



# DANA HART-STONE KALEIDOSCOPE

February 7 – May 19, 2024

American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center • Washington, DC

# DANA HART-STONE

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**Born** 1956, Billings, MT

### Education

1995–97 BA, Art, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA

1976–78 University of Montana, Missoula, MT

1974–76 Montana State University, Bozeman, MT

### Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

2023 *A State of Newness: Dana Hart-Stone and Dana Newmann*, Pie Projects Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, NM

2020 *The Life and Times of Plaid*, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco, CA, (catalog)

2019 *Ridin' the West: Works by Roy De Forest and Dana Hart-Stone*, Edwin M. Dowd Art and Art History Building Gallery, Santa Clara University, CA

2018 *Backroads*, 650 California Street, San Francisco, CA

2016 *A Western Trip*, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco, CA

2012 *Exposition*, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco, CA

2009 *History Paintings*, Brian Gross Fine Art at One Post Street, San Francisco, CA

1989 *Paintings and Ceramic Sculpture*, Christopher Pawlik/Native Design, Seattle, WA

1988 *Serigraph Mono-Prints*, Azo, Art Inc./Singleton Studios, Seattle, WA

1979 *Drawings*, University Gallery, University of Montana, Missoula, MT

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2023 *A Slice of Pie: Annual Invitational Exhibition*, Pie Projects Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, NM

2022 *FRAMED: Works by Peter Alexander, Robert Arneson, Andrew Belschner, Roy De Forest, Adam Fowler, Dana Hart-Stone, Robert Hudson, Ed Moses, Ruth Pastine, Paul Sarkisian and Andrea Way*, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco, CA

2021 *Photo Based: Works by Tony Berlant, Robert Hudson, Dana Hart-Stone, Keira Kotler, Meridel Rubenstein, and Paul Sarkisian*, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco, CA

2015 *Found/Made*, San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, San Jose, CA

2014 *Shift: Five Decades of Contemporary California Painting*, Monterey Museum of Art, Monterey, CA

2013 *Excavating Layers*, Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA

1992 *Indiana Caucus for Art*, South Bend Regional Museum of Art, South Bend, IN

### (Selected Group Exhibitions Continued)

1990 *Lines of Force*, National Poetry Association, Bayfront Gallery, San Francisco, CA

*Beyond Words: The Book as Metaphor for Art*, San Francisco Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco, CA

*Expressions of Faith*, AP Tell Gallery, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

1989 *Expressions of Faith*, AP Tell Gallery, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

### Awards, Honor, Commissions

2021 SECA Award nominee, SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA

2017 Finalist, SFO Terminal 1 commission, San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco, CA

2013 Commission: a global energy corporation, San Ramon, CA

2004 *Excellence in Teaching Award*, Union College, Schenectady, NY

1998 *Japan Experience*, Fulbright Memorial Teacher's Fund Grant

1992 *Honorable Mention*, Indiana Caucus for Art, South Bend Regional Museum of Art, South Bend, IN; Juror: Lynda Benglis

### Public Collections

Monterey Museum of Art, Monterey, CA

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA

### Bibliography

Kenneth Baker, "Cheap Thrill: Dana Hart-Stone," Review of *History Paintings, One Post Street, Brian Gross Fine Art, San Francisco Chronicle*, March 15, 2009.

Siena Sofia Bergt, "Bowerbirds: Artists as Collectors at Pie Projects' New Exhibit," *Santa Fe Reporter*, March 1, 2023.

Dewitt Chang, "Reviews," Review of *Exposition, Brian Gross Fine Art, Art Ltd.*, March 2012.

"Dana Hart-Stone Draws on His Montana Roots for New Exhibition at Brian Gross Fine Art," Review of *Exposition, Brian Gross Fine Art, Art Daily, Artdaily.org*, January 24, 2012.

Greg Flood. "Recommended San Francisco Gallery Shows in January 2012," Review of *Exposition, Brian Gross Fine Art, SF Contemporary Art Examiner, Examiner.com*, January 7, 2012.

