

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Mark Leckey, "Artist's Favorites," *Spike Art Magazine*, Issue 78, Winter 23/24

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Artist's Favorites

By Mark Leckey

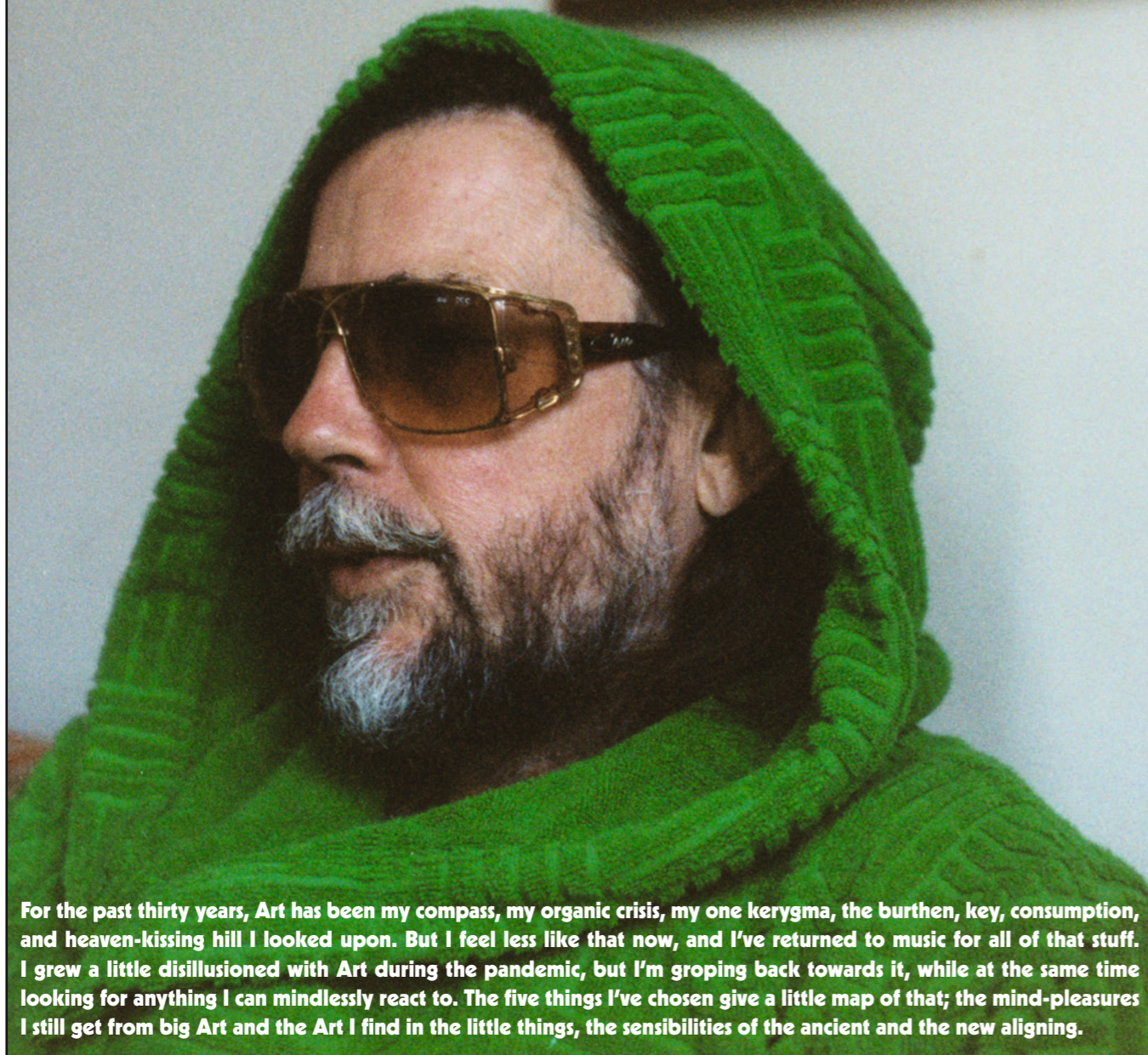


Photo: Alessandro Raimondo

For the past thirty years, Art has been my compass, my organic crisis, my one kerygma, the burthen, key, consumption, and heaven-kissing hill I looked upon. But I feel less like that now, and I've returned to music for all of that stuff. I grew a little disillusioned with Art during the pandemic, but I'm groping back towards it, while at the same time looking for anything I can mindlessly react to. The five things I've chosen give a little map of that; the mind-pleasures I still get from big Art and the Art I find in the little things, the sensibilities of the ancient and the new aligning.



