

*NUCLEAR FAMILY*

**Vito Acconci**  
**Joe Bradley**  
**George Condo**  
**Zaha Hadid**  
**Rachel Harrison**  
**Sigmar Polke**  
**Paul Thek**

Curated by Kenny Schachter

15 July – 26 August 2017

Parents and children comprise the core known as the nuclear family but I'd go further in our particular case and extend the definition to incorporate the artists and designers that have touched and inspired us on a daily basis and thereby expanded our basic social unit in the process. Nuclear is also an apt term with an altogether different meaning in relation to my family: the ad hoc, but determined, explosive chaotic state with which we approach and experience the tackling of life.

It is said you don't choose your family, but the artists you live and work with are by matter of inclination. The vaguely melancholic yet comedic output of Paul Thek is as intense and individualistic as his legendary work ethic: he drew daily on newspapers tracking time, honing his skills and inserting himself into the daily goings-on in the pages of the international news, literally.

Vito Acconci, by mercilessly provoking in his performances that were documented in austere black and white photographic/text works, opened the floodgates for what could be considered art. He broadened the boundaries of artistic practice in a way that has been culturally rippling, non-stop, since the late 1960s, from Marina Abramovic to Ryan Trecartin.

Zaha Hadid's work is certainly widely enough known that I needn't reiterate her profound contributions to culture. She seamlessly flirted between architecture, art and design; for Zaha, it wasn't simply a matter of creating for clients, she lived in an immersive environment no less daunting than Donald Judd's Marfa. Zaha was mentor to many across professions and didn't break the glass ceiling but shattered it. I miss her dearly.

Sigmar Polke foresaw directions that art would come to travel before most: combining a polymath of art making methods like painting, photography, and film with a connecting thread of conceptualism. His use of disparate and deadly chemicals on canvas exploded the language of abstraction not to mention his early anti-pop version of

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American pop, which undermined the celebration of the banal by pointing to the sinister, self-sabotaging nature of humanity, in a fun and mocking manner.

Since first encountering the work of Rachel Harrison, I have been living with oddball pieces in various materials from found foam (from the streets of New York) to cement, photography, plaster and collages—often strewn together in a strange, inscrutable brew. My kids were brought up on a steady diet of it. Having worked together since 1990, I can recall year after year when people scratched their collective heads unable to get a handle on Rachel's distinct brand of formalism. The obfuscation was nothing intentional, simply the end product of a unique sculptural mind, blending the disparate detritus around her into a heretofore unimagined concoction.

Joe Bradley is the slacker lurking in us all, the lackadaisical, uncaring, unprofessional trying to get by with as little exertion as possible. However, don't be mistaken, Bradley's posturing is an affectation, not in a bad sense, but the force behind a body of laissez faire abstraction that conjures the best of the past, from Guston to Gottleib and still very much of the present. Giving a naughty two fingers to convention, Bradley confounds with the sheer sloppiness of it all, and at the same time presents virtuoso compositions of shape and color.

The George Condo literally was a family member, I passed her regularly over the course of decades—the large pastel on paper drawing hung in my father-in-law's home before he passed away. The work outshines its Picassoid roots to take on an elegance and uniqueness its own, presaging much to come with Condo's most excellent recent works.

Into the mix are works in various media from the clan, all of us. And wacky we are. Within my family, art and artists constitute a way of life, we were as close with Zaha and others as relatives. Celebrating this array of mainly conceptual art and architecture is espousing a way of life where art is beyond a thing to hang; but, rather, a language—a shared physical and mental means of communication between us.

There are times I could barely stand my own family; and they me, for sure. Art is not merely the glue but cement that binds us like rice coursing through the digestive system; and, a window to another dimension that, by the way, has been clinically proven to shorten hospital stays and reduce medications of patients so exposed. Nothing can measure up to the wonderment and curiosity spurred by interacting with art, that thank god, we all have voracious appetites for. It feeds, nurtures, excites, impassions, and fuels us. The family that arts together, stays forever.

- Kenny Schachter

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