

G E O R G K A R G L F I N E A R T S

Hybridish

- And some other Hybrid expressions

All the artists in *Hybridish* are hybrid thinkers, who are offering alternatives to the rule of straight thinking. So what? Though we are all natural hybrid thinkers and capable of assembling a frightening array of contradictory thoughts in our heads at any one time, we have been taught for years to think in one way, to delude us into thinking we were marching in one straight line of progress. The artists here are enjoying helping us out of our straitjackets.

Feminism was a powerful motivation for change, as the straight line was basically a male conceit if not delusion (think of Brancusi's *Endless Column*). When Paula Rego was at college her teachers did not stop her from drawing forbidden stories: as she was a young girl, they did not take her seriously. She has been one of the pioneers in putting the twisted and convoluted story back in the mainstream of art. Wangechi Mutu and Marcia Kure refuse to put the Western male vision of identity central stage. They show how we are hybrids. The first sign work by Laure Prouvost that I saw back in 2011 read *YOU ARE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION* and ever since she has been offering a labyrinth of mental path options. Hale Tenger puts a different perspective on male phallic-led thoughts and female dreams. *Turkish Delight* is just part of our rollercoaster makeup. I take comfort from Leyla Gediz's *Crab Trainer*. It takes one of Turkey's most famous satirical paintings, *The Tortoise Trainer* of Osman Hamdi Bey, and seems to be offering a little hope. Whereas *The Tortoise Trainer* was making fun of the slowness of Ottoman reforms, the situation is reversed with the *Crab Trainer* in that it is a young mind looking at all the different shapes in his playground. As long as his mind can go sideways, diagonally, curvaceously there are possibilities.

Nedko Solakov has devised a special language of *Hybridish Hybridizing* for this exhibition. Solakov is the master of hybrid thinking. If anything is ever too straight, he checks it and checks it again. His work has the rare combination of a quick instant communication combined with the barbs that keep working on you. Pavel Pepperstein is similar but rather like one of Laure Prouvost's signs which reads *IDEALLY THIS CORNER WOULD EMBRACE YOU WARMLY*, his work operates by the power of its generosity. He is hugging you with his world. The fact that the viewer doesn't necessarily understand it when one first looks, it acts as a trigger. It works on our hybrid nature. Pepperstein is the son of a Russian poet and Viktor Pivovarov, a key Moscow Conceptualist, one of the first art movements to embrace and fully exploit hybrid thinking.

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Raymond Pettibon and Marcel Dzama both make highly individual drawings and films. They give us satirical anti-government, anti-war drawings. For this exhibition, we present individual works by Pettibon set against those made with Dzama. Pettibon became famous with his surf riding, baseball playing dream of American life, yet it was always underpinned by the angst underneath the surface. In *The ball player* it is as if Dzama and Pettibon, are fighting for the Super Soul of America, and revealing the monster they and we have created. We have the worst of both worlds today: we are still governed by these rules of 'straight-thinking' without believing in them. More than ever we need artists such as the ones in the exhibition showing here: catalysts of change and hybrid thinking.

Alistair Hicks