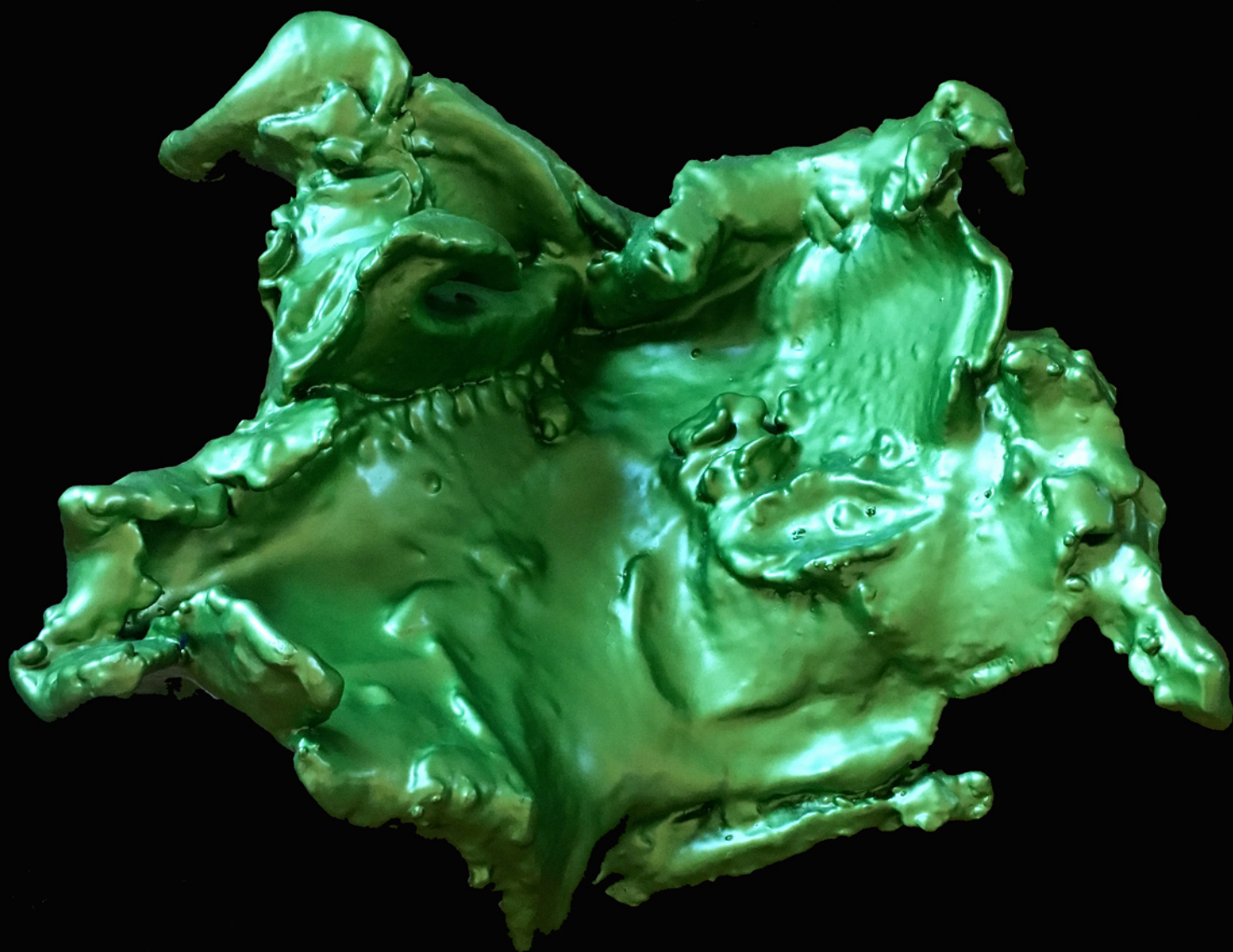


DOVE BRADSHAW

GALERIA MASCOTA
980 MADISON
NEW YORK
10075



DOVE BRADSHAW
CONTINGENCY PAINTINGS
&
SPENT BULLETS
2021

GALERÍA MASCOTA
980 MADISON AVENUE
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Hers and His

