of the flood line in Red Hook during Hurricane Sandy. Peering up at it, one suddenly felt underwater. Would the viewer go down with the sinking ship? A ladder connected a post to cargo netting hung at the ceiling. Conrad explained that the allusion to Jacob's Ladder "offers a physical, spiritual, and psychological escape from the impending demise of the sculpture's structural integrity and the hell set forth in 'The Horror at Red Hook.'"

The installation was cinematic and invoked a feeling of timelessness. As one walked around, the narrative shifted; viewers moved from land onto a boat and then into water, a conceit that evoked simultaneous sensations of floating and drowning. The walls and floors were painted entirely white, enhancing the illusion that the artworks were floating into the void of infinite space and time. Perhaps we, the viewers, had arrived at purgatory.

The pendant self-portrait, *Buoy No. 1 (Untitled),* displayed a life vest on a hanger, the straps knotted like a businessman's tie. A string extending down to the cement block implied the weight of a burden and an individual struggle.

According to Conrad, his intention was "to create a feeling of precarious equilibrium." Did the exhibition present putrefaction, or hope and resilience? A state of contagion or convalescence? Were we in heaven or hell, or lingering in between? The physical and metaphorical tensions in the works correlated to Lovecraft's short story. By producing the aesthetic of a ruin, Conrad considered how memories of the past dwell in the present. For him, the ruin invokes "feelings of longing, vitality, and the futility of memory." We move through psychological time, passing from the present moment to the past, from recognition to recollection. Every day, we confront good and evil, endure disaster and experience relief, repress desires and yield to them—yet somehow we manage to stay afloat and keep our heads above water until we see land.

—Rania Mehler

Above: Drew Conrad, installation view of "The Cold Wake," 2016. Right: Joe Fyfe, *Horse*, 2016. Wire fencing, cardboard, plastic, glitter, and fiberglass compound, 26 x 24 x 14.5 in.

New York

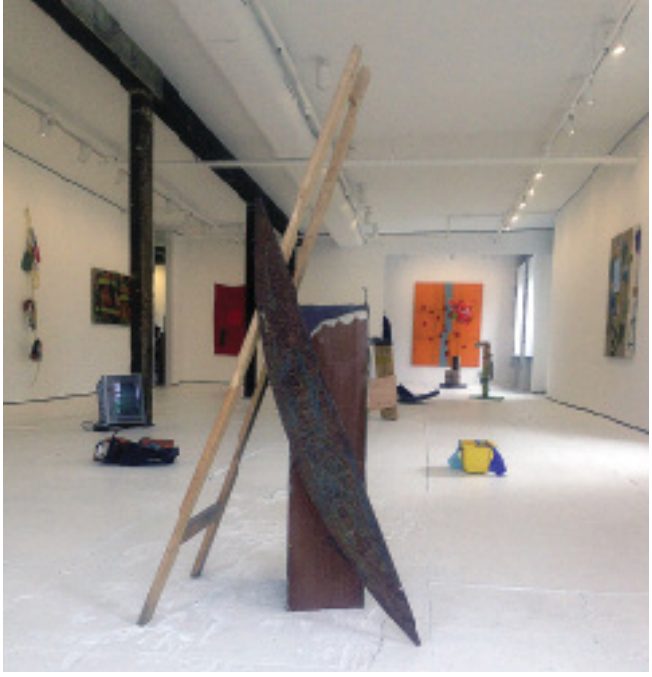
Joe Fyfe

Nathalie Karg Gallery

"Kiss the Sky," Joe Fyfe's recent exhibition, was a tour-de-force, seamlessly merging bright colors and quotidian materials, including steel, plastic, nylon, fabric, found wood, ink, rope, acrylic, and crayon. With some sculptures zigzagging down the middle of the long gallery, the show created a sort of color field so that the space itself became an active player in the interaction of mass, color, and movement.

It's obvious that Fyfe's works merge collage, painting, and sculpture with a nod to architecture. What is less obvious is that his abstract constructions materialize interiority. As many objects as possible are shown inside out, as is the case with *Advisement*, the inside of a fender with a screen and colored balls inside. *Gilles*, a cotton-on-banner collage, is a reversed red and black Michael Jackson "Bad" poster (the words are backwards); Fyfe has added polka dot, green, and orange fabrics to Jackson's chest to turn him into Watteau's clown Gilles, who is pic-

TOP: COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KUSTERA PROJECTS / BOTTOM: COURTESY NATHALIE KARG GALLERY



tured inside the Joseph Cornell box *A Dressing Room for Gilles* (1939).

