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From Kusama to Turrell, 9 Artists Who Made Perfect Spaces for Meditation

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY MITCH SAWYER

JUL 22ND, 2017 12:00 PM

It's a safe bet that anyone who's spent a prolonged amount of time looking at a painting—or failing that, can recall the Seurat scene from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*—can recognize the meditative power of art. But several artists have taken this idea further, building entire environments meant to help viewers experience deep serenity or contemplation. From giant saltwater tanks to secluded Appalachian outposts, these nine works provide space to guide in focused meditation.

Yayoi Kusama, *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity*, 2009





Yayoi Kusama
Infinity Mirrored Room—Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity, 2009
Seattle Art Museum

For Kusama, artmaking has been a lifelong form of therapy. Since childhood, she's experienced recurring hallucinations of being consumed in unending fields of polka dots or bright flashes of light. To manage these anxieties, she transfers them to her hypnotic artworks. This meditative practice may explain her works' frequent references to ego death—the complete loss of a sense of self—a concept tied equally to Zen buddhism as to psychedelia, which influenced her early career. *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity*, completed more than four decades after her first infinity room, immerses the viewer in a field of suspended lanterns, infinitely reflected by mirrored walls and a reflecting pool below. The lanterns recall *tōrō nagashi*, a ceremony on the final day of the Buddhist Obon festival, in which paper lanterns are floated on rivers in reverence of the dead.





Carsten Höller, *Giant Psycho Tank*, 1999. Courtesy of the New Museum.

That Höller got his start as a scientist—an entomologist, specifically—explains the clinical appearance of this large sensory deprivation chamber’s polypropylene walls. But the work’s intended effect leans spiritual. Visitors to Höller’s 2011–12 “Experience” show at the New Museum were encouraged to disrobe and float in a shallow pool of an epsom salt solution. The salt holds the viewer in perfect equilibrium as body-temperature water drowns out all outside sensation. Höller has said the tank is meant to induce such extreme relaxation that visitors begin to have an out-of-body experience. However, as some critics have pointed out, when laying naked in the middle of a crowded museum, separating yourself from the present moment is easier said than done. ^

La Monte Young & Marian Zazeela, *Dream House*, 1993



La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, *Dream House*, on Church Street, New York. Photo by Marian Zazeela, courtesy Dia Foundation.

Hidden away in an seemingly normal TriBeCa apartment, *Dream House* is a collaborative sound and light environment created by drone composer Young and neon light artist Zazeela. Inside, hazy magenta light casts on white walls, while Young's procedurally generated low frequencies play over speakers. Two of Zazeela's sculptural installations play with the light environment in interesting ways—either casting a glow, as with the neon *Dream House Variation I* (1989), or shadow, as with the rippled surface of *Ruine Window* (1992). Both Young's and Zazeela's bodies of work entertain

reflection (or a power nap).

Katie Paterson, *Hollow*, 2016



Katie Paterson, *Hollow*, 2016. © Katie Paterson. Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.

From the outside, Paterson's *Hollow* appears deceptively simple—a few posts of unfinished wood forming a hut on the grounds of Bristol's Royal Fort Gardens. Go inside, however, and you find yourself in a cavernous forest of 10,000 pillars, each gathered from a different variety of tree—from the common to the incredibly historic. ^

survived the bombing of Hiroshima. The isolated enclosure provides respite from the open gardens, while offering a humbling reminder of the vast natural history represented in the piece's walls.

Miya Ando, *8 Fold Path*, 2009



Miya Ando, *8 Fold Path*, 2009. Courtesy of the artist.



Buddhist temple in Okayama, Japan, she says her spiritual practice informs her exploration of simplicity and reduction. In 2009, Ando donated her work *8 Fold Path* to the Against the Stream Buddhist Meditation Society in Los Angeles. The work comprises a grid of four steel plates shaded by a thin application of patina. *8 Fold Path* serves as a reminder of the dharma wheel—a visual representation of Buddhism’s noble eightfold path—for the L.A. space’s practitioners, who meditate facing the pedestal above which the work hangs.

Alex Reed, *Quiet House*, 1942



Alex Reed, *Quiet House* (memorial to Mark Dreier), Lake Eden Campus, Black Mountain College, Black Mountain College Records. Courtesy of Western Regional Archives.

founder Ted Dreier, was killed in a car accident. The next fall, Reed, teaching assistant at the time to Josef Albers, began building *Quiet House* on the college grounds to memorialize Mark. Reed handled almost every aspect of the construction himself, from drafting the design to gathering stone and chopping wood. The house—situated in the forested Blue Ridge Mountains and adjacent to the shore of Lake Eden—served as a conduit for quiet reflection, as well as a venue for weddings and other celebrations until the college closed in 1957. Though the building has been converted into a dormitory for a boys' summer camp, the original *Quiet House* has been preserved through the photography of Black Mountain residents Hazel Larsen Archer and Robert Rauschenberg.

