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Malcolm Morley

Born in London in 1931, Malcolm Morley lived in and around New York City from 1958 until his death in 2018. He is acknowledged as one of the earliest innovators of Superrealism, which developed as a counterpoint to Pop Art in the 1960s. Over the course of his distinguished career, Morley defied stylistic characterization, moving by turns through so-called abstract, realist, neo-romantic, and neo-expressionist painterly modes, while being attentive to his own biographical experiences. Morley studied at the Camberwell College of Arts and the Royal College of Art. Since his first New York show in 1964, he had numerous exhibitions in Europe and North America and participated in many international surveys including Documenta 5 (1972) and Documenta 6 (1977). His first retrospective, organized in 1983 by the Whitechapel Art Gallery, travelled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and the Brooklyn Museum. In 1984, he was awarded the inaugural Turner Prize.

Subsequent noteworthy presentations of Morley's work include an exhibition of watercolors at Tate Liverpool, which travelled to the Kunsthalle Basel, Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, and the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, NY (1991-92); a retrospective at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1993); an exhibition organized by Fundación La Caixa, Madrid, which travelled to the Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (1995-96); a retrospective at the Hayward Gallery, London (2001); and the survey "The Art of Painting" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2006). Other notable exhibitions include "Malcolm Morley in a Nutshell: The Fine Art of Painting 1954-2012" at the Yale School of Art (2012), an exhibition exploring the role of paper in Morley's art-making process at the Parrish Art Museum (2012-13), and an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, organized in collaboration with the Hall Art Foundation (2013-14). Most recently, the Hall Art Foundation's Schloss Derneburg presented a solo exhibition of his work (2017-18). In addition to the Turner Prize, Morley was awarded the Painting Award from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1992 and the Francis J. Greenburger Award in 2015. He was inducted into both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2009) and the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2011). Morley became a citizen of the United States in 1991. His work can be found in museum collections worldwide. After his debut at Sperone Westwater in 1999, he had solo exhibitions at the gallery in 2005, 2009, 2011 and 2015.

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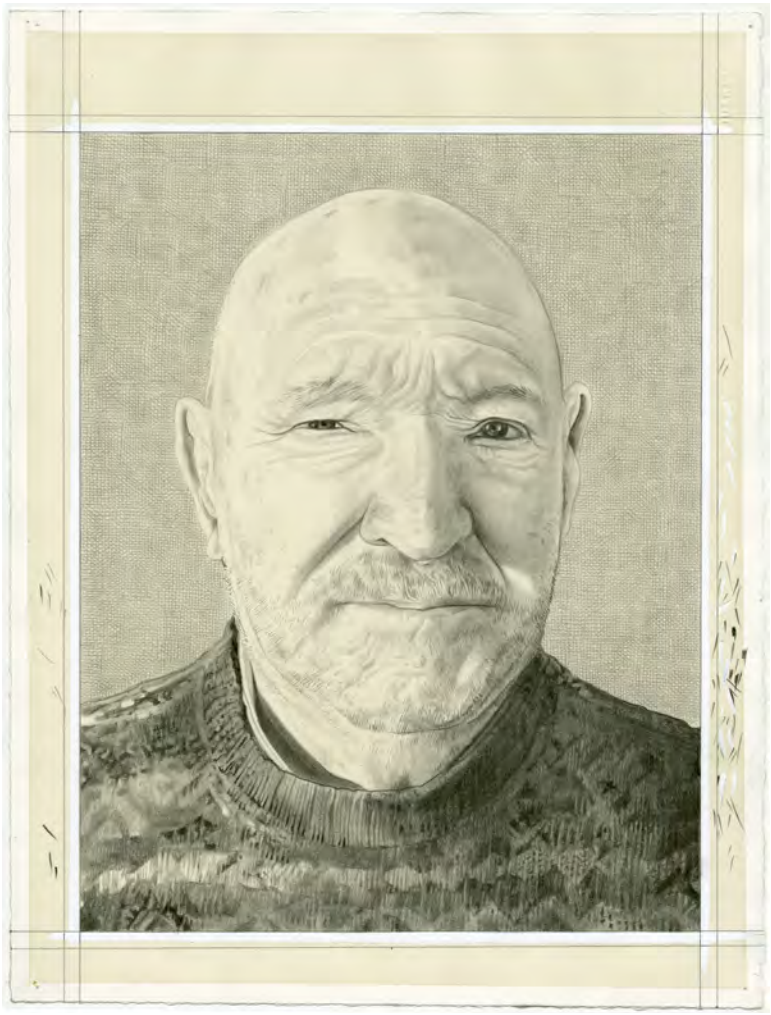
"In Memoriam: A Tribute to Malcolm Morley." *brooklynrail.org (The Brooklyn Rail)*, 3 August 2018.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE



Portrait of Malcolm Morley, pencil on paper by Phong Bui.

Malcolm Morley In Remembrance (1931 – 2018)

One tends to think of our artistic community, to some extent, as being similar to a symphony, which requires multitudes of instruments that each have their own distinct and unique sound, yet as a whole, they contribute to the total orchestration of musical experience. One can be certain that Malcolm is more like a violin or a piano rather than a viola or a celesta.

Anyone who has met or known Malcolm would offer a similar view, from up close the compelling details are deliciously visible, while from afar a broader perspective of the subject is generously revealed. As the saying goes, "there are those who read to remember and those who read to forget." Malcolm, with great certainty, belongs to the former.

The following is our tribute composed by his friends and admirers.

Eric Fischl

I met Malcolm in 1976 when I visited his studio in NYC. The purpose of my visit was to invite him to lecture at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design where I was teaching. NSCAD at that time was profoundly and intransigently anti-painting and I thought that if anyone could change their minds about whether painting could still be radical or not, Malcolm was the one to do it.

At the time of my visit he was nearing completion of a painting about a train wreck, and as we stood there in front of it he explained his process to me. A friend had given him a shadow box with a model train smashed up and set against black velvet. He decided to paint it but rather than work from a gridded off

photograph of it like he'd been doing, he decided to paint it from "life." He floated a string grid of thread over the box and then cut cardboard to hide all but one square at a time. As if that wasn't going to be difficult enough, he decided to paint it backwards. When he finished the painting he realized that no one would be able to tell that he had painted it backwards, and so he went back into it, adding the image of a crumpled Russian newspaper on top of the wreckage and then added a border with Japanese calligraphy on it. What didn't occur to him until he'd finished it was that no one who didn't speak Russian or Japanese would be able to tell that they were also painted backwards!

Anyone who knew Malcolm will have stories and memories not unlike this one. Every painting Malcolm created was a journey and an adventure. There was no one painting then or now who could make such a laden tradition feel like a novelty. There hasn't been anyone who can match his child-like whimsy, wonder, and impish disregard for the weight and authority of painting's own history. In his insistent deconstruction of the language of imagery and process of painting, with all its attendant clichés and sentimentality, he painted with an explosive energy that brought with it its own renewal.

Without Malcolm where do we go from here but carry on.

Malcolm Morley, *Train Wreck*, 1976. Oil on canvas, 60 × 96 inches. Museum Moderne Kunst/Ludwig Foundation, Vienna. Courtesy the estate of Malcolm Morley and Sperone Westwater, New York.

Andy Hall

I first became aware of Malcolm's paintings at Charles Saatchi's gallery in Boundary Road, London, in the 1980s. These bold, colorful canvases, full of unlikely and anachronistic juxtapositions, had a dreamlike quality with an unsettling hint of menace. They were hard to forget. Years later, as Christine and I became

committed “collectors,” Malcolm’s work became a particular focus of our new obsession. We tracked down works that spanned his whole fifty-plus-year career as one of the most innovative painters of his generation. In the process we got to know Malcolm quite well and visited his Long Island studio on a number of occasions. That Malcolm, like us, was an émigré from England (he came from the same unglamorous suburbs of West London) probably resonated. But his deep understanding and knowledge of art history combined with a quick and mischievous wit was what really made our encounters a stimulating and memorable experience. On one occasion, we listened to Malcolm give a lecture about his work to MFA students at Yale. Malcolm had illustrated his talk with slides of some of his better-known works replete with the familiar Morley motifs including ships, model planes, toy soldiers, animals, motor cyclists and the like, all executed in his signature palette of bright saturated colors. At the end of his talk Malcolm answered questions posed by the students. The first came from a young lady who asked if Malcolm “had ever engaged the nude?” The then 80-year-old painter considered the question for a moment, narrowed his eyes and dead panned: “Yes, on many occasions.”

Malcolm Morley, Cristoforo Colombo, 1966. Liquitex on canvas, 14 × 20 inches. Private collection. Courtesy the estate of Malcolm Morley and Sperone Westwater, New York.

From his early days in New York, Malcolm befriended and hung out with other artists. It was Richard Artschwager who told him to quit experimenting with sculpture and stick to painting ships. Supposedly Malcolm, following this advice, lugged his easel down to Chelsea piers and tried to paint the ocean liners that were docked there. He eventually gave up in frustration finding it impossible to fit the huge vessels on his canvas at such close quarters. Instead he bought some post cards of these passenger liners from a nearby newsstand and in his studio faithfully replicated the cheap four color printed images onto his canvases by

using a grid. Thus was born his signature style and method along with a genre of painting dubbed "photorealism," as well as some early Morley masterpieces like *SS Amsterdam in Front of Rotterdam* and *Cristoforo Colombo*. But Malcolm soon rebelled against being pigeonholed in this way. He defaced one of his paintings—a copy of a South African tourist brochure of a horse racing track (the aptly titled *Race Track*)—with a large red "X" the day before it was to be photographed for an article about him in Time magazine. Thereafter he progressively subverted his own earlier works. His imagery became more and more gestural to the point where by the early 1980s he was considered a leader of the neo-expressionist wave. How many painters can be categorized as both a photo-realist and a neo-expressionist? Subsequently, Malcolm successively synthesized these two polar extremes by painting gridded arrays of pure gestural abstraction that at a distance resolve into photographic imagery (or as he preferred to call it) "super" realism.

About 10 years ago we were chatting to Malcolm at a dinner honoring him and some other New York based artists—including a very well-known one with a famously large Manhattan studio and dozens of painter-assistants. Malcolm motioned in this artist's direction and mentioned that he had recently spotted a help-wanted ad in the newspaper seeking "photo-realist" painters. He called the number and asked what they were paying. Malcolm wasn't too impressed with the rate and said he thought it should be more. He was asked if he "could do photorealism?" to which Malcom answered breezily, "oh yes, I invented it." We are going to miss you Malcolm.

Malcolm Morley, *Race Track*, 1970. Liquitex on canvas, 67 × 86 2/3 inches. Ludwig Museum Budapest—Museum of Contemporary Art. Courtesy the estate of Malcolm Morley and Sperone Westwater, New York.

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Robert Storr
A Working-Class Dandy is Something to Be

Some memories spring into focus with the unimpeachable clarity of first-hand experience and others flicker around the edges of such clarity in such a manner as to suggest that they aren't really one's own recollections but rather variable mental reconstructions of things one has heard, things that however second hand nonetheless made so deep an impression that they feel first hand, earned. Years ago, when I was teaching at the Studio School on Eighth Street, I seem to recall having crossed Washington Square and noticing a man intently making $10 sketch portraits on a French easel of any and all comers.

It was the mid-Eighties and the man was Malcolm Morley at that time riding the crest of his second big wave of art world fame as an emblematic elder statesman of what the Royal Academy called *A New Spirit in Painting*. Such was the title of the RA's 1981 survey show of post minimalism and new media art. In 1984 he was chosen the first winner of the newly inaugurated Turner Prize, further confirming his status as a pivotal talent in the eclipse of the former avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s, all the while being emblematic of some of them, most notably the advent of photo-mechanically based practices that would morph into "anti-aesthetic" Post-modernist "discourses" of the 1980s. An expatriate Brit who brought his working-class accent and a pugnacious style with him from the rougher parts of London where he grew up during the Blitz as well as an avid enthusiast of early aeronautical exploits, Malcolm was the Wrong Way Corrigan of Photorealism who became famous for his anti-expressive renditions of luxury liners, contemporary interiors, race tracks and other "pop" culture subjects. By the 1980s all this had morphed into vivid, deceptively awkward renditions of toy soldiers and other tokens of boyish fantasy that could not be more pronounced, reminding one of Picasso's statement that having been well trained in traditional skills it had taken him years to learn how to draw like a child.

This transformation, as well as his academic training and official honors, speak to Malcolm's dedication to workman-like craft—as a practitioner of a medium that was officially dead he took the greatest pleasure in declaring his devotion to "the fine art of oil painting"—in constant dialectical tension with his utterly unpredictable playfulness which, Borstal boy that he had been before he found art, drove him to seek out and study rules the better to break them. For me the excitement of looking at his work overall and still more so example-by-example, was watching the tug of war between his drive to dazzle like the old masters and his impulsive need to mess with the viewer's expectations—and his own.

Early in my tenure as a Curator of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA, and less than a decade after *A New Spirit in Painting*, I had occasion to acquire a looming, brushy painting of a fishing tub *Michelle* (1992) and, later, as Dean of the Yale School of Art, I organized a compact retrospective of Malcolm's work. At Yale the one gallery synopsis of his career began with a conservative Euston Road-type landscape made while he was a student (the motif was the studio/residence of Sir Joshua Reynolds which was then inhabited by the British actor John Mills who came out to check on the person camped on the green outside his house and bought the work on the spot)—to brand new installation works incorporating the façades of pubs and other talismans of his childhood.

When I initially broached the issue of exhibiting his work Malcolm had just come through a life-threatening illness and seemed rather fragile. However, except for the Brooklyn Museum which mounted a Morley survey in 1982, the major New York institutions had generally neglected him, and thus despite his vulnerability—or perhaps because of it—Malcolm was anxious to take these 3D paintings public. I was, too. (In 2013 I organized a similar capsule retrospective for Alex Katz in the same space for the same reason.) And so, the Yale School of Art showed them for the first time as the climax of a synoptic account

of his career that began with the landscape mentioned above and encompassed major Photorealist canvases, funky painterly montages and reliefs of the 1980s, watercolors and more, many of which featured his preferred boy's toys—akin to those of Chris Burden, prompting one to wonder what a Morley/Burden exhibition might look like and what insights into "masculinity" it might offer—model planes, model boats, toy soldiers, and wonderfully polychrome sculptural animals wild and domestic, as well as a life-sized figure of a British marine. In the aggregate, they demonstrated a lifetime of empirical invention in many media and many representational idioms.

For students hamstrung by the ideological strictures of post-modern discourses of numerous kinds Malcolm's object lessons in full-bore multifarious facture were liberating. They provided abundant evidence that insouciant improvisation, betting on the long shot and choosing aesthetic anarchy over decorum could bear spectacular results—so long as they found themselves at the disposal of fearless and ceaselessly tinkering hands. A graduate of the school of hard knocks—in addition to reform school Malcolm did time in prison for burglary—and of the Camberwell College of Arts in the then unglamorous South London along with the tonier and more prestigious Royal College of Art nearer the center of the city, Malcolm was an insatiable student of the Grand Tradition, whose late life passion for "swagger portraits" of Admiral Nelson and other "heroes" of the British Empire would have cast him as an easy target for post-colonial critique had his obvious, not to mention fertile, contradictions and irrepressible contrariness not made him so engaging.

Image courtesy the author.

Moreover, Malcolm wore those contradictions like badges of honor. Or rather like a costume in his own updated re-creation of the charming shit-stirrer Gulley Jimson from *The Horse's Mouth*. Accordingly,

Malcolm arrived at the opening of his exhibition at Yale wearing an elegant felt hat and a hyper-posh black woolen overcoat from Saville Row, which he peeled off to reveal a fire engine red plaid suit set off by a bright green tie. Then, having made his entrance, he worked the room for several hours, talking to students and faculty not like an elder statesman resting on his laurels but like the restless, trouble-making maker that he was, someone who could give the youngest of the young and the cheekiest of the cheeky a run for their money. The gallery was abuzz with his images and with the effect that he had on all who came in contact with them and with him. It was a great evening. The paintings remain and they will continue to startle the eye and stimulate conversation long after the "verities" of late 20th and early 21st century critical chatter have been rendered obsolete.

Robert Storr
Brooklyn, 2018

Richard Serra
Looking at Malcolm's paintings

What it is
Is and is not
What it means
When I look at Malcolm's paintings I mix my sensations and memories with my immediate perceptions. I don't know how to separate them, I don't understand what comes from my recollection and what comes from my perception.
Malcolm's paintings converge with my memories even though their subject is Malcolm's memories, Malcolm's sensations.
What you see and what you think you see are not always synonymous with what's present which also includes what's absent; what's in the gap, the caesura of perception.
In that gap I find cynicism that targets social progress, I find friction, collision, collapse and catastrophe.
The difference between one Morley and another is in the ideas they contain about painting which take me beyond the visual.

Richard Serra
February 2005

Dorothea Rockburne

Dear, sweet Malcolm,

Damn! You know that I love you, love your sheer devilment! I'll miss you, your art, and your ever inventive, wonderful intelligence.

We met in the early 70s on Crosby Street. You were painting a street scene from your fire escape. Spotting me you introduced yourself. Showing me your work, you explained that you painted upside-down. That didn't get a rise from me. You continued to chat it up telling me how you learned to paint… in prison. [Still no desired effect from me.] How could you know I was partly English? I was raised in this rapport!

Next, you explained in England you had been a second story man, a thief. You related how you would enter a bedroom through the open window. Couples were either sleeping or fucking. You'd emulate their breathing, go through their pockets, then escape. Caught and sent to prison you learned to paint and fell in love with art. Only now can I tell you how amazed I was by your past, back then I simply nodded and said hmmm!

The next hilarious Malcolm scene occurred when we were both in Xavier Fourcade Gallery in the 80's. Xavier had, against all odds, managed to clean up your bad habits. That freed you to paint. You were doing well.

The summer of 1981 was hot in New York. I was working on the *Large Angel Watercolor on Vellum Series*. Xavier and I were having fun with Angelology. On the phone daily from Bellport, he would translate archaic angelic information for me from his French Library; often he would send a car on Sundays to drive me out to Bellport for a welcome swim and lunch.

On one such occasion, Malcolm and his then new Brazilian wife joined us. We were sitting at the table dawdling after lunch when Xavier suggested a game: If we were to die and be reincarnated as an animal, which animal would each like to be and why? I was breathless waiting for your response. The question went around the table with the usual answers—a giraffe, a lion, a bear, a cat, a dog, a tiger etc. until it came to you. Carefully studying everyone's face you stated (having just been married), "I would like to return as a woman." Silence reigned. It worked. They were shocked and I broke up in laughter. We had always loved and understood each other.

Your social form of rebellious love will always remain in my heart.

Love,

Dorothea

Bonnie Clearwater

Malcolm Morley was a risk-taker. Pigeonholed as a photorealist early in his career (a term he rejected in favor of "super-realism"), Morley defied categorization by frequently changing his work. As soon as a body of work was successful, he felt compelled to take a new tack, remarking, "You only really succeed by taking risks." A child of war-time London, Morley lost his unfinished miniature model of the battleship HMS Nelson when he left it to dry on his kitchen windowsill, only to be destroyed that night, along with part of his home, in the blitz. This model became his "Rosebud," representing the perfection he sought to achieve throughout his career. The frequent changes in his work perplexed those who wished he kept making the exquisite paintings of photographs of ocean liners that brought him fame in the 1960s, but his bold experiments were hailed by other painters. In 2005, when I was organizing back-to-back solo museum exhibitions for Albert Oehlen and Morley, Oehlen told me that Morley was the American artist who had influenced him the most. Although I never asked Oehlen what he meant, his revelation propelled me to remap Morley's work as a missing link between a vein of modernism that fused abstraction with figuration, and the artists of the postmodern generation. Painting gave Morley a sense of peace. Dividing his source imagery into square sections on his canvas, his world became whichever quadrant he was painting at the moment. His technique was democratic, no square was more important than the other. And when he reached the last square, all the segments coalesced into a single brilliant image. I was fortunate to work with Morley

when he was 74, and at the top of his form. By then he had the luxury of time to understand the consequences of his actions and to find meaning and continuity in his work, as well as his place in art history.

Bonnie Clearwater
2018

Malcolm Morley, *SS Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam*, 1966. Liquitex on canvas, 63 1/2 by 83 1/2 inches. Private collection. Courtesy the estate of Malcolm Morley and Sperone Westwater, New York.

Alanna Heiss

Malcolm was a rascal. No doubt about it. He was also a tormented, talented, ambitious visionary. He was dangerous. Primarily self educated, he was a voracious reader and wildly over informed about a vast array of subjects. His wit was quick and sharp and could be deadly. I was always quite careful around Malcolm even when joking as I wanted to avoid exposing a lack of knowledge. I wanted him to respect and like me.

I succeeded, largely, in this goal. Malcolm frequently, and generously, referred to the importance of a show of his work that I organized at the Clocktower in the ‘80s.

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I believe it was Klaus Kertess but it could've been any one of a number of (painter) friends who alerted me that Malcolm both needed and deserved a show at the strange, exclusive, tower in the sky that I ran where I exercised the extraordinary luxury of curating one artist shows in a space high above the Tribeca skyline with a large clock on each side symbolizing both timelessness and timeliness. Called the Clocktower, there had been since 1972 a run of wonderful shows each focusing on the special and sometimes strange quality of artists' dreams. This is where Carl Andre showed the poetry he wrote for his mother. This is where Dennis Oppenheim did the famous piece with the German shepherd. This is where Lynda Benglis first made her odd tied gelatinous bows, and this is where I invited Malcolm to develop a show that would explain to his artist colleagues what he had been up to the previous five years.

We all knew Malcolm was a great artist, but we also knew Malcolm was troubled and from time to time he would reject all around him, including his own work. He explained to me that he wanted this show to not only prove a point but to prove several points, his position in painting, and his opinion about other painters. Always optimistic, I suggested that we organize a panel with three other painters he admired to discuss their positions. The painters we chose were Brice Marden, Robert Ryman, and Joan Mitchell. Knowing that Malcolm was held in high regard, I thought that support from the great painters of the moment would increase Malcolm's confidence that he could follow his own path. Unfortunately all the painters rejected this invitation. Brice told me he was too depressed to take part in the exercise. Joan Mitchell told me to get lost, and Robert Ryman said he couldn't speak in public. I made Ryman come because he is such a nice guy that he couldn't resist but true to his promise, he refused to say anything about painting except "uhm. Uhm uhm."

Malcolm and I had chosen a beautiful show of powerful new paintings which accurately reflected his previous years of unseen work. The opening was mobbed by artists excited by the opportunity to see the new work and to hear Malcolm explain his role as a painter in the cluster of the admired painters of the moment. I was proud to be a part of the evening and to hear Malcolm speak with his customary extraordinary abilities. The panel began and I introduced Ryman and Morley, and when I asked Morley to speak he dived under the table and brought out a large paper bag from which he gleefully extracted handfuls of torn up paper that he threw in the air! He then ran around the room throwing the paper in the air yelling, "that's all there is folks! That's all there is! You can just tear up all your theories and throw them in the air, it doesn't mean anything!"

Although this was the time when performance was emerging as a viable exponent of art logic, this performance failed miserably. Once again Malcolm was seen as a kind of discontent who put little value on that which we valued so highly.

However the show itself was the argument and the only argument needed for Malcolm's genius despite his deliberate rejection of the opportunity to be a member of the club. It was clear and although Malcolm was no club member and would never be, he was a real artist.

Les Levine was worried that Malcolm was a potential suicide. He told Malcolm, "if you think you might do it, be sure to call me and I'll come and take a last picture of you." That's how he came to take a picture of Malcolm in Central Park sitting disconsolately on a bench. We used that photograph, of a lonely and sad Malcolm for the poster of the show.

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Peter Krashes

Gridded eyeglasses assembled by Malcolm Morley. Image courtesy the author.

Malcolm liked a perhaps apocryphal story about a conflict between Alexander Calder and Frank Lloyd Wright. In Malcolm's telling, Wright was forced to accept a Calder mobile in the atrium of the Guggenheim so he stipulated it be solid gold. Calder assented as long as the gold was painted black. Malcolm saw gamesmanship as a natural outcome of creative convictions. He called it "historic ambition." He took on his own actions as well as figures like Picasso and Cézanne and Turner who loomed large in his creative life.

I think the bold suits Malcolm wore in public, and the hand-striped overalls he wore in the studio were a product of his deep self-identification with being an artist, and more specifically with painting as a practice. He wore and painted the same colors. At varying points in his career he performed as a painter in public and created surrogates for himself inside his work. I don't think he believed there should be much separation between his dream-life, what happens in the studio, and life in public. This lack of boundaries produced uncontrolled outcomes, (he painted phalluses while collecting containers in the studio—we called it "The Search for the Perfect Container") and startlingly fine-tuned insights. It also enabled him to set aside his own inhibitions, whether with brush or career. It was good if an action evoked opposition, especially his own.

As vivid as his imagination was, his painting was nearly always grounded in observation. Not just his painting. He always looked around for better ways to do things. If a tool he needed didn't exist, he made it. Perhaps the single tool he made that best captures him was a pair of gridded eyeglasses. They help break down what you are looking at as long as you don't move. Malcolm was generally on the move.

Sir Norman Rosenthal

As I write this short tribute to the memory of one of the greatest painters of the last half-century, Malcolm Morley, I happen by chance to be sitting in the middle of an outstanding group of his works belonging to Andy and Christine Hall. The Halls, particularly independently-minded collectors, were great friends and supporters of Morley since the nineties. This group of paintings is housed in Schloss Derneburg, near Hanover in Germany, formerly occupied for many years as a studio by Georg Baselitz, but now brilliantly transformed by the Halls into a museum accessible to visitors—a place also of true romance.

This coincidence means much to me personally, as Malcolm was the poster artist for what was by far the most significant art show I ever co-curated, *A New Spirit in Painting*, which opened at the Royal Academy of Arts in January 1981. I collaborated on *A New Spirit* with Christos M. Joachimides, who too passed away earlier this year, and Nicholas Serota who went on to stage a great show of Malcolm's works at the Whitechapel Art Gallery where he was then director.

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In the early 1980s, Malcolm was making those extraordinarily dense expressive paintings of parrots, camels, cowboys, and native Americans that evoked exotic, even lost "fantasy" child-like colonial worlds. They matched, nonetheless with their very own style and mood, the new painterly expressionism of his European contemporaries, such as Baselitz himself, as well as newer, younger artists on the scene, such as Julian Schnabel and Francesco Clemente. But the fact is that Malcolm had much earlier already led the world of new painting by literally inventing Hyper-Realism, largely in a great series of ocean liner paintings, which in their time served as a great antidote to Pop Art while at the same time being a kind of necessary and vital sub plot to that world.

Malcolm was, of course, born into a British working-class family, but became a quintessential great American painter. His style of painting was constantly evolving as it conjured various motorized sports vehicles—bikes and cars, airplanes, but also horses. But with the evolution Malcolm always conveyed the profundity and even necessity of holding onto a certain child-like innocence. He was, indeed, immensely widely read, especially in matters pertaining to the human mind. However, it is touching, at least to me, that his last paintings present us with richly colored fantastical worlds of medieval castles: the knights that joust in shining armour were all based on toys that littered his house and studio. And yet through it all Malcolm was the most modern of painters, not say of individuals.

Malcolm was a marvelous man indeed, one of huge artistic achievement against many odds!

Derneburg
July 2018

Nancy Hoffman

It has been many years since I have seen Malcolm, and while we lost the thread of connection, he was never far from my mind—especially his energy. I marveled at his willingness to go out on a limb and stay there, allowing in dream-like images, which became part of his work. His daring was undeniable, his mash up of subjects was uniquely his. He was not a "photo realist" like others in that movement, though he often used postcards and photos as reference.

He was a renegade presence in SoHo in the '70s and '80s, peripatetic in his connection to galleries. Nancy Hoffman Gallery had the good fortune of working with him during a particularly fertile, rich, adventuresome period of his life in the '70s when he was experimenting with wide ranging imagery.

In the summer of '78, while at the Venice Biennale, I came upon his spectacular L.A. Phone Book page painting, real yet raw, pulsing with life. I decided to send him a postcard to tell him that he stole the show, and plucked a card of Guardi's Bucintoro from a postcard vendor, never thinking it would turn in to a painting. Lo and behold, months later Malcolm completed *The Ultimate Anxiety* with Guardi's image painted in his muscular fashion, and through the center of the painting he placed a toy train from the Lewis catalogue, recalling his London youth, referencing the shape of Venice bridges and disrupting what would otherwise have been a classic image of the ship that protected Venice.

That was Malcolm then, the brilliant disrupter. He and his genius will be sorely missed.

Nancy Hoffman

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Brooks Adams

Malcolm Morley needed me in the ‘90s. That is, he needed a younger American critic to write an essay for his 1995 retrospective at Fundación “la Caixa” in Madrid, organized by the European poet, curator, and former museum director Enrique Juncosa. All the subsequent catalogue essays for galleries were a terrific chance. Do you know how exciting it is to get a first crack at deciphering dense new paintings, and the occasional sculpture, by an eccentric, quixotic genius?

In person, during our studio visits, Malcolm was often flirty and gallant, lacing his comments with the occasional “dear” or “darling.” What did it signify? It seemed a throwback to an older, English lingua franca of difference—a strange survival in his now more established, though still quirky, individual style of speaking.

In the late ‘50s and ‘60s, was he an Angry Young Man or more of a Joe Orton type? There was that criminal, Jean Genet-esque aspect of his youth. Was he a bohemian tough, like one of those scrappy, Fitzrovian artist-pickers and their hangers-on in Anthony Powell’s multi-volume novel, *A Dance to the Music of Time*?

New York, February 2011. It was cold. I was staying in a hotel on the Upper East Side, took a cab to Penn Station, then a train to Bellport where Malcolm met me at the station, seemingly still in his pajamas, an overcoat thrown over them. I had come from Europe as he had, long ago. The conversation in the car was polite. He was reading a biography of J.D. Salinger, a strange choice I thought at the time. We were floating through the winter landscape of Long Island. I realized with some shock that Malcolm was driving and that I was going to be spending the night at his house.

Brookhaven. July 4th weekend, 2018. Around the pool at Tom Cashin and Jay Johnson’s, down the road from where Malcolm had lived and worked in a converted church, Lida Morley mentioned that Malcolm was once a redhead.

Greece, July 2018. It was hot. I was sitting in the Pirate Bar in Hydra, looking at the boats. One with an electric blue stripe on a red hull. Another caique painted a dull dark blue with a feeble yellow stripe. The white crests of water from speedboats, wakes crisscrossing, when we had earlier arrived by ferry from Metochi: all of it was Malcolm.

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Malcolm Morley in his studio in Bellport, New York, in 2009. Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York. Photo: Jason Schmidt

Gian Enzo Sperone

Dear Malcolm,

For many years I've been unable to classify your painting: fathers, mothers, grandparents, etc.

It isn't that I haven't tried. The thing is, you were—and are—an unusual painter whose originality doesn't reveal any underlying influence.

One of my obsessions in my youth was the problem of influences in art. That subsided in the early '70s with Harold Bloom's book, *The Anxiety of Influence*, but it does explain why I've always found your work mysterious and undefinable; precisely because it's rather rootless.

Your work isn't this and isn't that, doesn't derive from this and doesn't derive from that, respects the norms but at the same time violates them: consequently, it forms a page of true independence and extravagance in the history of painting.

In a context punctuated with the triviality of phoney and often unimaginative anarchists, your intuitions—yours and yours alone—are prized material.

Your friend and dealer
Gian Enzo Sperone

Ken Miller

I first met Malcolm Morley at one of Alanna Heiss and Fred Sherman's famous summer paella parties. Malcolm was probably already in his seventies, I, headed in his chronological direction. Sitting down over plates of delicious rice, beans, shrimp, and clams, lovingly prepared by Alanna's paella specialist, Charley Balsamo, we bonded over a mutual life-long love of marijuana. I sensed that Malcolm's wife Lida was becoming increasingly nervous as the conversation lingered on that subject, and then it reached the point where he asked with a gleam in his eye "Are you holding?" My wife, Lybess, pinched me and nodded her head in the direction of Lida who was frantically waving me off.

We subsequently met many times at their studio/home in Brookhaven and at ours on 17th Street in Manhattan where hangs a particularly nice Morley, an ocean liner with a life-boat dangling off its side. There's a lamp strategically placed so as not to obstruct the view but to protect the escape vessel from hands which might carelessly knock it from its moorings.

Once he admired a Moroccan fez I had donned on a lark, and after I took it off right then and gave it to him, it remained on his head for days, the white on his rice. The conversations we have had about art, philosophy, human nature, and our pasts—often punctuated by laughter—resonate as some of the more honest and essentially human exchanges it's been my privilege to experience.

Requiescat In Pace, Malcolm. Juvenile delinquent. Borstal boy. Bricklayer. Three dimensional artist. Multidimensional man. Truthspeaker. Deepseer. Lifelover. Friend.

Ken Miller

Enrique Juncosa

I met Malcolm Morley as I curated a retrospective of his work for Fundación "la Caixa" in Madrid. The show opened towards the end of 1995 and travelled the following year to the Astrup Fearnley Museet voor Moderne Kunst in Oslo. Malcolm was a great person to work with: he was an enthusiast, incredibly bright, and had a terrific sense of humor. He was also very generous. I was a freelance curator at the time and had not organized that many shows yet, but he seemed happy with anything I suggested or wanted to do. He also loved to talk, from old time stories and gossip about the art world, to serious reflections about his art and that of other artists he admired, like Picasso or Cézanne. He talked about painting as if it was a matter of life and death. He also liked to travel, especially by ship. He loved boats and aeroplanes—their shapes but also their suggestion of adventure. I remember Malcolm enjoyed meeting an admiral, who for some reason attended his opening in Madrid. He did my portrait while we were having a drink in the terrace of a bar, and later gave me a wonderful watercolor depicting a waterfall in Jamaica. When we were in Oslo, everything was covered with snow and it was freezing. We had dinner in one of the houses of Mr. Fearnley. He had a room furnished with Viking furniture, and also an indoor swimming pool and a ping-pong table. Malcolm was very good at this game. Mr. Fearnley also enjoyed big game hunting and there were heads of large antelopes hanging all over the walls. Later on, I bought one of Malcolm's paintings for the collection

of the Museo Reina Sofía. Later on I visited Malcolm and Lida at Bellport. It really suited him to live by the sea. Malcolm's work is greatly admired by other painters, and I remember having spoken about him with Terry Winters, Cecily Brown, Miquel Barceló, Francesco Clemente or Philip Taaffe. Morley's work was central to the art debates that dominated the art world in the '70s and '80s. After that, his work became more and more personal, like perfect material for psychoanalysis. It would be great to see his work in depth in New York very soon.

Robert Hobbs
Pre-Imaging and Painting Discrete Bits of the Visual Spectrum

Unlike other *Brooklyn Rail* contributors offering telling anecdotes about their friendship with Malcolm Morley, my association with him was strictly professional. In 2004 Angela Westwater invited me to write an essay on Morley for a May 2005 exhibition of his work at Sperone Westwater. I then spent an afternoon with Morley, who had been profoundly affected by a breakdown several years earlier that had left him speechless for six months, resulting in a return to his 1960s super-realist painting practice. This episode no doubt made him regard each interview as an opportunity to set the record straight about his ongoing effort to pre-image a single cell in a gridded photograph in order to transform it into painterly equivalents, and he was consequently very forthcoming.

Morley felt the need to be as faithful as possible to the discrete, small cutout blocks of photographic imagery that he would take from a chosen photograph in order to carefully analyze each one in an attempt to pre-image it in terms of the tones he would then transpose to his canvas. Even after undertaking these precautions to ensure painting a primary role in the conceptualization and actual production of individual cells, he realized that slight, yet critical, qualitative gaps or breaks would intervene.

Although this process has often been attributed to Chuck Close's efforts to break down photographic images into discrete bits of visual information, Morley started doing it two years before Close, who was one of his fellow teachers at the New York School of Visual Arts. Even though Morley worked with photographs, he was far less interested in analyzing photography's ways of warping vision through the necessary licenses it takes with depth of field than in understanding how he as an artist was able to perceive the world. For all their drama—and certainly Morley's subjects of sports and news events in his later works are highly dramatic—his own acts of pre-imaging, followed by his transposition in paint of the resulting images, is the very human stage comprising his stirring paintings.

In my opinion Morley's approach has definite antecedents in the English picturesque tradition of envisioning actual landscapes as equivalent to works of art before actually painting them. His tactic also resonates with Cézanne's heroic efforts to understand a selected motif in nature before transposing it to watercolor and oil paint. I view Morley's pre-imaging as an acceptance of Kant's a priori that precludes any direct understanding of the world since it is always mediated in terms of space, time, and the causes one might attribute to it; but Morley does so while still countering this transcendental means of knowing through the most rigorous empirical means possible.

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"Malcolm Morley (1931-2018)." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, 2 June 2018.

ARTFORUM

Malcolm Morley in front of his painting *Thor*, 2008. Photo: Xavier Hufkens and Sperone Westwater.

The London-born and New York–based artist Malcolm Morley, a self-described "super-realist" known for his paintings of ocean liners and airplanes modeled after paper-made kits, has died. The galleries that represented him, Xavier Hufkens in Brussels and Sperone Westwater in New York, confirmed his passing. The artist was eighty-six years old.

"With a career spanning over six decades, Morley developed a highly individual and expressive style of painting," Sperone Westwater said in a statement. "This placed him at the heart of the contemporary debates about painting, its authenticity and surface, and the validity of figuration versus abstraction. Morley defied stylistic characterization, moving through so-called abstract, hyperrealist, neo-romantic, and neo-expressionist painterly modes, while being attentive to his own biographical experiences."

Born in London in 1931, Morley had a troubled childhood. When he was twelve his home was destroyed by a "Doodlebug," or an early cruise missile called a V-1 bomb, during a Nazi blitz. The artist recalled lying in his bed before the explosion that destroyed the shoe store below his family's apartment and caused the wall of his bedroom to collapse. During psychoanalysis therapy years later, Morley would come to realize that a model of a ship that he had been working on for months had been lost in the bombing. The unfinished vessel would drive the artist to create countless compositions featuring battleships, tankers, and other boats as well as other references to World War II.

Shortly after the loss of his childhood home, Morley would attend a Naval boarding school in Surrey. However, his plans for the future were derailed after he was arrested for petty theft and sentenced to three years in jail. While behind bars, the artist learned about Vincent van Gogh in Irving Stone's novel *Lust for Life*, 1934. The book inspired him to make art.

Morley was released from prison at the age of twenty. His parole officer arranged for him to study at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in 1952. He went on to take classes at the Royal College of Art, where he met artists Peter Blake, Frank Auerbach, Joe Tilson, and Richard Smith as well as his mentor Carel Weight, a year later.

Fueled by a Tate exhibition of American art, and a girl he met on the number 37 bus, Morley moved to America in 1957. He married the girl, but the union didn't last, so he eventually made his way to New York, where he brushed shoulders with Willem de Kooning, Salvador Dalí, Barnett Newman, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein, who would help him find teaching jobs. He would live in and around New York City for the rest of his life.

Considered at the forefront of photorealism in the 1960s, Morley preferred to be called a "super-realist," which is derived from Russian avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich's notion of suprematism. Morley would paint images of horse races, beaches, and royal pageants by making use of the grid system, dividing his canvases into squares in order to ensure each area of the work received equal attention. By the 1970s, he tired of photorealism, claiming that it was being overdone, and he adopted a more abstract and expressionist painterly style. He pinpoints this transition to the work titled *Race Track*, 1970, a depiction of a South African horse race, which he painted a large "X" over.

In 1984, Morley became the recipient of the first Turner Prize. He was recognized for an exhibition staged at Whitechapel Gallery, which was organized by Nicholas Serota. He was also the winner of the 1992 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture's Painting Award.

Morley's work has been featured in a number of exhibitions in Europe and North America including the Guggenheim Museum's landmark survey "The Photographic Image" (1966), Documenta 5 (1972) and Documenta 6 (1977), and the Royal Academy's pivotal group show "A New Spirit in Painting" (1981). He has also had solo shows at various institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1984); the Centre Pompidou, Paris (1993); the Fundación La Caixa, Madrid (1995); the Hayward Gallery, London (2001); and the Schloss Derneburg Museum, Derneburg (2017–2018).

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"Malcolm Morley, inaugural Turner Prize winner – obituary." *www.telegraph.co.uk (The Telegraph)*, 17 June 2018.

The Telegraph

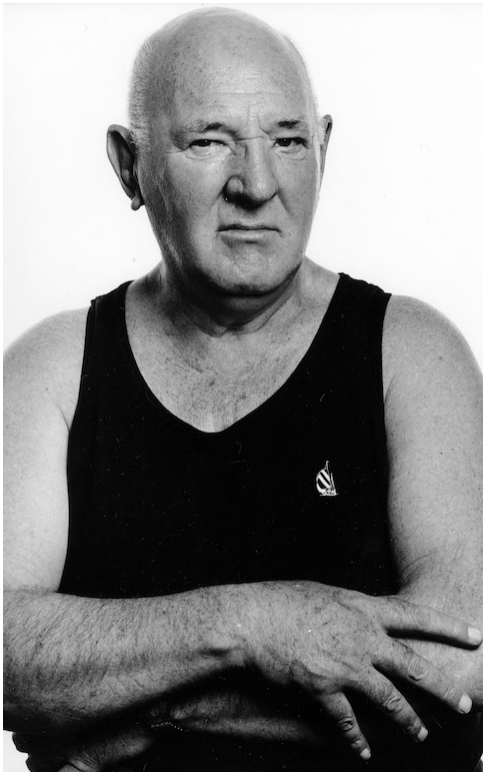
Morley in 2012 in front of his painting Icarus CREDIT: NEW YORK TIMES / REDUX / EYEVINE

Malcolm Morley, who has died aged 86, was a British expat painter and former jail bird who won the first ever Turner Prize in 1984, after making his name in America.

It was while serving three years for breaking and entering in Wormwood Scrubs that Morley first began painting. After moving to the US in 1958, he emerged in the 1960s as a pioneer of "photorealism", with paintings based on postcards and holiday brochures. In 1970, however, he executed an abrupt change of direction, symbolised by his painting a huge red "X" across "Race Track", a painting of a horse race in apartheid South Africa.

He had not intended to deface the painting, he explained later, but he had just gone to see Costa-Gavras's film Z, about the fascist military junta that overthrew the Greek government in 1967: "I came out of that movie wanting to kick a cop in the balls or something, and the only thing I had was this painting."

Morley then embarked on what he called a "catastrophe" phase, with apocalyptic paintings of disaster and destruction that contained elements of abstraction and surrealism. The ocean liners which he had depicted in his photorealist phase sailing past the Statue of Liberty were now found beached on top of a New York



Malcolm Morley in 2001 CREDIT: JACK MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

skyscraper. “You paint a photorealism of the consciousness, and I paint a photorealism of the unconscious,” Salvador Dali once told him.

Though there were recurrent themes in his work – ships were a constant – Morley continued to experiment, defying categorisation as he explored styles variously described as abstract expressionist, neo-expressionist, neo-romantic, post-pop – even, on occasions, performance art.

In 1983 the Whitechapel Gallery held a retrospective of his work, put on by the gallery’s director Nicholas Serota, and on the strength of this he won the Turner a year later. No doubt gratifyingly for the organisers of the award – granted in recognition of a major new contribution to British art – the announcement provoked a storm of rage from some critics unable to accept that candidates who practised their art in Britain – Richard Deacon, Richard Long, Howard Hodgkin, Gilbert and George – had been overlooked in favour of someone living in America.

Morley himself was somewhat queasy about accepting the award. “I think it’s disgusting,” he told a journalist. “The way they’ve conducted the giving of this prize: it’s like blood sport.” But, he admitted later, “I didn’t have the strength to turn it down.” And besides: “I saw it as a signal to go ahead and be more myself. And, in a funny way, I felt Britain didn’t let me down.”

It was difficult to imagine Morley painting the way he did had he stayed in England, yet his work was full of references to the Britain of his youth – particularly in his later years, when model ships, soldiers, aircraft and toys became regular parts of his repertoire of imagery.

In an interview with The Guardian in 2001 Morley claimed that everything in his turbulent life – prison, multiple divorces, drugs, depression, psychoanalysis – was driven by one devastating childhood event – the night his home in London was destroyed by a V-1 flying bomb and with it a balsa wood model of a navy battleship which he had been working on.

“Years later, when I was in psychoanalysis, a memory of the bombing came up and I realised that all those ships I’d done had to be to do with me trying to paint that battleship I never finished … It doesn’t matter how much I try to paint the perfect picture,” he said, “it never can be that ship that got lost.”

Malcolm Morley was born in Stoke Newington, London, on June 7 1931. He never knew his father, and when his mother married a Welshman he was brought up under the name Evans.

It was not a happy childhood. His stepfather was violent and he was sent to a naval boarding school aged six. “There were all these homes and things in between. I kept on running away from all these schools. When the doodlebug arrived, we were refugees in a sense, billeted in other people’s houses. And then I just wandered the streets from a very early age. I was a loner.” He took refuge in making model boats.

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In 1945, aged 14, Morley left to be a galley boy on an ocean-going tug, but was violently seasick and jumped ship in Antwerp, where he joined the ranks of hustlers struggling to keep their heads above water in postwar Europe, posing as an American sailor so that he could steal things to sell from an American military canteen.

Family Portrait, 1968, acrylic & oil on canvas, by Malcolm Morley
CREDIT: BRIDGEMAN

It was not long before he was caught by the military police and sent back to England where, on his 16th birthday, he was found guilty of housebreaking and ended up at a borstal near Birmingham. Back in trouble after his release, he ended up in Wormwood Scrubs. There, inspired by reading Lust For Life, Irving Stone's novel based on the life of Vincent van Gogh, he enrolled in a correspondence course in painting.

Released after two years, Morley spent some time as a hotel waiter in the artists' colony at St Ives, Cornwall, and while he was there his old parole officer arranged for some art schools to see the work he had produced in prison.

Morley was offered a place at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in 1952. A year later he moved to the Royal College of Art where his fellow students included Peter Blake, Frank Auerbach, Joe Tilson and Richard Smith.

In 1957 he moved to New York after meeting "an American girl on the number 37 bus". He would not see his mother for another 26 years. He married the girl, but the marriage (the first of five) soon broke down. By the time it did Morley was finding his way in the US art world, hanging out with such figures as Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Roy Lichtenstein, Salvador Dali and Barnett Newman.

At first, he dabbled with abstract expressionism, but it was his dramatic move to photorealism that made his name. His initial efforts at painting ocean liners docked in New York were too big: "So I got a postcard and divided it into a grid, a technique we'd used in art school but I'd forgotten about when I was busy being an abstract expressionist. … It was the total opposite of abstract."

Yet, behind the slick imagery, there was always an undercurrent of disquiet. In one picture, featuring an all-American family, tanned and jaunty, enjoying a day on the beach, the sea is turquoise, the sands are silver and there is no cloud in the sky. On closer inspection, however, the fixed smiles appear jarringly false, while the face of the blonde daughter is twisted into a grotesque leer.

Richard Dorment in The Daily Telegraph found these and other images to be "cruel pictures painted by a person emotionally cut off from the possibility of enjoying the ordinary pleasures portrayed in them". The uneasiness would become more explicit after Morley's move away from photorealism.

In the early 1970s Morley taught art at Stony Brook University where, often high on cocaine and LSD, he would turn up to lectures dressed in bizarre assortments of women's clothes. By 1973 he was splitting from a third marriage.

Malcolm Morley in 2007 CREDIT: PATRICK MCMULLAN VIA GETTY IMAGES

Psychoanalysis and the grid technique seem to have led Morley's art in several new directions, ending with his rediscovery of his boyhood joy in model-making. He continued to paint seven days a week until his 80s and became an American citizen in 1991.

Morley's work is found in museum collections around the world, and he was the subject of several retrospectives including at the Hayward Gallery, London in 2001 and at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, in 2013.

After four marriages ended in divorce, he found happiness with his Dutch-born fifth wife, Lida Kruisheer, whom he married in 1989 and who survives him.

Malcolm Morley, born June 7 1931, died June 1 2018

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Genzlinger, Neil. "Malcolm Morley, Dynamic Painter of the Real and Surreal, Is Dead at 86." *The New York Times*, 12 June 2018, p. B12.

Malcolm Morley, Dynamic Painter of the Real and Surreal, Is Dead at 86

By NEIL GENZLINGER

Malcolm Morley, an artist who helped foster Photorealism in the 1960s, then did the same in the late '70s for the more sensuous style of painting known as Neo-Expressionism, died on June 1 in Bellport, N.Y. He was 86.

His death was announced by the Sperone Westwater gallery in New York, which represented him. No cause was given.

Mr. Morley was a skilled and prolific painter with an exploratory spirit, moving through an assortment of styles and techniques after discovering art in an unusual place: prison, where he landed as a teenager on burglary convictions.

By the mid-1960s he was established in New York arts circles, working in a Photorealist style (he preferred the term "super-realist"), often making his paintings from images on postcards of cruise ships. Another work, "Queen of Opera" (1971), was simply a 48-by-60-inch oil painting of a Time magazine cover featuring Beverly Sills.

An art class in prison touched off a lifelong career for a prolific chameleon of genre.

He would later call such paintings the "heights of repression," and as the 1970s progressed he veered away from realistic reproductions into fanciful imagery.

"Where a ship would once have had complete sway, a cow or two may now share the ocean," The New York Times wrote of his transformation on the occasion of a retrospective of his work in 1984.

A 1984 work, for instance, "French Legionnaires Being Eaten by a Lion," depicts soldiers in shades of blue as half the canvas is being invaded by a giant yellow lion. In a mid-1980s series on the Barcelona Cathedral in Spain, the building is barely recognizable in shimmery outline and gaudy colors.

By 1989, his explorations prompted Kay Larson of The New Yorker to write of a show at Pace Gallery in Manhattan, "Some pictures are so out of control that it is almost embarrassing to admit that one or two are quite good."

In 1993, Michael Kimmelman of The Times, reviewing another retrospective, at the Pompidou Center in Paris, explained why Mr. Morley was "a painter painters admire."

"Partly it is his restless, renegade spirit," Mr. Kimmelman wrote. "You can never be sure what he's going to do next. Partly it is the fact that he brings to his work a combination of ambition and wit and technical derring-do that makes his art compelling even when it is not altogether convincing."

JASON SCHMIDT

Above, Malcolm Morley in his studio in 2009. His early works in Photorealism, like "On Deck," below left, consisted of painstakingly accurate recreations of postcards. Later in his career he veered into more fantastical creations, like "Flight of Icarus," below right.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, VIA SPERONE WESTWATER, NEW YORK

KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Malcolm John Austin Morley was born on June 7, 1931, in London to Dorothy Morley; he never knew his father. As a boy he enjoyed building models, and he often told of having just completed but not yet painted one of a battleship when his family had to flee during the bombing of London in World War II; when the family returned after the smoke had cleared, he found that the model, left on a windowsill, had been destroyed.

