



Connie Fox and William King: **An Artist Couple**

Curated by Gail Levin

Guild Hall

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Connie Fox and William King: An Artist Couple

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Elaine de Kooning, Connie Fox and William King attend an East Hampton fundraiser.

“For the past 35 years, the couple has been as integral to the East Hampton art community as anybody, if not more so,” enthused *The East Hampton Star* in 2014.¹ These two strongly individual artists share the exhibition that this essay introduces: Connie Fox, an abstract painter and William King, a figurative sculptor, were already well established when they met. From 1983, until King’s death in 2015, Fox and King lived together in East Hampton. While keeping creative independence from one another, they lived and worked with mutual respect and encouragement, exchanging ideas and sharing enthusiasms.

The community where Fox and King met on Long Island’s East End had been and remains home for many artists, some also joined in couples. Partnerships of same-career pairs present both opportunities and challenges not only among artists, but in the wider world. Any artist must focus on career demands, which can pose hardship for a partner and any children. That artist couples sometimes lead dysfunctional lives does not therefore surprise, nor that such relationships often fail. Biographies tell of the struggles of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner or of Willem and Elaine de Kooning, two of the most famous pairings in East Hampton, where the notoriety of abstract expressionism changed their lives. On the other hand, historians can also remember Jim Brooks and Charlotte Park, or Paul Brach and Miriam Schapiro, artist couples in the same community, whose long relationships managed to survive the challenges of maintaining both careers and married life.



William King, Connie Fox, Louise Himelfarb
Gallery opening, Southampton

When Fox and King got together in 1983, each was fifty-eight. A record of the beginning of their relationship was King's gift to Fox of an art work inscribed "To Connie from Bill 18 IV 83," which he had labeled, "*Ceres*," signed "William King," and dated at the time he made it, "10 VIII 78." Since King fashioned the figure with pieces of grain collaged onto paper, he must have learned from his sojourns in Rome that *Ceres* was the Roman goddess of agriculture, grain as in cereal, fertility, and motherly relationships. By this time, both Fox and King were not only well ripened in craft and career, but had been married and divorced more than once, each having two children. Both had been drawn to the artists' community in East Hampton.



William King *Ceres*, 1978, straw on paper, 14 x 11 inches

Fox, born in 1925, in Fowler, Colorado, was her parents' second and last child, following her older brother, Joe, by ten years. Connie's mother was an amateur artist, who painted murals in their home. Her father was a banker, who had grown up on a farm in Kansas. She tells that after her father had worked in Kansas for a bank, his boss there, offered to help him set up his own bank anywhere else that he chose.² Evidently, her father saw opportunity just over the border in Colorado and settled in Fowler, a small prairie town, which was built as a station for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

Fox grew up during the Great Depression, at the time of drought and the "Dust Bowl." In 1943, she left for the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she studied art and literature, which remained enduring passions. She graduated in 1947. On campus, Fox recalls that she lived with other women, in a fraternity house vacated by the men, most of whom were away serving in the military during the war. "It was a radical time politically," she recalls, remarking that she had belonged to "the AYD or American Youth for Democracy." AYD evolved in 1944 from the Young Communist League USA, which, along with the Communist Party USA, was dissolved as part of the Popular Front's struggle against fascism³.

During her junior year in college, Fox met and dated a senior from New York, Jonathan Marshall, who served as the college magazine, *The Window's* editor, while she was its arts editor. Marshall, to be a First Amendment advocate for freedom of the press, wrote in his autobiography that Fox "was a political liberal who came from a small conservative Colorado town. We talked about possibly getting married, but I had no job prospects and she wanted to graduate, so we broke up just before graduation."⁴

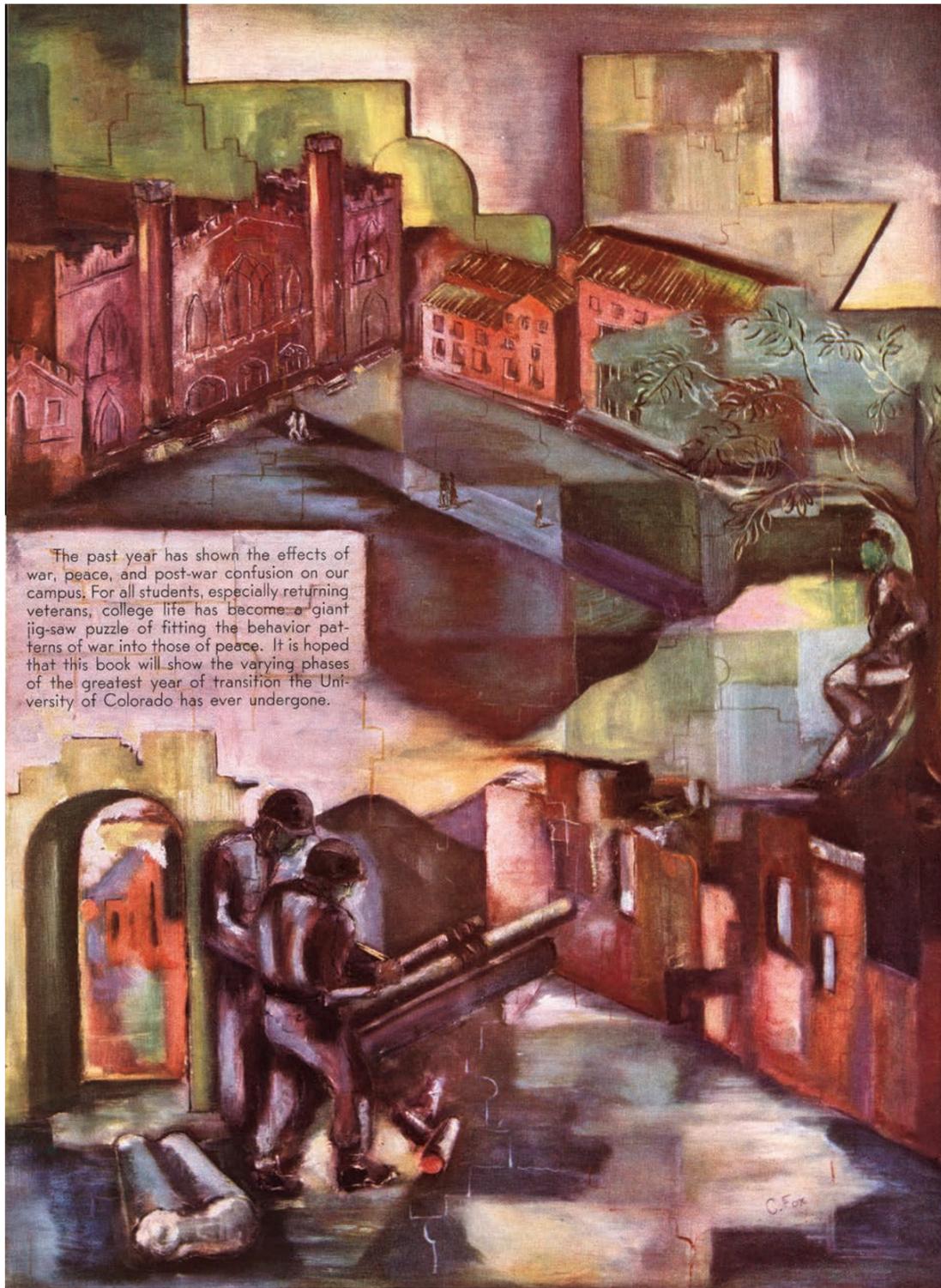


Fox, University of Colorado, Boulder

Fox produced an elegant cover design for *The Window* for the fall 1946 issue: a simple cascade of red and green leaves. The Spring 1946 issue of *The Window* included two of her two black and white sketches. One drawing is a portrait of Frances Spaulding Jameson, a teacher profiled in the issue. The other shows a woman on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor to the tune of "Ooh—Give Me 10 Men Who Are Stout-hearted Men, And I'll Soon Give You 10,000 more." Fox referred to two lines from the first stanza of a song by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein II.⁵

Fox's essay, "In Explanation of Paul Klee," also appeared in the Spring 1946 issue. Fox had just gone to see a memorial show of his work at Chappell House in Denver, which for a time served as the home for the Denver Art Museum and the university's art school. She wrote of the controversy "Because Paul Klee has completely broken away from any naturalism and partially broken away from any recognizable subject matter in his paintings..."⁶ She concluded what was important was Klee's "much-needed revolt against the old academic trend..."

In addition, *The Coloradan*, the university's 1946 yearbook, featured her painting on a full page. That composition already hints at the experimental direction that she would pursue in her abstract paintings. While representational, her canvas is divided into two parts. The top shows, on the right side, a male figure on a hill, leaning against a tree and regarding the architecture of the campus below. Beneath this figure is a second scene from a different perspective showing two soldiers preparing for battle. Various lines divide her images into irregular sub-shapes. Their identity—that of pieces of a jig-saw puzzle-- the picture's superimposed caption makes clear: "The past year has shown the effects of war, peace, and post-war confusion on our campus. For all students, especially



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Fox painting reproduced in *The Coloradan*, 1946

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Following her graduation in 1947, an ambitious Fox moved to California, where she continued her study at the Art Center School in Los Angeles. The school’s curriculum for the first two years emphasized fine arts prior to pursuing a design career. She stayed for three semesters, September 1948 - January 1950, and was registered as “an Advertising Illustration major.”⁸ One of the instructors in her program was the well-known modernist painter, Lorser Feitelson (1898-1978). Yet, her decision to leave the school reflects her desire to move from commercial to fine art.

