

UP NOW

'The Société Anonyme'

Phillips Collection
Washington, D.C.
Through January 21

An undertaking of the wealthy American collector and artist Katherine Dreier with Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, the groundbreaking Société Anonyme promoted modern art in the United States through the key decades of 1920 to 1950.



Man Ray, *Revolving Doors*, 1926, color screenprint, 22" x 15". Phillips Collection.

The proto-alternative art organization headquartered in New York started with a modest exhibition program as well as lectures and publications but ended up with an impressive inventory of more than 1,000 works purchased by Dreier. She left most of it to the Yale University Art Gallery, whose curators Jennifer Gross and Susan Greenberg organized this show.

Though the wide-ranging collection reflects the eclectic interests and sometimes eccentric tastes of its patron, works by established masters dominate here. These include Vasily Kandinsky's *Improvisation No. 7 (Storm)*, 1910, in which the exhilaration of innovation is palpable. Animated strokes of frothy blue-grays, luminous oranges, and deep summer greens suggest but do not describe nature. Jean Arp's bizarre anthropomorphic relief *Torso-Navel* (1921) seizes the viewer's attention and won't let go. Kurt Schwitters is well represented, and his *Relief with Red Segment* (1927), a large wood construction showing the influence of

Neoplasticism, stands out. There is also a fine selection of works by Man Ray, including an unusual series of delicate, brightly hued prints. One room is devoted to a Duchamp miniretrospective—a highlight is *Boite-en-valise* (1942–43).

The show's subtitle, "Modernism for America," inadvertently announces its weakness. Given the turbulence of the period covered, the exhibition feels tame, if not strangely mute, offering a palatable, apolitical "modernism lite." Where are Breton, Dix, Grosz, Heartfield, Höch, Rivera, Rodchenko, and Siqueiros? Dreier, a devotee of infamous theosophist Madame Blavatsky, looked for spiritual values in art at a time when historical imperatives were increasingly pushing artists into politics. As a result, this show betrays no sense of the political fury of Dada, the antibourgeois stance of Surrealism, or the utopian fire of Constructivism. It is a great collection but a sterile view of modernism. —Rex Weil

The show will be on view at the Dallas Museum of Art from June 10 through September 16, then travels to the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville and the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Connecticut.

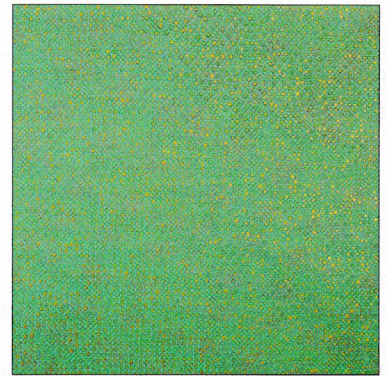
Teo González

Irvine Contemporary
Washington, D.C.

Teo González's paintings start out looking static and then get very busy. He takes the idea of the grid painting bequeathed by Agnes Martin, with its icy repetition, and creates opulent, shimmering surfaces that move in waves across the canvas. Built from long, parallel strings of tiny cells, some of his paintings recall a reptile's scaly skin, while others look like loosely knitted textiles.

González uses a fine brush to mix a pigmented polymer emulsion within the confines of one cell at a time, usually on paper or cotton. A miniature painting in and of itself, each element is an experiment in controlled chaos. Combining thousands of these, the paintings coalesce into a single pictorial system. Movement and life seem to ripple along the surfaces, their sensuality heightened by a limited palette of turquoise, gold, Prussian blue, and yellow. On a large scale—the paintings here ranged from two feet square to ten feet square—the effect can be quite hypnotic.

The title of this show was "226,085 Drops," hinting at the mathematical sensibility of González's work. It has an al-



Teo González, *Untitled #411 (10,000 gold and 22 karat gold on copper blue direct 100 gauge)*, 2006, mixed media, 24" x 24". Irvine Contemporary.

most obsessive feel, as if each element were meticulously counted by the artist, who now invites viewers, too, to add up the parts that make the whole.

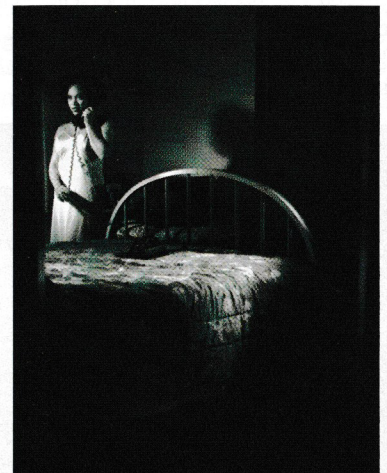
—Roger Atwood

UP NOW

Lorna Simpson

Miami Art Museum
Miami
Through February 4

This exquisite selection of works proves just how adept Lorna Simpson has become at melding the diverse strands of documentary photography, Conceptual art, and novelistic narrative. One recurring theme explores the way black women can be seen as beautiful in the context of a culture dominated by white standards of attractiveness. For the first midcareer survey of Simpson's work, American Federation of Arts adjunct curator Helaine Posner assembled 38 works



Lorna Simpson, still from *Interior/Exterior, Full/Empty*, 1997, multimedia installation, dimensions variable. Miami Art Museum.

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