

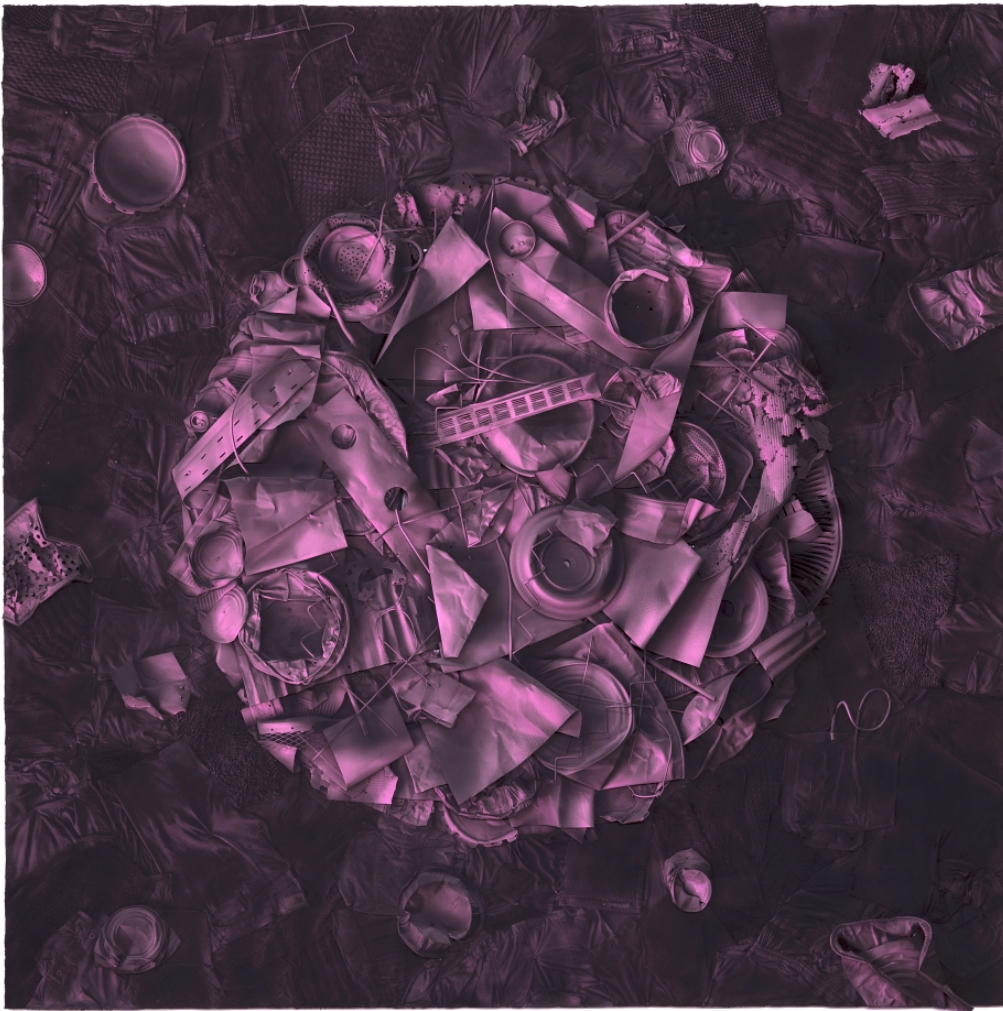
The New Criterion

Dispatch September 24, 2019 11:46 am

The Critic's Notebook

by The Editors

This week: Bruce Gagnier, William Monaghan, the *Country Life* archives & more.



William Monaghan, Untitled (1724), 2017, Steel, aluminum and paint on wood panel, Octavia Gallery.

