



ALLISON SCHULNIK
MARK MOORE GALLERY | STATEMENTS

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Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduces a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

Allison Schulnik choreographs her subjects in compositions that embody a spirit of the macabre, a Shakespearian comedy/tragedy of love, death and farce. The subjects often stare back at the audience and study them as they are in turn studied, aware of their ancestors from the Grand Theme works of the past, the genre paintings that inform them. Although a haunting sense of foreboding, discomfort and unease is palpable, a sense of understanding, compassion and hopefulness for her cast of characters is still evident in the heavy impasto paintings. Her sculptural use of oil paint references her clay-animation background, as a motion-like sensibility affords her paintings unparalleled depth and energy.

Born in 1978 (San Diego, CA), Schulnik earned her BFA in Experimental Animation from the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia (CA). She has had significant solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Rome and London, and has exhibited in both visual arts shows and film screenings around the world. Her work can be seen in the public collections of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (KS), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (CA), The Chaney Family Collection (TX), Musée de Beaux Arts (Montreal) and the Laguna Art Museum (CA). The artist lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.



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Above: *Flowers For Visitor #3*,
2006. Oil on canvas, 20 x 20 inches

Left: *Hobo With Bird*, 2009.
Oil on linen, 84 x 68 inches

STATEMENTS

ALLISON SCHULNIK



Interviewed by: Lauren Licata, Mark Moore Gallery

In your work, the canvas becomes a space for exploration, abstraction, and mark-making. Can you speak to how your methodology straddles dichotomies of chance/intention and fantasy/reality? Is there an overarching discourse in this tension?

To me, chance and intention are really essential to the tension or even vivacity that exists in the work. I often paint in the moment, but it's only through years of painting that I am able to perhaps project what a certain mark might look like; it's always a focused formal decision. In that sense, the work comes from both analytical and emotional decisions. It's never about a "random" way of working, each mark always has a purpose in the overall composition.

My work is fairly multi-layered, and really about activating the surface of the canvas. I rarely have one specific message that I'm trying to portray to my audience. I approach my paintings in various ways – Sometimes, I work from a study or collage, with a specific idea of what

the finished work will look like, while other paintings are made from simply starting to paint. When I work, I attempt to create a balance between working analytically and intuitively. I never know for certain what a mark might look like, so there is a certain risk or chance to the way I work. I'm interested in that contrast between focused painting and serendipitous moments that I feel lends a certain energy to the work. It's a bit risky and it helps me to live in the moment when I'm painting.

While some of your pieces incorporate a variety of grey tones, most works are extremely vibrant. What significance does your color palette have in your practice?

Color is quite key in my work, it can take on certain emotional qualities that are potent to me. Color functions similarly to music: it can move us, and it can bring very specific sensorial associations, memories, or corporeal reactions. It lends itself to the plasticity of the medium, and it really is the flesh of the work. I don't think the work could exist without it.

Parallels have been drawn between your work and Surrealism, Gaudi architecture, Baroque ornamentation, and Art Nouveau – What historical movements or external sources do you personally cite as the most influential to your practice?

I'm always looking at contemporary art, but I also love to look back in art history. I find my own work connected to a lot of early to mid-century artists: Max Ernst, Matta, Gorky, Joan Mitchell, Cy Twombly, Philip Guston, Lee Bontecou. I'm not concerned with whether their own visual language is abstract or figurative; some of these artists are more about a surrealist, inventive language, and with others, it's their raw, very emotional sensibility that I respond to. Often it's just a certain spirit about how to approach painting that interests me, like the fierceness of Joan Mitchell. I love the idea that her paintings were like Cathedrals and can relate to that a lot. I am also really inspired by looking at sculpture, sometimes more so than painting—I often imagine what my work would look like in 3-D form.

In terms of historical movements, I am particularly interested in Surrealism, Early Abstraction, Victorian Painting, Rococo, and Outsider Art. I'm also quite often inspired by looking outside of painting: literature, film,

even landscapes feed my work. Music is really important to me because I want my work to have that same sense of immediacy and emotional potency. I often title my paintings in relation to certain songs or sounds that might parallel a feeling in the work.

Finally, I always have a lot of images in my studio, from vintage children's encyclopedias and books on textiles to newspaper photos, though I'm never painting directly from them. There are definitely certain visual themes that creep into my work, various structures and patterns like crumbling buildings and ornate Indian temples that are then broken down and manipulated.

Your pieces incorporate a multitude of brush strokes, varying from soft curving lines to celebratory gestures, jarring angles, and intricate nooks – Is there an underlying tone or dialogue at work? What purpose does this juxtaposition of sentiments serve?

It's hard for me to single out one underlying tone or dialogue, often I am inspired by certain formal ideas that then translate themselves conceptually and emotionally into a work.

