

CULTUREWATCH

THE STATE OF THE ARTS AROUND THE WORLD | Edited by Stephen Wallis



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Miranda Lichtenstein



Carter Mull



Muzi Quawson



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Faces of Photography Now: Eight Under 40



Julian Faulhaber

A new generation of talent is pushing forward by looking back. **BY BARBARA POLLACK**

In the nineties photography suddenly became the contemporary art world's favorite medium, boosted by Andreas Gursky's panoramic images of commerce and culture and the cinematic inventions of Gregory Crewdson and Jeff Wall. It was the start of the digital age, and artists were pushing photography's technical and conceptual boundaries with work that was ambitious, expensive, and often billboard-size. Smitten collectors began paying sums once reserved for paintings (hundreds of thousands of dollars for the biggest names), spawning predictable hordes of aspiring Gurskys.

But in the past few years a new generation of photo artists has emerged with a different approach. Rejecting the glamour and glitz of their predecessors, they are working in ways closer to photography's beginnings, eschewing Photoshop and digital chicanery and, in some cases at least, scaling down. It's impossible to put a single label on this new breed of work. Many of the images are documentary, some even faux amateur, but they tend to be personal and intimate and celebrate the photographic process rather than mask it, as so much slick digital work does.

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“Younger artists specializing in photography are moving toward more personal values,” says New York dealer Yossi Milo. “And collectors are definitely responding to work that seems truly meaningful to the artist.”

The eight international artists presented here, all under 40, are creating smart, complex, textured images that are altering what is considered “cutting edge” in photography. Their work mostly sells in the neighborhood of \$10,000 instead of tens of thousands. Some of the artists are already well known, others are just emerging, but all are names to know now.

Miranda Lichtenstein

Eclectic and confounding, Miranda Lichtenstein, 38, is an artist without a signature style. She frequently adopts new approaches and subjects that push the limits of her photography. After a 2002 residency at Monet’s estates in Giverny, France, she created a series of images of his famous garden, shot at night in very low light with foliage glowing against deep, dusky backgrounds. For her 2004–05 series “The Searchers,” she created life-size environmental portraits of psychics, mediums, and others in trancelike states. Some of her newest works use appropriated images of female modern dancers, enlarged and with the blacks and whites reversed, creating a ghostly negative effect.

“Miranda Lichtenstein’s deep knowledge of photography allows her to experiment with a range of possibilities,” says Anne Ellegood, a curator at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C. “The results are both gorgeous and thought-provoking.”

The artist lives in New York, where she is represented by the Elizabeth Dee Gallery. For her show last fall, works produced in editions of five were priced from \$4,000 to \$15,000, depending on size. “Miranda asks questions,” says Dee, “about how photography can transcend the realities of the physical world in ways that are poetic and magical.”



Miranda Lichtenstein *Untitled #4*, an archival pigment print from 2008