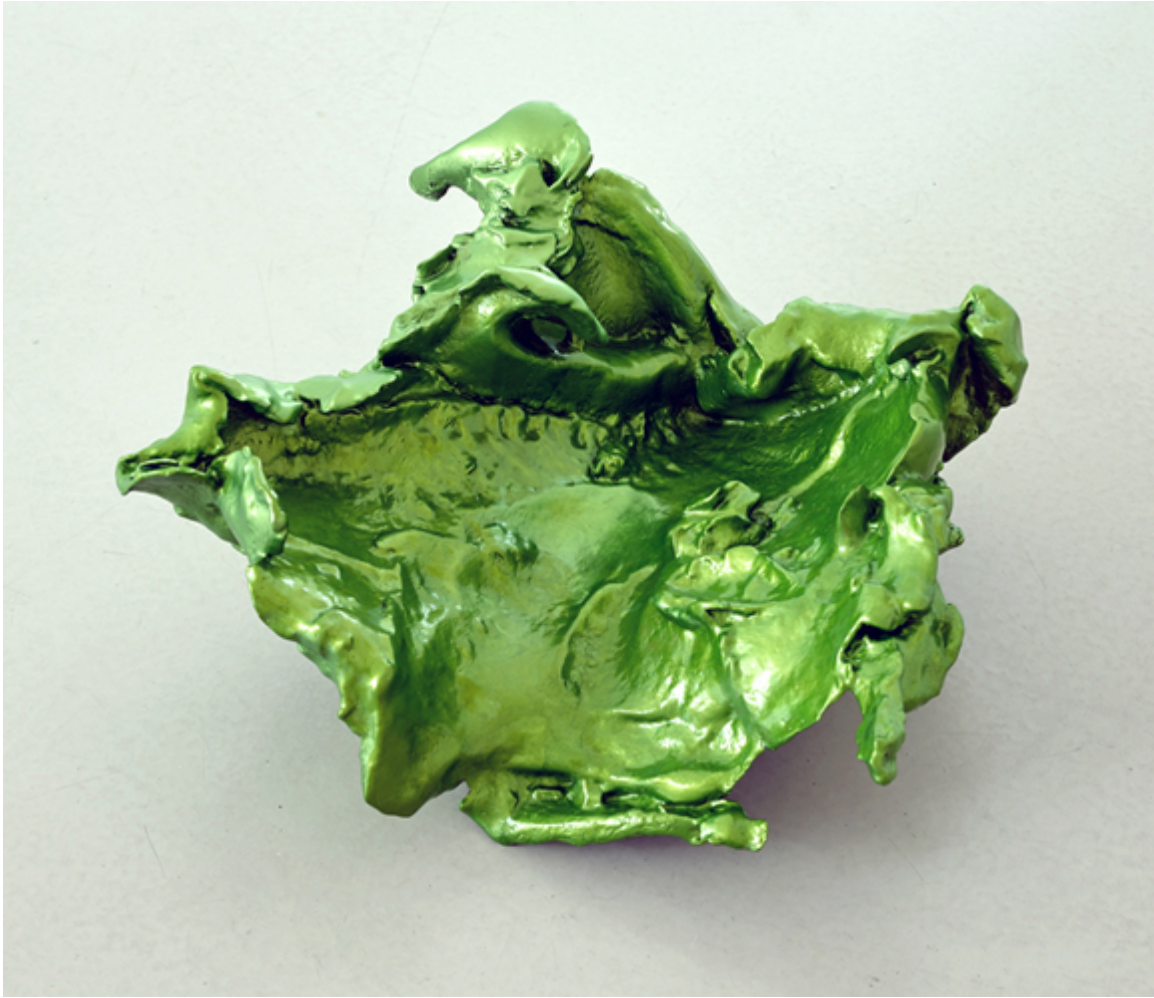
Charles Stuckey

Modern-minded young Mexico City gallerist Javier Estevez presented a selection of important works by the veteran New York artists Dove Bradshaw and William Anastasi at his satellite space for Galería Mascota at 980 Madison Avenue. It has been five years since major works by either of them have been exhibited in New York. Surrounded a few years ago by works like these installed in the Upper West Side apartment where Bradshaw and Anastasi have lived and worked since they became life partners nearly a half century ago, their friend, the late Robert Ryman, opined that together their works surpassed anything on view in any current New York gallery. While most married artists work independently of one another, Bradshaw and Anastasi (already an acclaimed conceptual art pioneer by 1974 when they met) both embrace the aesthetics of John Cage with its emphasis on chance methods. Beginning in 1984 they served jointly as Artistic Advisors for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