Art:

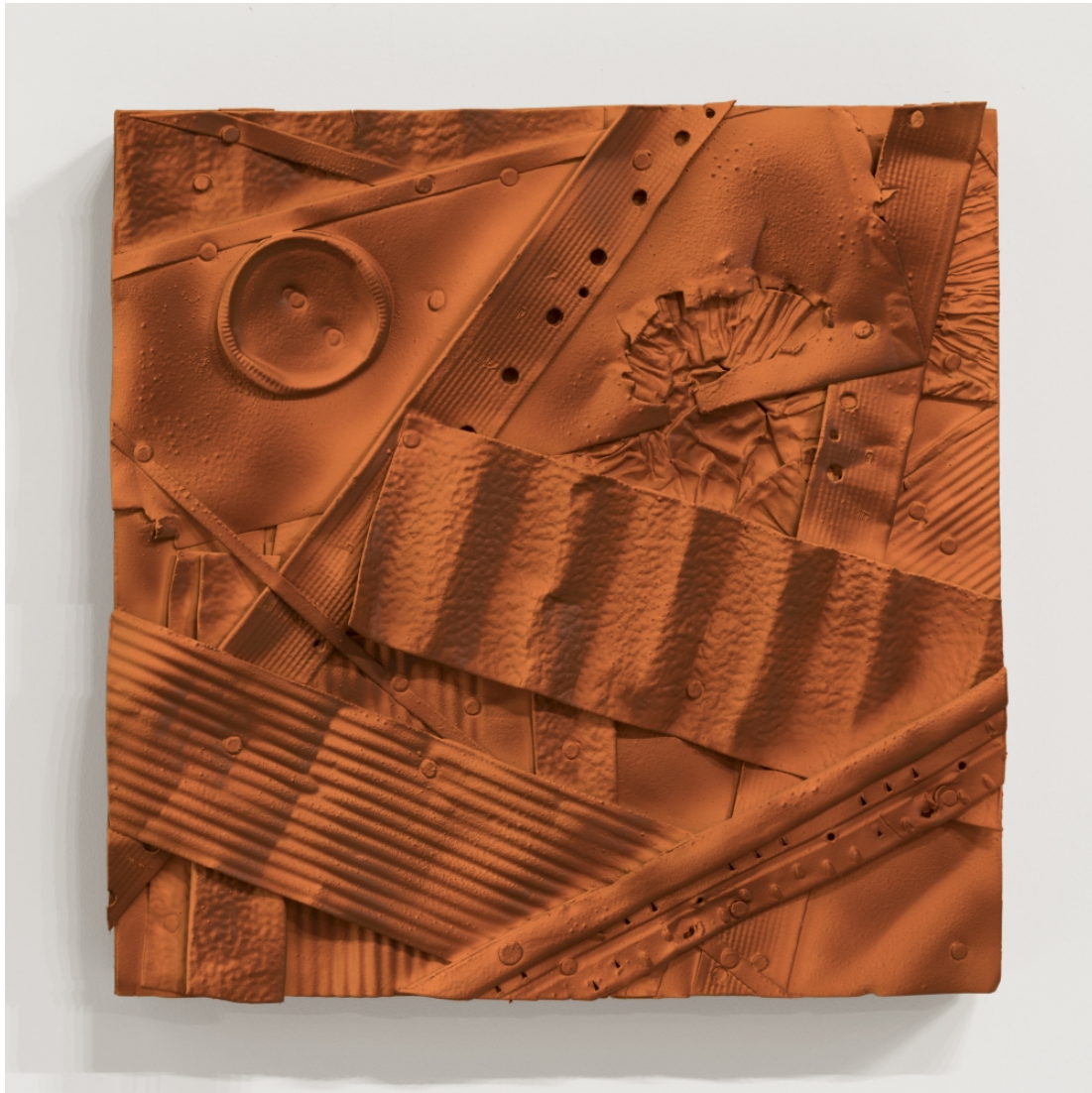


Bruce Gagnier, Lefty, 2017, Bronze, New York Studio School.

“Bruce Gagnier: Stance,” at the New York Studio School (through October 13): Bruce Gagnier’s distended sculptures all look as if they swallowed something disagreeable. Their humors are off, sometimes way off, as they sway along and toddle about. Gagnier comes out of a classical and

Renaissance sculptural tradition. His nude figures and portrait busts are created in plaster and clay and cast in bronze. But with their misshapen heads and out-of-proportion limbs, these are the opposite of Vitruvian men and women. Now at the gallery of the New York Studio School, where he is on faculty, “Bruce Gagner: Stance” brings together ten of these figures in bronze, craning and bending and trying to ignore everyone else around. As both figures and sculptures, his works seem equally worn down. What results is an unearthing of form and an archaeology of emotion. —JP

Art:



William Monaghan, Untitled (1721), 2017, Steel, aluminum, and paint on wood panel, Octavia Gallery.