Robert Irwin, *untitled (dawn to dusk)*, 2016



Robert Irwin, *untitled (dawn to dusk)*, installation exterior, 2016. ©2016 Philipp Scholz Rittermann, courtesy of the China Foundation. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.





installation is composed of a passage of partially-enclosed concrete antechambers, which surround an outdoor courtyard. Inside, the open ceilings and windows of the building not only recall the ruins of the World War II-era military hospital that once stood in its place, but also serve to cast sunlight through a series of black and white scrims—an experimentation with light in Irwin’s typical fashion. Irwin has referred to his work as a “quiet distillation” of its natural surroundings. Visitors to the installation are offered a conduit to reflect on the vast stillness of the West Texas desert.

Doug Wheeler, *PSAD Synthetic Desert III*, 1971



Installation view of “Doug Wheeler: PSAD Synthetic Desert III,” Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, March 2 August 2, 2017. Photo by David Heald. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

suspended platform and walls lined with sound-proofing material comprise Wheeler's *Synthetic Desert*, a self-contained semi-anechoic chamber. Visitors to the installation can snag a 10-minute session in the room on a first-come-first-served basis. Wheeler—who grew up in the Arizona desert—has compared the chamber's heavy silence to the stillness of the desert landscape, where “you can't tell a human voice from a car door closing or an eagle screaming more than a mile up.”

James Turrell, *Bindu Shards*, 2010



James Turrell
Bindu Shards, 2010
Gagosian



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inside, the room is unearthly in an entirely different sense. With the “Perceptual Cells” series, to which this work belongs, Turrell sought to induce what he called “behind-the-eye seeing.” To view the piece, visitors lie on a narrow bed, and an assistant slides them into the cell as if they were entering an MRI scanner. Inside, they are enveloped in a field of soft light. An assistant cycles through certain light cycles that occupy the field of vision. Turrell says the overwhelming stimulation is meant to induce theta brain waves, which occur naturally during focused meditation or before sleep.



—Mitch Sawyer

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Paintings, Part of \$29 Million Heist—and the 9 Other Biggest News Stories This Week

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ARTSY EDITORIAL

JUL 21ST, 2017 2:44 PM

01 Spanish police have recovered three stolen Francis Bacon paintings.

(via the BBC and The Art Newspaper)

The pieces were among the five stolen during a 2015 heist of a private home in Madrid, estimated to be worth \$29 million in all. The pieces belonged to José Capelo, a friend of the Irish-born British artist. Their theft is thought to be the largest case of stolen contemporary art in Spain's history to date. The works were recovered after Spanish police received a tip from London's Art Loss Register, a database of stolen art. An individual from near Barcelona contacted the ALR looking to verify the authenticity of a painting, sending them a photograph of the work showing Bacon's signature. From that image, police were able to determine the camera used and identify the individual who took the photograph, arresting the thief and several accomplices. So far, there are 10 arrests in connection with the case.

02 On Tuesday, artist Cady Noland filed a lawsuit seeking the destruction of *Log Cabin* (1990), a wooden sculpture formerly attributed to the artist that has been embroiled in authenticity and legal disputes.





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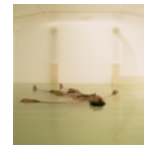
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You Can Now Paint a Digital “Scream” Using Edvard Munch’s Brushes

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT

JUL 21ST, 2017 1:16 PM





Image courtesy of Adobe.

In scandals heard round the world, thieves stole one version of the Edvard Munch's masterpiece *The Scream* in 1994 from the National Museum of Oslo, and a second version in 2004 from Munch Museet (the artist made four in total). Both were later recovered by teams of international detectives, at least one of whom donned a disguise in the process. A third iteration was sold at auction in 2011 for a whopping, much-talked-about \$119,922,500.

With drama like this, it's easy to forget about the more basic genesis of some of art history's most legendary works, and the tools used to create them.

But this summer, Munch is making news that turns the focus away from big-ticket sales and thrilling heists and back to the nuts-and-bolts of his artistic process. Munch Museet, the Oslo-based museum responsible for safeguarding the artist's archive, has



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In an effort to promote one artist's legacy—and, of course, to launch a saleable product

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How These Small Galleries Are Surviving Despite Wave of Closures

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY MARGARET CARRIGAN

JUL 21ST, 2017 12:14 PM





Installation view of Nick van Woert exhibition "Organ Donor" at GRIMM. Photo by René Clement, courtesy of GRIMM.

The position of small to mid-sized galleries in the Western world's major art centers grows ever more precarious in art hubs like New York City and London, as rising rents and a relentless schedule of expensive art fairs make it hard for smaller operations to compete with global mega-galleries such as Gagosian, Pace, Hauser & Wirth, David Zwirner, and White Cube.

The art press has documented nearly 10 significant closures reported just since May, including Wilkinson, Acme, and most recently Off Vendome.

