: "Absence"** at Vessel Gallery

Bay Area sculptor Cyrus Tilton's mixed-media works emphasize the artist's love for and facility with metal, concrete, and paper mache. For "Absence," a solo exhibition at Vessel Gallery, Tilton has channeled this investment in craft and form into primarily classical subjects such as the human body, horses, and simple mechanical structures. *Vesuvius* is made of paper mache, but has the rough-hewn surface and subtle texture of a plaster master study made in an academic atelier. Representing the figure of a woman holding a sheet over her head to form the shape of a mountain, the sculpture's title references the volcano that covered the ancient Roman town of Pompeii in ash, famously producing hollow spaces where people had been buried alive, a sly reference to the exhibition's ostensible theme. *Fuck It, You Make It 2*, a two-part mold made of concrete, bearing hollow spaces in the shape of a woman's head, arms, and torso, plays out this reference to the hollow people of Pompeii even further, while the title implies a contemporary hostility that might belie a strained relationship. The piece's acid-finished concrete has a rusty patina, as though it spent time outdoors, abandoned.

Tilton uses construction materials expressively elsewhere. *Veil*, made of hydrated alumina, wire, and epoxy, has an organic ephemerality distinct from the paper mache or concrete works; it looks like a cocoon or husk made in the shape of a classical bust by metal-working wasps. This work, too, evokes a human-shaped hole, but it also includes a meticulous scaffolding of rusty colored wires, holding up a papery shell. *Past, Present, and Future* is a similarly constructed shell of a figure in a Greek kouros pose, this time foregrounding the texture of sand over epoxy. Both pieces create an impression of emptiness, but one actively built and maintained by busy workers, involving many parts and continuous labor. Taken as metaphors, both pieces could imply either a concerted effort to recall a likeness, or conversely, an active initiative to keep someone gone. Together, these distinctive works are less sentimental than a title like "Absence" might imply. By recalling historical references and emphasizing material processes, Tilton expresses multiple, complex emotional ramifications of human longing.

—MARY ANNE KLUTH

"JILLIAN FLOWER DRESS," 2012
Kristen Hatgi Sink, PIGMENT PRINT
45" X 35½"
PHOTO: COURTESY GILDAR GALLERY

DENVER **"Real is a Feeling"** at Gildar Gallery

To coincide with Denver's "Month of Photography"—a biennial event—Adam Gildar, director of his eponymous Gildar Gallery, organized "Real is a Feeling," a group show about reproduction and subjective perception, dominated by photo-based pieces. The exhibition starts off with Travis Egedy's nearly three dozen framed snapshot-style color prints, mostly depicting young people on the edge—hanging out on the street, at punk rock concerts, and even at the Occupy Wall Street demonstration in Zuccotti Park. This show-within-a-show reveals that Egedy is clearly attracted to the outrageous and to the threat of violence.

The other artists included, unlike Egedy, create conceptual work. There are the paired digital prints of Google searches by Mario Zoots who typed in "Love me" and "Show me" and then took screenshots of the possible topics the search engine produced at a specific time on a particular day. Adam Milner also uses computer images, in his case, presenting disembodied hands floating above memory foam impressions of them. The found and altered images were taken from mattress ads on the web. Detached from their original purpose, they convey an unmistakable otherworldly quality. Milner also created the work titled *More More More*, which features a blanket printed with the image of another blanket. Displayed on a plinth, it's hard to distinguish the actual wrinkles from the images of them. Fooling the eye is also what a trio of Lee Stoetzel black-and-white prints are about. At first glance they look like familiar scenes—the Hollywood sign, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Pyramids. But they are actually models Stoetzel created from the contents of McDonald's "Happy Meals." Pop cultural references likewise appear in Adam Stamp's salutes to Colorado and California, in both cases mashing up travel icons with other subtle symbols to convey the character of the respective states.