"Maybe if I had gotten to paint that ship I would have been satisfied and never become an artist," he told The Times in 1984. "I am fond of saying this to German collectors."

By 14 he was living on his own, pursuing a career in burglary, something he apparently wasn't very good at: He landed in jail several times. During one stay he took a prison art course. After he was released at 20, a parole officer who recognized his talent arranged for art schools to see his prison works.

He was offered a spot at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London in 1952. In 1953 he advanced to the Royal College of Art in London, graduating in 1957. He arrived in New York the next year. (He would become an American citizen in 1991.)

Mr. Morley supported himself there as a waiter, and one night a customer asked him what a young Englishman was doing waiting tables in New York. When he replied that he was a painter, the man rose and embraced him. It was the artist Barnett Newman, who became both a mentor and an influence.

Mr. Morley began by setting up his canvas at the Manhattan docks and trying to paint the ships, but found them too big to take in — "one end is over there, the other end is over there, a 360-degree impossibility," as he once put it. So he started working from postcards, using a grid system he had learned in art school, painstakingly reproducing the image one square at a time.

He had his first solo show, at the Kornblee Gallery in New York, in 1964. Scores of solo shows followed, most recently last year at the Hall Art Foundation in Derneburg, Germany. He would be part of countless group shows as well.

Mr. Morley's works are in numerous museum collections in the United States and Europe. In 1984 he became the first winner of the Turner Prize, a prestigious British art award. (The decision generated some complaints, since at that point he had long lived in the United States.)

Mr. Morley, who lived in Bellport, married Lida Kruisheer, his fifth wife, in 1989. She survives him.

They would often go on trips, with Mr. Morley painting along the way. That, he said in 1993, was a result of an epiphany, which led to yet another change in his artistic direction.

"Go be an adventure painter," he said, describing this revelation. "Forget about aesthetics. Get out of SoHo, get out of your navel, be a 19th-century Victorian explorer-painter."

As for his personal journey from young housebreaker to acclaimed artist, he reflected that he used art "as a form of aggression, retreat and medicine."

"For me," he said, "art was truly redemption. I met a new way of life. Art as redemption is a great idea, don't you think?"

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Greenberger, Alex. “Malcolm Morley, Pioneer of Photorealist Painting, Dies at 86.” *www.artnews.com (ARTnews)*, 2 June 2018.

ARTNEWS

Malcolm Morley in front of his 2008 painting *Thor*. Courtesy Xavier Hufkens and Sperone Westwater

If there is one common thread that runs through Malcolm Morley’s output, which spans the gap between Photorealism and surrealist tableaux, it’s ships. Vessels sit in port, float through open seas, explode mid-air, zig-zag through choppy waters, and sail forward in his canvases, creating compositions that, depending on the mood of the picture in question, are either energetic or decidedly somber. Morley often ascribed his

interest in ships to battles he used to create between toy models. But, he sometimes cautioned, the ships were “more than toys”—they became tools for him to explore issues related to scale and size.

Fittingly, Morley’s painting was a rigorous form of play that lasted the whole of his career. Morley has died at age 86, Brussels’s Xavier Hufkens and New York’s Sperone Westwater galleries, which represented the artist, confirmed today. In a statement issued by both galleries, they wrote, “Morley defied stylistic characterization, moving through so-called abstract, hyperrealist, neo-romantic, and neo-expressionist painterly modes, while being attentive to his own biographical experiences. Thank you Malcolm, for your captivating art that broke new ground, your unique character, your exceptional knowledge and your friendship.”

Morley is often discussed in relation to the Photorealist movement, which sought to strip any sense of authorship from the act of painting through the creation of carefully worked images that mirror their photographic sources. However, Morley said he preferred the term “super-realist” to describe his work, because it aligned it with Suprematism, the early 20th-century Russian avant-garde that sought to distill painting to its most basic forms.

Morley’s method often involved dividing a canvas into a grid—a technique he had borrowed from his friend Richard Artschwager—and intricately copying postcards of ships. “It was the total opposite of abstract,” Morley said of the “excruciating” style in an interview with the *Guardian*. The results of Morley’s labor were extraordinarily detailed images of vessels that are quaint and strange, and also a little drily funny, since they are so clearly reproductions.

But only a few years after he began creating these works, Morley began moving away from a Photorealist style. He said that he considered his final work in this mode to be *Race Track* (1970), an image of just that with a big red X superimposed on top of it. The work is at once a protest (Morley was acting in defiance of apartheid in South Africa, where the race track was located) and an abandonment of Photorealism (he was crossing out a picture made using the style).

In the decades that followed, Morley, whom Salvador Dalí once labeled one of the best contemporary artists of his era, began working in a mode that drew on various Surrealist strategies. One painting-cum-performance involved visiting an auction house in Paris where a work of his was to be sold, with plans to shoot paint via a water pistol at the picture. The auction house was made aware of Morley’s plans, and they covered the painting in plastic; Morley nailed the gun to the work, instead. These sorts of gestures, Morley said, were inspired by the writings of Antonin Artaud.

Morley’s later work has sometimes been seen as a freeing-up of his earlier style, due to changes in his body resulting from old age. Planes swoop in from the sky, while ships sail through harbors and trains chug toward unknown destinations. The perspective is deliberately distorted, as though Morley was emphasizing the fact that he was no longer using the grid method; the compositions are bombastic and full of energy. (Other recent subjects included athletes.) Sometimes, he affixed objects to his canvas, so that the pictures branched out into the third dimension. He also crafted cryptic installations—one paired a reproduction of a Jacques-Louis David painting with a cannon tied to it. In a 2015 essay about late-career painters for *ARTnews*, the artist David Salle wrote of these pictures, “Morley’s work is almost punishingly dense, demanding, uningratiating; he dares us to imagine the act of sustained concentration that goes into its making.”

For Morley, this repeated emphasis on objects related to war—fighter planes, naval vessels, guns—came from his childhood, which he was able to recall vividly after having underwent psychoanalysis for years.

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Morley was born in 1931 in London. His childhood home was partly wrecked during World War II by a German bomb, creating a longtime fascination—or, perhaps, obsession—with conflict.

Morley was sent to naval school, but a three-year jail sentence for petty theft derailed that career route. While imprisoned, he read Irving Stone's 1934 novel *Lust for Life*, about the painter Vincent van Gogh, which convinced him that he could become an artist. He was let out early, and his parole officer got him into the Camberwell College of Arts in London. Shortly afterward, he transferred to the Royal Academy of Art. In the late 1950s, he moved to New York, where he fell in with a Downtown crowd that brought him into contact with various avant-garde strategies, principal among them Abstract Expressionism and Pop. (His first mature paintings were abstractions.)

Among the various accolades Morley won over the course of his decorated career was the first Turner Prize, in 1984, awarded to a distinguished British artist by Tate. He was also the 1992 winner of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture's Painting Award. Morley was included in the 1966 Guggenheim Museum exhibition "The Photographic Image," a landmark survey that explored the relationship between photography and other mediums in contemporary art, and the fifth and sixth editions of Documenta in Kassel, Germany, in 1972 and 1977, respectively. His work was the subject of retrospectives in 1983, at the Whitechapel Gallery in London (it later traveled to the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago); in 1993, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris; and the Hayward Gallery in London (2001).

Morley's work is sometimes credited with having helped spur on some artists associated with Neo-Expressionism, principal among them Julian Schnabel and Salle. But it's not difficult to imagine that Morley's paintings could be motivating the move toward figuration within the medium right now. If his influence was something Morley thought about, he didn't speak much about it. In 2015, he told *ARTnews*, "I never look back."

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Malcolm Morley
Selected Press

Belcove, Julie. "Obstacle to opportunity." *FT Weekend*, 27-28 May 2017, p. 16.

Arts

Obstacle to opportunity

Collecting | Andrew and Christine Hall tell *Julie Belcove* about the rewards and challenges of collecting and exhibiting across two continents

In 2005, art collectors Andrew and Christine Hall bought the renowned German painter Georg Baselitz's personal trove of about 120 artworks that he had acquired over the years, mostly from his friends and contemporaries. A year or so later, at Baselitz's suggestion, they bought Schloss Derneburg, the estate where he had lived and painted for 30 years. The Halls had been thinking about building a museum. What better place to house the expressionist visions of such master postwar artists as Eugen Schönebeck, AR Penck, Markus Lüpertz and Baselitz himself than the sprawling Derneburg, a nearly 1,000-year-old castle that long served as a monastery?

Last year, with the renovations nearly complete, their plans to exhibit German art in a German landmark outside the German city of Hanover were suddenly dashed by an unlikely culprit: Germany. The Bundestag and Bundesrat passed a highly restrictive cultural heritage law — in the face of fierce protests by the country's art community — that authorised the banning of export outside the EU of artworks more than 50 years old and valued at over €150,000, and inside the EU of works over 75 years old and worth more than €300,000. If the Halls kept their collection at Derneburg, it might have to stay there for good.

"We had an art truck turn up the week the law was passed, and all those early works were gone," recalls Andrew, who is chief executive of Astenbeck Capital Management and goes by "Andy". The Swiss warehouse that received the scores of artworks, he says, saw a veritable traffic jam of trucks arriving from Germany. "The law is totally stupid. The idea was to prevent the flight of artworks from Germany, but it had the exact opposite effect. Crazy."

On an overcast spring afternoon, after the markets have closed, Andy and Christine, a British-born couple in their sixties, are sitting in their Chelsea pied-à-terre. The apartment walls are pristinely white and starkly blank. The Halls have just completed a three-year renovation and have not taken the time to hang any art. They've been too consumed with Derneburg.

In addition to scrapping a show of Baselitz and his contemporaries' early works, the Halls stopped a shipment of about 140 of their Warhols headed for Derneburg's official opening, since the law applies to foreign-born artists as well, and to whole collections judged significant. Despite verbal assurances from government officials that their art would be allowed out, Andy says the law was so murky that his lawyers could not allay the couple's fears. "I just don't want to be the guinea pig," he says. "It's not a risk I'm prepared to take with hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of art."

Since then, the Halls have scrambled to reprogramme the 70,000 sq ft of exhibition space in their museum, coming up with an inaugural list of seven shows.

Clockwise from top: Schloss Derneburg, south of Hanover, Germany; 'Medieval Divided Self' (2016) by Malcolm Morley; Andrew and Christine Hall, photographed for the FT at home in London by Martine Fougeron

With more than 5,000 works in their private collection and another 100 in their foundation to draw on, as Christine puts it, "we have enough art." Opening on July 1 will be five monographic exhibitions of living artists who are free to exempt themselves from the law: Antony Gormley, Malcolm Morley, Barry Le Va, Hermann Nitsch and Julian Schnabel.

Joining them will be two group shows that feature works the Halls have deemed safe from the law's reach. The first, *Für Barbara*, is a compendium of more than 90 artworks by women that comprise an ode to the late Berlin dealer Barbara Weiss, curated by her stepson, gallerist Leo Koenig. Weiss, who was a staunch champion of female artists, gently goaded the Halls to buy more art by women. "Let's buy it for Barbara," became a mantra, Andy says, when they were on the fence about a piece by a female artist. Now, roughly 20 per cent of the artists in the collection are women, including Carmen Herrera, Barbara Kruger and Judith Bernstein.

Andy conceived of the second thematic show, focusing on the moving image, with works by artists such as Tony Oursler and Omer Fast, as a way to outsmart the new law: exhibition videos are frequently copies, so if one were to be confiscated, it would hardly be a catastrophe. "That was my initial, genius, inspired idea," Andy says with a smile. Andy tapped Chrissie Iles, a well-regarded curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, to organise the exhibition.

The Gormley show will be the artist's largest retrospective in Germany to date and will include works on paper as well as monumental outdoor sculpture. "They're fearless," Gormley says of the Halls. The sculptor, who curated the show, says the couple managed to turn an "obstacle into an opportunity . . . The law was a pretty serious undermining of their plans, but Andy and Christine quickly regrouped."

Although the Halls had long acquired art, they stepped up the pace substantially about 15 years ago in response to a mild midlife crisis. "I thought that rather than burnishing my bank account, maybe I should be doing something interesting with the money I was earning," says Andy. "We're talking about buying hundreds of artworks a year as opposed to one or two. Right from the get-go, I thought, 'There's no point in buying art just to put in a warehouse.' It was in the back of my mind that we would exhibit art to the public."

In addition to Derneburg, the couple have turned their Vermont farm into an exhibition space open by appointment from May to November. One of this summer's shows, *Hope and Hazard: A Comedy of Eros*, was curated by Eric Fischl, an American artist whose angst-ridden figurative work the Halls collect. Trawling the Halls' collection, Fischl found a pronounced through-line.

"It's very physical stuff — a lot of expressive, gestural work and very much involved with the body and with sexuality," says Fischl, who is himself known for his sensual nudes and has even painted Andy and Christine in the buff. He was floored by the hundreds of artists represented. "What surprised me was how few artists I knew."

The Hall Foundation also has an unconventional relationship with the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, born from another legal tussle. The Halls had installed a massive concrete sculpture by Anselm Kiefer on their front lawn in Connecticut. The local historical commission deemed the piece a structure, requiring its permission, which it was not keen on giving. A court battle ensued, and the Halls lost.

> The Halls are well on their way to acquiring one of every multiple Joseph Beuys created

Shortly thereafter, Joseph C Thompson, director of Mass MoCA, paid a fundraising visit to the Halls and, he recalls, "walking out, I expressed admiration for the sculpture". The following week, Andy called and offered the museum the work. Since Mass MoCA is not a collecting institution, Thompson declined and says he explained, "That one work, while beautiful, does not constitute an exhibition." A day or two later, he received a binder of Kiefer images from the Hall collection, along with a note from Andy: "See if you can constitute an exhibition out of this."

In the end, the Hall Foundation agreed to overhaul an abandoned structure on the Mass MoCA campus, pay the operating costs and make a 15-year renewable loan of the Kiefer art. It's a collaboration, Andy says, that he could envision expanding with more Kiefer works currently on view at the NSU Art Museum in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

A sophisticated observer of markets, Andy seeks out undervalued artists — Morley, an American painter of hyper-realistic cinematic images, is one — and buys deep. He is not naive about the impact his collecting habits can have on the art market. "I would like to think we were a factor in White Cube taking on Kiefer and Baselitz," he says of the London gallery, which first made its name promoting the Young British Artists, not ageing German ones.

The Halls' tastes have expanded from German expressionism to minimalism and conceptual art. They are, for instance, well on their way to acquiring one of every multiple Joseph Beuys created; they own about 550 of 650 made. "It's just a question of me getting the energy to go out and track down the remaining ones," Andy says.

Although their daughter Emma is involved and their daughter-in-law, Maryse Brand, is the foundation's director, Andy gets a creative jolt from assembling the collection. Says Christine, who has seemed content to let her husband do most of the talking, "No one advises him."

hallartfoundation.org

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Tuchman, Phyllis. "Malcolm Morley." *Artforum*, October 2015, pp. 320-321.

Malcolm Morley, *Aircraft on a Yellow Plane*, 2014, oil on linen, 50 × 40".

Malcolm Morley

SPERONE WESTWATER

The fifteen paintings in Malcolm Morley's latest show at Sperone Westwater, like all of his finest works, snap, crackle, and pop. In this instance, the British-born, American-based artist activates these sensations from a mix of bold, vivid colors, rambunctious compositions, and themes that refer to aerial dogfights during World War II, cannon fire during the Battle of Waterloo, medieval warfare, and even Viking exploration. All told, Morley, at age eighty-four, has become one of our preeminent history painters.

Though he had a brief period when he painted abstract pictures—they were in his solo exhibition at the Kornblee Gallery in 1964—Morley has, for the most part, remained a representational artist. Lately, his subjects relate to his boyhood in wartime London. In addition to hearing bombs bursting and feeling walls quaking, he and his family became homeless after an aerial attack destroyed their flat above a shoe store. Then too, as a child, he enjoyed assembling planes and boats from model kits, which he still collects by the dozens.

The battles being waged in Morley's art have the character of war games being fought by children. Instead of planes flying and dropping explosives under the cover of night, we find serene blue—or even green or yellow—skies with feathery clouds. Some of the aircraft look like they date from World War I. Moreover, the stripes, crosses, bull's-eyes, and the like that personalize the planes are reminiscent of the patterns found in abstract paintings from the 1960s rather than of actual manufacture. All of this is further underscored by the fact that the miniature, artist-crafted three-dimensional planes that are attached to the surfaces of the paintings mimic the kind sold in kits.

There are certain moments when you look at Morley's latest paintings and ask yourself, What's wrong with this picture? The perspectives, for example, are often askew. Then there are the collaged elements that he's introduced. Liberties have been taken. Have you ever seen a triptych like *Trafalgar-Waterloo*, 2013? The side panels are exquisite portraits of the heads and torsos of the British commanders who led those respective battles. In the center, a faux cannon is aimed directly at gallerygoers. Morley incorporates assemblage as if he were a sculptor rather than a painter. He has said he attaches model planes to the flat surfaces of works such as *The Searchers*, 2014, because he likes the shadows they cast. I wonder if it took him longer to make these three-dimensional elements than it did to paint the skies on which they appear. The cannon and the cannonballs he's made from paper and encaustic not only introduce the third dimension but also enliven and make "real" the way we experience works such as *Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon*, 2014, as well as *Trafalgar-Waterloo*. Between the presence of cannons aimed at viewers and the variety of aerial dogfights the artist has depicted, this was the noisiest show I've ever attended without actual sound being piped in.

Recently, Morley has talked about being inspired by the Comte de Lautréamont's famous image of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table. But he uses the "meeting" of these objects differently than the Surrealists did. It's almost as if Morley's understanding of the image of that union gave him permission to make free associations, and not necessarily poetic ones. Sometimes he forces the connections. The bulldog, kachina doll, and planes in a work named after Lautréamont's 1869 novel—*Maldoror I*, 2014—seem to be oddly related. The warplanes, fire engine, cargo freighter, and medieval castle replete with knights, jester, and king and queen, however, make perfect sense. After all, don't we live in the age of channel surfing and Facebook feeds? One minute you might be referring to *The Tudors* and the next *Downton Abbey* and after that *The Alamo*, while Susan Sontag's *The Volcano Lover* sits on your nightstand. It's all historical drama, isn't it?

With consummate skill, Morley connects the past to the present. I found myself spending more time than usual in front of the artist's work at Sperone Westwater. It grabbed my attention, causing me to pause and think about war and peace. As he has for decades, this transplanted English representational artist here managed to stay a few steps ahead of everyone else.

—*Phyllis Tuchman*

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Salle, David. “Old Guys Painting: On the mature painter’s letting go.” *Artnews,* September 2015, pp. 48-57.

OLD GUYS PAINTING

On the mature painter's letting go

BY DAVID SALLE


Malcolm Morley

50

Painting is one of the few things in life for which youth holds no advantage. The diminutions wrought by aging—of muscle mass, stamina, hearing, mental agility (the list goes on)—are offset among painters by fearlessness, finely honed technique, and heightened resolve. A ticking clock focuses the mind. There's a recurring narrative about late style in painting: from Rembrandt to de Kooning to, in our own era, Agnes Martin and Cy Twombly, the trajectory of the long-lived painter in the final decade or two reaches toward a greater openness and a simplifying of form, along with efficiency of execution. Muscle memory is the last thing to go. In this reading, a painter's late work is characterized by letting go—the older painter needs do *less*. This effortlessness is also embraced by young painters, but for a different reason: they're placing a bet on one idea and hoping it's enough. Anyway, young people are in a hurry—there's no time for psychological complexity. Conflict is left for the middle years.

Two shows in New York last spring illustrate the effect I'm talking about: Alex Katz (age 88) at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, and Malcolm Morley (84) at Sperone Westwater. Both artists had strong and invigorating exhibitions that refocused our sense of how their painting, and painting generally, can be extended. To these shows I would add a third that happened to coincide: Georg Baselitz's "Orange Eaters" and "Drinkers" series, from the early 1980s, at Skarstedt. Can we add that? When he made these paintings Baselitz was barely into his 40s—a *youth*. True, but some people are never really young. Baselitz strikes me as someone for whom the sunniness of youth held no savor. Maybe it was the war—gravitas settled heavy on him from an early age. The beginning of the '80s was an especially fruitful time for Baselitz, and the "Drinkers" and "Orange Eaters" are among the very best pictures of his robust career. There is a certitude and a clarity about them, the end point of a hard-won evolution, as well as a wiliness; it's remarkable

they were made by anyone semi-young. I'm told that Baselitz thinks of himself as a *young artist*, his chronological age a mere technicality, and that he's surprised not to be included in shows of young painters. But to paraphrase Bob Dylan, he may be younger now, but he was so much older then.

ALL THREE SHOWS HAD IN COMMON A CONCERN WITH THE way painting takes an image and makes out of it something iconic. How is an image built out of paint? What holds it together, and to what end? For Baselitz, the starting point is a gesture—someone raising a glass to his lips—and through repetition and intensely focused observation he makes of that gesture a piece of existence; the painting *holds* our seeing it. At first look, the image seems to exist merely to give the paint something to do; the space is flat, the figures barely volumetric. Baselitz paints the world upside down, like a human retina in reverse; his visual field is upended and projected, one mark at a time, onto the canvas. It's a demanding perceptual conversion, like walking backward through a crowd. The purpose of this self-imposed awkwardness has been to ensure that the visual translation natural to painting is made with maximum attention. Try it. You'll see how exhausting it is—exhausting to do, exciting to see.

For Katz, on the other hand, the iconic image begins with scanning a scene for interlocking patterns of light and shadow, as well as overlapping objects that create scale and distance—an observed bite of reality, like a house glimpsed in some woods, say, its chimney and front door glowing pink in the sun, that forms the image in embryo. These are the ingredients from which a unity is sought and onto which it is imposed, like

PREVIOUS SPREAD Malcolm Morley, *The Island of the Day Before Regained*, 2013. OPPOSITE Georg Baselitz, *Orangenesser X*, 1981. ABOVE Georg Baselitz, *Trinker mit Glas*, 1981.

pieces of a puzzle that snap together. These pieces, the shapes, are given contours of such specificity as to create a sense of authenticity, of life. Sometimes the very improbability of his shapes guarantees their veracity; *it could only have been thus*. Painting at this level has a moral dimension: Katz's work is permeated with an awareness of *things as they are*. It's a matter of core identity. One doesn't just paint—one merges with painting. His six-decade career reminds me of James Boswell's view of Samuel Johnson (quoted by Andrew O'Hagan in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books*), that Johnson was a "moral unity, a man who was never not knowingly himself."

Morley begins with something semi-iconic—a model airplane, a toy boat, or a postcard—and finds in it, through a complex and stubborn act of mimesis at the end of a brush, the image that is the painting. He doesn't paint life per se. Rather, he crafts scenes assembled from models, mostly of his own making, and the paintings that result from this convoluted process are like a loopy costume party; everyone is masked, true identities are withheld. What we see is only the shmushy, malleable surface behind which the actual, sharp-focus world resides. And what with painting's central paradox—that there is no world behind the painting, any painting, only the painting itself—looking at a Morley can give you the sensation of being trapped in a painterly hall of mirrors. At times, it can feel a little airless.

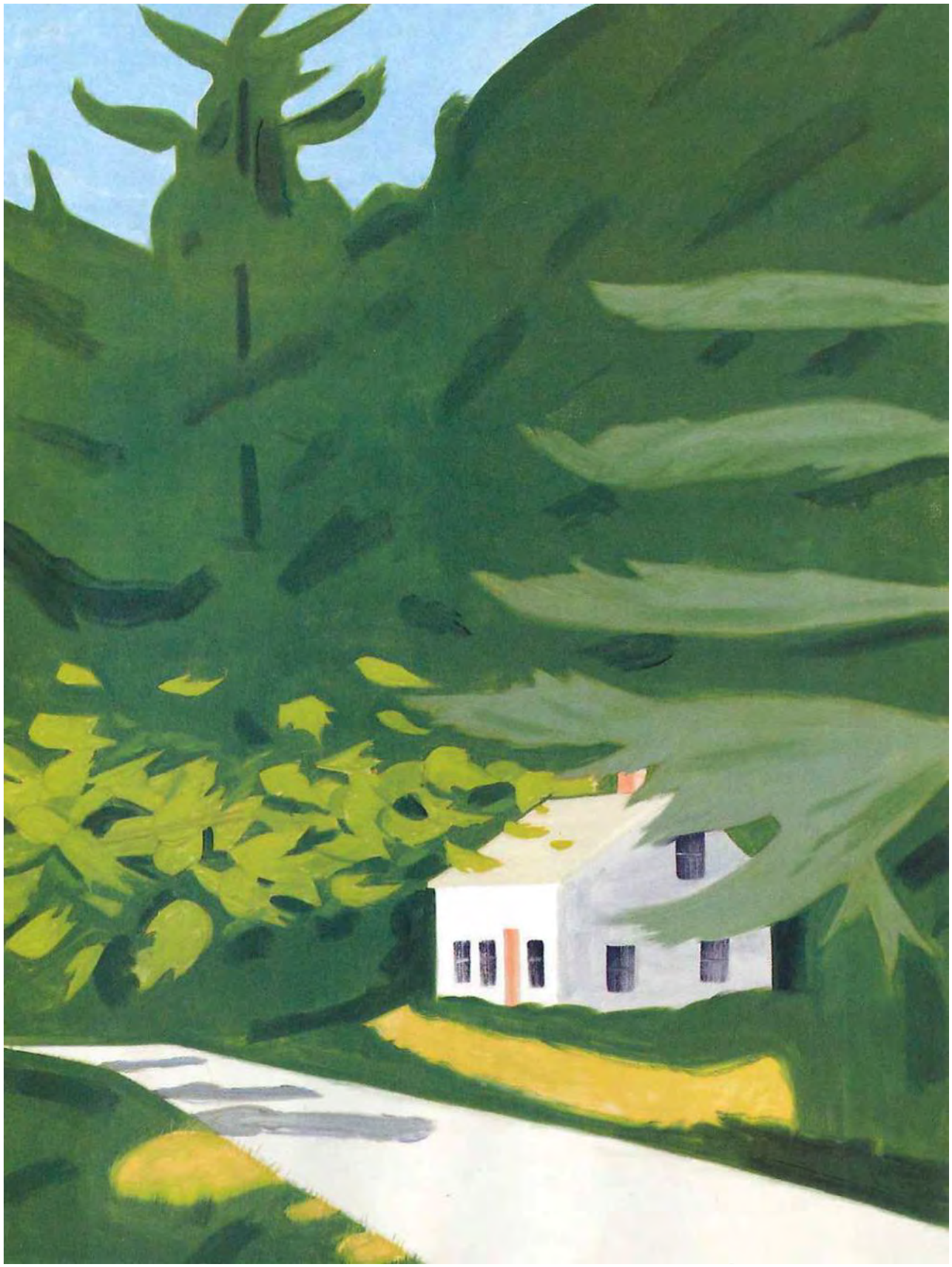
These three painters also have diverse approaches to the question of how to treat an edge within a nominally realist enterprise. Edges in painting are like accents—you can place where someone's from by their diction. Baselitz, hewing close to the Northern European graphic tradition that runs from Dürer to Max Beckmann, uses line, or more properly marks, to corral and lay out his subject. With a slashing brush loaded with black paint, he constructs a contour for the figure, not so much to define the form but as a way to fix it in space—*to get it down*, as closely as possible, to the generating moment of perception. In this regard, Baselitz inhabits the same stylistic and moral universe as Giacometti, whose incessant erasure and redrawing of the model is an obvious precursor. "Image capture" indeed—it's not only on your laptop. Painting the image upside down makes it impossible to work in any traditional figurative manner—that is, from the inside out, from bones to flesh. Baselitz applies color in the general vicinity of the form, and then holds in the expanding area of color with an accumulation of black marks; the lines give the color a kind of exoskeleton.

Katz eschews outlines altogether. The edge, the place where two shapes meet, is everything. The edge for Katz is like phrasing in ballet—it's the essence of his Astaire-like painterly grace. Color is thinly brushed out to the perimeter of a shape and left to stay there. In the same way that Baselitz started out with a style rooted in the past and bent it to his own historical position and temperament, Katz began with what is essentially the classical French tradition (forms described by areas of color; where the plane changes, so does the color) and brought to it the flatness, immediacy, and graphic enlargement of Pop art. It's a good example of how a style or technique, once common but now attenuated, can be redirected—nearly a hundred years later, by a radically different historical imperative—into a completely new look. It's what used to be called tradition—a thing one understood and, if one was ambitious and lucky, built on. Probably no one in 1860 could have predicted that Manet's style, the simplifying of form into light and shadow, would be reborn as Katz's, but that's one way to think of it.

As for the edge in Morley's melty universe, it's all negotiable. In 1982 the artist painted *Cradle of Civilization with American Woman*, which remains a kind of ur-postmodern picture. I remember being struck by the painting when it was first shown at Xavier Fourcade Gallery in New York. A sienna-hued nude woman sunbathing on a crowded beach lies huge at the bottom of the picture plane—she looks to have been painted with the kind of wire brush used to clean BBQ grills—while crowds of people, swimmers red as tomatoes, cavort and collide in the surf. Superimposed onto this scene are a figure of vaguely Hellenistic appearance, encased in a cerulean-blue outline, and a black horse, minus rider, with a Trojan battle helmet floating over its back. The painting should have come with a warning: don't try this at home.

Morley had been working for years to find a way to translate his fracturing, shattering, and disjunctive impulses into paint. In *Cradle* the transgressive id runs riot; the picture is a gas. It has neither outlines nor, strictly speaking, edges. It has instead Morley's exploding, dissolving, at times deliquescing sense of form; you feel that his forms are made from the inside out, that each figure or tuft of hair or ocean wave is

OPPOSITE Alex Katz, *Untitled Landscape 1*, 2014.



the result of a little micro-explosion of paint, a kind of paintball in reverse.

THE PROBLEM WITH KATZ'S WORK, IF IT CAN BE CALLED a problem, is that so much flawless painting over so many decades has lulled his audience into thinking that they know everything there is to know about the old boy. People can relax into the knowledge that Katz isn't likely to break new ground at this point in his career. The steady stream of perfectly realized paintings calls to mind one of those graphs showing a dauntingly expanding series of prime numbers, each one uniquely itself but all related, stretching to infinity, or Charlie Parker at the Blue Note—so many perfectly struck notes played in rapid succession that it's hard to pick out the gems. But that's the audience's problem, not the artist's. And for Katz (unlike Parker), the story is far from over.

Most, if not all, of the paintings in Katz's show at Gavin Brown bring a jujitsu-like ingenuity to the familiar Katzian playing field. To see him work is like watching a seasoned master of the soccer field—the green expanse is familiar, but in tonight's game he will introduce some new moves, some new inflection of the knee that will subtly change the game's dynamic. Maybe a goal will be scored from an improbably long distance—the accuracy, seemingly effortless and happening in an instant, bringing the crowd to its feet. True to the late-work notion, these paintings are exceedingly open, both in their conception of what is sufficient to make a painted image, and in the way they're painted. The brushwork is loose and precise at the same time; some fairly complex shapes whose edges are cut out and into like so much cookie dough are laid down with an enormous brush using very few actual strokes. You wouldn't think such a tight corner could be taken in such a wide vehicle, but it seems to offer no resistance; the paint appears to know exactly where it needs to go, and goes there without argument. The color intervals as well as the value pattern of these new pictures have a level of sophistication not seen in New York for a long time, if ever. Some of the color has the elegance and unexpectedness of Italian fashion design: teal blue with brown and cream, emerald green with pale yellow and brown, black with blue and cream. You want to look at, wear, and eat them all at the same time. For all their looseness (and in one or two the paint is so thin it looks like it might slide off the canvas) the paintings are held together by a firm undergirding; a rigorously delineated map keeps the painting from flying off into formlessness. Katz's world is not all cream puffs and daisies; this understructure is made of hardened steel.

Slab City 2 (2013), titled after the unlikely name of the town in Maine where Katz has summered for nearly 60 years, revisits a familiar theme: a lone house by a road glimpsed through some woods. How is Katz able to make this image look so immediate? We have the sensation truly of coming upon it unexpectedly; it's a hushed little surprise, painting's secrets revealed. The picture is very tall; it puts our sight line somewhere improbably high up, so that we seem to be swooping in and down through the trees, floating over the road to arrive just short of the cabin door, which glows pink in the late-afternoon light. The huge trees are interlocking fingers of green, a quartet of greens, creating three overlapping, directional weaves, each one pulsing energy out to the edges. And the crisp sliver of pink door—one brushstroke with an angled top—is the grace note amid so much green. The painting, along with many in the show, is so right, and executed with such controlled abandon, that I had the sensation of someone gaining traction on air.

This individuality, this uniqueness of shape or mark, is primarily a *form of attention*, and it carries with it an implicit worldview. Coming in contact with it makes you realize yet again that all the arguments against painting, which are determinist, economic, and political, have little to do with the practice of painting, and have in fact had little impact on it. Questions of dominance or irrelevancy, or of the market, are of a different nature from what is most vital about painting, which is found in the realm of specific attention paid to specific visual schema.

Morley, too, has been perfecting a very specific, highly personal, idiosyncratic way of putting paint on canvas for a very long time. Besides octogenarianism, Katz and Morley don't have much in common. Morley is mercurial and restless, experimental, literary, theoretical, and perverse. His work is squarely in the tradition of his countryman J. M. W. Turner, with its mists, tunneling light, images of combat, and outward spiraling squalls of paint, but it also has something in common with Arcimboldo and other Mannerist eccentrics. He's a windmill tilter.

OPPOSITE Alex Katz, *Slab City 2*, 2013.

While Katz uses the largest possible brush for each form, only switching to smaller, pointed brushes (called "brights," a name I love) for details like eyelashes or buttonholes, Morley uses small-bore brushes for the whole goddamn painting. And whereas Katz uses the least number of brushstrokes to set the scene, once confiding that a lovely painting of a seagull in flight was made with "exactly 45 brushstrokes," Morley seems intent on seeing just how many densely packed licks of the brush he can bundle into every square inch of canvas surface. It cannot be said of him, as Fairfield Porter once wrote about Roy Lichtenstein, that "he does not torture the paint." Morley tortures it good and plenty.

Morley's work is almost punishingly dense, demanding, uningratiating; he dares us to imagine the act of sustained concentration that goes into its making. Ship masts, airplane insignia, ocean waves, tiny flags, portraiture, battle, motion, and weather—Morley loads difficulty on top of still more difficulty; if there's a harder, more roundabout way to make a painting, Morley has yet to discover it.

At its best, all this *travail*, all this surface agitation achieved at such effort, combined with the warping, sheared-off, rollercoaster-on-the-descent kind of spatial feeling, results in pictures that win our admiration. A good example is *Dakota* (2015), in which a WWII-era bomber, a few freight-train cars on a track to nowhere, a modern-day tanker, a Viking ship, and a turreted brick castle tower all share a Permanent Green Light sky and a similarly hued sea, the waves of which are rendered as little chicken scratches of white or darker green. And in the bravura *The Island of the Day Before Regained* (2013)—a depiction of two Messerschmitts going after an improbably candy-striped U.S. Army bomber that looks about to crash into a Man-O-War ship of vaguely 18th-century appearance—the whole kind of I-don't-give-a-fuck surface roils and boils with manufactured abandon.

One thing has changed. True to the cliché about older artists stripping away all unnecessary scaffolding, Morley has more or less deserted the grid that informed his work for decades in favor of a direct attack with the brush. The absence of the grid—the device by which the painting was broken down into small, manageable bits—has resulted in paintings even more fluid and disembodied than before. Unconventional to the core, Morley has the autodidact's surety of self, along with a frenetic, anxious, gleeful will to please. At 84, he's like the boy who wants to be praised for blowing up his toys.

More than any other painter, Baselitz works like a boxer: he makes you lean in, but in the next instant keeps you at arm's length; get too close and you could take one on the chin. (Compare him to Anselm Kiefer, whose work yields no advantage when viewed up close. The effect of Kiefer's work is theatrical, akin to how images work on a proscenium stage; the best seat in the house is about row K.) Baselitz's surfaces are a balance between raw agitation and calculation, between perceptual rigor and design. The paint is applied with insistent, overlapping brushstrokes that might get around to defining an image, but are mostly just themselves. There is, in his work, an internal sense of when to start and when to stop; when to introduce a new color, a bigger scale of mark; when to insist and when to leave off insisting; when to feint and when to jab. Whereas Katz's work is like being roughed up by a cloud, Baselitz aims to bruise. As a colorist, he has something in common with Brice Marden. His '80s work is an essay into the possibilities of yellow (yellow-orange, yellow-green, yellow-black) as well as green-black, turquoise, mint, mud, and, surprisingly, white. His color is visceral, sophisticated, and mostly free of referents. It's all art.

The show at Skarstedt, handpicked and deliberately assembled, was in large part composed of masterpieces. I was struck by what a sophisticated designer Baselitz is—something I hadn't noticed before. And there was something else in these paintings that Baselitz is not known for: wit. In *Drinker with Glass* (1981), a man seen in profile, one hand up to his cheek, is gingerly sipping from a cobalt-blue martini glass that is about two feet tall. His red nose and the slightly alarmed look in his eye tell the whole story. It's a deeply poignant and funny and gorgeous picture. In *Orange Eater III* (1982), we see Baselitz the quirky designer. The orange eater of the title is wearing some kind of harlequin or argyle shirt. Aquamarine, turquoise, brick-red, and white diamonds jostle together, floating free of their wearer, while alongside the picture's right edge a cascade of loosely cross-hatched teal-blue marks declares its autonomy: sometimes paint is just paint. ■

OPPOSITE Malcolm Morley, *Dakota*, 2015.

David Salle is an artist living in Brooklyn and East Hampton, New York.


shell
Malcolm Morley

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Belcove, Julie. "Malcolm's Moment." *DuJour*, Summer 2015, pp. 102-103.

The artist working at his Brookhaven, New York, studio

Malcolm's Moment

RIDING A NEW WAVE OF APPRECIATION, 84-YEAR-OLD PHOTO-REALIST MASTER MALCOLM MORLEY DISCUSSES THE CHILDHOOD MEMORY HE'S NEVER GOTTEN OVER AND THE WILL THAT KEEPS DRIVING HIM

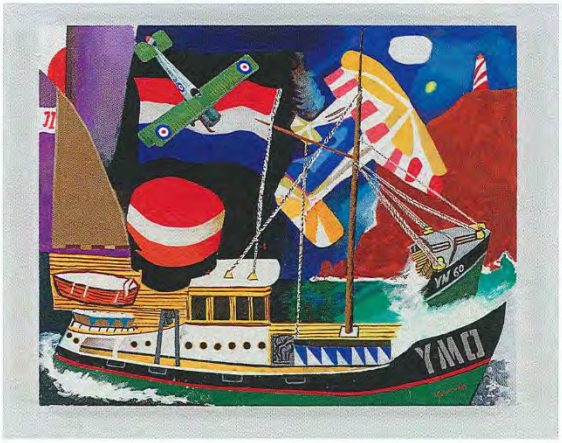
WRITTEN BY **JULIE L. BELCOVE** PHOTOGRAPHED BY **KYOKO HAMADA**

He may be the only world-class artist who can boast of learning to paint via a correspondence course—in prison. Fortunately, Malcolm Morley was a better artist than a thief.

As colorful as his cinematic, action-packed paintings, Morley is sipping a cappuccino at the Carlyle hotel in New York and reminiscing about how he came to be a pioneer of photo-realism, the hyper-detailed style of painting that he prefers to call "super-realism" and that would help earn him the very first Turner Prize, in 1984, and the Francis J. Greenburger Award, which he received this spring. His latest batch of canvases, on view at Sperone Westwater Gallery in New York, makes references to numerous historical periods with depictions, in both two and three dimensions, of the Alamo, Napoleon and a cannon from the Battle of Trafalgar, for a different take on his longtime subject of war.

Morley's psyche was marked by war from his earliest memories, when he was shipped off to boarding school in the U.K. at age 5 in 1936. His mother had not told him he was going until she said good-bye at the train station, leaving him with a lifetime of separation anxiety. But one night off the coast of Devon, where he'd been sent, a freighter was torpedoed, and the next day the schoolchildren were allowed to see the wreck, complete with floating loaves of bread. "That sinking freighter has been a recurring theme, so in a sense, it was a blessing," he says. He loved war movies and was fascinated by the seeming adventure of Spitfire-Messerschmitt dogfights over London during the Blitz. Then, back with his mother, Morley survived a German "doodlebug" destroying their flat and, along with it, a model ship he'd built. "It was about three in the morning," he recalls. "There was a huge bang—I felt it from my toenails to my head. We were refugees overnight."

In 1958, after stints in prison and art school, Morley immigrated to New York, not because it was the home base of the Abstract Expressionists but because he was following a woman, the first of his five wives. "I never had girlfriends," he says. "Just got married." One day he tried to paint a ship in the harbor. When he realized he couldn't see the bow and the stern simultaneously, he bought a postcard of it, which he then faithfully re-created five feet long in oil paint, ushering in photo-realism. "It required an enormous amount of



Clockwise from top left: Morley's paint tubes and models; *Trafalgar Cannon* (2013). *Cargo Freighter Lida* (2013); *YM60* (2014).

concentration and willpower," says Morley, who relied on a trick from art school: using a grid to size up the image from source material to canvas. Painting square by square with a fine brush, Morley perceived his creations as a series of tiny abstractions; only the results were representational.

He painted ships almost obsessively. "It took a while to realize I was trying to paint the ship that got blown up, that could never be painted," he says. (Morley underwent 25 years of psychoanalysis. "Finally the shrink threw me out.") His loosened-up images of the 1970s were the precursors to the Neo-Expressionism that fueled the 1980s art boom, and his subject matter broadened to airplane crashes, animals (harkening to the great British painter George Stubbs) and athletes, our modern-day heroes. At 84, he is still innovating. "I've come off the grid," he says, somewhat triumphantly. Rather than working meticulously from a photo or a watercolor, Morley is improvising, composing the canvas one object at a time from models he has built—though with the same dedication to precision.

Robert Storr, dean of the Yale School of Art, calls Morley both "smart" and "unruly." "He's continued to make really interesting, eccentric, richly layered stuff, and he's no kid," says Storr. "He's not housebroken, and his painting does not sit quietly on people's walls."

Brookhaven, Long Island, is now Morley's home with his wife of 26 years, Lida. He misses the energy of the city but says, "I live in the light. Goethe's last words were, 'More light.' I love the last words of dying people." Goethe's may be apocryphal, but asked to predict his own, Morley quips, "More recognition!" He laughs. "I'm pretty much insecure enough and secure enough to go on." ●

→ MORLEY'S PAINTINGS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO DRAW FROM SCENES IN MOVIES, INCLUDING *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN* AND *SUDDENLY.*

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Cyphers, Peggy. “Flying Aces: Malcolm Morley at Sperone Westwater.” *artcritical.com* (*Artcritical*), 24 May 2015.

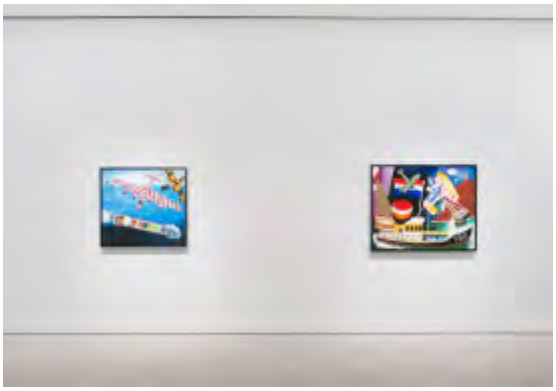
artcritical
the online magazine of art and ideas

Installation view, “Malcolm Morley,” 2015, at Sperone Westwater. Photo courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

Turner Prize-winning painter Malcolm Morley is currently exhibiting a striking new body of paintings and installation works at the Sperone Westwater. An accompanying monograph has also been published by the gallery. Throughout his expansive 60-year career, Morley has deftly surfed between rigid art-world categorizations such as abstraction, Pop art, photorealism and Expressionism. Ignoring such strictures has allowed Morley to stay true to his subjects — most recently his fascination with military histories and vintage paper models of planes — and, in the process, reveal hints of his own life story and obsessions.

The artist’s fascination with war harkens back to his boyhood in London. During World War II enemy forces bombed his family’s home. The family hurriedly left the house that night, never to return and Morley was deeply affected by this tragedy. During my recent visit to his Long Island studio, he revealed that his last, most poignant memory of home was the distinct image of his newly painted model airplane left sitting on the windowsill of his bedroom.

In these recent works, Morley scripts his color-laden fighter planes, battleships, forts and cannons into raucous, nonsensical battle scenarios — combinations of events and timelines plausible only from a child’s point of view. His recurrent lexicon of war imagery, adapted from vintage toys and model kits, once again



Installation view, "Malcolm Morley," 2015, at Sperone Westwater. Photo courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

resurfaces here. They evince a subtle but important shift in technique, towards a more expressionist brush mark, a loosening of the underlying grid, and a distortion or abstraction of surface. Buttery, sensuous brushstrokes compete with more textural applications of paint. In *Freighter with Primary Colors and B2 Bombers* (2013), paint is applied as physically articulated marks, both dry-brush and juicy, in stippled applications. The textural elements indicate splashing waves and bombs dropping. Meanwhile, deftly modeled tones of blue and white create poetic transitions in the sky and clouds. The bands of color that make up the deck of the sea vessel are slab-like marks that create tension and physicality as abstraction, a merger of historical fact and pure artistic license. The B2 bombers in this painting are decorated with a variety of stripes and patterns borrowed from aircraft insignia used to guide pilots in recognizing allied aircraft and sea vessels more effectively in the era before advanced radar and radio technologies took over. In the painting *Dakota*, (2015) the carnivalesque battle engages military forces of historical implausibility. With exaggerated, child-like renderings, history hits the blender as a Viking ship, lighthouse, train and German fighter plane are orchestrated across a silky cobalt green expanse. Although he is depicting naturalistic imagery, Morley does so by magnifying the abstract nature of his materials and subjects.

Installation view, "Malcolm Morley," 2015, at Sperone Westwater. Photo courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

A number of works in the show incorporate paper assemblage and mixed media installation. In *The Searchers* (2014) two hand-decorated model airplanes are physically affixed to the cloudy blue sky of the painting plane at oblique angles. Morley explains he attaches the planes as such "to create shadows." In the largest and most ambitious work in the show, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon* (2014), painting and sculptural components merge into a theatrical, diagrammatic installation. The artist renders Napoleon on horseback, his equestrian pose borrowed from the famous painting by Jacques-Louis David. A paper-and-encaustic cannon, replete with a stack of cannonballs, occupies the floor space in front of the painting, the weaponry aimed directly at the portrait. They're a commanding presence, seemingly attacking Napoleon's portrait and the regal militarism for which it stands.

Twisting military fact with fiction, Morley's illogical narratives can sometimes bewilder beyond patient observation. But the vintage model airplanes, now a primary component of his illusionist reliefs, expand our experience beyond the nostalgia of his biography into a critique of dominant culture's obsession with militarism. More importantly, their presence on and around the painted image allows for a heightened experience of time and place, both real and imagined, by creating a theatrically staged experience of Morley's underlying narrative.

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"The Lookout: Malcolm Morley." *artinamericamagazine.com (Art in America)*, 30 April 2015.

Art in America

While the U.S. government aims unmanned drones at human targets in faraway lands, Malcolm Morley's paintings of World War II-era bombers and other quaint weaponry of yesteryear point to the ongoing absurdity of war. This exhibition of recent works—all dating from 2013 to 2015—comprises 15 paintings and two watercolors. In *Aircraft on a Yellow Plane* a jumble of toylike red, blue and gray propeller planes is arrayed against a yellow ground, with all the aplomb of Wayne Thiebaud pastries. Other works are painted with more exacting detail and recall the narrative obsessions of certain self-taught painters like Horace Pippin. Against an expansive sea, a green plane nose dives towards a medieval turret in *Dakota.* Nearby, a couple of vaguely militaristic boats and a Viking ship, helmed by a bearded warrior decked out with a sword and goofy horn helmet, cruise the waters. A train putters along the horizon.

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Ebony, David. "David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for April." *news.artnet.com (Artnet News)*, 22 April 2015.

artnet®

Malcolm Morley, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon* (2014). Photo: Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

1. Malcolm Morley at Sperone Westwater

The Napoleonic Wars are still raging—at least in several recent works by Morley in this terrific show. Armed conflict has long been a central theme in works by legendary painter Malcolm Morley. He uses children's toys, especially airplanes and warships, as models for elaborate war narratives that seem incongruous, played out in clashing historical periods, and unlikely geographical settings. This exhibition is no exception.

Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon (2014) features a striking painting-installation, featuring a large canvas that mimics Jacques-Louis David's heroic equestrian portrait commemorating Napoleon's foray into Austria in 1800. As a matter of historical fact, Napoleon actually rode a donkey and lugged a cannon through the mountains, which Morley humorously conveys here with 3-D elements, including a realistic-looking cannon and a pile of cannon balls, all made of paper covered in black encaustic. Elsewhere, Admiral Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington strike dashing poses in *Trafalgar-Waterloo* (2013), with their portrait panels separated by a life-size cannon barrel rendered in low-relief.

Morley culls most of the images in the show from his childhood memories of World War II. He witnessed his toy ships and airplanes being blasted from their shelves as his family's London apartment was bombed in the Blitz. The family survived, though their material possessions vanished in a flash. There is sorrow and joy in that story, just as in each of the seventeen works on view here

The Turner Prize winner, now 83, manages to imbue his poignant war tales with touches of humor, and delivers them with masterful, painterly panache. At the show's opening, my friend and colleague Walter Robinson likened the works in this exhibition to late Picassos, and the analogy seems apt. After an extraordinary career spanning nearly six decades, Morley today produces works whose childlike freshness conveys more than ever an exuberant outlook on life, despite all of its conflicts and mayhem.

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Chiaverina, John. "Heavy Artillery: At 83, Malcolm Morley Is Still Doing Battle." *www.artnews.com (ARTnews)*, 21 April 2015.

ARTNEWS

Malcolm Morley, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon*, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

"I never look back," the legendary 83-year-old British ex-pat artist Malcolm Morley said Thursday. Morley—who at different points in his distinguished career has been at the forefront of movements like Photorealism and Neo-Expressionism—was speaking to me on the afternoon of his opening at Sperone Westwater, his fifth solo exhibition for the gallery.

