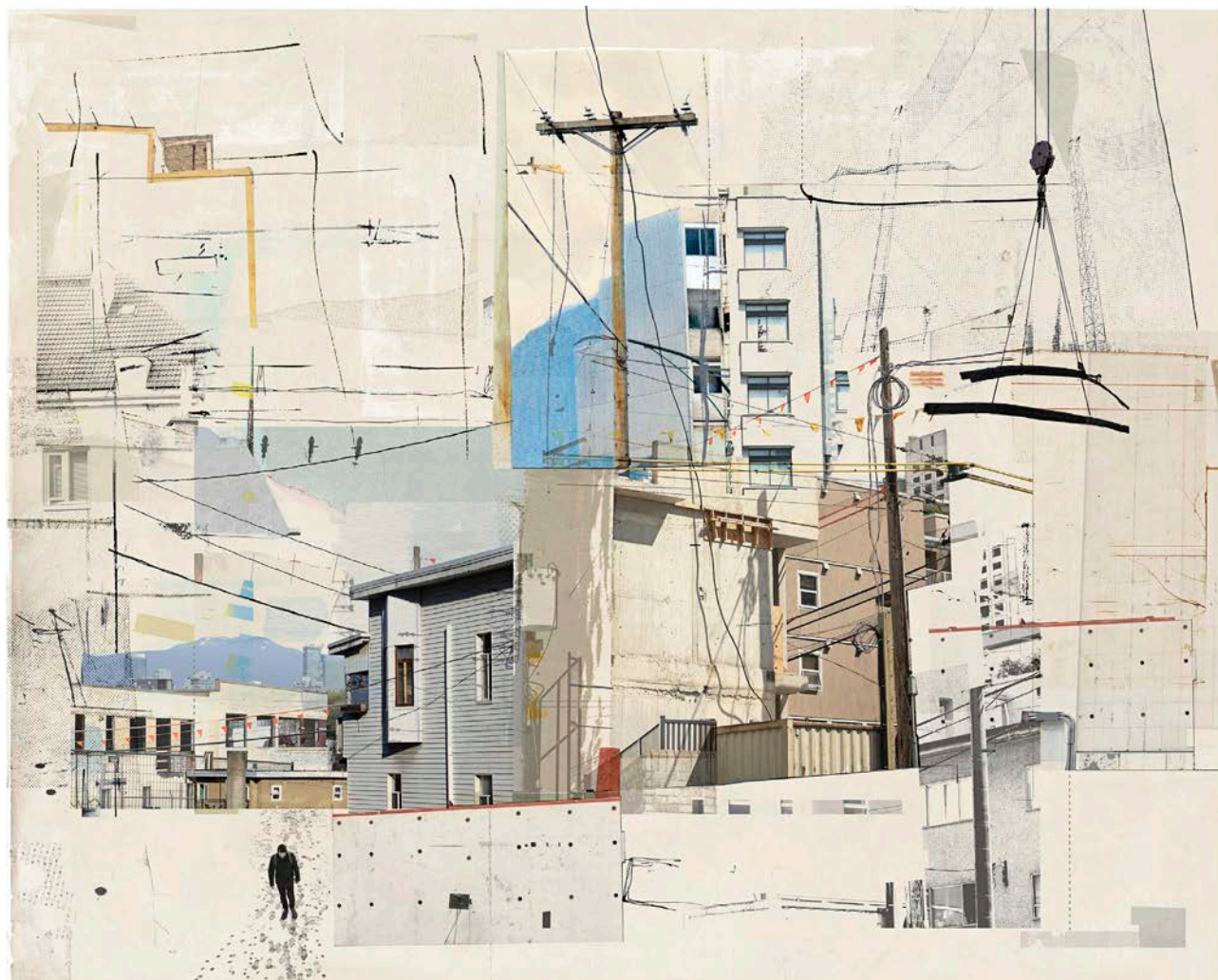


B A R B A R A
S T R I G E L



R E S T L E S S
S Y M M E T R I E S

FOTO RELEVANCE HOUSTON TEXAS

JUL 16 - SEP 3, 2022

BARBARA STRIGEL

R E S T L E S S

S Y M M E T R I E S

Cover Image: Reading Architecture

Archival digital collage with colored pencil

14 x 18" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP

30.25 x 38" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP

RESTLESS SYMMETRIES

BY GEOFFREY C. KOSLOV

Restless Symmetries brings together two artists of differing backgrounds who share common ground in their art. For Barbara Strigel, her images are a visual essay on the nature of our perception of cities. For Kelda Van Patten, her work is in the style of a not-so-classic still life with visual reference to our internal environment and our inner selves inspired by selected poetry. Both artists exhibit a common energy in their work: a certain anxiety, pleasure, restlessness and motion. One exhibits symmetry in architecture from various countries; and the other a correspondence between symbolism embedded in both words and images. What appear to be disparate works come together in Restless Symmetries.

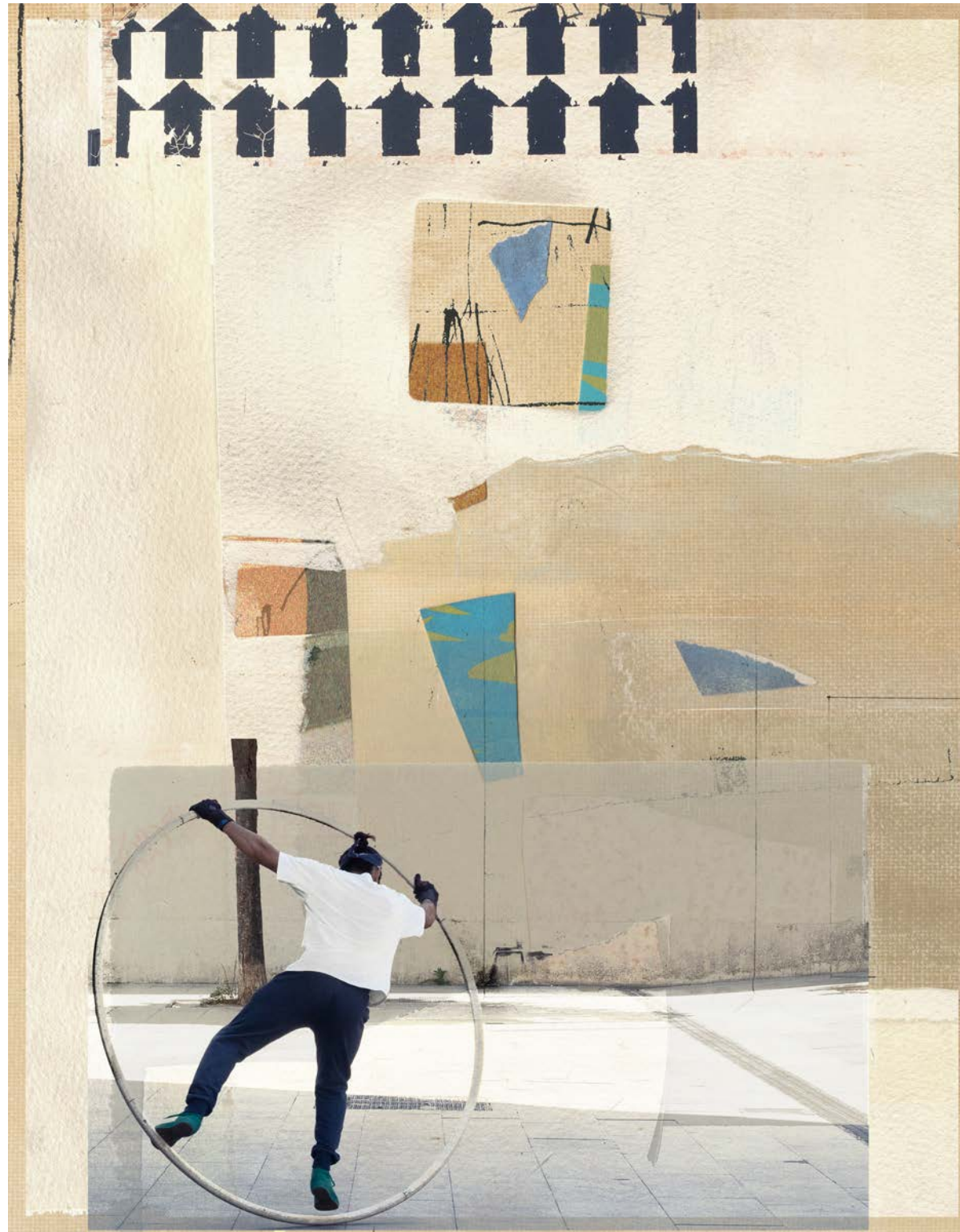
Barbara Strigel uses her urban/street photography to convey the sense of being "alone together" in urban life. In much of Strigel's work, she features shadow-like images of people in motion. For the body of work entitled "We Were Neither Here nor There," she comments: "There's a certain gestalt in the balance of connection and separation that occurs in cities. We go about our business, sharing the sidewalk but lost in our own thoughts... For me, street photography and collage are both a search for unity. " Another set of her images is titled "If We Were to Talk about Architecture." Here, she comments: "In the shape of the city, there are instances when architecture becomes an entry point. The shadow of leaves on a blue wall becomes a recollection of summer, telephone wires sing jazz, and a repetition of square windows evoke a meditation. These fragmentary moments are resonant, sensory perceptions that invite connection to space." In Strigel's imagery, there is a simultaneous sense of the intangible connection with others in cities, and a sense of common ground and shared existence as we go about our lives in the same urban environment which, in a very real sense, holds and contains us.

