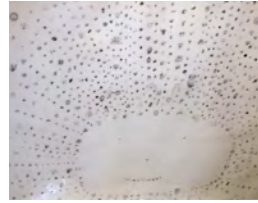




**Matthew Higgs** (b. 1964) Artist, curator and writer Matthew Higgs is the current Director of White Columns, New York City's oldest alternative non-profit art space. Higgs' work often takes the form of framed book pages and covers acquired from second-hand stores. Higgs is represented by Murray Guy in New York.

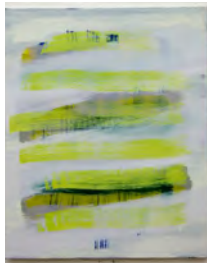
**Chris Ofili** (b. 1968) Internationally acclaimed artist Chris Ofili explores themes of contemporary black culture, referencing a wide range of influences, from his own Nigerian heritage to Zimbabwean cave paintings to hip-hop heroes. In 1998 Ofili was awarded the Turner Prize, and in 2003 he was selected to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale. He is represented by David Zwirner in New York.



**Alex Olson** (b. 1978) The paintings by California-based artist Alex Olson possess a deep-rooted liveliness, evidenced through bursts of color, gestural lines, vigorous mark making, or youthful dots made with her fingertips as in the case of *Untitled* (2010). Olson is represented by Lisa Cooley Fine Art in New York and Shane Campbell Gallery in Chicago.



**Laura Owens** (b. 1970) The work of Los Angeles-based artist Laura Owens uniquely blends abstraction and representation, incorporating expressive washes of color, detailed line work, and romantic and whimsical imagery. Her work has been exhibited at several renowned museums, including the Kunstmuseum Bonn in Germany and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. She is represented by Gavin Brown's enterprise in New York.

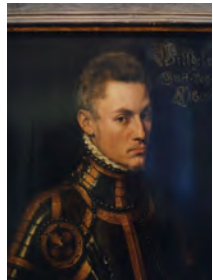


**Jon Pestoni** (b. 1969) Jon Pestoni creates alluring abstractions through beautifully and thinly applied layers of paint. Exploring light and spatial tension, the surfaces of his paintings breathe as the various layers emerge, recede, and engage with one another. Pestoni is represented by Lisa Cooley Fine Art in New York.



**Elizabeth Peyton** (b. 1965) Elizabeth Peyton's distinctive portraits offer personal and intimate views of friends, family, and famous and historical figures, depicted in her signature style with jewel-like colors. She is represented by Gavin Brown's enterprise, and has exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and Royal Academy in London.

**Michael E. Smith** (b. 1977) Known for using domestic and urban materials, Michael E. Smith's sculptures, paintings, videos and installations speak to the urban condition of his hometown of Detroit. He is represented by Clifton Benevento in New York and has exhibited at the St. Louis Museum of Contemporary Art.



**Wolfgang Tillmans** (b. 1968) German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans is known for his versatile style, moving through a wide array of subjects, from abstraction to seemingly casual snapshots. Tillmans is represented by Andrea Rosen in New York, and in 2000 he became the first photographer and non-English artist to be awarded the Turner Prize.



**Hayley Tompkins** (b. 1971) Hayley Tompkins' small scale works on paper and sculptures touch upon experiences we encounter every day. The objects she works with - whether mass produced, natural, or found - contain tangible histories and reveal a passage of time. She is represented by Andrew Kreps in New York and The Modern Institute in Glasgow.

# Real Simple



## At Riverview School

**Selections from the collection of  
Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg**

Text by Benjamin Godsill  
*Curator*

Cover Art by Anne Collier  
*Songwriter*



551 Route 6A, East Sandwich, MA 02537  
Gallery Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30- 5:00pm

“Nothing is simple” is a refrain we hear again and again. Everything around us, including instructions, sounds, ideas, arguments, is said to have a complexity to them that is often hidden by the simplicity of their surface appearance. But, just because beneath the surface something is complex, we should not deny the raw joy of a simple external structure. It is often the immediate feelings one has on first encountering an idea or an object that can be the most emotionally and aesthetically resonate. Take, for example, a beautiful Italian sports car, a Ferrari: while we may never comprehend (or care to) the intricacies of mechanics, torque, horsepower or aerodynamics involved in the car, the sight of such an exotic automobile on the street can fill us with feelings of wonder at the power it seems to possess, an almost visceral or physical understanding of its grace and exuberance.

