

Incandescence:

The Chandelier in Contemporary Art



Deb Achak
Chandelier, 2020
Archival pigment print
Edition of 5
45 x 30 inches
© Deb Achak
Courtesy of Winston Wächter Fine Art

Deb Achak creates a portrait of a dark and glittering chandelier, which appears both Gothically ominous and coolly soothing. The artist removes the chandelier from its obvious surrounding, but notes that “this particular one hangs over my bed and has captured my attention for many years. I took the liberty of adjusting the color to sapphire blue (my birthstone) because it felt right. Finding beauty in my everyday surroundings has been my practice for as long as I can remember, however in 2020 (and the years that followed) it became more essential.” Originally a mental health social worker, the artist says, “COVID impacted my ability to travel and shoot street photography, but it gave me push to create closer to home. . . . Creating beauty during times of stress or tension is therapeutic on many levels.” Achak, as photographer, creates images with a simplicity that beguiles because she removes an object from its surroundings allowing the eye to focus on the purity of its form and its inherent symmetry. Photographing the chandelier from below, Achak creates a “reverential” point of view that makes it impossible for the eye to judge the size and scale of the actual object. We might be observing a glittering iceberg emerging from the sea.



Julie Allen
Orb, 2017
Neoprene, vinyl, plastic, marble, thread,
lamp, metal
13 x 14 x 13 inches

Satellite, 2017
Neoprene, vinyl, plastic, marble, thread, metal 5 x 8 ½ x 8 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and McKenzie Fine Art

Traditional chandeliers in historical styles often took inspiration of form from the branching of trees and flowers in nature. Here, though, Julie Allen creates a chandelier



in shades of vivid orange and fuchsia that is a Pop-inspired futuristic object. Her work would look at home in *The Jetsons*, the early 1960s animated cartoon that presented a humorous and stylized look at the future, which was also a cultural artifact very much of its time, reflecting America's interest in the "space race." Allen makes her chandelier from soft materials that appear cuddly, rather than the spiky metal most often visually associated with human-made space objects. This "orb" and its small "satellite," which could almost be a cat toy, seem less examples of a cool technological information-gathering future and more a camp/retro idea of how the future might look. Allen's work also nods to Claes Oldenburg, the Swedish-born American Pop artist who created soft sculptures of everyday objects that challenged traditional notions of sculpture by using unconventional materials and soft, pliable forms. Rather than emanating a strong light, Allen's orb glows very softly, beckoning the viewer to peer under and then up into its interior. Within her *Orb*, Allen created a padded, creamy interior that glows with an ethereal light, suggesting the soft insides of a luminescent, space-traveling oyster.



Liu Bolin
Sala Bianca, Palazzo Pitti, Firenze, 2022
Archival inkjet print
44 ¼ x 59 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Eli Klein Gallery
奕来画廊

In the chandelier adorned ballroom of the Pitti Palace—the dazzling "white hall" and the largest room in the former home of the Renaissance Medici family, stands a concealed man—the artist Liu Bolin. Bolin, known as an "art chameleon" uses this chandelier as the perfect visual symbol of power, and shows the desire to be concealed from the threat of that power, even when under the harshest illumination. His work makes a fascinating contrast with Lily Cox-Richard's *Drone Chandelier No. 2*, shown hanging nearby, which emphasizes the power to record and observe from the magisterial or teaching view, while Bolin's work acts as a visual refusal of the observing eye. Liu's *Hiding in Florence* highlighted the artist blending into some of the city's best-known landmarks, among them the Piazza della Signoria, the Uffizi Galleries, and Palazzo Vecchio. These photographs were completed as part of the wider series, *Hiding in Italy*, which has Liu "disappearing" across the cities of Milan, Venice, Verona, and Rome. An internationally renowned artist, Bolin has become "invisible" in front of landmarks around the world, and also amidst piles of garbage, groups of anonymous immigrants, and stocked supermarket shelves. He says, "When I work on a new piece, I pay more attention to the expression of ideas. For instance, why would I make myself invisible? What will making myself invisible here cause people to think?"



Clare Celeste Börsch
Holding Light II, 2024
Paper and mixed media
24-inch diameter
Courtesy of the artist

Holding Light II is a new iteration from Berlin-based Clare Celeste Börsch, who explores of the interplay of light and shadow. Her chandelier of meticulously hand-cut imagery of the natural world harkens back to elaborately detailed Victorian collage, often made by women during the 19th century from printed papers with colorful designs. The design's heavily patterned detail generated a distinctive aesthetic, which has parallels to Börsch's work. Her contemporary chandelier features overlapping flora and fauna that the eye must work to delineate. The artist then transforms the space surrounding the chandelier through the shadows it casts, creating depth and movement by its use of negative space. In this way, the shadows that appear ghostlike on the walls of the gallery speak to the rapid loss of animal and plant life occurring around the planet. Börsch frequently works with found imagery from the Biodiversity Heritage Library, a virtual collection of naturalist imagery, and *Holding Light II* speaks to the beauty and fragility of biodiversity, reflecting on both the urgency of preserving our ecosystems and the profound loss already endured. Börsch's creative practice balances optimism—highlighting solutions to our planetary crisis—and a mourning for species lost.



Lily Cox-Richard
Drone Chandelier No. 2, 2024
26.5 x 23 inches
Courtesy of Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York

Lily Cox-Richard's *Drone Chandelier No. 2* carries a fascinating multitude of meanings. The artist created her first "drone chandelier" piece for an exhibition at MASS MOCA in 2022, in which a flying drone was garlanded with crystals that acting as prisms cast an array of rainbows. That exhibition, entitled "Weep Holes," focused on the mournful, but cleansing effects of "a good sob." In this original iteration, the drone chandelier "freed from surveillance duty, gets to throw rainbows," in a kind of cathartic release. From this original concept piece, Cox-Richard produced versions that are actual working chandeliers. She took apart drones and cast elements of them in brass, which she then wired together to make working chandeliers. Although the initial concept of the flying drone chandelier was poetic and freeing, the work has other, more ominous, connotations. Rather than being in a kind of "retirement" through repurposing, the viewer is left to wonder if their surveillance continues over the seemingly benign crystal-draped chandelier, quietly recording domestic dinner table conversations. The "magisterial gaze" of the chandelier, positioned as an ever-

observing entity overhead, Cox-Richards's work enters into a fascinating dialogue with Liu Bolin's *Sala Bianca, Palazzo Pitti, Firenze*, located nearby.