But a willful contingent of gallerists continues to thrive despite the middle-market squeeze. Often, the key to their success is an actual set of keys. Well-timed real estate decisions or tough choices to move off the beaten path have helped some stay afloat when so many others have fallen prey to skyrocketing rent. ^



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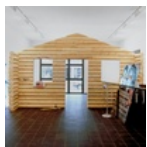
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means, which include renting out studio spaces to supplement costs, pulling in revenue beyond art sales, skipping expensive art fairs in favor of longer exhibition periods, or limiting artist rosters.

Lower Manhattan has seen a lot of ebb and flow on the small and mid-sized gallery front, with spaces such as On Stellar Rays, CRG Gallery, and Kansas all shuttering in the last few months. Yet Jorg Grimm of Amsterdam's GRIMM Gallery, who just opened a location on Bowery in June, sees the shifting sands as an opportunity for non-New York galleries to break into the scene.



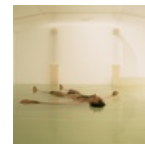
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Cady Noland Sues Seeking Destruction of Artwork “Copy” She Disavowed





Cady Noland, *Log Cabin*, 1990.

On Tuesday, artist Cady Noland filed a lawsuit seeking the destruction of *Log Cabin* (1990), a wooden sculpture formerly attributed to the artist that has been embroiled in authenticity and legal disputes.

The suit asserts that, in an effort to conserve the piece, it was entirely reconstructed from new wood without permission or notice, essentially producing an unauthorized copy. Noland says this copy and its subsequent sale for \$1.4 million violated her copyright and rights under the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA).






have conspired to infringe on her copyright by reproducing the work without her knowledge. The suit names Wilhelm Schürmann, the German collector who first bought the cabin, art advisor Chris D'Amelio, and two galleries that handled the work—Galerie Michael Janssen and KOW—along with Janssen personally, as defendants.

In an emailed statement, Janssen said that he has yet to be served with the suit, “but based on what I have heard I believe that it has no merit.” The gallerist added that “unfortunately, Ms. Noland has a history of trying to use the law to hurt art collectors and even her own artwork. That should not be necessary and I hope to find a positive outcome in this case.”

Purchased by Schürmann in 1990, the large-scale wooden sculpture went on view outdoors in 1995 as part of a long-term loan with Aachen's Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum. The piece stayed outside for approximately 10 years, according to the complaint.

The suit charges that in 2010, a conservator evaluated the cabin and recommended to “one or more” of those named as defendants that all of the logs should be replaced. As a result of the advice, “the entire edifice” of the piece was replaced and the original discarded. In July of 2014, the conserved *Log Cabin* was sold by Galerie Michael Janssen to Ohio collector Scott Mueller for \$1.4 million.

Shortly after the sale, Noland says she was informed about the replacements to her work for the first time. She was told the piece had “suffered significant deterioration” and that “a great number of the logs had rotted or begun to rot.” Noland faxed Mueller on July 18th disavowing the piece, writing “this is not an artwork” and noting it was “repaired by a conservator (sic) BUT THE ARTIST WASN'T CONSULTED.”

Under VARA, artists can disavow their work and prevent attribution to them if the piece is mutilated or modified in ways that are prejudicial to an artist's reputation. Noland has disavowed other pieces in the past for such reasons, including *Cowboys*  *Milking* in 2011. The previous disavowals likely contributed to a clause in Mueller's



Noland's fax. After receiving \$600,000, Mueller sued Janssen and his Berlin gallery in a New York court in June of 2015 for the rest of the funds, but the case was dismissed as being time-barred.

At the time, some questioned whether Noland had actually disavowed the *Cabin* or if the statement "this is not an artwork" referred simply to the fax itself, as a spokeswoman for Janssen claimed to *The Art Newspaper*. But Tuesday's suit puts any remaining confusion about the artist's feelings to rest. "Noland refused and continues to refuse to acknowledge or approve of the 'legitimacy' of the Log Cabin Copy," the complaint reads. "And she seeks to disassociate her name from said Copy, and claims that her moral rights, and rights under the Visual Artists Rights Act and other similar legislation have been violated."

Barring a settlement, the suit will provide rare case-law around VARA, which is often invoked but rarely litigated to verdict. The law does grant artists the right to disavow mutilated or distorted art. But it carves out an exception for modification "which is the result of conservation or public presentation, including lighting and placement" unless that modification is "caused by gross negligence."

Whether the display and conservation of the log cabin qualifies as negligence will be an important issue in the case. In her suit, Noland alleges that Schürmann was "either negligent or indifferent" and failed to regularly inspect the piece while on view outside, where it was in direct contact with the soil.

Noland also charges that the restoration of her work duplicated the cabin in violation of copyright law, which prohibits the reproduction of copyrighted or derivative work without permission. The charge raises broad questions about the conservation of conceptual art, notes Amy Adler, an art law professor at New York University.

"At what point does conserving a piece mean recreating it?" she asked.





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eventual destruction, an injunction halting any use of the work, any profits from the piece, and damages of between \$750 and \$30,000, along with statutory damages, if applicable.

Representatives for KOW declined to comment. Chris D'Amelio and Wilhelm Schürmann were unable to be reached for comment.

—Isaac Kaplan

Additional reporting by Mitch Sawyer.

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