

*Principle Gallery presents the exhibition *Disrupted Realism*,
curated by John Seed, featuring work by artists who are
challenging and changing traditional realism.*

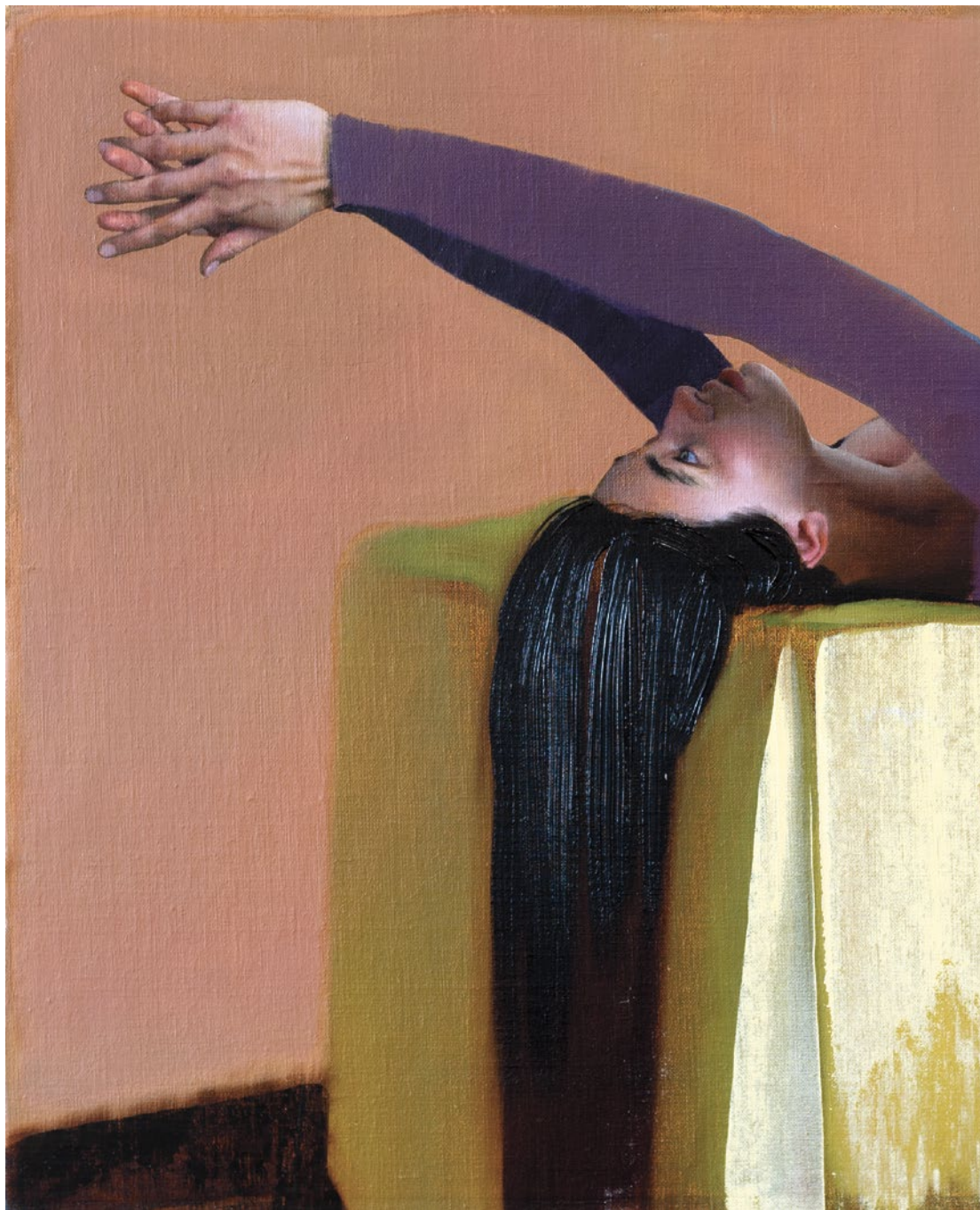
BY ROCHELLE BELSITO

RESHAPING



REALISM

Valerio D'Ospina,
L'Inferno di Dante,
oil on panel, 32 x 43"



J Louis, *Revision*, oil on cradled linen panel, 22 x 30"



When John Seed published his book *Disrupted Realism: Paintings for a Distracted World* in 2019, he may not have known the true impact it would have in the art industry. In its title, and through the work of 38 painters, he defined a movement that had been taking shape for years—artwork that is pushing boundaries of traditional realism and playing with abstraction, distortion, line or form.