Petah Coyne
Untitled #1533 (Sylvia Plath), 2021 Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16-inch. Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic
30 x 18 ¼ x 17 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York



Petah Coyne
Untitled #1537 (Hannah Wilke), 2021
Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16-inch Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic
25 x 22 ½ x 19 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York



Petah Coyne
Untitled #1530 (Ruth Asawa), 2021
Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16-inch Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic
35 x 17 x 18 ¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York

Petah Coyne
Untitled #1542 (Marilynne Robinson), 2021
Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16" Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic

	<p>24 x 12.5 x 12.5 inches Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York</p>
	<p>Petah Coyne <i>Untitled #1532 (Zora Neale Hurston)</i>, 2021 Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16" Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic 29 ½ x 15 ¼ x 15 inches Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York</p>
	<p>Petah Coyne <i>Untitled #1533 (Sylvia Plath); Untitled #1537 (Hannah Wilke); Untitled #1530 (Ruth Asawa); Untitled #1542 (Marilynne Robinson); Untitled #1532 (Zora Neale Hurston)</i>, from the series 'Color of Heaven' 2021 Specially-formulated wax, silk flowers, pigment, wire, jaw-to-jaw swivel, quick-link shackles, silk Duchesse satin, 5/16" Grade 30 Proof coil chain, paper towels, Velcro, thread, plastic Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong & Co., New York</p> <p>Petah Coyne is best known for her grandly scaled sculptures that incorporate from natural elements—be they flowers, feathers, earth, hair, trees, or thick wax, which often hang from a ceiling in the form of chandeliers. She creates compositions in which her objects act and interact, and combines them to create breathtakingly fantastical, intensely theatrical worlds. Here, in this sculptural installation, the artist is working on a smaller scale, presenting luscious bouquets of silk flowers that are wax-dipped, each named in tribute to a significant woman artist, writer, or political figure. Originally the group of 11 bouquets called “Color of Heaven” designed the Frank Furness building at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Five pieces from that bouquet are shown here and colored warm pink and deep violet are a departure from Coyne’s penchant for working in black and white. These flowers are named to honor sculptor Ruth Asawa, author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, poet and novelist Sylvia Plath, novelist Marilynne Robinson, and painter Hannah Wilke. Coyne says that this body of work “came to fruition because of the COVID-19 pandemic. An increase in uninterrupted time alone in the studio led her to experiment. “At the beginning of the pandemic, I was creating large-scale black sand sculptures, many of which feature countless hanging shapes, or Buddhist “thought bubbles.” In an effort to seek out optimism and beauty in spite of the melancholia currently surrounding us all, I was soon compelled to create these smallish brightly colored wax pieces.”</p>



Deborah Czeresko
Fowl, 2024
Glass and metal armature, light bulbs
Approximately 48 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Fare is fowl and fowl is fare in Deborah Czeresko’s showstopping sculptural chandelier, shocking and witty in its unexpected form. The artist has translated glass into seemingly raw turkey and chicken: whole birds as the body, a single leg which dangles as a pendant, and beautifully rendered necks that form the unnerving “branches” of the chandelier. She brilliantly captures the opalescent quality of uncooked poultry flesh, which, under the flame lights, seems to glow with a malignant possibility. In *Fowl* Czeresko creates a pointed reminder of the short distance between the abattoir and the dining room. The artist is best known for her work with glass, and frequently references food, art history, gender, and her experiences as a queer artist. With *Fowl*, the artist pays homage to the historical form of Venetian glass chandeliers, subverting the typical visual of elaborate floral arrangements, and reinterpreting them as flesh. The artist says, “by using traditional material and techniques, *Fowl* is a reflection on the history of chandelier and glass manufacture. It takes a critical view of the predominantly male dominated glass studio community, and humorously addresses the parallels between masculinity, misogyny, and meat.”



Marc Dennis
Las Rockstars, 2023-24
Oil on linen
70 x 60 inches
Courtesy of Harper’s, East Hampton

Is a “glitterball” a chandelier? The debate rages. Strictly speaking a glitter or disco ball is a ball mirrored, and reflects light, rather than produces it, In *Las Rockstars* Marc Dennis brilliantly interprets Diego Velázquez’s famous *Las Meninas* (*The Ladies-in-waiting*, 1656), a masterpiece of Western art. Velázquez, on traditional canvas and in oil, depicted a complex scene in which he foregrounded the child infanta, Margarita Teresa, surrounded by her maids of honor (*meninas*), courtiers, and a dog. This composition from 300 years ago is renowned for its playful manipulation of perspective and its study of the relationship between reality and illusion by its dramatic contrast of light and darkness. Dennis injects modern, celebratory energy in his recreation of Velasquez’s iconic work, He hangs a chandelier of this day and age from a ceiling dappled in the distinctive light of the discotheque, where it exposes dynamic tension between the historical and the contemporary — a signature of this artist’s work. By recreating famous paintings throughout the western art canon but with notable differences, Dennis’s art find new meaning in the hallowed lineage of Old Master painting.