Thematically, I am often thinking about the idea of beauty

versus awkwardness, as well as the tiny, detailed moments versus the overall, gestalt of the painting, and the issue of abstraction vs. representation is always present. I think of my paintings as being fairly abstract, though I truly feel that in contemporary painting, there is often little difference in a figurative painter's approach compared to my own.

With such a heavily gestural style, your work brings awareness to painting as a material process, and to the role of the artist as well. How does movement and medium factor into your work? Do you see your paintings as an inscription of time or painting itself?

Yes, I think that's an interesting point. We live in a so-called "digital age" where we can constantly manipulate what we're seeing or experiencing, and often that can feel quite hollow. With my own work, I'm interested in creating something that is tangible, visceral, and honest, where there is a sense of the artist's touch, complete with imperfections and successes alike. Ideally, my work forces the viewer to slow down and experience the specific sense of time and movement I've created.

Finally, can you describe any changes in your most recent body of work, or any evolutions

since the beginning of your practice? How might your trajectory evolve from this point forward?

My recent work has become more about playing, quite loosely, with patterns and dimensionality. There is still a sense of dualities co-existing in the same space, but I feel the work is perhaps clearer; less about excessive, heavy paint dominating the canvas and more about a certain clarity and balance.

My work has gradually shifted from being highly figurative in nature to more abstract. In grad school, I started out working with a vocabulary of cartoony, rather Rococo characters, and that evolved into multi-layered landscapes. Embellished with glitter and puffy paint, the surface would become like frosting, echoing decadence and repulsion. The work has shifted a great deal since then, but I think the overlapping forms and embellishments are still present.

I hope to continue in a similar vein, but it's hard to predict how the work might shift in the future—I like the idea that each canvas is its own unique experience, and I want my work to be constantly in flux and evolving.



"Smith is an adept colorist, manipulating seductive combinations in the tradition of Matisse. Her expressive compositions include swaths of pure, beautifully mixed vibrant colors conversing with linear detail and architectural yet organic structures, that are at once playful yet precarious. Referencing the formalist ploys of abstract expressionism, her works attempt to give the historical trope new relevancy."

— Sasha Lee,
Beautiful/Decay, 2008

Rug Girl #2, 2009. Oil on
linen, 84 x 68 inches

Mermaid With Legs, 2012. Oil
on Linen, 72 x 60 inches.
(Detail)



Wolf, 2009. Oil on linen, 36 x 48 inches.





Captain, 2012. Oil on linen, 68 x 84 inches

"The exuberant *Geek Love* pulsates off the wall. A chaotic mix of fuchsia, red, black, light pink and bright blue, it depicts a closely jumbled collection of shapes and objects that seem to grow out of a red table-like surface. Thick pink, flower-shaped blobs of paint dominate the lower part of the painting. It's like a psychedelic dream featuring neon toys, the detritus of a long-ago childhood."

— Elizabeth Anderson-Kempe,
Artillery Magazine, 2008

Hobo On Bike, 2009. Oil on linen, 84 x 36 inches

Opposite Page: *Flowers for Long Hair Hobo #3*,
2008. Oil on canvas, 28 x 22 inches







Left: *Mermaid (Gouache) #1*, 2012. Gouache on paper, 16.25 x 10.75 inches
Center: *Sebastian (Gouache) #4*, 2012. Gouache on paper, 14.5 x 9.5 inches
Right: *Mermaid (Gouache) #2*, 2012. Gouache on paper, 16.25 x 12.25 inches

Sailor, 2012. Oil on linen, 72 x 60 inches





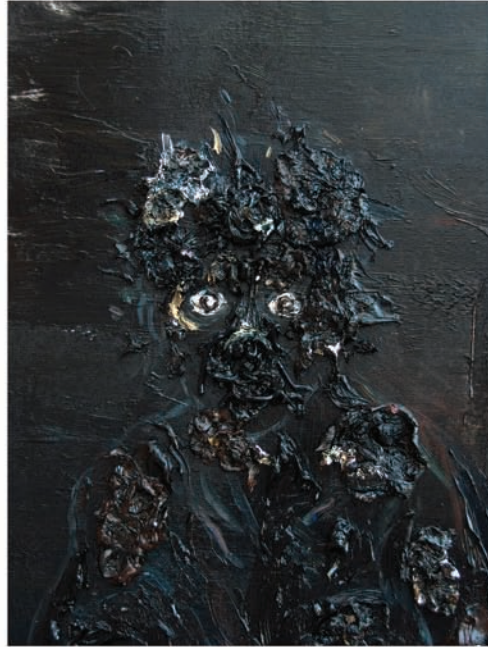
Desert Tree, 2010. Oil on linen, 78 x 98 inches

"In *Terrains Vagues*, the colors are subdued, the paint is less dense, and the brushstrokes are flatter and more refined. Against a grey-washed background, a fairly detailed set of objects and shapes is arranged in a precarious stack that references Duchamp's famous staircase. In this painting, Smith exhibits the most control over her brushwork and a stronger formalism in her composition to great effect..."

