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# ARTnews



## Those '70s Shows

**Head in the Clouds:  
Tomás Saraceno**

Not-So-Still Lives:  
Thiebaud on Morandi

**Dancing with the Stars:  
Merce Cunningham's Artists**



and some jars and debris scattered across the floor are all that remains of the former occupants. —*Alice Thorson*

## Max Klinger

**Childs**  
**Boston**

Max Klinger did not discover the unconscious, but he gave it vivid form in his black-and-white etchings, made around the same time Sigmund Freud was plumbing its depths in his landmark studies. It was in Klinger's suites of prints, rather than in his paintings and sculptures, that the German artist realized the greatest degree of expressive freedom, unleashing visions at once mesmerizing and chilling.

Love, sex, disease, and death fill the images selected for this small but potent exhibition. A naked baby sits with preternatural calm atop the chest of its dead mother in *Tote Mutter* (Dead Mother, 1898), an etching and engraving from "Vom Tode II" (Of Death II). A man bobbing in a stormy sea gasps for air, possibly before descending forever, in *Untergang* (Going Under, 1884), from



Max Klinger, *Untergang* (Going Under) from "Ein Leben" (A Life), 1884, etching, 10 1/2" x 9". Childs.

"Ein Leben" (A Life). *Mondnacht* (Moonlit Night, 1881) features two centaurs lounging as casually as picnickers at the edge of a ravine.

If the circumstances of these scenes

are fantastical, their recording is quite the opposite. Crisp lines trace realistic figures amid natural settings and charged interiors. Hitchcockian horror whooshes through the plague-riddled sick ward in *Pest* (Plague, 1903), from "Vom Tode II." While bodies hover near death in rows of infirmary beds, a nun wields her rosary beads as a weapon, swinging at the black birds swooping across the room. Klinger carefully captured the curtains billowing ominously in the breeze, the sunken eyes of the moribund patients, and the black feathers of outstretched wings.

The artist's netherworld resists the tidy packaging of civilized society. Instead, in this realm, mysteries and taboos hold sway, threatening to overwhelm the precarious balance of everyday life. Klinger understood that he could best illustrate the power of the psyche by setting it loose in places viewers might recognize—or think they do.

—*Joanne Silver*

## Mary Anne Kluth

**Frey Norris**  
**San Francisco**

Conceived as a simulation of a didactic exhibition, Mary Anne Kluth's "Visitor Center" featured handcrafted "rocks," photographs of handmade dioramas, watercolor and graphite renditions of minerals, and infographics that mimic those found in natural-history museums. The artist was inspired by her geologist father's extensive rock collection and his descriptions of the different specimens.

One of 15 C-prints featuring rock samples in constructed tableaux, *Black Cliffs in Illinois, Shiny Cubes Sticking Out of Each Other* (2011) showcases faux cubic crystals in a cartoon palette of bright yellows and oranges. These and other rocks are



Mary Anne Kluth, *Black Cliffs in Illinois, Shiny Cubes Sticking Out of Each Other*, 2011, C-print on aluminum, 20" x 16". Frey Norris.

situated amid cliffs and mountains constructed from plaster cloth and cardboard, among other materials. In *The Colorado River Outside the State of Colorado, Rocks Like Pieces of Wood* (2011), artificial mesas rise from a painted desert studded with toy cacti and candy-colored objects that look like petrified wood. The smoke-gray sky, rendered in watercolor, hints at rain.

The artist's diorama photographs were complemented by a handful of infographics, including a pie chart detailing the material make-up of Kluth's rocks (concrete, expanding foam, chicken wire, etc.), a house floor plan that supposedly maps the "distribution" of rocks in the artist's childhood home, and a humorous graph with the self-explanatory title *Magnitudes of Rocks, or How Likely My Dad Will Want to Take it Home* (2010).

Kluth's esthetic, with its fanciful colors and miniature scale, is heavily influenced by her work as a restoration painter at Children's Fairyland, a theme park in Oakland. But her beautiful watercolor and graphite renderings of rocks and minerals on plain white paper are like scientific illustrations, adding some realist heft to the tongue-in-cheek pseudoscience of this show. "Visitor Center" was playful on first glance, but Kluth asks serious questions about what is real. —*Lea Feinstein*