Dacquoise (2016), an all-white, color-splotched wood assemblage, looks like worn, blank road signs pointing in slightly differing directions and suggesting that we all travel the same life-to-death journey. *Untitled* (2016) resembles the back of a wooden easel resting against a curved, slender metal crescent. Nearby, an old piece of propped-up cardboard looks like a triptych, any potential imagery buried in darkness. An untitled sculpture from 2014 has a base made from a textured steel, diamond plate used on stairways; it holds a stack of bundled wood and a large square wooden post about 27 inches high. Recalling the high and low buildings of New York's skyline, it also refers to the materials used in their construction.

One of my favorite works was *Horse* (2016), a three-dimensional composition with cardboard, plastic, glitter, and fiberglass arranged in conical, triangular, square, and other geometric shapes; they have mirror-like reflective surfaces and are bundled inside wire fencing. The horse metaphor could refer to anything from the Trojan Horse to the phenomenon of betting on winners and losers in the art world.

Fyfe incorporates Asian fabrics and kites in *Kiss the Sky*, *Les Cigales*, and other works. The kite in *Kiss the Sky*, which shows a fantasy woman riding a feathered bird, is set into a background of large, orange felt pieces divided by an uneven strip of blue cotton. Fyfe generally uses jewelers' glue to paste together his fabrics, so even though there are a few red blotches of paint, these are generally constructions rather than paintings. The title comes from Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze." That song, like Fyfe's materials, harkens back to a time when daily use materials were more durable. Some works use old washcloths from Vietnamese and Korean outdoor ad fabric that Cambodians repurposed into tarps and umbrellas. Since Fyfe shows most of his materials inside out, the muted "inside" colors are on view. This gives his work familiarity as well as newness. Fyfe's strengths include his formalist aesthetic and his socio-cultural astuteness in finding, piecing together, and reframing things from all over the world.

—Jan Garden Castro

TOP: JAN GARDEN CASTRO

Left: Joe Fyfe, *Untitled*, 2016. Wood, iron, plastic, and cardboard, 59.5 x 25 x 36.5 in. Below: Joan Giordano, *Start Spreading the News*, 2015. Mixed media, handmade paper, archival New York *Times*, and encaustic on board, dimensions variable.

New York

Joan Giordano

June Kelly Gallery

Joan Giordano's recent exhibition "Woven in Time" spoke to both the history of art and postmodern phenomena. Her constructions, which straddle the boundaries of painting, collage, and sculpture, can be compared to Kurt Schwitters's "Merz" assemblages or Ellsworth Kelly's 1956–57 wall reliefs, though they hold more in common with the postmodern stylistic developments of Marela Zacarias's "Supple Beat" architectonic sculptures. But unlike Zacarias's colorful, formally bound sculptural reliefs, Giordano's works investigate current issues and the politics of underlying prejudices. She uses newspaper and magazine texts to express her ongoing engagement with events such as the WikiLeaks scandal. The sculptural relief *Free Press* declares Giordano's interest in justice, and like Honoré Daumier's *Freedom of the Press: Don't Meddle With It*, the work is meant as a warning. Like Daumier, Giordano makes use of satirical, sometimes scathing double entendre, dedicating her work to human dignity, honesty, and fair play.

Although her sculptures are filled with meaningful textual content, they are also extremely beautiful and expertly made works. In this show, they covered the gallery walls, gaining power in their culmination by curving rhythmically in Giordano's inimitably grand style. *Wind Lanterns* undulates, spreading its wings like an eagle into the night, for as purposeful as Giordano's means appear, they also incorporate accident. Using such free and seemingly fortuitous methods—such as the flying white brushstroke that allows some of the background color to be seen—is very daring. It can only come from the confidence gained through many years of practice. Giordano reaches back in time to ancient Egypt to find encaustic and to China for papermaking, mixing them with metal, newspaper, and other modern mediums.