Fox was studying in Los Angeles in a period notable for cultural philanthropists, including the art collectors Walter and Louise Arensberg, the comedienne and singer Fanny Brice, and the actor Vincent Price, who came together to found The Modern Institute of Art. This was a nonprofit gallery that opened in February 1948, on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, intending to become the West Coast version of New York’s Museum of Modern Art. The first exhibition featured avant-garde artists, who had been rarely shown in Los Angeles, among them Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, and Marcel Duchamp.

About the same time, also in Beverly Hills, the artist and collector William N. Copley, working together with his brother-in-law, founded the short-lived Copley Galleries, which survived for just six months in 1948 and 1949. It showed Surrealist art, including Man Ray, Roberto Matta, and Max Ernst; admission was free. Fox recalls the first time that she saw “real paintings” was in 1949, when she discovered Surrealism: “While there, I discovered a gallery that showed the Surrealists, and they just knocked me out. It was the real thing, and I knew it when I saw it.”⁹

Also in this period, Fox met the future art historian, Wayne Andersen, then a high school dropout working for a veterinarian, who later wrote about her, “An intellectual life line was tossed to me by this remarkable woman when I was about to drown in mediocrity.”¹⁰ He recalled going with Fox “to lectures, art openings, museums. I saw a Picasso, a Matisse.”¹¹ He credited her with converting him “from Hudson’s *Green Mansions* to Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*...from a van Gogh-emotional to a Surrealist-intellectual focus.”¹²

While dating Andersen, Fox invited him home to Colorado. He wrote: "Connie Fox and I made a ten-minute movie employing a real bull and a real dead rabbit in 1950 while at her parents' farm in Southern [southeastern] Colorado."¹³ Fox and Andersen used her brother Joe's movie camera for their project. Fox had developed a fondness for Surrealist film and for Cocteau's "charged silences."¹⁴

In 1950, Fox and two girl friends left for a long bicycle tour across post-war Europe. En route, they visited New York, where she recalls seeing her first abstract expressionism, a painting by Willem de Kooning, probably at the Charles Egan Gallery. Not lingering, she pushed on to Europe, where she spent eight months and traveled more than a thousand miles. The three women, (an Italian-American, Maria Altobelli, and a Norwegian-American, Edna Hurup), set off from Rotterdam, also visiting Amsterdam and Arnhem in Holland, taking photographs and painting as they went, and staying in student hostels.¹⁵ They then headed north through the bleakness of post-war Germany to Denmark and Norway, where Hurup remained with relatives. The other two rode south to Italy, all the way to Altobelli's parents' town, Bari, where she remained. Fox rode on alone, going north through Italy, before taking a train back to Rotterdam, where she caught a "student ship" to return home. It was the power of the old masters that left a lasting impression. Fox says that she had never before "seen any real art from the past."¹⁶



Italy, 1950

Starting in the spring of 1952, Fox did graduate work at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where she taught for a number of years. She was painting abstract landscapes simplified, but loosely related to natural appearance. It was in 1954 that she married Blair Boyd (1926-2010), a Harvard graduate who was then studying anthropology at the University of New Mexico. Their union produced two children and lasted until 1966. In 1962, they moved to Berkeley,



Family farm in Fowler, Colorado

California, so that Boyd could pursue graduate work in geography at the University of California. But they had built and maintained their own two-story adobe house outside of Albuquerque on the Rio Grande, to which they returned whenever possible.

It was in Albuquerque that Fox met Elaine de Kooning (1918-1989), who arrived to teach in 1957. "That was my exposure to Abstract Expressionism. There was a version of it going on there and it was helped along when Elaine came. Other New Yorkers spent time there, so there was some actual interchange. There was high-level energy."¹⁷

Fox, Boyd, and several others founded the "Albuquerque Modern Museum," which held classes and staged shows in an old bean factory. Fox and de Kooning became close friends and the two women were still in touch when Fox moved, in 1968, with her two children and second husband, biologist Max Braverman (to whom she was married from 1969-1974), to Sewickley, Pennsylvania, not far from Pittsburgh, where both Fox and de Kooning taught for a time at Carnegie Mellon. De Kooning, who had become a kind of a mentor, eventually suggested that Connie move to East Hampton, where she still maintained a home and studio.

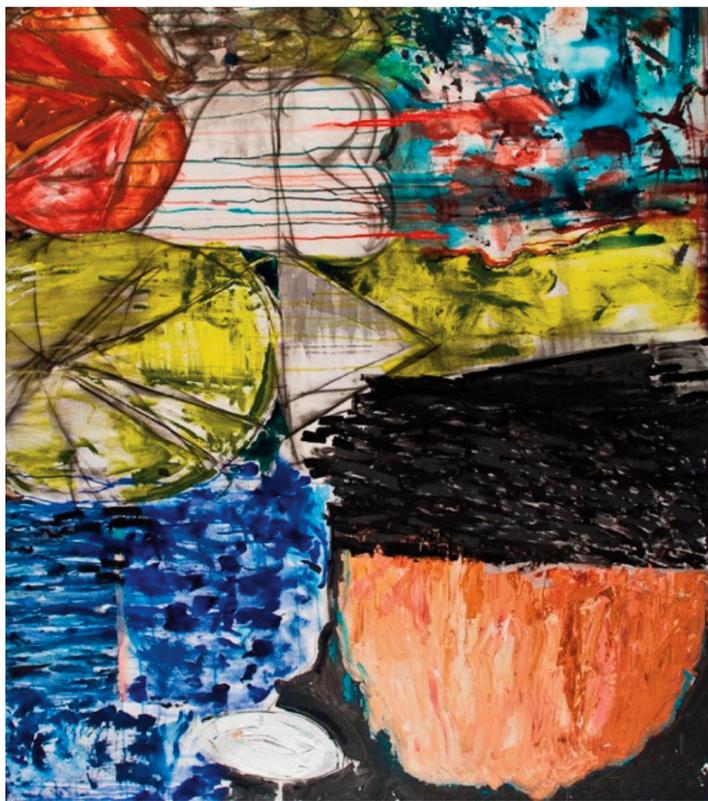
Fox arrived in East Hampton in 1978, when the abstract expressionist legacy loomed large. Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, James Brooks, and others were still alive and a visible presence in the community. Fox had already evolved in another direction: "I deviated a lot from abstract expressionism, because to me it wasn't enough," she explained. "It didn't have enough content -- it had all that energy and the freedom, but I didn't feel like it was a place to stop for too long."¹⁸

Fox nonetheless worked directly on her paintings without preplanned sketches, exploited her dreams, and sometimes used brush strokes resembling the abstract expressionists. Still, Fox often created illusionistic spaces and paid homage to her favorite early modernists from Sonia Delaunay to Piet Mondrian to Vasily Kandinsky.¹⁹ Her fondness for Kandinsky's improvisations is apparent in a work like her 1981 painting, *Galaz Site*, which she nonetheless named for a prehistoric Mimbres Village excavated in Southwestern New Mexico during 1975-76.²⁰

Connie Fox, *Galaz Site*, 1981, acrylic on paper, 38 x 50 inches

Fox continued to take an interest in Kandinsky's friend and contemporary, Paul Klee. Her journal from the early 1960s documents some of what Fox was then reading and thinking about, ranging from Buddhist art in China and Japan to reading Klee's treatise, *On Modern Art*.²¹ For example, Fox copied out several quotations from Klee, including: "To my mind the real justification for the use of words by a painter could be to shift the emphasis by stimulating a new angle of approach; to relieve the formal element of some of the conscious emphasis which is given and place more stress on content." Fox held on to some imagined content, even as she moved away from representation. Her concern with content sometimes lurks in her titles.

Fox's aesthetic remained closer to European modernism, a predilection that she shared with King, despite her rapport with Elaine de Kooning and the strong ethos of abstract expressionism in the East Hampton artist community. Her paintings like *Two Times Four* (1988) or *Carnival* (2008/2014), suggest affinities with early modernists like Klee, Kandinsky, or the Delaunays, while modernist sculpture from Picasso to Brancusi to Nadelman continued to attract King.



Connie Fox, *Carnival*, 2008-2014, acrylic on canvas, 70 x 60 inches



William King, East 10th Street studio, 1954

King (1925-2015) was born in Jacksonville, Florida, the second of two sons of a self-taught civil engineer, who worked for Pan-American airlines. He grew up in the Coconut Grove area of Miami, when it was still largely rural. Fox recalls the story how as a small boy, King had slipped out of school on his own and walked home, prompting his mother to get a job teaching in an alternative school that he was willing to attend.²² He made it to the University of Florida, but in September 1945, after just two years, he left the state. He liked to tell how his mother had told him that there was nothing for him in Florida and given him \$100, saying: "Get out of this state and don't come back until you are 65."²³ He left for Columbia University, planning to study architecture, but short of funds, he managed to gain admission to Cooper Union, which was then tuition-free. After his drawing teacher took the students to see a show of sculpture by Elie Nadelman, the Polish-born modernist who also appreciated and collected folk art, King switched from architecture to sculpture, "With all the arrogance of youth, I said, 'I could do that.'"²⁴

King graduated in June 1948 and won a scholarship to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, where he spent that July and August studying sculpture with Jose De Creeft and fresco painting with Henry Varnum Poor.²⁵ The end of art school, he said, "was traumatic. I was so scared, I got married."²⁶ His bride was a classmate, the representational painter, Lois Dodd.²⁷ After further work at the Brooklyn Museum Art School as monitor in the class of Milton Hebard, a figurative sculptor, King won a Fulbright Grant to study in Italy.