Lesley Dill
Wisp of Iridescence Chandelier, 2023
Copper sculpture backed with organza,
copper wire and hooping
48 x 20 x 15 inches
Courtesy of Lesley Dill Studio and
Nohra Haime Gallery, New York

“What reading does to us, how it changes us, how it acts on us,” motivates Lesley Dill, who “hunts for the right words like a fox after a rabbit.” The words Dill finds she puts into her artwork. She may discover the words in readings from ranks of authors like Dickinson, Rilke, and Kafka or she may feel them. For Dill, “The convergence of language with art is what made me make art.” The artist’s ultimate goal is to discover those words that either cloak or reveal the human psyche. From Cate McQuade (Boston Globe): “This is the stuff of Dill’s art: the ability of language and image to take us - and sometimes force us inward toward enlightenment.” The strands of words that entwine in her *Wisp of Iridescence Chandelier* Dill constructs from shining and textured metal sheets and wire that suspended summon the eye to wander amongst discrete letters. Dill’s words seem to hang in the moment between rising and falling and in brief arrest enable us to read them. *Wisp of Iridescence Chandelier* reminds her of travels she made in the mountains of India and Nepal, where word-covered banners released into the air brought Buddhist blessings by the winds. Dill weaves her own blessings with warm tones of copper and describes the amount of handwork she puts into her sculptures as almost obsessive. “...hours and hours of weaving, stenciling, painting, and cutting flat copper metal shapes.” In the act of creating art with words, Dill is driven by an inner music that guides her in the way words flow with the object and shape the work itself. The words may tangle as in *Wisp of Iridescence Chandelier* or appear as murmurings in a half-remembered dream.



Lee Essex Doyle
(left to right)

Pink Spiraling, 2023
Mixed media on paper, mounted to aluminum
12 × 12 inches

Brocade, 2023
Mixed media on paper, mounted on aluminum
48 x 48 inches

Baroque Fragment II
Mixed media on paper, mounted on aluminum
12 x 12 inches

Courtesy of the artist

In a series of mixed media works that depict perspective from below, Lee Essex Doyle creates an unexpected view of the chandelier, capturing its unalloyed visual pleasures and connotations of opulence, and underscoring a “reverential” view of the light-emitting source above. The artist employs an unusual cropping technique that suggests snapshot photography, made even more visually impressive by her masterful use of light and pattern. Drenched in radiant color, these works “dance on the ceiling,” much like the sparkling movement of chandelier light, and merge with architectural patterns and design motifs pushing her compositions further into abstraction. Doyle derives her jewel-like chandelier imagery from architectural details she has seen on her extensive travels across India, Africa and Europe.



Lee Essex Doyle
Baroque Fragment II
Mixed media on paper, mounted on aluminum
12 x 12 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Lee Essex Doyle
Pink Spiraling, 2023
Mixed media on paper, mounted to aluminum
12 x 12 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Gonzalo Fuenmayor
Playground of Nonsense, 2022
Charcoal and spray paint on paper
60 x 75 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Dot Fiftyone Gallery, Miami

Gonzalo Fuenmayor’s large-scale charcoal drawings enthrall with drama and whimsy. Huge chandeliers hang from bunches of bananas; palm trees and other tropical plants infiltrate Victorian-era drawing rooms; headdresses are piled high with exotic flora and fauna. Such imagery is rooted in both reality and magical realism, alluding to collisions

of culture and realms of the past A native of Colombia now based in Miami, Gonzalo Fuenmayor's *Playground of Nonsense* is part of a large series of work that the artist made around the chandelier, looking at ideas of exoticism, colonialism, and the uneasy relationship between man-made ornamentation and nature. His images are formally beautiful in composition, surreal in unexpected juxtapositions, and pointedly political, all at once. The symbolism of the fallen chandelier as the embodiment of collapsed Empire and faded power is overt in Fuenmayor's oeuvre, referencing a decadent and troubled colonial past. Yet this artist's work is not didactic. Here, the larger-than-life chandelier that has crashed to the ground like a deflated dirigible is surrounded by identically dressed young women standing together in what resembles a kick line. The scene is inherently theatrical, like a splashy "tropical" number from a Busby Berkeley musical that has gone disastrously awry. Fuenmayor notes, "As the past, the present, the exotic, and the familiar collide, absurd and fantastic panoramas arise."



Kyungah Ham

What you see is the unseen / Chandeliers for Five Cities SSK 01-01B, 2018-2019

North Korean hand embroidery, silk threads on cotton, middle man, smuggling, bribe, tension, anxiety, censorship, ideology, wooden frame, approx. 1300 hrs/1 person
45 ½ x 69 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery. Seoul, South Korea

Kyungah Ham's large-scale embroideries of tilted, fallen, or collapsed chandeliers are powerful political and conceptual statements. The embroideries, made of malleable materials are the surprising symbols of collapsed imperial power that speaks to the fraught political relationship between North and South Korea. Ham's glistening tapestries made of thousands of silk stitches are here not just for admiration but to reference the partitioning of Korea, which can be laid at the feet of the United States and its allies in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II. The effects of the separation are reflected in the heart-rending process that Ham employs to embroider. Beginning in digital design in Seoul, South Korea, Ham's designs take shape and are printed on fabric. The fabric is then smuggled into North Korea by intermediaries using bribery and espionage, where it is hand embroidered in small pieces by artisans, who cannot legally work for anyone but the North Korean state. The laws of both North and South Korea prohibit communications between its citizens, making North Korea the world's contemporary "Hermit Kingdom." Ham uses the computer skills of South Korea and the meticulous handcrafting of North Korea to make objects of beauty that take thousands of hours to complete. The individual portions must be smuggled back across the border to be reassembled by Ham months later. For everyone's safety Ham never learns the names of the artisans who have been working with her. Her materials listed above is a cheeky tabulation of all that is involved — not only "silk threads on cotton" but "middle man, bribe, tension, anxiety, censorship." Simply stated, she must stretch her hand across a dangerous border to create art with people she can never meet.



