

# Art in America

110

## THE PERILS OF POST-INTERNET ART

by Brian Droitcour

Though its buzzworthy name implies a cutting-edge aesthetic, Post-Internet art reinforces an all-too-familiar gallery system, according to a critic of online culture.

120

## RICHARD BELLAMY

Interview by Billy Klüver and Julie Martin,  
introduction by Judith E. Stein

The legendary New York dealer who helped foster Pop and Minimal art reflects on his heyday in this recently rediscovered 1991 interview with two art world impresarios.

128

## THE HOLE TRUTH

by Raphael Rubinstein

In the 1970s Howardena Pindell adopted the simple hole punch as an artistic tool, creating distinctive abstractions inspired in part by African textiles.

136

## RE-CREATING STURTEVANT

by Eleanor Heartney

Sturtevant made her name with work that closely resembled—some might say copied—the art of her peers. The author considers the artist's late-career pivot to creating frenetic video installations that were all her own.

144

## PORTFOLIO

by Joshua Cohen, Jon Kessler and Alexander Provan

This collaborative project takes the form of an annual report for a faux Silicon Valley firm founded by a guru/entrepreneur known as the Global Village Idiot.

152

## THE FABRIC OF MEMORY

by Gregory Galligan

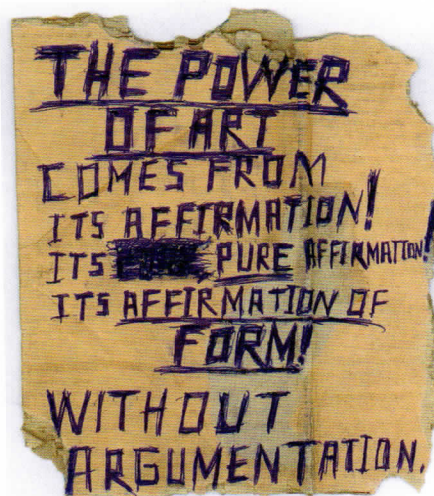
Taking a cue from military uniforms and religious iconography, Jakkai Siributr creates fabric sculptures and installations that offer pointed commentary on the troubled politics of his native Thailand.

160

## IN THE STUDIO: TOMMY HARTUNG

with Faye Hirsch

Religion, violence and social upheaval are among the major topics addressed in filmmaker Tommy Hartung's latest production, *THE BIBLE* (2014). The artist discusses his unconventional upbringing and the wide-ranging sources for his collagelike films.



Cover: Thomas Hirschhorn, formatted by Romain Lopez. See Contributors page.

# RICHARD BELLAMY

**The author of an upcoming biography  
on the art dealer unearths an unpublished  
interview from the early 1990s.**

## **Interview with Billy Klüver and Julie Martin Introduced and edited by Judith E. Stein**

ACCORDING TO THE CARTOONIST Saul Steinberg, the best art dealers have a fictitious quality. Richard Bellamy (1927-1998), the most influential and enigmatic dealer of the 1960s, called to mind Sir Gawain, Huckleberry Finn and Miniver Cheevy. The only child of a Kentucky-born father and a Chinese mother, both doctors, Bellamy grew up an outsider in an otherwise homogeneous Cincinnati suburb. Chinese artifacts were the first art he knew. Seventeen when his beloved mother died, he blundered through a few alcohol-hazed semesters of college before leaving home in 1948.

Provincetown, Mass., was Bellamy's portal to self-discovery. His future wife, artist Nancy Christopherson, introduced him to a circle of former Hans Hofmann students, and he attended Forum 49, a historic exhibition and event series in the city, including the first group show of Abstract Expressionists. By the early '50s, the couple were part of the bohemian arts community in Lower Manhattan. After a stint as a radio DJ, Bellamy, by then separated, found his life's work in 1955, when friends hired him to direct the Hansa Gallery, a Tenth Street cooperative that moved uptown. His four years at Hansa, tantamount to journey-

man training, were followed by a Wanderjahr (1959-60), when he visited artists' studios around the city and dreamed of a gallery he couldn't afford to open. Bellamy starred in Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's *Pull My Daisy* (1959), the quintessential short film of the Beat Generation, and took part in Happenings by Allan Kaprow and James Lee Byars. Ivan Karp, for a time the Hansa codirector, introduced him to collector Robert C. Scull, a taxi magnate looking for aggressive new art before prices went up.