In November 1949, King and Dodd left for a year in Rome. In the winter of 1950, three of King's sculptures were shown in the "New Talent" exhibition held in the Penthouse at the Museum of Modern Art, while he remained in Italy. That spring of 1950, through friends who had found work in a film production, King got a job as an extra, playing a G.I., in an American movie, *Teresa*, that was being shot in Bologna by director Fred Zinnemann.²⁸

Returning home, King and Dodd were part of the group (with Fred Mitchell, Angelo Ippolito, and Charles Cajori) that founded the Tanager Gallery, a co-op on Tenth Street. The couple's son, Eli, was born in 1952. Then, for two months during the winter of 1952-1953, with funds earned from selling his work, King went to England and attended the Central Art School. He then returned to Florida and taught drawing and painting for a term at the University of Miami, before taking a position teaching sculpture at the Brooklyn Museum Art School in August 1953. His marriage to Dodd ended in early 1954. "I think it's hard to be an artist married to an artist. I think it's generally hard to be married and be an artist," Lois Dodd has gone on record, adding, "When you're married, you have to think of another person, and art is a very selfish activity."²⁹

Following what King later described as "an *amour fou*," he married Shirley Bowman, an English art student, in June 1955, when he was thirty and she twenty-three.³⁰ They went to live for a year in Rome, where King wanted to have his sculptures cast in bronze. A daughter, Amy, was born in 1962. Once again, in December 1962, King went to Europe, working in Athens, Greece, through June 1963. He produced eight bronzes. "I worked so hard I only got to visit one island one time," he explained.³¹

King had confidence that he could sell these bronzes. He had been showing and selling his sculpture in New York since his student days, beginning at the Roko Gallery. In the spring of 1953, he joined the Downtown Gallery run by Edith Gregor Halpert and Charles Alan and specializing in American modernism and folk art.³² Although King modeled a ceramic portrait bust of *Edith Halpert* in 1959, he had already left her stable of artists earlier, when Alan formed his own gallery for contemporary art.

Alan gave King his first solo show in April 1954, which was favorably reviewed. He would continue to show there until December 1961, when he left to join the Terry Dintenfass Gallery, where he had his fourth solo show in New York in November 1962. He continued to show with Dintenfass, who was herself, a protégé of Halpert.

The summer of 1965, King was in East Hampton with Bowman and their small daughter, making sewn vinyl sculptures in a rented garage.³³ For the academic year, 1965-66, King taught at the University of California, Berkeley. That spring, he had a solo show at the Berkeley Gallery, which was well received in the press. "William King must be a nice guy," remarked critic Arthur Bloomfield, upon seeing "King's giants ...sleek, whimsical, flattened-out ten-footers....statuesque yet absolutely unheroic..."³⁴



William King, *Edith Halpert*, 1959, glazed ceramic, 10 x 6 x 5 ½ inches, Collection of Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY



King's marriage to Bowman ended in 1965, after he "fell in love with Annie Kobin," whom he married in the spring of 1968, prompting travel to Greece, focusing on Rhodes and Crete.³⁵ Before this transition, King was teaching at the Miami Art Center from January- February 1967.³⁶ His new marriage lasted until 1977, when King, who had first visited East Hampton for the summer in 1959, moved there full time to live with the painter Cile Downs, known for her political activism and as a founder of the local Accabonac Protection Committee, a conservation group in East Hampton.

Looking back from January 1998, Sheridan Sansegundo interviewed King for *The East Hampton Star*: "His present relationship, with another painter, Connie Fox, has broken the pattern -- they have been together for about 18 years."³⁷ King told Sansegundo, "One of my wives said, 'You love those statues more than you love me.' And I thought, 'It's true.'"³⁸ Despite the cynicism that King expressed about himself and marriage, two of his art dealers contradict his account of putting his work first. Both Janet Lehr and Ruth Kalb tell how they wanted to show King's work alone at Vered Gallery, but were disappointed when he preferred to leave them for a gallery that would show Fox too.³⁹

King and Fox had first met briefly in Berkeley, California, when he was teaching for the year, 1965-66, and she attended the opening of a group show that included his work.⁴⁰ But neither recalled this when both turned up in a group show at a gallery in Watermill, New York, in 1980. The two soon discovered that they enjoyed some of the same vital passions, interests, and outlooks. The partnership would endure for more than three decades.

Although Fox and King worked apart in separate studios (at the same East Hampton location), the present project documents some of the couple's shared tastes: especially for music, jest, and modern art, but even for political activism. Both admired the work of Marcel Duchamp, the quirky iconoclast, who after his 1915 arrival in New York, forever altered the character of American art.



Connie Fox, *Self-Portrait as a Flower*, 1955, India ink on crescent board, 12 ¼ x 9 ¾ inches

Like Duchamp, Fox and King each experimented with alter egos or counter parts not usually seen by others. Such alter egos showed the opposite side of one's own external personality. To do this, they each presented themselves in the guise of another form or person. For example, in 1955, Fox drew in India ink a linear *Self Portrait as a Flower*, in which she showed herself elegantly dressed but bespectacled, her head surrounded by petals of a bearded iris, as if her legs constituted the plant's stem and her body its reproductive parts. It is not surprising that she produced this drawing the same year that she got pregnant with her first child, her daughter, Megan Boyd [Chaskey], born in August 1956. Fox thought this drawing significant enough that she held onto it, reproducing it as the frontispiece of a catalogue for a solo show of her work at the Brenda Taylor Gallery in New York in 2006.⁴¹



Connie Fox, *The Flower Lifts (Self as Flower)*, 1967, India ink, gold leaf and collage on paper, 21 x 30 inches

In 1967, Fox continued this animated theme, producing *The Flower Lifts*, with an India ink face drawn on paper and then collaged on the center of a circle of flower petals seen against a gold leaf background. It is worth noting that Fox made *The Flower Lifts* the year after her first marriage ended. Her role as the reproductive flower had resulted in two children. (A son, Brian Boyd, was born in 1960.) She now found new energy to “lift” herself up and get on with what would be a very productive life as an artist.

Fox’s self-identification with the flower motif is already clear in her early line drawing from 1955. Although Donna De Salvo has suggested that these flower-like motifs were Fox’s response to the counterculture movement in Berkeley that began to emerge during the early 1960s,⁴² in fact “flower power” as a slogan was not used until the late 1960s. The Beat poet Allen Ginsberg coined it in 1965, as he attempted to change violent anti-Vietnam war protests into positive peaceful spectacles. It was also in 1965, however, that

Fox produced a canvas she called *The Flower as Sarah Bernhardt*, which shows the great actress’s face at the center of a multi-petaled flower. It is possible that Fox was responding not to “flower power,” but to having seen a *Paeonia Sarah Bernhardt*, the common name for a particular flower and spectacular beauty: the dramatic pink Herbaceous Peony.

As for King, he delighted in depicting his own lanky figure. In 1955, he sculpted his own full-length self-portrait as *Self in San Francisco* and had it cast in bronze. He was on his way to becoming his own favorite theme, subjected to humor and satire. As Fox had around the same time in her *Self Portrait as a Flower*, he too emphasized his long legs. Of course the couple would not meet until many years later.

King depicted himself in the guise of another-- showing a work called *Self as Bacchus*, a bronze figure, 27 inches high, in his March 1964 solo show at Dintenfass.⁴³ But after he was with Fox, who shared with him her enthusiasm for Duchamp, it appears that King began to depict himself much more often in various alter egos, perhaps egged on by Duchamp’s example. Two more instances of what would become a continuing series of “Self as” appeared in 1986: *Self as Picasso*, carved in wood, and *Self as Doubleday*, made of vinyl, a medium for crafting figures that he appears to have invented. (He found specialized fabrics with help from the art collector Ben Heller, who worked in the fabric industry.) In the latter, King shows his own long legs supporting a male figure with a baseball bat and cap, referencing Abner Doubleday, who, at least in myth, is credited as the inventor of baseball on a cow pasture in Cooperstown, New York, in 1839.

William King, *Self in San Francisco*, 1955, 22K gilded cast bronze, 17 ½ x 15 ½ x 9 ½
Lehr/Vered Collection



For King, it appears that certain figures from history or myth triggered strong identification and empathy. A similar impulse had led Duchamp to pose as his female alter ego, whom he called in 1921, "Rose Sélavy" (also spelled "Rose Sélavy)." Duchamp's *calambour* or visual pun mimicked the French phrase *Eros, c'est la vie* ("Eros, that's life"). Dressed as Rose, Duchamp posed for a series of photographs taken by Man Ray.

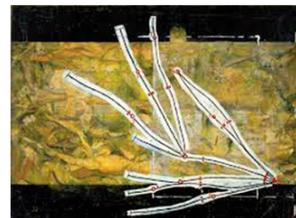


Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy



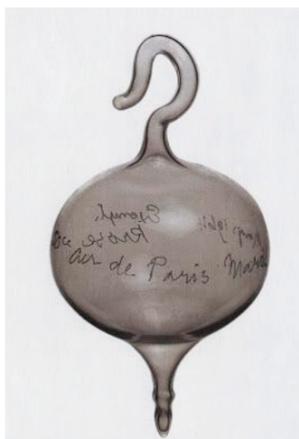
Tonsure de 1919 - Paris
Marcel Duchamp

Duchamp's art and mythic persona inspired repeated references by Fox. In 1993, she painted *Marcel's Star: You don't have to be a star baby to be in my show*, in which she depicted the famous star-shaped tonsure that Duchamp had shaved onto his head as an abstract motif to be photographed by Man Ray in 1921. Fox would call upon this same star motif in other abstract images. King followed by sculpting in 1995, a wooden male figure that he called *Duchamp*. Two other 1993 abstract paintings by Fox that she called *Small Stoppages* contain map-like lines recalling Duchamp's 1914 *Network of Stoppages* in the Museum of Modern Art.