Kirsten Hassenfeld
Horn of Plenty, 2004
Paper with mixed media
60 x 24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of Susan Hancock

The cornucopia or horn of plenty dates from classical antiquity and remains to this day a symbol of abundance and nourishment. As such, the horn of plenty would seem to make an ideal symbol and vehicle for the chandelier, the lighting fixture often suspended over a dining table, a motif of celebration. Not often seen today, its asymmetrical design may have blunted its popularity for this role. Hassenfeld shows here that the horn of plenty is commonly depicted overflowing with fruits, flowers, or nuts that represent the bounties of the harvest, although the artist also adds her own signature diamond-shaped forms and quilled objects. Hassenfeld makes her *Horn of Plenty* with translucent white paper that gives the piece an elegant glow and drained of color, its monochromatic quality draws attention to its many details. The artist says of this period of her work and its detailed forms, “I have been attempting . . . to allow the decorative to run amok and overtake whatever I am building, resulting in the effect that decoration is being decorated. . . . Fabergé eggs were hugely important to me when I first began to make this work as icons of the most ludicrously luxurious objects imaginable, toiled on by countless workers, and enjoyed by very, very few.”

Sunil Garg
“Breuer” Gesture Chandeliers, #1 - #4
Found, painted, bent metal tubing from Breuer-design chairs,
glass crystals, HPDE tubing, RGB LED strands, PWM programmers,
Each, 4 to 6 feet long x 3 feet wide
Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Garg is an experiential light artist noted for his use of neon light. He declares that it is exciting for him to manipulate light to create any atmosphere he wants, when as a child on a farm outside Delhi, India he did not experience electric light. For his site-specific installation in Lehman College Art Gallery’s Rotunda, which introduces the 2024 exhibition *Incandescence: The Chandelier in Contemporary Art*, this artist created four new chandeliers with historical stylistic references to Marcel Breuer, the architect of the gallery. First, Garg “tips his hat” to this famed Modernist architect who designed the building originally planned to be the Lehman College Library. Instead, transformed into Lehman’s art gallery its construction was completed in 1960. Thirty-five years earlier, when head of the cabinet-making workshop at Bauhaus, Germany, a school of avant-garde art, Breuer designed the Wassily chair, one of the most famous products of the Bauhaus School, reproduced and copied since its creation. Copies of this chair can be seen in Lehman Gallery, and now, in 2004, Garg treats the Wassily Chair anew, entwining sinuous neon tubing within the curves of his four sculptures to create a sense of balletic movement as they swing suspended from

the ceiling, Adding a further historical grace note, Garg bedecks each of the modern chair sculptures with a wash of crystals, harkening back to the classical form of the chandelier. Reminiscing about the meaning of light and its absence in his childhood Garg says, “There was no electricity or what I like to call living without manufactured light. It was all natural light...for the first formative years of my life I got used to looking at shadows and realizing how ephemeral light actually is... it’s an interesting medium because you really can’t see it, but you can’t see without it.”



Ran Hwang
The Secret Sublime P3, 2022
 Crystals, beads, pins on Plexiglas
 59 x 47 ¼ inches

Although Ran Hwang’s work gives pure visual pleasure, the artist was deeply impacted by a tragedy — the happening of 9/11, and she says it taught her the indelible lesson that nothing is permanent in this world. “Everything is constantly being born and dying. I think that the art and media I use are eternal. They therefore help to add stability to my life.” This artist’s shimmering chandelier that she placed against alluring pink Plexiglas is an object of exquisite desire that references beauty, consumerist desire, and the fashion world, the one in which Hwang began her career. Hwang created the elaborate form of her chandelier from thousands of crystals and the pins that hold them in place, and reference George Seurat’s late 19th-century painterly style of Pointillism, in which he composed paintings from thousands of colored dots woven together to create a magical whole. The basic “building blocks” of Hwang’s crystals and pins create a highly satisfying texture. The artist says, “Because I pursued painting when I began my art practice, I regard my primary materials, buttons and pins, as the ‘paint’ for my work—although they are objects. That is why my works are considered to be highly influenced by pictorial aspects. When looked from a distance, they seem to be like paintings, but when taking a closer look, viewers can recognize that they are 3-dimensional works.” She further notes, “Ever since I discovered the beauty of the pins penetrating through the back of the panels, I began to use Plexiglass panels, which are transparent and thinner than wooden panels.”



Michiko Itatani
“Quantum Chandelier,” painting from Tesseract Study 21-B02, 2021
 Oil on canvas
 78 x 96 inches
 Courtesy of Storage Art Gallery, New York

Michiko Itatani’s cotton candy-hued canvas *Quantum Chandelier, painting from Tesseract Study 21-B0*, places a huge geometric form known as a “tesseract” (also called a 4-cube, analogous to a two-dimensions square or a three-dimensional cube), that floats in the center of a soaring cathedral — suggesting a combining of the scientific and the spiritual. This artist depicts spaces in her paintings, such as libraries,

cathedrals, and concert halls that seem to have become otherworldly, the luminescent interiors populated by layers of chandeliers and opalescent orbs that emanate light. These same spaces, though, are devoid of inhabitants, creating a surreal environment with unsettling effect. Saturated with decoration and flickering patterns of cast light, Itatani’s large church and opera house scenes highlight the chandelier as a fixture that often functions as a crowning moment or decorative apex in grand “public” spaces, both real and fictional. Both Gaston Leroux in his 1910 novel *The Phantom of the Opera* and Andrew Lloyd Webber in his contemporary musical recount the chandelier of the Paris Opera collapsing into a screaming audience — a crowning moment extraordinaire.. Itatani is practical. She uses geometric shapes and thickly painted graphic marks to draw the eye to the “flatn” material quality of her work, breaking the illusion of realism and reminding her audience of the essential nature of paint on canvas, just as she continues the ambiguity of her work by showing us interiors from another time and with unfamiliar spaces.