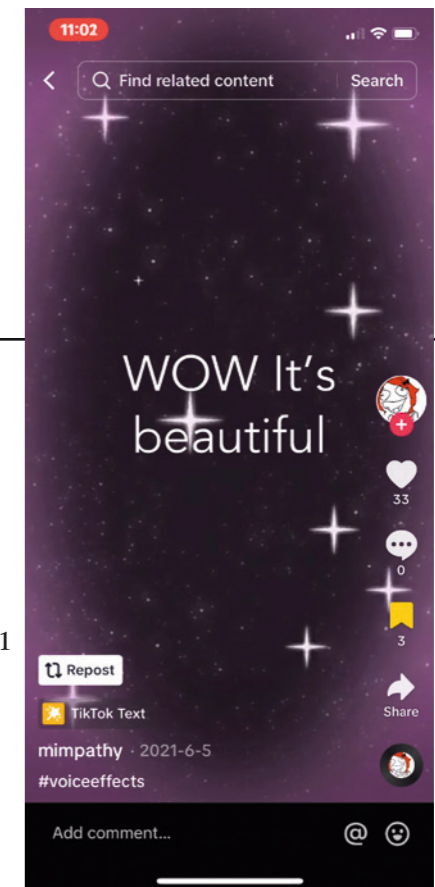
Sheena Patel, *I'm a Fan* (Rough Trade Books, 2022)

Sheena Patel

I'm a Fan, 2022

“What is the line between being vulnerable and prostrating yourself for a system that won't recognize you? The onus is never on the system to adjust its hardness, it's always on you to shape-shift and acquiesce.”

This is a short novel by Sheena Patel, and for me, it is all about possession, all the things that we desire to have or be taken by, aspirations that then come to possess us. It is intensely confined to the PPI of a phone screen, but then will abruptly do a two-finger zoom-out to the ownership of nar-ratives and territories and those dispossessed by these claims.



@lowiqhonorlevy

mimpathy, 2021

*Maybe it's OK I've made nothing of value because it's so beautiful.
I wish I could show you what I see when I close my eyes.
Because I've been on this app for so long,
I close my eyes, and I just see this, I just see sparkles.
It's like ... the whole world is on TikTok now. It's beautiful.
I guess I did make something worth something in my own eyes*

This brief, almost-nothing-at-all, twenty-second clip on TikTok has given me more than any other cultural artifact in the past couple of years. I'm completely mesmerized by it. It's a looped epiphany, delusion and disembodiment made into an apophatic affirmation.



Photo: Archivio Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena. By concession of Ministero della cultura. Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena

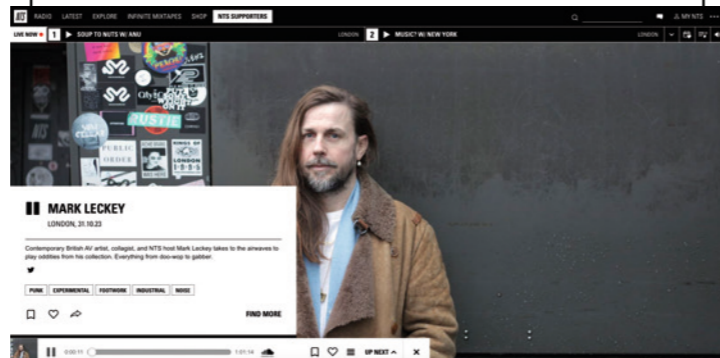
Il Sassetta (Stefano di Giovanni di Consolo)

I've long been a fan of iconography, especially from the period from around the late 14th century until just before the Renaissance, when it all went wrong. I've only recently discovered Il Sassetta, and he's my new enthusiasm. A particular favorite of mine is *Veduta di città sul mare* (City by the Sea, 1424). When I look at this painting, it seems to describe how the world feels now, like we were somehow reversing towards this city as it was back then. There is no sense of overall unified space, no one point of view. Instead, there is a doxastic logic to the city: Buildings appear at different scales and different geometries, and everything feels weightless and flat, situated somewhere between matter and spirit.

Born c. 1400 in Cortona, died 1450 in Siena.

NTS Radio

During the pandemic, when art felt totally hopeless, I leaned on music. I started an hour-long timeslot on the online radio station NTS, and through the worst of the lockdown, it was the only institution that really gave me hope. Through my show, I discovered first the UK composers Klein and Neil Luck, then a crop of artists that came out of Manchester, like Iceboy Violet, Blackhaine, and aya. What I love about music is that it can be grassroots and esoteric simultaneously. Unlike art, moreover, in music, disadvantage isn't strictly an obstacle to experimentation – it can actually be the incubator of it.



© Martine Syms. Courtesy: the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London



Martine Syms

The African Desperate (2022)

The African Desperate, directed by Martine Syms and starring the artist Diamond Stingily, tells a story of being at art school – in an MFA program – and makes an artwork out of that. The setting gives you the sense of art as both your best friend and your worst enemy, how the art world entralls and appalls, compels and repulses. It's the most recent work by an artist that has stuck with me, in the sense that someone has described their reality, how they experience the world, and has put that in your mind so it occupies your thoughts.

Born 1988 in Los Angeles, lives in Los Angeles.

MARK LECKEY

(born 1964 in Birkenhead, lives in London) is a video artist who, since the late 1990s, has looked at what ties popular culture and technology together, often through the lenses of youth, class, wistfulness, and anxiety. Recent solo shows took place at Cabinet, London; Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf (both 2022); Galerie Buchholz, Berlin (2021). He has recently participated in the group shows "In First Person Plural," MACRO, Rome; "Calling," Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (both 2023); "Broken Music Vol. 2," Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; "Mountain / Time," Aspen Art Museum (both 2022); "The Dreamers," 58th October Salon, Belgrade Biennale (2021).

Stills from *The African Desperate*, 2022, film, 97 min