Marcel Duchamp, *Network of Stoppages*, 1914

Fox appears to have related to the idea of visible and semi-visible layers in *Network of Stoppages*, aiming to contrast as Duchamp did the representational systems of diagrammatic lines with chance operations, seemingly mapping the world without showing any place at all. In 2009, Fox painted a large, ethereal abstraction that she called *Paris Air*, recalling Duchamp's 1919 *L'Air de Paris*, a glass phial filled with "genuine" Paris air, which Duchamp originally gave to his friend and patron, Walter Arensberg, one of those who had helped bring modern art to Los Angeles while Fox was studying art there.



Duchamp's
L'Air de Paris



Connie Fox, *Small Stoppages III*, 1993



Marcel's Star: You don't have to be a star baby to be in my show, 1993, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 65 inches

As early as the late 1950s, Fox wrote the following in her journal: "Marcel Duchamp: 'Creative act is not performed by the artist alone. The spectator brings the work in contrast w/ the external world....interpreting its inner qualifications & thus adding his contrib.'" She added "spectator may not understand all this conscious creativity – but may add much in the understanding of the unconscious creative act."⁴⁴

Duchamp's jesting androgyny and gender bending in portraiture also inspired King to make many such alter-ego figures, depicting himself in a series of remarkable females: one in cut-out aluminum (1995), called *Bill as Nefertiti*, after the famous bust of the old Egyptian queen in Berlin's Neues Museum. Many of his female alter-egos are



William King
Bill as Nefertiti, 1995



Connie Fox, *Paris Air*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 70 inches



William King, *Duchamp*, 1995, wood, 60 inches



William King, *Petit Danseur de 72 Ans*, 1996 (2010), wood, polychrome, 40 x 9 x 9 ½ inches

made of painted balsa wood: a parody of Degas' *Little Dancer of 14 Years* in his *Petit Danseur de 72 Ans* ("Little Dancer of 72 Years") of 1996, dressed in a tutu and carrying a violin; "*Truckin*" or "*Self as Cindy Sherman*" of 2000; and *Self as Barbara Hepworth* of 2002.

Given his admiration for and identification with Duchamp, King's choice of Cindy Sherman does not surprise. The noted contemporary photographer does summer on the east end of Long Island not far from Fox and King's home; but in particular Sherman has dressed up in costumes and even body prostheses and photographed herself in many different guises. King's interest in the famous English sculptor Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) may surprise, but he studied and spent time in England and appears to have admired the toughness and strength that she showed negotiating her career as a modern sculptor in what was a man's world.

Like Duchamp, King served as his own model, taking his own body as his

subject, sometimes eliding, transforming or performing identity. Rather than put on a costume and make-up as Duchamp did to pose for Man Ray as Rose Sélavy, and as Sherman has so often done in so many guises, King dressed his sculptures, after creating them in his own thin, gawky 6-foot-2-inch-form, which was instantly recognizable. Instead of posing himself, he usually let his creations do it for him, repeatedly, over time.



William King, *Self as Barbara Hepworth*, 2002, balsa, polychrome, 25 x 7 ¾ by 6 ¾ inches



William King, *Truckin', or Self as Cindy Sherman*, 2000, balsa, polychrome, 46 x 13 ½ x 8 inches

On occasion King, like Duchamp, did dress up and masquerade as a woman. Snapshots record King wearing a dress and a wig with long hair at a party, where Fox matched his game, posing as his male partner, dressed to the nines in fedora hat, suit and tie.⁴⁵

Besides females, King also donned other guises: in *Bill-Dogg-Hampton* of 2003, he shows himself as a grinning dog standing upright and wearing a dapper man's

suit. He also played with a macho character: *Self as Roscoe Turner*, an American aviator (2010), recalling his father's occupation in the aviation industry and his own experience as a teenager during World War II, when he worked on patching together wrecked planes in airfields outside of Miami.⁴⁶ He could sometimes take a more humble stance. His small, glazed terra cotta *Self as BLT* (1970), shrinks his scrawny form squashed and awkwardly poking out of a sandwich, literally a "Bill, lettuce, and tomato." This could be a comment on the fact that the male artist was expected to "bring home the bacon."

In 2014, in what would be one of his last works, *Self as Eulenspiegel* ["owl mirror"], King casts himself as the impudent trickster figure originating in Middle Low German folklore and immortalized in the music of Richard Strauss.⁴⁷ By identifying with Till Eulenspiegel, King caps his life-long self-reflexive wit implying that he identifies some of Till's wicked playfulness in himself.



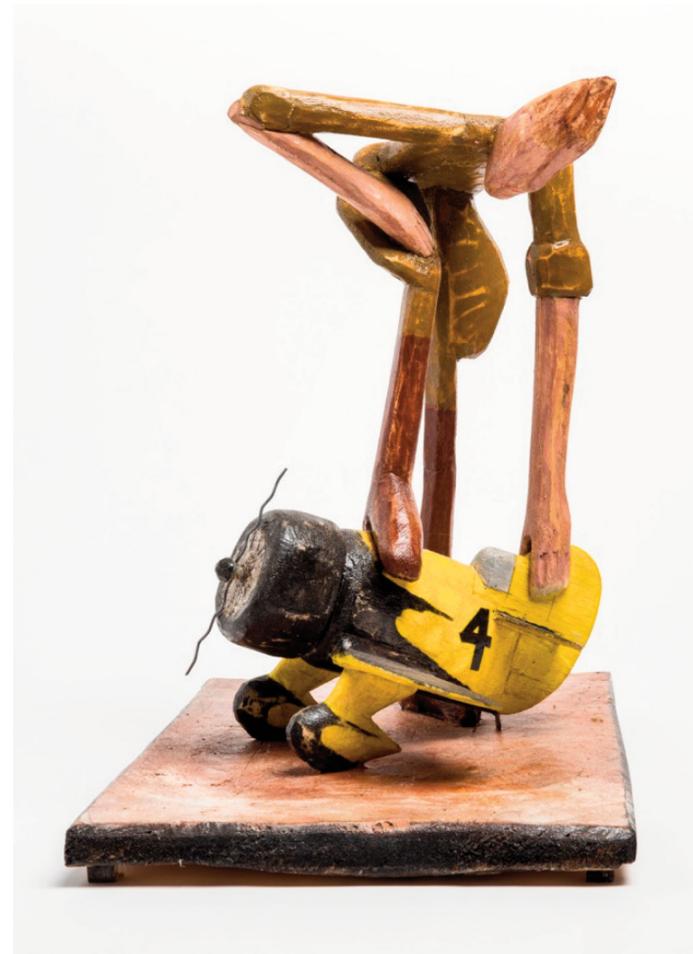
William King, *Self as BLT*, ceramic



William King, *Self as Eulenspiegel*, 2014, wood, polychrome, 12 x 12 inches



William King, *Bill-Dogg-Hampton*, 2003, balsa, polychrome, 28 x 8 1/2 x 7 inches



William King, *Self as Roscoe Turner*, 2010, balsa, polychrome, 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches



Connie Fox, *Colette*, 2007, India ink, charcoal, on paper, 14 x 17 inches



Connie Fox, *Self as M. B. in Tux II*, 2007, Collection Parrish Art Museum, Watermill, NY

Long after Fox and King were a couple, in 2007, Fox produced an intense portrait of the French writer and actor, *Colette*, in India ink and charcoal on paper. She must have seen something of herself in *Colette* (1873-1954), because she followed this image with a series of portraits of herself as the French novelist.⁴⁸ She produced these by consulting a book about Colette and studying her own image in a mirror. Around the same time, Fox also did a series of self-portraits as the German artist Max Beckmann (1884-1954), who himself produced many self-portraits. In depicting herself as Beckmann, Fox, like Duchamp and King, also played with gender ambiguity, identifying with the male painter whose work and career success she admired.



Connie Fox, *Sammy's Beach II*, 2009, acrylic on linen, 55 x 68 inches

Fox continued to be drawn to the way Duchamp represented the visible and semi-visible in *Network of Stoppages*, sometimes aiming to depict a particular place without showing specific recognizable aspects of that place. For example, in 2009, Fox painted a series of large canvases specifically inspired by her regular swimming spot, Sammy's Beach, on the bay in the Northwest woods area of East Hampton. For years, Fox took photographs of the area, swam, and relaxed there, but resisted painting either the beach or the views from it. Though she might have been inspired by the light reflecting off the water, by the wind, the waves, or the feel of the sand beneath her feet, what Fox eventually painted has nothing to do with actual appearances or mimetic art made in souvenir of a particular place. Instead these are conceptual paintings that convey the multiple effects of the lasting experience of Sammy's Beach on the artist over time: "I've been going to Sammy's beach for thirty years and I take quick snapshots," she explained. "Then I suddenly wanted to do paintings of Sammy's. I looked at the photos and they suggested things. Those rectangles on the top could relate to houses visible from the beach. You could turn around and see the row of houses. There are things that suggest images to me. It's a lot of memory and feeling."⁴⁹



Connie Fox, *Sammy's Beach III*, 2009, acrylic on linen, 80 x 72 inches

Fox had a solo show of this series of paintings in the spring of 2014 at Danese/Corey Gallery in New York, which continues to represent her. She won acclaim from the critics, including Donald Kuspit, who wrote about these canvases in *Artforum*: "Their energy and assertiveness, their sheer instinctiveness, their interplay of warring impulses—Eros and Thanatos, one might speculate—are remarkable."⁵⁰



William King *Connie*, 1984, wood, 31 x 7 x 6 inches



William King, *The Swimmer*, 1955 - 1972, pine with paint, 15 x 16 x 72 inches
Collection Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

While swimming together at Sammy's Beach eventually made Fox paint its visual and atmospheric impact upon her, the experience had earlier prompted King to carve the two of them there in their bathing suits. In 1984, he first memorialized the ritual of these excursions to the beach, by carving in wood a portrait of *Connie* standing in a two-piece bathing suit. At just 31 inches high, King's sculpture is dwarfed by the scale of Fox's later paintings from her Sammy's Beach series, some of which measure up to 88 inches. Even King's carved wooden *The Swimmer* (1955-72) in the Guild Hall Collection is, at 72 inches wide, slightly shorter than his own tall frame.