Foundation
 Ilya and Emilia Kabakov
The Fallen Chandelier, 1997
 Installation: Chandelier
 53 ½ x 51 ½ inches
 Courtesy of Emilia Kabakov
 Photograph by Igoris Markovas, © Ilya and Emilia Kabakov Art

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have collaborated since 1989 (and were married in 1992). They are widely recognized as pioneers of installation art. Their works have been influenced by the hardships, surveillance, and suspicion characteristic of their years under the Soviet regime. At the same time, that unease is often coupled with an eccentric sense of whimsy. The theatricality and surrealistic inflections that characterize their installations, often heightened by the incorporation of lights, text, and music, result in environments that read like alternate universes.

“In nearly every language, and as far back as we can trace, light has been used as a metaphor for knowledge. Here, in this space originally designed by Marcel Breuer to function as Lehman College’s library, the fallen chandelier pays homage to that history and to the educational mission of this institution.

“The fallen chandelier, with its sad hum, resounds for us as that kind of constant reminder which Pascal expressed in the following words: ‘We remain human as long as we preserve our memory.’

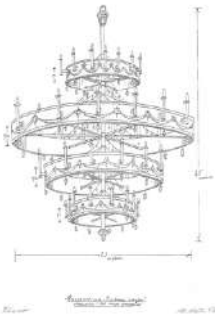
“The project speaks precisely of that need to preserve our memory, to study history, and to strive for the truth. At this moment in time, that need is greater than ever.

“Through education, through the pursuit of knowledge, we keep the light on in the chandelier, we keep the music playing.”

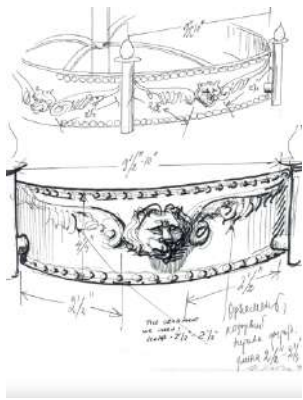
---Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, *The Fallen Chandelier*



Ilya and Emilia Kabakov
Concept drawing for the installation: The Falling Chandelier, 1997
Courtesy of Emilia Kabakov
© Ilya and Emilia Kabakov Art Foundation



Ilya and Emilia Kabakov
Concept drawing for the installation: The Falling Chandelier, 1997
Courtesy of Emilia Kabakov
© Ilya and Emilia Kabakov Art Foundation



Ilya and Emilia Kabakov
Concept drawing for the installation: The Falling Chandelier, 1997
Courtesy of Emilia Kabakov
© Ilya and Emilia Kabakov Art Foundation



Philipp Lachenmann

Fatman, 2024

Exhibition C-print

20 x 30 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Andreas Binder © Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich, Germany

Innocuous looking, Philipp Lachenmann's photographs of two chandeliers hide deeper meaning within bullet-like forms. Although much smaller than the original bombs for which they are named, these chandeliers bear the same nicknames, first derived from the distinctive shapes of the nuclear bombs "Fat Man" and "Little Boy" exploded by the United States to end World War II. On August 6, 1945, "Little Boy" was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima—it was the first nuclear weapon to be used in a war. Three days later on August 9, "Fat Man" was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. The second, it was also the last nuclear weapon to be used in war. Lachenmann's contained and dispassionate photographs capture the chandeliers at eye level, the better to delineate their forms in deadpan fashion that belies their ominous reference. However, the artist's sculptural originals are working chandeliers, which can be hung above the head of the viewer to create the sensation of the "sword of Damocles," which suspended just overhead easily creates an uneasy feeling of impending doom. Lachenmann consciously chose a streamlined crystal "Empire" style (named after the classical décor popular during the time of Napoleon I), translating the form of the chandelier, the bourgeois status symbol, into home décor on a grand scale, while, at the same time referencing the shapes of the two historic weapons of mass destruction.



Philip Lachenmann

Littleboy, 2024

Exhibition C-print

20 x 30 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Andreas Binder, Munich, Germany © Galerie Andreas Binder



Jean Lowe
Concert Room, Neues Palais, 2024
Casein on wood panel
30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and McKenzie Fine Art, New York
Photograph: Brian Lockhart, Quint Gallery.
LaJolla, California

“To seduce and show off,” is Jean Lowe’s message that she puts forward in her swirling depictions of gilded interiors that showcase the glowing chandeliers that assume premier positions in regal surroundings. Less the tongue-in-cheek social commentary on contemporary society for which she is best known, Lowe, here, comments on the implications of the interiors she presents, not the design: “The conspicuous display of wealth and prestige embodied in elaborate baroque and rococo interiors, along with the wholehearted embrace of pleasure and indulgence, seems to mirror contemporary excess—however differently that is visually expressed. The wall ornamentation, furnishings and dazzling chandelier pictured in *Concert Room, Neues Palais*, work together to seduce and show off in equal measure—not an unfamiliar posture for the present day.” The original Concert Room (Konzertzimmer) shown in Lowe’s canvas is in the Lower Royal Suite of the New Palace (Neues Palais) in Potsdam, Germany. The palace was built in the Baroque style under Frederick the Great between 1763 and 1769, at the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War. In addition to the Concert Room, the palace is known for its majestic interiors, including the Marble Hall, Grotto Hall, and Palace Theatre. The New Palace was used for guest apartments, celebrations, and was the preferred residence of William II, the last German emperor, who took 34 train wagons of furniture out the palace with him, when he fled into exile at the end of World War I. It seems it is hard to give up ornamented interiors and the associations they spur.