### Representation

Brian Gross Fine Art, briangrossfineart.com

Pie Projects Contemporary Art, pieprojects.org



4400 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016  
www.american.edu/cas/museum

# KALEIDOSCOPE

## SURREALIST AMERICANA

by David M. Roth

Americana and Surrealism are two terms that rarely show up in the same sentence. The first refers to a bygone era's culture, customs and visual relics; the second to a time-honored method of disrupting rational thought. Dana Hart-Stone combines both to disarming effect in his digitally assembled, intricately manipulated photo collages. At a distance, they resemble inscrutable geometric mazes that, on close inspection, reveal vintage photos dating from the Victorian era to the 1970s. Printed as mandalas on tondo-shaped canvases, they show real and imaginary acts unfolding serially like kaleidoscopic visions. The result is time travel informed by homespun humor and large dollops of absurdism.

Hart-Stone, 67, grew up in northeastern Montana and Bozeman, and his work is a career-length paean to his youth and, quite possibly, that of his parents and grandparents. He acquires source images from auctions, garage sales and the internet, with a particular emphasis on county fairs, parades, family gatherings, schools, farms, rodeos and circus acts. While nostalgia is an animating force, his process situates him closer to his formative years, the 1960s. His repetition of images, for example, recalls Warhol, while his fashioning of them into concatenations of daisy-chained Rorschach blots brings to mind Bruce Conner's inkblot drawings and the stacked video imagery of Michal Rovner. On a purely formal level, Hart-Stone's crowning achievement may be his inversion of Chuck Close's signature device. Where Close used abstract marks to create photo-realistic portraits, Hart-Stone uses photos to build representational works that also function as pure abstraction. That innovation, alone, makes his work *sui generis*.

Take, as a case in point, *Distracted by Ric Rac* (2019), a send-up of small-town pageantry. In this, marching bands, dogs, cowboys, wagon trains, and old ladies wearing funny hats circle the canvas, bound together by photographed lengths of ric rac, an old-time trim used to hem clothes in zig-zag patterns. Repeating images of a woman piloting an

open-cockpit plane ring the picture's edges. They sit atop a human pyramid reminiscent of the Flying Wallendas, a high-wire act famous throughout much of the 20th century for executing daredevil maneuvers of exactly this sort.

*Squeezebox* (2021), another mandala, features accordion players arrayed in increasingly larger circles around a starburst at the center. Crowned by haloes, the musicians appear to possess occult powers, which is not something we typically associate with that much-maligned instrument. Weirder still: images of a smiling lady, topped by conifers to which fish attach, circle the outer edge of the picture, drawn in by what appears to be a magnetic force. *On Parade* (2019) carries similar nonsequiturs, the most notable being a man balancing a model sailboat on his head while toting strawberries the size of boulders, one in each hand.

The exhibition also includes a major digital collage that preceded the tondos. It's titled *A Western Trip* (2016), and its contents (rodeos, 4H events, family gatherings, old cars, fishermen) arrayed in the same repeating fashion as the mandalas, unfurl at a monumental scale, 120 by 162 inches. Where the mandalas can be seen as evidence of a cyclical view that what goes around comes around, this piece, with its rectangular format, seems to reflect a different and decidedly western orientation: that history, however splintered, moves forward linearly.

Either way, the artist seems to be more interested in producing visual impact than in serving up philosophical commentary. Like carnival barkers and circus-tent showmen of yore, Hart-Stone, using materials and methods of reproduction that span two centuries, seeks only to reel in viewers and hold them rapt.

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David M. Roth is the editor and publisher of *Squarecylinder*, the online visual art magazine serving the San Francisco Bay Area.



Dana Hart-Stone, *Dear Friend Lola*, 2021. UV cured acrylic ink on canvas, 75 in. diameter. Courtesy of the artist and Pie Projects Contemporary Art.  
Front cover: Dana Hart-Stone, *On Parade*, 2019. UV cured acrylic ink on canvas, 75 in. diameter. Courtesy of the artist and Brian Gross Fine Art.



Dana Hart-Stone, *Distracted by Ric Rac*, 2019. UV cured acrylic ink on canvas, 75 in. diameter. Courtesy of the artist and Brian Gross Fine Art.  
Verso: Dana Hart-Stone, *A Western Trip* (detail), 2016. UV cured acrylic ink on canvas, 120 x 162 in. Courtesy of the artist and Brian Gross Fine Art.