

texture and art, demonstrating an ingenious structural method of interlocking wooden pieces. Kirsten Berg's *Compound Eye/"I"* reflected a spiritual emphasis; the 18-foot geodesic sphere, covered in convex mirrors and topped with a spire of mirrored balls, resembled a Thai headdress as well as Mandelbrot fractals, referencing enlightenment and interconnectedness.

Burning Man, which may have birthed an art movement, with its shared approach blending populist, outsider, and visionary art impulses, evolved in response to an avid audience of people (now at 70,000 attendees) who like to cluster, play, contemplate, and be amazed. Its fusion of art and spectacle has become a blueprint for the most crowd-pleasing exhibitions and installations of recent years.

—Teresa Annas

TORONTO

Ydessa Hendeles

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

A palpable sense of unease pervaded Ydessa Hendeles's "The Milliner's Daughter," at least initially. The installations in this decade-long survey broke down into three dimly lit spaces populated by various mannequins and four brighter spaces featuring mechanical toys, panels of illustrated texts, and assorted supplementary images. Lingering in the galleries, that first impression of unease began to erode before reasserting itself. Not only did the heartening impact of the mechanical toys wane dramatically, but deeper and darker associations also began to emerge.

Drawing from assorted events and literary sources, as well as personal and family history, Hendeles combines diverse materials to create fables that call attention to treachery, power struggles, shifting values, forms of exclusion, and calamity. In



From her wooden sleep... (2013), viewers join a host of lifeless surrogates surrounded by old musical instruments and funhouse mirrors. The dark space—a nightmarish waiting room—manifests isolation, derision, and monotony. Taking Florence K. Upton's *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwogg* (a popular children's book published in 1895) as its starting point, the work traces the evolution of the black character (based on a rag doll owned by Upton's children) from a protagonist-hero to racist stereotype. A vitrine in another gallery housed an outsize, exquisitely constructed metal wind-up toy, das Flugzeug-Auto. The surrounding walls were covered with Gustave Dore's large-scale illustrations for "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and a photo of a kitschy Halloween-themed doorstop. The car periodically springs to life when its propeller whirrs and wings extend, but it ends up going nowhere. *THE BIRD THAT MADE THE BREEZE TO BLOW* (*Aero-Car*

No. 500) (2011) intertwines themes of fate, the empty promise of technology, immutability, and the weight of psychological burdens. Though the fables that composed "The Milliner's Daughter" induced contemplation of a range of often uncomfortable issues, the works themselves, as well as the manner of their construction, could feel somewhat formulaic. In fact, all but one of the installations were limited to no more than two or three types of components, which contributed an unwelcome predictability. To my surprise, the work awakened memories of shows that Hendeles, who is also a curator and philanthropist, mounted in her Toronto gallery in the mid-1980s, highlighting similarities with text pieces by Astrid Klein and sculptures by Jana Sterbak and Andreas Gehr. These echoes demonstrated just how long some of these issues have occupied her mind. Though Hendeles's family history was framed by the Holocaust, her work differs significantly from more

Left: Ydessa Hendeles, *From her wooden sleep...*, 2013. Mixed media, installation view. Below left: Ydessa Hendeles, *THE BIRD THAT MADE THE BREEZE TO BLOW* (*Aero-Car No. 500*), 2011. Automaton sculpture with key and mahogany and glass vitrine, 511 x 253 x 369 cm.

theme-specific installations and performances, such as Christian Boltanski's *Canada* (1988), Nigel Rolfe's *European Dream* (2010), and Anne Bordeleau, Sascha Hastings, Donald McKay, and Robert Jan van Pelt's *The Evidence Room* (2016). Hendeles, instead, uses historical subject matter as a launching pad for multi-layered narratives that explore the complex set of forces influencing human behavior. Though the scope of this wide-angled view can be daunting, it presents many points of entry. Perhaps most importantly, this approach excels in conveying the power of images, objects, and stories, underscoring how they can be misrepresented and the consequences of such twisted interpretations. The strength of "The Milliner's Daughter" derived from the ability of its content to enlighten and perplex. Hendeles gets people thinking about the past and the present, and the issues that she addresses are not easily forgotten.

—John Gayer

DISPATCH

NEW WINDSOR, NEW YORK

"David Smith: The White Sculptures"

Storm King Art Center

Did David Smith intend to leave eight large white sculptures white, the state in which they were seen at Bolton Landing, when he died suddenly in 1965? That question, which has periodically vexed art historians, drove an intriguing exhibition at Storm King Art Center, where six of the white-painted steel constructions were installed outside on the lawn, including the three *Primo*

Piano sculptures on view together for the first time. These works were contextualized by an indoor display of related sculptures, paintings, photographs, and sprays, in addition to a newly digitized 16 mm film by the sculptor Robert Murray that documents many of Smith's works in the fields surrounding his home and studio after his death.

The carefully calibrated installation raised more questions than it could answer. Views through and around the works were crafted to highlight their relation to each other and to the landscape. The gleaming *Primo Pianos* (1962) and *2 Circles 2 Crows* (1963) are among Smith's most abstract and pictorial works, with their white planes sometimes looking more like large pieces of paper than solid steel.

Primo Piano II, a study in contrasting materials and cast shadows, features a large bronze teardrop in the center and a raised stainless steel plane, positioned obliquely. The series offers a broad range of mesmerizing relationships. The vertical *Circle and Box* (*Circle and Ray*) and *Untitled* (both 1963) relate to each other as abstract personages, echoing the surrounding trees; the high circle is neatly positioned against the sky, appearing to collapse heaven and earth into a single plane. These apparently elemental compositions are knowingly complicated by myriad cast shadows.

The bright white surfaces are remarkable, transforming dark metal into a screen responsive to changing light conditions, and quieter than Smith's more dazzling burnished steel works such as *XI Books III Apples* (1959) and *Cubi XXI* (1964) on view nearby. White is not empty, not lacking in color or presence, but the opposite—a receptive, Zen-like plane that invites dialogue. At Storm King, the bright white surfaces danced with leafy shadows, but they could also turn dark, depending on the location of the sun or the arrival of