Kaoru Mansour
Fish and Chandelier #101, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
40 x 40 x 1 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist



Kaoru Mansour
Pink Rose, Fern and Chandelier #101,
2018
Mixed media on canvas
54 x 44 x 1 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist

Kaoru Mansour's canvases operate on the level of dreams. A native of Japan working in Los Angeles, much of Mansour's work is inspired by the lush, natural environment the surrounds her. She borrows familiar imagery from this environment— birds, fruits, flowers, and other vegetation— and collages them onto canvases to create layered mixed-media paintings with multiple meanings. Each of her two works in this series create beautiful and surreal juxtapositions, contrasting natural objects in the form of flowers and fish with manufactured objects in the form of chandeliers. The black backgrounds of her current paintings make the settings unclear: are we seeing the night sky, the darkest of closets, or the deepest of waters? The lighting in both canvases is extremely low, projecting upwards from an unseen space onto objects that seem to be hanging in space, possibly illuminated from search or spotlights. Interestingly, none of the three chandeliers shown in these two paintings provide an actual light source for the canvas, instead Mansour gives the curlicues and crystals the same reflected glory as the underbelly of the luminescent scales we see on the suspended fish. Mansour's pink roses are particularly beguiling. Hanging like frosted cake decorations, they are cheerfulness, hope, and celebration holding out against the dark.



Lizbeth Mitty
Two Very, 2017
Oil and metal on canvas
48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist

In *Two Very*, Lizbeth Mitty pushes the chandelier to its most abstract form. Her painterly surface gives nod to the Abstract Expressionist with this work that shows a thickly encrusted canvas that suggests two hanging chandeliers, both light and shadow. Mitty uses the color variations between the two to give the piece dimension. One critic said her chandelier paintings “serve as mordant symbols of better times,” while another described Mitty's paintings of dark visions as combinations of “painterly verve and hellish beauty.” In *Two Very*, the artist focuses on the most glimmering aspects of the chandelier, creating a contrasting palette that draws the eye across the composition. Mitty's passages of both light and dark capture the reflective qualities of the chandeliers and bring to mind the segmented compositions of crystals. Long focused on deteriorating though formerly grand interiors as well as the less explored corners of urban architecture, Mitty says of chandeliers, shorthand symbol of the upper class, “When I am someplace that blows me away, I take a lot of pictures and make little sketches. Then I come home and I don't know if it's going to go into the painting

or not. In this case, what seemed to come out was the chandeliers, which I wasn't focusing on while I was in [Barcelona]. . . but chandeliers started appearing on unexpected backgrounds.”



Andrew Moore
Art Gallery at the Dorsey Mansion, Union County, New Mexico, 2014
Archival pigment print
48 x 61 inches, framed
Courtesy of artist and Yancey Richardson, New York

Andrew Moore
Rose Pavilion, 2001
Archival pigment print
50 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Yancey Richardson, New York

Andrew Moore uses the formal vocabularies of architecture and landscape photography to present his large-format color photographs. In both photographs here, this artist shows the passage of time in the built environment — one in a Russian metropolis, St Petersburg, the other in the United States, New Mexico. He writes: “My photographic interests are stimulated by the busy intersections of history, particularly those locations where multiple tangents of time overlap and tangle. *Rose Pavilion* is his striking study of chandelier contrasts — grandiose and lit; the *Dorsey Mansion*— a bird’s eye view of once desired chandeliers, dusty and dim. On a trip to St. Petersburg, he photographed many of the region’s palaces, astonished by the faithful reconstruction of sites that had been destroyed during WWII and the lengths Russia went to recreate the past. The *Rose Pavilion*, part of the Pavlovsk Palace complex built by Catherine the Great, destroyed during the war, and reconstructed anew in the 1990s is known for its elegant Palladian design. *Art Gallery at the Dorsey Mansion, Union County, New Mexico*, a state landmark, was the 19th-century home of Stephen W. Dorsey, United States senator and New Mexico cattle baron. Privately owned, access to this home was at first denied to Moore, although the owners eventually relented, allowing the artist to photograph. The current owner, with hoarding tendencies, told Moore that he had purchased the vast collection of chandeliers that Moore photographed from atop a ladder at an auction house in New Orleans. Moore shows us faded glory. In a sense, Moore’s photographs as documents become historical fiction, in which the beauty and glory of the scene are a kind of history-erasing fabrication.



Andrew Moore
Rose Pavilion, 2001
Archival pigment print
50 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Yancey Richardson, New York



Brian Oakes
Vessel 3, 2023
Printed circuit boards, electronic components, microphones, audio cables, custom 3D-printed hardware, power supplies, chain, miscellaneous hardware
28x28x19 inches
Courtesy of the artist

In his chandeliers, Brian Oakes creates a meditative “Technological Sublime,” which combines ethereal beauty that speaks to the long origins of religious mysticism but with the contemporary impact of the Computer Age on humanity’s imagination. Speaking of his embrace of circuitry in his art, Oakes said, “I started making circuit boards by hand years ago to help control some of the electronics in my early sculptures. I was always interested in using electronics to activate my work and make things that were active in a space.” Oakes includes winged forms in the circuitry of many of his chandeliers, which suggest the role of the angel as harbinger of a new era, just as an angel brought the Annunciation to Mary, ushering a new era for religion. As human beings have become increasingly dependent on constant digital communications, and as artificial intelligence has infiltrated our daily experiences, Oakes’s works allow the idea of the human subconscious to rise to the surface to manifest physical form. The titles of this artist’s works are suggestive: *Vessel* carries both the classical connotation of a container of knowledge as well as the means of a transforming voyage, while *Lantern* provides a light for guiding the way through darkness. Oakes compares the search for the sublime and meaning in religion to the Surrealist’s interest in random occurrence. He says he likes the idea of an arbitrary sound bite becoming “a divine message, or a message that brings with it meaning or great importance.”