“The one thing that I always tell people about the book and the idea behind the book is artists make these things happen. As a curator, and in assembling a book, my role is just to be a good observer. I am not in any way initially grouping artists or trends,” explains Seed. “I am asking questions: What am I seeing across the field of art? What are artists trying? What’s working for them?”

The book came from seven years of Seed logging posts online between 2010 and 2017, where he started to notice a recurring theme in contemporary artwork from around the world. Seed says, “It was all over the place. I saw manifestations of artists feeling realism isn’t adequate for what they were wanting to say.”

Disrupted realism is in response to the modern experience, which is filled with technology and moments of time that are gone in an instant. It is a realism that allows the artist to think about what is going on around them and reflect that in their art. The artists, as Seed writes in the book, “may suggest time, memory and individual experience or refer to digital, photographic or cinematic sources. It is a subjective approach that favors perception over seeing and embraces subjectivity.” Every artist is different in their approach, and through their individual ideas, techniques and artistic vision they are adding to the language of realism.

Since publication, Seed has mounted numerous exhibitions with a focus on disrupted realism. “What I’m learning is when you publish a hardbound book—and this is my first coffee-table book—is that it has legs,” says Seed. “People keep it around and talk about it. Artists bring it by, and galleries let us know that the conversation about these ways of thinking are continuing through exhibitions.”

His newest show is the aptly titled *Disrupted Realism*, which he curated for Principle Gallery. On view September 17 through October 18 in Alexandria, Virginia, the exhibition includes work by 14 artists—some artists who were featured in the book and others who are newcomers to Seed’s shows. Included will be art by



Joshua Flint, *Flushed & Flamelike Themselves*, oil on canvas, 68 x 58"

Mia Bergeron, Daniel Bilodeau, Michelle Condrat, Valerio D'Ospina, Joshua Flint, Anne Harris, Catherine Kehoe, Aiden Kringen, Stanka Kordic, Maya Kulenovic, J. Louis, Nick Runge, Timothy Robert Smith and Zack Zdrale.

Bergeron will exhibit her painting *Stop Running*. Describing the work, she says, "The inspiration for *Stop Running* was actually purely visual—I loved the way the light hit the skeleton and the colors

reminded me somewhat of a stained glass, which felt interesting given the subject matter. I think what I like so much about the term 'disrupted realism' is that it is so broad—to me, it can mean a visual disruption like parts of a painting disintegrating, but it can also translate to when you are looking at reality and are taken somewhere else. I think when I saw the skeleton in *Stop Running* sitting in that almost church-like light, I was transported out of that specific

environment, and into a place much more abstract and ethereal."

Flushed & Flamelike Themselves, by Flint, depicts a human figure up in flames. "One aspect of my painting is 'reordering the appearance of [my] subject matter' in an intuitive manner, which is one way John has described *Disrupted Realism*. By working in this manner, it allows me a greater capacity to bring together a wide range of topics, which layers and enriches



Mia Bergeron, *Stop Running*, oil on panel, 16 x 12"



Michelle Condrat, *Autumn Flirtation*, oil on board, 16 x 12"



Nick Runge, *A Fire Apart*, oil on canvas, 36 x 36"

the imagery, such as the young boy on fire," says Flint. "Is the fire a representation of an interior feeling now visualized? Is he spectral like an apparition? Is it metaphorical about growth and identity? Fire has deeply rooted cultural significance and very personal associations, so I'm exploring those questions. My hope is that the painting resides in that liminal space of myth, dreams and history through this 'reordering' of the image. The greenhouse-like backdrop derives from my interest in how we see ourselves and find ourselves echoed in the landscape, whether human-made or natural."

Also on view will be D'Ospina's *L'Inferno di Dante*, which the artist started

after watching the Italian news a few months ago. His work depicts the "Camera dei deputati," or the Chamber of Deputies, which is the lower of the bicameral Parliament of Italy. "To me it was inevitable the association with Dante's *Inferno*, both aesthetically and allegorically, so I decided to paint it," he says. "The first day I was working on it, while I was blocking in the composition, my thoughts went to the disrupted realism show for a moment, and I had to put down the brushes to write what I was just thinking: 'What reality is more disrupted than that which is discussed in a place like this?'"

Other works in the show include landscapes by Condrat; Zdrale's *Repeller*, which

was done in early 2021 in direct response to 2020, with the figure giving the composition structure; and figurative pieces from Bilodeau, Runge, Kordic and more. *Disrupted Realism* opens with a reception on September 17 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. ●

DISRUPTED REALISM CURATED BY JOHN SEED

When: September 17–October 18, 2021;
Sept. 17, 6–8:30 p.m., opening reception

Where: Principle Gallery, 208 King Street,
Alexandria, VA 22314

Information: (703) 739-9326, www.principlegallery.com