As if to go beyond conceptual art, around this same time each began to make monumental works that integrated abstract gestural painting With conceptual procedures outside their control. Orchestrating sense and

nonsense, the colors for the works in Anastasi's ongoing *Bababad* series are determined by chance, while the seemingly meaningless stenciled letters are excerpts from the one-hundred-letter thunderclap accompanying the bricklayer Finnegan falling to his death at the beginning of Joyce's classic tale. As for Bradshaw, whose striking materialistic sculptures starting already in the late 60s involve an expertise of metal elements, her dark mysterious "pigments" for the large scale *Contingency* paintings are silver and liver of sulfur, unstable together and so fated to change hue and shape long after the artist set them into motion. She has a special eye for exquisite accident, whether self-initiated or found at random, like the plastic exuberance of bullets shaped by chance on impact, each as like as unlike one another. Greatly enlarged and cast in resin these found objects transform into festive *Spent Bullet* sculptures, coated with metallic automotive colors. No less dramatic, the graphic excitement in Anastasi's *Burst* drawings, repeating the simplest single gesture from here to there as a visualization of the magnificence of energy exhausted is in keeping with the visual power of the *Spent Bullets*. Both artists make the case that chance-based art has an impact and truth that rivals the most profound works of the last half-century.





Spent Bullet [Mercedes Chartreuse 2018], 2015/2018
ABS resin, car paint over copper and nickel plate
9 ½ x 18 ½ x 17 inches

Contingency [Fontana], 2018/2021
Silver, liver of sulfur, pigment, carpenter's glue,
pyrite crystals, varnish, gesso on linen
32 x 24 inches

A failed 2015 painting from the *Guilty Marks Series* (not a one-hundred percent chance composition), for this exhibition silvered with its chance composition preserved in liver of sulfur turned into *Contingency [Fontana]* that then markedly celebrates his influence.



Spent Bullet [Aluminum I], 2015/2016
Edition of 2, ABS resin, aluminum paint
9 ½ x 20 x 16 ½ inches
Edition Number 1: Judith Pizar, New York

Spent Bullets are 3D enlargements of .38 caliber New York City Police bullets. In 2015 they were recovered from a range on 20th Street off Fifth Avenue. The target pictures a cartoon image of a menacing man, an outline within the face and body indicating the *sweet zone*, with greasy slicked back hair, one hairy hand steadying the other holding a gun aimed directly at the police.

These bullets are designed to kill humans, not squirrels, nor deer, humans that police practice targeting. I first gathered shot bullets from a 100th Street range in 1979. Back then bullets were not sheathed in copper so after passing through targets the lead flattened when hitting tilted steel plates set at 90 degrees, striking the upper sheet first, then ricocheting onto the lower and sliding into sand where they are recovered, melted down and reused. They opened like flowers and in a Utopian gesture were cast into jewelry.

By 2015 the slugs had been clad in copper to protect the shooter from lead poisoning. It produced a sculptural twisted raw lead sometimes with scraps of copper still attached, that evidenced their speed and impact. When the possibility of 3D printing became more commonly available I was inspired to make large-scale sculptures. Various I covered them first with white gold leaf, then aluminum and rubber spray paint from a hardware store and finally they were professionally painted in a body shop. The car paint introduced bright colors—2004 Toyota Blue and Mercedes Chartreuse, Mercedes Sakhir Orange and Porsche Formula all from 2018. Now that they are weather proof, they can be outdoors.

During the Pandemic in place of guests I hooked the bullets onto the back of our Eighteenth Century Chinese chairs knowing artists always have their work for company. That led to creating a ballet with a stage-set-replica of the table and chairs that is being discussed for the City of Boston Ballet under the Direction of Tony Williams. Conceived as *A Pandemical Ballet*, Mr. Williams re-aimed the theme more directly at lethal police misconduct. In 2021 Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State acquired *Spent Bullet [Porsche Formula 2018]*, also made in 2021 presently set in his State Department office. Writing him, I offered: *Make Art, Not War*.





Spent Bullet [Dum Dum], 2015/2016
ABS resin, rubber coating
8 x 26 ½ x 14 inches

Contingency [Riverroots], 2011
silver, liver of sulfur, varnish on linen
82 x 66 inches

Roots swept loose from the historic 2011
hurricanes Irene and Lee following less than two weeks later were
gathered from the Sock at Haystacks, The Endless Mountains, Pennsylvania

Contingency [Winter Light] has a bear story, literally. One early morning a bear came to a dwarf peach tree that I had planted in the country tearing off a branch—amounting to a fifth of it. Heartbroken I was immediately prompted to use the branch in a silvered linen already on the studio floor. It had been prepared for my customary overall treatment of the volatile chemical liver of sulfur designed to darken silver and so thin it loses brushstrokes.

Spontaneously I threw the branch onto it (center right) later adding others along with garden clippings, blindly throwing them without composing. Loosely I followed their lines brushing on liver of sulfur, lifting each branch, replacing it, then leaving it to dry.