Connie Fox, William King, Sammy's Beach, East Hampton NY

Fox and King had shared some of the Sammy's Beach excursions with her long-time friend, Elaine de Kooning, whose studio was located nearby. They walked their dogs together on the beach, at times up to four or five between them. Years later, in 2007, King produced, *Jolies Fleurs* [Pretty Flowers], in

Painted balsa wood, showing Fox and himself, clad in swimsuits, at the beach. King based his small sculpture on a snapshot of himself and Fox taken at the beach. Since another related shot taken that same time includes Elaine de Kooning, she could be the one who framed this photograph of the couple posing in their swimsuits. According to Fox, King was fascinated that despite his greater height, their legs were the same length.



Connie Fox, William King, Elaine de Kooning, Sammy's Beach



William King, *Jolies Fleurs*, 2007, balsa, polychrome, 23 x 7 1/4 x 6 inches

Notwithstanding their diverse reactions to the shared experience of Sammy's Beach, which were separated by time, scale, and medium, Fox and King do have a history of collaboration in several very specific areas: music, making interviews on video, and one joint installation. The latter was a commissioned collaboration limited to one period of preparation. This joint endeavor took place in 1989, and was exhibited that summer in East Hampton at the Vered Gallery and called "The Home Show."⁵¹ Ruth Kalb had gotten the idea and invited King and Fox to create a collaborative installation of unique interior furnishings designed by them.



King and Fox, *The Home Show*, Vered Gallery

This collaborative venture was Kalb's response to King's insistence that both he and Fox should both show in her gallery. Her preference to show only King's work reflected a market, where it was so much easier to sell a man's work.⁵² Or, to put this another way, it is not surprising that the mid-1980s gave birth to protests about gender discrimination in the art world. Such bias prompted the actions of the Guerilla Girls, an anonymous group of women artists—feminists—dedicated to fighting sexism and racism within the art world. As for women abstract painters, even Lee Krasner (1908-1984) did not receive a retrospective in an American museum until 1983, just months before her death.⁵³



Connie Fox, *Rocking Chair*

Although the Vered Gallery installation was collaborative, the two artists each made their own works. Some of the chairs King designed he either painted black or in abstract splatter patterns. And Fox designed her own wrought iron bench and a chair of wood and metal, which she then had fabricated from her drawings.⁵⁴ Thus there was some experimentation and some role reversal.

"It's all functional," King told a reporter.⁵⁵ "This is our first collaboration." The subtitle for the show, which the reporter credited to King, but sounds more evocative of Fox's Colorado childhood, was "The necessities and pleasantries of a log cabin." Perhaps, however, King was referring to his earlier



experiences at the Skowhegan School in Maine. Fox's subtitle was "What a Girl from Colorado thought Paris looked like in the 1920s." She painted an armoire or cupboard in a colorful geometric motif that recalls the abstract decorative designs of Sonia Delaunay, which she admired.



Connie Fox, *Painted Ceramic Plate*

Fox also painted headboards for two "fantastic" beds and painted three "rugs" on unstretched canvas. These could be placed on the floor or hung on the wall like a rare carpet. One appears simple, but a bold oval shape, executed in black paint on unprimed canvas and rimmed in black. Another "rug," a large colorful square, Fox called her "Cubist Rug," but its vivid contrasting colors look more like the palettes of Robert and Sonia Delaunay than they resemble Picasso



Connie Fox *Black/White Rug*, 1989, acrylic on canvas, 69 1/4 x 83 3/4 inches

and Braque's somber early Cubist pictures. Fox also painted unique abstract designs on heavy glazed ceramic plates. Their flowing patterns are perhaps the closest that Fox came to producing abstract expressionism.



Connie Fox *"Cubist Rug"*, 1989, acrylic on canvas, 75 x 75 inches

King's work in the Home Show expressed his playful side. Another of King's pairs of chairs have hearts cut out from their backs so that they can be mounted on the seats, making these pieces more sculptural than comfy. He called them "Kiss Me" and "Me Too!" But this is not just furniture, but an allusion to an important theme in King's work: romance and coupledom. From his own statements and from his choice to depict so many couples in his sculpture, we can see his recurrent preoccupation, which he began at least as early as 1951.⁵⁶ King explained how his partnership with Fox succeeded: "We only give our opinions when asked."⁵⁷ According to Fox, King told her that one of the reasons that they were able to work side by side was that they were both artists at the same level of achievement.⁵⁸



William King, *Kiss Me*

King's depictions of couples are numerous. He portrayed not only himself with Fox, but other artist-couples from their social circle, including in 2013, the painters John Hardy and Joan Semmel, an image he called *Sass II* and made as a painted relief. King produced another, larger relief in 2013, his image of Eric Fischl and April Gornik, which he called *Continuum (Gornik - Fischl)*. With his usual impish nature, King depicted Fischl as a hunter, triumphantly holding up a rabbit, while wearing a hat, overalls, and carrying a rifle, even though he does not hunt. Never one to lose sight of female beauty, King's conception of Gornik was to portray her with her signature red hair, wearing a long elegant yellow dress. Both Eric Fischl and John Hardy (1923-2014) reciprocated by painting portraits of Fox and King.



William King, *Sass II*, 2013, painted plaster relief, 25 1/4 x 25 inches

King's early depictions of couples also include fantasy pairs such as *Mantis Man Meets Laser Lady*, which he carved out of cedar shingles in 1985. His title supposes a mythical bug-like creature resembling a huge "Praying Mantis" that had been reported by fishermen in New Jersey, near the Musconetcong river.⁵⁹ Some have claimed that the "Mantis Man" was an alien from outer space.



William King, *Continuum - (Gornik-Fischl)*, 2013, painted wood relief, 48 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches



William King, *Mantis Man Meets Laser Lady*, 1985, carved cedar shingles, 31 x 8 x 8 inches

Extraterrestrials represent a topic that may have unconsciously touched Fox too. This is not a surprise-- since she had spent years living in New Mexico, where in mid 1947, a United States Air Force surveillance balloon crashed near the town of Roswell, prompting lasting claims that the crash was of an extraterrestrial spaceship. In her colorful canvas, *Travel Markers*, begun in 1986, but finished only in 2012, Fox depicted green landscape elements and walls with gateposts across the top. The structure in the lower center could refer to extraterrestrials.⁶⁰ In *Earth to Clay*, another canvas of 1986, we find what appears to be an extraterrestrial figure in the upper left corner, but Fox says that this figure came instead from Native American art. In the upper right corner, however, images look like flying saucers from the cosmos.



Connie Fox, *Travel Markers*, 1986-2012, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 75 inches



Connie Fox, *Earth to Clay*, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 75 inches



William King *A Prisoner of Love*, 2004, balsa, polychrome, 29 x 5 x 8 inches



William King *Brazil*, 1991, wood, polychrome, 8 ½ x 4 x 3 ½ inches

Fantastic images related to flight attracted King too. In 2010, King produced *Marry Me* out of painted balsa wood. This humorous image is of a tall, skinny man like King down on one knee, awkwardly proposing marriage to a red and white painted airplane with a female head. It is not clear, however, if his choice of motif indicates that he saw women as powerful, or as flighty and capricious, or both. Fox recalls that King spoke about wanting to fly a plane.⁶¹ His depictions of planes and of himself as an aviator, recall his childhood fascination with planes, when his father worked in the airline industry.



William King, *Marry Me*, 2010, balsa, polychrome, 28 x 16 x 8 ½ inches

Fox's abstractions are often much more opaque; any meaning can be difficult to decipher. In her large vertical painting, *Touchdown*, of 1987, what appear to be green and black targets or maps appear in both of the upper corners. (These circular forms also recall Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs* Optical Disks of 1935.) Thus, the title, "Touchdown" could refer to the moment when an aircraft's wheels or part of a spacecraft make contact with the ground during landing-- rather than to the scoring move in a game of football.