– Elizabeth Anderson-Kempe,
Artillery Magazine, 2008



Home for Hobo, 2009. Oil on linen, 84 x 136 inches



Left: *Albino (Ape Woman #2)*, 2006 (Detail). Oil on canvas, 60 x 72 inches
Permanent Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

Center: *Ape Woman*, 2006 (Detail). Oil on canvas, 60 x 72 inches
Permanent Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego

Right: *Big Monkey Head #2*, 2008. Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Flower Mound, 2011. Oil on linen, 100 x 148 inches



"The improvisational character of these compositions is like improv jazz or stream-of-consciousness writing: what at first appear to be haphazard combinations slowly reveal an underlying structure that comes alive through reception."

"Each painting is a universe unto itself."

– Elizabeth
Anderson-Kempe,
Artillery Magazine, 2008



Performance, 2006. Oil on canvas, 96 x 136 inches
Permanent Collection of the Laguna Art Museum

The Funeral Party #1, 2010. Oil on linen, 102 x 132 inches



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Above: *Song Painting #4 (Start Your Digging)*, 2009. Oil on linen, 30 x 40 inches

Left: *Two Clowns*, 2010. Oil on linen, 30 x 40 inches



Above: *Protea*, 2012. Oil on canvas stretched over board, 30 x 24 inches.

Left: *Monkey Hobo*, 2009. Oil on linen, 84 x 68 inches.
Permanent collection of Santa Barbara Museum of Art

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Pink Shells, 2012. Oil on canvas stretched over board, 16 x 20 inches

Girl With Animal, 2008. Oil on
canvas, 68 x 84 inches



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Above: *King Helmet Shell*, 2012. Oil on canvas stretched over board, 12 x 12 inches.



Right: *Ariel*, 2012. Oil on linen, 72 x 60 inches.

Performance #2, 2010. Oil on linen, 102 x 198 inches.
Permanent Collection of the Nerman Museum, Kansas



BIO

Allison Schulnik

Born 1978, San Diego, CA

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

Education

2000 BFA, Experimental Animation, CalArts, Valencia, CA

Solo Exhibitions

2013 *Allison Schulnik*, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA

2012 *Salty Air*, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA

Mound, ZieherSmith Gallery, New York, NY

Mound, Oklahoma City Art Museum, Oklahoma City, OK

Mound, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, KS

2011 Division Gallery, Montreal, QC, Canada

2010 *Home for Hobo*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

Home for Hobo Too, Tony Wight Gallery, Chicago, IL

2009 *Go West*, I/9 Unosunove Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy

Go West, Pulse Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, New York, NY

2008 *No Luck Too*, Mike Weiss Gallery, New York, NY

2007 *Fools, Rejects and Sanctuaries*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

No Luck, Rokeby Gallery, London, UK

Group Exhibitions

2012 *Spectacle*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH

Twisted Sister, Dodge Gallery, New York, NY

2011 *New York Minute*, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture,

Moscow, Russia

Facemaker, curated by Kathy Grayson, Royal/T, Los Angeles, CA

Go Figure, curated by Eddie Martinez, Dodge Gallery, New York, NY

Have You Seen Me, curated by Tanya Haden and Anna Oxygen, Las Cienegas Projects, Los Angeles, CA

Cryptic, St. Louis Contemporary Arts Museum, St. Louis, Missouri

Performance, Division Gallery, Montreal, Canada

The Archaic Revival, Las Cienegas Projects, Los Angeles, CA

2010 Pulse Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, Miami, FL

Postermat, The Hole, New York, NY

Gray Day, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA

Homunculi, CANADA, New York, NY

Touched, Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY

Reframing America, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA

Power of Selection 3, Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL

Elements of Nature, Contemporary Arts Museum, New Orleans

The Power of Selection, Part I, Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL

Allison Schulnik: Forest, The Hammer Museum, Flux Screenings, Los Angeles, CA

Allison Schulnik: Recent Videos, The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, HI

Hobo Clown, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS

Artefiera Art First, Unosunove Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy

2009 *Whaddaya Wanna Be a Flower?*, Alexander and Bonin, New York, NY

Flux Screening Series, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Small is Beautiful, Seomi & Tuus, Seoul, Korea