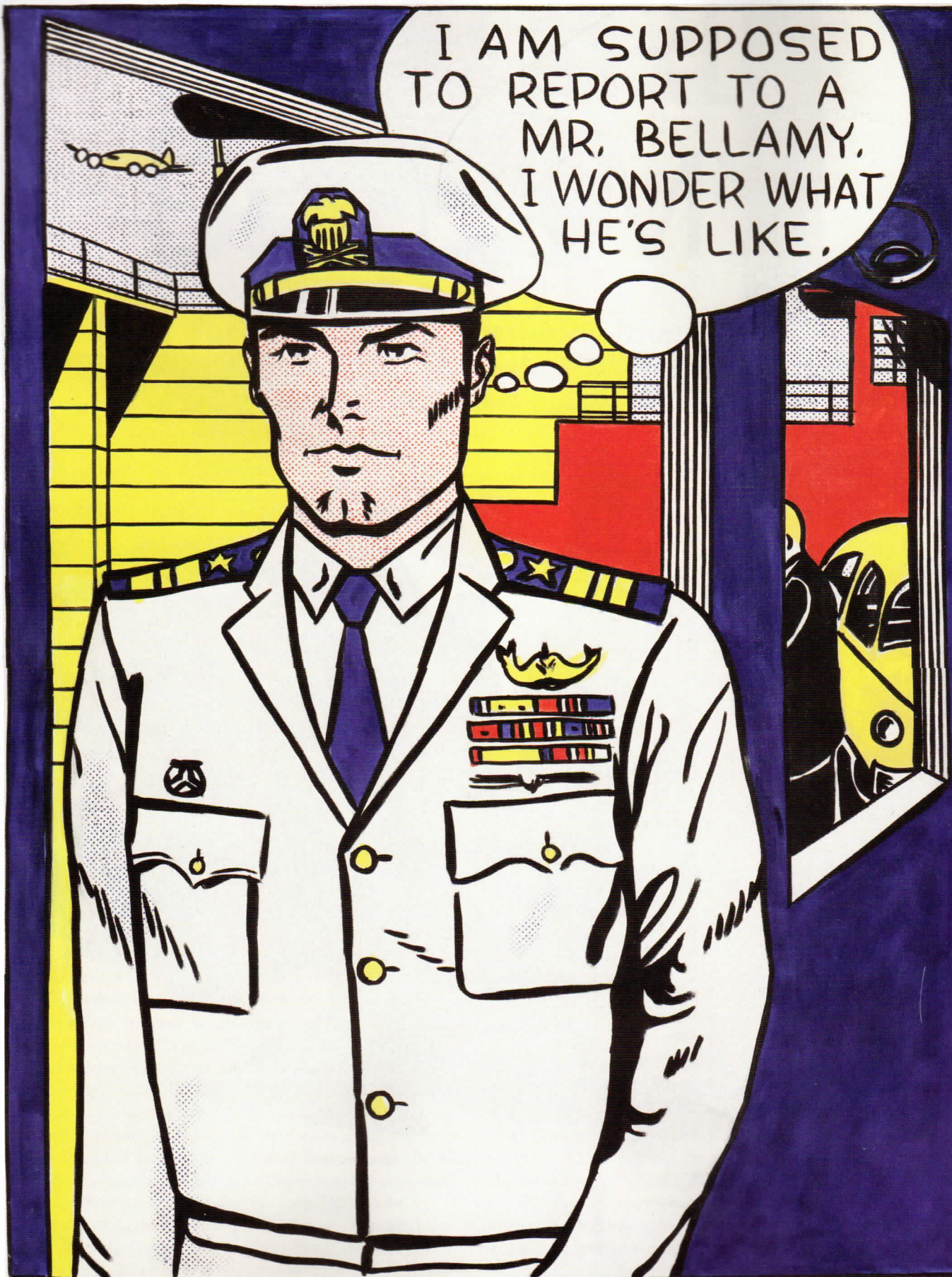
With Scull's covert backing, Bellamy opened the Green Gallery (1960-65) on West 57th Street. A publicity-shy impresario, Bellamy launched Mark di Suvero, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, Lucas Samaras, Larry Poons, George Segal, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Tadaaki Kuwayama and Tom Wesselmann, among others, and was the first to exhibit the sculpture of Yayoi Kusama. No gallery in New York or California showed Andy Warhol's Pop paintings earlier than did Green.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Bellamy's career was not his legendary eye but his disdain for art commerce. His insouciance frustrated his artists and troubled Scull, whose pullout in 1964 precipitated Green's closure a year later.