If we look at Fox's very large canvas titled, *Two Times Four* from 1988, she may have given a few clues to her thoughts, while the overall image remains abstract, without a literal meaning. Yet, featured in the center right of the canvas is an obelisk with a white and blue top. Feminists and anthropologists have generally interpreted obelisks and some other vertical structures like skyscrapers as phallic symbols that dominate the landscape reminding us of male power, domination, and authority. Next to the obelisk, in fact, slightly overlapped by its base, is a colorful disc that evokes *The First Disc* by Orphic Cubist Robert Delaunay of 1913-14. We can recognize its familiar division into four wedges of colored stripes that encircle this disk. This same disk recurs in a prominent position at the top of Sonia Delaunay's *Electric Prisms*, a large canvas of 1914. Thus, Fox was making a reference in 1988 to another, more famous artist couple from history. She would

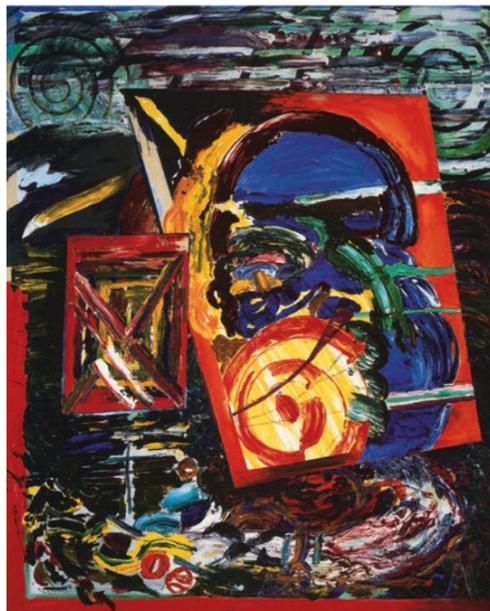


Connie Fox, *Two Times Four*, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 72 inches



Sonia Delaunay, *Electric Prisms*, 1914

have seen images from and read about the first American retrospective of Sonia Delaunay that took place in New York in 1980, organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, a museum in Buffalo. It is worth noting that the Delaunays' close relationship thrived until his death in 1941; for the rest of her life, Sonia continued to promote her late husband's work. "The Delaunays were very important to me both as a couple and for the work that they did. I loved the fact that they were a couple," Fox remarked.⁶²



Connie Fox, *Touchdown*, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 72 inches

When Fox and King got together, he had already been working with Frazer and Frances Dougherty and others to create LTV, the East Hampton local television station. This was in keeping with King's history of political activism, including writing letters and making political cartoons for *The East Hampton Star*. "I had an idea that if we had public access TV, we'd have a different kind of politics in this town," he explained.⁶³ When the station began in 1984, King designed its logo and was one of its earliest participants. He and Fox took an active roll as "citizen producers."

The first show King and Fox produced was a series called "New York Review of Art," which began in 1982. "Their idea was to do a magazine show about the arts," said Genie Henderson of LTV. "They recorded a lot of local artists, but also went to galleries in New York."⁶⁴ Among the first artists to be featured were Willem and Elaine de Kooning, each interviewed in their own studio, testifying to Connie's long and close friendship with Elaine. Then came many more, including Leon Polk Smith, George Segal, Philip Pearlstein, John Chamberlain, and Sol LeWitt. King credited his wife, not himself, "Connie and Genie started the whole art thing at LTV; I thought it would be a nice chain: pick an artist, interview him uncut, show it on LTV, a rough-and-ready situation. That artist would choose another artist, and it would go on that way."⁶⁵

That show, known as "Art Beat," ran from 1985 to 1987 and, in keeping with the times, included many more women than the previous one-- Joan Semmel, Li-Lan, Hedda Sterne, and Miriam Schapiro-- as well as two men, Ibram Lassaw and David Slifka. The Fox-King team for LTV also produced a series of three plays by Joe Pintauro, each shot in Fox's studio. Fox collaborated with Pintauro in 1987, when both felt their viewers perceived unintended allegory and religious elements in their work.⁶⁶ Pintauro, who admired the dream-like aspect of Fox's work, commented, "Her large paintings are almost like one-act plays. They lift us out of the prosaic."⁶⁷

Another area of shared enthusiasm and collaboration between Fox and King was their enjoyment of music. Their joint musical escapades included playing their fiddles together in public. Fox had studied music and her mother played the violin, but King was self-taught. He could play accordion, clarinet, violin, and piano. In 1980, when both turned up as fiddlers in the artist Audrey Flack's bluegrass band, "The Art Attacks," their encounter led to their relationship. "I was second fiddle," King quipped years later. The



William King, *Talent*, 1994, wood, polychrome, 72 ¼ x 14 ½ x 15 inches



William King, *Debut*, 1995, balsa, polychrome, 57 x 11 x 11 inches

couple soon were playing their violins together as strolling musicians at Elaine Benson’s gallery openings, once horrifying the artist Jimmy Ernst, Fox recalls, when he was having a show open there and they were stealing all the attention. He told Benson: “Get them out of here. They’re ruining sales.”⁶⁸

Both Fox and King shared diverse musical tastes, including classical music and jazz. King’s love of all kinds of music found its way into his sculptures, including a bronze figure of Mozart in the Guild Hall Collection. King’s enthusiasm for jazz prompted a remark in *Time* magazine: “Among the men jazz fan King most admires is Clarinetist Benny Goodman. Benny’s music, King explains is ‘earthy on a high level.’” The same art critic noted, “That goes for King’s cheerfully lifelike sculpture as well.”⁶⁹

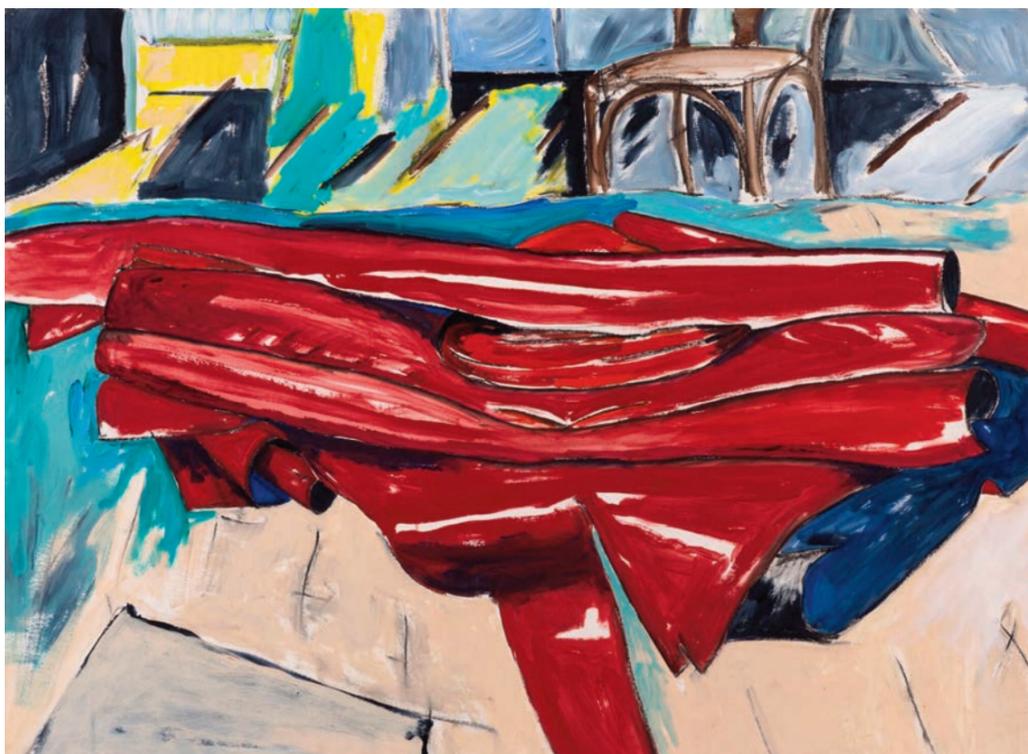


William King, *Jazz Quartet*, circa 1954, cast bronze, 19 x 7 ½ x 8 ½ inches

When King sculpted a jazz quartet in bronze (ca 1954), the four skinny figures of musicians are typical reflections of his own proportions. Very similar, but more squat, horn players appear in Fox’s 1985 painting on paper that she called *Dog/Jazz*. The combination of the jazz musicians with a dog image takes another motif—the dog—that is recurrent in King’s work, even in his series, “Self as,” for example, *Bill-Dogg-Hampton* of 2003.



Connie Fox *Dog/Jazz*, 1985, acrylic on paper, 38 x 50 inches



Connie Fox, *Bill's Vinyl Man with Stool*, 1985, acrylic on stonehenge paper, 38 x 50 inches

At times, Fox and King each responded directly to the presence of the other when making their own art work. When King left red vinyl shapes for constructing his tall, figurative sculpture, *Partner*, lying around on a table in 1985, Fox made these vivid shapes the subject of one of her abstract paintings on paper, which she called *Bill's Vinyl Man with Stool*. King later made a smaller version of this red vinyl figure in 2007, which he called, *My Pleasure*. He hand stitched the vinyl over an aluminum armature. When asked about his skinny images in the late 1960s, King had protested: "They're not intended as pop satire. They're not cartoons. They're not supposed to be funny. This is just the way I see them—straight. Of course there's something of myself in the figures. There's something autobiographical in everyone's art."⁷⁰



William King, *My Pleasure*, 2007, vinyl, aluminum, 68 inches

When King observed Fox's commitment to meditation, he calmly constructed for her a small, seated Buddha out of scraps of cut copper sheets. Later, he made several related works as larger images of Buddha. In the garden of the Ocean Zendo in Sagaponack, in a ceremony conducted by Peter Matthiessen, the writer and roshi (the spiritual leader of a community of Zen Buddhists), Fox and King married on August 17, 2003-- more than halfway through their 33 years together. "I think artists living together...That's the ticket! You don't have to explain anything to anybody," King reflected in 1995.⁷¹ Another time, King told an interviewer, "I once asked Connie if her first husband ever resented her being an artist. She said, 'No, only when I began to get a career.'"⁷²



William King, *Buddha*, copper sheeting, 11 x 7 x 4 1/4 inches

Gail Levin, Guest Curator, Distinguished Professor at Baruch College and the Graduate Center at the City University of New York, is author of many books and articles on modern and contemporary art.