Matt Neff
Sugar Chandelier IV; I, II, 2008 (Left to Right)
Silkscreen, sugar
14 x 20 inches (signed on reverse)
Courtesy of the artist

Matt Neff's subtle sugar prints spring from his desire to critique class via the luxury represented by the form of the chandelier that he then pairs with the fraught meaning imbued in sugar. Sugar, a major driver of slavery to produce a profit-yielding crop, was also notably addressed in 2014 by artist Kara Walker in her monumental public project *A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby*, presented at the former Domino Sugar Factory on Brooklyn's waterfront. Neff is interested, too, in the idea of "modular luxury" that he found in type specimen books from the 19th century. Having started his printmaking career running The Common Press, a letterpress studio at the University of Pennsylvania, Neff acquired type and ornament collections prompting him to assemble chandeliers "... relying on their ornament and symmetry, as I would on the letterpress." Inspired by typologies, Neff created a series of variations on the chandelier, similar in both size and format, that allow the eye to travel among them to compare stylistic differences. Neff's works are as he said, "... combinations of fragments, pieces, and parts of images of chandeliers, collaged bits of scanned type and ornament, all bundled into a sugary package."



Matt Neff
Sugar Chandelier II, 2008
14 x 20 inches (signed on reverse)
Courtesy of the artist



Matt Neff
Sugar Chandelier IV, 2009
Silkscreen, sugar
14 x 20 inches (signed on reverse)
Courtesy of the artist



Carlos Rolón
Around the Way Girl, 2013
Metal, gold leaf, glass, vintage jewelry,
quartz crystals, and latex
72 x 96 inches
Artwork courtesy of the artist and Hexton Gallery, Aspen

Carlos Rolón's over-the-top chandelier seems to grow out of a forest of jagged, mirrored stalagmites that symbolize a rags-to-riches narrative. Combining mass-produced items with artisanal techniques, this chandelier weaves together past and present. For Rolón the past includes being born to a Puerto-Rican family and his motivation to deal with issues of inclusion and aspiration. Rolón explores how cultivated settings and social barriers operate and how they relate to post-colonial spaces. The chandelier, very much an item of a cultivated setting, intrigued Rolón whose hybrid design for *Around the Way Girl* blends a monumental formal chandelier with elements of early Hip-hop culture, such as bamboo hoop earrings and gold Cuban-link chains. The title of the work, itself, references an archetype that celebrates the strength and style of women of color, as well as the 1990 song "Around the Way Girl," by LL Cool J. Rolón's chandelier manages to be at once melancholic, excessive, and exuberant, poised between celebration and regret, and much of this artist's work deals with juxtapositions. "What has always motivated me," he says, "is to create work so that I can see 'myself' or a story I can relate to as a young Latino born and raised in Chicago in a blue-collar setting. Someone who deals with conflict of identity."



Jeanne Silverthorne
Maquette for 'Untitled (Chandelier), 1994
Rubber and plexiglass
8 x 26½ x 18 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Jeanne Silverthorne came to prominence in the 1990s as a sculptor working with industrial-grade rubber and employing a labor-intensive, old-fashioned process that required numerous separate casts to make a single artwork. The product: a series of sculptures in which the foreboding density of the material was a strong part of her

message. Silverthorne’s model, shown here, is the original design for *Untitled (Chandelier)*, eventually completed as a room-sized object that hung from the ceiling, unusable, without practical purpose. The chandelier form carries connotations of wealth and historical association in its elaborate rococo design, but ultimately this work becomes a symbol of a chandelier’s unfulfilled potential and a kind of *memento mori*—it hangs dark and unlit, an object of mourning, a snuffed out candle. *Untitled (Chandelier)* mutates into a meditation on profound loss. The light typically cast by chandeliers makes them references to the Age of Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries, but that potential seems drained into a dark void, making this piece essentially a Gothic form, inspired by medieval ruins from an even earlier time. In this lighting fixture’s ultimate failure as an object of production for use (perhaps a good definition of art itself), Silverthorne’s work is reminiscent of Jasper Johns’ s cast lightbulb sculptures of the 1960s. While this artist’s final monumental piece shows overwhelming power, observing the chandelier’s design in model form is strangely creepy. It transforms into an insect, a tiny Louise Bourgeois-like spider trapped in a box, its long ganglia of rubber tubing its tendrilled web.



Rachael Tarravechia
International Princess, 2024
 Dreamtime rhinestones, chain, glitter on linen
 48 x 48 inches
 Courtesy of the artist and Ceysson & Bénétière, New York

Rachael Tarravechia describes her paintings, as “a little romantic, kind of bubbly, but with a dash of foreboding evil.” *International Princess* certainly fills the bill, being literally and metaphorically off-kilter. When hung perfectly level, the artist has designed the composition to appear slightly askew, which creates a foreboding ambiance. The glittering beam that runs through this *mise en scène* is awry and from it hangs a spiked military flail at incongruous odds with the pink flocked wallpaper and bedazzling floor and ceiling patterns. Above, the red chandelier seems to look down on the uneasy, empty stillness—an observing, bloodshot variant of Picasso’s watchful eye in his violent painting *Guernica*. Tarravechia uses the real estate website Zillow as the starting point for creating her unnerving domestic spaces, looking through the 3-D house tours for spaces that speak to her. In a few of her compositions, the artist adds unusual weapons or symbols of violence, like a *guillotine*. She says, “Viewer experience and interaction is a key part of the work. Since these works draw from horror, anime, and video games, I try to emulate the mysterious, enticing qualities these forms of media are constantly displaying. I think about this while making my work. Right before something momentous is irreconcilably changed, it’s up to the viewer to choose how to proceed.”