Her works are interpretations of the idea of the city, and as such often combine imagery of multiple cities. The images are captured from a life that is very international. Her husband is German, and her first husband was Iranian. In addition to the United States and Canada, she has traveled to Germany, Turkey, Italy, Iran, Croatia, Cambodia, Japan, Mexico, Bonaire, Czech Republic, Hungary, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Austria. What she photographs and how she uses that imagery depends on what aspect of those cities move her and how she reacts to being there. Why are there multiple locations in her collages? Strigel answers, "I am often working with photographs from my travel archive. As a traveller, I am interested in the character of particular places, but these collages are not about specific locations. Instead,

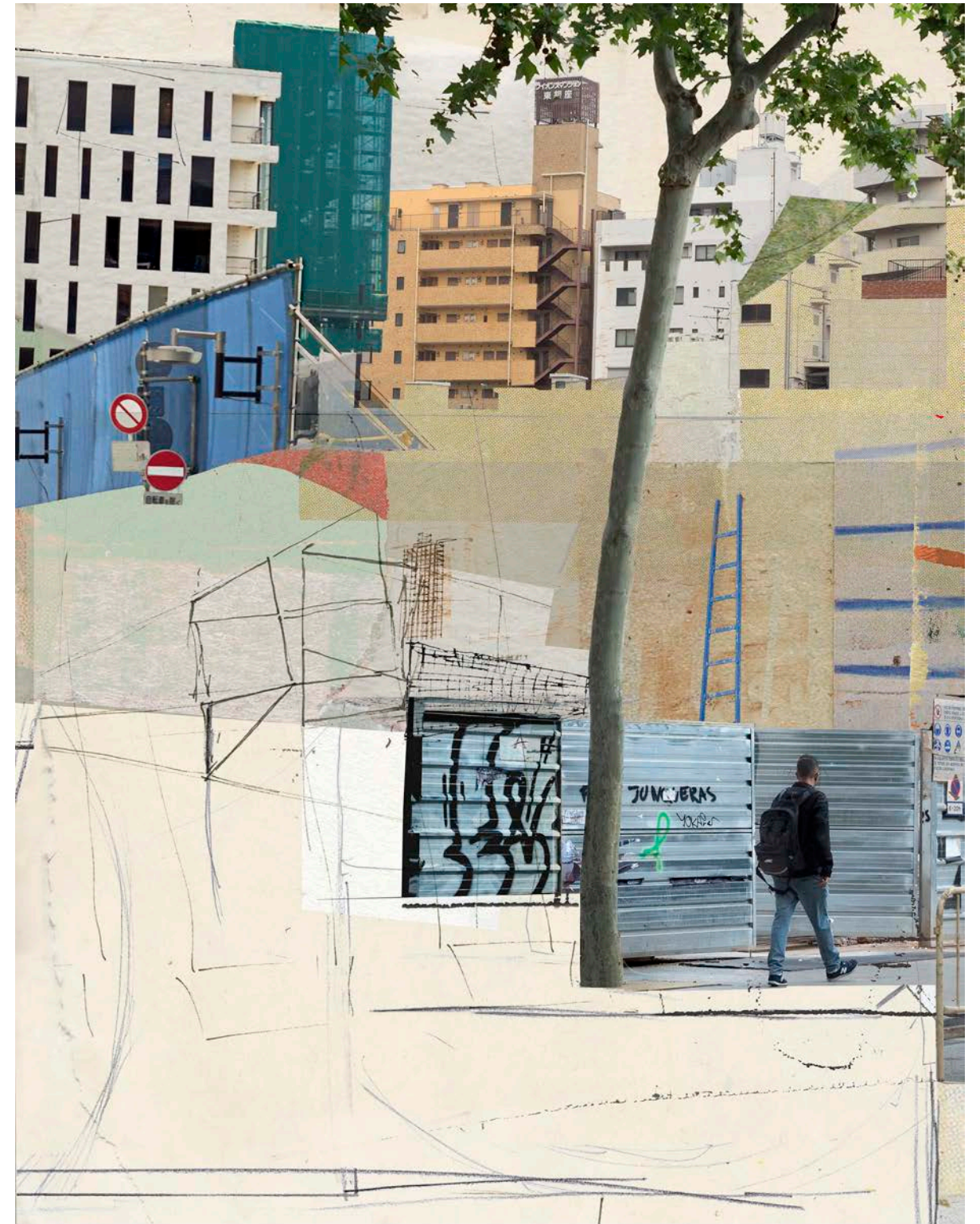
they explore the idea that a city is a perception, shaped by individual associations and experiences. When I moved to Vancouver after decades of living in the suburbs, I was enthralled to be living in a city again. I found rhythm in the alley's telephone wires and a sense of containment in the way the mountains and sea surrounded the periphery. There were old hotels that reminded me of an Edward Hopper painting and walls in Chinatown that evoked another era. I felt a part of something outside of myself when I stood beside strangers waiting for the bus. My notion of this city was shaped by my history of reading about other cities, by movies I'd seen and the poetry of Frank O'Hara and the collages of Romare Bearden. It's the idea of an analogous city, one that takes its shape from collective memory. When I construct these collages, I work with fragments of my photographs. I layer them, positioning and arranging until something resonant begins to appear, and then I work to unify the pieces into an evocative familiar space. I want my collages to remind the viewer of the way a place appears in recollection."