Close to Home, Galerie Davide Di Maggio, Milan, IT

Too Big Too Fail, store-front, curated by Dan Heidkamp, Brooklyn, NY

- Wild Exaggeration: The Grotesque Body in Contemporary Art*, Hafia Museum of Art, Hafia, Israel
- NewNow • Building the Museum Collection*, The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS
- Single Channels: Animations*, Tony Wight Gallery, Chicago, IL
- La Femme*, McClain Gallery, Houston, TX
- Jeff Zilm & Allison Schulnik*, Marty Walker Gallery, Dallas, TX
- Holy Destruction*, Polad-Hardouin, Paris, France
- Psychic Hearts*, Harris Art Gallery, University of La Verne, Los Angeles, CA
- Baker's Dozen*, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA
- Sleights of Hand*, Sam Francis Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- Five Year Anniversary Show*, Mike Weiss Gallery, New York, NY
- 2008 *The Unruly and the Humorous*, Angles Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- Some Paintings: The Third LA Weekly Annual Biennial*, curated by Doug Harvey, Track 16 Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- Warm, Red, Salt and Wet*, 31 Grand, New York, NY
- A Loaf of Bread, A Carton of Milk, and a Stick of Butter*, Hudson Franklin, NY
- HangART-7: Edition: Los Angeles*, Hangar-7, Salzburg, Austria, curated by Hubert Schmalix and Lioba Reddeker
- Artissima Contemporary Art Fair*, 1/9 Unosunove Arte Contemporanea booth, Turin, Italy
- Blumen/Flowers*, Galerie Huebner, Frankfurt, Germany
- Romancing the Skull*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 2006 *Mark Moore Gallery Presents*, Rokeby Gallery, London, UK
- Benefit Auction, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
- Art in Embassies Exhibition, US Embassy Residence, Belmopan, Belize
- 2005 Project Room, Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Honeymoon with Romeo*, Groeflin Maag Galerie, Basel, Switzerland
- The Armory Show*, Black Dragon Society booth, New York, NY

- Group, Carl Berg Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Epic*, Bellwether Gallery, New York, NY
- Horses #6*, Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles, CA
- Amfar 2x2 Benefit for Aids and Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX
- 2003 *The Gentle Artists Show*, FIG Gallery, Austin, TX
- The One Second Film*, Exhibition, Frame #3 Director, CalArts Main Gallery, CA
- 2000 *San Diego Art Association 45th Annual International Exhibition*, San Diego, CA
- Paintings and Drawings*, CalArts, Valencia, CA
- Upstairs, Downstairs*, CalArts Tatum Gallery, Valencia, CA

Screenings

- 2012 *Eureka!*, Whitaker Court, Blue Leaf Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
- Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination*, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN
- Through the Looking Glass: Female Surrealist Cinema*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA
- 2011 The Green Box Project, curated by Kathy Grayson, Miami, FL
- 2010 Creative Time/MTV, Screenings in Times Square, New York, NY
- SXSW Film Festival, Runner-Up Best Music Video/Jury Award, Austin, TX
- First Thursdays series, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
- Film Independent's Los Angeles Film Festival
- Flux Screening Series, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Ann Arbor International Film Festival, Ann Arbor, MI
- Melbourne International Festival of Animation, Melbourne, Australia
- International Film Festival Breda, The Netherlands
- Puppet Grinder Cabaret, London, UK
- Pictoplasma, Berlin, Germany

- Cartoon Express, Silent Movie Theater, Los Angeles, CA
 Birds Eye View Film Festival, London, UK
 2009 Hobo Clown, Cyprus Arcade Experimental Art Projects,
 Greece
 Hobo Clown, Festa Grande (Imagine'), NABA, Milan, Italy
 Death of Distortion, Anthology Film Archives, NY
 Jeff Zilm & Allison Schulnik, Marty Walker Gallery, Dallas, TX
 Single Channels: Animations, Tony Wight Gallery, Chicago, IL
 New Filmmakers LA, Sunset Gower Studios, Hollywood, CA
 2000 Vedma, Slamdance Film Festival, Park City, UT

Public Collections

- Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, CA
 Santa Barbara Art Museum, Santa Barbara, CA
 The Chaney Family Collection, Houston, TX
 Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, KS
 Laguna Beach Art Museum, CA
 Museum des Beaux Arts, Montreal, Canada
 Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, Canada
 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada

Films

- 2011 *Mound*, NTSC color DVD, stop-motion claymation animated film
 2009 *Forest*, NTSC color DVD, stop-motion claymation animated film for Grizzly Bear
 2008 *Hobo Clown*, NTSC color DVD, stop-motion claymation animated film
 2000 *Pistachio*, 16mm, stop-motion animated film
 1999 *Vedma*, 16mm, stop-motion animated film
 1997 *The Slaying*, 16mm live-action/stop-motion animated film



Above: *Red Flower #2*, 2012. Oil on canvas stretched over board, 102 x 70 inches

Front Cover: *Mermaids With Crab*, 2012. Oil on linen, 102 x 70 inches

Back Cover: *Fish Heads (Flounder)*, 2012. Oil on linen, 36 x 48 inches (Detail Image)

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