

Art in America



\$12 SEPTEMBER 2015 COVER BY NICOLE EISENMAN

Editor's Letter

POOR PABLO! Last century's poster boy for the male genius artist is this month's muse for Nicole Eisenman's cover—and what does she do? Deflates his manhood. She's made a powerful and enigmatic image: part sculpture, part drawing, part photograph.



Pablo Picasso: *Chair*, 1961, painted sheet metal, 45½ by 45 by 35 inches. Musée national Picasso, Paris. © Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

An amorphous, white phallic object appears to have washed up on a beach at dusk. Eisenman's cover evokes the experimental and eclectic nature of Picasso's sculpture practice, both in the choice of materials (white plaster, ceramics, found objects and metal) and the collage effect she achieves by combining seemingly unrelated objects and producing formal fractures. A pile of detritus, also white, clumped at the base includes Magritte-style pipes, a wristwatch, a slice of Swiss cheese, a broken lightbulb, a Zippo lighter, a toothbrush, a peace sign

and an embracing couple drawn in Eisenman's distinctive hand.

This motley array suggests many things: the passage of time, decay, the twilight of modernism and a strong wit. Eisenman created *Art in America's* Picasso-infused cover to coincide with the opening this month of the Picasso sculpture survey at New York's Museum of Modern Art. We also invited nine artists to share their thoughts about Picasso, echoing a symposium commissioned by *A.i.A.* in 1980, when MoMA mounted a major retrospective.

Travis Jeppesen traveled to Venice to see this year's Biennale. Instead of the usual review, he takes an unorthodox approach, blending fact and fiction and veering into satire. While I disagree with many of the opinions of his fictional art critic Cheb, Jeppesen raises some poignant questions about art-world hypocrisies. Jeppesen's sometime collaborator Bjarne Melgaard responded to his article with a group of drawings, which leave us grateful and amused. Meanwhile, *A.i.A.* associate editor Brian Droitcour weighs in on the Biennale with an examination of the national pavilion system, wondering why so much money, effort and time yields such critically weak results.

This issue also contains a thoughtful treatise on Romanian video and photography by Olga Stefan, who spent several months immersed in that scene. Elsewhere, we hear from artist Edgar Arceneaux, who provides a personal account of the work and life of the late and underappreciated Noah Purifoy, who is currently the subject of a major show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The intrepid Jeppesen also went to the Havana Biennial in Cuba this summer. During his visit, he spoke with Tania Bruguera about her recent travails with the Cuban government, and we are happy to have this lively and timely interview.

Lindsay Pollock

LINDSAY POLLOCK