Richard Bellamy,  
ca. 1964. Photo  
© Bob Adelman.

JUDITH E. STEIN is a writer and independent curator. Her biography of dealer Richard Bellamy is forthcoming from Farrar, Straus and Giroux. See Contributors page.





Roy Lichtenstein:  
*Mr. Bellamy*,  
1961, oil on canvas,  
56½ by 42½ inches.  
© Estate of Roy  
Lichtenstein.

Bob and Ethel Scull were by then celebrity art collectors—the country’s first, a status derived in large part from what they acquired through Bellamy.

Bellamy organized occasional group shows at the Noah Goldowsky Gallery (1965-74) and dealt privately as the Hyena Escrow & Garanshee Development Company, representing Alfred Leslie, Jo Baer and Myron Stout. Before the '60s ended, he brokered Yoko Ono’s first sale (to Scull); introduced Bruce Nauman on the East Coast; proved indispensable to Walter De Maria’s and Michael Heizer’s Land art projects; and debuted Neil Jenney, Richard Serra, Dan Christensen and Keith Sonnier. European curators and dealers sought his advice as an *éminence grise*.

Bellamy lived with Charlotte Tokayer and their son, Miles (b. 1963), in the early '60s; thereafter, dancer Sally Gross was his intermittent life partner. A “founding” patron of Max’s Kansas City in 1966, Bellamy, with Gross’s help, largely stopped drinking by the mid-'70s. He maintained a loft on unfashionable Park Avenue South, where he represented Leslie and di Suvero, and learned photography to document the sculptor’s work. Bellamy ran the Oil & Steel Gallery on Chambers Street in pre-gentrified Tribeca from 1980 to '85, and then shifted it to di Suvero’s compound in Long Island City, his base of operation for 13 years. He and the young gallerist Barbara Flynn sustained a 10-year professional and personal partnership in the '80s and early '90s.

Over the years, Bellamy displayed acts of gratuitous kindness, jumpstarting the careers of Robert Zakanitch and Rafael Ferrer, whom he did not represent, and finding a publisher for Sophie Calle’s first book. He was an early adviser to P.S.1 founder Alanna Heiss. A mischievous man with fierce loyalties and a passion for poetry, Bellamy was a cipher to those who knew him. “I am supposed to report to a Mr. Bellamy. I wonder what he’s like,” reads the text in an early painting by Roy Lichtenstein. Bellamy, age 70, died in his sleep in 1998, a copy of Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* propped open on his chest.

*Billy Klüver (1927-2004), a Bell Labs scientist and cofounder of Experiments in Art and Technology, together with his wife Julie Martin, conducted more than 400 interviews with people in the arts around the world between 1990 and '92 as background for an unpublished follow-up to their book Kiki's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900-1930 (1989). The following text consists of excerpts from their interview with Richard (Dick) Bellamy, conducted on Mar. 4, 1991.*

**RICHARD BELLAMY** It’s lovely to see you. This is the first time we’ve sat down together in maybe 30 years.

**BILLY KLÜVER** I understand you have Chinese ancestry.

**BELLAMY** My mother was Chinese. She was a physician, and so was my father—they met in medical school in Cincinnati.

**KLÜVER** You grew up in Wyoming, a suburb of Cincinnati. How long were you there?



**BELLAMY** All through grade school, high school and my first two semesters at the University of Cincinnati, where I got bounced. In 1947 I tried a semester at the Columbia University College of General Studies and flunked out of that too.