We sat down on folding chairs and talked inside of a room that houses a striking new mixed-media installation called *Napoleon Crossing the Alps with Cannon* (2014). The work remakes Jacques-Louis David's painting of Napoleon galloping on a horse (which includes a great painted faux-wood frame) and tethers it to a handmade cannon via what the artist calls "a very physical rope." Adjacent to all of this is a stack of cannonballs attached to wheels. The whole piece feels ready for battle.

"The painting was made first, and the idea of building a cannon developed," Morley said. "The cannon was built later. Linking the painting up with the cannon was a kind of inspired idea, really. Is the cannon pulling the painting or is the painting pulling the cannon?"

(Morley was dressed quite dapperly in a houndstooth blazer and colorful scarf. He was wearing a hat that I want to call a trilby but I can't be sure—my brimmed-hat knowledge is pathetic. This wasn't his opening outfit, however. He told me that later on he would be changing into a tailored black suit.)

Morley's past includes a childhood spent enduring the Nazi Blitz and a brief tenure in prison for theft, which actually led to his career as an artist. After moving to the States, he first gained wide notice in the 1960s for his grid-based Photorealism works (which he prefers to refer to as superrealism) before ditching associations with the style after it became diluted by art school students around the country.

The 1970s saw him delving into more expressionist work that would open the door for artists like Julian Schnabel and also pulling some art-world pranks of his own: once, as an act of protest, he nailed a squirt

gun to his own canvas at an auction house. In 1984 he was the first ever artist to receive Britain's prestigious Turner Prize.

Morley's new show at Sperone Westwater marks a procedural departure for the artist: a handful of the paintings on display were created without the use of a grid, which has been somewhat of a hallmark for him throughout the years.

Morley said that the poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror* by Comte de Lautréamont (a favorite of the Surrealists), in which a passage describes "the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella," was a giant influence on his new grid-less paintings.

"These new paintings without a grid were painted by just starting off with one single object, be it a bomber from World War II, and after that was completed it would suggest another object, which would be a lighthouse," Morley explained. "So then the bomber, then the lighthouse, and that would suggest another object. So the paintings were made by adding on."

When taking about this free-association painting process, Morley might have been referring to *Dakota*, which contains all of the above and more. The lighthouse in the work has an almost faux naif quality to it, the bricks all skewed in a way that brings to mind the drawings of the late outsider artist Wesley Willis.

The scale of each object in *Dakota* is unrealistically proportional, as if the artist has been painting from a couple of toys next to each other. This was not a coincidence: the genesis of much of the work on display stems from a large cache of paper-made model airplane kits that the artist keeps in his studio, a byproduct of his longstanding interest in English war history.

(An employee from the gallery showed me photos of work from the exhibition packed tightly in Morley's studio, a converted church on Long Island. Among these was a large shelf full of paper models.)

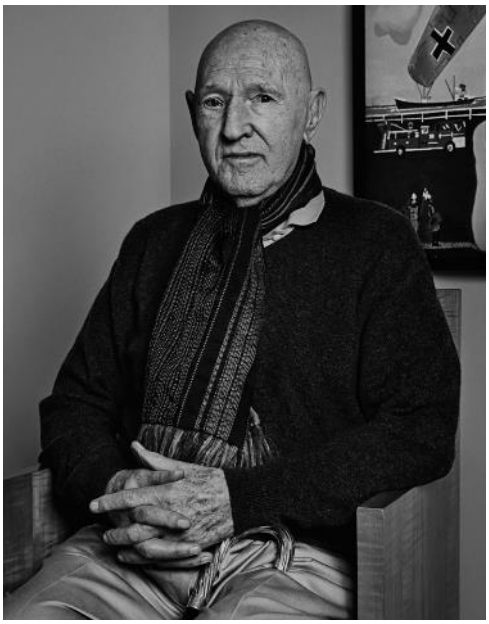
"The rule is that all of these images have to come out of these paper-made kits," Morley explained. Some of the models show up on actual canvases, as in *The Searchers*, in which two paper airplanes are attached to a sky-and-water landscape, painted with oil on linen. The effect is a three-dimensionality that feels like a real-space version of Morley's photorealistic paintings. This feeling is compounded when viewing the work through the lens of a book or computer screen.

The artist spoke of "picking subjects that have a larger human scale to it," which has in the past included everything from motorcycle jumpers to distinguished war heroes. There's a sense of pop-culture heroism to a lot of these images that spans history and traditions. *Cromwell* was painted from a DVD box of the 1970 movie of the same name.

"I guess what connects them is I've made a choice based on the idea of the painterly possibilities in each instance," Morley said, "and that varies a great deal."

McDermott, Emily. "Malcolm Morley and the Self." *www.interviewmagazine.com (Interview)*, 20 April 2015.

Interview



Malcolm Morley in New York, March 2015. Portraits by Christian Högstedt.

Transitioning between various mediums and styles since he began painting in the 1960s, New York-based artist Malcolm Morley's most recent body of work explores his chosen iconography through sculptures made of paper and oil paintings on linen. The 15 new pieces, which are now on view at Sperone Westwater in New York, expand upon motifs previously seen in Morley's work—fighter planes, Viking ships, lighthouses, medieval castles, and more—through surrealistic compositions created with the vibrancy of pop imagery. One might be led to believe that his childhood in London amidst the tumultuous years of World War II is the root of such subject matter, however, upon speaking to Morley, it becomes clear that his source material is much simpler: an ever-growing, yet relatively untouched stack of model airplanes, castles, trains, and other various objects, unassembled, still in their original boxes.

For the last 30 years, Morley has collected model sets, but it wasn't until now, inspired by Comte de Lautreamont's image of a "chance meeting on a dissection table of a sewing machine and an umbrella" in his 19th-century poetic novel *Les Chants de Maldoror*, that he put the collection to use. In the works, Morley often depicts many of the unmade objects through paint, although he also built a few of the models, psychically imposing them upon the surface, bringing the two-dimensional forward, into the viewer's space.

When Morley moved from London to New York in 1958, he was painting with an abstract expressionist aesthetic, but soon adopted—and arguably caused the creation of the term—photo-realism. Despite leading this painterly movement, Morley does not consider his older works photo-realistic, instead preferring the term "super-realism." He has since dabbled in other movements and styles, including sublime watercolors, and exhibited solo shows around the world at establishments that include the Pompidou in Paris, Hayward Gallery in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Miami, and the Parrish Art Museum just outside of New York City.

Before the opening of "Malcolm Morley," we met the artist and spoke about everything from the exhibition to his experience with psychoanalysis, dreams, and alter egos.

EMILY MCDERMOTT: For the most recent works, it's a lot of war imagery, like planes, castles, and trains. There are all sorts of recurring elements. When did you first begin this new series and what sparked it?

MALCOLM MORLEY: First, I don't think of them as series, because I have no idea after one painting what painting comes next, so it surprises me. Over the years I've collected a stack of model ships that come

in cardboard packages with instructions on how to construct it. They were sitting on a shelf for years without me doing anything much about it, but as of late, I've gone to use what's available in the stack.

They're three-dimensional objects that I look at, and the emphasis is very much on the idea of looking at. I paint them from the way in which I'm *looking at* them, which is really from the point of view of sensations. I feel the sensation of it, and pre-imagine it made of paint. As an exercise, whatever is in front of you, you can imagine what it would look as paint. This is determined by the amount of references you have already to how paint looks; it's an accumulation of experiences that enrich the current sensation, [like] looking at that glass of water, not as a glass of water, but as paint on a two-dimensional surface. So it's not just a question of looking, but of doing, in relation to this, in relation to that, in relation to the space between things. In a way, it's very classical.

Photography CHRISTIAN HÖGSTEDT

MCDERMOTT: Do you consider painting everything you see?

MORLEY: No, it has to be specific. Lately it's become iconic. What I'm painting right now is a Trojan horse, which is from a kit. So I have this actual horse, which is very realistic, made of cardboard, and I place it, and I paint it.

MCDERMOTT: How do you determine what you want to make three-dimensional?

MORLEY: I want to say it's a question of time, in the sense that I have hundreds of these things and only picked a couple. But the way in which the painting gets constructed is that I paint one single object and see what it suggests as a second object. In this case, I paint the fighter bunk first, and then the lighthouse.

It comes from an influence of a writer called Lautréamont, who wrote a famous book called [*Les Chants de] Maldoror* and it became the mantra for the surrealists. In it was the statement of a sewing machine with an umbrella on a dissecting table. For me, I picked up on that in so much that sewing machine doesn't relate to an umbrella on a dissecting table, but when all three of them are together, that's the relationship. That was really helpful to me to go about how the paintings add on. He was a very young man, this Lautréamont. He died at the age of 24 and had written this book, and a couple of other books, that became classics. It's a very cruel, nasty book.

MCDERMOTT: When did you first come across it?

MORLEY: I've had the book itself without reading it for years. But I have a friend, who is also a mentor, who lives in Paris, Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, he was telling me about *Maldoror*. [It's] hard reading. For example, there's one part where he's talking about a cat that jumps on his neck and wants to injure him, and you realize that he drowned the cat's kittens in boiling oil. It really was founded of the theater of cruelty.

Malcolm Morley, *Air Battle over Medieval Castle*, 2015. Oil on linen with metal and paper attachments. 50 x 40 x 3 in. Photo: Tom Powel, courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater, New York

MCDERMOTT: I know reading about other artists is something you often do. The first thing that really brought you to art was *Lust for Life*, the book on Van Gogh, so it's interesting to see that idea of violence still coming through.

MORLEY: Well, when I was a young man, I was actually in jail, as you probably know. I think that's one of the books that came through then. It was a perfect setting to read it... There were reproductions in this book, and whatever idea I had about art had been from my grandmother, who's idea of an important artist is somebody who is an RA—a Royal Academy admission—with very slick finishes, something that would be very hard to do. So when I looked at the Van Gogh, it seemed that it was something I could do, because they were crude. There was something about it that was very primal.

MCDERMOTT: I know some other artists you admire are Cézanne and Vermeer, but their styles are so different. How did you become interested in them?

MORLEY: I very soon caught onto the idea that there's a progression in painting, that it progresses. Not that it necessarily gets better or worse, but it changes and what changed with Cézanne was an enormous step for moving away from linear perspective into painting from sensations.

MCDERMOTT: Which is what you do.

MORLEY: Right, so it seemed to be a step forward. Cézanne was definitely the man, but before that there was Manet, and one of my most favorite painters is Velásquez, who still is involved with the idea of the world as paint.

When you look at Velásquez, they look like [globs] that he's flicked on the canvas, and you stand back, it's this astonishing diamond. It's from that family of painterly-ness that has been a base, but the recent developments have been much more involved with an idea of subject matter, such as the Trojan horses, or, the last painting that I made was the Alamo. It's the last painting and it's an American icon.

These were a bunch of Texans that had revolted against the Mexicans, because they were in Mexico. That was Mexican, the Alamo, but it allows me to think about Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and what happened to them.

MCDERMOTT: You reference the war in Britain and Greek history, but now you're also referencing American history. How do you balance the difference?

MORLEY: It wasn't as American history; I wanted to bring in these images made from these kits, so that's the actual stimuli. What affected me a great deal as a boy was World War II; there were air raids and things like that. I'm very much a child of World War II.

MCDERMOTT: I've read that a lot of articles that refer to you as a British-born American artist, which I find interesting given the often British subject matter and the fact you were raised in England. What do you make of that label?

Malcolm Morley, *Trafalgar-Waterloo*, 2013. Oil on linen and encaustic on paper with rope, mounted on aluminum panel. 37 x 82 x 9 in. Photo: Tom Powel, courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater, New York.

MORLEY: I don't consider myself, period.

MCDERMOTT: You don't consider yourself, ever?

MORLEY: No, but the idea of the self interests me a great deal. What is the self? And finding yourself, and which self? In a way, we're more than one self, but you somehow try to get to a rock bottom self.

MCDERMOTT: I know you've done a lot of psychoanalysis. Is that all to find the self?

MORLEY: Very much so. One of the things is making friends with your unconscious life. That's a great source of energy.

MCDERMOTT: Would you consider yourself friends with your unconscious self? What have you discovered through that?

MORLEY: Yes, [and] intense dreaming—remembering dreams, writing them down.

MCDERMOTT: What did you dream last night?

MORLEY: Actually I didn't remember dreaming last night. [*laughs*] I very often have dreams about alter egos, like Jasper Johns, who I am very fond of.

MCDERMOTT: You would consider Johns one of your alter egos?

MORLEY: Yes, I would.

MCDERMOTT: So what would you do if you lived in his shoes for a day?

MORLEY: [laughs] Well, what he's been doing, recently, is painting Picasso paintings. It's always going through my mind, and very often, it is, "What would Picasso do?"

MCDERMOTT: How long have you been doing psychoanalysis?

MORLEY: Forever, but I've stopped now, actually. My shrink threw me out. I had a dream about him. I forget what it was, but he said, "I think it's time for you to leave."

Malcolm Morley, *Dakota*, 2015. Oil on linen. 50 x 40 in. Photo: Tom Powel, courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater, New York.

MCDERMOTT: And you haven't tried to find another one? Do you want to?

MORLEY: No... [Psychoanalysis] comes down to the process itself—the self, and life. I think I can say that I'm friends with the unconscious life, but I've never tried to make a painting directly from a dream. The paintings have a lot to do with the idea of seeing and doing, and the relationship between your hand and your eye, and the object. Cézanne said that he felt his eye would bleed when he took it off of one spot and moved it over to the next piece. Isn't that fantastic? Like his eyes are suction cups.

MCDERMOTT: It's really discovering yourself, yet you said you don't question or consider yourself.

MORLEY: In some areas, yes, I do. I've done a lot of bad things in the past, and that troubles me, so I keep going over that, for example. It is often before I could say I was a self.

MCDERMOTT: Do you want to talk about anything you did when you were younger?

MORLEY: [*pauses...shakes head*]

MCDERMOTT: You came to America in 1959, after the end of the war. What was it like working alongside all of the pop artists in New York?

MORLEY: It was wonderful. I became friends with Roy Lichtenstein and Ivan Karp. Ivan Karp had worked with Leo Castelli and was the person who brought the pop art thing into being. He discovered Andy Warhol, [James] Rosenquist, and I met all of those guys, but they were a little bit before me. When I first came over here I was doing abstract expressionist paintings, but that didn't feel right.

MCDERMOTT: That's when you adopted photo-realism, or "super-realism."

MORLEY: I've been campaigning that the earlier paintings are paintings, not photographs, but when you see them in reproduction, they look like a photograph. At a dentist office, they stay on the page, whereas a Picasso painting looks like a painting [in a photo]. My whole thing was to make a painting that didn't look like a painting [from far away or in reproduction], although when you look at the surface, they're very painterly. And that was the hidden...

MCDERMOTT: Subtext. What brought you away from photo-realism?

MORLEY: By the end of the year, there were 100 guys doing this. One was specializing in racehorses, another one was doing diners. I felt pushed from behind. They used airbrushes, and critics were saying, "When you look at a Morley, they're quite ugly. The brush strokes are ugly."

In a sense, the painting that pushed me over the edge was the painting of the South African racetrack. I made the painting of the racetrack from a poster. I had gone to see a film that night, this political film about the Greek colonel and he gets assassinated. [I was] so mad when we came back from the movie, I went down to my studio and put an X on the racetrack. It became "Malcolm's X;" it was a pun that I couldn't have invented—talk about three tiers of the unconscious. That's how this X became a very famous painting, how this X got on the racetrack! And that was pushing me away. It was apartheid as well as anti-photorealism in one shot. When I experienced the power of unconscious life and going with it, it was a great revelation.

MCDERMOTT: Your painting and work on a whole have gone through so many changes. Would you say you have a philosophy toward art?

MORLEY: It's a great means of self-discovery. One of the things that appealed to me in the beginning was that it was a great way to get girlfriends. [*laughs*] Girls seemed to like artists! I felt very drawn to the idea of power, really, and doing painting as a power trip, in a sense. This idea of power has always driven me.

MCDERMOTT: To this day?

MORLEY: To this day, to this second. And, will.

MALCOLM MORLEY *IS ON VIEW AT SPERONE WESTWATER IN NEW YORK THROUGH JUNE 6.*

Baumgardner, Julie. “Now in His 80s, Malcolm Morley Is Still Finding New Ways of Looking.” *tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com (T Magazine)*, 15 April 2015.

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

The artist Malcolm Morley in his studio in Bellport, New York, in 2009.Credit Jason Schmidt

Malcolm Morley has gotten off the couch. A longtime champion of psychoanalysis, the 83-year-old British artist “finally got thrown out” by his therapist, he says. But that doesn’t mean the self-described “super-realist” painter has been relieved of that foundational psychoanalytic catch: He is still fixated on his childhood. “I have been able to, as one person put it, ‘make friends with your unconscious life,’” says Morley, who was quite famously a child of neglect with a disregard for the system. But a stint as a petty thief, and then one in prison, straightened him out — though naturally, it was painting that truly saved him.

With a new group of paintings showing at Sperone Westwater, his fifth solo exhibition at the gallery, the octogenarian Morley is finally returning to those early struggles that “I didn’t have the means to deal with at the time,” he says. “It’s good when an artist can see into himself for heavy emotional experiences that he hadn’t been able to resolve as a small person. It’s the adult person who resolves that initial experience.” Though he is well known for exacting photorealist portraits, tragic-satiric images that capture the banality and fragility of life, “I’ve always been fascinated by evolution and one’s self-evolution,” he says. These works are brighter, looser in brush and certainly don’t stick to the script of reality. One of the paintings

depicts a British Douglas C-47 plane nearly crashing into a red-and-white-striped lighthouse, while a Viking ship sails around its basin. History never saw such an event, nor previously would have Morley. The new works "have to do with the idea of layering, a form of excavation, leading me to a different scale of thinking about what I've been doing," he says, "It's rather like a big, huge lasagna."

Morley's "Dakota," 2015 Courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery

"The Island of the Day Before Regained," 2013 Courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery

Morley hasn't abandoned World War II bombers or tankers as subjects — rather, he's just reoriented what he does with them. "The layers are moving in a particular direction, towards large world wonders," he says of the technicalities involved. "The themes got bigger." The famously traditionalist curators Robert Storr and Norman Rosenthal waxed wistfully on that change in the essay they wrote for recent exhibitions they both staged for him (at Yale and Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, respectively), chalking it up to a product of his aging body failing him. (In the 2012 show catalog, Storr wrote of artists in their elder years, "Painting is most seriously endangered by the congenital weaknesses compounded by old age.") And Morley does owe his new approach, at least in part, to a physical event. "Quite recently, in the last year, I had taken a bad fall that shook me up quite a bit," he confesses. "I had been in slumps before, and a slump is a good indication of running out of stuff and being open to the idea of the new. I think that was part and parcel of this recovery."

But such a narrative can't fully explain the 15 paintings Morley's been crafting over the last two years. "I felt very lucky I got to a point when it all come to a stop. There's always agonizing in the stop," he confides. "Then this new thing started, and I started making these paintings in a much more open way." Instead of wallowing in the woe, Morley's new works have a bit of a surrealist edge, indirectly inspired by Comte de Lautréamont's "Les Chants de Maldoror," a cruel novel considered foundational to André Breton's poetic experiments that helped to found the pre-war psychoanalytic movement. "I don't really think about the Surrealists as a deciding factor in what I do," he explains. "My eyes look at an object and translate it into what I call 'painterliness,' which is pre-imagining the object has already been painted in my mind. It's a continuous rehearsal of looking at the world as if it's made of paint." So while critics may chalk his new kind of vision up to failing eyesight, it's actually far more simple — and profound. "It's a great game to play wherever you are," Morley says, "and the experience of turning it into paint is very much based on how much experience you've already had turning other things into paint." Who ever said the mind doesn't sharpen with age?

"Malcolm Morley" is on view April 16 through June 6 at Sperone Westwater, 257 Bowery, New York, speronewestwater.com. Morley will also be the recipient of a Francis J. Greenburger Award on April 21 at the New Museum.

Black, Paul. "Malcolm Morley At The Ashmolean: Paintings and Drawings from the Hall Collection." *www.artlyst.com (Artlyst)*, 16 October 2013.

artlyst

Malcolm Morley. *Cristoforo Colombo*, 1965, acrylic on canvas, 45 x 60 in., Hall Collection, © Malcolm Morley

A retrospective of fifty years of the artist's work on loan from the Hall Foundation, curated by Sir Norman Rosenthal, and tracing the career of the first artist to win the Turner Prize.

Malcolm Morley's paintings share a connection with Pop Art - but he isn't a Pop Artist. He created his work using methods similar to the Photo-realists – but he isn't one of them. The artist just does not fit into any one particular genealogy; this connection to Photorealism, or Super-realism - as he named it - was discarded by the artist in favour of a more expressive method of painting – that critics deemed a kind of Neo-expressionism. But as the artist has stated, with a wry quip; once a movement is named it's dead.

Morley is hard to place, difficult to categorise and therefore hard to kill, and because of this, critics don't quite know what to make of him.

In an art historical desire to pigeon-hole with a finely chosen 'ism'; It is harder to quantify what Morley is; than what Morley is not.

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He is not a Photo-realist. Morley's painting can convey a Photo-realist quality when reproduced in publication, but to the eye of the viewer there is a subtle yet conscious energy to the paint; there is covert mark-making in Morley's Super-realist works. If an 'ism' was to be found it was in the artist's self-categorisation - before discarding the method and the category of Super-realism in order to follow an expressionistic route – a route already alluded to in that surreptitious energy.

As Morley stated; the paintings in reproduction appear as Photo-realist, but upon inspection of the actual work a strange phenomenon occurs and you see the physical reality of the surface, and it seems to work through your central nervous system.

As Morley focused his attention on 'area' [the surface of the canvas as opposed to any exploration of background or foreground] he worked in grids, painting each section of his canvas one at a time, and applying the equal values of a mathematician, or an artist of the Renaissance, to every segment of the image.

In fact Morley expressed an interest in Malevich's suprematism, where the object is rendered meaningless to feelings engendered by geometry and form. Morley was making his objects quietly flat, and his canvas democratic.

An idea reflected in the artist's work 'The Theory of Catastrophe' – a bird's eye view of a motorway pile-up, where, upon inspection of the Photo-realist energy and violence of objects, the painting gives way to an equality of form and surface

The act of a Photo-realist painter - or in this instance; the Super-realist painter – is still, in and of itself, controlled and methodical. Yet Morley juxtaposes this restraint by delving into his own subconscious to find his subject matter, and there is a frequent exploration of chaos and destruction as an almost 'counter weight' to the artist's equipoise of paint.

The leitmotif of the ocean liner is a recurring image for the artist. Originally Morley attempted its likeness by painting the real thing from pier 57 in New York, only to discover that he couldn't take in the scale of these vessels. So instead he resorted to a postcard – with this decision; Morley's Super-realism was born, and a plethora of ocean liners followed in its wake.

Only many years later in the depths of psychoanalysis did the artist remember a balsa-wood model of HMS Nelson waiting to be painted, left overnight on a windowsill – destroyed by a German V1 bomb, along with his childhood home - with this memory Morley realised that all the ships that he, the artist, had painted in his career had been an attempt to complete that model.

The story is possibly a conceit similar to that of Joseph Beuys' story of the origins of felt and fat in his work; yet it is an exemplifier of Morley's need to inject an element of chance and the random into the highly structured format of his Super-real.

The exhibition has been curated by Sir Norman Rosenthal and is situated in one of the lower galleries of the Ashmolean Museum. This is not a white cube space in the sense of a contemporary art gallery, as the exhibition shares this location with a small number of permanent artefacts from antiquity. A fantastical hybrid creature rests between Morley's paintings in the form of an Assyrian 'Winged Genie' Relief carved from a slab of gypsum, a minor deity that rests its eyes upon 'Pamela Running before the Wind with a Dutch Lighthouse' – it's an unfortunate relationship thankfully not destined to last - yet Morley's oeuvre is

certainly arresting enough to draw the eye away from this inadvertent juxtaposition, and that of Sir Henry Cheere's 18th century statuary.

In fact Morley has not been overpowered by old or indeed new media, his painting from postcards transcended that of the Photo-realists in that it never dismissed a sense of the painterly. But in this Malcolm Morley has far more in common with George Seurat than he does with Roy Lichtenstein.

Malcolm Morley at the Ashmolean Museum Oxford, Paintings and Drawings from the Hall Collection – until 30 March 2014

Wroe, Nicholas. "Malcolm Morley: 'The moment anyone said my work was art, I had this block – I took a long time to find myself.'" *www.theguardian.com (The Guardian)*, 4 October 2013.

theguardian

'New work is always early work' … Malcolm Morley in his Studio. Photograph: Jason Schmidt

The Turner prizewinner talks to Nicholas Wroe about therapy, model ships and how love on a bus led him to New York

When the British-born artist, and inaugural Turner prize-winner, Malcolm Morley became an American citizen in 1991, the presiding judge at his ceremony gave a short speech. "They always want to say something about what it is to become an American," recalls Morley. "And this judge spoke about how diversity worked better than the status quo. It really stayed in my mind because diversity is something the art world has always had a problem with, but only for a while. Then time goes by and they catch up with what's new or what's different."

Morley's life – which has included prison, psychoanalysis and five marriages – has not been one much troubled by the status quo, and the accompanying diversity in his career has seen him along the way associated with the Euston Road school of painting via Cézanne, abstraction, abstract expressionism, neo–

expressionism and post-pop. “But it’s always worth remembering that as soon as a movement is named you know it’s over,” he laughs. “Picasso didn’t call those paintings cubism. He was just trying to get to another layer of realism.”

The “ism” most closely associated with Morley is what critics have called photo-realism, but he prefers to describe it as super-realism, “not because I’m saying the art is super, but because it reminded me of Malevich’s suprematism”. Morley’s intricately accurate 1960s paintings of postcard images range from horse races to beach scenes, royal pageants and, most characteristically, ocean liners. And at a time when, as Norman Rosenthal, curator of a new retrospective of Morley’s work at the Ashmolean museum in Oxford, puts it, “issues concerning the democratisation of art and life became ever more central to the intellectual and political discussion on both sides of the Atlantic”, Morley’s work was both democratic in its use of postcard images, and also in its method of production.

By dividing the original image and his canvas into corresponding grids, Morley systematically painted the work one tiny area at a time. “I discovered there’s no such thing as space in painting, only what a mathematician would call ‘area’,” he says. “So each section receives the same attention, has the same value and you get away from the idea of foreground and background. And then a strange phenomenon occurs: if you see a reproduction of the painting it does looks like a photograph, but when you see the physical reality of the surface it seems to work on you through your central nervous system. Paradoxically, a sort of stereoscopic feeling emerges even though I painted every section equally. You find yourself in a strange mind-set.”

Despite his success with super-realism, it is just one of the styles that feature among nearly 50 years’ work on loan from the Hall Foundation, his most comprehensive collector, in the Ashmolean show. “Some of the changes I’ve been through do seem to have confused people,” he acknowledges, “but there was no other option. There’s big Malcolm who makes the work. But there’s also little Malcolm who lives here” – he gestures at his sternum – “and who is really in charge. Sometimes big Malcolm takes on something that little Malcolm doesn’t like and that is the end of it. A valve shuts down and suddenly I lose the wherewithal to do it. It can be traumatic. One minute you’re going along being successful and satisfied, the next you are falling off a cliff and thinking you’re finished. Then something happens and work starts again, but I don’t take it for granted. It always feels more like a lucky break.”

The 82-year-old Morley’s latest preoccupation is a series of paintings inspired by his interest in the 18th century (“I fell in love with the period, which was a great one for the British”) and his Long Island studio is adorned with his portraits of Wellington and Nelson, toy soldiers as well as models of cannons, homemade cannon balls and man-of-war gun ports. “I’m currently reading up on Nelson and it turns out he was a total son-of-a-bitch,” he says. “Schoolboys are brought up on his heroism, but in fact he was a real nerd.” More than 50 years after Morley left the UK he says its influence on him remains strong, but he also confesses that as a young man his thoughts were less on the likes of Nelson and more on his own predicament. “Things were so fucked up I didn’t really have a wider view. The strongest feeling I had was that I was nobody, and that I wanted to be somebody. Real Marlon Brando *On the Waterfront stuff*. ‘I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody.’“

Morley was born in Stoke Newington, London, in 1931. He never knew his father, and when his mother later married a former Welsh miner Morley was brought up under the name Evans. The definitive memory from a troubled childhood was of making a balsawood model of the navy battleship HMS Nelson. “I loved making models and I’d just finished this one and put it on a windowsill overnight ready to paint in the morning. That night we were blown up by a German V-1 bomb, a doodlebug, the whole of the wall was blown away and, of course, the model was lost, as was our home. Years later, when I was in psychoanalysis,

a memory of the bombing came up and I realised that all those ships I'd done had to be to do with me trying to paint that battleship I never finished."

Malcolm Morley's *Man Overboard* (1994). Photograph: © Malcolm Morley

Morley was evacuated to Devon and then sent to a naval boarding school in Surrey. By the age of 14, with what family life he had in some disarray, he left to be a galley boy on a transatlantic tug. Returning to England he became a petty thief, and a period in reform school was followed by a three-year prison sentence for burglary. He eventually served two years in Wormwood Scrubs before being released, aged 20, on parole. It was in prison that he began to paint.

"There was little or no art in my early life beyond my grandmother saying that anything neat looked like it had been done by 'a Royal Academician'. But then in jail I came across Vincent van Gogh in Irving Stone's novel *Lust for Life* that had been made into the Kirk Douglas film. Van Gogh's art struck me as crude, although of course it was not crude at all, but more importantly it seemed something I could do. I could draw, and the idea that you could make something of yourself through art was very strong."

After leaving prison Morley spent some time as a waiter in the artists' colony in St Ives, Cornwall. "And although it wasn't really the plan, I got to meet artists and there was such a sense of friendliness that I guess I turned the art world into my family. It was quite a conscious thing. I was very aware of that feeling of acceptance, as well as the fact that if you were an artist you could get good girlfriends. That was part of it, too."

Meanwhile, in London, his parole officer had arranged for some art schools to see the work he had produced in prison and Morley was offered a place at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in 1952, “where I discovered art history and rushed to this idea that other people before me had done this thing”. He moved to the Royal College of Art a year later, “sort of through the back door because I didn’t have the schooling. But I’d been taken up by one of the owners of Lyons tea houses, Julian Salmon, a big patron of the arts, who paid my fees.” At the Royal College fellow students included Peter Blake, Frank Auerbach, Joe Tilson and Richard Smith. “I felt very naive next to someone like Dick Smith, who was so sophisticated, but people took to me and I had a great time, although I didn’t produce that much work. The moment anyone said it was art, I had this block and I took a long time to find myself.”

Despite his lack of productivity, Morley enjoyed a prestigious introduction to the art market when an early painting of a grand house on Richmond Hill – which he later discovered had been built for Joshua Reynolds – was bought by the house’s then owner, the actor John Mills. Years later Morley bought the painting back from Mills’s daughter, Hayley, and it now hangs in his American home. That early work was signed Evans, but Morley returned to his birth name just a couple of years later when he had to apply for a passport for his move to America in 1957. His enthusiasm for the place had been fired by an important Tate exhibition of contemporary American art, but the more immediate reason for his emigration was “a girl I met on the number 37 bus”.

Malcolm Morley, *Cristoforo Colombo*, 1965, acrylic on canvas, 45 x 60 in., Hall Collection, © Malcolm Morley

He followed her back to her home in America and they got married. “It didn’t last long, a year or so, but I knew I’d stay.” Gradually he worked his way into the New York art world and began to hang out at the Cedar Street Tavern where Willem de Kooning – “very modest, very nice to younger artists” – Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline had drunk. He became close to Roy Lichtenstein, who later arranged teaching jobs for him, and met Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol - “shy, polite, treated me like an elder statesman” – as well as Barnett Newman, who gave him early encouragement.

Morley lived in lower Manhattan when Spring Street was under the direct control “of a notorious mafia boss and was therefore one of the safest place in the city. But artists are city planners. They go to an area that is broken down and when some of them become successful the Wall Street guys think it’s cool to follow because they can seduce girls better in a loft. Then the boutiques move in, then the restaurants … “

Arriving at the tail end of abstract expressionism he had little in common with the younger generation still aping the style, yet with his friend Lichtenstein owning the territory of comic books, “and the coke bottle also occupied, all that seemed left to me was ships”. His initial efforts at painting ocean liners at pier 57 in New York failed because they were simply too big to take in. “So I got a postcard and divided it into a grid, a technique we’d used in art school but I’d forgotten about when I was busy being an abstract expressionist. My friend Richard Artschwager used grids and I learned a lot from him and felt that this was somewhere I could go. It was the total opposite of abstract.”

He says the laborious process made the works “excruciating to paint, and I couldn’t find brushes small enough. But getting to that end result was so important to me. When I had this conversation in analysis about being bombed in the war it did make sense and was almost like having a genie in the lamp. All I had to do was rub that memory for the genie to appear.”

Morley describes himself at the time as “very neurotic. Constantly acting out in dramas to do with the other sex. Going into analysis was a big commitment, but I went for it big time.”

After four previous marriages he has been with his Dutch-born fifth wife, Lida Kruisheer, for the last 26 years, enjoying unexpected contentment in their home/studio about an hour-and-a-half’s drive from New York City.

Back in the early 1970s it was a sense of anger that led him to move away from super-realism, even though it had established his reputation. “There was a guy in New York who worked in a gallery and travelled round America to art departments showing slides of these paintings, and within a year there were 100 guys doing versions of them: race horses, diners. I felt totally eclipsed and as if something had been taken away from me.”

The painting most identified with the end of this phase of his career is *Race Track* (1970) on to which Morley applied a large red cross over a super-realist depiction of a South African horse race. “It was simply a gesture of frustration, but that’s where the unconscious comes in. Here was Malcolm’s X on a South African subject entitled *Race Track*. I wasn’t thinking politically when I did it, but it precisely reflected my emotions and my views.”

In subsequent years his brushstrokes became larger, he painted nature and made use of toys he described as “archetypes of the human figure”. He won the first Turner prize in 1984 following an exhibition at the Whitechapel gallery put on by a long-term supporter, Nicholas Serota. “It wasn’t so hot back then, and I got the smallest amount of money they’ve ever given out.” There was considerable criticism that the prize had been given to someone living in America. “Some of it was over the top, and while I sometimes get

upset at criticism, my attitude is usually 'if you don't like that, just wait until you see the next thing. You *really* won't like that."

He has viewed with interest developments in the UK, and says he liked the way that the YBAs "somehow found a way of reinventing themes. When Damien Hirst first appeared I thought this was the real thing. But I've never seen anybody go down so fast, and I was rather saddened because I really thought he had something to offer."

Morley's own productivity increased into his 60s and 70s. Ships, model soldiers, aircraft, toys all became regular parts of his repertoire of imagery, but whatever the ostensible subject matter, there was also a remarkable degree of consistency in his approach. "I was once on a boat trip in England and was asked what I did. I said I was a natural scientist, and was then asked what did that entail. 'Well,' I said, 'I study contours, mass, tone, colour, edges.' And that has stayed much the same."

He says Robert Rauschenberg once told him about an important collector visiting his studio and saying how much he liked his early work. "Bob pointed at what he was doing that day, and said, 'This is my early work.' And he was right. New work is always early work. And so seeing work from a long time period together is pleasurable because not only do you see the diversity, you also see some fidelity. It's something I arrived at after a long time of trying to pare things down to their essentials. Things change, but they are still true to something. And with that you've got it. Diversity and fidelity."

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Sheets, Hilarie. "Not Off the Grid, but Often in Flight." *www.nytimes.com (The New York Times)*, 21 November 2012.

The New York Times

The artist Malcolm Morley with his "Flight of Icarus," from 1995. Credit Kirsten Luce for The New York Times

For Malcolm Morley the drama of the London blitz during his boyhood has provided a lifetime of imagery to work with.

"We would go on top of roofs and watch Messerschmitts and Spitfires have dog fights and bet marbles on who was going to shoot who down," said Mr. Morley, the 81-year-old painter, leading a tour through the studio that adjoins his house here on eastern Long Island.

He showed off a model of a German V-1 flying bomb that he recently constructed out of watercolor paper, scaled up from a standard kit. He loved model making even as a child and spent six months in 1944 assembling a battleship from balsa wood. He finally set it down on his windowsill, ready to be painted, just hours before a V-1 ripped open the outer wall of his bedroom in the night. His ship vanished, and his family was displaced.

Seven decades later, gracious and dapper, surrounded by a lifetime of paintings and with his wife of 23 years nearby, Mr. Morley seemed sustained by a domestic stability that eluded him in youth. But he is no less fascinated than he ever was by the machinery of disaster and speed.

The models of planes and lifeboats he makes today, “three-dimensional watercolors” as he calls them, often are affixed to canvasses already buzzing with his depictions of aircraft and ships, racecars and daredevils, sometimes in surreal mash-ups or spectacular collisions. “People don’t see them as models, and then get a shock when they realize that it’s three-dimensional,” said Mr. Morley, who has spent the last five decades pushing the potential of painting to deliver a jolt. “It’s heightening the realism of the painting and the sensation of the viewer’s experience.”

Credit: Gordon M. Grant for The New York Times

The fluid interchange between his oil canvasses and works both on and of paper since the mid-1980s is explored in “Malcolm Morley: Painting, Paper, Process,” the first exhibition at the new, Herzog & de Meuron-designed home of the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill on Long Island. The show, which like the museum opened this month, includes paintings based on Mr. Morley’s own watercolors — works in oil in which he creates the illusion of transparent washes, as in “Icarus” (1993), which also has paper model planes attached to its atmospheric sky. In “Flight of Icarus” (1995) he fashioned a monumental paper model, extending more than nine feet from the wall, of the three-winged, bold-red aircraft flown by the World War I German pilot Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron. That same plane reappears among a flurry of others in the 1990 watercolor “Air Circus Over Maine.”

“It’s like a labyrinth he goes back through, and every time he comes out he might take a different path,” Alicia Longwell, chief curator at the Parrish, said of how Mr. Morley translates images from one medium to another with “protean ambition.” She said that as an internationally recognized artist living “right in our own backyard,” Mr. Morley was an obvious choice for the inaugural exhibition.

“The Art of Painting” (2008), one of the works in the show. Credit: James E. Cottrell & Joseph F. Lovett Collection

He can lay claim to jump-starting two art movements. His dazzling hyperrealist paintings of ocean liners from the 1960s spawned the term “Photorealism” (which he always hated) and legions of followers. His highly gestural scenes populated with exotic animals and figures from the late 1970s and 1980s presaged “neo-Expressionism,” which took off in the ’80s with Eric Fischl, David Salle and Julian Schnabel (once Mr. Morley’s assistant).

If at points he has felt misunderstood or eclipsed by others in the art world, his work has reverberated with younger artists. Richard Phillips, whose own hyperrealist paintings were recently on view at the Gagosian Gallery, remembered first seeing paintings of Mr. Morley’s like “Farewell to Crete” (1984) at Pace Gallery in New York when Mr. Phillips got out of art school.

“He seemed willing to do anything with paint and take it to the furthest possibilities, which made a massive impression on me,” said Mr. Phillips, who recently met Mr. Morley when they both sat on a panel at

"S.S. Amsterdam in Front of Rotterdam," from 1966. Credit: Collection of Norman and Irma Braman, Miami Beach/Sperone Westwater

the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami (where a large survey of Mr. Morley's work was mounted in 2006). "To hear the stories from David of Malcolm's impact on all of them — he was just putting them to shame in terms of how far out there he would go."

Mr. Morley always took chances. His teenage ambition to be a master thief in the mode of Cary Grant got him sentenced to reform school and then to three years in prison. It was in jail that he attended his first art classes, and his parole officer arranged for him to go to the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in 1953. A year later he was accepted to the Royal College of Art, from which he graduated in 1957. After meeting a girl on a bus in London, he followed her to New York in 1958 — she was the first of five wives — and stayed.

He had his first show of horizontally structured abstract paintings, influenced by Cy Twombly, at Kornblee Gallery in New York in 1964. That same year he visited the New York studio of Richard Artschwager and was struck by his use of the grid. Having tried to paint an end-to-end view of a cruise ship at Pier 57 on the West Side of Manhattan, but unable to organize the image within his field of vision, Mr. Morley realized he could just overlay a grid onto a postcard of a cruise ship. Using a magnifying glass and tiny brushes, he spent months meticulously transposing the postcard picture, square by square, onto canvas at a larger scale. "It was worth the excruciating effort for the end result," he said, adding that he realized later, during psychoanalysis, that he had been trying to recover his lost battleship.

He prefers the term "superrealism" to "Photorealism" to describe the verisimilitude of these early canvasses based on reproductions from postcards, advertisements, travel brochures and magazine covers. "My intent was to make a painting," he said, as opposed to a copy. "I turned a ready-made into a handmade."

Mr. Morley at work in his studio. Credit: Laurie Lambrecht

The grid has remained at the heart of his process, even as he radically increased the scale and looseness of his brush strokes in hallucinatory paintings of crumpled ocean liners or distorted versions of old master paintings. In later years he moved away from using reproductions and instead stretched a framed wire grid — in the tradition of Albrecht Durer — between himself and scenes he staged with toy figurines, animals and vessels against the backdrop of his own watercolors. Since 2001 he has returned again to working from photographic images, drawn to high-velocity action shots of racehorses, athletes and car crashes. "Theory of Catastrophe" (2004), for instance, first exhibited at the Sperone Westwater gallery in New York (which has represented him since 1999), shows an overhead view of a multivehicle crash with a simultaneous sense of depth and flatness — what Mr. Morley calls "stereoscopic space."

“What appealed to me about the photo was the configuration of the trucks,” he said. “It reminded me of Cubist painting. There’s a curse that I have of feeling the obligation to paint imagery. I’d rather be an abstract painter, although I feel I am.”

Looking at a canvas in progress in his studio, a visitor can easily see why he said that. He now cuts up his source image into small squares that he numbers, focusing on one individual cell at a time and painting from top to bottom in rows.

“Icarus,” from 1993, incorporates model airplane wings. Credit: Monica and Richard Segal, Rye, NY/Sperone Westwater

“It’s very democratic because everything gets treated equally,” he said. “There’s no concept of background or foreground. It’s all upfront. My god is really Cézanne, who introduced the idea of seeing as a sensation rather than a sense of knowing. I know behind you the wall continues. But I don’t see it, so therefore from a painterly thing it doesn’t exist. Everything is patches joined together.

“I don’t have the anxiety of the whole. I’ve turned the whole into parts. I can walk around all day just thinking about those two tones. For me I can’t find a better way of painting.”

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Bui, Phong. "Malcolm Morley with Phong Bui." *The Brooklyn Rail*, March 2012, cover, pp. 28-31.

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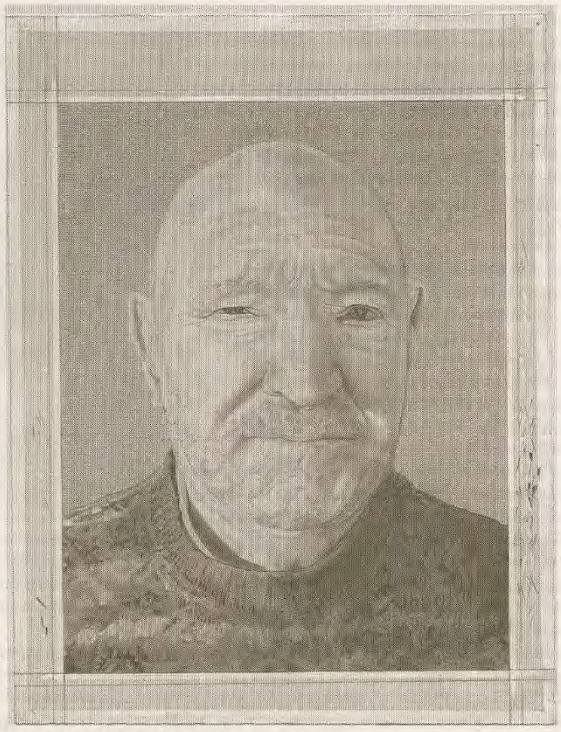
MARCH2012

in conversation

Malcolm Morley

WITH PHONG BUI

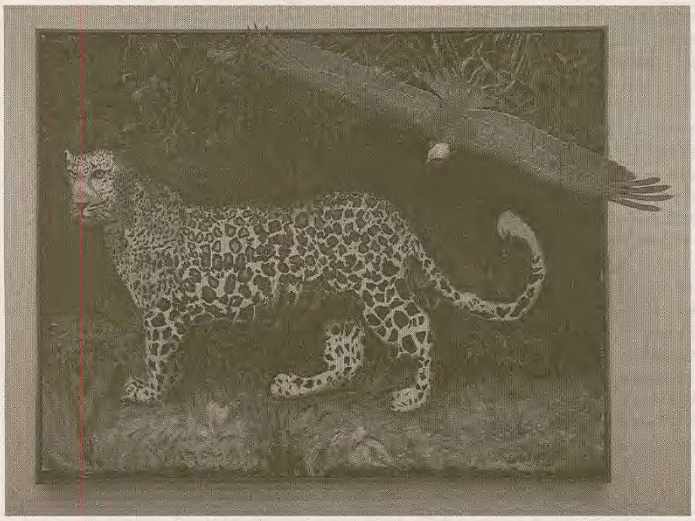
Soon after the opening reception of his survey at Yale University's Edgewood Avenue Gallery, *Malcolm Morley In A Nutshell: The Fine Art of Painting 1954–2012*, curated by Robert Storr, Dean of the Yale School of Art, (January 31 – March 31, 2012), and *Malcolm Morley: Another Way to Make An Image, Monotypes* at Sue Scott Gallery (January 11 – February 19, 2012), publisher Phong Bui made a trip to Brookhaven Hamlet, Long Island, New York to visit the painter's home/studio, a former church he has shared with his wife Lida Morley since 1986. They sat down in his sunlit studio to talk about his life and work.



Portrait of the artist. Pencil on paper by Phong Bui.

PHONG BUI (RAIL): What can you tell us about one of the featured works in the show, titled "Biggles" (2011)?

MALCOLM MORLEY: The title "Biggles" comes from the nickname of James Bigglesworth, a character from a series of children's books created by W.E. Johns. Biggles was a fighter pilot during World War I—the forerunner of Ian Fleming's James Bond, really. Any Englishman 50 and over has most likely read the books. At any rate, when World War I was over, Biggles was out of a job, so he and his sidekick Algy went on different adventures around the world, which was so exciting to read about when I was a young boy. Years later, when I had a show with Anthony d'Offay, who had been a book dealer, I mentioned the books to him. Before I knew it, he brought out three very rare Biggles books. One of the covers was the image I painted on the pub sign—you can see the two beers on either side of the name Biggles. I also replaced Biggles with myself, sitting on the plane. I sort of moved the alter-ego around, and it felt just terrific.



Malcolm Morley, "Wildlife," 2000. Oil on linen with attached bird. 63 ½ x 84 ½ x 17 ¾". Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

RAIL: I thought it was a sign painting first, but upon closer inspection I realized you had painted it.

MORLEY: It's also double-sided, and it's coming out perpendicular from the wall. So when you get in front of it, the painting just disappears. All you see is a black line. Actually, the idea came from a poem by Wallace Stevens called "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." It occurred to me that there's another way of looking at a painting. So that's why I painted on both sides.

RAIL: So the viewer who walks from either side sees the painting, but if he or she stands directly in front of it they see it almost like a Barnett Newman zip.

MORLEY: Yeah, absolutely.

RAIL: Which brings me back to your last interview in *BOMB* with Richard Francis (Spring 1996), in which you reminisced about how you met Newman when you were a waiter in a restaurant, and then soon you both became friends. Though later when you showed him your super realist paintings you were worried that you might have betrayed him. It was in fact the contrary.

MORLEY: Yeah, Barney liked them very much. He liked the sense of light in them. At first I thought he was talking about the idea of light in Impressionism but he was really referring to the idea of the artist's inner light. And I had this image of being a coal miner with a light on my head, so wherever I went, the light shone through. The scale of his thinking was something I hadn't come across. He'd say things such as "I'm emptying Renaissance space" and I'd see him with a big shovel—emptying Renaissance space [*laughs*]. Barney had very wonderful, ambitious visions and it was the scale of the ambition that grabbed me. I describe it now as historical ambition that I have. I hope to sit in the pantheon of greats, but whether that happens is up for other people to decide. But that's the level of ambition he aspires to in his thinking.

RAIL: You know, when Meyer Schapiro was teaching at Columbia in the '50s and '60s, he would invite artists to his graduate seminar so that there'd be some sort of rapport established between his students and the artists. Tom Hess gives an account of a visit from Newman in one instance. Toward the end of class, Hess recalls that Schapiro drew four rectangles on the blackboard: one an outlined object, the second filled with dots, the third with interlocking forms, and the fourth with dissociated shapes or elements. Newman understood this to be a "typology" of modern art. The first indicated realism, the second Impressionism, the third Cubism, and the last Surrealism. Schapiro then asked Newman where he would fit in. Without any hesitation Newman immediately walked up to the blackboard

and erased the dots, then put his vertical zip down quite emphatically. Later he said to Hess, "I had to think fast, so I wiped out Impressionism." [*Laughs.*] The reason why I mention that story is because when you're called upon to do something, you ought to do it with no hesitation.

MORLEY: Or you make a mistake with confidence.

RAIL: That's another good way of putting it. That's something you have consistently done your whole career. You've received plenty of praise, but there have been many negative reviews written on your work. How do you deal with the negative ones?

MORLEY: Well—I'm not an artist who says I never read my criticism, because I do, and I suspect most artists do, too. Anyway, it can be very upsetting, but I am always able to turn it into a positive energy. It may have evolved over time but I always felt that I have the ability to deal with all sort of negative situations.

RAIL: That's good. In an interview with Robert Storr in the catalogue for the show, you said when you came to New York in 1958 the two important artists to you were Pollock and Balthus.

MORLEY: Yes, there were two simultaneous shows, one of Pollock, the other of Balthus at the Museum of Modern Art soon after I came to the city. It struck me, as if I've been doing a synthesis of the two ever since, on some level.

RAIL: Because of the all-overness of this image and the even distribution of paint material. I understand the Pollock reference, but I don't see how Balthus has a presence in your work.

MORLEY: Well, the painting's surface in Balthus penetrates directly to your central nervous system, similar to the way Pollock's does, in spite of his paint surface being so different. It's got nothing to do with what you know. It's more to do with being open to the sensation of a surface. After all, the whole painted thing is a surface. So that's what the paint is doing, making a surface. And I've noticed that people are very shy about looking at surfaces of paintings; they tend to look just at the image. Therefore they're missing out on a lot of sensation. Of course, the whole idea of sensation comes, for me, from Cézanne, who's the quintessential sensationalist. When he said, "I paint what I see, not what I know," he meant that behind a still life set-up there's a wall, but he doesn't see it, therefore in terms of the truth of eye, it's not there until he actually looks at it. Every part that appears in his painting is essentially patched or joined together. He even said that he felt his eye bleed when he took it off of one area like a suction cup being taken off of a bottle top. That was a huge revelation for me. It's always stayed with me. And it's in every painting for me.

