

Regina DeLuise

Dreamer's House

Thursday, January 31 – Sunday, March 17, 2018

Maryland Institute College of Art

Bunting Center: Pinkard Gallery

Reception: Saturday, February 2, 5 – 7 p.m.



Table and Chairs, Bogliasco, Italy, 2017

Her World

Let's concede that the world is everything that is the case. I understand "everything" here to include not only things but relations among things, including the relationship known as perception. In any case, the one thing we know about everything that is the case is that no one knows what that is. We know some of the things that are the case and can speculate with some confidence about several others; that's all.

The same philosopher who defined the world as everything that is the case also wrote: "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." The world is one thing, my world another. Let me suggest: My world is an interpretation of the world. I mean this just in the same sense that an actor gives an interpretation of a role, or a musician interprets a score. Richard Burton's interpretation of Hamlet was undoubtedly different from that of John Gielgud, just as Wilhelm Kempff's played a Beethoven sonata somewhat differently than Artur Schnabel. Something different is revealed in each case — but never is everything revealed. An interpretation simultaneously reduces what it interprets (selects, establishes limits) and adds to it — a valid interpretation of Hamlet, for instance, always adds something that no other interpreter has found, and which, for that matter, Shakespeare did not put there.

A photograph is an interpretation of the world. Regina DeLuise could rightly describe what is seen in her pictures as her world because, through the very act of selecting from the world, she's added something, expanding our understanding of what might be the case — given something that was not there before, something that was not yet the case until the making of the photograph. First of all, she selects tone as a language for rendering light; in agreement with a longstanding photographic tradition but in contradiction to most current practice in the field, she understands that something of the mute and irreducible existence of things can be expressed more forcefully in shades of gray than through prismatic color. Strange: the color of things is not recorded in these photographs, but it is not missing from them.

Few photographs embody a world made of thing but shades of gray as fully as DeLuise's *Porch, Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York, 2018*. The image is so nebulous that at first you might think it simply out of focus; the more closely you look at it, the less you see.



Destefano, Catskill, New York 2016

Better to lean back a bit and let the shadows gather into forms. In doing so, you'll also become more conscious of the vertical folds that traverse the immediate foreground, which show that we are seeing this space through a kind of scrim — perhaps not literally a gauzy fabric, but perhaps a sheet of plastic? In any case, by eliminating any extreme contrasts of light and dark, this material through which we see reinterprets the black and white world as a plane on which shadows are gathered and dispersed rather than as a stage on which volumetric objects are situated.

Perhaps the most important factor of selection and limitation, for any photographer, is the act of framing — the particular way I take a (typically rectangular) "cut" from the world to show as "my" world. On this matter, DeLuise's photographs sometimes offer a meta-commentary — they draw deliberate attention to their framing so as to make it part of the work's subject. A good example would be *Table and Chairs, Bogliasco, Italy, 2017*, where what centrally occupies the frame is not the furniture mentioned in the title, but rather the framed view out a large window onto a nearby tree trunk and the surrounding landscape, which includes not only more distant trees but also a fence separating the single

nearby tree from the rest but also echoes the horizontal and vertical elements of the window itself, the sash and frame. The world “out there” is at once wild and irregular, like the bark of the tree or the spreading branches and leaves of the closest one on the other side of the fence, but it is also divided up, with a geometry that is both imposed on the terrain and inherent in our means for getting a view on it (the window). At the same time, as the wood grain of the table in the foreground reminds us, the very planes of our artfully or artificially constructed world incorporate the wild matter of the world beyond and before geometry. Etymologically, a camera is a room; this picture reminds us that although part of the function of the camera is to separate itself and its operator from the world — to put the world, temporarily, “over there” in order to get a view on it — the apparatus is also part of the world that it is trying to get a view on. Except in a mirror, however, it can never show itself, but here, DeLuise evokes the working of the camera without including its reflection in her frame.



Smoke in Olive Grove, Bogliasco, Italy 2017

Showing me something of her world, the world that appears only through the camera by means of which she interprets the world — like a Kempff or a Schnabel interpreting through an instrument they handle as only they know how — DeLuise at the same time shows me how she shows me her world. This redoubling, by which she not only offers an interpretation not only of the world but of her interpretive apparatus, is not only in the interest of cognitive penetration. It also makes possible a further extremity of pleasure.

—Barry Schwabsky, 2018

Barry Schwabsky is art critic for *The Nation*. He also writes regularly for such publications as *New Left Review* and *Artforum* (where is co-editor of international reviews). He has taught at, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Yale University, MICA and Goldsmiths College among others. His most recent books are a collection of critical essays on art writers and art writing, *Words for Art: Criticism, History, Theory, Practice* (Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2013) and a collection of poems, *Trembling Hand Equilibrium* (Black Square Editions, New York). *The Perpetual Guest: Art in the Unfinished Present*, Verso (New York and London) a selection of Schwabsky's art criticism from *The Nation*.



Porch, Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York, 2018



Doll Shoes, Amherst, Virginia 2016



Photograph of the artist by Donna Whicher

Regina DeLuise joined the full time faculty at MICA in 2007. She is a Guggenheim Fellow and is represented in private and public collections, including MOMA, MET, SFOMA, Art Institute of Chicago, Houston Museum of Fine Art, NMAH Smithsonian Institute and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. Before arriving at MICA, DeLuise worked at the Daniel Wolf Gallery in New York and co- founded Elm Street Arts, a cooperative gallery in Manchester, Vermont. Regina is from Brooklyn, New York, received her B.F.A. from SUNY Purchase and her M.A. from Rosary College, Graduate School of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy.

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MICA MARYLAND INSTITUTE COLLEGE OF ART

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