A break through—it was the first time, in say fifteen years by then—since there was a foreground and background. Slow progress indeed, though the overall canvasses had yielded a great variety because of their rough chemical mix, the time of year or whether they had been made indoors or out. That unpredictability kept the activity lively.

Contingency [Winter Light], 2011
silver, liver of sulfur, varnish on linen
82 x 66 inches





Contingency [Sticks & Stones], 2013 in the country studio:
the sticks had been gathered for firewood, but before
being thrown into the fire were randomly tossed onto
the linen in order to make a chance-based composition.





Contingency [Snow Melt] was made in winter in New York City in my building's gated alley where lying flat on the ground, this time on a silvered stretched canvas randomly composed with dog sticks gathered from Riverside Park that had been underlined with liver of sulfur. It was brought inside to await a snowstorm. When the snow duly fell it was a perfect consistency—moist enough to cling to the minutely raised chemical etch—the snow accumulating up to eight inches above even the tiniest splash as the canvas raked at a slight angle, had been left outside all day.

A film was made during the storm, its look far more ethereal than the finished painting. Of course the snow melted when inside, leaving drips that were barely apparent until the silver tarnished. Curiously they have remained bright nearly seven years now though silver naturally tarnishes in light, air and humidity. How acidic is our New York City air. Could one somehow bottle it so that silver need not be polished?

Contingency [Snow Melt], 2015
silver, liver of sulfur, varnish on canvas
82 x 66 inches

The fact that the world is always changing lends itself to work that itself changes in order to be open to it.





Spent Bullet [Mercedes 2018], 2015
Contingency [Fontana], 2018/2021
Contingency [Riverroots], 2012



Contingency [Riverroots], 2012
Contingency [Winter Light], 2011

[Bradshaw's] dark mysterious "pigments" for the large scale *Contingency* paintings are silver and liver of sulfur, unstable together and so fated to change hue and shape long after the artist set them into motion.

Charles Stuckey



Contingency [Winter Light], 2011
Contingency [Snow Melt], 2014



Contingency [Snow Melt], 2015

Spent Bullet [Aluminum I], 2015/2017

Spent Bullet [Toyota Blue 2004], 2018



Spent Bullet [Toyota Blue 2004], 2015/2016
ABS resin, car paint
9 ½ x 20 ½ x 16 ½ inches



Dove Bradshaw

Spent Bullet silver earrings and clasp, 1979

Contingency [Snow Melt], 2014 in the background

As noted in 1979 bullets had not been sheathed in copper. Unmentioned as yet however, they were sliced at the tip three times in order to produce a larger hole in flesh that would cause more collateral damage. The aim is to stop anyone dead in his tracks; without that extra harmful touch a bullet could more easily pass through the body possibly barely harming an escaping suspect. In target practice these solely lead bullets flattened out appearing so much like flowers they immediately suggested jewelry. Earrings and pins were first cast in silver, *alchemically* becoming silver gilt and finally *turning* solid gold as greater support occurred.

It was a Utopian notion that each slug taken out of circulation would be one less lethal round, by contrast to be worn on the “outside.” On the eve of the Iraq War in a protest performance I had filled with slugs a red Fire Bucket that normally holds sand. I invited viewers to select one laying it to rest in a small black-velvet jewelry bag with the title *INFINITY* printed in white, upon which in mock hope, I numbered each: 1/Infinity, 2/Infinity and so on, signing it.

In Appreciation:

Javier Estevez, owner of Galerí Mascota, for joining Anastasi and myself for two solo exhibitions that served as a duet celebrating our near half-century together in such a beautiful space and in such an important location coupled with his generous support mounting Bill's drawings.

Charles Stuckey for his ardent advocacy, organization and brilliant summation requested pedestrianly for a press release that became much more, all while declining payment. Bill, Javier and I have our work cut out to make it up to him.

Copy writes:

Hers & His, Charles Stuckey, 2021

In situ photographs, the *Contingency Paintings* and *Spent Bullet [Aluminum I]* and *Spent Bullet [Dum Dum]*, Josh Nefsky, 2021 and 2016 respectively

Contingency [Fontana], 2021, *Spent Bullet [Mercedes Chartreuse 2018]*, 2018, *Contingency [Sticks & Stones]* in progress, 2013, *Contingency [Snow Melt]* details during the storm, 2015, *Spent Bullet [Toyota Blue 2004]*, 2018, commentary about her works and catalogue design by Dove Bradshaw, 2021

Portrait of Dove Bradshaw, Joel Fischer, 2021

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