Karen Tompkins
Mandala/Chandelier, 2024
Hand-colored archival pigment print,
39×39 inches, Edition of 5
Courtesy of the artist

Karen Tompkins, born in the United States and working in London, recognizes that in the mind's eye the most satisfying “traditional” chandelier demands an adherence to classic symmetry. She knows that there is tremendous visual reassurance to be gleaned in the formal geometry that occurs in the natural world. The artist has engaged in a long and deep study of the patterns and repetitions of the celestial universe, which informs her current work. In *Mandala/Chandelier* the ten “branches” of the chandelier and its central base are photographed by Tompkins precisely beneath the hanging fixture. Tompkins’s title for the work is key because she underscores the visual relationship between the circular, mystical nature of mandala that is symbolic of the cosmos or deities and used for mediation across many faiths, with the mesmeric quality of the illuminated chandelier. At first glance this photograph from the “reverential view” may puzzle the viewer unsure of the object looked at—perhaps it is a dendrite under a microscope, a sea creature twirling in the depths, or the cog of a machine? From this angle, the bottom hanging finial is transformed into a dark void at the center of the print. Tompkins hand colors passages of her composition, enhancing the glittering aspect of crystal, while simultaneously suggesting the brightly colored passages typically found in a mandala.



Ken Weaver
Ad Astra Lumina, 2007
Oil pastel on paper
30 x 45 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Backed by blazing red pastel that seems to combine fire and blood, Ken Weaver’s *Ad Astra Lumina* is from his 2006 drawing series, *Royally Fucked*. in which theatrical, aristocratic characters revel in excess ornamentation. The monochromatic drawings from this series show chandeliers, which embody the hubris of extreme ornamentation. Chandeliers, fixtures that casts light, are here garish signifiers borrowed from the Baroque and Rococo periods to further Weaver’s comments on indulgence in today’s society. “The Queen,” at the center of the image, is a kind of crazed Marie Antoinette-esque figure. both a victim of violence — blood trickles in a thin strand from her nose to her bared bosom— and a threatening figure, who confronts us with disdain and challenge. The cut crystal chandeliers that menacingly flank her are echoed in the entrapping crystal drop choker that circles her throat. Weaver describes her living in a “world that is stained red — a contemporary Vanitas [and vanitas-like, as her grim face attests, she faces the passing of earthly things]. She is a heavy metal Baroque Queen... a harbinger of sex, drugs and rock n’ roll. The Queen is one with her glittering

surroundings, forever locked within the fractured light of her chandeliers—a prisoner and performer within a gilded stage of mirrored luminous spotlights.”



Charlotta Westergren
Gardening #12, 2024

Glass, brass tubing, electric wiring, and light bulbs
Approximately 46 x 82 x 38 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Marisa Newman Projects, New York

Bursting with blossoms and fruits like an exploded cornucopia, Charlotta Westergren’s chandelier installation, *Gardening #12*, resembles the distinct elements of a still life painting scattered into air to be brought to 3D sculptural life. Born in Sweden and working in Brooklyn, Westergren is an admirer of the tradition of exuberant 17th-century Flemish still life with its (studio created) bounty that often juxtaposed fruits and flowers that would never naturally come to fruition at the same time of year. Westergren likewise presents as an assertion the beauty and the magic of the materiality of the everyday. Combining elements of “high” and “low” art in her *Gardening* series, the artist employs the simple elements of industrial tubing and scavenged glass. Decorative sculptural objects made from glass, popular in middle-class household décor in the 1960s and 1970s, are transformed into objects of joy. The concept of transforming objects considered to be “out of style” and “déclassé” into chic and “upcycled” installations is echoed in the delicate glass bees that hover on gilded wire amongst the fruits and flowers of *Gardening #12*. Westergren’s busy insects remind us of the role of fertility in the cycle of life and the endless cycles of creativity in the artistic endeavor.



Tim Wilson
Vienna Hall at the Grand Hotel De l’Europe, 2024

Oil on paper mounted to linen-stretched panel
31 ½ x 23 ½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York

Tim Wilson said, “An artist’s single brush stroke contains a multitude of decisions within a microsecond.” Here in a room soon to be devoted to a piano recital, he highlights a large crystal chandelier in its foreground. Wilson beautifully renders the interior of this space, the Vienna Hall, located in the basement of the Grand Hotel De l’Europe. In the silent room, the grand piano is opened, but the room not filled with an audience. The rows of empty chairs create both a sense of expectation and a certain melancholy, which suggest the work of painters like Edward Hopper and John Koch. Wilson’s interior scenes inspire viewers to reflect on the space they take up in the world, as well as the intimacies of the spaces they inhabit. Such stillness gives way to highly mediated pieces of art. There is almost a contradiction between the materiality of painting and the sensory awareness Wilson brings to his work. The artist reflects, “I see painting as a model for those physical conditions governed by natural laws that

seemingly give rise to a sense of self and notions of free will. I'm attempting to mimic that unfolding and at the same time create thought through painting material. In doing so, my work attempts to be what it represents and represents it simultaneously—a sort of onomatopoeia in painting language that seeks to find meaning in nothing.”



Frederico Uribe
Midas, 2024
Metal and cutlery
40 x 40 x 40 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Adelson Galleries

Federico Uribe’s chandelier is a wild cacophony of golden flatware made out a substance called Dirilyte, a metal alloy harder than silver and with the same color as gold, although it has no actual gold content. Uribe’s title for this piece refers to King Midas of Greek myth, who sought to transform everything around him into gold, only to end up destroying himself and all he loved. His fate echoes in tales of ancient alchemists who, in an effort to produce gold, mixed magic and pseudo-science. Today the pursuit of gold continues this tale of destruction in the reports of miners and scientists rending the earth and ruining the environment searching for the prized ore. Uribe’s sculpture is a kind of mediation on gluttony at the table, the myriad forks, spoons, and knives exploding with kinetic energy, and provides interesting contrast with Deborah Czeresko’s *Fowl*, installed nearby. The work of this artist, who was born in Colombia and is now based in Miami, resists classification. Rooted in the craft of sculpture and paint, it rises from intertwining and combining everyday objects, such as cut-up pieces of pencils, colored shoelaces, pins, electrical wires, bullet shells, books, ties, and plastic waste, all in unexpected and surprising ways, but still imbued with formal references to the history and tradition of classical art.