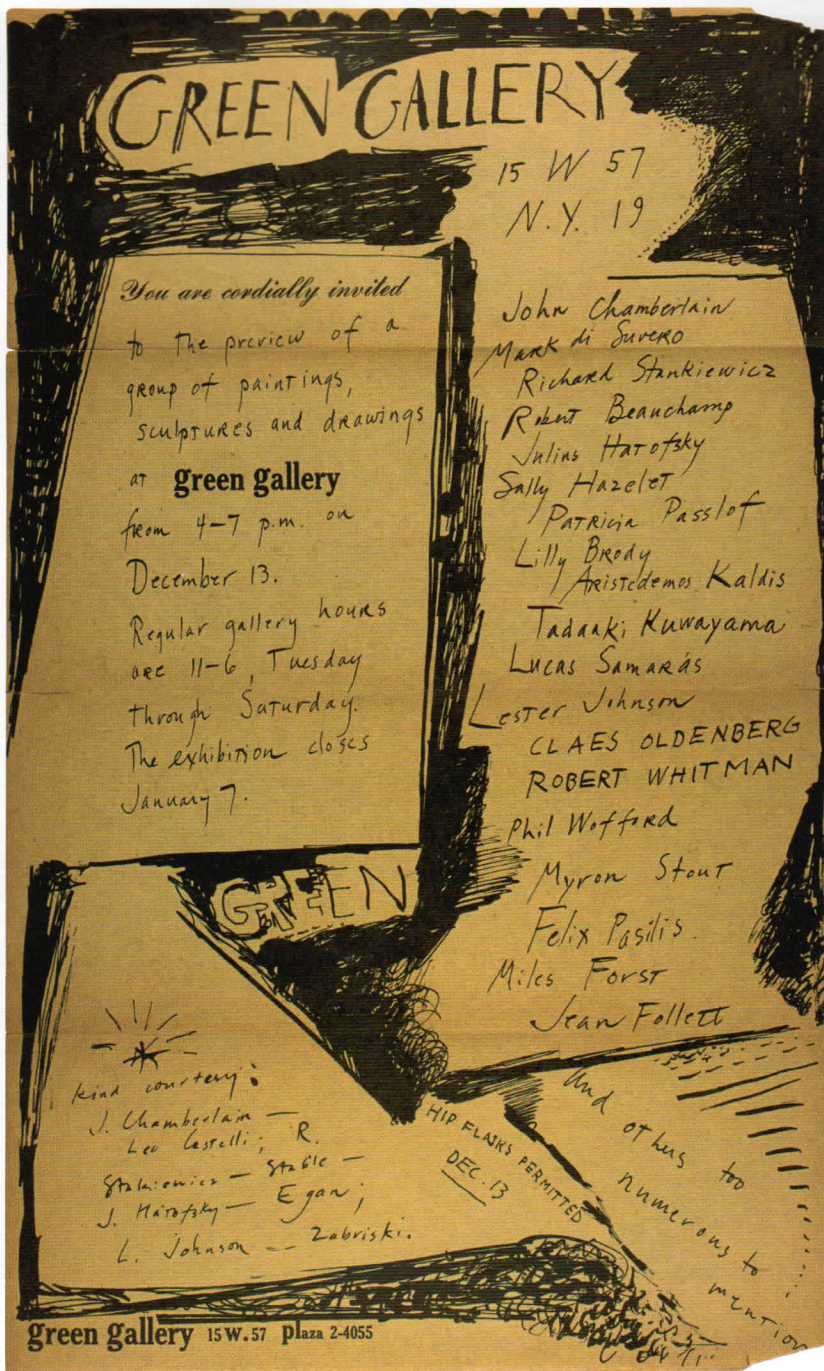
**KLÜVER** Provincetown, what was that like in 1948-49?

**BELLAMY** How could you not be influenced by Provincetown? I was there for about a year and a half, and saw Forum 49 and the 1949 summer exhibition of Abstract Expressionists including Pollock, Motherwell, Tworkov and Stamos. I fell in love with Nancy Christopherson, a self-taught painter who had exiled herself from Manhattan.