“William Monaghan: Environmental Studies” at Octavia Gallery, High Line Nine (through October 5): William Monaghan is an abstract artist whose recent work consists of painted pieces of scrapyard metal affixed to square wooden panels of various sizes. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the native New Orleanian began making these forceful pieces to engage artistically with the industrial detritus in which his hometown was then awash. Now, in one of the new “High Line Nine” arcade gallery spaces on Twenty-seventh Street, Octavia Gallery presents “William Monaghan:

Environmental Studies.” Here, Monaghan continues to investigate the formal potentials of the square format, introducing to his “studies” a set of radioactive color combinations that heighten the post-apocalyptic unease of these uncanny pictures. —AS

Music:



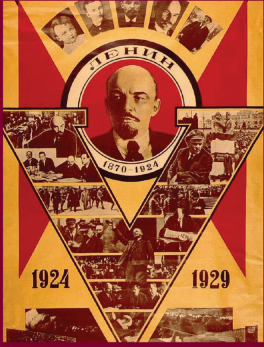
“The William R. Miller Grand Organ Recital,” featuring Jeremy Filsell, at Saint Thomas Church (September 27): The past few weeks in New York City have been kind to organ amateurs. Two weeks ago I flagged Paul Jacobs’s three-part series, “The Great French Organ Tradition,” which is set to conclude this Tuesday at Saint Ignatius Loyola on the Upper East Side. To hear a talent such as Jacobs’s is a treat on any occasion; hear it in a sacred space such as this one, and you’ll be left breathless. (If you need a second opinion, read our music critic Jay Nordlinger’s review of the Saint Mary’s concert.) But if, once dazzled by Jacobs, you still find your week coming up short on polyphonic grandeur, you can head a few blocks south on Friday to hear Jeremy Filsell give a concert on the Miller–Scott Organ at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue. The evening will serve as a double inauguration of sorts. In addition to kicking off Saint Thomas’s 2019–20 “Grand Organ Series,” it represents Filsell’s formal introduction to the church community that he now serves as organist and director of music. The state-of-the-art Miller–Scott Organ at Saint Thomas, dedicated in 2018, arrived a year too early for the trifecta. —RE

Architecture:



English House Style: From the Archives of Country Life, by John Goodall (Rizzoli): Architectural historians know what a valuable resource the *Country Life* Picture Library is. Since 1897 the English weekly has been documenting the finest, most notable, or most characteristic houses in England. Now the general public has a chance to dip into the archives with the recent publication of *English House Style*, a gorgeous compendium of interior shots and a primer for those wishing to know more about the historical styles that have made English design a byword for elegance. Each chapter handles a different style, from Romanesque to Modernism and Post-Modernism, and is prefaced with an essay by John Goodall, *Country Life*'s architectural editor. But most of the text takes the form of extended captions of pictures. We learn style through example and appreciate the continuities through a thousand years of decorating. —BR

Upcoming at *The New Criterion*:



“Leninthink:
on the pernicious legacy of Vladimir Lenin”

The First Annual Circle
of *The New Criterion* Lecture
September 25, 2019
6–8 p.m.

SPEAKER
Gary Saul Morson,
*Lawrence B. Dumas Professor of the Arts
and Humanities at Northwestern University*

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Gary Saul Morson

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“Leninthink: On the pernicious legacy of Vladimir Lenin,” featuring Gary Saul Morson (September 25).
Presenting *The New Criterion*’s First Annual Circle Lecture.

From the Archive:



“Heavy sentences,” by Joseph Epstein (June 2011). On *How to Write a Sentence and How to Read One*, by Stanley Fish.

From our pages:



“Jaap ’n’ Glass ’n’ Kelli,” by Jay Nordlinger. On a night at the New York Philharmonic.

Each week the editors of *The New Criterion* offer recommendations on what to read, see, and hear in the world of culture in the weekly Critic’s Notebook. To get it first, subscribe to the free Critic’s Notebook email by [clicking here](#).