RAIL: When did you have that revelation, Malcolm? While you were in art school or after?

MORLEY: After art school, but it wasn't a one-day situation; it gradually built up over time.

RAIL: Like the way you make your painting.

MORLEY: Exactly. And Cézanne is a painter that you can mature with as you age. There's so much more in his paintings, and the problem he took on was so huge. He said to himself that the audience of his painting does not exist yet, and that the painting will create it steadily in the future. I feel the same way with myself, that I've somehow created a particular type of audience, and I'm sure that if I had conversations with that audience, I could talk about psychoanalysis very easily and the whole idea of evolution of your own mind, consciousness, which is all part of a continuous process.

RAIL: It's the process, which first requires one to identify one's own fear and anxiety, like Cézanne did in his early paintings, then to depersonalize oneself so that the painting can be personal. I like what you once said in one interview: "You can't achieve happiness unless you can tolerate a certain amount of uncertainty."

MORLEY: It's absolutely true.

RAIL: Do you think that has deep roots in your early upbringing?

MORLEY: For sure. My life early on was very, very uncertain. I was eight years old when the war began in 1939, and 14 when the war ended in 1945. In addition, my personal experience of being separated from my mother when I was five was very, very severe. I was in a train carriage going down to Devon in the southern part of England, with a bunch of other kids and suddenly my mother disappeared and it was a big shock. I just bawled non-stop for the eight hours. This anxiety that I'd always had was made clear to me when I saw Donald Klein, a famous psychiatrist, who analyzed it and said it was referred to as "massive separation anxiety." And the moment he said it I felt so much better.

RAIL: And when was this?

MORLEY: Twenty-something years ago. He's since retired. I felt better because now I had a clear term for this feeling that I never had a name for. So besides this source of massive separation anxiety, my whole house was blown up by a jet-propelled bomb that landed in the street opposite me at 3:00 in the morning. We were homeless for a while. We were essentially billeted from one to the next person's house. So I've had a long history of separation anxiety in different forms. It even crept into my five marriages—I've been married five times. I never had girlfriends, I just got married.

RAIL: [*Laughs.*] Just straight to the matter.

MORLEY: I wanted the idea of family, which probably confirms the desire for stability, but it never worked out because of my own neuroses. I hadn't up to that point resolved my "massive separation anxiety" so I would create the separation: leaving them before they left me instead. All of my past wives were all very, very good people and I could have stayed with any one of them. I'm blessed now with Lida who is the most terrific and smart person. We've been together for 23 years.

RAIL: Congratulations.

MORLEY: Thank you. I was, as I'm now, lucky to have married a very smart woman. My last two wives, for instance, had gone to Bennington, which was, in those days, the crème de la crème.

RAIL: The Greenbergian headquarters.

MORLEY: Right. And you know they'll take the whole summer off to read just Proust. You may say that I've been educated through the women I have been married to.

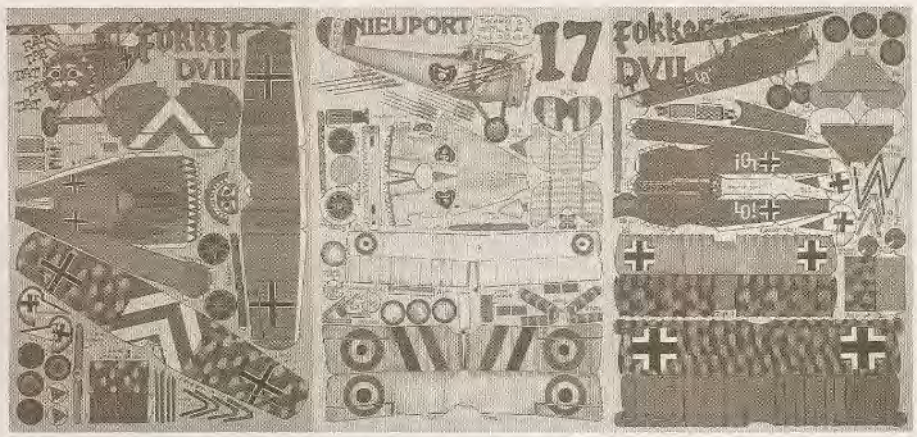
RAIL: Speaking of Proust, I'm now reminded again of Balthus. The two most beautiful essays I have read on his paintings are by Albert Camus and Guy Davenport. Camus felt that Balthus's painting is an inseparable part of the process in which his figures are trying to suspend their "paradise of childhood," as he put, "green for Balthus as for Baudelaire." Whereas Davenport identifies Balthus's paintings with the tradition of modern French culture for which the world and imagination of children are well respected, and understood, unlike the puritanical value ingrained in American culture that certainly lessens the appreciation of Balthus's vision.

MORLEY: I couldn't agree more with you.

RAIL: So you appreciate Balthus's enigmatic, erotic vision, but you make bright, action-packed paintings—quite the opposite. It's cool. I remember seeing your painting, "The Day of the Locust" (1977), at MoMA in the late '80s, and I kept thinking whoever made this painting must be a very colorful, and joyous person.

MORLEY: Well, the title, first of all, was culled from Nathanael West's novel *The Day of the Locust*. In fact, the first scene, a bunch of 18th-century soldiers walking through a Hollywood set, delighted me, and I painted

Malcolm Morley, "The Theory of Catastrophe," 2004. Oil on linen. 6 x 81". Hall Collection



Malcolm Morley, "Rat Tat Tat," 2001. Oil on linen. 94 x 197". Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

the whole scene in the lower part of the painting. The above image, however, is a segment from the film *Suddenly* (1954), in which Frank Sinatra played an assassin, especially the segment when he shoots a rifle through a window and the window cracks. I also took the still of the screaming nanny with her left punctured eye and the glass broken below from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). So it's cross-fertilization, as with my other paintings.

RAIL: And you hate the term "photorealism."
MORLEY: That's right. I prefer my own term, "superrealism." In any case, what led me to the ships was that the abstract paintings I was doing early on, the Twomblyesque scribbles, were very much like the superstructures on the ocean-going liner.

RAIL: With stacked-up windows.
MORLEY: And decks in rows. With that association, plus my visit to the studio of Richard Artschwager, who's been very important to me, where I saw him using a grid.

RAIL: You both were credited as being among the first contemporary artists to make paintings from photographic sources, as well as for your use of the grid. But let me confirm this fact, Malcolm: after your first show of abstract paintings at Jill Kornblee in 1964, you met Roy Lichtenstein through Ivan Karp. And it was through Roy that you were invited to teach at Ohio State University?
MORLEY: Yes, Roy got me a job there in Columbus, Ohio. In fact, the early ship paintings like "Amsterdam In Front Of Rotterdam" (1966), were painted in a small, little room in Columbus, Ohio, very far away from the ocean [*laughs*].

RAIL: How long did the job last?
MORLEY: Two or three years.

RAIL: What was your teaching experience like?
MORLEY: I put a lot into it. I'm not a teacher who believes in doing your own thing. Because if you can do your own thing you don't need to be in a class, you don't need to be in a school. So I gave specific problems that the whole class would address. Only afterwards we would look at the result and discuss what was successful or not. I treated it like the way you would teach somebody who was going to be a great concert pianist. You just have to do endless exercises and learn how to listen to good criticism.

RAIL: Did you get to know Tom Doyle while you were there?
MORLEY: Tom must have already left when I came. But I did meet Tom and Eva (Hesse) later in New York.

RAIL: Tom told me in my last interview with him (May 2008) that Roy didn't get the tenured job, so he would just stay and spend a lot of time at home painting. Can you imagine if Roy Lichtenstein got the tenured job? [*Laughs.*] What would his work be like as a result?
MORLEY: That would not have been good. We would have had no Roy Lichtenstein. The same thing happened to me. When my tenure came up they turned me down because the so-called modern people really hoped that I could get them galleries in New York and of course I couldn't. Anyway, I was happy to have moved back to New York, and soon got a job teaching at the School of Visual Arts, where I taught for quite a while.

RAIL: And then you had your second show also at Kornblee, where you showed your super-realist paintings for the first time in 1967.
MORLEY: That's right.

RAIL: And what sort of reception did you get?
MORLEY: I was sort of naïve on a certain level. I didn't know that I had hit a nerve, even though I was always comfortable with post-pop. The truth was at that point whenever I felt compelled to use images, the question wasn't wanting to paint but what to paint. The general consensus was all the images had been used up by Roy or Rauschenberg or Johns, and what was left?

RAIL: So we're talking about '68, '69?
MORLEY: You kill me with the dates.

RAIL: But roughly about that time!
MORLEY: Okay, if you say so [*laughs*]. I was told by Jean-Claude Liebenstein that I have an oceanic sense of time [*laughs*].

RAIL: He is the author of the comprehensive monograph of your work (*Malcolm Morley: Itineraries*, Reaktion Books, 2001).
MORLEY: Yes. I once talked to Jean-Claude about my thoughts on the career of an artist, which, in some ways, is involved with the idea of skins, being we all have five layers, as they say. The first skin for the artist might be establishing his identity as an artist, getting an exhibition. I'd die a thousand deaths when people would say, "Oh, you're a painter, where do you show?" "Well, at the moment, I don't show." [*Laughs*]. That seemed to be the most important thing, to get a gallery to show. And it is. So that's the first skin. Yet not quite that surprising actually, very often artists don't always get down to the second skin, which is regarded as an occupational hazard.

RAIL: What is the second skin?
MORLEY: Well, the second skin means consolidating what that first skin was and then being prepared to let it go. I remember once walking down Fifth Avenue with $20,000 in my pockets, 10 in the left, and 10 in the right, and I thought, this is all because I took a risk with the first super-realist paintings. So what would be the best second risk to disqualify the value of the first risk? That's when the paint started going all over the place and then people who had collected the early paintings lost confidence, so they sold all of them. Meanwhile, I couldn't sell the newer work at all. But I remember Roy telling me one day that he painted a painting that was impossible to sell; yet later he sold it for more money than he had ever sold before. So it's like gamesmanship, or upping the ante; I learned that very early on. So on a certain level I was pushed from behind. Because Ivan Karp had taken my slides all over America and at the end of the year there was 100 photorealists. One specialized in racehorses; another guy did diners, using an airbrush. Critics somehow tended to put my work in the mix, which was quite annoying. The problem is most of those paintings have no real surfaces, no touch.

RAIL: So it's good that you called your painting superrealist.
MORLEY: Yeah, partly because I'm crazy about Malevich's term "suprematism."

RAIL: That makes sense.
MORLEY: And in France they call it hyperrealism.

RAIL: So how would you describe the third, the fourth, and the fifth skin?
MORLEY: After the first and second skin, I think the third, fourth, and fifth are about maintaining the flow and being even more flexible. A big influence on me was a book called *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*, by the philosopher Norman O. Brown, which I've read four times, and each time it has different meaning. The book is essentially a psychoanalytic analysis of Freud. The first chapter is called "The Disease Called Man," which is brilliant. He explores Freud's concept of "polymorphous infancy," which deals with the early stage of an infant who doesn't make a hierarchy of touch, sensation—it's the same all over. But later during puberty the focus becomes genitally organized and Brown's saying that society or culture itself is genitally organized. It's like, for example, before dinner you have foreplay, you have a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres, then dessert is climax. He also wrote a book called *Love's Body*, which contains only verse, no chapters, which I also loved. His chapter headings were great. One was called "The Excremental Vision," in which he talks about Jonathan Swift's famous poem, "The Lady's Dressing Room," about how Celia's beautiful and she's gorgeous and the end line is "Celia shits."

RAIL: [*Laughs.*] That's fantastic.
MORLEY: And then he talks about how Martin Luther had his best visions shitting on the john and he associates shit with the devil [*laughs*]—I mean this guy is fearless, not highbrow even though he was trained as a Latin scholar, and then he got turned on to Freud. Brown's critique of Freud was that Freud could not deal with art like Otto Rank. Rank's *The Artist* and *Art and Artist*, I think, are absolutely beyond brilliant. I think that artists should know a lot of things besides making art. I actually think of art very often as a branch of natural science, which I've said before. Once I was at a seminar and someone asked me, "What do you do?" And I said, "I'm a natural scientist." "Oh, what do natural scientists do?" this someone continued. "Oh, well, I study mass, linearity, tonality, hue, chromatics, etc., etc." He then said, "Oh, that sounds like being an artist."

RAIL: [*Laughs.*] He got it. Finally.
MORLEY: Yeah. We tend to forget that philosophy in and of itself doesn't have a medium. The fact is that people choose to write their thoughts, and a thought is a thought, it's not manifest, it's gotta be manifest in something. As Nietzsche says, "Philosophy begins in the marketplace." So, what is of value? What are levels of value? I could probably incorporate that thought into different layers of the skin.

RAIL: Which layer of skin are you now?
MORLEY: The fifth and last one.

RAIL: No wonder why it sounded so wise [*laughs*]. Anyway, how did you deal with the dominance of minimalism in the late '60s?

MORLEY: I wasn't threatened by what minimalist artists were doing. In fact, I lived above Agnes Martin earlier on and I love what she did.

RAIL: Similar to how Newman liked your supperrealist paintings, and you his. So there's no problem there.

MORLEY: Right. And, you know, it's not even a question of liking, because you don't necessarily have to like something in order to admire it. For example, there's something nihilistic and grim about Artschwager's style, but his work is serious and important. The same thing can be said of Lucian Freud, whose work gives me the creeps. Every time I see his paintings I feel my flesh is being decayed, getting rotten. Yet there is some psychedelic power of realism in it that can be very hypnotic.

RAIL: I can only agree with you all day long [*laughs*]. Anyway, how did the show come about?

MORLEY: Rob Storr came and said he wanted to do a show. I thought it was to be in a year but he meant to do it in six weeks. It was a tight schedule. What Robbie did was select works that were reasonably accessible and organized as a cross-section of different times, like a small survey so to speak.

RAIL: Can you tell us a bit about the other painting installation, "The Spitfire" (2012)?

MORLEY: The image of a young Palestinian man jumping over the wall was initially from another painting, "Wall Jumpers" (2002). What I did was put him right above a painting of a bomber. Then I had a friend of mine shoot through the spitfire "sign" with a gun. And I put the painted cutout of a naval officer in the middle of the sidewalk, right next to the bulldog with the British flag, which refers to Winston Churchill and the Royal Navy. Actually, I've been reading several books on World War II. Many of them seem to blame Theodore Roosevelt for having sent missionaries to the Far East, between 1901 to 1909, which led to the Japanese feeling threatened. That consequently gave rise to this war monger generation that was in reaction to Roosevelt wanting to turn all the Asians into Christians. He really did. I've been learning all about the big mistakes that the West has made in really misunderstanding the Asiatic mind. It's been quite an experience. Now I'm just finishing H. G. Wells's autobiography, called *Experiment in Autobiography*, which is astonishing. He actually has this concept of basing the value of money on a different system altogether, which is a system of energy; you would delegate a certain amount of energy to something, and that would represent itself in money. So that money couldn't be manipulated so easily. Fantastic.

RAIL: Keynes would have agreed with that theory. At any rate, I like the way you painted the bulldog.

MORLEY: Have I ever told you the story about the dog?

RAIL: I don't think so.

MORLEY: Oh, as soon as I finished painting the dog I remembered that when I was a small boy I was taking a violin lesson and I went down into the village and a dog came out of a pub and bit me right through the nose. I had completely forgotten that until I finished the dog. So much for the unconscious.

Malcolm Morley, "Biggles," 2011. 125 x 83 ½ x 64 ½". Wall: Wax encaustic on paper mounted on panel. Sign: Oil paint on linen with wooden frame and supports. Sidewalk: Encaustic and enamel. Paint on linen mounted on wood; paper; oil paint on cloth, paverpol and wire Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York.

Plagens, Peter. "Don't Stop, Just Paint." *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 March 2012, p. D6.

LEISURE & ARTS

Don't Stop, Just Paint

Malcolm Morley In a Nutshell: The Fine Art Of Painting 1954-2012
Edgewood Avenue Gallery
Yale University School of Art
Through March 31

By Peter Plagens

New Haven, Conn.

"The Theory of Catastrophe" (2004)—a big overhead view of a freeway pileup painted by Malcolm Morley in a deliberately offhand, close-enough-for-government-work version of Photo Realism—could well be painting's riposte to the reason the photographer Garry Winogrand gave for photographing something: to see what it would look like photographed. Mr. Morley wanted to see what such a chaotic scene would look like painted. Of course, the obvious objection to this comparison is photography's supposed machine-made "objectivity"—even in this digital age of Photoshop. Mr. Morley, though, is himself something of a painting machine. That's a compliment, meant in the same way you might call Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer tennis "machines."

Mr. Morley was born in 1931 in London. His family's house was blown up by a German bomb during the Blitz; homeless for a time, he led a rough-and-tumble youth. Serving a three-year sentence in the Dickensian-sounding Wormwood Scrubs prison for breaking and entering, the young Mr. Morley read "Lust for Life," the novel about Vincent van Gogh and, he later told a critic, he figured that being an artist was something he could do. After attending art school in London, he moved to New York in the late 1950s. There he met Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, and was set on a course combining Warhol's wan acceptance of practically any subject that passed in front of his face as suitable for painting with Lichtenstein's surgical irony toward the paradox of the painted image—is it just a bunch of borrowed colored shapes, or is anything meaningful fully there?

For more than half a century, Mr. Morley has attacked that paradox by painting and painting and painting. He's taken his brushes and palette on a wild ride from dreary English postwar realism ("Richmond Hill Below the Wick," 1954) to hard-core Photo Realism (the ocean liner "Cristoforo Colombo," 1965), varieties of neo-expressionism ("Camels and Goats," 1980), cliché-embracing pulp-illustration pictures of World War II fighter planes ("Beautiful Explosion," 2010) and, most recently, veritable installation art (an exterior segment of a pub called "The Spitfire," 2012). All of this and more is engagingly crammed into the modestly proportioned art gallery of the Yale School of Art, a little minimalist building that's usually used for graduate-thesis exhibitions. "Malcolm Morley in a Nutshell" was curated by Robert Storr, the school's director, and it's an art education all by itself.

Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

'The Theory of Catastrophe' (2004).

An awful lot of expertly improvisational painting moves—oddball compositions, deft brush strokes, snappy colors, risky gimmicks such as miniature 3-D barrels hanging by wires in "Depth Mine with Sharks" (2011)—are in action at a breakneck pace. While a few artists might be better at paint-handling than Mr. Morley, he does keep his colors separate and crisp, and he can make you shiver at the dark, cold wetness of Atlantic Ocean water. A certain visual garrulousness is part of his charm.

But he isn't perfect—and he probably wouldn't want to be. A couple of titles ("Aero-naughty-cal Manuever" from 2009, for instance) are too cute. A painting called "Split Level" (2011) is an expedient top-and-bottom reprise of two previous paintings, and one of the pub installations, "Biggles" (2011), is too sentimental for real translation into a work of art, yet too garish to convey genuine affection. "Rat Tat Tat" (2001), a 17-foot-wide triptych depicting cardboard punch-out models of World War I aircraft—and the least successful work in the show—is installed directly above the gallery entrance, as if to encourage you to miss it.

In the end, though, Mr. Morley is great at representation, not just verisimilitude. He paints whatever wows him at the moment, and manages most times to find the superficial essence (a deliberate oxymoron here) of his enthusiastically varied subjects. Mr. Morley's emphasis on finding his artistic inspiration outside of himself is what keeps his art from succumbing—as so much contemporary work does these days—to overintellectualizing and bottomless self-reference. "The idea," Mr. Morley has said, "is to have no idea. Get lost. Get lost in the landscape." By landscape, he means the hurly-burly of the world at large—ships, airplanes, naval battles, exotic animals, pubs and the occasional catastrophe. The exhibition is a kind of tribute to the good, old-fashioned, lusty painter's life, and—although Mr. Morley is in his ninth decade—an artistic spirit that's still as young as they come.

Mr. Plagens is a New York-based painter and writer.

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"Malcolm Morley." *The New Yorker*, 25 April 2011, p. 12.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

MALCOLM MORLEY
Morley's great painterly gifts have always groped for proper subjects. Here they revert to boyish fantasies of aerial combat, circa the World Wars and Korea. Creamily brushed in resounding colors, the Red Baron and other aces pose with their aircraft. Planes explode in midair or upon crash landing. One picture—its forms distorted as if by sheer excitement—finds Morley portraying his aged self in a diving Sopwith Camel, as a German pilot glances back at him while parachuting from a burning Roland D.II. Modern violence goes rococo: Tiepolo with machine guns. Through April 30. (Sperone Westwater, 257 Bowery. 212-999-7337.)

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"Malcolm Morley, 'Rules of Engagement.'" *Time Out New York*, 14 – 20 April 2011, p. 52.

Sperone Westwater

257 Bowery between E Houston and Stanton Sts (212-999-7337, speronewestwater.com). Subway: F to Lower East Side–Second Ave. Tue–Sat 10am–6pm.

* **Malcolm Morley, "Rules of Engagement"** In one of those serendipitous collisions of art and current events, Morley's recent paintings of fighter pilots and aircraft (favored motifs for more than a decade, and inspired by Morley's London boyhood as he watched the Blitz unfold overhead) arrive hot on the heels on the bombing of Libya. The 12 new canvases here depicting scenes of aerial combat are rendered in the Turner Prize winner's (he received the inaugural honor in 1984) typically bold paint-handling—which, since the 1960s, has evolved from a sort of proto-photorealism to a looser style. Also on view: the monumental *Rat Tat Tat* from 2001. Both through Apr 30.

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Ebony, David. "A One-Man Movement: Q+A With Malcolm Morley." *www.artinamericamagazine.com (Art in America)*, 14 April 2011.

Art in America

Malcolm Morley *Bomber Strafing the Water*, 2010 oil on canvas 45 1/2 x 58 inches

The legendary London-born New York artist Malcolm Morley turns 80 this year, on June 7. The irrepressible Gemini has been a leader of at least two art movements. His precise paintings of ocean liners defined Photo-Realism in the 1960s; in the late 1970s and '80s, his exuberantly deconstructed imagery paved the way for the Neo-Expressionists, such as Julian Schnabel and David Salle. Morley was the recipient of the Tate Gallery's inaugural Turner Prize, awarded in 1984. Since then he has maintained a unique and rather exalted reputation as both a modern master and a cult figure.

Morley, who grew up in the midst of World War II, has vivid memories of the Blitz that destroyed his childhood home. No wonder he often returns to the subject of war in his art. Morley revisits the theme in his latest efforts. After a long and serious illness last year, he made a heroic recovery and painted the powerful group of works in "Malcolm Morley: Rules of Engagement." The show, on view through Apr. 30 at Sperone Westwater, New York, is accompanied by a catalogue with an essay by Brooks Adams. Morley's latest paintings of battle scenes and modern day warriors could well launch a new, one-man movement—Heroism.

Among the highlights of the exhibition are the action-packed images for which Morley is well known-here they include aerial scenes of dogfights and planes exploding midair or on runways. Many, however, are haunting portraits of notable pilots from various wars, immortal folk heroes to some, villains to many, from legendary figures like the Red Baron to others long forgotten.

On the occasion of the exhibition, Morley met at the gallery with *Art in America*'s David Ebony to explore the artist's triumphant but not unproblematic art-world odyssey spanning more than five decades. The conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

DAVID EBONY: You're turning 80 soon, and you're looking dapper as ever. You are a survivor personally and professionally. Tell us about your regimen.

MALCOLM MORLEY: Yes. I work out three days a week—pushups, weight training. I am no good in the mornings, so I go to the studio midday and work until dinnertime. I go back to the studio after dinner until around 10 PM or so. Then I go watch a movie on TV.

EBONY: Has your routine changed over the years?

MORLEY: Yes, it did when I married Lida 23 years ago. Prior to that I was a roving lunatic, painting mostly at night.

EBONY: Early on in your career Salvador Dalí recognized you as one of the best and most important contemporary painters. He made a great show of support for your work. But he also predicted that one day you'd wind up trying to assassinate painting. Have you done that?

MORLEY: No. I saved painting. There's the great line of Clement Greenberg where he's talking about Pollock and he quotes Miró saying that he wanted to murder painting. He was talking about a certain kind of attitude about painting.

EBONY: Dalí said that in the late 1960s, during the heyday of Photo-Realism. You were at the pinnacle of the movement. But not long after, you were the first of the Photo-Realists to sort of deconstruct the genre, making more expressive paintings and textural kinds of works that undermined Photo-Realist methodology.

MORLEY: I always preferred the term Super-Realism because it is related to Suprematism. Malevich is one of my favorite painters. The end of Photo-Realism for me came about from a very emotional experience after seeing the movie Z, directed by Costa-Gavras, with Yves Montand. I was with Tony Shafrazi, and we went back to my studio after seeing the film. I had just finished a painting of a South African racetrack [*Race Track*, 1970] and Ivan Karp was coming to photograph it the next day. We were so revved up from the movie, I thought I had to "X" out the image. But I didn't just paint an "X" on the canvas. I got a sheet of Mylar and put red paint on it so that when pressed against the surface it would leave a red "X." We did a number of tests and the "X" got thinner and thinner. Finally, we pressed it hard on the canvas. It came out like a perfect "X"; lo and behold, I became Malcolm X. [*Laughs*.] Racial issues were already implied in the painting. Also, at that same moment, I was X-ing out Photo-Realism.

EBONY: That painting does seem to mark the end of an era.

MORLEY: Even before that, critics would say that my brushstrokes were kind of ugly, not neat and tidy like Goings or Estes. My painting style really comes from my childhood, when I was painting model boats and airplanes. I had spent six months on a model of a big ship when I was about 12. One night the neighborhood was bombed by a "Doodlebug," which is what we called a V-1 guided missile. I was lying

Malcolm Morley *Beautiful Explosion*, 2010 oil on linen 45 1/2 x 58 inches

in my bed sleeping when suddenly there was a big bang and the entire wall of my bedroom collapsed. The shoe store downstairs exploded and the street was filled with shoes. My model disappeared. We had to leave the building and my family and I were basically refugees. Anyway, eventually, through psychoanalysis, I made the connection between my paintings and trying to recover the boat that disappeared-the beloved lost object. I guess I should thank the Germans for that!

EBONY: Your early works were abstract. You painted Minimalist compositions. Who and what inspired you early on?

MORLEY: My first show in New York, at Kornblee Gallery, was of abstract compositions. I came here around 1960, and New York was still a hotbed of Abstract Expressionism. I used to go to The Club where people would rant and rave at each other. De Kooning and Milton Resnick and everybody would scream at each other. I was most attracted to Cy Twombly's early work. I made paintings with bands, using a pastry gun, with some added pencil marks. In the end, the paintings have the feel of the structure of an ocean liner, with rows of windows, for example.

EBONY: I saw some of them from the early '60s in your Hayward Gallery retrospective in London [2001]. It was the first time I had seen any of the abstract works in person.

MORLEY: At the time, they were a big breakthrough for me. I studied at the Royal College of Art with Carel Weight, a figurative painter who was my mentor. When I discovered Matisse and started doing Matisse-like nudes, Weight accused me of being a modernist. But my classmates at the school included hip artists like Richard Smith, Peter Blake and Robyn Denny. I was like the Grandma Moses of the bunch. Not cool. At least not in the studio. At night we'd all twist the night away at the Peppermint Lounge.

EBONY: Do you get nostalgic for those times?

MORLEY: Not really. I recently discovered that the Latin root of nostalgia means "disease of the past."

EBONY: Early on in your career, you became known for some provocative incidents, like when you attacked a painting of yours at an auction as it came up for sale.

MORLEY: That was at an auction in Paris. It was a painting of Buckingham Palace I did in 1970 that had been commissioned by the flower company F.T.D. [*Buckingham Palace with First Prize*]. There were a number of artists also commissioned, and I decided to give myself first prize, and stuck the ribbon in the corner. Around that time I was very taken in by Artaud and when the painting came up for auction a few years later, I developed a performance piece. I asked friends to come to the auction, and let them know that I was going to do this event and maybe shoot paint at the canvas with a water pistol. The auction house was tipped off about it and when the painting came out they had it covered in plastic. I was dressed in a tuxedo with long tails. I had hired a violin player. She started playing and I spouted off a speech I wrote about how God means the painting not to be a fake, or something like that. I went up to the painting and nailed the water pistol onto the canvas. The audience was beside itself, shouting and laughing, and the auctioneer stopped the sale. The painting was eventually bought by a Swedish collector, and now it's in the Pompidou

collection—with the water pistol still attached. The whole thing was filmed. But I left the film with someone who I paid $1,000 to edit it, and it disappeared.

EBONY: Have you done other films?

MORLEY: I made a film called *Vincent the Ballroom Dancer*. It never really got it off the ground, so I don't want to go into it too much. But that one is lost, too. Someone stole it.

EBONY: Are you interested in new media or new technology?

MORLEY: My only interest is in using Photoshop to rev up the images. My assistant helps me with it. I'm not that good at it.

EBONY: You often use 3-D elements in your work. Your previous New York show featured a rare freestanding sculpture—of a motorcyclist jumping through a flaming hoop.

MORLEY: My paintings sometimes have objects attached to them that you don't notice at first. In a sense they are eye tests. It is only when you look around the painting that you notice them, like the paintbrush attached to the canvas near one of the jet's firing machine guns in *Rules of Engagement* [2011]. I was trying to say here, "make art, not war!"

EBONY: What is the difference in your approach to sculpture and painting?

MORLEY: One thing I would say is that with painting you are kind of outside the action but with sculpture you're always in it. You think as you go with sculpture. But with painting, I already have the script pretty much set out.

EBONY: Your new works are closely related to one another in terms of scale and subject matter.

MORLEY: That's what the series calls for. I was more involved in the works as a set from the beginning. I had a show in Brussels a couple of years ago and a young painter gave me a book with old illustrations of fighter pilots. The moment I saw it, I knew this would be my next series. It brought back memories of being a kid, when we used to watch the fighter pilots battle it out in the sky at night. And I never doubted that this series would be everything I wanted to do now. Many of them are portraits. David Sylvester once asked me, "Why don't you paint people?"

EBONY: You have painted figures over the years.

MORLEY: Yes, but these are really more like portraits.

EBONY: In the way of a Graham Sutherland portrait, maybe?

MORLEY: His portrait of Winston Churchill was amazing.

EBONY: You chose historical figures that relate in a more general way to current events, especially armed conflicts in the world. You have also painted have quite a few images of well-known sports figures.

MORLEY: They are all related. The sports paintings have to do with heroes. And the new ones are heroes too. That is the link. I came across a book about early Rothko, and he talked about mythology and how strong that is as a theme. Mythology always needs a hero and a hero always needs danger. And I thought about what a hero means to an American. I went to the local deli and listened to the guys talking about a

football game from years ago. They remembered every detail of the game. I realized that this is their mythology; these are their heroes.

Malcolm Morley *Ring of Fire*, 2009 Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York

EBONY: In your work, you often juxtapose images of violence and pleasure, a jarring dichotomy. What wins out in the end?

MORLEY: Neither. There is no end.

EBONY: I guess I meant to ask, are you an optimist or a pessimist? Is humankind about to self-destruct? Or will we be OK?

MORLEY: I have that dichotomy within myself. I feel that we are pretty pathetic as a species, yet there are grand ideas. Personally, I feel that life in itself is a good thing. It is not good for most people, though, I think. I am always conflicted about the idea of god, if god exists.

EBONY: It makes me think of the Woody Allen quip, that if god does exist we should mount a class-action lawsuit.

MORLEY: He got it right on the head.

EBONY: There is something spiritual about your work, in the sense that you convey some core beliefs about the infinite greatness of humanity and the world.

MORLEY: I have a friend who says that what we call spiritual is just a certain configuration of particles. There's no denying that it's spiritual, but it is just another bunch of particles. I never thought that someone would be able to have a spiritual experience like that through my work. I feel it mostly in music.

EBONY: Maybe what I am getting at is a kind of emotional intensity I find consistent in your work. The painting *Macaws, Bengals and Mullet* [1982] has that kind of impact.

MORLEY: If you look closely at the center of that composition, you will see a kind of crucified Christ figure, a torso appears in the tree trunk.

EBONY: What's your next project? What paintings are you planning?

MORLEY: Babies and English pubs. Babies because I want to paint all of those beautiful plastic toys. A big baby with all those toys; it would look like a horror story.

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Hanna, James Chad. “Painting for Glory: Malcolm Morley on the World War II Origins of His High-Flying Art.” *www.blouinartinfo.com (Blouin Artinfo)*, 1 April 2011.

BLOUIN ARTINFO

Malcolm Morley, *Rat Tat Tat*, 2001, Courtesy Sperone Westwater

“Often times people say, ‘What do you paint?’ and I say, ‘Adventure paintings,’ and that ends it,” Malcolm Morley explains with a playful smile. One of the pioneers of Photorealism (also known as Superrealism), Morely, 79, grew up in London and came to New York City in the mid-’60s and made a name for himself painting highly realistic images typically based off photographs or postcards, often adding self-referential marks to recast the source image in a more political or social light — one of the most famous examples of this being his “Racetrack” from 1970. A multifaceted painter, Morley’s style became more expressionistic for a time, but in the ‘90s he returned to his realist roots. Morely is a longtime enthusiast of planes and ships, and these machines frequently find their way into his work. This is the case again with his most recent solo show at Sperone Westwater, titled “Rules of Engagement” and running through April 30, in which 12 new works portray classic fighter planes and the men who piloted them.

Your style has been so diverse over time. I’m interested in how your artistic progression evolved.

The word itself, style, is interesting. It roots from stylus, the tool used for carving, and essentially you could only tell the differences between one carver and another by the mistakes they made. So if you’ve made a perfect “O,” it was without style. So, I think that language has got pretty sloppy, and I’m very keen to get it into another context. Does God have style? Although, I do understand how it’s used today — it’s really a mode of recognition, and you bring out this idea of these shifts and changes. It seems like that to me too, but what’s odd about it is that although there seems to be a very abrupt gap between one thing and another at the time, when you see them all together in a retrospective they flow — it’s a strange phenomenon. I seem to be more circular than linear. Like the metaphor of throwing a huge stone at the middle of a pond — the velocity of the throw, and scale of the stone, which I feel is kind of pain-based. So the evolution is more circular than linear.

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Malcolm Morley, *Strafing*, 2010, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

Malcolm Morley, *English Fighter Pilot (Ace)*, 2010, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

Malcolm Morley, *Major M.J.A. Morley of the 266 Squadron*, 2011, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

How did you get your start?

It's funny, you know, because in the beginning — well my very first show in New York was at a gallery called Jill Kornblee which is a very historic gallery — and they were abstract paintings. I was very taken by Cy Twombly and it was sort of my own version of abstract expressionism. They tended to have the feeling of the superstructure of ships, cruise ships, these sort of bands and things. But I always felt this wasn't really me. Whatever that is, the changing me. And I was taken over to visit to Richard Artschwager, and he was working with grids and that reminded me very much of the sort of thing I did at art school, which was on grids. Although at that time I hadn't seen that the grid was simply a means of getting the drawing, and then that's the end of the grid. So I actually went down to the 57th Street Pier and there was a liner — they called them liners then — and attempted to make a painting of it, which was impossible, you know? One end of the ship was down there and the other end was over here. So I got a post card of it, and made a painting of that, on a grid. And that was the first beginnings of what, very unkindly, was called Photorealism.

Why unkindly?

Lawrence Alloway's wife, whose name was Sylvia Sleigh, came from a sort of very upper-class English background, and when she saw them, she coined it Photorealism. Basically it was based almost on the idea that the upper class believed that the man in the street's appreciation of art is a painting that looks as close to a photograph is possible. And it was meant as a put down.

Yet it seems like this style of painting would require an immense amount of effort and time.

Compulsion. Yeah.

Is there a term you prefer to Photorealism?

I always go toward Superrealism. Not that I thought it was super, but I wanted to associate it with Suprematism. Because my interest was on a much bigger issue than so called "copying," and I would always cringe when "copying" would come up — because I always thought of it as an interpretation, of translating the thing into a painterly invention, you know, and so forth. What's really interesting about it is that the very first paintings were these spectacular meticulous looking liners, cruise ships and stuff. When I was a boy I used to build models, and one night we were blown up by WWII — we had been

blown up by what was called a V1, that was a jet-propelled bomb. And I'd been building this model battleship out of balsa wood, and the turrets turned and the lifeboats came down, quite spectacular. The idea was to paint them and photograph them. And then you couldn't tell the difference. I was going to start painting it the next day, but after the bomb the wall completely disappeared and so did the boat — just completely disappeared. And we lived on top of a shoe shop. And the whole street was littered with shoes — very surreal. And smoke. And I had really not made a connection, but through psychoanalysis, it came up: that really I was trying to paint that original boat.

Malcolm Morley, *Russian Fighter Pilot (Ace)*, 2010, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

And how old were you at that time when the bomb hit?

About 12. And nobody ever mentioned it when it happened. It just disappeared. We were sort of refugees staying in other people's houses and stuff. Anyway so that was the end of my modeling career then. So I was rather thrilled to make the link why I would go through it. Because it's quite an ordeal to paint them. It's because of the end result that I'm willing to do it. You know and a strange phenomenon would occur that I call the stereoscopic space — it would appear through just painting these flat tones against each other and yet illusionistically — I suppose going through your central nervous system. You have this illusion of space, and of course there is no space in painting. Mathematicians would call it an area. You know in the '60s all you heard was space in paintings. Anyway that's something else. So then, Ivan Karp, he was a very prominent in introducing Pop Art and so forth, he was a very, very close friend, and he went all over America with these slides — to various art departments and at the end of the year there were 100 people doing it. And I really claim to be the originator of what was known then as Photorealism. Although there were others who were also doing something parallel to that at the same time like Richard Estes. There were three of us you know. But so, you know, one would specialize in dinners, another one would do racehorses, and you know.

Malcolm Morley, *Rules of Engagement*, 2011, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

Malcolm Morley, *Crash Landing*, 2010, Courtesy Sperone Westwater, NY

Tell me about the origin of *Race Track*.

The painting of the racetrack was really the jump. It's an interesting story. I'd gone with, actually, Toni Shafrazi, a very close pal, to see a movie called "Z." Yves Montand plays a Greek politician in the time of

the colonels in Greece, and he get assassinated. And in the meantime I had finished the racetrack. And Ivan Karp had arranged for Time magazine to come and photograph it on Monday. That was Friday. So Tony and I were so pissed when we came out of the movie — you come out mad — and so I got this idea of putting an X on the racetrack. And instead of just taking some paint and poom-poom, making an X, we got sheets of plastic and put them on the painting and rehearsed the X, and it got thinner and thinner. Because the painter didn't really want to totally destroy the painting, you know. So it was really quite a thin X. And then we reversed the plastic, printing the X on the painting. And low and behold it was Malcolm's X on a racetrack in South Africa. And because that was a pun that came out afterward, which sadly Lawrence Alloway claimed as his own discovery — but anyway, writers do this. So that was the beginning of the end. Not only was I exing out racetrack, but I was exing out Photorealism at the same time. And I'm a tremendous believer in the unconscious as an activity and have been devoted to psychoanalysis for most of my life. And although I think that neurotic art is interesting, I think conscious art is much more interesting. And so, you know, psychoanalysis is a way of making friends with your unconscious life and so it becomes one thing rather than a divided thing. People always think of us as icebergs with very little showing on top and a lot underneath.

How did the critics receive your work?

You know, actually I think there were one or two critics who were like, "This Morley guy, he's not so realist, when you look at them close they're really quite ugly." Now you take Ralph Goings, you know — smooth airbrush. And so I was always involved with the idea of painting, to put in a nutshell, really in a classic tradition. But at the same time wanting to do something new. Actually, you paint — whether or not it occurs to sit in the pantheons of the greats — for glory, you know. I mean, it's nice to go to the back, but that's not the end of it, you know? So I got that part of it straight. And so really I never left — well, once or twice I left the grid — but really I couldn't find a better way to organize it. And actually the grid is quite democratic because you're treating the background and the foreground the same. They are equal. And that's the paradox of this illusionistic space thing that occurs. It's a mystery to me really. It's very digital. If you're trying to paint a figure in space, a sort of corniness starts to occur, I suppose. And so then I could paint them up. There's no right way out for them, in terms of a small square. For a long time I didn't cut up the square, so I was always losing my place. This way I could just run around all day thinking about a quarter tone against a half a tone. And nothing else. I got rid of the burden of carrying the whole around simultaneously. So that in a nutshell is it.

So tell me about your new paintings. I understand you've been meditating on this idea of the hero.

That started some time ago. I had come across this book Rothko had written. It was a notebook, and he wrote it before he was Rothko essentially, and I was quite taken with it. He was talking about all those guys like Barnett Newman who were all involved with mythology, and myths need a hero and a hero needs to face danger, et cetera. And that appealed to me because I feel the modern painter faces danger if he's looking at the whole picture, and I started thinking, "Who is the modern hero?" And I went down to the deli one day and there were two guys talking about a baseball game that had been played years earlier, and they remembered every detail of it. I thought, it's the sportsman that is the hero that takes the risk. So that's what got me into the that series of paintings. I did an ice hockey guy and I did Souza, the baseball player, you know, things like that. And so that's how that happened. It's as if I'm always looking for a bigger subject you know?

Tell me about your new body of work.

So these new paintings came about because I was doing a show in Belgium a year and a half ago or so, and as I was leaving a young painter gave me a small pamphlet sort of thing. And there were illustrations of these fighter pilots from WWI and WWII, and I was very taken by them — when I saw them I knew that was it. That's such a great feeling when you get that. And it was so tied up with my earlier life, you know, completely. So I started out doing it with a tremendous belief, a stronger belief than I had had earlier. All the pilots are different nationalities. The jet propelled bomb I spoke of earlier, the tail of it came in my bedroom. And there was a swastika and a number stenciled on it. And the metal was hot. Now, I'm not a Nazi, but in painting the German pilot I painted these swastikas, so this idea of painting on the word classified came into my mind as a means of distance. I did that and I liked it so much, just the plastic visual look of it that I put it up on all the pilots. It also makes for another level. Because the word classified stands between you and that. It turns it into something that could be a document, it's hovering over all of those levels. And I like to say that some people buy paintings, collect paintings, that are pictures, and some people buy paintings because they're paintings. And some people buy paintings because they're pictures and paintings. So it's a kind of a test, this word classified.

And this continues the exploration of the hero concept?

Yes it does. The titles of them have the nationality, like "The Italian Pilot" (ACE), so they're all aces. They're oil paint on canvas, not oil paint on oil paint. When you build up too much paint on paint it becomes dull. So this is wet on wet — it's all close to the canvas. You know, throughout my work the color in my work has never been discussed. It's like the imagery takes over more strongly. And yet they are colored pigment on canvas. That's essentially what they are.

What are your work habits like?

I've got a routine. I'm not so good in the mornings — I putter around — and it's as if I take a hundred-yard warm-up to dash ten yards. I usually start midday and carry on until dinner., and very often go back after dinner and work until about 10. It's a seven day a week thing for me. It's harder for me not to work. With these, conviction drove it. Painting was always problematic. But I never had any doubt about these.

You were mentioning this idea earlier about a stone being cast into the water and rings circularly going out. And mentioned that the velocity with which the stone is thrown is determined by pain. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

It happened to be a very painful early life. So this idea of throwing the rock... or another idea is that of the oyster. The size of the pearl is determined by the size of the grit. The irritation. The greater the irritation, the greater the pearl, supposedly. It's a metaphor anyway. And I was very fortunate really because I was taken up by people and ended up going to the Royal College of Art. And I didn't have the scholastics. Actually that was part and parcel of what was known as the angry young man syndrome during the time of "Look Back in Anger." The root of that was that after WWII men were coming back from the battle field and, just based on their merit, were getting into Oxford or Cambridge with Cockney accents. And the upper classes would not accept them. Still won't, you know. So there was this kind of resentment. John Osborne the playwright wrote his famous play "Look Back in Anger." The president of the Royal College was a very enlightened guy. All I wanted to do was join in — I wasn't really rebellious. I wanted to belong. And the great thing about New York was that I was always sort of accepted by other artists. And, so, I turned that into my family really. So I got away from that whole English class thing. I moved out from painting sort of from the point of view of reaction into a point of view of action. Which has a lot more to do with loving. And it's a stronger quality, the acting. And so I'm a very happy man.

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Robinson, Walter. “Malcolm Morley: Rules of Engagement.” *www.artnet.com (Artnet Magazine)*, 1 April 2011.

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Malcolm Morley, *Rules of Engagement*, 2011, Sperone Westerwater Gallery

The brilliant British-born New York pop realist Malcolm Morley (b. 1931), back in the studio after something of a dramatic health scare, presents a dozen new paintings of World War II aerial combat. Dynamic and sophisticated in color, the new works are spectacular scenes of soaring dogfights, Spitfires and Messerschmitts outlined against a bright blue sky.

A group of portraits of fighting aces are based on illustrations from Morley’s youth, when he would watch the soaring aircraft above a field near his home, an experience of “bliss.” Two of the new paintings are self-portraits that place “Major Morley” in a World War I Sopwith Camel.

Close observation of the dogfight depicted in *Rules of Engagement* (2011) reveals a small brush attached to the surface, right in the muzzle blast of the plane’s guns. “I wanted to represent ‘Make art, not war’,” Morley said.

The Paris-based art critic Brooks Adams wrote the essay in the accompanying catalogue.

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Malcolm Morley at Sperone Westwater, New York, Mar. 31, 2011

"Malcolm Morley: Rules of Engagement," installation view of *Rat Tat Tat* (2001) from the mezzanine at Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York

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Ayers, Robert. "Malcolm Morley." *ARTnews*, Summer 2009, p. 122.

Malcolm Morley

Sperone Westwater

Perennial provocateur Malcom Morley continued to surprise his audience in this splendid show. Once again his subject matter was sports stars—this time mostly motocross riders and Nascar drivers—who, for him, are the contemporary equivalent to mythological heroes, a belief he articulated in a statement published to coincide with the show.

Malcolm Morley, *Ring of Fire*, 2009, mixed media, 113" x 77½" x 87". Sperone Westwater.

The standout work in this group was *Ring of Fire* (2009), an audacious life-size sculpture of a motorcyclist leaping through a flaming circle. Though the artist had requested that the material used to create the piece remain classified, it was eventually revealed to be heavy watercolor paper. Morley's occasional forays into sculpture are always fascinating. This work brilliantly demonstrates his skill at combining different styles of representation. The motorcycle's chain and sprockets are reconstructed with almost loving accuracy, and the chunky tires are rendered with incredible complexity, but the cyclist's face is simply generic, as though it had been sketched by a teenage motocross fan.

The amusement Morley derives from having several things going on in the same work was obvious throughout the show. *Thor* and *Hubris* (both 2008) feature more or less lifelike representations of motorcyclists painted immediately adjacent to what seem to be images of the same picture ripped up and crumpled. Morley entertains himself in *Ring of Fire* as well, having strewn about the motorcycle and the rider's outfit little jokes in the guise of sponsors' logos.

Morley's art dealer, Angela Westwater, is honored in this way, as are members of his studio team. Most significantly, the rider's goggles bear the stylized signature of Cézanne, as if to remind viewers that the artist's real subject is art itself rather than the motorcycles and cars that are merely its vehicle. (Pun intended.)

—Robert Ayers

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Doran, Anne. "Malcolm Morley." *Time Out New York*, 28 May – 3 June 2009, p. 44.

Art

Blue Boyz

Malcolm Morley

★★★★½

Sperone Westwater, through June 20 (see Chelsea)

Post-Pop artist Malcolm Morley likes to make things difficult for himself. A self-described painter of modern life, and in particular its spectacles, he pushes his medium to the limits of its capacity to represent the world. After 50 years of continually reinventing his art, he's arrived at a state that seems simultaneously one of grace and one of determined free fall.

Morley's last show of new work here, in 2005, comprised high-drama images of sporting events, and marked a return to the superrealism of his work from the 1960s and '70s. His current show, inspired by NASCAR and motocross racing, takes a lot more risks. At one extreme, the monumental *Texas Swing* depicts a line of colorfully suited motorbike riders with hallucinogenic clarity even as it deliquesces into a matrix of abstract passages. At the other, *Blue Boyz* features a weirdly dreamlike group of identical blue-suited riders cresting a muddy hill. From a hole ripped in the canvas's center, a three-dimensional version of another such figure explodes forth. In its deadpan literalness and clunkiness, the work almost qualifies as outsider art. Holding down its own room and looking like a three-dimensional lobby display is another piece: a strange, life-size paper sculpture of a helmeted stuntman jumping through a ring of fire.

One of two glorious watercolor paintings of NASCAR champion Dale Earnhardt's fatal accident bears the title *The Art of Painting*. For Morley, making art will always be a daredevil sport. To paraphrase David Bowie, he's always crashing in the same car. And he's always walking away.—*Anne Doran*

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Ayers, Robert. "'Three cheers for the unconscious!' Robert Ayers in conversation with Malcolm Morley." *www.askyfilledwithshootingstars.com (A Sky filled with Shooting Stars)*, 25 May 2009.

Many years ago, back in the early 1980s, I used to write for a little British art magazine called *Artscribe*. We published in black and white, scraping by from issue to issue, but we were an earnest little group who felt that our opinions might actually shape the future of contemporary painting. Of course that meant that we had our disagreements. One of the biggest arguments that occurred, I remember, was over the award of a then-unheard-of trophy by the name of the Turner Prize to a guy named Malcolm Morley.

Malcolm Morley, *Ring of Fire* (2009)

He had had a retrospective at London's Whitechapel Gallery in 1983, which charted his development out of his own brand of superrealism into an early and particularly effusive kind of eighties neo-expressionism. The next year he was given the first Turner Prize for making the most important contribution to British Art in the previous twelve months, despite the fact that he had lived here in New York since the late 1950s. It certainly set the cat among the pigeons and I genuinely believe that the arguments about Mr Morley winning that first Turner Prize not only secured its future, but also established its reputation for controversy. The British art scene might have been a rather different place, in other words, had it not been for Malcolm Morley.

Malcolm Morley, *Farewell to Crete* (1984)

Mr Morley has never lost his taste for controversy, constantly twisting and turning his own painterly development – with occasional forays into sculpture – as though deliberately trying to keep his audience guessing. His current show at Sperone Westwater (through June 20) looks as much as anything like a group

Malcolm Morley, photo: (c) 2005 Daniel Moss

Malcolm Morley, *The Art of Painting* (2005)

show of several different artists making their own Morley-esque mash-ups of the same subject matter. The stand-out work in the show is a life-size paper sculpture of a motocross rider leaping through a ring of fire.