**KLÜVER** Did you go to The Club, or the Cedar Bar?

**BELLAMY** Nancy and I made a few trips into Manhattan from Provincetown before we moved there in the winter of 1949.

Bellamy (left) and collector Robert Scull at the Venice Biennale, 1968. Photographer unknown. Courtesy Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Poster for a 1960 group exhibition at Green Gallery, New York. © Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, New York.

Before The Club got to be The Club, I was present when de Kooning gave a talk called “A Desperate View.”<sup>1</sup> There were about 15 or 20 people in the audience in a small, second-story loft. I was in the front row. I turned around and saw de Kooning, sitting in back of me. Robert Motherwell came to the podium and said, “I don’t know why, but Bill de Kooning has asked me to read this to you.” Then he read de Kooning’s text out loud in a very neutral, dull, uninspired way. But I remember being perfectly astonished at its splendor, it was just so beautiful. I *knew* about the Cedar Bar but I was too scared to go—all these big guys were there. But I made my way there [laughter]; I missed some of the hardline stuff that you hear about.

KLÜVER What about Clement Greenberg?

BELLAMY It was like a first love; respect, but with affection. Clem was to me—as well as to a lot of people—a real childlike person. His prose in the *Partisan Review* was exciting stuff. I really liked his phrase—“American-type painting.” And that’s what it was.

KLÜVER How did you get to be an art dealer?

BELLAMY Through Nancy I met the artists who in 1952 went on to form the cooperative Hansa Gallery, including Miles Forst, my oldest friend, Jan Müller, Wolf Kahn and George Segal. The Tanager and the Hansa were the first of the Tenth Street co-ops.

After the Hansa moved uptown to Central Park South, the members asked me to be one of their directors, that is, just to *sit* in the gallery. I had never thought of becoming a dealer; that was not my intention.

KLÜVER How did Ivan Karp get to work at the Hansa?

BELLAMY I’m responsible for Ivan. [Laughter.] I had separated from my wife, Nancy, and was living out of a closet at the Hansa, usually with a half-pint of Napoleon brandy at my side. Ivan came to the gallery to review shows for the *Village Voice*. After I decided that I didn’t want to spend five days a week there—or the members suggested it [laughter]—I recommended Ivan as co-director. We worked together for two years [1956-58]. He left to go to Martha Jackson’s, and I was alone there for the last year. It closed the summer of ’59.

JULIE MARTIN Was it because no one was interested?

BELLAMY It had already gone on too long. Jan had died; Richard Stankiewicz had gone to the Stable Gallery and Wolf Kahn to Grace Borgenicht’s. It had the *obvious* problems inherent in a cooperative.

KLÜVER Did you have a sense of a tradition of figurative painting?

BELLAMY I liked Lester’s paintings a lot;<sup>2</sup> Giacometti. But for me, or someone my age, abstraction was . . . a concept that seemed in the intensity of the mystical realm. It was like life itself, the work that meant the most to me at that time.

I loved Jan Müller’s paintings. The first de Koonings I saw were in the *Partisan Review*, the 1947-48 black-and-white paintings, and they just went into the back of my skull. I also loved David Smith’s work but not the first Pollocks—I was late to understand what was happening there. I was beginning to understand abstract art in another way. The greatest artists of our time were in the forefront of my being, experience, the imperium, as it were. I didn’t see [abstraction and figuration] as battling against each other.

KLÜVER Did you see abstract painting as a kind of freedom?

BELLAMY When I saw abstract art I really didn’t think of the person in front of the canvas marking huge motions. My image was of an artist alone in the studio, sitting on a stool, looking at what he was doing.

KLÜVER I can’t think of anything today that resembles the feeling of *Pull My Daisy*.

BELLAMY Sweet little film, perfect of its kind.

KLÜVER How did it come about?



**BELLAMY** Alfred Leslie wanted to make a film—he had made them before. He and Robert Frank were very close friends, next-door neighbors on Third Avenue, and Robert wanted to move into film work. So there was this collaboration. I remember being present when Robert and Alfred were going over lots of shots for *The Americans* [1959]. There were many, many that were edited out, and Robert and Alfred were looking at them together.

