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by Hendrik Hertzberg

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# THE NEW YORKER

FALL BOOKS

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on prose and pose

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**JAMES WOOD**  
on fine art and fakery

## ELIZABETH SMART'S

FREE ADVICE  
**MARGARET TALBOT**  
on a captive turned author

## CUBA'S STAR CRIME WRITER

**JON LEE ANDERSON**  
on realism and the regime





# ART

## MUSEUMS SHORT LIST

### METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—“Balthus: Cats and Girls—Paintings and Provocations.” Through Jan. 12.

### MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—“Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938.” Through Jan. 12.

### MOMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Ave., Queens (718-784-2084)—“Mike Kelley.” Through Feb. 2.

### GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—“Kandinsky in Paris, 1934-1944.” Through April 23.

### WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—“T. J. Wilcox: In the Air.” Through Feb. 9.

### BROOKLYN MUSEUM

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—“Wangechi Mutu: A Fantastic Journey.” Through March 9.

### AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—“The Butterfly Conservatory.” Through May 26.

### MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—“Edgar Allan Poe: Terror of the Soul.” Through Jan. 26.

### NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222).

“Sartorial Anarchy #23” (2013), by Iké Udé, at the Leila Heller gallery through Nov. 9.

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

### Guggenheim Museum

#### “Robert Motherwell: Early Collages”

It’s fitting that this exhibition was first seen at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, in Venice: the bohemian heiress encouraged Motherwell to experiment with *papiers collés*. Motherwell likened the act of tearing paper to “killing someone,” and his overlaying of fine and rough papers—decorative wrapping, maps, a shipping contract—packs a disjunctive punch. The earliest works, from the nineteen-forties, retain representational features and show the influence of Latin-American surrealists such as Matta; in “Pancho Villa, Dead and Alive,” on loan from MOMA, Motherwell overlaid three kinds of paper and wood veneer with humanoid shapes done in energetic black gouache. By 1951, when this show ends, he’d developed the Abstract Expressionist vocabulary he’d employ for decades, with decidedly mixed results. These early works, all done before he was thirty-six, may actually mark the high point of his career. Through Jan. 5.

### Morgan Library & Museum

#### “Tiepolo, Guardi, and Their World”

This handsome if dutiful show of some hundred works from the

museum’s collection opens with a brown ink drawing by Tiepolo: a radiant Madonna and her theatrically gleeful child are seated atop a globe. When the drawing was made, in the seventeen-forties, Venice no longer enjoyed a similarly lofty position, but the drawings here give little indication that the Most Serene Republic was on the wane. Late-baroque drawings by Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (an architectonic Annunciation, a male nude in tantalizing contrapposto) give way to freer, looser eighteenth-century delights, among them a series of beguiling Canaletto drawings that place familiar Venetian sites into invented settings. In one superb late *veduta* by Guardi, a state barge processes down the Grand Canal—you can just make out the sketched outline of San Giorgio Maggiore on the horizon—while the doge drops a ring into the water, marrying the city to the sea. Through Jan. 5.

### New Museum

#### “Chris Burden: Extreme Measures”

More a sampler than a true survey of the Los Angeles artist’s conglomerate oeuvre, this show offers a sense of his abiding interest in testing the limits of a material’s endurance—whether that material is his own body or a block of concrete. Burden has always maintained that his notorious early performances—including “Shoot” (1971), in which a bullet was fired into his arm, and “Through the Night Softly” (1973), in which he crawled nearly naked across broken glass with his hands tied behind his back—are essentially sculptural, but the documentation of such projects here is relegated to marginal galleries, making the history feel remote. No matter. His feats of mechanics, such as a three-ton flywheel powered by a 1969 Benelli motorcycle, and a mobile in which a 1974 Porsche and a meteorite are counterbalanced, bring “what if” scenarios into the realm of the profoundly real. Through Jan. 12.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

### Philip-Lorca diCorcia

When diCorcia first showed his cinematic photographs of L.A. hustlers at MOMA, in 1993, they made for a provocative and memorable museum debut. Now the series reminds us how far he’s come. Although a number of the pictures here have never been shown before, they’re minor variations on his now familiar approach: DiCorcia asked rent boys to pose in motel rooms, laundromats, and parking lots that provided ready-made B-movie sets. His subsequent work may be more arresting and emotionally complex, but the best of these portraits have a

volatile mix of seediness and glamour. Through Nov. 2. (Zwirner, 519 W. 19th St. 212-517-8677.)

### Paul Elliman

The British artist and graphic designer is like a magician whose tricks rely on a secret compartment hidden between a picture and a thousand words. Most of the works in his New York solo debut—photographs, a sound piece, taxonomic arrangements of found objects he considers fonts—invoke language, albeit obliquely. Look closely at that impressive specimen of rock crystal in a vitrine: it’s constructed from the clear-plastic barrels of ballpoint pens. A grid of photo-booth portraits is billed as an alphabet. A black-and-white patterned silk scarf—the type a conjurer might have up his sleeve—is titled “The Smoke of My Own Breath,” a line by Walt Whitman. Through Oct. 26. (Wallspace, 619 W. 27th St. 212-594-9478.)

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

### Christine Osinski

These black-and-white photographs, shot on Staten Island, where Osinski has lived since the eighties, when these pictures were made, are so casual that it takes a minute for their rigor and wit to register. Diane Arbus comes to mind (many of Osinski’s pictures look like the charming work Arbus did for the children’s-fashion section of the *Times*), as do Stephen Shore and Judith Joy Ross. The mood is relaxed, the clothes summery; boys have their shirts off, girls lounge against cars. For context, Osinski includes a few houses and gives us a sense of the dead suburban space that her people always manage to animate. Through Oct. 27. (Wolf, 70 Orchard St. 212-925-0025.)

### “Descartes’ Daughter”

In 1640, distraught at the death of his five-year-old child, René Descartes built an automaton in her likeness and doted on the model as if it were alive. The great rationalist’s bereavement drives this sharp group show, which explores how emotions can disrupt the Cartesian division of mind and body. A catalytic abstract painting by Charline von Heyl and a melancholy steel-and-wood assemblage by Rochelle Goldberg are bracketed by a surprising sixty-panel work by Hanne Darboven, which incorporates animal photography into the German Conceptualist’s mathematically rigorous drawings. Just when the show starts to feel too decorous—nearly everything here is black, white, or silver—a sound work by Sergei Tcherepnin intercedes: a piercing alarm so intense you can feel it in your stomach. Through Nov. 3. (Swiss Institute, 18 Wooster St. 212-925-2035.)