To confuse matters further, Mr Morley repeatedly stakes a claim for the traditionalism of his art. He insists that his real subjects are not the sports stars that have dominated his recent paintings, for example, but the art of painting itself. He cites artists as various as Velasquez, Manet, Cézanne, and Picasso in talking about his work, and in an essay called "Spectacle" that he has written to accompany his present exhibit he offers himself as a contemporary version of Baudelaire's painter of modern life. He also stresses the importance of psychoanalysis to his art, and suggests links between his painting and ancient mythology. So when I spoke to him last weekend I wanted to get to the bottom of some of these issues.

Malcolm, I'm interested in this essay that you've written. That's not something that you usually do. Why did you feel it was appropriate this time around?

Well, the ideas behind it were surfacing a bit when I had my last show at Sperone Westwater, which was a show of all the big sports heroes. The idea derived from Mark Rothko's book, "The Artist's Reality" [published in 2006]. All of those guys, Rothko, Newman, and the rest of them, were all involved with mythology – it was a very big thing for them – and Rothko makes the point that in the ancient world mythology wasn't something in the past. It was lived on a day-to day basis.

One day I was in the deli buying a cup of coffee and I heard these two regular guys talking about a baseball game that had been played years before, and they remembered every possible detail about it. And I decided that this was contemporary mythology, and the sports stars were the heroes. To be a hero you have to take a risk, so of course the best ones are those that risk their lives – NASCAR drivers and people like that.

Of course, it's not that painting heroes is the only thing I do. It isn't a permanent thing, necessarily. But it's especially apropos in terms of the current state of affairs. I certainly don't think that you can identify the contemporary soldier as a mythic hero: all he wants to do is get home in one piece, basically. Whereas the stars of sport live these mythic lives.

I'm interested to hear you mention Barnett Newman there. As I understand it, he was one of the more important influences on you when you first came to New York City in 1958.

Yes, very much so. I was working in a restaurant, waiting on tables, and he was one of my customers. He asked me what I was doing there and I said, "I'm a painter, I'm just working here to pay my bills," so he

gave me his phone number and asked me to call him. He came down to my studio and at that time I was doing my version of abstract expressionism – rather à la Cy Twombly – and he told me this great thing. He said, "You know, all the guys here in New York are involved in the bullfight, and sticking in the stiletto, whereas I'm interested in the myth of Excalibur, and removing the sword from the stone." Then he'd talk about "emptying renaissance space." I hadn't come across that scale of thinking before. It was quite a revelation.

Malcolm Morley, *Cristoforo Colombo* (1965)

In fact, when I had my first show of the cruise ships, I felt very embarrassed that I'd betrayed Newman. So I didn't show up for my own opening until it was almost over, only to be told that he'd been waiting for me, and he absolutely loved the paintings! You see, he didn't like people who painted Newmans. He told me, "You know, the hardest thing in the world for me to do is to paint a Newman. But the easiest thing for anybody else to do is to paint a Newman." So I had a wonderful metaphysical mentor there.

Of course the other guy, at the other extreme, was Salvador Dali. I was living in the Chelsea Hotel, and one Sunday morning there was this funny little voice on the phone. It said, "Malcolm Morley? This is Salvador Dali." And I thought it was a friend playing a joke, so I said, "Well fuck off!" and hung up. Of course he loved that and called back. He became quite a champion of my work, and he liked to say that he painted photographs of the unconscious, whereas I painted photographs of the conscious. When you were in a one-

to-one relationship with him he was really great, he only went into that gobbledygook when there were people around. So between Newman and Dali I had plenty of room to maneuver.

Malcolm Morley, *Ring of Fire* (2009) (detail)

I'm fascinated by the sculpture in the current show. What is it that keeps you coming back to sculpture?

Well, one of the things is that it can be made. That whole piece is made of watercolor paper, very heavy watercolor paper with an armature of plastic plumbing piping. You can do a lot of things with paper. I always think of sculpture as something in two dimensions that's folded.

Even the mud that's splashed on it seems to be made of papier mâché.

The mud? Oh that was something else. The piece was finished. It was pristine. I live in a building on the corner of a road with traffic going past it. We took it outside, and I got hold of the toilet brush. You know those big brushes for cleaning the toilet? I mixed up a paint with papier mâché so that it looked like mud and started swishing it on from a distance. And the traffic stopped. People were saying, "What the hell? It's a lunatic." And that's how it went on. It was literally splashed on to get the velocity.

You know, although I've followed your career for years, I'm never quite sure of who Malcolm Morley is. On the one hand there's the audacious character who seems to delight in having people ask, "What the hell?"…

Well, upping the ante is what it is …

… but then on the other hand, there seems to be a deeply traditional streak to your art.

Oh yes. The way I see it is that the whole history of the arts is like a huge river that moves forward in one direction. And you want to be in the middle of that river, even if sometimes you have to fight against the current. Now that river also has little tributaries and pools of stagnant water. Lots of artists start out tremendously, right in the center, but then they get trapped in the stagnant water. To me it's all a question of character, and having lots of nerve.


Ring of Fire in Malcolm Morley's studio. (Photo: Joseph Thaler)

Where do you see yourself, in the mainstream or the backwaters?

Malcolm Morley, *Blue Boyz* (2008)

Malcolm Morley, *Hubris* (2008)

Well what do you think? Of course I think I'm out there, being what you might call contentious or on the cutting edge of things.

But as you say, I also have this very strong connection to the whole history of painting. Sometimes people ask me, "How long did it take you to paint that?" And I'll say, "Sixty thousand years!" Because I'm starting off with cave painting and I have incorporated all of that into what I do. I'm very proud of my facilities. I rehearse them I practice them. I feel as though I belong to an ancient guild.

You sometimes talk about "historical ambition".

Oh, I'm glad you brought that up. The idea of historical ambition is that you want to sit in the pantheon of the greats. Whether or not that happens is something else. It's for time and history and other people to decide. But I do have this deadly ambition, this deadly drive that never seems to stop.

Where does that ambition derive from? You've talked a lot in the past about the importance of psychoanalysis to your art.

Yes, I'm very interested in unconscious life. One way of putting it is, "to make friends with your unconscious life." I'm a great believer in this. And that's what I think the ancients did, in a sense, when they lived with mythology on a day-to-day basis. If you can come to terms with your own unconscious life, you can find a huge well that goes deep enough down to tap in to the collective unconscious. And that's where it's at. That's what I feel happens in what I do. Three cheers for the unconscious!

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Kley, Elisabeth. "Gotham Art & Theater." *www.artnet.com (Artnet Magazine)*, 20 May 2009.

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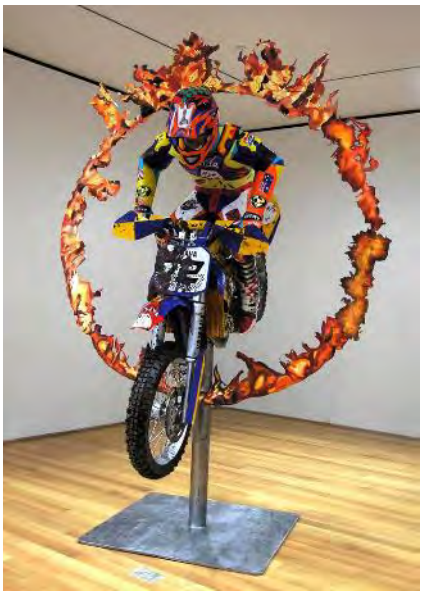

Malcolm Morley, *Ring of Fire*, 2009, Sperone Westwater

At 77, Malcolm Morley is as enthralled by daredevil destruction as a little boy crashing his toy trucks. In fact, an elaborate warship model destroyed by a German bomb during the WWII London blitz may have inspired his entire body of work. Early paintings of ocean liners copied from postcards and travel brochures seem to recreate the lost toy boat, and recent depictions of colliding racing cars and half-demolished buildings could be flashbacks to the 1944 explosion. Morley's latest images of motorcycle racing, another method of courting danger, are on view at Sperone Westwater Gallery, Apr. 16-June 20, 2009.

The showstopper is *Ring of Fire* (2009), a mud-splattered life-sized sculpture of a man on a motorbike jumping through a burning hoop. Constructed from heavy watercolor paper and supported by a framework of steel, he resembles an over-sized toy soldier with a tubular body and flat paper lips. Colorful logos cover his clothing, and every detail of the bike is painstakingly reproduced, including the treads on the wheels. The orange flames are beautifully painted in loose watercolor washes.

Blue Boyz (2008), the phantasmagorical relief tucked away in a back gallery, is another contender for stealing the exhibition. Bouncing over mountainous brown terrain with the texture of actual dirt, ten painted motorcyclists rush from all directions towards the viewer, led by a fully three-dimensional paper rider bursting from a hole in the center of the canvas. Small paper flags are pasted here and there, and a tiny balloon floats in a sky that is rapidly shifting from day to night, accompanied by fluffy white clouds, a crescent moon and a sprinkling of stars.

The rest of the paintings seem hyper-real from a distance, but close-up they are engagingly handmade. Methodically representing chaos, Morley copies photographs from sports magazines and transfers them to his canvases with grids. By turning the paintings upside down, he can lovingly paint every detail, square by square, without getting bogged down in representation. The image materializes by itself when the canvas is turned right side up.

Malcolm Morley, *Blue Boyz*, 2008, Sperone Westwater

Summoning up a vision of a motorcycle crash, *Hubris* (2008) is a two part vertical painting that features a pair of racers making a sharp turn, placed above a still life of fragments of the original magazine photo after it was torn apart by a dog. In *Thor* (2008), a single racer appears above more painted bits of paper, but this time the boundaries between whole and torn images disappear, as if the subject

is literally disintegrating from the bottom up. The penciled grid left bare at the edges undercuts Morley's photorealism, and an actual racing glove pinned to the painting's lower right corner also draws attention to the racer's immateriality. Prices range from $250,000 to $400,000.

Malcolm Morley, *Hubris*, 2008, Sperone Westwater

Malcolm Morley, *Thor*, 2008, Sperone Westwater

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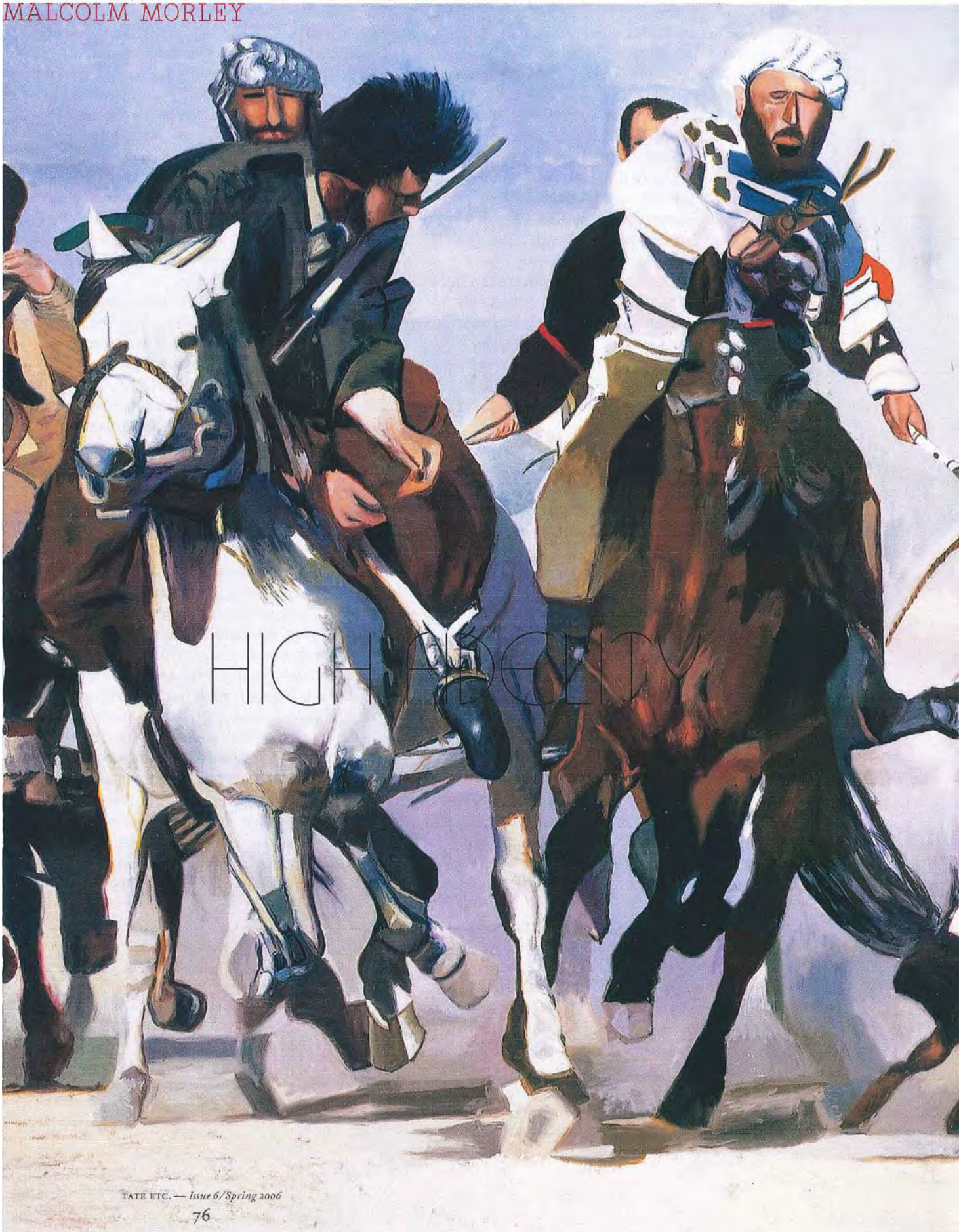
Ratcliff, Carter. “Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting.” *Tate Etc.*, Spring 2006, cover, pp. 76-79.

MALCOLM MORLEY



BY CARTER RATCLIFF

Malcolm Morley
Buzkoshi
(2002)
Oil on linen
144.8×228.6cm

Malcolm Morley was an early practitioner of superrealist painting. He then won the first Turner Prize in 1984 after having moved to a looser style of brushwork. In recent years his work has reached a new maturity in what he calls his "fidelity painting"

All images: private collection/courtesy Sperone Westwater

There are many Malcolm Morleys. Ultimately, of course, there is only one, and yet the unity of this singular painter emerges only from a survey of the many. Writers usually begin with the pictures of ocean liners he painted in 1965–1966. Postcards were his sources, and Morley shocked the art world with his fidelity to the look of mass-produced photographic imagery. Pigeonholed as an inventor of photorealism, he called himself a superrealist instead.

The superrealist Morley began to change in the early 1970s. Though his development was erratic, with many lateral moves and a few about-faces, it was unrelenting. There was a tropical Morley, who filled jungles of heavily-worked paint with splashy tigers and macaws. For a brief moment, a pattern-making Morley crowded the canvas with nearly identical images of charging legionnaires. By the late 1980s he had become the quasi-abstract Morley, a painter of hectic, high-keyed canvases in which cathedrals and other solid things dissolved into snarls of colour. As the 1990s began, his drips, smears and high-speed streaks of pigment gave way to calmer effects. Slowly, he became a hard-edged painter of ships and airplanes, yet the superrealist devoted to the meticulous, obsessive transcription of photographic images did not reappear. Then, in 2002, he did.

Since the 1980s, Morley had based his oil paintings on his own watercolours. The picture that brought him back to superrealism, *Man, Boy and Donkey* (2002), originated in a newspaper photograph of a scene in Afghanistan. Yet the author of this work is not identical to the Morley who produced the ocean liner canvases of the mid-1960s, or the even more fiendishly photographic *New York Postcards* of the early 1970s. Painterly generalisation endows the man, the boy and the donkey with an elegant sketchiness, and the background of this image is quasi-abstract. Morley's old precision reappeared full-force in *House in Brooklyn* (2003), a picture of a tenement in a state of collapse. *Car Crash* (2003) shows racing cars piling up amid clouds of smoke and exhaust fumes. *Theory of Catastrophe* (2004) presents a variation on this subject: cars and trucks in the aftermath of an horrendous pile-up on a motorway. For other motifs, he turned to sports. In *Racer* (2004) a downhill skier leans into a sharp turn. Bat is about to connect with baseball in *Batter's Box* (2004), and in *Backstroke* (2004) a swimmer's goggled face emerges from foam. The theme of automotive mishaps returned in 2005 in a canvas entitled, strangely enough, *The Art of Painting*. A diptych of sorts, it shows one cluster of crashing racing cars in its upper half and another cluster below. Though the painting is about disaster, its title suggests that this is not its only subject.

Malcolm Morley
The Art of Painting (2005)
Oil on canvas
256.9×202.3cm

Having insisted that his art is superrealist, not photorealist, Morley gave it another label: "fidelity painting". At first, one assumes the obvious: he means fidelity to a photographic source – the postcards that provided him with images of ocean liners, or the sports photographs he reproduced in recent years. But what about everything in between – the canvases that are based on photographs only indirectly, or not at all? To what is that work faithful? A plausible answer is that Morley's paintings, whatever their style or source, are faithful to the act of seeing, and thus keep faith with an early modern maxim: paint what you see, not what you know.

What he knows best of all is how it feels to see, to make sense of the visible world, especially those bits of it to be found in pictures. Yet there is more to his knowledge, as he suggests when he says: "It's one thing to see it, and quite another to see it and paint it." For Morley, his awareness of his seeing is not complete until he has struggled to transpose the experience to canvas – struggled and failed, as he must, given the impossibility of representing the dynamic process of seeing in the immobile medium of painting.

Morley's fidelity painting cannot be faithful to what he sees, any more than the art of his hero Cézanne could be faithful to what he saw. Like Cézanne's, his art can be faithful only to what he knows. But why is that worth doing? Answers emerge from a look at the paint in the most photographic of his recent canvases. Close up to *The Art of Painting*, for example, we see imagery dissolving into colour as willingly as it does in his messiest paintings of the 1980s. We see, as well, that the distinction between the abstract and the representational is arbitrary: sooner or later, we see ourselves seeing. For, as it turns out, all the various Morleys are made into a singular Morley by one persistent purpose: to get us to be as self-conscious as he has been at every stage of his career. And he hopes that the self-consciousness achieved in the exemplary act of looking at art will carry over to the rest of our lives.

Carter Ratcliff is a poet and art critic. His most recent book is Out of the Box: The Reinvention of Art 1965–1975.

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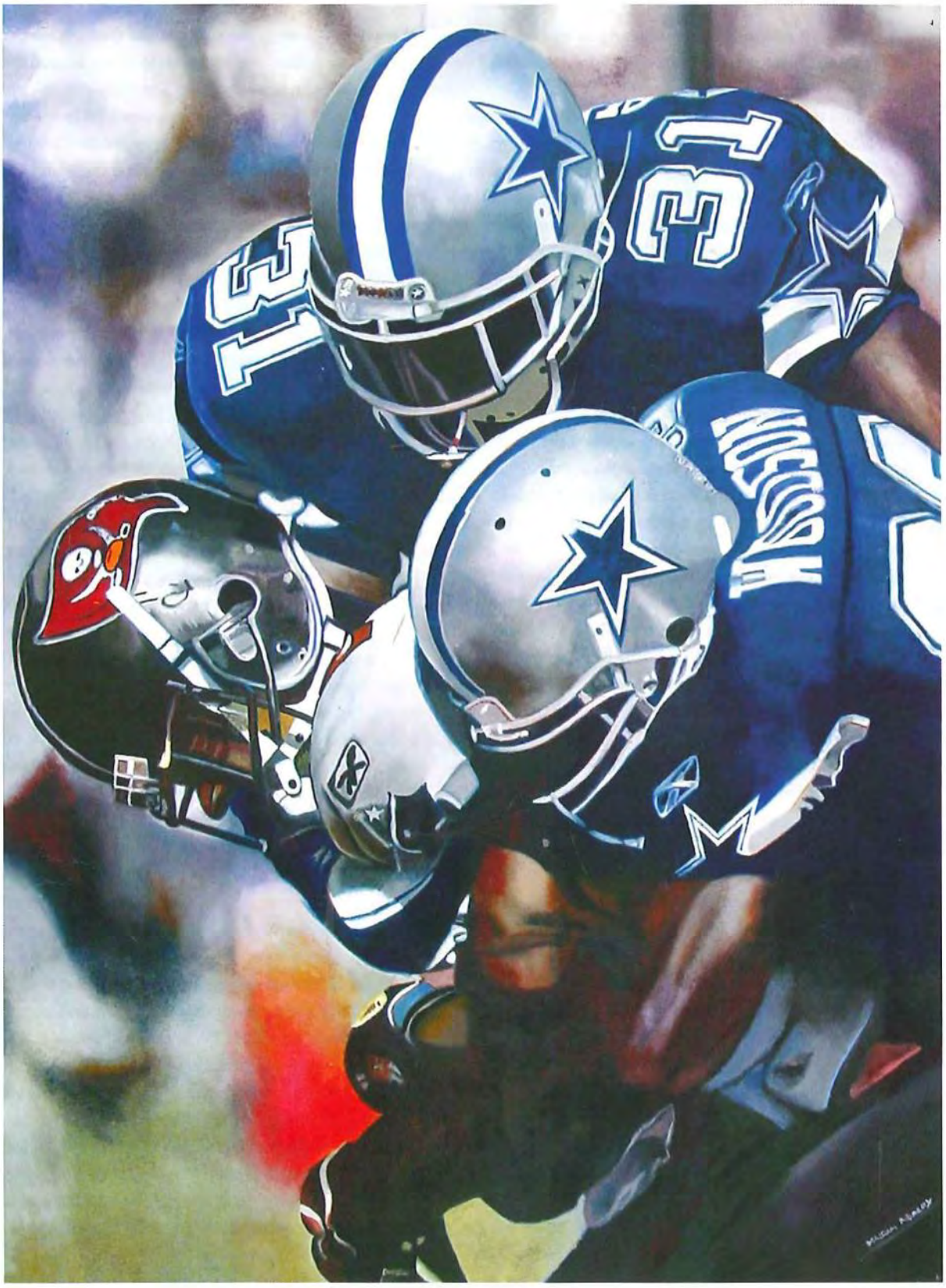
Enright, Robert, and Malcolm Morley. “Malcolm Morley: The Principal of Uncertainty.” *Border Crossings*, vol. 25, no. 4, issue 100, 2006, cover, pp. 22-36.



Malcolm Morley

The Principal of Uncertainty

"Every brushstroke is an invention" and "each painting is the first painting I ever made." Malcolm Morley is an artist who likes to get to the beginning of things. In a career now in its fourth decade, he is admired for his refusal to settle into a style or a way of making art that is predictable. "I wouldn't want anything I did to look like anything else and I wouldn't want anything else I've done to look like much of what I'm doing now."

BY ROBERT ENRIGHT

S.S. Amsterdam In Front of Rotterdam, 1966, Liquitex on canvas, 62 x 84". Collection of Irma and Norman Braman.

preceding pages, left: *Tackle*, 2004, oil on linen, 49 x 36". All photographs courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York. Private Collection, London.

right: Malcolm Morley, studio shot. Photograph: Daniel Moss.

The British-born painter, who has lived in the United States since 1958, is credited with initiating two influential art movements in the 20th century: Super-realism and Neo-expressionism. In the mid-'60s he dramatically stopped making abstract paintings that showed the mixed influence of Cy Twombly, Willem de Kooning and the West Coast transcendentalism of Mark Tobey in favour of highly realistic paintings. The best known of these are a number of ocean liners, among them *ss Amsterdam in Front of Rotterdam*, 1966. Apart from a meticulous fidelity to their photographic sources, these works are also remarkable for their method of composition. (It is worth noting that Morley prefers the word fidelity, rather than super-realist, to describe these works). He divided the photographic images into grids, which he then painted square by square and often upside down, making each of these mini-paintings an abstraction. It is a methodology he has continued to use throughout his career.

The details of Morley's life before coming to America are well-documented. His childhood was troubled: He never knew his birth father, was terrified of his step-father and drifted into petty crime, culminating in his arrest and three-year sentence to London's Wormwood Scrubs for break-and-enter. He came out of prison on good behaviour after only two years, a convert to a world he knew nothing about but one which fascinated him. In Scrubs he had read *Lust for Life*, Irving Stone's fictionalized biography of Vincent van Gogh. "It looked like something I could do," he told the critic Jean-Claude Lebensztejn. "I could also be an artist." From that moment on, Malcolm Morley set out to become his own story.

What he has come to realize, through intensive and lengthy involvement in psychoanalysis, is that the events of his life could be used as material and provocation for events in his paintings. Everything from model shipbuilding as a child, to his experience at sea as an adolescent (he was a galley boy on an ocean-going tugboat crossing to Newfoundland), to bricklaying as a young man, have fed both the content and the process of his art-making. He admits that his consistent

use of ships as a subject is connected to the loss of the finest model he ever made; the balsa wood ship was destroyed, along with most of the flat he and his mother were living in, during a German bombing raid on London in 1944. Each time he begins a painting of a boat, he recognizes it as an unattainable attempt to "reclaim that original perfect ship."

Morley's assessment of his own capabilities is as frank and candid as his observations about the world of art and artists. "I always felt that essentially I was very clumsy as a painter, and so there has been this constant battle to be less clumsy." He couples this aesthetic recognition with a philosophical outlook that rejects the idea of certitude. Morley subscribes to Freud's observation that you can't achieve happiness "unless you can tolerate a certain amount of uncertainty."

One of the ways he guarantees a state of uncertainty is through his cultivation of risk. The essential question he has posed to himself, in a career dominated by highly successful shifts, is to decide what risk he can take that will "disqualify" the success he had achieved in taking the previous risk. This practice of deliberate self-sabotage explains the dramatic changes in the styles and methods of assembling his paintings and accounts for what can be regarded as a process of aesthetic deconstruction. In a sense, he sets out to sink his own ships. Or, put another way, he has taken to heart the advice of Norman O. Brown, the political philosopher who was an early and formative influence on his thinking: "If you want to stay healthy, get lost." Morley's career is a sterling example of the generative possibilities of losing oneself in art.

Morley's painting life is deeply implicated in his lived life, which explains his preference for the visceral over the cerebral. His recent—and startling—foray into politics, what he calls "the state of affairs," is an example of how far he is prepared to go in his engagement with an unruly and unpopular subject. He has just completed the first image in what may become a body of work, using as its source the troubling photographs that came out of the prison at Abu Ghraib. On a TV screen, which he has placed on top of a camouflaged column, we see an image of the naked prisoners, stacked on top of one another in a humiliating mound of flesh. The stand and the TV are as light as air, but they carry a weight and meaning that is rock solid. "I've been looking for a target for a long time," Morley says about this most recent work in his light-filled studio. It's clear from this sculpture/painting that he has found a subject that will allow him to zero in on yet another theme of personal significance and social consequence. In setting his sights on a new subject, Malcolm Morley has scored a direct hit on its exposed centre.

Malcolm Morley was interviewed in his studio by Robert Enright and Meeka Walsh on October 16, 2006.

BORDER CROSSINGS: *When we were looking at the as yet unnamed painting you're working on here in the studio, you referred to a sense of democracy in the composition. What did you mean?*

Coronation and Beach Scene, 1968, Magnacolour and Liquitex on canvas, 89 5/8 x 90 1/8". Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981.

For me, every brushstroke is an invention. I can never get it right enough.

MALCOLM MORLEY: What I'm talking about when I mention democracy is that there's no hierarchy of sensation in the making. You can see the painting in two specific ways: as a holistic thing, and then you can start to experience the parts of it. For me, the essential thing that identifies a work of art—and I'm talking about painting here—is that I can go back and forth on these ways of seeing, in the same ratio as my heartbeat. And that can

include Barnett Newman, so it's not a question of detail, since there's no detail in Newman. I had a Japanese friend named Tadaski, a great painter who was doing 16- to 20-foot, single-colour paintings back in the '60s. I said to him, "I bet you can't find a brush big enough," and he said, "No I can't find a brush small enough because I don't want to miss anything." He was very Zen. But that idea stuck with me. Also it's polymorphous, in a sense. Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death* is all about hierarchies and genital organization, and I feel very much in that spirit. I must say, he had a tremendous influence on me in terms of confirming my own views.

BC: *You've said that people should react to painting biologically.*

MM: I had a funny idea that it would be great to have a little machine called "The Critic." You would plug into it and your blood pressure would be registered when you looked at a work of art, then you would get a printout. It was just to demonstrate the idea of not looking at a painting so much with your mind. I'm very interested in those mad ideas of string theory. I read a lot of science books, which is not to say that I understand them all, but here and there things come through. There's a new direction in microbiology about the source of intelligence. Most people, even if they're not religious, feel that intelligence trickles down from above. But this other idea is that tiny bits of things become intelligent as they join together. A guide for me is that a thought either excites me or it doesn't. It's almost as if a thought from the outside goes to my central nervous system.

BC: Cradle of Civilization with American Woman, *1982, seems to juxtapose a passing world with a more monumental, lasting world. Was that part of the dialectic you wanted to get across as an idea in the painting?*

MM: I don't think about those ideas until after they're revealed by the painting. I've recently come across a book Mark Rothko wrote when he was very young, before he was Rothko, really, and he made the observation that mythology in ancient times was lived on a day-to-day basis. It wasn't something that happened eons ago; it was a living thing. Myths really need heroes, and I started considering this idea of heroes and arrived at those sports figures, because sports stars are the heroes of today. You can go down to the deli and hear two guys, an electrician and a plumber, and they're recalling a game that was played 10 years ago and they can remember the weather and what happened. So it's a folklore as well. I'd already started the sports paintings, and then I came across the Rothko notebook. It's worthwhile, wonderful writing and, of course, all those guys were interested in myths. The other aspect is your acquaintance with, and how you live with art history, as a contemporary artist. Was it Santayana who said that if you don't know history you're doomed to repeat it? It is the basis of psychoanalysis of which I am a great proponent. I'm probably the most analyzed person you'll ever come across—35 years. The basis in Freudian thought, as I understand it, is the problem of repression. Culture conspires to repress, and if you succeed in coming out you have an opportunity to tune in to the world and see how neurotic it is. Norman Brown has a chapter in his book with the title, "The Disease Called Man."

BC: *Do you use psychoanalysis as a functional tool to think about how a painting can be made?*

MM: It is connected, and I have a very active dream life. But I would never dream of the idea of making a painting from a dream.

BC: *I want to pick up on your relationship to art history. I know that Cézanne was a major influence.*

MM: The first school I went to, Camberwell School of Art, was very much in that tradition. The tradition was called the Euston Road School, which came out of Walter Sickert, who was the English Cézanne. You'd see dots and dashes, really a scaffolding, and the figure would appear. That was very big at Camberwell. But the way I see it is that the whole history of art is a huge river. So when people ask me how long did it take you to paint that, I'll say 50,000 years because I'm thinking of a stream from the cave paintings on. It's a derogatory thing to say, but nevertheless, one can feel the mainstream from which a lot of tributaries go off into swamps and into places where they never get out. They're not what critic Roger Fry called significant art. It's very hard to measure how a painter makes a difference. The standard idea is that you'd see passages of paint that would remind you of say, Seurat, but I can't honestly say that ever happened. I think if I had never come across art history, they still would be the same paintings.

BC: *So your relationship to art history is more subliminal?*

MM: It's the essence of those artists that comes through. There was a moment very early on when I was making abstract paintings that were very much pointed towards Twombly and de Kooning, the classic abstract expressionist stance.

***BC:** When you first went to St. Ives, did you get to know the painters Alfred Wallis and Peter Lanyon?*

MM: Wallis had died but I did know Peter Lanyon. I actually got a job carving stones for Barbara Hepworth, until one day I split a big marble down the middle and then I no longer had a job. I was only 17 and I'd just come out of jail. I'd heard that St. Ives was where the artists were. But I never really got on the contemporary artists thing. I met people you probably wouldn't even know about, good artists who were Royal Academicians, and they took me up. What attracted me tremendously was how friendly artists were to each other, and that meant a great deal because I hadn't had that sort of experience. So I turned the art world into a family. One of the great things about being an artist is that you can pick your own ancestors.

***BC:** It doesn't take too much armchair psychology to imagine that the art world would be compensatory for someone who grew up not knowing who his father was.*

MM: I'm sure it was, but I wasn't conscious of it. I wasn't very aware. I hadn't really become myself yet.

***BC:** How much of your life was shaped by what was a fairly traumatic childhood? A number of critics have argued that your use of ship models in painting came out of the model-making you did as a child. Are those legitimate ways of looking at your work?*

MM: I think so. I used to make balsa wood models when I was a kid, and my masterpiece was a battleship called HMS Nelson. It had 16-inch guns, the turrets moved and the lifeboats came out. I was to paint it the next day. That night a German doodlebug fell on the house opposite us. We lived on top of a shoe store and my bedroom was facing the street, and the ship was on the windowsill and the whole thing disappeared. All that was left was this gaping hole. Then we became refugee types, billeted with another family, and that was the end of that. Early on in my psychoanalysis, it became clear to me that painting these ships was an attempt to reclaim that original perfect ship, which could never be reclaimed. I would never be able to replace what I call the original loved object. Children have tremendous emotional relationships to objects, like teddy bears. I think that led me to the recognition that nothing could be too much trouble to get it right.

***BC:** What role did Barnett Newman play in this family of artists you talk about?*

MM: I met him when I was working in a restaurant called Longchamps. One evening this guy came in wearing a black suit, carrying a cane with a silver head on it, and wearing a monocle. He asked me where I was from, and I said "England," and he said, "They showed me a wonderful time at the Tate Gallery." So he gave me his phone number and a week or so later I called him. He actually came down to my studio, which was on

Wildlife, 2000, oil on linen with attached bird, 63 ½ x 84 ½ x 17 3/4" overall, bird wing span: 58".

Most of the time I've been painting in reaction, but now the paintings come out of action, which is more out of loving. Reacting comes out of anger.

Henry Street, and he lived way up on the other side of New York on Riverside Drive. I was doing that Cy Twombly mix with a lot of white painting. When you're in doubt, use white; although when Robert Ryman was asked why he doesn't use colour, he said because it would interfere with the painting. I just think that's a priceless observation. But the first thing Newman said in my studio was that he liked the sense of light in the work, and I thought: "What the hell is he talking about, this is macho painting." He sat down and said, "all the guys here in New York were involved with the bullfight," and then he drew himself up to his five-foot-five height and said, "whilst I am interested in the myth of Excalibur, in removing the sword from the stone, in emptying Renaissance space." Well, I hadn't come across this scale of thinking, and that's really what did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it. He said the easiest painting in the world to do is a Barnett Newman, except for Barnett Newman. Then you'd ask him something like, "What's your relationship with Malevich," and he'd say: "My dialogue is with Michelangelo." He didn't mess around.

BC: *Was it inspiring as a young artist to hear people talk that way? You mentioned earlier that what you had to do was turn yourself into a legend. From the sounds of it, Newman's was legendary talk.*

MM: Yes, it was quotable and he was inspirational. But it's not that I sat down and consciously thought about being a legend. It's just that the kind of things I did became that. A lot of what I did was done out of intense anger.

BC: *Anger at the painterly status quo?*

MM: It was much deeper but I could fasten this anger on to just about anything. A lot of artists pander to critics and collectors and I thought the best thing to do to a collector is to punch him in the nose right away. It did happen once, and when it got around a lot of the collectors were shit-scared. And that, of course, was the end of Morley. So I tried to destroy myself as much as possible. I love Michelangelo's way of saying what a piece of sculpture is: You take it to the top of a mountain and roll it down, and what you have left is sculpture. I did that with myself, essentially.

BC: *How influential was the show of American art at the Tate Gallery in 1956 in persuading you to come to the United States?*

MM: I hadn't made the connection quite like that, because it took me some time to make contact with the so-called abstract art world, the abstract expressionists and the Cedar Bar and all of that. I was living in Queens and working in Brentano's bookstore in the Bible and Philosophy section, where I sold a lot of Splengler's *The Decline of the West*. For me, history is a very living thing.

BC: *Let me use Splengler to ask a question about what a painting does. Does the activity of painting find a way to do the same things differently, or different things the same? Is that the question you end up asking?*

MM: I never ask myself that question because each painting is the first painting I ever made.

BC: *So you're Adam in the Garden of Painterly Eden every time you start?*

MM: Is that what it's called? It should be Adam in the Garden of Painting Security.

BC: *Did you actually study weaving and bricklaying?*

MM: Yes, I did these courses. To me, the wall is the canvas and those grids are the bonding. I'll tell you a funny story about that. I'd gone through this course and I was coming out of the clink, and they gave me a set of tools, a plumb line and a trowel. I could crack a brick in half with the side of the trowel and I knew all the bonds. We used to build these incredible white-brick-with-black-mortar fireplaces and arches, so they got me a job on a building site and the first thing the foreman said was go and fill up the holes the plumbers had created under these sinks. Although I knew how to build an English arch, I had no idea how to get that bit of brick to stay in that symmetrical hole—it just kept popping out—and at the end of the day the foreman said, "I'm sorry son, I've gotta let you go." Today I get a bang out of how I make the paintings in relation to all that experience.

BC: *I want to get at the remarkable changes you went through. You were afraid when you did your first exhibition of realist paintings that Barnett Newman wouldn't like them. Was it because he was an abstract painter?*

facing page: *The Art of Painting*, 2005, oil on canvas, 101 1/8 x 79 5/8". Private Collection.

MM: Yes. There were areas of me that were naive to a certain degree. Also, you're not too far off the mark in assuming that abstract painters think figurative painting is a lesser thing. To a certain degree, I agree with them. I feel cursed with the need to make figurative painting.

BC: *Except that when you make them, given the nature of your method, every section of every painting is an abstract painting.*

MM: Yes. There are a few abstract painters who recognize that. Brice Marden loves them and he's pretty far from where I am. I despise most figurative artists. Figurative—the word itself pisses me off, as if anything is not a figure.

BC: *When you first did the fidelity paintings, they must have been radical.*

MM: They were radical paintings. They've been called post-pop, which is a term I prefer. Somehow pop had popped. I was quite close to Roy Lichtenstein and I was very involved with the dealer, Ivan Karp. The Coke bottle had been used up, everything had been used up. I can recall going down to Pier 57 with a canvas to paint a ship because ships had been very big in my life. Actually, the other way that had come about was that those abstract paintings were made in horizontal

Neck and Neck, 2005, oil on linen, 54 1/8 x 76 5/8". Private Collection.

rows—I used a pastry gun to load and scribble into it—and people would say it looked like the superstructure of a liner. I started thinking about that and it led me on. But the problem at the pier was that the end of the ship was over there and the beginning was over here, and it was impossible to grasp it.

BC: *Do you mean perceptually it was too big for your vision to incorporate?*

MM: Yes. You'd have to be half a mile away. So I got a postcard of a ship. That was the first one, and oddly enough I made a mistake on the proportion of the grid. The canvas was longer than the proportion of the postcard, and so I just painted a black strip on the right-hand side. It gives a sense of film, which I fell into, so to speak. Also, Richard Artschwager was a big influence. There was a collector from Detroit called Florence Barron and she took me to Richard's place, and that's where I saw this grid being used. I was very familiar with the grid from art school, so I connected the two. I felt I could be in the mainstream and still use a grid.

BC: *Did it matter to you to be in the mainstream?*

MM: Of course. I wanted to be an insider. The most attracting thing to me about art was glory and getting good girlfriends. I found out that women like artists rather than stockbrokers. And also, it was to sit in the pantheon of the greats. Whether or not that happens is something else, but it is the scale of my historical ambition.

BC: *So is* Vermeer: Portrait of the Artist in his Studio, *1968, an act of homage or an act of competition? If you're going to enter the pantheon, at what level do you decide to make that entry?*

MM: Neither. It was just another way of making a painting. The thing you have to remember is that mine was 10 feet high and the original was something like 25 inches. By then I had met Salvador Dali, which was very interesting, because here was another scale of thinking.

He loved Vermeer, who wasn't thought of very much in the 19th century and in his own time was seen as a copyist. To paint my version I had bought a reproduction of a poster from the Met, and I painted in the photographer's copyright and "Printed by Abrams" with a border. I had all these theories about borders, that it represents eight horizons instead of four, so it slows down the image in a certain way.

BC: *By the time you get to* SS Amsterdam *in Front of Rotterdam, 1966, you're painting in a grid system so small you have to use a magnifying glass to do it. A friend of yours is Barnett Newman and "big attack art" is the order of the day; that makes you the "other."*

MM: I knew I was taking risks. Lawrence Alloway did a show at the Guggenheim called "The Photographic Image," and all of my paintings in the show sold in one afternoon. I was walking down Fifth Avenue with $20,000, 10 [thousand] in each pocket, and I thought: "This occurred by taking a risk, so what would the next-best risk be to disqualify the value of the first risk?" So the collectors panicked and the paintings were sold, sometimes three or four times in a year, and the assumption was I'd lost my way. Ivan Karp thought I'd betrayed him because he'd been going all over the USA showing my slides to art departments, and by the end of the year there were hundreds of guys doing it. Then they began to specialize—racehorses or diners—and so critics would say Morley's brushstrokes are really ugly when you get them under a magnifying glass. But it was always about painting. Also, working from a postcard is basically still life painting. It's a three-dimensional object; it has a dimension. I set up still life arrangements with a grid in front of it, so I was playing every way possible with a grid. I'd register how things would shift. As Cézanne said: "I only have to move to the left or the right to find a completely different motif." So I explored all those things. I was pretty aware of Cézanne's idea and I was hoping some critics would link it up in some way, but they never have.

BC: *Were you consciously setting out to find different ways to keep yourself interested and to keep people guessing?*

MM: I never cared about the response of other people. The "other people" was always me, because I'm the doer and I'm also the first spectator. I'm also a spectator I trust. It's like having an inspector's number on a shirt that you bought. The dialogue was really with myself. As I'm making every mark I can go through the history of the art in terms of a brushstroke, and every brushstroke represents a thought.

BC: *When I look at* Coronation and Beach Scene, *1968, it still seems a radical painting.*

MM: I never thought it was radical at the time. There was a very famous documentary called *The Sky Above, The Mud Below*. It was made by the French director Pierre-Dominique Gaisseau, and I think Larry Rivers was involved. That title always attracted me. It was a metaphor, really, for two things being separate, because the sky and the earth are so different.

Myths need heroes and I arrived at sports figures because they are the heroes of today.

BC: *Tonally, though, the two parts of the painting do share an insistent harmony.*

MM: Yes, that was what struck me about it. I think British close tonality has to do with the weather. It rains a lot. The Japanese are also very tonal visually, and it rains a lot there, too. There was never much of a watercolour school coming out of Italy or in Arizona, which I call Aridzone. By the way, English speech is tonal as well. The English are taking letters out of words like mad.

BC: *But* Coronation and Beach Scene *didn't look like anything else at the time.*

MM: No. I wouldn't want anything I did to look like anything else, and I wouldn't want anything else I've done to look like much of what I'm now doing. If you're successfully selling one thing, people want you to keep doing it, and when something else comes in, they get upset. But when you see the works in a retrospective, they stay together very well. It's like a continuum. But they don't appear in that sequence as they're being made.

BC: *Still, there is a logic to the way you've made paintings. There are points where you use your own work as a way of making a self-referential painting.*

MM: To start with, nothing makes me decide to do anything. Art has nothing to do with reason.

BC: *How much does it have to do with beauty? Does it matter to you whether a painting looks beautiful?*

MM: That's a very tricky question. When I started doing those so-called rough paintings, like *The Injuns*

are Coming—The Officer of the Imperial Guard is Fleeing, 1983, and *Black Rainbow over Oedipus at Thebes*, 1988, I almost felt like throwing up at the end of each one. But now I look at them and they look beautiful. Beauty is a learned thing. I always felt essentially I was very clumsy as a painter, so there has been this constant battle to be less clumsy.

BC: *Are you getting any better? Or is a better way of putting the question: Are you becoming less clumsy?*

MM: Now I welcome clumsy because somehow the hand gets very educated. I don't trust it. In any case, it's not really so much to do with the process of doing. If the inspiration is there, the process arrives. Or another version of that is what Cézanne said: If the drawing is right, the inspiration will come.

BC: *Is there discovery in the making of the painting for you?*

MM: Yes, I'm discovering I'm making a painting. I mean this painting I'm doing now has a lot weighing on it, so to speak, because it is the first painting I've made in a number of years that has been generated from what I call an original image. The other paintings, which were photo-based, I call interpretations, interpretive painting. This is composing from scratch.

BC: *Do you still think of painting as a primal activity?*

MM: Well, a primal person couldn't make a painting. It's necessary to have a tremendously evolved cultural savvy to get to primal painting. There is that great story about Picasso, who was taken around an exhibition of children's drawing, and at the end of it the director said, "Maestro, what did you think of that?" and Picasso said, "I was astonished, because at their age I could paint like Velasquez and it took me 60 years to learn to paint like a child."

BC: *Do you have to un-invent painting in order to paint now?*

MM: For me, every brushstroke is an invention. I can never get it right enough. Picasso's quote about Cézanne is that he gets hold of a leaf and he's like a suction cup that won't let go until he gets on to the next part of the tree. It's Cézanne's anxiety to get it right that engages us. Honestly speaking, I can never get skilful enough. As I've said, I feel I am rather clumsy.

BC: *What made you decide to work from a watercolour source again, rather than from a photographic source as you'd done before? What's brought you to this point now?*

MM: I think I was looking to do something self-generated. And a lot of that had to do with the psychoanalysis, as well.

BC: *I was intrigued by* The Day of the Locust *painting you did in 1977. Was there something about the apocalyptic nature of Nathanael West's novel that was a point of departure for you?*

MM: Yes. One of the opening sentences is that a squadron of dragoons is moving down Wilshire Boulevard. Obviously, they were in a film, but that struck me right away. That's the second version; originally I'd made a painting of the LA phone book, and I did the tear because that was related to the Duchamp painting *Tu m'*, 1918. There's a tear in it and he uses a safety pin. So I build conceits into these paintings.

BC: *Is the reading a supplement to the work, or is it something you consciously orchestrate?*

MM: It's nothing that I consciously orchestrate, but I like to learn a lot of things because I feel we're here to learn. I'm 75, but just recently I hired a math teacher because I have no idea about it, so he comes every Friday and we're doing fractions and a bit of algebra. He's brilliant, and because he was educated as a Jesuit, he speaks Greek and Latin. So his teaching of math is rather original. He'll bring in Shakespeare and we'll look at sonnets by counting lines in the verse forms. He has a very original way of teaching. The thing I really want to do is geometry.

BC: *One of the things American art has always been able to deal with is scale. I'm astonished at the* New York City Postcard Foldout, *(1972–73). It's six feet tall and 30 feet long, painted on both sides. Where did the ambition come from to do that piece?*

MM: It was like a screen. It appealed to me because one side is upside down when the other side is the right way up, and you can flip them.

BC: *I want to give you more credit for invention than you're prepared to take. You talk as if you just stumble into these things, and yet your career has been a series of deft, intelligent and radical moves, one after another.*

MM: Underneath it all I have a tremendous belief in my importance. It's almost as if I deliberately underplay it. I can't be like Julian Schnabel and say I'm the most wonderful painter in the world, although I think I am. But I'd never say it. Maybe not the greatest, but I

think I'm as good as Jasper Johns. I've always loved his painting—until I see that it's become a sort of signature, and that saddens me.

BC: *That is one thing you have consistently avoided. The signature for Malcolm Morley would be: I don't know what the hell he's going to do next. The signature is uncertainty.*

MM: Yes, yes. I love Freud's observation that you can't really be happy in the world unless you can tolerate a certain amount of uncertainty. The lengths to which people will go to get rid of uncertainty are extraordinary, even to the point of sacrificing their lives and becoming a clerk and getting a pension. So you've got a 30-year-old guy thinking about his retirement. It's very liberating when you can live without that guarantee. I'm a religious athiest.

BC: *Is it because you're brave, or just foolish?*

MM: I think I'm very courageous and I know what I'm doing. Most of the time I've been painting in reaction, but now the paintings come out of action, which is more out of loving. Reacting comes out of anger.

BC: *But being able to render the image in a pleasing way must be important to you. You've said you don't care what people think, but I can't entirely buy in to that.*

MM: You're absolutely right, because I think of these paintings very often as eye tests. It's like going to the optician: what you see and what you don't see. Now I think that people will be disappointed if I start to make what they would call consistent work—you know, 20 of those, what happened to him? Because people are excited, and at the same time they don't want change. It's that battle of not wanting to change because we know where we are.

BC: *Do you pay much attention to what other painters are doing, or is your world sufficiently self-referential that you can generate painting out of what you've already done?*

MM: That's been there since the first super-realist painting. I suppose I can say that my identity as an artist

Go Carts, 2006, oil on linen, 32 x 45 ½". Cantin Collection.

was revealed and established with the ocean liners, and that was 30 years ago.

BC: *You have initiated two significant art movements on your own. When you look back, do you see yourself in the context of art history, or is that too grand a frame to consider?*

MM: That's where I'm not sure. One never knows. I suppose it is, if you're thinking of history in such recent terms. You know the story of the French prime minister asking the Chinese prime minister what he thought of the French Revolution, and he said it was too early to tell.

BC: *Were you serious, in 1999, when you said you wanted to repaint all your old paintings?*

MM: I thought I was at that moment. I think it was a way of repossessing them. It was a way of getting back what I had put out, and some of these paintings had gone for huge sums of money, so somehow the idea had a bit of larceny in it.

BC: *William Butler Yeats wanted his letters back so that he could make them consistent with what he felt was his fuller and more mature vision of the world.*

MM: I think that's a cop-out. In a sense, you have to live by what you say. One of the great things about Roy Lichtenstein was he never said anything that could be seen to be contradictory later on. In all the time I knew him, he never said anything negative about any other artist. On the other hand, nobody knew him. He had a screen there that was impenetrable.

BC: *I want to talk about the sports paintings.* Batter's Box, *2004, makes me think of Clyfford Still. I suppose I'm thinking of the grounded palette.*

MM: You could think of Rothko, too. One of the things I liked about that image was that the players were creating the composition as they played. Those pure white lines at the beginning of the game changed after the players slid over them a few times. You get this wavy composition which you couldn't possibly invent.