**KLÜVER** How long did it take to do *Pull My Daisy*?

**BELLAMY** The shooting took place over a period of several weeks or more, but the editing took a long while.

**MARTIN** You started the Green Gallery with your friends.

**BELLAMY** They were the people I developed a relationship with at the Hansa. After it closed, I drifted or looked for a job for about a year. I worked for Martha Jackson for five or six weeks, during which time I sold nothing and she fired me. I was going to the bars, and I was going to the studios of people I really *knew*, and I was spending a lot of time with Alfred; I was very close to him; I was one of his acolytes; I thought he was one of the best artists around.

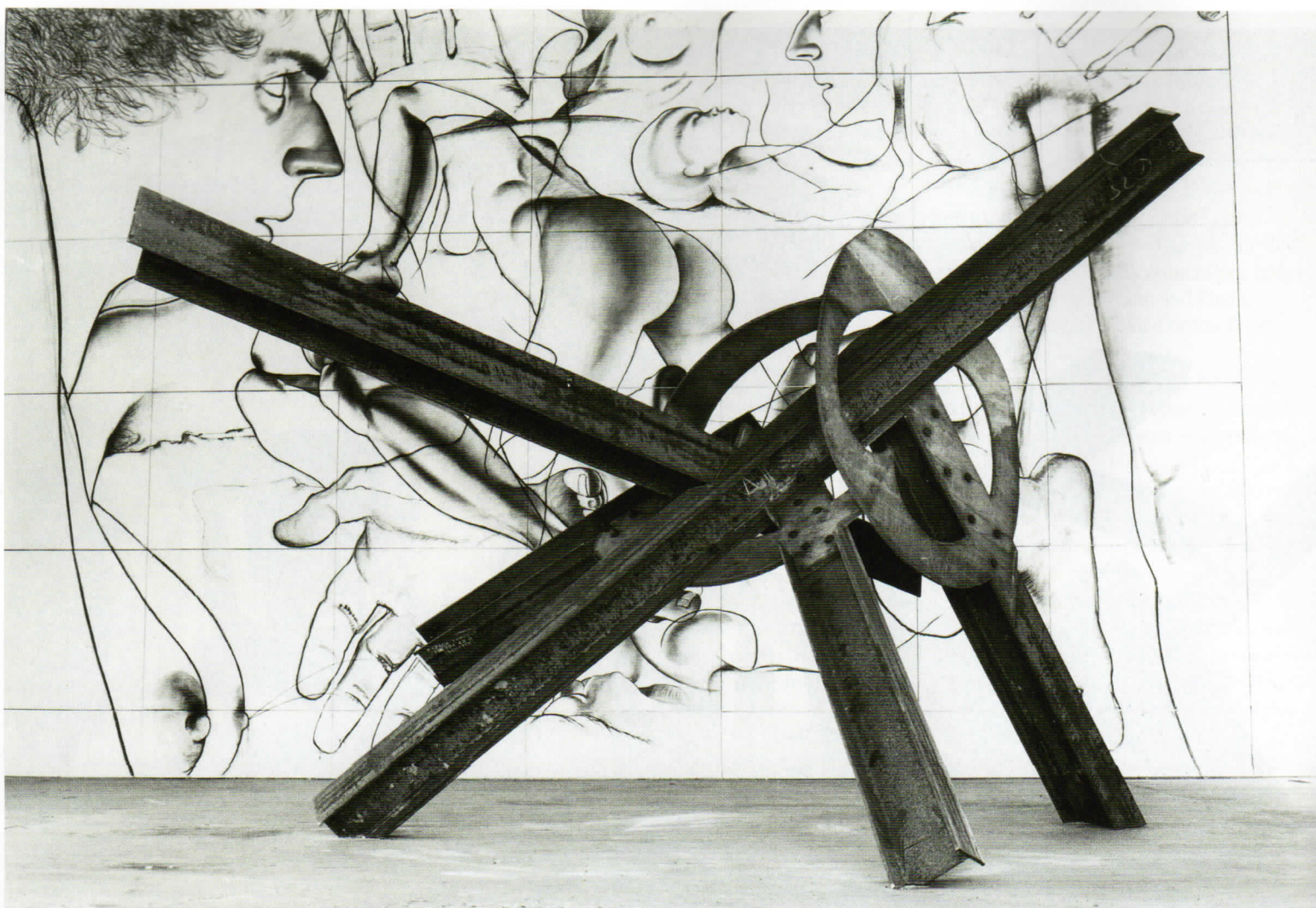
**KLÜVER** You're known for your silences on studio visits.