As with automobiles so it is with art. Often the most powerful experiences with art are reactions to basic forms, a simple gesture, a line, color. While complexity may lie beneath the surface, it is that surface that first captures us. So it is with the seventeen artworks brought together in this exhibition - they speak clearly as to what they are and how they were made. Taken individually and together they are *Real Simple*.

Several of the works in *Real Simple* project simplicity through their gestural abstraction. Emblematic of this approach is *House of Blues* (1995), the blue gridded painting by the lyrical abstractionist Mary Heilmann. In this work Heilmann arranges an almost childlike series of blue grids to resounding affect. Similarly, works by Alex Olson, Laura Owens and Jon Pestoni are each gestural abstractions that offer punches of colorful power. Abstraction as a distillation of form is not limited in the exhibition to painting. In Michael E. Smith's *Untitled* (2010), a garden hose is repurposed creating a form akin to a scribbled gesture on the wall. The act of abstracting an item from the everyday world is also the subject of Wolfgang Tillmans' *paper drop (glas)*. The simple idea of photographing a photograph curved in on itself is made riveting by the physicality of the subject.

Several other photographs included in the exhibition are in essence portraits. One of the most basic uses of photography has often been to look at our fellow human's visage. However, the works by Anne Collier, Roe Ethridge, and Saul Fletcher all add complicating

gestures in their composition allowing for both simple and more obscure experiences. In Collier's *Songwriter* (2004), for example, the subject obscures her or his face with an album cover held as to make the photograph on the record seem to stand in for that of the subject's.

Hayley Tompkins' two works from 2001 are both based on portraits. Here, however, the artist has torn the images of young women out of magazines and then balled them up and held them in her fists for several days. The resulting wrinkled images become endowed with the artist's energy and aura. Elizabeth Peyton, well known for her small-scale paintings of lithe young things, further engages in portraiture in her 2010 work *Flaubert in Egypt (After Delacroix)*. While not necessarily simple in subject matter, the work was drawn with the specific intention that it would be made as a multiple edition using one of the most basic methods, the Xerox.

Perhaps the most outwardly simple form of artistic production is appropriation, the taking of an image from one place and changing its meaning by placing it in a different context. Matthew Higgs' two delightful works in the exhibition are each title pages removed from books then framed - they use an efficiency of labor to make witty verbal plays such as "*Nostalgia Isn't What It Used to Be.*" Martin Creed in his work *Don't Worry* (2001) spells out those very words in glowing yellow neon - a seemingly simple phrase that can mean so very many things is (literally) writ large.

Chris Ofili touches on the same feel good vibes as Creed in his work *The Chosen Ones* (1995-96). Ofili fills the page with dozens of sketched tiny faces, not all smiling, that combine to make one big crude smiley face. Like all the work gathered in this exhibition, it is simple and easy to react to, to understand how it was made and how it makes us feel. While in all the works there are many issues boiling beneath the surface, on the surface it is what it is, it's real simple.



**Anne Collier** (b. 1970) Anne Collier's photographs incorporate found images, such as magazine pages, record sleeves, and posters, to explore notions of perception and representation in a media-driven world. She is represented by Anton Kern Gallery in New York and has exhibited at Nottingham Contemporary, UK and the Salina Art Center in Kansas.



**Martin Creed** (b. 1968) Martin Creed uses modest materials in his work to make visually arresting, witty commentary on the relation between art and everyday life. Creed is represented by Gavin Brown's enterprise in New York, has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions world wide, and was the recipient of Britain's prestigious Turner Prize in 2001.

**Roe Ethridge** (b. 1969) A successful commercial photographer, Ethridge's images exude precision and clarity, while demonstrating the full expressive power of the medium. Ethridge is represented by Andrew Kreps in New York and Gagosian Gallery in Los Angeles, and has exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.



**Saul Fletcher** (b. 1967) Saul Fletcher is known for the elusive and melancholic quality of his small-scale, intimate photographs. Fletcher carefully conceives of and composes each detail in his images, and often incorporates his own home, himself, or a family member. Fletcher is represented by Anton Kern Gallery in New York, and his work has been exhibited at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburg and the Tate Modern in London.



**Mary Heilmann** (b. 1940) Mary Heilmann's vibrant and joyful abstract paintings are noted for their saturated colors, lively treatment of space, and rhythmic compositions. Heilmann is represented by 303 Gallery in New York and has had major exhibitions at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and Wexner Center for the Arts in Ohio.