BC: *You've described* Goalie, *2004, as one of your favourite paintings.*

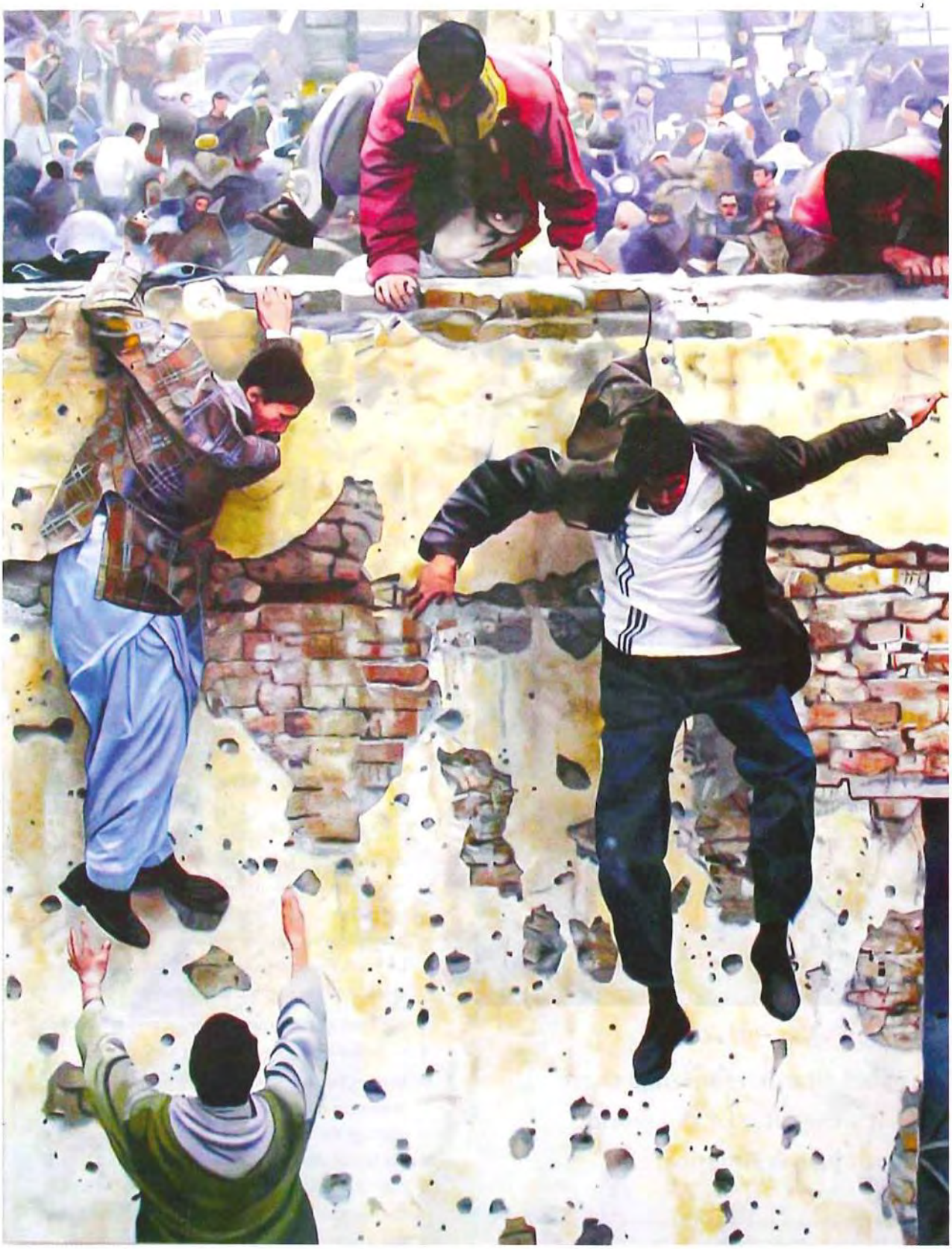
MM: I go into such ecstacies over ice and how great it is to paint. And then there are memories I have about Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* where all the Swedish knights get caught on the ice and they slowly start to sink. Those abstract white paintings I did were inspired by that particular image. And I used to ice-skate myself in a local rink. Ice is such a terrific thing: lemon yellow beside ice and cerulean blue. Then, inside the pads the goalie wears, there is a landscape and a lot of distortion going on. You can really start getting off on all the distortions and reflections.

BC: *Has film been an important part of your life?*

MM: I am a film buff. I'm sure it gets into my consciousness, but I don't know how directly it has affected my painting. As a kid I would see three films a week. They used to have an A film and a B film, and I saw all those great B noir films, for which that

New York City Postcard, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 62 x 234 ½". Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo, Norway.

facing page: *Wall Jumpers*, 2002, oil on linen, 90 x 69". Musee d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg.



The real altar in religion is the TV—it's the altar of the world, and not just in America.

Military Object I, 2006, watercolour and museum board sculpture with oil paint on linen, acrylic and enamel paint on paper, sand, magnets, 58 3/16 x 15 ¼ x 18 ¾".

name did not yet exist. Now it turns out they are the classics and the A films have disappeared.

BC: *The painting you did of Jackson Pollock's floor in 1999 is splendid. What interested you in doing that painting?*

MM: I went to the Pollock show at MOMA and I took a catalogue which included a reproduction of Pollock's floor, so I painted it from that reproduction. I've never seen his real floor, although later on we went for a visit to Springs in East Hampton. When I saw it, I realized it had absolutely nothing to do with the reproduction. There was no connection and I felt his floor was much better than my painting of it. I think I have to revisit that floor. Very hallucinogenic.

BC: *You have talked about "art-on." Is that what you mean?*

MM: What I mean is that if the painting doesn't have a relationship between its whole and its parts, then it doesn't work. That can be applied to so-called figurative or abstract painting.

BC: *The most astonishing work you've done in a long time is the move you've made in the Abu Ghraib piece. What made you take that direction?*

MM: I've been looking for a target for a long, long time. This one seemed to be something I could do something about, because other issues, like the civil rights movement, were too abstract. Here's the thing: For many years I've wanted to be engaged in the state of affairs as an artist, but social realism is a dirty word because it mainly means bad art. Yet you can think of Goya's *The Third of May*, 1814, which is definitely social realism and a great painting. But I couldn't find a way into it, and then I developed the idea that the real altar in religion is the TV—it's the altar of the world, and not just in America. So I found a bridge, a vehicle for doing it, and these were specific images connected directly to a country I've become a citizen of. I actually believed in it as a way to organize human beings.

BC: *Is part of your outrage that the country you've become a citizen of is going down the wrong road?*

MM: Yes, but there's another factor going on here. One of the equations is that the aesthetics of that piece has to outweigh the subject matter. Twenty years from now it will be this object, so it was a challenge on that level. If I say so myself, I think it was a brilliant way of making that statement. I have the idea that I might put sound into it. It would be the sound of men screaming. ■

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Turner, Elisa. "Reviews: Malcolm Morley." *ARTnews*, May 2006, pp. 170-171.

Malcolm Morley

Museum of Contemporary Art
North Miami, Florida

Whether depicting a car crash or a thundering phalanx of racehorses urged on by their brightly uniformed jockeys, Malcolm Morley's visceral recent paintings took vibrant, athletic, and even violent movement through space as their subject. The imagery formed a dynamic culmination to this perceptive survey of more than 40 works dating from 1965 to 2005.

The show included Morley's early photorealist paintings, which he preferred to call "superrealistic" in homage to Kasimir Malevich's pioneering Suprematist art. In *SS Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam* and *Ship's Dinner Party* (both 1966), Morley captured the bold colors and glossy surfaces of the offset-printed promotional materials used to advertise cruise-ship glamour.

COLLECTION OF DAVID LEIBER, NEW YORK

Malcolm Morley, *Death of Dale Earnhardt*, 2003, oil on linen, 39" x 60". Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami.

Over time he has replaced the brittle elegance of these scenes with bright confusion and grisly subject matter. *Death of Dale Earnhardt* (2003) and *The Art of Painting* (2005) were both inspired by an Associated Press photograph of the 2001 collision that killed the famous racecar driver. Morley, clearly enthralled by the lush colors and textures of paint, rendered the cars' creased metal and smoky haze with a smoldering intensity. While his earlier paintings brought to mind the static clarity of a mechanical reproduction, here Morley suggested how the camera can capture cataclysmic motion.

This exhibition was the third in a series of solo shows curated by museum director and chief curator Bonnie Clearwater, following surveys of the work of Roy Lichtenstein and Richard Artschwager. She has keenly analyzed the ways in which all three used photographs and photographic reproductions to break away from Abstract Expressionism, and how each in his own way used painting to riff on the verisimilitude of a photograph.

—Elisa Turner

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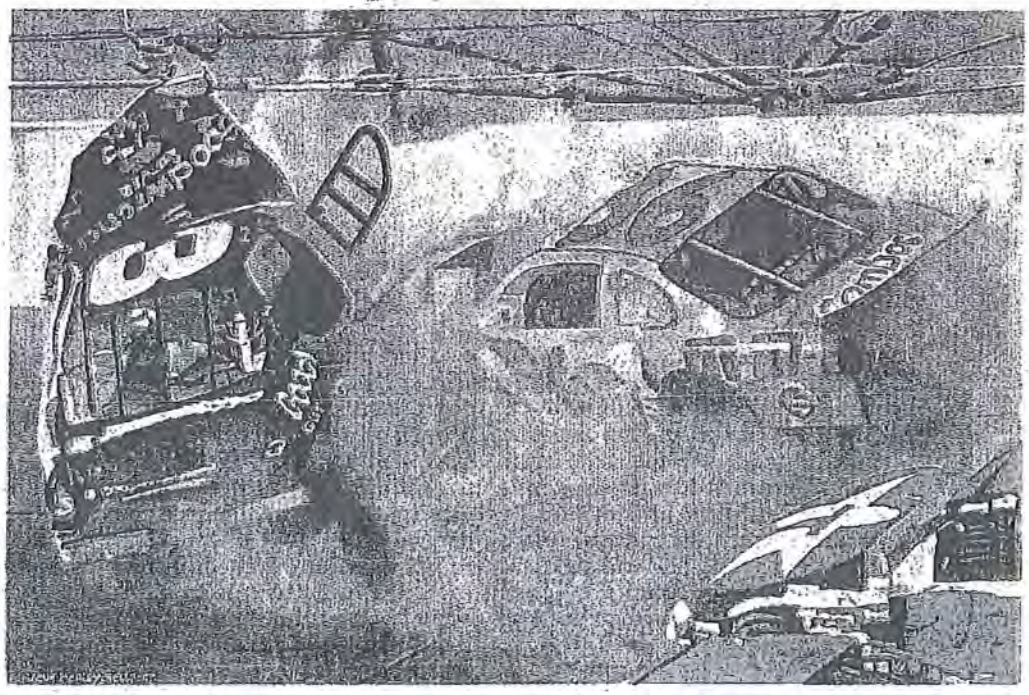
Turner, Elisa. “Photo Finish.” *The Miami Herald*, 12 March 2006, pp. 3M, 8M.

PHOTO FINISH

MALCOLM MORLEY – WHOSE WORK IS ON DISPLAY AT MOCA – WIELDS HIS PAINTBRUSH AS IF IT WERE A CAMERA



‘DEATH OF DALE EARNHARDT’: It was inspired by an Associated Press photo of the car crash that killed NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt in 2001 at the Daytona 500.

SPERONE COLLECTIO

SPEED AND MOTION: *Jockeying for Position* is a 2005 work by Malcolm Morley, a mercurial, but always painterly, pop-influenced artist.

BY ELISA TURNER
elisaturn@aol.com

The energy-animating color, form, and idea — the big three of the visual arts — at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami continues to impress.

Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting is the first U.S. museum survey of this pop-influenced and tough-to-classify artist since 1984. Morley straddles two countries: Born in London in 1931, he settled in New York in 1958, and became a U.S. citizen in 1991.

The show, organized by MOCA and curated by MOCA director Bonnie Clearwater, brings together more than 30 paintings gathered from private and museum collections in the U.S. and Europe.

Documented with a handsome catalog, the show charts the circuitous journey that this mercurial, but always painterly, artist has taken. It goes from the early classic *Ship's Dinner Party* in 1966 to the beautifully executed paintings of volatile, even lethal, speed in action, such as *Death of Dale Earnhardt* and *Jockeying for Position* of 2005. In the late 1960s, Morley drew attention with his meticulously executed paintings of photographic sources, such as the color-printed brochures that cruise lines published for the tourist industry. But his wasn't a household name among art lovers like others of the era, such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.

Clearwater hastens to stress that these 1960s paintings do not look so much like actual photographs, but like color offset reproductions. Morley's paintings make a point of showing the crisp white border that framed the colorful brochures. It's a way to further stress the painterly artifice of what he's done, and also emphasizes that he is using sources from popular culture, as Warhol did with his famous soup cans.

Giving this show an added art historical edge, Clearwater links this exhibit with two other shows she has curated for the museum in past seasons, a solo show for Lichtenstein in 2001 and one for Richard Artschwager in 2003.

She shows how all three artists knew each other at about the same time in the 1960s. They continued on similar but divergent paths, as all made distinctive paintings adapted in different ways from photographic sources.

Although Morley's late 1960s paintings, including *SS Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam*, seem to look "realistic," and he likes to describe them as "super realistic," they hold our eye with more than a few strange moments.

First we see that unexpected white border —

• TURN TO MOCA, 8M

Artist's paintbrush is like a camera

•MOCA, FROM 3M

where would you find something quite like that in art history? And then Morley's intricate manner of working provides us with a strange sense of proportion. Somehow the perspective does not seem quite right in these "super realistic" paintings.

Morley typically paints by using a very old-school method: He scores his source and his canvas into a precise grid. Next, he cuts the source into tiny squares, and temporarily tapes each square to the canvas before he paints it. Then he paints one square at a time, focusing solely on that particular square. Each square becomes a tiny abstract composition, a minute section of mosaic. In this way, distortions created in the color reproductions are somehow magnified. In *Ship's Dinner Party*, the woman's black-gloved hand holding a champagne glass stands out awkwardly from the painting's middle ground, a scene of well-dressed diners laughing in a cruise ship's elegant dining room. The black-gloved hand has a jarring effect in this vision of affluent gaiety, and emphasizes the elaborately staged artifice of what we are seeing. In the fourth edition of the classic art history text, *H.H. Arnason's History of Modern Art*, it has been noted that although Morley has always discounted the notion that political commentary may be embedded in his painting, he does have a penchant for showing the upper class at leisure during years of political turmoil. A work from 1970 is known for its more overt political reference, as Clearwater points out in her catalog essay.

Not in the show, but reproduced in MOCA's catalog, is Morley's 1970 painting *Race Track*. Once again, Morley has used a tourist brochure as a source; this time it's one used for promoting tourism in South Africa during the country's notorious apartheid years.

Marked over Morley's white-framed scene of a gloriously emerald-green race track, labeled "South Africa," is a red-painted X. The X is painted in a typically neat, restrained fashion. Its polite, British decorum makes this painting of leisure activity in a racist society all the more vivid as an expression of outrage.

Especially given this background, it's interesting to learn that the photographic source that brought Morley out of a nervous breakdown, in which he could not paint for six months, was a New York Times photograph of an man and boy running from military clashes in wartime Afghanistan, as Clearwater further explains in her essay. That painting, *Man, Boy, and Donkey* of 2002, is also reproduced in the catalog.

High-powered speed and crashes, either of man-driven modes of transportation or the implicit crashes of cultures, become the fluid, powerfully rendered subject of his most recent works. Those modes of transportation may be cars or horses; he's previously been intrigued by ships and planes as modes of transportation, which can refer to wartime battles in implicit or overt ways.

His previous works in the exhibit, produced after the 1960s and before the most recent ones, show how Morley experimented with techniques and three-dimensional devices. In the peculiar but graphically grabbing painting *Nieuport* of 2000, he creates a composition by showing the various unfolded pieces for making a model airplane. Apparently Morley can imagine a collector cutting up the painting to create a plane, but the MOCA catalog doesn't say if this has actually happened.

SMART BOX

IF YOU GO

What: *Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting* and *Raqib Shaw: Garden of Earthly Delights*

Where: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Joan Lehman Building, 770 NE 125th St., North Miami

When: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday; open 7-10 p.m. the last Friday of each month, through April 16

Cost: $5 for adults, $3 for seniors and students with ID; free for members, North Miami residents and City of North Miami employees, and children under 12

Info: 305-893-6211 or www.mocanomi.org

Nieuport is part of a series painted from cards in kits for assembling World War I and World War II fighter planes. This work seems to be a warm-up for the beautifully shocking paintings that take your breath away at the end of the show. You see Morley enthralled with the way graphically designed modes of swift transportation are distorted by a clashing impact.

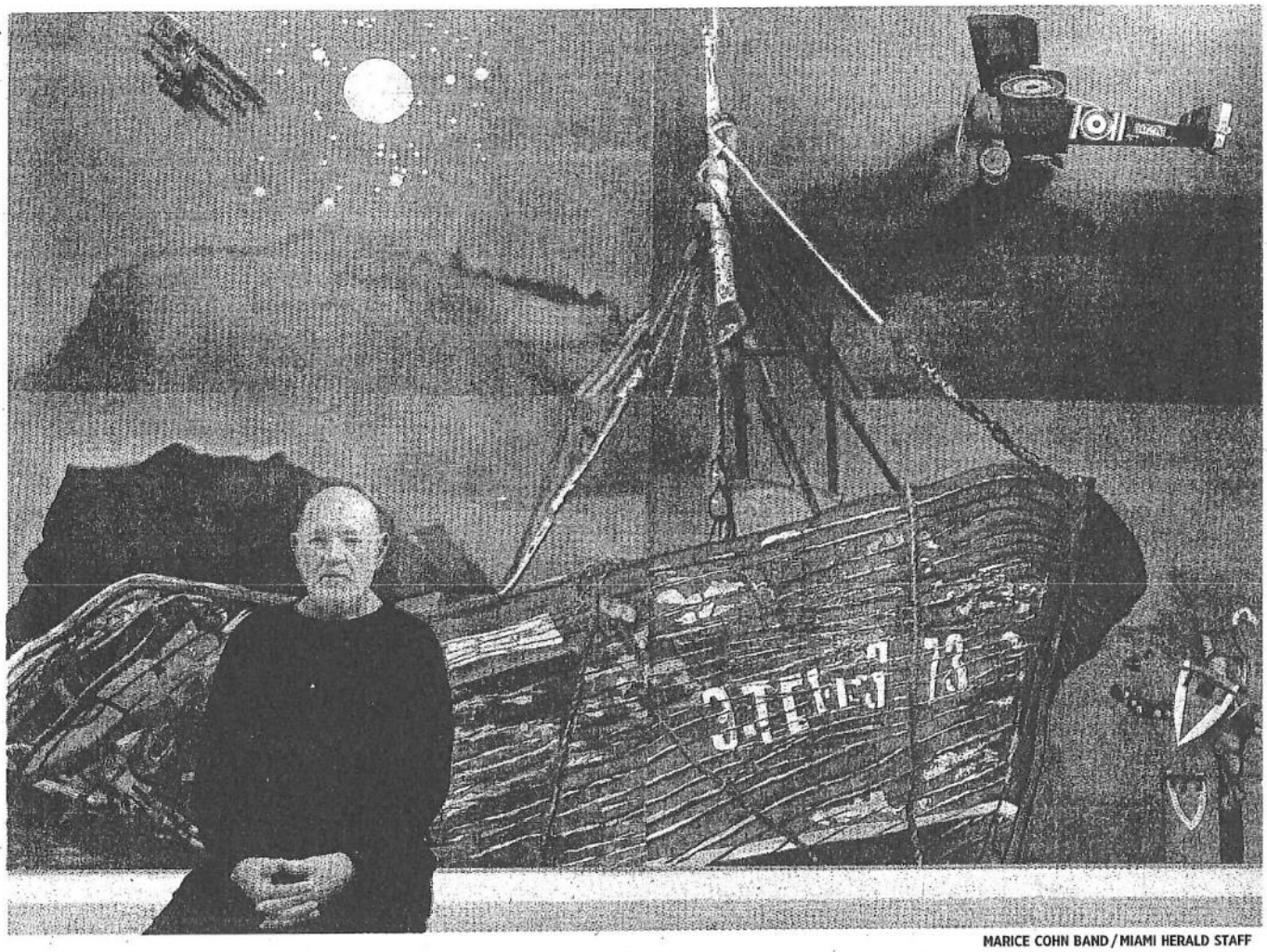
The crumpled black Chevy and yellow Pontiac in *Death of Dale Earnhardt* are inspired by an AP photograph of the car crash that killed NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt in 2001 at the Daytona 500.

This painting is painted with Morley's trademark grid. But as his source has no white border, you don't see one here. This current work makes the paintings echoing travel brochures look almost con-

COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

'NIEUPORT': In this peculiar but graphically grabbing 2000 painting, Malcolm Morley creates a composition by showing the various unfolded pieces for making a model airplane.

gealed. It makes a direct impact. It becomes an inspired update of the time-honored tradition of history painting, allowing riveting current events to stand as metaphors for an even larger clash.



MARICE COHN BAND / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

THE ARTIST: Malcolm Morley stands in front of *The Oracle*, a 1992 work that is included in *Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting*.

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Mills, Malcolm. "Return of the Malc." *www.browardpalmbeach.com (New Times Broward)*, 16 February 2006.

BROWARD PALM BEACH New Times

"Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting," now at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, is the final installment in a trio of exhibitions surveying the careers of painters who are very different yet also very similar, and what a smashing conclusion it is. Think of the series as MoCA's *Lord of the Rings*, with the Morley show as its triumphant *Return of the King*.

Morley's superrealism is back in new paintings *Theory of Catastrophe* and *Backstroke*

The trilogy began in 2001 with "Roy Lichtenstein: Inside/Outside," then moved on to "Richard Artschwager: 'Painting' Then and Now" in 2003. As satisfying as those two exhibitions were, they could hardly prepare us for the scale and bombast of "The Art of Painting."

Almost 40 paintings are included, most monumental in size, and the range of subject matter is vast, from cruise ships and their passengers to athletes in action to tribal figures to planes and boats and cars. And Morley has approached or sometimes, it seems, attacked his raw material using equally varied styles and techniques. As you move through the galleries in a roughly chronological progression, you may need to remind yourself that this is indeed the output of a single artist.

Morley's medium of choice is oil, supplemented (especially early on) by other paints such as acrylic, watercolor, Liquitex, and Magnacolor. An early preference for canvas seems to have been replaced over the years by a yen for linen. He has consistently but sparingly used such accents as wax, gold leaf, and objects of wood and plaster. And in the past few years, he has even incorporated such things as diamond chips, glass beads, and worn-out paintbrushes into some paintings, always subtly and effectively.

Although Morley has lived in the United States since 1958 and became a citizen in 1990, he was born in London in 1931 and was influenced by the traditions of English maritime and landscape painting, to which he applied his own characteristic twists. The exhibition begins with a handful of 1960s works in a style generally described as photorealism. The artist himself prefers the designation "superrealism," although he also likes "fidelity painting."

Regardless of what you call them, some of these paintings still astonish. His famous *SS Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam*, painted in 1966 from a photographic reproduction, portrays an oversized ocean liner slicing the canvas diagonally against the backdrop of the Dutch city. From several feet away, the image really does look like an enlarged photo, only to reveal its painterly qualities as you move closer. *Castle With Sailboats* (1969) has a similar impact.

For other superrealistic pictures from this period, Morley worked from slick promotional materials such as brochures, resulting in the glamorous staged tableaux, complete with actor Jerry Orbach, of *Ship's Dinner Party* (1966), and *Diving Champion* (1967), taken from a page of a Goodyear calendar, with corporate logo

faithfully re-created below an almost impossibly perfect snapshot of a male in mid-dive as a coyly posed female looks on from the platform.

In *Coronation and Beach Scene*, from a year later, Morley juxtaposes two contradictory, elaborately composed scenes, one piled atop the other: a horse-drawn carriage conveying Queen Elizabeth II and a cluttered waterfront cafe, with sunbathers in the foreground and the ocean in the distance. The wealth of detail in both scenarios is simultaneously overwhelming and exhilarating, and this uneasy combination gives the image a weird grandeur in which the whole is much greater than either of its parts.

It should be noted that while Morley almost always works from reproductions rather than from life photos for the earlier paintings, watercolors for the later ones he usually divides his source material into a grid and inverts it. He then tackles the grid square by square in a methodical manner. This distance allows him to concentrate on translating the square's contents to paint. As MoCA director and exhibition curator Bonnie Clearwater puts it in her long, illuminating catalog essay: "Each element [is] thereby reduced to its abstract essence. Morley has described this technique as a democratic way of constructing a painting. All parts are equally important."

Morley continued with this technique even after he started using larger, more vigorous brushstrokes in the early 1970s. In his 1972 reinterpretation of the Raphael masterpiece *School of Athens*, he got so caught up that he didn't notice until later that a whole row of grid squares in the center of the image were slightly off-register, so that tops of heads seem to hover in space a few inches away from where they should be. The effect might be comical if it weren't so jarring, and I suspect that Morley was so pleased with this accident that he left it rather than correcting it.

School of Athens hangs about midway through the show, in a gallery surrounded by four large canvases that seem willfully bizarre. *Christmas Tree (The Lonely Ranger Lost in the Jungle of Erotic Desires)* (1979) is a closeup of the titular tree wildly overdecorated with such things as a cowboy brandishing a dildo at an Indian, a derailed toy train, tropical birds, shapely but disembodied female legs, cacti, and snakes. The large vertical *Macaws, Bengals With Mullet* (1982) features a similarly congested composition layering birds, tigers, and fish, while *Arizonac* (1981) is a much sparer mix of two ornately costumed Indian figures against a desert Southwest backdrop, with a tiny Indian on horseback (misidentified as a cowboy in the text panel and catalog) in one corner.

It's the grandly surreal *Farewell to Crete* (1984), however, that most captivates. This nearly 7-foot-by-14-foot concoction has echoes of Picasso and Dali, among others, in its jumble of distorted imagery, which includes horses, nude sunbathers, statuary, and other elements suggestive of a Mediterranean setting. Like other paintings from this period, these derive not from photos but from drawings and watercolors Morley made, sometimes while traveling by barge as a member of an amateur watercolor society.

But what's most striking about the pieces in this gallery is Morley's abrupt abandonment of superrealism for his own idiosyncratic variation on expressionism. The dramatic dislocations and disruptions of scale and continuity are the exhibition's most forceful reiterations of its premise that Morley is, and has always been, in love with painting itself. While it's easy to admire the artist's early "fidelity paintings" for their clarity and technical mastery, you have to be able to appreciate his pure pleasure in making marks on surfaces to make much sense of *Farewell to Crete* and its companions.

I can't really say I like some of the '80s and '90s paintings, especially the ones dominated by ship and airplane imagery. But I admire the rigor and vigor with which he appears to be wrestling with his own inner

demons. There's not room here to go into Morley's turbulent personal life, although the wall text panels provide a good sense of it.

The exhibition concludes with a handful of recent paintings that have never been shown in the United States, and they mark a thrilling return to superrealism. Like the car-crash images that kick off the show *Death of Dale Earnhardt* (2003) and *The Art of Painting* (2005) these are action paintings in the most literal sense, portraying such things as athletes caught in performance, a chain-reaction highway pileup, and Afghan horsemen playing the ancient game buzkashi. (The latter is taken from a *New York Times* photo but also bears an uncanny resemblance to the foreground of *The Battle of Tetuán* by Dali, who knew Morley.)

Morley comes full circle and then goes beyond with these works, which only confirm his mastery of a medium he so clearly adores and whose possibilities he finds almost infinite. For him, the *act* of painting and the *art* of painting are one and the same.

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Suarez de Jesus, Carlos. "Royal Paint in the Arse." *Miami New Times*, 8 February 2006.

Royal Paint in the Arse

Artful scallywag ends up a great Briton

BY CARLOS SUAREZ DE JESUS

The Malcolm Morley exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) dishes out a meaty chunk of the painter's career and hints at a knockabout journey that smacks of a Louis L'Amour yarn.

Featuring more than 30 large works dating from the Sixties, **"Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting"** marks Morley's first U.S. museum survey since 1984. The twists and turns of the artist's formative years pepper his paintings — experiences he conveys with panache.

Born in England in 1931, Morley ran away from home at the age of fifteen and signed up as a ship's boy aboard the tugboat *Salvonia*. He was later clapped in the clink for snatching a purse and sentenced to a year in reform school. His second scrape with the law landed him in London's infamous Wormwood Scrubs prison for a two-year stretch, during which he discovered Van Gogh, took a correspondence course in drawing, and became consumed by swapping a life of delinquency for that of an artist.

Once released, he attended the Royal College of Art. He moved to New York in 1958 — the height of the Abstract Expressionism period, whose influence he showed himself hungry to crawl out from under. In 1984 Morley was the first recipient of the prestigious Turner Prize for British artists, twisting the adage that crime doesn't pay.

***The Death of Dale Earnhardt* (2003): These are no bumper cars**

At the outset of his career he experimented with reproducing photo-based imagery within the framework of modern art. He later succeeded in collapsing the representational into the abstract, having discovered fertile territory to explore conceptually.

Based on a promotional reproduction of a photograph, *SS Amsterdam in Front of Rotterdam* (1966) is an early example of the hyperrealistic works that earned him attention. The giant luxury liner is depicted from an aerial view, knifing diagonally into the harbor. The vessel towers over a tugboat and ferry pictured in the lower right-hand corner of the composition; in the upper background, almost drowned by the ship's scale, is the city. The work mirrors his lifelong flirtation with maritime themes.

In this piece and throughout the astonishing range of his later productions, the artist deploys a grid technique to transfer source imagery to the canvas. He breaks up the canvas into modular cells and often flips it upside down or sideways as he paints each section. He terms this technique "a more democratic way of constructing the image."

Coronation and Beach Scene is another sumptuous painting from the Sixties. Here the artist horizontally splits the picture plane with a shot of Queen Elizabeth's coronation in the upper half and affluent families enjoying a posh Brighton holiday in the lower panel.

The rich gold hues of the royal carriage, the crisp blues of the liveried coachmen, and the velvety reds of the uniformed soldiers lining the procession bleed across the opulent scene in the top panel and are reflected in the duplication of hues used in the seaside scene below, telegraphing Morley's sweet touch with the palette.

The delectable work — strewn with dozens of fabulous characters laid down in imperceptible brushstrokes, and boasting brilliantly ornate tonality — seems to thrum with energy while exuding a hedonistic vibe.

"Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting"
Through April 16. Museum of Contemporary Art, 770 NE 125th St, North Miami; 305-893-6211, www.mocanomi.org.

His recent paintings of athletes and car crashes are dazzling and compelling.

In the Seventies, the artist adopted a rougher approach to his paintings. He began muscling the canvas with brawnier, longer brushstrokes and laying on paint with a palette knife. He also began smearing on daubs of color straight from the paint tube.

During this period, Morley also shifted to three-dimensional objects as an image source. He would create still-life tableaux in his studio and work from the staged scenes. A fascination with childhood toys began popping up in these edgy pictures, which almost appear to be executed by another's hand.

An arresting example is *Christmas Tree (The Lone Ranger Lost in the Jungle of Erotic Desire)* (1979). The large-scale painting howls with intensity and is somewhat surreal and primitive in nature. A disjointed array of elements, dizzily altered in scale and strung up on what might be described as a towering Christmas tree, conveys the sense one is experiencing it from a toddler's perspective. Freighted with phallic symbolism and splattered in a lurid detonation of color, the iconography mines the murk of psychoanalysis and seems the stuff of a sexually awakening youngster's wet dreams.

From the upper edge of the canvas the bare stiletto-heeled legs of a trio of strumpets seem to float away from the picture plane as if ascending angels. Below them the Lone Ranger is caught brandishing a dildo at an Indian on the warpath, who's waving a tomahawk over his head. An engorged cobra hisses wildly at the masked cowpoke's steed. A derailed train sits near the bottom of the picture, and a tangle of prickly cacti dangles precariously from the bushy evergreen background. A weather-beaten pandemonium of parrots completes the crazy scene.

Throughout the Eighties, Morley engaged in an even wilder departure from his refined early style, often tipping his hat to modern masters while marinating the work in mythology. Several seem to be nods to Pollock's drippy action paintings, and one in particular looks like a candy factory blasted by a grenade.

Black Rainbow over Oedipus at Thebes (1988) depicts a tiny pair of loosely drawn figures in striped clothing in the lower right section of the work. Most of the composition consists of muddy mountain peaks reminiscent of pointy bullet bras or giant melting Hershey's Kisses. Thick ribbons of slapped-on paint suggest the titular rainbow. This work might be among the most hideous in the show and can produce the same reaction as an image of a cigarette being extinguished in an egg yolk. With this garish piece, Morley headlocks the spectator into considering whether a painting should be filtered perceptually through notions of taste or confronted on its own legs.

During the Nineties, Morley dragooned imagery of the balsa-wood model boats and airplanes he tinkered with as a child, creating a series of immense works that allude to growing up in the terrifying climate of World War II. Morley was thirteen when, during the London blitz, a German bomb demolished part of his home and destroyed a favorite model boat he says has inspired these paintings.

His recent paintings are the most dazzling and compelling in the show.

Marking a return to his superrealist work of the Sixties, these canvases dynamically depict athletes in action and tragic racecar crashes that almost place the viewer in the middle of the excitement.

Batter's Box features an overhead view of Sammy Sosa's race against Mark McGwire for baseball's home run record in 1998. The painting captures Sosa swinging at a smoking pitch and ready to explode the ball into the bleachers with salt from his wood. A catcher is seen with his mitt extended toward the plate on a glowing orange field where streaks of chalk demarcating the baseball diamond are rendered in shimmering bolts.

Backstroke, a crystal clear closeup of an Olympic swimmer aggressively splashing toward the finish line, pins the spectator to a poolside view.

Morley has openly expressed little interest in athletic pageantry. However, he rifles the subject matter to present sports heroes as part of a contemporary American mythology and as a wry poke at our infatuation with bread-and-circus games.

Perhaps the most stunning painting in the exhibit is *Death of Dale Earnhardt*, which dramatically depicts the demise of the legendary NASCAR champion. As Earnhardt's black Chevy spins out of control near the racetrack's shoulder, a yellow Pontiac plows into its side. The force of the collision crumples Earnhardt's car like a toy, as a bluish curdled-milk sheen engulfs both cars. Morley created the haze of fumes by applying paint to the canvas using balled wads of cellophane. The velocity of impact and sensation of burning oil almost make one choke and seem spellbinding in accuracy.

After experiencing 40 years of the artist's creative anxieties and dominance of his media, one leaves convinced that Morley, far from lying down, is a crafty old dog adept at devising new tricks.

And MoCA has scored another bull's-eye.

Contact the author to discuss the story: art@miaminewtimes.com

Adams, Brooks. “Malcolm Morley.” *Artforum*, January 2006, p. 91.

Malcolm Morley

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
January 20–April 16
Curated by Bonnie Clearwater

Malcolm Morley stands among the preeminent living American painters, but the historical scope of his work is too little known in the US, his adopted country since 1958. This survey of forty paintings from the mid-'60s to the present is long overdue; it is, in fact, the artist's first in the US since 1983, when he was recast as a neo-expressionist (having first been pigeonholed as a Superrealist). Now, the grandeur of his work puts it far beyond mere labels: "Only when Morley's work is taken out of the movement of Photorealism do his interests come into focus," maintains Clearwater. The show, which includes recent paintings, such as those of model-plane kits and current events in Afghanistan (most never before shown in the States), should reveal an oeuvre marked by radical switches but also by a deep inner consistency. —*Brooks Adams*

Ebony, David. "Malcolm Morley at Sperone Westwater." *Art in America*, October 2005, pp. 168-169.

Malcolm Morley at Sperone Westwater

In this recent exhibition, titled "The Art of Oil Painting," Malcolm Morley showed a dozen large canvases from the past three years that mark both a turning point and a new high in his long career. The works feature brilliantly colored, slick surfaces and action-packed images of sports scenes, car crashes and a collapsing building. The latter, *House in Brooklyn,* features a kind of crazy-quilt pattern made of colorful triangles and irregular grids that describe the interior of an apartment house whose entire facing has fallen away.

The show's title piece, and the largest work on view at about 9 by 6 feet, is a powerful, two-part image of race-car crashes. In the top half of the canvas two silvery vehicles appear to fly side-by-side over several other cars that have crashed on the smoke-filled track. The lower portion, based on a photo of the 2001 crash that killed NASCAR champion Dale Earnhardt, shows a head-on collision at the moment of impact, with auto parts exploding in the air. Another resplendent work is *Theory of Catastrophe,* an aerial view of a multi-car and truck pileup on a freeway. The lively canvas, with the bold white and silver forms of skewed tractor trailers thrusting across the darker surfaces of the roadway, suggests a classic Franz Kline painting.

Significantly, in this time of war, the artist has turned away from nostalgic images of old battleships and World War I fighter planes, which preoccupied him for some years; also gone are the 3-D elements that he often incorporated into his paintings. Instead, Morley employs a newly refined, photo-based, squaring-up technique that recalls his pioneering Superrealist works of the 1960s and '70s. However, instead of using watercolors or postcards as models for the paintings, as in the past, he selects images from newspapers and magazines, putting them through Photoshop to enhance the compositions.

In an essay for this show's catalogue, art historian Robert Hobbs says that some of Morley's recent themes evolved after he injured his hip. Laid up in bed, he thought about the movement of the body, especially the strenuous efforts of athletes. *Batter's Box* features an overhead view of home plate; its brilliant white geometric shape vibrates against a searing orange ground as Sammy Sosa, identified by the name on his shirt, stretches to connect with the ball. *Racer*'s dynamic composition is a sweeping diagonal showing a downhill skier straining to maneuver a gate, and in *Neck and Neck* two jockeys vie for position as their horses gallop toward the finish line. A speed swimmer gasping for air is the subject of *Backstroke.* Crystalline facets made of frenzied brushstrokes surround the head in this, the latest example of Morley's distinctive depictions of water.

Each work in this engaging show conveys a kind of compressed tension that either anticipates extreme action and violent movement or is found in the immediate aftermath. One of the best of all, *Tackle*, shows two Dallas Cowboys pouncing on a Tampa Bay Buccaneer. Morley manages to evoke the dynamism of the act simply by emphasizing the colliding trio's helmets glistening in the sun.

—David Ebony

Malcolm Morley: *Theory of Catastrophe*, 2004, oil on linen, 76 by 81 inches; at Sperone Westwater.

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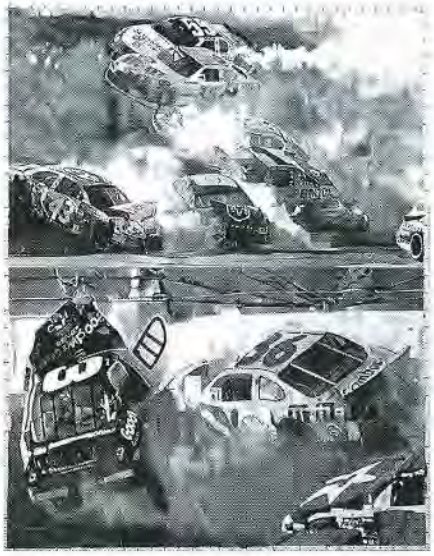
Avgikos, Jan. "Malcolm Morley." *Artforum*, September 2005, p. 302.

MALCOLM MORLEY

SPERONE WESTWATER

"Jock art," or art that incorporates sports imagery, is a much-maligned genre—right up there with paintings of wild animals and portraits of Elvis on velvet—but that only makes it ripe for recuperation. Many great moments in American art have taken us into the heat of competition; generally speaking, however, art that references the world of sports finds its niche at the dead center of mainstream culture, churned out by schlock mills, marketed in "starving artist" sales at airport motels, or, worse yet, sold in "theme art" galleries that specialize in ripping off their clientele with dubious merchandise and hard sell about "investment potential." While young artists (many of them still in graduate school) have recently shown a renewed interest in such "discredited" cultural by-products as muscle cars and motorbikes, there's one old-timer who could still teach those pups some new tricks.



Malcolm Morley, *The Art of Painting*, 2005, oil on linen, 101⅛ x 79⅝".

Malcolm Morley breaks all the rules of the game. He has earned an esteemed reputation as a "painter's painter," which is unsurprising given his ability to make paint itself the main focus of any canvas he produces, regardless of its ostensible subject matter. Yet therein lies the sticking point: Morley is drawn to the most unlikely of motifs. These have included an assortment of boats and airplanes and, in his new work, athletes and action-packed sporting events. Most of these pictures look as if they were taken from ESPN when, in fact, all derive from photographs. A swimmer battles past the finish line in record time; a hockey goalie deflects a flying puck; helmeted football players clash in a crushing tackle; a skier races at top speed downhill, his suit a zigzag blur. Morley savors heroic gestures and spectacular, climactic moments, both of which he depicts with unreserved bravura and such meticulous detail that his style deserves to be called hyperreal.

Morley's virtuoso paint handling conveys a sense of liquid ease. It's not unlike Chuck Close's technique, wherein abstract and representational qualities emerge from each other. Morley's best new paintings by far are the five in which he turns his mastery to large-scale tour de force disaster scenes rendered in blazing color. These include *House in Brooklyn*, 2003, which features a partially collapsed building spilling the domestic guts of eight apartments into the pit of an adjacent excavation site; *Theory of Catastrophe*, 2004, an aerial view of a freeway pileup of tractor-trailers and cars; and three monumental NASCAR wrecks: *The Art of Painting*, 2005; *Car Crash*, 2003; and *Death of Dale Earnhardt*, 2003.

There aren't any mutilated bodies or bloody corpses in these paintings; no murkiness slows the reception of their richly mesmerizing spectacles. Each calamity unfolds in the crystalline light of a beautiful day. Clouds of billowing smoke produce luminous atmospherics that refract soft, kaleidoscopic patterns of color. Mounds of mangled automobile wreckage are reminiscent of John Chamberlain's sculptures wrought from polychromed metal car parts. Yet beauty among the ruins isn't the canvases' primary virtue, nor (thankfully) does metaphor appear to be a driving force. Unlike Warhol's 1960s "Death and Disaster" paintings, which zero in on dead bodies to the exclusion of all other detail, Morley's fundamentally optical paintings are crammed with visual information. No mere fixed gaze will do—these paintings demand constant retinal movement. They fully engage our ability to multitask, whether we're reading the imagery (and mentally translating it back into newspaper headlines or sports-magazine stories), following the dissolution of the subject into luscious pools of pattern and paint, or doing both at the same time.

—*Jan Avgikos*

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Friedling, Melissa. "Malcolm Morley." *Flash Art*, July-September 2005, p. 73.

Sperone Westwater

Malcolm Morley

A painting career that has spanned about half a century may be the credential one needs to call one's solo show "The Art of Oil Painting" — a title teetering on the presumptuous, but indicative of Malcolm Morley's career ambition to make painting the very topic of his art. British born and a New York resident since 1958, Morley's name has become a requisite entry in any art historical account of photorealism. Renowned for his own brand of superrealism, his distinctive process involves taking found commercial images as source material, transposing them onto a grid, 'pre-imaging' a sketch of each cell separately, and then painting largely from memory.

For this exhibition, Morley has turned to photojournalism as his starting place — spectacular images of catastrophe and contemporary sport. Employing his grid technique, he achieves a flattening, a distortion and a level of abstraction that is still highly representational. But, the oversized, heroic images of athletes in action, emblazoned with logos and advertising, can't be abstracted enough from the overpowering and glorifying visual rhetoric of professional sports as an institution. The most interesting paintings are not sports related — an aerial view of a highway accident and a collapsed apartment building in Brooklyn. Both of these compelling compositions succeed in leveling the image plane, sending the eye everywhere over busy scenes that do indeed invite a consideration of "the art of oil painting" itself.

—*Melissa Friedling*

MALCOLM MORLEY, Theory of Catastrophe, 2004. Oil on linen, 193 x 206 cm. Courtesy of Sperone Westwater. Photo: Tom Powel.

Dannatt, Adrian. "Paintings about the act of painting." *The Art Newspaper*, May 2005, p. 40.

Artist interview

Paintings about the act of painting

After 50 years, Malcolm Morley is still fascinated by the potential of the medium and is not too proud to learn from a "watercolour holiday" on an English barge with amateur artists

ARTIST INTERVIEW

ADRIAN DANNATT

Amidst all the current brouhaha about painting, its supposed triumph or otherwise, the long career of Malcolm Morley stands as tough testimony to exactly what that medium is capable of doing, the full fireworks, grand parade, somersault and double-twist, deception and redemption. If Morley were not so successful, he would doubtless be dubbed a "painter's painter" because he probably knows more about that profession than anyone else, whether of his generation (he is 73) or aspirant teen. Chunky, whip-smart and faintly threatening despite the proverbial twinkle, Morley lives up to his famous portrait by Peter Hujar, a scowling genius on the Long Island shore where he now lives. The exceptional range and import of his painting stretches from "kitchen sink" realism through abstraction to the invention of what he called "Superrealism" and his latest series of gorgeously painted sporting images. Morley consistently takes the risks, whether attaching three-dimensional objects to his canvases or actively flirting with the "ugly" and should be seen as a major artist perfectly positioned—conceptually and aesthetically—between Jasper Johns, born the year before him, or Gerhard Richter, born the year after.

The Art Newspaper: Your current exhibition is of sporting imagery. Does the subject matter?

Malcolm Morley: The subject of all these paintings is the painting of them. But I do have a connection to people looking at them, paintings are made to be looked at. I am their first viewer and one who is hard to satisfy, and if the paintings pass my inspection then it is okay for them to go out into the world. This latest group is of an ice hockey player, a skier, a swimmer: they are all champions. I came across this newly discovered memoir by Rothko. In it he talks about mythology and how in ancient times myths lived alongside you on a daily basis, not in the past. A key ingredient in myths are heroes. I wanted to make a common sort of heroic myth, which today would involve sports figures. The subject must be pictorial, there are lots of images I do not deal with. As in popular songwriting you have to have a "hook", so the image is a hook. But you never know about people's interpretations. When I was doing those early Photorealist paintings in South America, they thought I was parodying capitalist luxury cruise culture. They saw it from a political perspective which was of no interest to me whatsoever.

TAN: Your 1970 *Race track* painting of South Africa was political?

MM: I painted it after seeing the Costa-Gavras's film *Z* [about a government cover-up] and came out of the film really pissed, ready to attack a policeman or something. So I went back to my studio and I had the idea of putting an X on the painting. I was with Tony Shafrazi, he was a really good artist at one point, together we positioned the red X over the image.

TAN: Just three years before he sprayed red paint on Picasso's *Guernica*!

MM: I had not thought of that link, but that feeling was in the air. We put a piece of plastic over the canvas and tried out various types of X, I reversed the plastic and printed it onto the image, with that wonderful texture. Not only was it putting an X through apartheid in South Africa it was X-ing out the Photorealist movement. Because of that whole movement, the reviewers started saying, "You know this Morley is not so realistic at all, when you look at those brushstrokes they are quite ugly. When you look at Ralph Goings you cannot see a brushstroke at all". By naming this type of painting "Superrealism" I was referring to Suprematism and Malevich, to establish the fact that I had a historical ambition. My criticism of all this fashionable painting currently going on is that I do not know if there is any real historical ambition, like a relay race, passing the baton from one great artist to the next.

TAN: In the stock car crash painting, *The art of painting*, there is a tiny square of abstract sections.

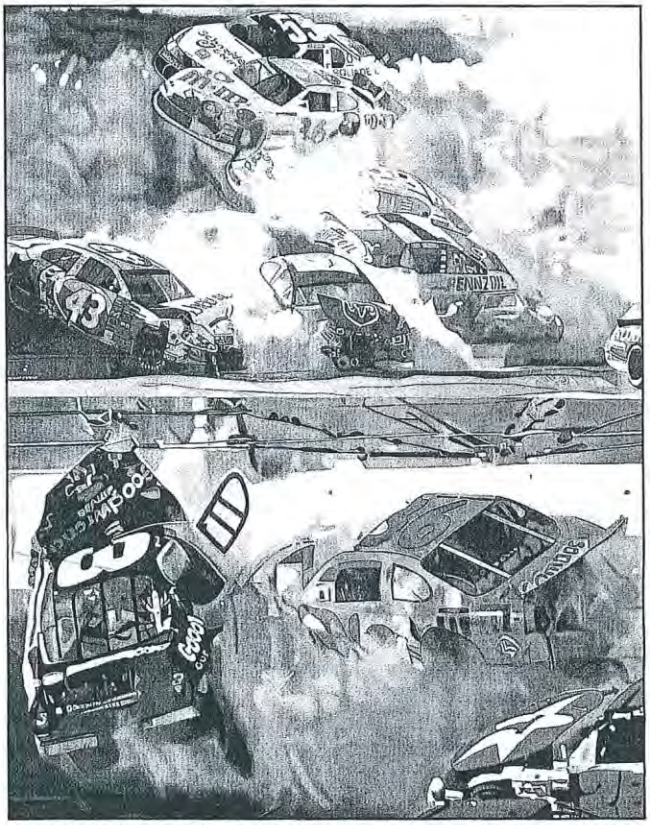
MM: Oh, you noticed that. That came from admiring the glitches on TV; sometimes on a couple of channels it glitches and they are beautiful little things, like jewels. I am fascinated by them. They are only on screen for a second but they are beautiful. They come right out of TV and I was very pleased there was something there that could be painterly, because what I am doing all the time is looking for what is painterly, in relation to my temperament. Cézanne said: "the painter paints in relation to his temperament".

TAN: You worked in acrylic, even when painting your version of Vermeer.

MM: It is funny, the acrylic works I made all look as if they are oil paintings. I could not use it now. It feels like Brylcreem, it is homogenised to be the same, whereas these tubes of oil paint all have different qualities, some are thick, some opaque, some stringy, they are more like bottles of wine while acrylic is like Coca-Cola, the same all the way through.

TAN: So you are actively concerned with basic skills, with techniques?

MM: Every now and then I take these weird little trips, watercolour trips with amateur groups, you see them advertised in the paper. I enrolled and we went to England on a barge. They did not know I was a professional artist, there was one other person who wanted to be anonymous, he was a plumber. Anyway I learned so much from what we were taught about watercolour on this trip, I discovered I had been using the wrong brushes and the wrong technique all these years. So that was quite humbling. At the end of the trip two of the ladies said how much they had enjoyed my big show at the Brooklyn Museum, so they had known I was an artist all along!



***The art of painting*, 2005, on show in Morley's latest exhibition at Sperone Westwater, New York, 5 May-25 June**

Biography

Born: London, 1931 **Education:** Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and Royal College of Art, London **Currently showing:** "The art of oil painting", Sperone Westwater, New York, 5 May-25 June **Solo shows include: 2001:** Hayward Gallery in London **1995:** Fundacion La Caixa in Madrid **1993:** Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris **1991:** Kunsthalle Basel and Tate Liverpool **1983:** Whitechapel Gallery in London, Brooklyn Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago **1964:** Kornblee Gallery in New York **Selected awards:** Turner Prize, Tate Britain, 1984

Stevens, Mark. "Collision Course With Reality." *New York*, 30 May 2005, pp. 100-101.