**BELLAMY** When you go to an artist's studio, it is best to keep your mouth shut. One always wants to look good in the artist's eyes, to say something brief and astute if one can. Generally I would say *nothing*, because I felt that I knew what I was looking at, and the artist oughta *know* that I knew what I was looking at, and if it was very, very good, I didn't have to tell them, because they knew that I knew. Of course, I was wrong about that, all along the line.

**KLÜVER** Didn't you also make studio visits as part of a group?

**BELLAMY** Ivan, myself, Henry Geldzahler, Bill Seitz and Peter Selz were touring artists' studios together [1960-61]. Selz had just come to the Modern, and so had Seitz, who'd been a prof at Princeton. Henry was still fresh on the scene at the Met. I can't remember how it began. I can just imagine Bill saying, "What's going on, Ivan?" Ivan getting names from people and Peter wanting to come along, and Henry, and Ivan saying, "Let's all do this together."

View of Mark di Suvero's 1960 exhibition at Green Gallery, showing *Hankchampion* (foreground), 1960, and *Barrel Piece*, 1959. Courtesy Spacetime C.C., Long Island City. Photo Rudolph Burckhardt.



Di Suvero's *Quantum*, 1986-87, with a mural by Alfred Leslie, at Oil & Steel Gallery, Long Island City, 1987. Photographer unknown. Courtesy Spacetime C.C.

**KLÜVER** I don't think anybody had done that. It was a new idea.

**BELLAMY** The early '60s was a different time from the '50s, going to studios with museum personnel, getting to see the artists before they had their first shows.

**KLÜVER** How did you meet Robert Scull?

**BELLAMY** Ivan had met Bob Scull, who wanted to back a gallery. He arranged a dim sum breakfast in Chinatown with me and Scull, and that's how the Green began. Actually I had met Scull first at Martha Jackson because he bought a painting of Alfred's; and that's where Scull first saw [John] Chamberlain's work.

**MARTIN** So Scull already knew what was going . . .

**BELLAMY** Well, this is the beginning of his knowing. I just wanted a steady job when I met Scull. At the Green, I pulled in my \$75-a-week paycheck for two years. . . . [There's] the whole story [*laughter*]. I had heard about Mark di Suvero through Pat Passlof; shortly after that, Mark's accident occurred. I already knew Mark would be my first show, knew that the space I was looking to rent would have to accommodate his sculpture.

**KLÜVER** What was your agreement with Scull? He paid you, and he paid the gallery? What did he do—take it out in paintings?

**BELLAMY** You could say he got a very good deal. Nobody else was buying the work. Had I been wiser, not as much work

would have gone into Bob's [collection] as it did. More should have been kept by the artists. But after the first show, Mark di Suvero's, there were simply no sales for the next two years. At that time, it was: hang on Sunday and Monday; open Tuesday; three weeks up; then down. Nothing was sold in the first exhibition except to Scull. People didn't begin to buy things until late '62, '63.

**MARTIN** Really?

**BELLAMY** Yes, thanks to the promotion of Pop art by Sidney Janis and Leo Castelli. During this time the gallery's expenses were going up. If I couldn't pay a given month's bills, then Scull would buy enough to make up the deficit, and, of course, he would get a 50 percent discount. I made a commission on it, but I didn't get 40 percent or whatever it was. He kept the Green going until 1964. I was never an astute salesman; I didn't know anything about marketing. When the Tremaines bought two Rosenquists and several Oldenburgs, you cannot believe how *surprised* I was to see these works selling.

I was trying to keep the gallery going financially. Scull, being a businessman, wanted the gallery to exist as a business, not as my plaything.