- ¹ Mark Segal, "Key Links in the East End Art Chain," *East Hampton Star*, December 9, 2014.
- ² The banker's son, George Docking, became Governor of Kansas.
- ³ According to David Hayes, archivist at UC, Boulder, The student group AYD at University of Colorado, Boulder, was accused of Communist ties and ordered off campus after an investigatory committee discovered that "the membership of AYD in New York was the same as the previous, then banned, Young Communists' League. The campus leadership was attempting to shield the university from political assault from the state press, law enforcement, legislature and governor..." The Red Scare was underway and there was interest on the part of the FBI and House Un-American Activities Committee.
- ⁴ Jonathan Marshall, *Dateline History: The Life of Journalist Jonathan Marshall* (Phoenix, AZ: Acacia Publishing, Inc., 2008), 91. He founded *Arts Digest* magazine and became a crusading liberal newspaper editor in Scottsdale, Arizona. In 1974, he ran for the Senate against the incumbent, Barry Goldwater. See also: <http://journalism.uoregon.edu/news/jonathan-marshall-ms-62-dies-84/>
- ⁵ The lyrics quoted are from the 1928 operetta *The New Moon* with music by Sigmund Romberg and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Two films called *New Moon* followed, in 1930 and 1940.
- ⁶ Connie Fox, "In Explanation of Paul Klee," *The Window*, Spring 1946, 24.
- ⁷ Caption superimposed upon Connie Fox's image for a kind of frontispiece of *The Coloradan*, 1946, yearbook of the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, 8.
- ⁸ Archives of Art Center School, now know as Art Center. Thanks to archivist Robert Dirig, email of July 20, 2016.
- ⁹ Fox to Segal, December 9, 2014.
- ¹⁰ Wayne Andersen, *My Self* (Geneva, Switzerland: Fabriart S. A., 1990), 28.
- ¹¹ Andersen, *My Self*, 21-22.
- ¹² See Wayne Andersen, "Wild Artists I've Known," quoted in Joyce Beckenstein, "Connie Fox: Reckoning with Rectangles," *Woman's Art Journal*, spring/summer 2013, vol. 34, no. 1, 5.
- ¹³ Andersen, *My Self*, 151.
- ¹⁴ Connie Fox quoted in Amei Wallach, "Connie Fox Doesn't Think Like You Think She Thinks," in *Connie Fox Paintings* (New York: *Brenda Taylor Gallery*, 2006), 15.
- ¹⁵ Edna Hurup became a Norwegian-American illustrator and worked as a translator; Maria Altobelli appears to have designed medallions.
- ¹⁶ Connie Fox to the author, July 19, 2016.

- ¹⁷ Fox to Segal, December 9, 2014.
- ¹⁸ Connie Fox to Janet Goleas, in "Talking With: Connie Fox Discusses Elaine de Kooning, Sammy's Beach & Working within a Triangle," *Hamptons Arthub*, http://hamptonsarthub.com/2016/03/04/talking-with-connie-fox/?utm_source=Sunday+Reading+4.2.16&utm_campaign=Sunday+Edition+04.03.16&utm_medium=email
- ¹⁹ Connie Fox in "Connie Fox 'Paintings,'" January 1, 1995, video, courtesy LTV.
- ²⁰ *Galaz Site*, 1981, is an acrylic on paper mounted on linen, 38 x 50 inches.
- ²¹ Lost for many years, the journal recently arrived, a surprise recovery, sent by the daughter of a late friend from New Mexico days. Pages are dated from 1956 to June 14, 1961.
- ²² Connie Fox to the author, July 23, 2016.
- ²³ King told the author this story on more than one occasion. Some have misunderstood this as "don't come back until 1965."
- ²⁴ William King as quoted by Sheridan Sansegundo, "William King: Humor And Humanity," *The East Hampton Star*, January 29, 1998, online at <http://easthamptonstar.com/Archive/2/William-King-Humor-And-Humanity>
- ²⁵ William King, "Accomplishments," undated narrative written for Guggenheim Memorial Foundation grant application, ca 1964, Archives of American Art, [hereafter AAA] Smithsonian Institution, William Dickey King papers, roll 487, 1-7.
- ²⁶ King to Sansegundo, January 29, 1998.
- ²⁷ Lois Dodd, quoted in Jennifer Samet, "Beer with a Painter: Lois Dodd," *Hyperallergic*, March 28, 2015: "At Cooper Union, I met Bill King, who had come to New York City intending to study architecture at Columbia. But without adequate tuition money, he enrolled at Cooper Union instead, and moved into sculpture. At the end of the three-year program Bill received a scholarship to Skowhegan and also a Fulbright fellowship to Italy. We were married between his two scholarships and I went to Italy with him at the end of 1949."
- ²⁸ Lois Dodd, quoted in Jennifer Samet, "Lois Dodd," March 28, 2015. Fred Zinnemann to William King, letter of March 26, 1951, AAA, roll 487, frame 39.
- ²⁹ Lois Dodd, quoted in Daniel Grant, "Love and Marriage Artist Style," *Huffington Post*, 11-17-2010 online at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-grant/love-and-marriage-artist-_b_784179.html
- ³⁰ Shirley Bowman is better known as the cookbook writer Shirley King.
- ³¹ William King quoted in "Miami Artist Finds Greece Ideal Place for Sculpture," May 31, 1964, *Miami Herald*, AAA, reel 488, frame 348.

- ³² Charles Alan to Bill King, letter on The Downtown Gallery logo, July 7, 1952, AAA, reel 487, frames 40 and 44 (letter from Edith Halpert releasing King from agreement signed September 25, 1952).
- ³³ "At the Country Ateliers," *New York Herald Tribune*, August 31, 1965, AAA, reel 488, frame 376.
- ³⁴ Arthur Bloomfield, "Artistic Monsters Can be Charming," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 11, 1966. AAA, reel 488, frame 396.
- ³⁵ King to Sansegundo, January 29, 1998.
- ³⁶ Contract dated December 1966, AAA, reel 488, frame 172.
- ³⁷ King to Sansegundo, January 29, 1998.
- ³⁸ King to Sansegundo, January 29, 1998.
- ³⁹ Author's interviews with Janet Lehr in East Hampton, NY on June 12, 2016 and Ruth Vered in Southampton, NY on July 2, 2016.
- ⁴⁰ Probably at the University of California-Berkeley Art Gallery, where his ten-foot-high vinyl figure, *Red Anxious*, attracted a lot of attention. See "Visitors to U.S. Art Show Greeted by 'Red Anxious,'" *Oakland Tribune*, May 25, 1966, 24-A. AAA. Reel 488, frame 399.
- ⁴¹ *Connie Fox Paintings* Introduction by Barry Schwabsky and essay by Amei Wallach, (New York: Brenda Taylor Gallery, 2006).
- ⁴² Donna de Salvo, in *Connie Fox: Recent Paintings* (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro: Weatherspoon Art Gallery and Southampton, New York: The Parrish Art Museum, 1994), 6.
- ⁴³ William King Recent Sculpture, March 3-24, 1964; a show of 33 bronzes; # 12 on the checklist.
- ⁴⁴ Connie Fox journal, n.p., 1956-1961.
- ⁴⁵ At least one of these appearances in such costumes was for a party at the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, NY.
- ⁴⁶ See Sanford Schwartz, *The Early Work of William King* (New York: Alexandre Gallery, 2006), 12.
- ⁴⁷ *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* is a tone poem written in 1894-95 by Richard Strauss, chronicling the misadventures and pranks of the German peasant folk hero, Till Eulenspiegel.
- ⁴⁸ Both of these two series by Connie Fox of herself as Colette and as Max Beckmann are in the permanent collection of the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, where they were shown in the spring of 2016. See Mark Segal, "Fox, Gaman, and Morris in Three Solo Shows at Parrish," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2016.

- ⁴⁹ Connie Fox to the author, 2015.
- ⁵⁰ Donald Kuspit, *Artforum*, "Connie Fox at Danese/Corey," Summer 2014.
- ⁵¹ The show was June 10-30, 1989.
- ⁵² This is even true today. See <http://www.artnews.com/2015/05/26/taking-the-measure-of-sexism-facts-figures-and-fixes/>
- ⁵³ Krasner's retrospective opened in Houston in October 1983. She died before the same show opened in New York at the Museum of Modern Art. See Gail Levin, *Lee Krasner: A Biography* (New York: William Morrow, 2011).
- ⁵⁴ Credits for the show were to: Richard Baxter, *Master Carpenter*; Janet Battle, *Master Blacksmith*; Greg Therriault, *Master Ceramicist*.
- ⁵⁵ Lydia Longshore, "Kiss Me," *Hamptons*, June 9, 1989, 35. All of the following quotations about this show are from this same article except where indicated otherwise.
- ⁵⁶ King's *George and Julie*, his earliest known double portrait, made in terra cotta in 1951, is lost. See Schwartz, *The Early Work of William King*, 17.
- ⁵⁷ King to Longshore, 1989.
- ⁵⁸ Connie Fox to Gail Levin, July 19, 2016.
- ⁵⁹ See http://cryptidz.wikia.com/wiki/Mantis_Man
- ⁶⁰ Fox told this to her assistant, the painter, Tracy Harris, who told the author in conversation July 18, 2016.
- ⁶¹ Connie Fox to the author, July 19, 2016.
- ⁶² Connie Fox to the author, July 19, 2016.
- ⁶³ William King quoted in Mark Segal, "Key Links in the East End Art Chain," *East Hampton Star*, December 9, 2014.
- ⁶⁴ Genie Henderson quoted in Mark Segal, *East Hampton Star*, December 9, 2014.
- ⁶⁵ William King quoted in Mark Segal, *East Hampton Star*, December 9, 2014.
- ⁶⁶ See Joe LeSeur, "Art and Theater: A Collaboration," *East Hampton Star*, July 14, 1987.
- ⁶⁷ Joe Pinturo in "Connie Fox 'Paintings,'" video, January 1, 1995, courtesy LTV.
- ⁶⁸ Connie Fox to the author, July 19, 2016.
- ⁶⁹ "Art: Part Four," *Time*, May 24, 1954, 78. AAA, reel 488, frame 311.
- ⁷⁰ Beverley Wilson, "'Miami's Too Busy Scrambling for Buck,'" *Miami Herald*, AAA, n.d, January or February 1967, during period he was teaching workshop there, reel 488, frame 304.
- ⁷¹ William King on video, "Connie Fox 'Paintings,'" January 1, 1995, courtesy LTV.
- ⁷² King to Segal, *East Hampton Star*, December 9, 2014.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS: Connie Fox

Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
 Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, NM
 Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
 Duke Energy Corporation, Charlotte, NC
 Goldman Sachs & Co., New York, NY
 Greater Lafayette Museum of Art, Lafayette, IN
 Greenville Museum of Art, Greenville, NC
 Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, NY
 Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca , NY
 IND-COM, Pittsburgh, PA
 National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, , D.C.
 New School for Social Research, New York, NY
 Pacific Enterprises, First Interstate World Center Los Angeles, CA
 The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY
 Roswell Museum of Art, Roswell, NM
 Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
 Siemens Corporation, New York, NY
 Simpson, Thatcher and Bartlett, New York, NY
 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
 Weatherspoon Art GalleryThe University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC
 Xerox Corporation, Stamford, CT



SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS: William King

Allentown Art Museum, Pennsylvania
 Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, Arkansas
 Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
 Columbus Museum, Ohio
 Fine Arts Center, Cheekwood, Nashville, Tennessee
 Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
 Hopkins Art Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
 First National Bank of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
 Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York
 Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York
 Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, New York
 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
 Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 New York University, New York
 Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California
 State University of New York, Potsdam,
 State University of New York, New Paltz
 State University of New York, Oswego
 State University of New York, Plattsburgh
 State University of New York, Jamestown
 State University of New York, Fredonia
 Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 University of California, Berkeley
 University of Massachusetts, Amherst
 Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



Acknowledgments

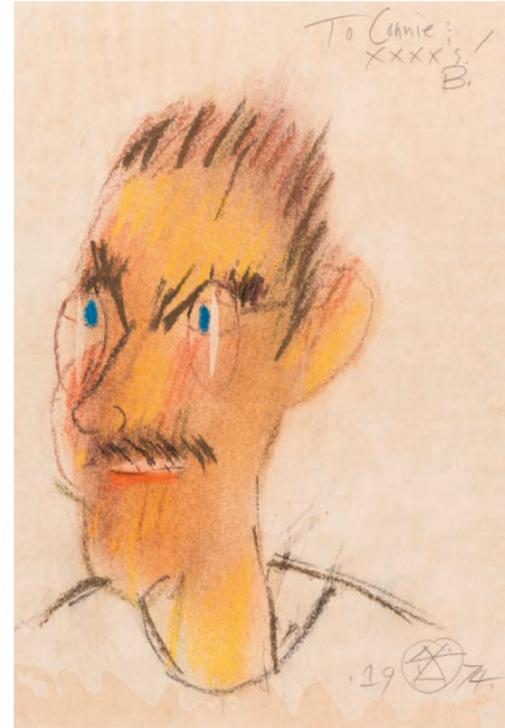
Many people helped make this exhibition and catalogue possible and deserve my thanks. Above all, the artists, who have been my friends for many years. Connie Fox has worked to locate these art works, have them photographed, and share with me memories of her own life and career, as well as her husband's. Although Bill King gave his blessing to this project, he did not live long enough to see it realized. Pamela Williams, who showed both Fox and King in her gallery, has offered invaluable help, especially with production of the catalogue. David Azran of Dalma Design, Inc. also offered important assistance.

Alex and Carole Rosenberg encouraged and supported this project by contributing the seed money necessary to get it off the ground. Fox's daughter and son-in-law, Megan and Scott Chaskey, also helped me realize this project. Their daughter Rowena Chaskey's photographs recording King's sculptures in the estate were helpful while organizing this show. Levin Chaskey, their son, has contributed his video program of his grandparents, which will be among those shown in the exhibition.

At Guild Hall, I appreciate support for this project from the trustees and the new director, Andrea Grover. I especially thank Christina Strassfield and her assistant, Stephanie Miller for all their efforts to help realize this show. Thanks also to Barbara-Jo Howard, in Guild Hall's marketing and communications department, for her help in publicizing this show and its related events.

Generous production assistance from Genie Henderson of LTV has been crucial for the video program. LTV's digital archives are invaluable. Important help during my research phase came from Gina Piastuck of the East Hampton Collection at the East Hampton Library; Robert Dirig at the archives of the Art Center in Los Angeles; and David Hayes, Archivist and Jennifer Sanchez, Photographic Archivist at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Thanks also to Andrew Dintenfass, Eric Fischl, April Gornik, Tracy Harris, Ruth Kalb, Amy King, Eli King, Janet Lehr, Shelley Lichtenstein, Alicia Longwell, Susan Parker, Joe Pintauro, and John Van Sickle.

Gail Levin, September 21, 2016



William King *Self-Portrait*, 1974, pastel, charcoal on paper, inscribed "To Connie XXXX's! B.", 11 ½ x 8 ½ inches



William King *Self-Portrait*, 1986, monotype, 16 x 13 inches



William King *Reverie*, n.d., clay, 11 x 3 x 3 inches

Checklist of the exhibition:

Connie Fox (b. 1925)

Connie Fox is represented by Danese/Corey, New York, New York

- Self Portrait as a Flower*, 1955; India Ink on Crescent Board, 12 ¼ x 9 ¾"
- The Flower Lifts* (Self as Flower), 1967, India ink, gold leaf and collage on paper, 21 x 30"
- Colette*, 2007, India ink and charcoal on paper, 14 x 17"
- Bill's Vinyl Man with Stool*, 1985, acrylic on Stonehenge paper, 38 x 50"
- Carnival*, 2008/2014, acrylic on canvas, 70 x 60"
- Earth to Clay*, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 75"
- Two Times Four*, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 72"
- Touchdown*, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 72"
- Marcel's Star, you don't have to be a star baby to be in my show*, 1993, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 65"
- Paris Air*, 2009 acrylic on linen 60 x 70"
- Travel Markers*, 1986/2012, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 75"
- Sammy's Beach II*, 2009, acrylic on linen, 55 x 68"
- Sammy's Beach III*, 2009, acrylic on linen, 80 x 72"
- Black/White Rug*, 1989, black acrylic on canvas, 69 ¾ x 83 ¾"
- Cubist Rug*, 1989, acrylic on canvas, 75 x 75"
- Four painted ceramic plates, 1989

William King (1925-2015)

- Ceres*, 1978, straw on paper, inscribed to Connie from Bill, 1983, 14 x 11"
- Bill-Dogg-Hampton*, 2003, balsa, polychrome, 28 x 8 ½ x 7"
- Duchamp*, 1995, wood. 60"
- Connie*, 1984, carved wood, 31 x 7 x 6"
- Buddha*, n.d., copper sheeting, 11 x 7 x 4 ½"
- Reverie*, n.d., clay, 11 x 3 x 3"
- Edith Halpert*, 1959, glazed ceramic, 10 x 6 x 5 ½"
Permanent Collection of Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY

William King (1925-2015) Continued

- Bill as Nefertiti*, 1995, aluminum, 16 x 4 ½ x 5"
- Brazil*, 1991, wood, polychrome, 8 ½ x 4 x 3 ½"
- Self-Portrait*, 1974, inscribed To Connie XXXX B, pastel, charcoal on paper, 11 ½ x 8 ½"
- Self in San Francisco*, 1955, 22k gilded cast bronze, 17 ½ x 15 ½ x 9 ½",
Lehr/Vered Collection
- Self II*, 1986, monotype on paper, 16 x 13"
- Petit Danseur de 72 Ans*, 1996 (2010), wood, 38" h, base 9 x 9 ½"
- Self as Barbara Hepworth*, 2002, balsa wood, polychrome, 25 x 7 ¾ x 6 ¾"
- Self as Eulenspiegel*, 2014, carved wood panel, polychrome, 12 x 12"
- Talent*, 1994, wood, polychrome, 72 ½ x 14 ½ x 15"
- Debut 1995 balsa*, polychrome, 57 x 11 x 11"
- A Prisoner of Love*, 2004, balsa, polychrome, 29 x 5 x 8"
- Self as Roscoe Turner*, 2010, balsa, polychrome, 18 ½ x 12 ½ x 17 ½"
- My Pleasure*, red vinyl, 2007, 68"
- Kiss me and Me Too*, 1989, (two chairs) wood, polychrome
- Two Black Chairs*, 1989, painted wood,
Lehr/Vered Collection
- Continuum (Gornik - Fischl)* 2013, carved wood relief, polychrome, 48 ½ x 22 ½"
Collection of Eric Fischl and April Gornik
- Sass II, (John Hardy and Joan Semmel)*, 2013, painted plaster relief, 25 ¼ x 25"
- The Swimmer*, painted wood, 1955 - 1972, 15 x 16 x 72"
Permanent Collection of Guild Hall, East Hampton
- Jolies Fleurs*, 2007, balsa, polychrome, 23 x 7 ¼ x 6"
- Mantis Man Meets Laser Lady*, 1985, carved cedar shingles, 31 x 8 x 8"
- Marry Me*, 2010, balsa, polychrome, 28 x 16 x 8 ½"
- Truckin' or Self as Cindy Sherman*, 2000, balsa, polychrome, 46 x 13 ½ x 8"
- Jazz Quartet*, circa 1954, cast bronze, 19 x 7 ½ x 8 ½"



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Self in San Francisco, courtesy Lehr/Vered
The Swimmer, Edith Halpert, courtesy Guild Hall, photographer: Gary Mamay
Images of Fox and King installing *The Home Show*, Vered Gallery
Black and white images of King at work in studio, courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery, Inc.
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