COURTESY OF SPERONE WESTWATER, NEW YORK

ART

Collision Course With Reality

Not quite a photorealist, not quite a photographer, Malcolm Morley gives an ironic kick to painting's oldest function: documenting the familiar.

BY MARK STEVENS

MALCOLM MORLEY could be the most underrated old-timer in the art world. He first came to attention about 40 years ago, but has never settled into a comfortable niche. He has connections to Pop Art, but he isn't a Pop artist. He founds his paintings upon photographs, but he isn't a photorealist. Pigeonholers don't know what to make of him. His inability to fit into the usual museum genealogies is not, however, a sign of irresolution. Morley is a trickster, a kind of double agent. He camouflages himself in the appearance of our time—using grid-making, digital photography, juicy colors—but is really a member in good standing of the Great Tradition. He's closer to Cézanne than to Warhol.

At the Sperone Westwater gallery, Morley is exhibiting a series of new paintings based upon digital photographs of sports scenes or catastrophes, such as the collapse of a building. (In an image of the crash that killed the NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt, he combines the two subjects.) Morley's practice is to apply a grid to a photograph and then paint each individual cell of the grid onto the canvas. This approach gives his work an air of measure, detachment, and reserve. At the same time, Morley never just copies what he sees in each cell. Instead, his painting of the pieces is full of visual variety and spontaneous inspiration; every Morley contains numerous paintings within the painting. And yet the ensemble holds together. To know Morley's work, you must see it in person: The images in reproduction appear much more photographic than they actually are.

Exactly what a Morley picture conveys to a viewer is never obvious. *House in Brooklyn,* for example, depicts a partially collapsed building. The viewer has a kind of doll's-house view of the structure's innards spilling out: sagging floors, torn walls, beds exposed to the open air. The place is a shambles, yet the painting imparts to the scene a feeling of careful, almost formal order. This could almost be a Cubist picture. The mess is seamlessly stitched together, without foreground or background, despite visual cues for perspective and deep space. The color is rhythmic and sometimes surprising, even including a strong but delicate robin's-egg blue. A similar spirit is found in *Theory of Catastrophe.* Morley gives us a bird's-eye (or helicopter's-eye) view of a vast pileup of cars and tractor trailers on a freeway. But it is his treatment of visual space, not the accident itself, that finally claims and sustains our attention.

Morley takes no particular interest in his overt subject matter. Often his selection of subjects actually diminishes their impact. Could there be anything less interesting to the New York art world, for example, than NASCAR? (Morley himself says that he doesn't follow sports much.) Nevertheless, his paintings contain narrative whispers. In the current show, for example, a number of images convey a sensation of explosive, almost transcendent release. In one image, a swimmer in black goggles opens his mouth amid an extraordinary eruption of white. In another, the bluish smoke of a racing-car smash-up seems to swirl away from the destruction, loosening everything strict, linear, and rational. The most mysterious picture in the exhibit is an overhead view of Sammy Sosa about to hit a baseball. With the ball just inches from the bat, home plate floats mysteriously in space, a sharply angled pentagon that seems to have something important to impart to the loosely smudged chalk lines nearby. The field of color has a Rothko-like luminosity.

Photography long ago wormed into the heart of painting. Today, not surprisingly, photographs often dominate paintings. They appear more contemporary than paintings do, more accurate about our cultural moment. But Morley hasn't conceded to the power of the newer media. No photograph owns him. Instead, he always seems to own the photograph, controlling, challenging, and transforming its effects. There's something appealing, in a David-and-Goliath way, about Morley's particular enterprise as an artist. Photography, film, and video may now be our dominant forms of visual expression, but there are important things that they will never do as effectively as painting does. Prose will never fully supplant poetry. ■

BACKSTORY

Britain's Turner Prize has been **controversial since it was first awarded in 1984,** when Malcolm Morley, a Brit who had been living in the United States for decades, won the honors for his solo show at London's Whitechapel gallery. Art-world insiders who **saw Morley as more of a Yank** (one who first took up the brush during a prison stint, no less) were outraged; Britain's **minister for the Arts, Lord Gowrie,** made the official announcement at the Tate with the disclaimer that Morley had **"led a chequered career"** and that he would have preferred the award to go to British sculptor Richard Long. Morley himself later referred to the competition as a **"blood sport."**

THE ART OF OIL PAINTING
MALCOLM MORLEY. SPERONE WESTWATER. THROUGH JUNE 25.

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Smith, Roberta. "Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting." *The New York Times*, 27 May 2005, p. E34.

Malcolm Morley

'The Art of Painting'

Sperone Westwater
415 West 13th Street, West Village
Through June 25

Malcolm Morley has returned to Photo Realism, the style that he extracted from Pop Art in the mid-1960's (as did Gerhard Richter, Robert Bechtle, Richard Artschwager and Vija Celmins). He disliked the term, preferring Superrealism or "fidelity painting." These new paintings are a trifle bland by Mr. Morley's standards, but they continue to prove that fidelity, taken far enough, turns into something else.

Mr. Morley's work has always stressed the tensions between reality, the art of painting and the act of looking. His early efforts were based on glossy postcards of ocean liners, painted in grids one square at a time. The weirdly faceted results reflected his conviction that "painting that doesn't hallucinate is not painting."

Things were considerably more hallucinatory after 1970, when Mr. Morley's surfaces thickened; his canvases were sometimes shaped; his style rifled through Surrealism, Expressionism and illustration; and his subjects included train wrecks, jungles and World War I air battles. His new works, while more restrained, remain action-packed. Based on newspaper photographs of sporting events or accidents, their depictions of violent movement contrast with the grace, detail and silence of the painted, subtly gridded surfaces.

The sense of suspended animation mirrors our comprehension. It takes an instant to organize a bulky swatch of yellow and blue into a rampant ice hockey goalie; or to grasp the gray area behind two cars in "Theory of Catastrophe," an image of an extensive thruway pileup, as blacktop; or to see a cascade of rosy brushwork as a building collapse.

The best paintings of a sports accident depict the Nascar crash in Daytona Beach, Fla., that killed Dale Earnhardt in broad, folded planes, alternately smoke and metal. Mr. Morley's work is always meticulously painted, but never quite put together. That's one of its strengths.

ROBERTA SMITH

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Schjeldahl, Peter. "Critic's Notebook: The Realist World." *The New Yorker*, 23 May 2005, p. 21.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE REALIST WORLD

The present boom in photography-based realist painting—which Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, among others, have been exploiting—gains an

unusually qualified septuagenarian recruit: Malcolm Morley. Forty years ago in New York, the turbulent master, who had dedicated himself to painting when he was a young man in prison for theft in his native England, pretty much invented Photo-Realism, with scintillating views of cruise ships, beach scenes, and a Vermeer. He abjured photography in the early seventies, just as other painters were embracing it, and worked from his own drawings of rural and jungle landscapes, war toys, and island paradises. Morley's new renditions of athletes in action, stock cars colliding, and a collapsed tenement, which are now on view at Sperone Westwater, surprise and please, with bravura force that parallels rather than represents the violence of Sammy Sosa's swing or Dale Earnhardt's fatal crash. The sport pictures are not about sports, unless painting itself can be considered one. As a response to younger dabblers in photographic painting, this show suggests John Wayne remarking to Ricky Nelson, "I'll take it from here."

—*Peter Schjeldahl*

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Adams, Brooks. “More Than a Maverick.” *Art in America*, December 2001, pp. 66-73.

Malcolm Morley: **Floundering Vessel with Blue Whales and Viking Ships**, ***1998, oil on linen, 102 by 79½ inches. Columbus Museum of Art. Photos this article, unless otherwise noted, courtesy Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York.***

More Than a Maverick

A 40-year Malcolm Morley retrospective at the Hayward Gallery in London presented the self-styled "wild man" as a controlled, steadily evolving painter whose work reflects diverse but ultimately complementary formal and thematic concerns.

S.S. Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam, ***1966, Liquitex on canvas, 62 by 84 inches. Collection Irma and Norman Braman.***

BY BROOKS ADAMS

How do you rein in a contemporary artist's unruly production and give it a story line, when it palpably has none, or many? This was the challenge that confronted Sarah Whitfield in curating "Malcolm Morley: In Full Colour," a slim, trim retrospective with a neo-'60s zing to it that was on view last summer at the Hayward Gallery in London.[1] Known for her scholarly but unconventional exhibitions of Magritte (including his '40s expressionist work) and Lucio Fontana (figurative ceramics and all) at the Hayward, Whitfield steered a firm course through seemingly disparate bodies of work, radically trimming anomalous elements and whole half-decade increments, to make sense of Morley's cacophonous worldview. As a result of Whitfield's selection, Morley's progress came to look more solidly based in midcentury abstraction than we'd realized, more like that of a dyed-in-the-wool modernist. (A new monograph on Morley by the French scholar Jean-Claude Lebensztejn presents a very different picture of the artist, celebrating the very fissures and inconsistencies in Morley's development that were elided in the Hayward show.[2])

Born in 1931 in London (but since 1958 a resident, and since 1990 a citizen, of the United States), Morley is one of the great wild men of modern art. Yet his work remains curiously underknown on both sides of the Atlantic (the Tate Gallery bought its first picture by Morley, *Mariner,* 1998, only in 1999). Although I've seen all but his earliest shows in New York, I've only really been on his case since the mid-'90s, at a point when his career was at a low ebb. I remember seeing his 1983 Whitechapel retrospective when it came to the Brooklyn Museum. The close-knit facture and picture-postcard subject matter of his '60s Super-Realist works didn't resonate that strongly against the brash painterly splendor of his '80s Neo-Expressionist works, with their loose brushwork and clashing

Alexander Nevsky, *1962, oil and mixed mediums on canvas, 96 by 84 inches. Collection Guy and Nora Barron.*

touristic and archeological subjects. Yet today, in light of Whitfield's show, there actually seems to be a weird kind of continuity between the '60s and '80s work, between his '60s Pop imagery, with all its sybaritic overtones of tanned men and women enjoying "perfect" vacations, and the '80s Neo-Ex imagery, with its orientalist notion of the good life as pursued by the artist on his myriad tropical watercolor trips.

Where it served her purpose, Whitfield highlighted particular phases of the artist's 40-year oeuvre, emphasizing the serial nature of his '60s pictures, for example, and adding one or two striking, less familiar works. She contracted the run of the anarchic paintings he made in the '70s, and did not include some of his most English scenes, which skewer public monuments. Notably missing were *Buckingham Palace with First Prize* (1970), with its real red ribbon and water gun attached to the frame, and *Piccadilly Circus* (1973), which sports a collaged festoon of arrows shot at a sack of dripping paint appended to the canvas. Whitfield drastically conflated, to rather startling effect, separate periods and styles, namely, his loosely brushed '80s canvases and, from the '90s, several tightly finished works. She united the pictures she did select from these periods largely by subject and scale in a big gallery that looked almost English-country-house in its grandeur. (She also, wisely perhaps, omitted the more problematic early '90s paintings of boats and airplanes with large three-dimensional models affixed to them.) The resulting show not only felt smoother than Morley's work probably warrants—it was also less political, less topical and also less literally three-dimensional. There were few freestanding objects and few paintings incorporating high-relief elements. The emphasis, through all the phases of imagery on view, was on painterly calibrations.

Morley had his last major show in London in 1990, at Anthony d'Offay. He has been in and out of the lime-

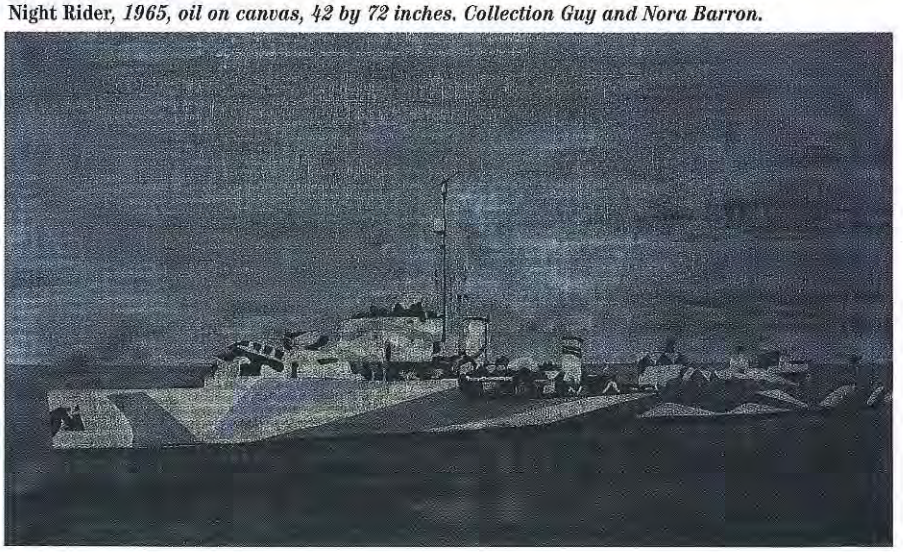
In Sarah Whitfield's selection, Morley's progress looked solidly based in midcentury abstraction, like that of a dyed-in-the-wool modernist.

light there since the '60s, when Lawrence Alloway included his work in the 1966 exhibition "The Photographic Image" at the Guggenheim and wrote about it in the English journal *Art and Artists* (February 1967). He was also feted in the 1980s. His parrots were on the poster for the 1981 show "A New Spirit in Painting" at the Royal Academy, and one of his "Catastrophe" tondos was on the cover of *A.i.A.*'s Neo-Expressionism issue (December 1982). In 1984, after more than 20 years in America, he was the first recipient of Britain's Turner Prize: he reentered his native land in high style and raised hell at the Ritz in a notable prelude to YBA antics. But in the last decade or so, his work has slipped from view, so the Hayward show provided a refresher course, as well as a first glimpse in Britain of the new "Picture Planes" series. Concurrently a large three-part example, *Rat-tat-tat* (2001), was on view at Gagosian's London branch, where, alone in a huge room, it looked oddly diminutive, suggesting a trio of playing cards or a cartoon altarpiece.

Morley's work is heftier and more rewarding, on the level of pure intellectual gamesmanship, than I first realized in the '80s. A casual glance at reproductions of his paintings (themselves reproductions of reproductions) may not disclose the brilliant conceptual thinking behind his '60s and '70s imagery, not to mention its freeze-dried recapitulation of many issues having to do with high-modernist abstraction. Especially now, when there is so much interest in the interrelationships between British

French Navy, *1964, oil on canvas, 12¾ by 34¾ inches. Collection Lori and Marc Barron. Photo courtesy Hayward Gallery, London.*

Night Rider, *1965, oil on canvas, 42 by 72 inches. Collection Guy and Nora Barron.*



Ship's Dinner Party, ***1966, Magnacolor and Liquitex on canvas, 82¾ by 63 inches. Centraal Museum, Utrecht.***
Photos this page courtesy Hayward Gallery.

and American art, not to mention the connections between painting and popular culture in the post-World War II period (witness the Menil Collection's recent show, "Pop Art: US-UK Connections, 1956-1966"), Morley's work, with its deep meditations on what it means to have grown up during and after World War II, looks to be more crucial than ever.

Where another show might have begun with Morley's Euston Road-style realism, Whitfield's kicked off with a revelatory, and practically unknown, body of early works made in the U.S., a group of abstract paintings dating from 1961 to 1964. (Some of these were shown in October 1964 at Kornblee in Morley's first New York show.) The story, according to Whitfield, is that the heirs of Florence Barron, a Detroit interior decorator and collector of contemporary art, approached Morley after her death to tell him of the whereabouts of these early works. The first gallery at the Hayward presented a young artist circa 1960 in the thrall of de Kooning and Twombly, trying to introduce snippets of imagery and high-flown allusion into his lush, mostly white painterly fields. *Alexander Nevsky* (1962), as we learn from Whitfield's essay, was directly inspired by a scene in Sergei Eisenstein's film, where Russian knights on horseback are crashing through the ice into the water. (There's an implicit medievalism here that resounds through the later work, particularly a number of '90s images of knights, which were not included in the show.) The cellular composition of black and white shapes, inflected with color along the contours, is also strongly reminiscent of Conrad Marca-Relli, and shows Morley to have been a talented, and well above average, second-generation Ab-Ex painter. But clearly this wasn't enough for the artist, for he kept toying with representation and found imagery. In *Submarine* (1962) we see hints of Jasper Johns in the strict vertical bisection, which suggests a plumb line and a dyptych; here, too, is an early abstract enunciation of what would become the artist's obsession with maritime subjects.

Morley's mid-'60s forays into imagery, all of it appropriated, came off especially well at the Hayward. Whitfield's staging of these paintings in a separate alcove made them seem iconic and foreboding. Qualitatively speaking, they appear to be absolutely on a par with contemporaneous works by Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins and Gerhard Richter. One practically unknown painting, *French Navy* of 1964 (an image from the Barron heirs' collection used for the Hayward catalogue cover), is a grisaille depiction of sailors, almost all of them seen from the back; this, we learn from Whitfield's essay, was probably a response to Artschwager's frontal *Sailors* of the same year. Florence Barron was also responsible for introducing Morley to Artschwager, who in turn would give him the crucial advice in 1965 to abandon abstraction and keep the boat imagery. Outstanding among the early maritime paintings are *HMS Hood, Foe* and *HMS Hood, Friend* (both 1965). These are depictions of a grainy newspaper illustration (or perhaps two variants of the same illustration scaled up to different effect)—*Foe,* a coppery green; *Friend,* a tinted rose—of the British warship that was sunk by the Germans in May 1941. This, we learn from Whitfield's essay, would have been an unforgettable incident for the nine-year-old Morley, who pored over *The Illustrated London News* during the war years. Another little-known grisaille, *Night Rider* (1965), a dim sfumato vision of a camouflaged World War I warship, provides a fascinating historical footnote for Warhol's '80s "Camouflage" paintings and foreshadows the camouflaged fighter planes in Morley's most recent pictures (not to mention the couture camouflage on everyone's back in the summer of '01). It is also a welcome addition to the art-historical repertories of both camouflage and wartime imagery in 20th-century art.

The large gallery of '60s Super-Realist works was really the pièce de résistance of the Hayward show: a lineup of eight large paintings that effectively dispelled any presuppositions I might have had about the limitations or superficiality of Morley's '60s imagery. One possible exception, *Vermeer: Portrait of the Artist in His Studio* (1968), a large canvas

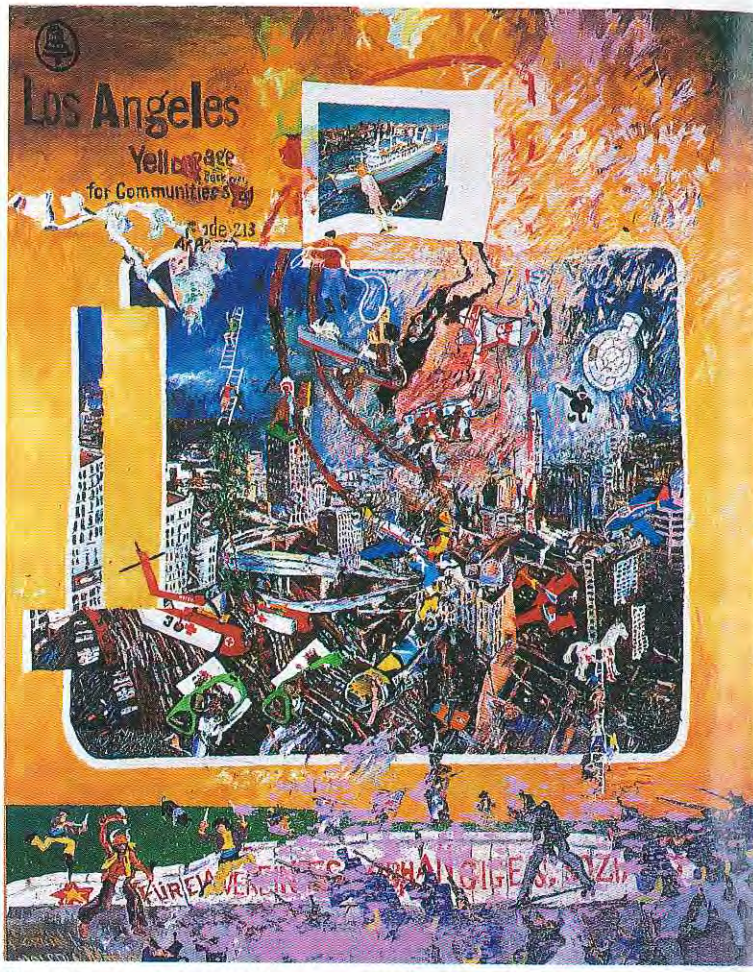
Race Track, ***1970, Liquitex on canvas, 66⅞ by 86⅝ inches. Ludwig Museum, Budapest.***

Morley was an advocate of the "more is more" esthetic in the '70s, and many of his loosely brushed works feature an iconography of catastrophe.

based on a museum poster of the Dutch old-master painting, came off as a slightly corny period piece of art-about-art. Otherwise, the works in this gallery looked more profound, and more passionately painted within the confines of Morley's specific process, than ever before. His method, then as now, has been to superimpose a grid on the photographic source, and paint one square at a time, with the others masked off. Since the '60s he has used a magnifying glass in painting the smallest grids. Frequently the canvas will be turned upside down or on its side, to interrupt the natural rhythm of the brushstrokes and break the figurative reference. (To this day, though, he still works from handheld models: the oversize hobbyist's postcards used for the "Picture Planes," and the three-dimensional watercolor airplanes and boats he builds with his assistants.)

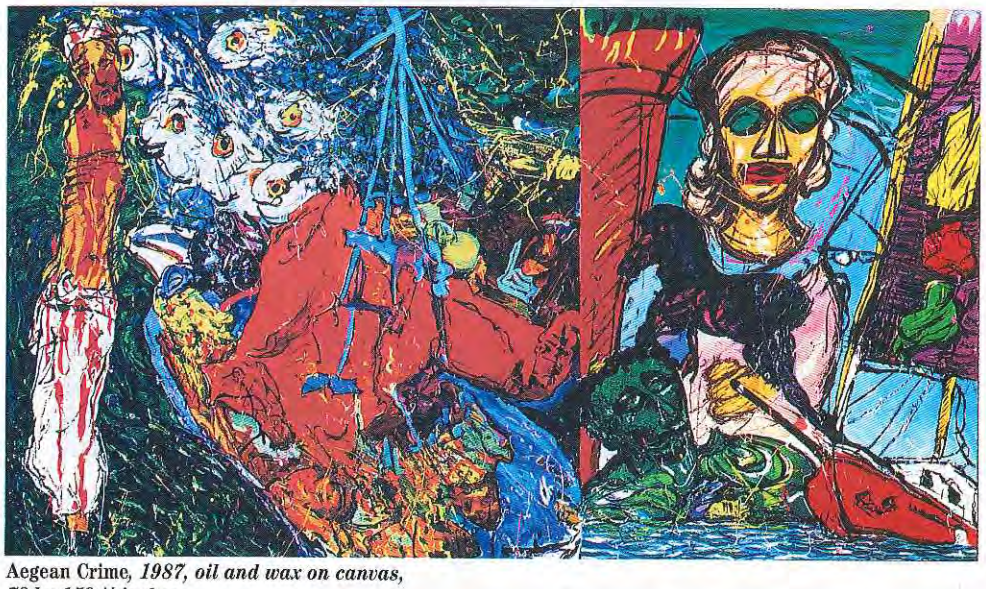
The real killer in the Super-Realist camp was *Ship's Dinner Party* (1966), with its summarily cropped imagery of three grinning, black-tied bourgeois couples (Lebensztejn persists in calling them "pigs") yucking it up at a round table. Edging in from the left, an odd, disembodied black opera glove holding a blurrily rendered champagne glass, which in turn foreshadows the glinting ice sculpture in the middle distance, is the very image of warped midcentury glamour. The weird primitivistic carved relief of pigs on the wall behind anticipates Morley's over-the-top animal paintings of the late '70s and early '80s (all but missing from the Hayward show) based on watercolors made at the Tampa Zoo.

The eerie pertinence of Morley's appropriated imagery has itself become a matter of historical significance. *Race Track* (1970) depicts a crowded outdoor sporting event in Durban, South Africa; the image was gleaned from a travel-agency poster that dates from the height of apartheid. This fact alone makes the meaning of the source image more resonant than it was 30 years ago, and Morley's transcription of it is virtuosic. Look at the way it's painted, at the varying degrees of pointillism, ranging from the tight treatment of the umbrellas at the left, to the looser, fatter dots of the red tiled roofs at right. These roofs, in turn, transport us to the outer reaches of a bygone South African suburbia. Over



Day of the Locust, ***1977, oil on canvas, 94¼ by 78⅝ inches. Museum of Modern Art, New York.***

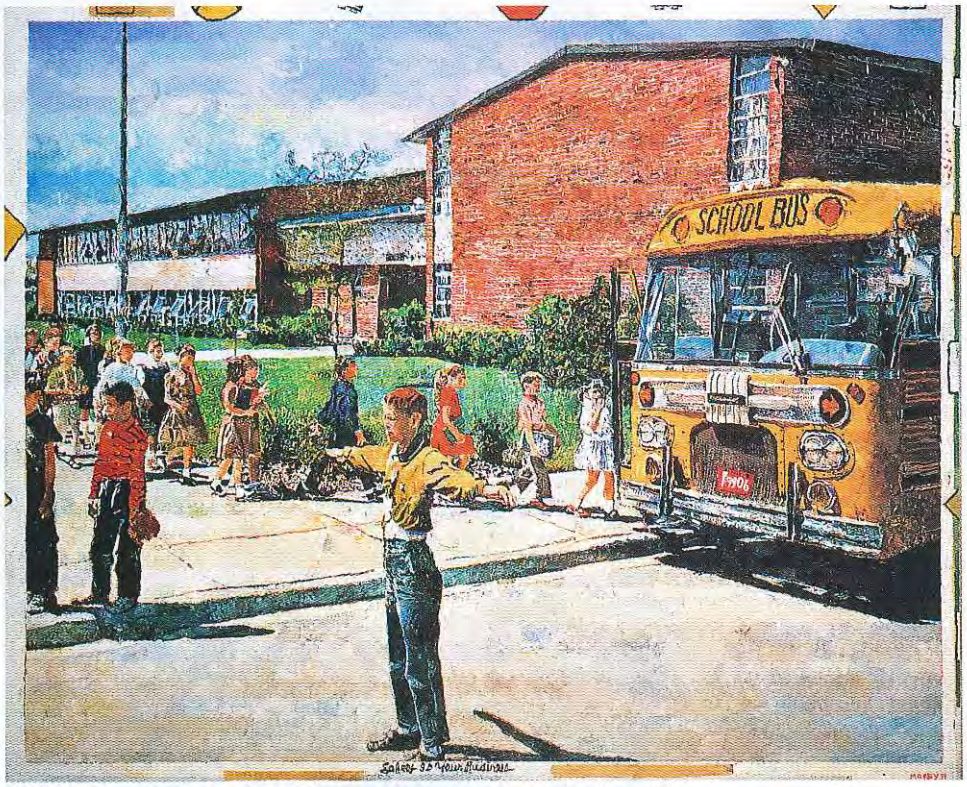
this late '60s crowd scene looms one of the seemingly most brash obliterations in modern art—a large red X that looks like two big slashing paint strokes. But the marks are actually calculated; in fact, they were imprinted from a sheet of plastic like a decal or monotype (and applied with the assistance of Tony Shafrazi, as we learn from Lebensztejn's book). Inspired by a viewing of Costa-Gavras's film *Z*, a trenchant polemic about political upheavals in Greece, *Race Track* (or "Malcolm's X," as the artist came to call it) transforms the banality of evil into a stunning act of negation.



Aegean Crime, ***1987, oil and wax on canvas, 78 by 159 ¼ inches.***

Thereafter things devolved a bit in the exhibition, as they do in the artist's oeuvre: those Super-Realist works, in their ferocious clarity, are hard acts to follow. In the '70s gallery, *Safety Is Your Business* (1971) caught my eye as an exceptional work, with its loose and fractured rendering of a suburban schoolhouse; its odd painted frame featuring cut-off bits of traffic signs; and its bland image of a young boy—a student safety monitor—playing traffic cop in a rigid, authoritarian pose that could also be likened to a crucifix. (The safety theme is of note, too, as an antidote to Morley's contemporaneous iconography of catastrophe.) This

painting aside, however, the gallery served mostly to demonstrate that Morley was an advocate of the "more is more" esthetic in the '70s. (The show needed at least one of Morley's really crazy '70s experiments with freestanding painting or perhaps a crushed, Chamberlainesque piece, such as the no longer extant *Hollywood Film Stars and Their Homes*, 1974, illustrated in the catalogue, to prepare us for the later emergence of three-dimensionality in the '90s works.)



Safety Is Your Business, ***1971, oil, wax and Liquitex on canvas, 88 by 110 inches. Collection Robert Lehrman. Photo courtesy Hayward Gallery.***

Arizonac, ***1981, oil on canvas, 80 by 105 inches.***

Morley begins drastically altering his found imagery in the early '70s. For one thing, his work gets more painterly. In the large horizontal *New York City Postcard* (1971), the vignetted views of skyscrapers and the Statue of Liberty are so loosely brushed that the images appear to bend and warp slightly. In the same year, Morley introduced new pictorial incidents and started overlapping disparate images, to comic or chaotic effect. At the Hayward, the pairing of two versions of the Los Angeles phone-book cover with its bright cityscape proved how apocalyptic Morley's vision can be. The 1971 canvas is better known, with its trompe-l'oeil painted fissure, its Johnsian target shape and its outburst of rayonist brushwork; as we learn from Lebensztejn's book, the canvas was finished just a few days before an actual earthquake in Los Angeles on Feb. 9, 1971, which caused 62 deaths and much damage. The later variant, *The Day of the Locust* (1977), is even more spectacular. Inspired by Nathanael West's 1939 novel (and John Schlesinger's 1975 film version), the phone-book image is distinguished by a totally off-register rendering at the far left, as if Morley's all-controlling grid had suddenly slipped. Lush painterly abstraction erupts at the upper right, while the rest of the painting is a horror vacui of scrambled imagery that now, in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks, looks sickeningly realistic. Red Cross helicopters, figures falling from ladders, people climbing out of a Trojan horse, a wrecked plane, all have taken on a new pathos. Morley's '70s "Disasters" and "Catastrophes," which I used to dismiss as somewhat fanciful, now look grimly prophetic.

The late '70s and early '80s gallery was for me something of a letdown. Chronologically speaking, this is where I came in on Morley's work. (I'll never forget the excitement of seeing one of his new cowboy-and-Indian paintings, *The Lone Ranger Lost in the Jungle of Erotic Desires (A Christmas Tree)*, 1979, on the cover of the summer 1980 *Artforum*; it looked so crazy and forbidden at the time.) I wanted to see more of these works in London so as to reassess them, but that wasn't possible. Only *Out Dark Spot* (1978), with its brushy facture and wildly divergent imagery of flamingos, Native American warriors and a kitchen knife stuck into a red Nazi armband, was included at the Hayward.

The most successful work for me in this gallery was *Arizonac* (1981), in which a radical contrast between the tightly rendered Kachina doll figures in the foreground and the super-juicy pink and orange mountain landscape behind suggests a cognitive split. The figures loom large, but are based on trinkets, while the landscape is a transcription of one of Morley's travel watercolors. The Kachina figures have some of that hard, dry, limnerish quality that is so manifest in Morley's recent ships and airplanes, and it was interesting to see that manner in place so early. But, unfortunately, the rest of the paintings in this gallery tended to

The recent "Picture Planes" announce a return to flatness, and a return to postcard imagery, even as they reaffirm field-painting aspects of the early work.

look like art for a Florida beach house—too bright and peppy, too windswept, not quite rigorous enough in terms of conceptual displacement. *Seastroke* (1986), with its lashing blue and orange skeins, catches some of the high-flying, almost psychedelic bravura of Pollock's *Blue Poles*, but to my mind, it doesn't quite live up to the referent. (In 1999, continuing this theme, Morley completed *Painter's Floor*, a trompe-l'oeil rendering, to scale, of the paint-splattered floorboards in Pollock's Springs studio, which looks tantalizing in reproduction in Lebensztejn's book.) Without the example of the watercolors on which the '80s works are based (there were no watercolors or drawings in the show), works like *Seastroke* seemed to lack the necessary cerebral ballast.

On the other hand, Whitfield's decision to juxtapose Morley's Cretan subjects of the '80s with his '90s maritime imagery worked brilliantly. *Cradle of Civilization with American Woman* (1982) and *Aegean Crime* (1987) are big, meaty, vulgar history paintings with a surfeit of content and too much red in them. But what a contrast they made to the tightly painted and convulsive *Mariner* and *Floundering Vessel with Blue Whales and Viking Ships* (both 1998), with their maniacally rendered imagery of white spume, heraldically striped sails and seismically ruptured wooden decks. Altogether they show Morley as a master of painterly rhetoric who can take the heat up or down, striking different balances of soft and hard finish, all the while remaining a *malerisch* artist.

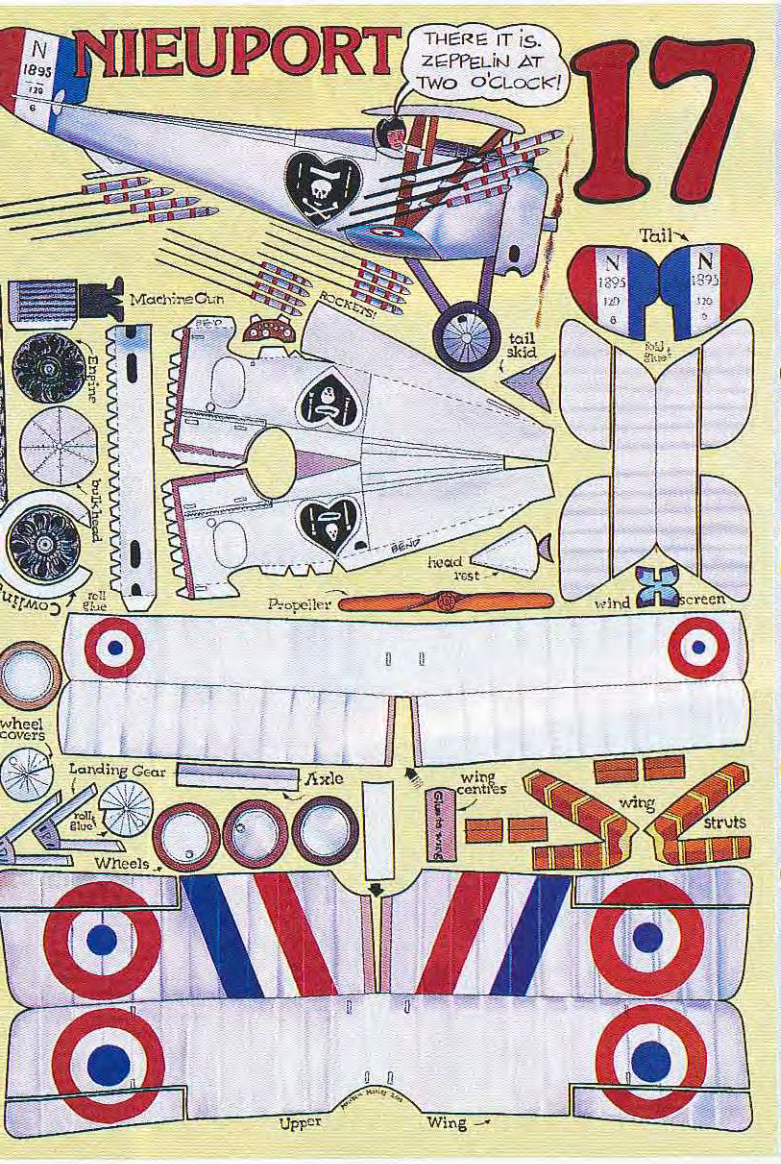
Whitfield cleverly orchestrated the repressed quality of the "Picture Planes" by beginning the last section of the show with a long vitrine devoted to the artist's diminutive painted models. They looked exquisite, like so many little Picassoid "Absinthe Glasses." The implicit point here seemed to be that Morley's reliance on these little models is really part of a larger tradition, which includes Synthetic Cubism, collage and the advent of modern still-life sculpture. It was a canny, historicizing move on Whitfield's part. Near the vitrine of models, she hung a small, luscious 1962 oil, *Malcolm Morley at the Seaside*, which she sees as closely indebted to early Ryman; and *Tankerton Bay* (1997), a set of four previously unexhibited holographic plates, which depict Morley's *ur*-subject, a solitary lifeboat adrift in ever-changing, volumetric waters. This odd sampling served to remind us that exquisite painterly cuisine, coupled with a certain sense of forlornness and a healthy attraction to kitsch, have all obtained in Morley's work from the outset.

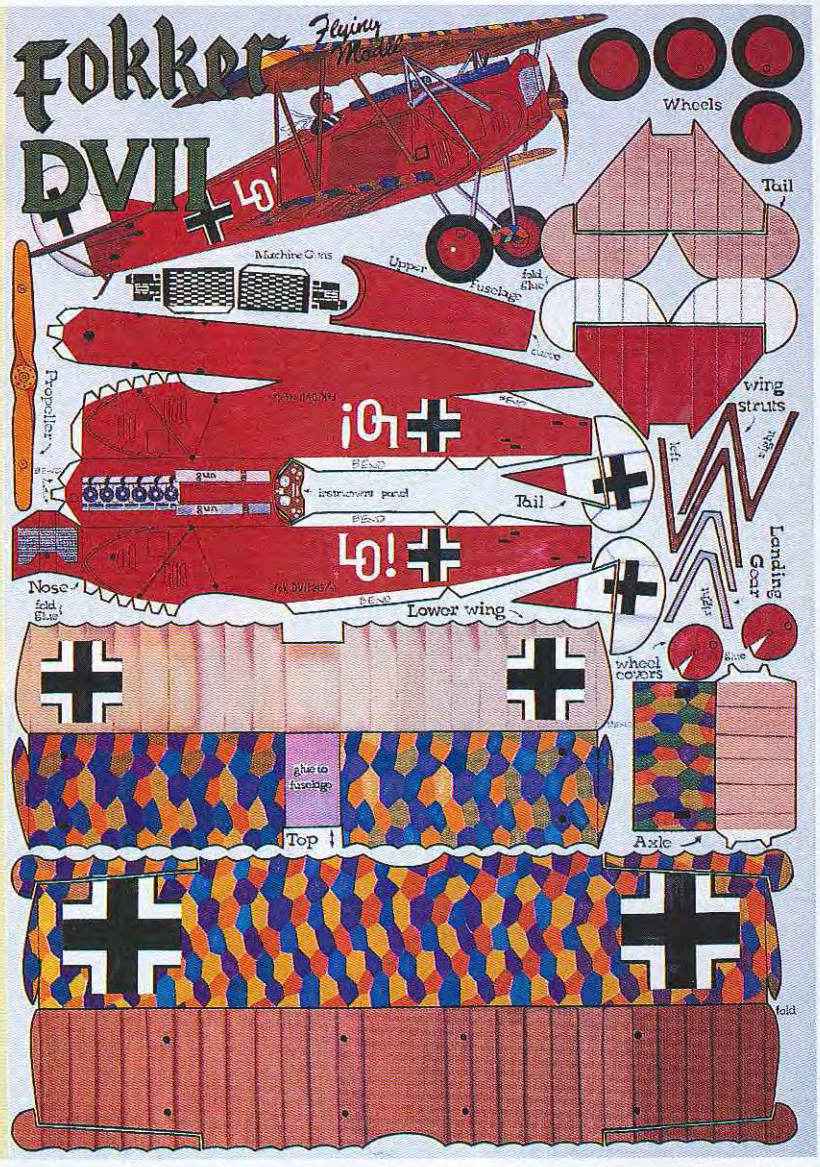
Rat-tat-tat, ***2001, oil on linen, 94 by 197 inches. (Shown at Gagosian Gallery, London.)***

A final gallery focusing on the "Picture Planes" announced a return to flatness, and a return to postcard imagery, even as it reaffirmed field-painting aspects of the early abstract work. The paintings are all based on cards illustrating patterns for models of famous World War I and II airplanes, along with the directions for how the cutout parts can be assembled. Needless to say, allusions to Picasso's and Braque's *papiers collés*, not to mention Duchamp's and Picabia's Dadaist word-and-image paintings, are rife, and some of the verbal instructions on the postcards sound quite lubricious. The American modernists Stuart Davis, Gerald Murphy and Patrick Henry Bruce also came to mind when I was looking at the flat, precise, interlocked renderings of disembodied airplane wings and fuselages, ready for bending and gluing.

Here, too, issues of connoisseurship

Hollywood Film Stars and Their Homes, ***1974, oil and aluminum, dimensions variable. (Not included in the Hayward Gallery exhibition.)***





pertain: it was instructive to compare *Nieuport 17* (2000) at the Hayward with the central section of *Rat-tat-tat* (2001) at Gagosian, and *Fokker DVII* (2000) in the retrospective with the far-right panel of the Gagosian painting, because questions of exact replication and slight variation are at issue. I wonder whether Morley amended the original postcard design or simply used two different versions of the same source. In this group, *Nieuport 17* is exceptional in that it includes, on a little shelf atop the painting, a low-relief reliquary of an airplane wing that Morley literally cut out of the canvas, stretched, glued and assembled according to the directions of the model kit, and then installed in a makeshift case. But in a broader sense, the large painting at Gagosian points the way to further spin-offs and delirious foldout versions of the original postcard imagery. (For example, in 2000 the artist supervised the fabrication of a "Picture Plane" as a freestanding metal sculpture, with partially folded wing parts; this was not included in the Hayward show.)

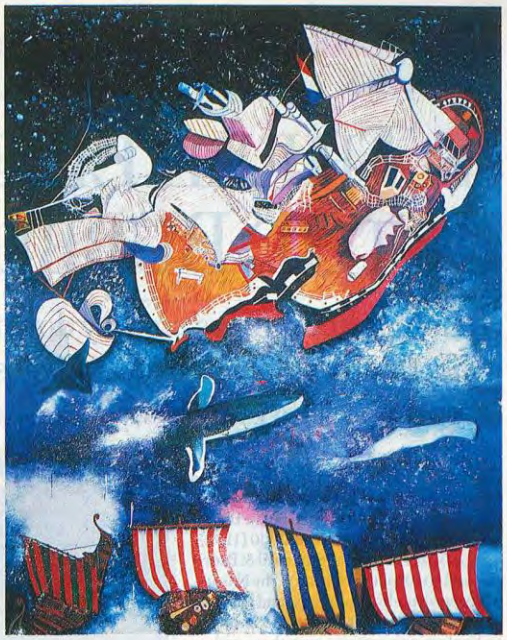
Thus do Morley's thought processes circle around one another and spawn an ever more eccentric art. I look forward to a retrospective that would celebrate the genres not covered in Whitfield's show, among them the recent animal pictures—lions, cheetahs and springbok—based on postcards garnered from a 1997 trip to South Africa. These might have some startling resonances with the earlier paintings of camels and flamingos, not to mention the X-ed out image of the Durban racetrack. A subsequent Morley retrospective might well concentrate on the whole notion of "found abstraction" and how it pertains in his work from the late '50s onward right through to the targets and chevrons of the "Picture Planes." And the radically subversive nature of Morley's '70s political imagery (including several Vietnam War scenes) still needs to be explored in depth. In a time of terrorism, his paintings of targeted monuments and liquidly dissolving skyscrapers all have the force of revelation. □

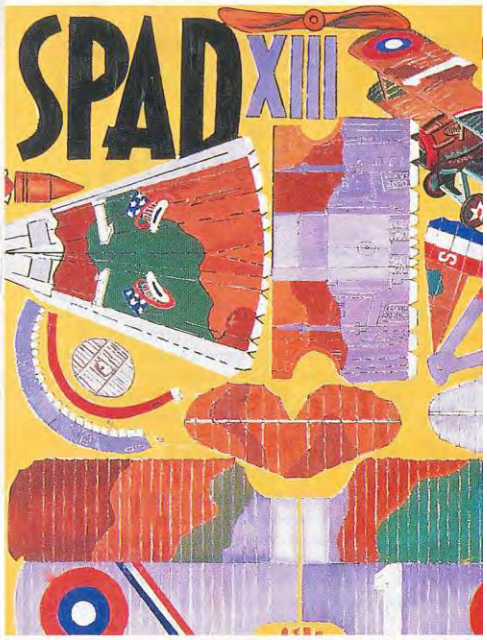
1. The show did not travel. This is unfortunate, because Morley is at least as much an American artist as a British one; this show would have been a coup for any museum. Not to fear, though—Alanna Heiss may do her own U.S. Morley retrospective for P.S. 1 in the not-so-distant future.
2. Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, *Malcolm Morley: Itineraries*, translated by Lucy McNair, London, Reaktion Books Ltd., 2001.

"Malcolm Morley: In Full Colour" *was on view at the Hayward Gallery in London from June 15 to Aug. 27, accompanied by a 150-page catalogue.* Rat-tat-tat *appeared at the Gagosian Gallery, London, June 18-July 28.*

Author: *Brooks Adams is a writer and critic living in New York and Paris.*

Plagens, Peter. "A Thoroughly Modern Man." *Newsweek*, 13 August 2001, pp. 50-51.





ART

A Thoroughly Modern Man

Ever since he ran away from naval school as a boy in England, the painter Malcolm Morley has led an unconventional life. Especially in the studio.

BY PETER PLAGENS

A PASTEL FORMER METHODIST church in a manicured, upscale village on Long Island, New York, is perhaps the last place you'd expect to find the painter Malcolm Morley living. As a youth in England, he ran away from the boys' naval school he'd been sent to during World War II. After a disastrous stint as a tugboat galley boy (he broke his leg and was unceremoniously shipped home), he stole a few things and did time in a reform school and in the infamous Wormwood Scrubs prison. Then at art school in 1950s London, Morley recalls, "most of the instructors drank a lot and most of the education was for students privileged enough to go drinking with them." Fortunately, Morley was one of the privileged. Later, as a college art professor in the United States during the 1970s, he was notorious for showing up for class in, well, seriously altered states. For about 20 years he did "carbon-dioxide-inhalation therapy" (which, Morley says, provides weird visions revealing one's innermost self) under the direction of a psychiatrist. And along the way he was also married a few times.

But Morley, now 70, has found a little peace and quiet—not to mention a spacious, light-filled studio—in his formerly ecclesiastical abode. And his current retrospective exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London ("Malcolm Morley: In Full Colour" runs through Aug. 27) finally gives him the homecoming that an artist who was in on the ground floor of both pop art in the 1960s and neo-expressionism in the '70s—and who won the very first Turner Prize in 1984—deserves. The barrel-chested, pugnacious-looking Morley—he could pass for one of Lennox Lewis's cornermen—has also discovered domestic happiness with Dutch-born Lida Kruisheer, whom he married (and who settled him down, a bit) a few years after he bought the church in 1985.

Morley's approach to painting is as unusual as his biography. Originally directed toward art by a kindly jail warden, he was fascinated early on by both the idea of the romantic, loner artist (he was especially impressed by "Lust for Life," Irving Stone's novel about Vincent van Gogh) and the discipline involved in painting realistically. After a foray into an elegant, restrained white-on-white version of abstract expressionism in the early '60s, Morley started to insert fragmentary ship images into dourly tonal abstractions. The ships became whole boats, and one day he decided he wanted to paint a big cruise ship. So Morley, who had

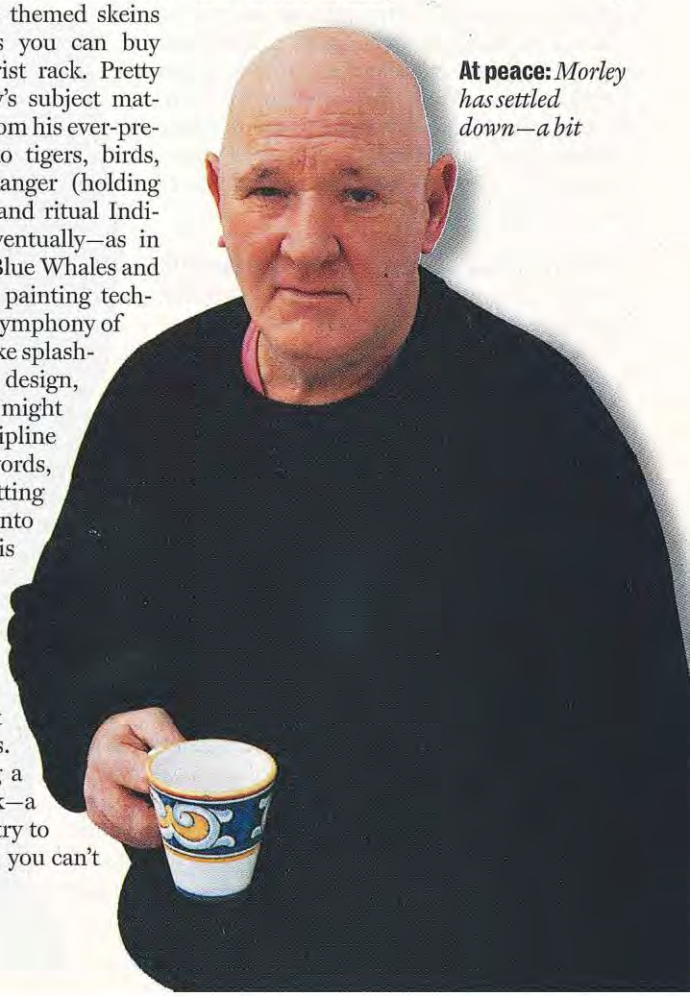
immigrated to New York in 1958, walked down to the Manhattan piers to find one. The trouble was, as he puts it in the retrospective's catalog, "one end [of the ship] is over there, the other end is over there, a 360-degree impossibility." So he bought a bright postcard at the shipping office and took it home to copy—which for Morley consisted of drawing a ruled grid on top of the postcard, drawing a similar grid but with bigger squares on a canvas and then replicating the source image, unit by completely finished unit.

Although Morley's style has changed several times since the cruise-ship pictures, he's been constantly obsessed with the question of where, and how, an artist's creativity actually gets into his work. "I wonder," he says during a break from the studio, "about what is 'copying' and what is not copying. Can something creative happen without the intent of being invented? Can something come into painting when you're trying your best not to be inventive or creative? When I'm copying, it's really sheer concentration on painting; I'm mixing color, mixing paint at a certain velocity and density, and I need it to go down in a certain way. If I look at a painting from the side, I don't want to see bits of paint sticking out. I want to be painterly without being *painterly*."