Leo Castelli instituted a 50 percent commission for his gallery on each sale. I couldn't adjust to the idea of the artist getting only half of the sale. Before Leo, the standard New York City



commission was 33⅓ percent. At that time, you took photographs of three works for each exhibition so that you could hand out one to each of the art magazines. Certainly there was no idea of photographing every work in the show; it was pretty much on a nickel-and-dime basis. Leo also instituted the European practice of giving stipends to the artists—I also began doing that to justify taking that commission. At the time stipends were small amounts of money, \$300 or \$500 a month. Personally, I was hitting the bottom during this period.

**KLÜVER** Was Bob's wife, Ethel, ever involved?

**BELLAMY** No, she wasn't. She didn't know what was going on. But Ethel taught me something, and I am grateful to her for it. I was in bad shape in early 1962. My scene had been deteriorating very badly. I understood that my *job* was in jeopardy. Ethel told me that Bob was seriously fed up. She said, "Dick, I know Bob. And he's going to close the gallery; he's not going to support you anymore unless something is happening." She advised me to use Pledge furniture polish on the desk. "Get it shiny." Shortly after that, I gave Jim [Rosenquist] his first show. I began to climb out of that deepest part of my detrimental state. Do I credit any of that to Ethel? To Pledge? It could very well be. [*Laughter.*]

**KLÜVER** When was Oldenburg's first show?

**BELLAMY** September 1962. That was after the summer Claes confined Patty [Mucha] to the Green Gallery, sewing, super designing [patterns for the canvas sculpture]. . . . Other pieces in the show had been in The Store—what passion was in all those plaster pieces. One was a double hamburger—the Modern bought 'em for 300 bucks.

**MARTIN** Where did Bob Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns fit it?

**BELLAMY** Jasper's painting *Green Target* was in a show at the Jewish Museum [1957]; I didn't get it. Allan Kaprow was also in it. I remember hearing Allan speaking with Meyer Schapiro at the Hansa Gallery; Meyer was the show's curator. "Meyer, you've got to put Jasper Johns in that exhibition." It certainly impressed me that Allan was being a little discourteous, a little too full of his oats. There was definitely a tone in Meyer's voice, a kind of supreme patience.

I was aware of Bob's work, the rooster; the classic Combines from his 1955 show at the Pointdexter Gallery. I dug his work.

**KLÜVER** How did the Tenth Street artists respond to Rauschenberg?

**BELLAMY** They felt a threat without their knowing it. They were putting the work down, but they knew it was good, without being willing to admit it. I remember speaking with Ken Noland later in the '60s, when we got to know each other. He asked me what I thought of Rauschenberg. He had heard about that goat with the tire around it, and he had gone to see it, and he wondered what all the fuss was about.

A lot of artists knew Rauschenberg had done window decorating, and they had this con line, "This sure isn't painting like I make it." People were putting him down as a homosexual decorator. They wouldn't say it that way, but that was what was on their minds: "He isn't 'in'; he doesn't know anybody that I know." That's what I would pick up from the artists. I said,

"Ken, it's not like that." When I first saw those pieces, they looked really fresh to me. It looked to me like Rauschenberg was really trying to do something.

At that time there was no question that Johns was very prominent; much was being made of him, and nothing was being made of all the core Tenth Street artists. Sad. "Look at this guy. He's getting all this publicity, and he's just beginning to learn how to paint!" [*Laughter.*]

**KLÜVER** Green Gallery, where did the name come from?

**BELLAMY** Scull would not sit still for some of the names that Ivan and I came up with in 1960: Oil & Steel, OK Harris Gallery, the Big Tit gallery, the Finger Lakes Gallery and others. At the last minute we had to sign the incorporation papers, and Scull said, "Look, let's make this simple." So I said, "Call it the Green Gallery." I had heard that green was a very difficult color to make a painting with.

**MARTIN** [*Laughter.*] That's great. ○

1. The talk was delivered at the artists organization Subjects of the Artist: A New Art School, 35 East 8th Street, New York, on Feb. 18, 1949. It was the first of three lectures by de Kooning on his personal aesthetic theories. <http://www.dekooning.org>.
2. Bellamy is referring to figurative expressionist Lester Johnson (1919–2010).

Bellamy at Oil & Steel Gallery's Chambers Street location, ca. 1983. Photo Dianne Blell.