Changing style: *'Beach Scene,' 'Floundering Vessel ...,' 'Spad XIII'*

The result in the mid-'60s was a spate of hyperrealistic, deliberately banal but blindingly full-color pictures of cruise ships, parties aboard cruise ships and resort-life vignettes such as "Beach Scene" (1968). These paintings—embraced by the critics as genuine pop art—made him a star. But Morley, an inveterate envelope-pusher, was compelled to move on. His paint got thicker, the copying purposefully shakier, and he even constructed a few canvases in accordion bends to mimic those themed skeins of postcards you can buy off any tourist rack. Pretty soon Morley's subject matter ranged from his ever-present ships to tigers, birds, the Lone Ranger (holding a dildo instead of a gun) and ritual Indian dances in Arizona. Eventually—as in "Floundering Vessel With Blue Whales and Viking Ships" (1998)—his painting technique became an absolute symphony of delicate copying, Pollock-like splashing and geometric graphic design, all held together by what might be called the rigorous discipline of a wild man. In other words, what looks like Morley's putting anything he damn pleases into any part of his paintings is actually as deliberate and hard-earned as a jazz master's riff, which might sound as if he's playing whatever notes he feels like. "It's about the amount of seeing per look," he says. "It's like the idea of eating a meal with a knife and fork—a mouthful at a time. If you try to eat the whole plate at once, you can't digest it."

Of course, Morley wouldn't be Morley without another abrupt turn. Last year he discovered some old cut-fold-and-paste model-airplane cards that took him back to the illustrations of fighters in The Illustrated London News he loved as a kid, and to the prized model of the HMS Nelson he lost when a V-1 rocket destroyed part of his childhood home during the Blitz. These days Morley likes to copy the airplane cards onto big canvases, all the while relishing their garish colors, ham-handed cartoonishness, defiantly unpoetic prose ("Nose: fold & glue") and even the original artist's clunky printed signature ("Mudget"). Like much of Morley's work, the pictures *should* look silly, and perhaps they do at first glance. There's something, however, in his deceptively deadpan rendering—a kind of willed naiveté—that speaks convincingly of an artist who can do just about anything he wants with paint, struggling to keep things strange, and fresh. Morley admits he worries that paintings like "Spad XIII" (2000) might turn out to be a "dead end." But he's been down that road before, and the seeming cul-de-sac has always, in the end, opened up into something new. In Morley's studio-in-a-church, his dictum—"It's one thing to see it, and quite another to see it and paint it"—is much more than a mere article of faith. ■



At peace: *Morley has settled down—a bit*

FROM LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY LEE STALSWORTH; PHOTO COURTESY COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART, OHIO; PHOTO COURTESY SPERONE WESTWATER, N.Y.; DANIEL MOSS

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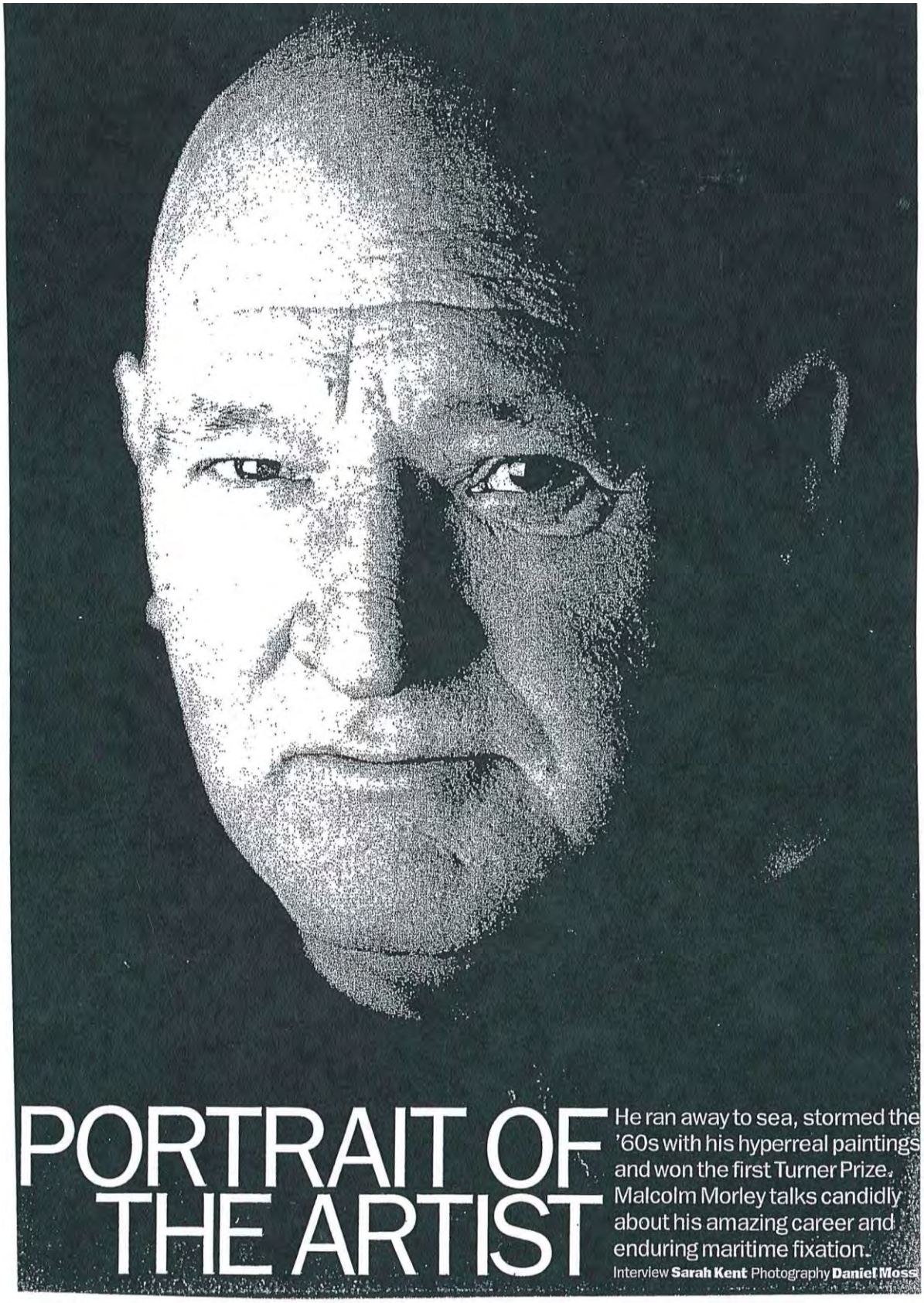
Kent, Sarah. “Portrait of the Artist.” *Time Out London*, 13 – 20 June 2001, pp. 18-19.



PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

He ran away to sea, stormed the '60s with his hyperreal paintings and won the first Turner Prize. Malcolm Morley talks candidly about his amazing career and enduring maritime fixation.

Interview **Sarah Kent** Photography **Daniel Moss**

Malcolm Morley last showed in London ten years ago. 'This is my last word,' he announced emphatically at the time. 'This is the last time I'm going to speak to anyone.' He's done a lot of talking since then; the catalogue for his forthcoming Hayward retrospective contains a long interview; and he agreed to speak to me again.

Remembering the belligerent man who warily parried my questions a decade ago, I scarcely recognise the soft-spoken, self-deprecating person on the other end of the line. He's at the Atlantic Centre for the Arts in Florida and, as master-in-residence for three weeks, his role is to tutor mature students. 'It's difficult,' he says. 'There's less to teach than I thought; so I'm taking the role of coach.' Such diffidence comes as a surprise from an artist who has continually raised the stakes by changing the rules of the game and whose flamboyant paintings seem to brim with assurance.

Reading Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's newly published monograph on Morley (Reaktion Books £22), two things strike me: the beauty and exuberance of the recent paintings; and Morley's incredible virtuosity. It seems that he can paint in any way he chooses. Much to the annoyance of critics, since the 1960s he has changed his style every few years, as though the need to stay alert and alive has forced him constantly to reinvent himself. 'The path is always behind,' he has said, 'it is never in front... the path is where one's been.'

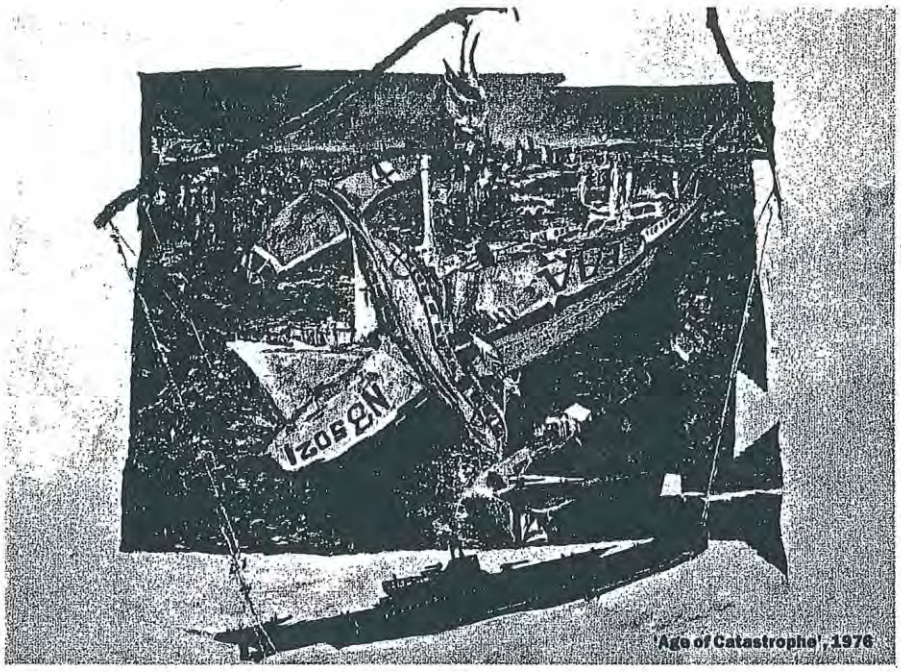
He burst on to the scene in 1965 with hyperreal paintings of ocean liners copied from postcards. Painted by means of a grid whose squares were so small that he often had to use a magnifying glass, the ships sail across the canvas with supreme confidence only to be scuppered by white borders that reveal their origins – as crummy reproductions.

The labour required to paint them (a picture might take six months to complete) implies intense engagement with the subject; but Morley covered over the canvas and, concentrating on one square at a time, produced each picture like a series of miniature abstracts, the image remaining hidden until the painting was finished. As with Warhol's silk screens of car crashes, emotional intensity coexists with dispassion.

In the early '70s, disaster strikes. 'SS Amsterdam in front of Rotterdam' – the most iconic of the hyperreal paintings – makes a dishevelled reappearance. Morley's handling is rougher and cruder, and the upper part of the image is crumpled and torn; stabbing the canvas is a real knife, possibly responsible for the attack. 'I call those early ship pictures my perfect period,' says Morley, 'and what followed an imperfect period – a tearing down of perfection.' In 'Age of Catastrophe', SS Amsterdam is dive-bombed by a Pan-Am plane; the image has ragged edges and a submarine and dead bird hang suspended in front of it. Flanking the white margins are violet borders which emphasise that this is a picture of a picture – a mediated world.

Towards the end of the decade, Morley began travelling and making voluptuous watercolours of exotic animals and birds, mountains in Kenya, sunbathers in Crete and fishermen in Greece. Along with toy cowboys and injuns, they replaced the postcards as source material. In the lush and exuberant paintings that followed, the handling seems as spontaneous as the watercolours, yet Morley still used a grid to copy his originals.

Morley set sail for New York in 1958 and has lived there ever since; when he was awarded the first Turner Prize in 1984, angry critics argued that, as an exile, he wasn't even eligible. The surprise of the recent work is that this 'exile' has been producing marine paintings which seem quintessentially English – reminiscent of Turner or Nash. Yachts, ocean liners, Spanish galleons and trawlers brave the seas while the skies are filled with balloons, paragliders and biplanes. Once again the paint is smooth, lucid and brightly coloured; the atmosphere, though, is playful rather than perplexing. Morley now paints mainly from models, often making the boats and biplanes before setting them up as still lifes which he views through a string grid.



'Age of Catastrophe', 1976

Sometimes the models invade the picture space. In 'Biplane in Flight', four views of a Focker EV/DVIII are joined by the actual model, wing tip to canvas. 'I'm not the first person to attach real objects to the canvas,' says Morley. 'Duchamp put a safety-pin in "Tum'", Fontana put pebbles on his paintings and Jasper Johns added a broom and a cup to "Fools House". It's a game, a form of actualism that introduces the element of time, the fourth dimension. I also like the pun of putting an aeroplane on the picture plane.'

Given his amazing virtuosity, why does he need props, I wonder. Why does he use a grid, for instance, when the object is in front of him? After all these years, can't he paint spontaneously as he does in watercolour? 'It doesn't happen that way,' explains Morley. 'I need things in the right place. It's like opening the lock of a safe; if I don't have the right combination I can't open it. The bottom line is having faith in what you are going to do – if the belief isn't there, there's nothing to work with; it's like an automatic valve that closes. You can't force inspiration, but you can put yourself in a position where it will occur and the right combination creates a form of inspiration. The scale of models gives you a sense of omnipotence; because you can see the whole thing in a single glance and there's the exotic aspect; you can juxtapose a Roman trimaran with, say, Columbus's ship, the Santa Maria.'

Models and the sea have played an important part in Morley's life. He escaped the unhappiness of his childhood (a mother with a 'character disorder', a father he never knew, a stepfather who terrified him) by making model boats. It was wartime and Morley was about 13. His latest model was on a table waiting to be painted when a doodlebug destroyed the front of the house. The family became refugees, but what made the incident especially traumatic was the fact that his stepfather had just caught him masturbating and warned, 'I'll kill you if you ever do that again.' The bomb must have seemed like divine retribution. The same year Morley ran away to sea; later he ended up in a reform school then prison, where a correspondence course in drawing enabled him to go to art school on his release. When he emigrated to America, he made the journey by sea.

The violence done to the vessels in his paintings – mangled ships and crashed planes often feature in paintings of the '70s and '90s – seems to reiterate that childhood trauma. 'I don't see it as violence,' he says. 'I don't feel any more violent than a child who crashes his toys, exploring how things are made. Up until my fifties I was living very vigorously and painting was a way of calming myself down; but I'll be 70 on June 7 and the paintings are more serene now. They have *trompe l'oeil* violence; they fool the eye. I want the imagery to be an event, an experience. I aim to create an object that is a sensation, that stimulates the central nervous system.'

Lebensztejn's book ends with the apocalyptic statement: 'In 1999, Morley announced that he was going to repaint all his paintings.' It sounds like an endgame. 'I'm in a hiatus right now,' says Morley. 'The most recent paintings are based on plans for model aeroplanes, but I don't know if I want to do any more. Ideas run out on me; one day nothing seems to work. It's like being beached; I'm stuck and I can't do a damned thing. It's unsettling and depressing – quite a crisis – and it can last a month or two.

'I have never kept any paintings – the cost of living has always been greater than my production – so now I can repaint them from transparencies and re-own them. I feel most nostalgia for the super-realist paintings.'

This is Malcolm Morley's fourth retrospective. It must be odd to have one's work curated by someone else. 'You have to let go,' he says. 'It's not my show but "the" show and when I'm no longer around other shows will be done in other ways. I always get a surprise seeing my own exhibitions; I discover a different person each time I go.'

Malcolm Morley's retrospective opens at the Hayward Gallery on June 15. See Art listings.

Siegel, Katy. "Malcolm Morley, Sperone Westwater." *Artforum*, May 1999, p. 176.

Malcolm Morley, *Floundering Vessel with Blue Whales and Viking Ships*, 1998, oil on linen, 8' 6" x 79½".

MALCOLM MORLEY

SPERONE WESTWATER

Like a rock icon who neglected to die young or burn out, Malcolm Morley has to put up with critics interested in nothing but his "early stuff," whether it's his '60s-era superrealist hits or his expressionist work from the '70s. His exhibition of recent paintings reveals the artist glancing over his shoulder as well, but in unanticipated ways.

Good digestion is the key to successful borrowing, and in these paintings, Morley mixes the peculiarly British genre of maritime painting with quotations from artists as far-ranging as Malevich, Rousseau, and Picasso, washing it all down with imagery from his own work. Underneath these allusions lies a healthy dose of his much younger self, in love with fighter planes and ships, fascinated by the sea. We look down on many of the scenes from above, as if hunching over notebook drawings on a school desk.

This boyishness is embedded in the method: The ships and planes are rendered from maquettes that Morley builds himself (one makes an appearance here attached to the canvas *Biplane in Flight*, 1998). In *Approaching Valhalla*, 1998, the first of three identical Viking ships is painted from a maquette, but the second is copied from the first image, and the third from the second, with the representations losing scale and detail along the way. What separates Morley from other "copy" artists, the assorted photorealists and appropriaters, is the playful self-reflection balancing the reflexivity of his images.

Working from objects rather than photographs liberates the surface of the paintings. They are flat, but not tight. And while Morley's paint is not as loose as it was five years ago—the most recent work, *Battle of Britain*, 1999, is the smoothest here—there are painterly passages. These fail in two gimmicky paintings featuring muddily scumbled mountains that are paired in one work with a figure magnetically attached to the painting (*Maroon Bells*, 1998) and in another with Day-Glo parachutes (*Parasailors with Maroon Bells*, 1998). In *Floundering Vessel with Blue Whales and Viking Ships*, 1998, the heavier paint works: Large areas of stuccolike, splattered paint, particular and unpredictable, efface the cliché of the ocean as an occasion for alloverness. The thick paint and clumsy, distorted figures strike an expressionist note against the coolness of Morley's gridding technique.

The breaking up of the canvas is most obvious in *Mariner*, 1998, a large oil paint "collage" of imagery from earlier works, visually not unlike Jasper Johns's 1987 *The Seasons*. But what in Johns looks like a strut down memory lane seems more subtle in Morley. While the sea is certainly a lifelong interest, the paintings he draws on directly belong, for the most part, to the mid-'90s. Rather than sum up his own career, the artist experiments with different sources (along with the maquettes, he paints after watercolors, oils, and transparencies). The art is intensely personal, well made but decidedly unglossy, sometimes uneven in quality—art that means it, and even makes mistakes.

—*Katy Siegel*

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Johnson, Ken. "Art in Review: Malcolm Morley." *The New York Times*, 12 March 1999, p. E42.

Malcolm Morley

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Through March 20

As a boy in London during World War II, Malcolm Morley built a model boat that was destroyed when a German missile hit the family apartment. Only years later, during psychoanalysis, did he remember this "loss of the beloved object," as he has called it. This may not explain why Mr. Morely's paintings are so vivid today, but it does suggest why they look as if they were imagined by a 12-year-old boy. In his paintings of antique airplanes, ships and seafaring adventure (with three-dimensional models sometimes attached), it is as if the artist were giving his younger self a chance to live out the imaginative life that the war interrupted.

"Mariner," a grand 10-by-12-foot summation of the artist's recurrent interests, presents the stuff of a boy's picture book: World War I biplanes, a festively striped hot air balloon, a Spanish galleon and a modern trawler plunging over rough seas, a toppled lighthouse, a downed fighter plane. All are generously painted with a bright, illustrative clarity. But the imagery is also broken up into mismatched, rectilinear sections so that instead of a coherent narrative you get an expansive Cubist patchwork.

Considering the autobiographical background, the pictures remain oddly opaque psychologically. Their impact is more a matter of visceral excitement than of metaphorical resonance, as the turbulent adventure of the imagery is completed in the all-over adventure of part Cubist, part Expressionist paintings. Mr. Morley has been working out of this eccentric convergence of juvenile vision and adult formalism for a long time, but the paintings he is making now are as fresh and energetic as ever. *KEN JOHNSON*

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MALCOLM MORLEY
Biography

1931	Born London, England, 7 June
2018	Died Bellport, New York, 1 June

Education:

1953	Camberwell School of Arts and Craft, London, England
1957	Royal College of Art, London, England, ARCA

Selected Honors/Awards:

1984	Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, London, England
1992	Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Painting Award
2009	Inductee, American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Class IV: Humanities and Arts, Section 5: Visual and Performing Arts—Criticism and Practice
2011	Elected as Member, American Academy of Arts and Letters
2015	Francis J. Greenburger Award

One Person Exhibitions:

1964	"Malcolm Morley," Kornblee Gallery, New York, 17 October – 5 November
1967	"Malcolm Morley," Kornblee Gallery, New York, 4 – 23 February
1969	"Malcolm Morley," Kornblee Gallery, New York, 15 February – 8 March
1972	"Malcolm Morley," Galerie de Gestlo, Hamburg, Germany, September – October "Malcolm Morley," Gallerie Ostergren, Malmö, Sweden "Malcolm Morley," Galerie Art in Progress, Zurich, Switzerland, October – November
1972-73	Time Magazine Building, New York
1973	"Malcolm Morley," Steffanoty Gallery, New York, October
1974	"Malcolm Morley," Galerie M. E. Thelen, Cologne, Germany, April "Malcolm Morley," Steffanoty Gallery, New York, 1 – 31 August "Malcolm Morley," Galerie Gérald Piltzer, Paris, France, 21 November – 20 December
1976	"Malcolm Morley," The Clocktower, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, New York, 7 – 30 October (catalogue)
1977	"Malcolm Morley," Galerie Jollenbeck, Cologne, Germany, July – August "Malcolm Morley," Galerie Jurka, Amsterdam, Netherlands, October – November
1979	"Malcolm Morley," Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, 21 April – 31 May "Malcolm Morley," Susanne Hilberry Gallery, Birmingham, MI, 13 October – 10 November
1980	"Matrix 54," curated by Lawrence Alloway, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, January – March (booklet)
1981	"Malcolm Morley: New Paintings and Watercolors," Xavier Fourcade Inc., New York, 3 April – 9 May
1982	"Malcolm Morley: Paintings & Watercolors," Xavier Fourcade Inc., New York, 2 – 31 December "Malcolm Morley: Paintings," Akron Art Institute, OH
1983-84	"Malcolm Morley: Paintings, 1965-82," Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland, 22 January – 27 February 1983; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 17 April – 29 May 1983; The Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England, 22 June – 21 August 1983 (organizer); Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 9 September – 6 November 1983;

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 19 November 1983 – 22 January 1984; The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, 18 February – 15 April 1984 (catalogue)

1984 "Malcolm Morley at Fabian Carlsson Gallery," Fabian Carlsson Gallery, London (catalogue)
"Malcolm Morley: Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und Farbradierungen," Galerie Nicoline Pon, Zurich
"Malcolm Morley: Watercolors, Drawings and Graphics," Ponova Gallery, Toronto
"Malcolm Morley: New Paintings, Watercolors and Prints," Xavier Fourcade Gallery, New York (catalogue)

1985 "Malcolm Morley," Fabian Carlsson Gallery, London
"Malcolm Morley," Galerie Georges Lavrov, Paris

1986 "Malcolm Morley: New Paintings and Watercolors, 1984-86," Xavier Fourcade Gallery, New York, 29 November – 30 December (catalogue)

1986-87 "Malcolm Morley: Prints and Process," Pace Prints, New York, 28 November 1986 – 17 January 1987

1988-89 "Malcolm Morley: New York," Pace Gallery, New York
"Malcolm Morley: Recent Drawings, Lithographs and Watercolors," Temperance Hall Gallery, Bellport, NY

1990 "Malcolm Morley: Paintings, Sculptures and Watercolor," Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

1991 "Malcolm Morley: Sculpture," Bonnefantum Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands
"Malcolm Morley: Recent Paintings and Sculptures," Pace Gallery, New York

1991-92 "Malcolm Morley: Watercolours," Bonnefantum Museum, Maastricht, Netherlands, 10 March – 1 May 1991; Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland, 8 June – 4 August 1991; Tate Gallery Liverpool, England, 23 August – 1 October 1991 (organizer); The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, 22 November 1991 – 2 February 1992 (catalogue)

1992 "Malcolm Morley," Galerie Montenay, Paris

1993 "Malcolm Morley," Mary Boone Gallery, New York
"Malcolm Morley," Musée national d'art moderne Centre de création industrielle, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, 2 June – 19 September; Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Midi-Pyrénées, Labège-Toulouse, France, 15 October – 31 December (catalogue)

1994 "Malcolm Morley," Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, D.C.
"Malcolm Morley: Recent Paintings," Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 23 July – 27 August

1995-96 "Malcolm Morley," Mary Boone Gallery, New York, 6 May – 24 June
"Malcolm Morley," Fundación 'la Caixa,' Madrid, Spain, 19 September – 12 November 1995; Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo, Norway, 18 January – 28 April 1996 (catalogue)
"Malcolm Morley: Drawings," Michael Klein Gallery, New York, 21 November 1995 – 6 January 1996

1996 "Malcolm Morley: A Selections of Watercolors, 1976–1995," The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 24 January – 22 March (catalogue)
"Malcolm Morley, Recent Paintings," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 4 May – 8 June

1997 "Malcolm Morley," Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, France, 29 April – 18 June
"Malcolm Morley, Africa: Watercolors," Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, CO, 4 July – 4 August
"Malcolm Morley: The Flight of Icarus," Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, D.C., 18 October – 28 November

1998 "Malcolm Morley," Galleria d'Arte Emilio Mazzoli, Modena, Italy, 26 September – November (catalogue)

1999 "Malcolm Morley," Sperone Westwater, New York, 20 February – 20 March (catalogue)

2000 "Malcolm Morley," Art Dealers Association of America Art Show, Sperone Westwater Booth, New York, 23 February – 28 February

2000-01 "Malcolm Morley, Recent Paintings," Gallerie Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, Belgium, 7 December 2000 – 27 January 2001

2001 "Malcolm Morley," Hayward Gallery, London, 14 June – 27 August (catalogue)
"Malcolm Morley, Rat Tat Tat," Gagosian Gallery, London, 18 June – 28 July

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2003 "Malcolm Morley," Galleria Cardi & Co., Milan, 8 April – 30 May (catalogue)
2005 "Malcolm Morley: The Art of Oil Painting," Sperone Westwater, New York, 5 May – 25 June (catalogue)
2006 "Malcolm Morley: The Art of Painting," Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL, 20 January – 16 April (catalogue)
2007 "Malcolm Morley," Art Dealers Association of America Art Show, Sperone Westwater Booth, 23 February – 26 February
2009 "Malcolm Morley," Sperone Westwater, New York, 16 April – 20 June
2010 "Malcolm Morley: Seven Paintings," Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, Belgium, 4 March – 10 April
2011 "Malcolm Morley: Rules of Engagement," Sperone Westwater, New York, 31 March – 30 April
2012 "Malcolm Morley: Another Way to Make an Image, Monotypes," Sue Scott Gallery, New York, 11 January – 19 February
"Malcolm Morley in a Nutshell: The Fine Art of Painting 1954-2012," Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT, 31 January – 31 March
2012-13 "Malcolm Morley: Painting, Paper and Process," Parrish Museum of Art, Southampton, NY, 10 November 2012 – 13 January 2013
2013 "Malcolm Morley at Galerie Aveline Antiquaire," Galerie Aveline Antiquaire, Paris, 22 October – 22 November (catalogue)
2013-14 "Malcolm Morley at the Ashmolean: Paintings and Drawings from the Hall Collection," curated by Sir Norman Rosenthal, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, 8 October 2013 – 30 March 2014
2015 "Malcolm Morley," Sperone Westwater, New York, 16 April – May (catalogue)
2016 "Malcolm Morley: History Painting," Xavier Hufkens, Brussels, 18 November – 17 December (catalogue)
2017-18 "Malcolm Morley: Works from the Hall Collection," Schloss Derneburg, Holle, Germany, 1 July 2017 – 20 May 2018 (brochure)
2018 "Malcolm Morley: Tally-ho," Sperone Westwater, New York, 12 September – 27 October 2018 (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions:

1955 "Young Contemporaries," London (as M.J. Evans)
1956 "Young Contemporaries," London (as M.J. Evans)
1957 "Young Contemporaries," London (as M.J. Evans)
1959 "Art in the USA," Sun Gallery, Provincetown, MA
1964 Franklin Siden Gallery, Detroit, MI
Sun Gallery, Provincetown, MA
1966 "Sound, Light and Silence," Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO (catalogue)
"The Photographic Image," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (catalogue)
1967 "Personal Preference: Paintings and Sculpture from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. S. Brooks Barron," University Art Gallery, Oakland University, Rochester, MI, 3 October – 12 November
"Environment USA, 1957-1967," Biennale de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
1968 "Preview 1968," Widener Gallery, Trinity College Hartford, CT
"Realism Now," Vassar College Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, NY (catalogue)
"Patriotic Images in American Art," American Federation of the Arts, New York
1969 "Directions 2: Aspects of a New Realism, Two Critical Essays," Milwaukee Art Center, WI; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, TX; Akron Art Institute, OH; O.K. Harris Gallery, NY (catalogue)

"Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture," Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL (catalogue)
"Pop Art," Hayward Gallery, London (catalogue)

1970
"22 Realists," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (catalogue)
"Aspects of a New Realism," Milwaukee Art Center, WI
"Wirklicher als Wirklich," Galerie M. E. Thelen, Cologne, Germany
"American Art Since 1960," The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ (catalogue)
"Directions 70, Part II, The Cool Realists," Jack Glenn Gallery, Corona Del May, CA
"Kunst um 1970," Neue Galerie der Stadt Aachen, Aachen, Germany (catalogue)
"Painting from the Photo," Riverside Museum, New York (catalogue)

1971
"Kunst der 20 Jahrhunderts," Freie Berufe Sammeln, Stadtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, Germany
"Radical Realism," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"Shape of Realism," Deson Zaks Gallery, Chicago, IL
"Neue Amerikanischer Realkisten," Galerie de Gestlo, Hamburg, Germany
"Each is His Own Way," The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL

1972
"Art for McGovern," New York
"Gallery as Studio," University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY
"Amerikanischer Fotorealismus," Wurtenbergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany; Kunst und Museumverein Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany
"Documenta V," Kassel, Germany (catalogue)
"Colossal Scale," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
"Contemporary American Painting," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
"Sharp Focus Realism," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

1972-73
"Freunde des Museums Sammeln," Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany

1973
"Amerikanska Superealister," Lunds Konsthall, Lunds, Sweden; Gallerie Fabian Carlsson, Göteborg, Sweden
"Werkelijkheid is Meervoud: realisme uit de Verzameling, Ludwig, Neue Galeire Aken," Museum voor Stadt en Lande, Groningen, Netherlands
"Photo Realism 1973: The Stuart M. Speiser Collection," Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Fine Art, Ithaca, NY; Memorial Art Gallery, University Rochester, Rochester, NY; and other venues in the United States (catalogue)
"Mit Kamera, Pinsel und Spritzpistole," Ruhrfestspiele Recklighausen, Recklinghausen, Germany; Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Germany
"Amerikanska Realism," Gallerie Ostergren, Malmö, Sweden
"American Art: Third Quarter century," Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
"American Sharp Focus Realism," Galleri Lowenadler, Stockholm, Sweden
"The Super-Realist Vision," De Cordova and Dana Park Museum, Lincoln, MA
"Zeichnungen Sommer 1973," Galerie Thelen, Cologne, Germany
"Image, Reality and Superreality: Prints Bought for the Arts Council Collection by Edward Lucie-Smith, 1972-73," Arts Council, London, England
"Ein Grosses Jahrzehnt Amerikanischer Kunst: Sammlung Ludwig Köln/Aachen," Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland
"Ekstrem Realisme," Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Demark
"Photo-Realism: paintings, Sculptures and Prints from the Ludwig Collection and others," Serpentine Gallery, London, England
"Amerikanischer Fotorealismus," Kunst und Museumverein Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany
"Hyperrealisme," Galerie Isy Brachot, Brussels, Belgium
"Grands maîtres hyperrealistes americains," Galerie des 4 mouvements, Paris, France

1974
"Art Conceptuel et Hyperréaliste: Collection Ludwig, Neue Galerie Aix-la-Chapelle," ARC, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
"Aachen International 70–74," Festival Exhibition, Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, Scotland

"Imagist Reaslim," Norton Gallery and School of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; Merriewold West, Far Hills, NJ
"25 Years of Janis," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
"Kunst bleibt Kunst: Projekt '74. Aspekte internationaler Kunst am Anfang der 70er Jahre," Wallraf-Richardtz Museum, Köln, Germany; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Köln, Germany; Kunsthalle Köln, Köln, Germany, 6 June–8 September (catalogue)
"Hyperréalistes americains, réalistes européens," CNAC, Paris, France; Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (catalogue)
"Dealers' Choice/Choice Dealers," The New York Cultural Annex, New York

1975 "Watercolors and Drawings: American Realists," Louis K. Meisel, New York
"Portrait Painting, 1970–1974," Allan Frumkin Gallery, New York

1976 "New York in Europa: Amerikanische Kunst aus Europaischen Samlungen," Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany; Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark
"New York, Downtown Manhattan: Soho," Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, Germany; Berliner Festwochen, Berlin, Germany
"American Family Portraits," Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA

1977 "Kunst um 1970, Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen," Kunstlerhaus Wien, Vienna, Austria
"Gerard Laing/Malcolm Morley," Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York
"Illusion and Reality," Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Australia; Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth, Australia; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Australia
"Second Biennial, Works on Paper," Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York
"Malerei und Photographie im Dialog von 1840 1840 bis Heute," Kunsthaus, Zurich, Switzerland
"Documenta VI Künstler," Galerie de Gestlo, Hamburg, Germany
"Documenta VI," Kassel, Germany
"British Painting, 1952-1977," Royal Academy of Arts, London, England

1978 "Art for Collectors," Toledo Art Museum, Toledo, OH
"Things Seen," Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE (catalogue)
"Artists Look at Art," Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 15 January – 12 March (catalogue)
"Cityscape: 78," Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma
"Landscape, Cityscape," Brainerd Hall Art Gallery, State University College, Postdam, New York
"Hallwalls," Buffalo, NY

1978-79 "Art about Art," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, CA; Portland Art Museum, Portland, WA (catalogue)

1979 Cedar Rapids Art Center, Cedar Rapids, IA
Edward Thorp, New York
"Bill Elrod, Rafael Ferrer, Malcolm Morley, Joseph Raphael: Recent Works on Paper," Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York

1979-80 "Neue Galerie, Sammlung Ludwig," Ausstellung der Stadt Aachen in der Landesvertretung Nordrein-Westfalen, Bonn, Switzerland

1980 "American Drawings in Black and White, 1970-1980," Brooklyn, NY
"Figuration," University Art Museum, Santa Barbara, CA
"A Penthouse Aviary," Museum of Modern Art, New York
"One Major New York Each," Xavier Fourcade Gallery, New York
"Elizabeth Murray, Jacques Lipschitz, Malcolm Morley, Alex Katz, Joel Shapiro," Suzanne Hilberry Gallery, Birmingham, MI
"Janet Fish, Georgia O'Keefe, Robert Zakanitch, Malcolm Morley," Robert Miller Gallery, New York
"Malcolm Morley, Charlotte Moorman, Al Hansen: Current Work," Hansen Gallery, New York
"Linda Benglis, Ron Gordon and Malcolm Morley," Texas Gallery, Houston, TX

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1981 "Painter's Painters," Siegel Contemporary Art, Inc., New York
"Late Twentieth Century Art from Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation," Richmond, VA (catalogue)
"Permanent Collection: Recent Acquisitions," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"Painter's Painters," Siegel Contemporary, New York
"The Image in American Painting and Sculpture, 1950-1980," Akron Art Institute, Akron, OH
"Drawings," Sperone Westwater Fischer, New York, 19 September (opening date)
"Westkunst," Messehalle, Cologne, Germany
"Contemporary American Realism since 1960," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
"A New Spirit in Painting," Royal Academy of Art, London, England, 15 January – 18 March (catalogue)

1981-82 "Malcolm Morley and Susan Rothenberg, Dialog Exhibition," Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH
"Super Realism from the Morton G. Neumann Family Collection," Kalamazoo Institute of Art, Kalamazoo, MI; The Art Center, South Bend, IN; Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, MO; Dartmouth College Museum, Hanover, NH; De Cordova Museum, Lincoln, MA; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA (catalogue)

1982 "Selection from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"Contemporary Painting/Figuration," University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA
"The Expressionist Image," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 9 – 30 October
"Zeitgeist," Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany, 15 October – 19 December (catalogue)
"Thirty Painters: Given and Promised," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
"Issues: New Allegory 1," Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, MA
"Painting and Sculpture Today 1982," Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, 6 July – 15 August (catalogue)
"Landscapes," Robert Miller Gallery, New York
"Mitchell, Morley, Rockburne: New Prints and Works on Paper," Xavier Fourcade Gallery, New York

1983 "Realist Watercolors," The Visual Arts Gallery, Florida International University, Tamiami Campus, Miami, FL, 21 January – 25 February
"The First Show: Painting and Sculpture from Eight Collections, 1940 to 1980," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (catalogue)
"International Art Since 1960, Budapest," The Ludwig Museum of Modern Art, Vienna and the Austrian Ludwig Collection, Vienna, Austria (catalogue)
"In Honor of De Kooning," Xavier Fourcade Gallery, New York (brochure)
"New Art," The Tate Gallery, London (catalogue)

1984 "Contemporary Art in the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. S. Brooks Barron," Meadow Brook Art Gallery, Oakland University, Rochester, MI (catalogue)
"Modern Expressionists," Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, 10 March – 7 April
"El Arte Narrativo, Pintura Narrativa Mexicana," Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (catalogue)
"Exhibition Candidates for the First Annual Turner Prize," The Tate Gallery, London, England
"An International Survey of Paintings and Sculpture," The Museum of Modern Art, New York (catalogue)

1985 "American Paintings, 1975-1985, Selections from the Collection of Aaron and Phyllis Katz," Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (catalogue)
"American Painting and Sculpture: Selections from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"Pop Art, 1955-70," Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Gallery of New South Wales, South Wales, Australia, Queensland Art Museum, Queensland, Australia; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
"The First Exhibition — Dialogue on Contemporary Art in Europa," Lisbon, Portugal (catalogue)

"1985 Carnegie International," The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA (catalogue)
"Selections from the William J. Hokin Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, 20 April – 16 June (catalogue)

1986 "In Honor of John Chamberlain, Willem De Kooning, Dan Flavin, Jasper Jones, Donald Judd, Malcolm Morley, Frank Stella," Xavier Fourcade, New York (catalogue)
"Focus on the Image, Selections from the Rivendell Collection," Phoenix Art Museum, AZ; University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, Norman, OK; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, NY; University of South Florida Art Galleries, Tampa, FL; Lakeview Museum of Art and Sciences, Peoria, IL; California State University Art Museum, Long Beach, CA; Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, TX (catalogue)
"Europa/Amerika," Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany, 6 September – 30 November (catalogue)
"Origins, Originality and Beyond: The Biennale of Sydney," Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 16 May – 6 July (catalogue)
"An American Renaissance in Art: Painting and Sculpture Since 1940," Ft. Lauderdale Museum of Art, FL
"The Barry Lowen Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
"Selections from MOCA's Barry Lowen Collection," Mandeville Art Gallery, University of California, San Diego, CA
"A propos de dessin," Galerie Adrien Maeght, Paris, France

1986-88 "Two Hundred Years of American Art, The Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute," Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama, GA; R.W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, LA; Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ; Sunrise Museums, Charleston, W. VA; Oklahoma Museum of Art, Oklahoma City, OK (catalogue)

1987 "Englische Kunst im. 20.Jahrhundert," Royal Academy of Arts, London, England, 15 January – 5 April; Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany, 9 May – 9 August (catalogue)
"Art against AIDS," New York (catalogue)
"Pop Art America Europa dalla Collezione Ludwig," Forte di Belvedere, Florence, Italy
"Art of Our Time: The Saatchi Collection," Scottish Royal Academy, Edinburgh, Scotland (catalogue)

1987-88 "Berlinart, 1961–1987," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 4 June – 8 September 1987; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, 22 October 1987 – 3 January 1988 (catalogue)

1988 "Exhibition Road: Painters at the Royal College of Art," Royal College of Art, London, March–April (catalogue)
"Drawing on the East End, 1940-1988," Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, 18 September – 13 November (catalogue)
"Recognizable Images, 1969-1986," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
"Fifty-Second National Midyear Exhibition," The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH
"Recent Acquisitions," The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1989 "Masterworks of American Art from the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute," Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, NY
"Figurative Expressionism and New-Expressionism: Selections from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Garden Hall, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 25 September – 17 October
"El Arte Narrativo, Museo Rufino Tamayo," Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (catalogue)
"Sculpture by Painters," Pace Gallery, New York
"Constructing a History," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

1989-90 "The 1980s: Prints form the Collection of Joshua P. Smith," National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 17 December 1989 – 8 April 1990 (catalogue)

1990 "Cornell Collects: A Celebration of American Art from the Collections of Alumni and Friends," Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (catalogue)

"The Times, the Chronicle, the Observer," Kent Fine Art, New York
". . . A Room with a Soutine, Neel, Hockney, Freud, Ensor, Guston, Morley, Bacon, Kossof, Basquiat, and a De Kooning," Robert Miller Gallery, New York
"Art for Artists' Sake: A Salute to Project Rembrandt," The Galleries of the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York
"Portrait of an American Gallery: The Pace Gallery, New York" Galerie Isy Brachot, Brussels, Belgium

1990-92 Garden Hall, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 24 October 1990 – 29 January 1992

1991 "Selections from the Permanent Collections: 1975-1991," Museum of Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA, 25 August – 15 December
"Realism, Figurative Paintings and the Chicago Viewpoint," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"New Acquisitions: The MCA Collects," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
"Group Show," Pace Gallery, New York
"Drawings," Gallery North, Setauket, New York
"Portraits on Paper," Robert Miller Gallery, New York
"Summertime," Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York

1991-92 "Recent Acquisitions, 1989-91," Hirshhorn Museum of Sculpture Garden, Smithson Institution, Washington, D.C., 8 October 1991 – 5 January 1992

1992 "Bestände Onnasch," Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany
"Both Art and Life: Gemini G.E.L. at 25," Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA, 22 September – 29 November
"Contemporary Masterwork," Feigen Gallery, Chicago, IL
"Recent Acquisitions: Selected New Works in the Permanent Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 9 February – 17 May 1992

1992-93 "Selections from the Permanent Collection," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 3 September 1992 – 21 February 1993
"Images: Selections from the Lannan Foundation Collection," Lannan Foundation, Los Angeles, CA

1993 "Drawing the Line against AIDS," Benefit for AMFAR International, Venice, Italy, 8 – 13 June (catalogue)
"Image: New York/Chicago," Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York, 14 September – 31 October

1993-94 "Opening Exhibition: Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art," Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo, Norway, October 1993 – April 1994

1994 "New Traditions: Modern Art in Savannah Area Collections," Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Savannah, GA (catalogue)
"Malfiguren," Museum Moderner Kunst, Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria, July – September
"Under Development: Dreaming the MCA's Collection," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (catalogue)

1995-96 "Images of an Era: Selections from the Permanent Collection," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 15 October 1995 – 23 June 1996

1996 "Beyond Print-Masterworks from the Ken Tyler Collection," Dr. Earl Lu Gallery, LaSalle-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore, 24 October – 21 December (catalogue)
"Realism After Seven A.M.: Realist Painting After Edward Hopper," The Hopper House, Nyack, NY, 27 October – 1 December (catalogue)

1997 "Birth of the Cool," Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany, February – April 1997; Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland, 18 June – 7 September 1997 (catalogue)

1998 "Artificial," Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, Spain, January – March
"Wounds: Between Democracy and Redemption in Contemporary Art," Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 14 February – 19 April (catalogue)
"Sea Change," The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, 13 September – 15 November (catalogue)

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1999	"The Virginia and Bagley Wright Collection," Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA, 4 March – 9 May
	"Group Exhibition," Sperone Westwater, New York, June 18 – 30 July
	"Twenty Years of the Grenfell Press," Paul Morris Gallery, New York, 8 July – August
	"Reality and Desire," Juan Miró Foundation, Barcelona, Spain, 22 September – 7 November
	"Loaf," Baumgartner Galleries Inc, 6 November – 8 December
	"78th Exhibition of Artist Members," The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 22 November – 23 December
2000	"Arte Americana; Ultimo Decennio," Museo d'Arte della Citta di Ravenna, Ravenna, Italy, 8 April – 25 June (catalogue)
	"Bluer," Carrie Secrist Gallery, Chicago, IL, 8 September – 28 October (catalogue)
	"Locating Drawing," Lawing Gallery, Houston, TX, 20 January – 24 February
	"Collector's Choice II" Contemporary Art From Central Florida Collections," Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL, 9 September – 29 October
	"The Sixties, 1960-1969: Selections from the Permanent Collection" Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 10 September – 31 December
2000-01	"Luci in Galleria. Da Warhol al 2000. Gian Enzo Sperone: 35 Anni di Mostre fra Europa e America/Lights in the Gallery: From Warhol to 2000, Gian Enzo Sperone: 35 Years Between Europe and America," Palazzo Cavour, Turin, Italy, 6 October 2000 – 14 February 2001 (catalogue)
2001	"Fresh: Recent Acquisitions," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 8 September – 21 October (online catalogue)
2002	"Painting on the Move," Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland, 26 May – 8 September (catalogue)
2003	"178th Annual Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York, 2 May – 15 June
	"Hyperréalismes USA, 1965-75," Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France, 27 June – 5 October
	"Defying Gravity: Contemporary Art and Flight," North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC, 2 November – 7 March
	"War (What is it Good for?)," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, 18 January – 18 May
2004	"North Fork / South Fork: East End Art Now, Part One," The Parrish Art Museum, Southhampton, NY, 23 May – 18 July (catalogue)
2004-05	"Co-Conspirators: Artist and Collector, The Collection of James Cottrell and Joseph Lovett," Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL, 24 July – 31 October 2004; Chelsea Art Museum, New York, 21 April – 29 May 2005
2005	"Covering the Real; Art and the Press Picture from Warhol to Tillmans," Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland, 1 May – 21 August
2006	"The Other Side," Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, 5 May – 30 June
2007-08	"The Painting of Modern Life," The Hayward, London, England, 4 October – 30 December 2007; Castello di Rivoli, Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin, Italy, 6 February – 4 May 2008 (catalogue)
	"German and American Paintings from the Frieder Burda Collection," Museum Frieder Bruda, Baden-Baden, Germany, 20 October 2007 – 6 January 2008
	"Turner Prize: A Retrospective," Tate Britain, London, England, 2 October 2007 – 6 January 2008
2008	"Bad Painting Good Art", Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria, 6 June – 12 October 2008 (catalogue)
	"History in the Making: A Retrospective of the Turner Prize," Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan, 25 April – 13 July (catalogue)
	"Summer Exhibition," Royal Academy of Arts, London, England, 9 June – 17 August
	"Maritime: Ships, Pirates & Disasters," Contemporary Art Galleries, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 20 October – 5 December
	"Accrocage: Art of the 60s to 80s," Galerie Joellenbeck Michael Nickel, Cologne, Germany, 21 November – December

2008-09	"Exhibtion of Musee National d'Art Moderne du Centre Pompidou," Seoul Musem of Art in Korea, Seoul, Korea, 22 November 2008 – 22 March 2009 (catalogue)
	"Oranges and Sardines: Conversations on Abstract Painting with Mark Grotjehn, Wade Guyton, Mary Heilmann, Amy Sillman, Charline von Heyl, and Christopher Wool," Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, 9 November 2008 – 8 February 2009(catalogue)
	"Shock of the Real: Photorealism Revisited," Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL, 16 December 2008 – 11 March 2009
2009	"Picturing America: Photorealism in the 70s," Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany, 7 March – 10 May
	"Contemporary Art from the Barron Collection," Cornell University, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY, 4 April – 5 July (brochure)
	"Slough," curated by Steve DiBenedetto, David Nolan, New York, 28 May – 24 July
2010	"Your History is Not Our History," Haunch of Venison, New York, 5 March – 1 May (catalogue)
	"Realismus: Das Abenteuer der Wirklichkeit," Kunsthalle Emden, 23 January – 24 May; Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, München, Germany, 11 June – 5 September (catalogue)
	"Merry Christmas Mr. Ordover," Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, 1 July – 3 September
2011	"Inside the Painter's Studio," MassArt (Massachusetts College of Art and Design), 25 January – 2 March
	"Surrounding Bacon & Warhol," Astrup Fearnley Museum for Moderne Kunst, 5 May – 2 October
	"National Academicians: Then and Now," National Academy Museum & School, New York, 16 September – 31 December
	"Perfect Man II," curated by Rita Ackermann + Parinaz Mogadassi, White Columns, New York, 10 September – 15 October
2012-13	"Malerei der 80er Jahre," curated by Albert Oehlen, Sprüth Magers, Berlin, 9 November 2012 – 12 January 2013
2014-15	"Disturbing Innocence," curated by Eric Fischl, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, 25 October 2014 – 31 January 2015 (catalogue)
2015	"Fighting History," Tate Britain, London, 9 June – 13 September
2015-16	"Picasso.Mania," Grand Palais, Galeries Nationales, Paris, 7 October 2015 – 29 February 2016 (catalogue)
	"Mutated Reality," Gary Tatintsian Gallery, Moscow, 27 November 2015 – 2 April 2016 (catalogue)
2016-17	"The Conversation Continues…Hightlights from the James Cottrell + Joseph Lovett Collection," Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, 16 September 2016 – 1 January 2017 (catalogue)
2017	"You Are Going On A Trip: Modern and Contemporary Prints from the Permanent Collection," Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, 28 May – 20 August
2018	"A New Spirit in Then, A New Spirit Now, 1981-2018," curated by Norman Rosenthal, Almine Rech Gallery, New York, 2 May – 9 June
2017-18	"Theft is Vision," LUMA Foundation, LUMA Westbau, Zurich, 18 November 2017 – 4 February 2018 (catalogue)

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1965	Ashton, Dore. "New York Commentary." *Studio International*, vol. 169, no. 861, January 1965, 25.
1966	Alloway, Lawrence. *The Photographic Image.* Exhibition catalogue. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966.
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1967 Pincus-Witten, Robert. “Sound, Light and Silence in Kansas City.” *Artforum*, January 1967, 51-52.
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1968 “Morley.” *Preview*, 1968.
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1969 Tillim, Sydney. “The Reception of Figurative Art.” *Artforum*, February 1969, 30-33.
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Selected Public Collections:

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo
Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, Holland
Broad Foundation, Los Angeles
Centraal Museum, Utrecht
Columbus Museum of Art
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.
Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Kröller-Müller Museum, the Netherlands
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark
Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
Ludwig Foundation, Austria
Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest
Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute, Utica, New York
Musee d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg
Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Utrecht, Netherlands
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Orlando Museum of Art
The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York
Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence
Sammlung Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, Germany
Seattle Art Museum
Tate, London
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Whitney Museum of American Art
Yale University Art Gallery