Each of her images from the series "If We Were to Talk about Architecture" present a familiar but unexpected view. Some of the visuals trigger the recollection of the noise we experience in any city environment - we can practically hear the images come to life. Telephone poles and wires feature distinctly in Strigel's work, reminding us of the constant stream of communication, with land-lines and cellular data that is flowing all around us - visibly and invisibly. In many images, anonymous figures, often in motion traversing the space of the city, act as guides for the viewer into, and out of, the image. They call attention to the main function of architecture which is, at its core, to facilitate humans living and working together.

What we find in common with all of Strigel's images in this exhibition is the generous visual gift of space, despite the sense of urban living. There is an airiness to her work, that invites rather than overwhelms, that gives us room to breathe rather than feel claustrophobic and hemmed in, surrounded by stifling huge concrete and iron monoliths. With her use of patches of color, we are given a sense of festivity rather than confrontation with the drab, dirty, white colored sidewalks and unexciting colors of most buildings, and the lack of green spaces that offer what natural color a city might have beyond flashing neon signs, billboards and a blue sky, if we can see the sky through the smoke and smog. Notably, Strigel has not highlighted some of the exciting newer architectural structures popping up in these cities. In these images, the buildings carry more a sense of the historic and the traditional.



Tilt
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
39 x 29.75" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Excerpts and Approximations
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 29.25" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



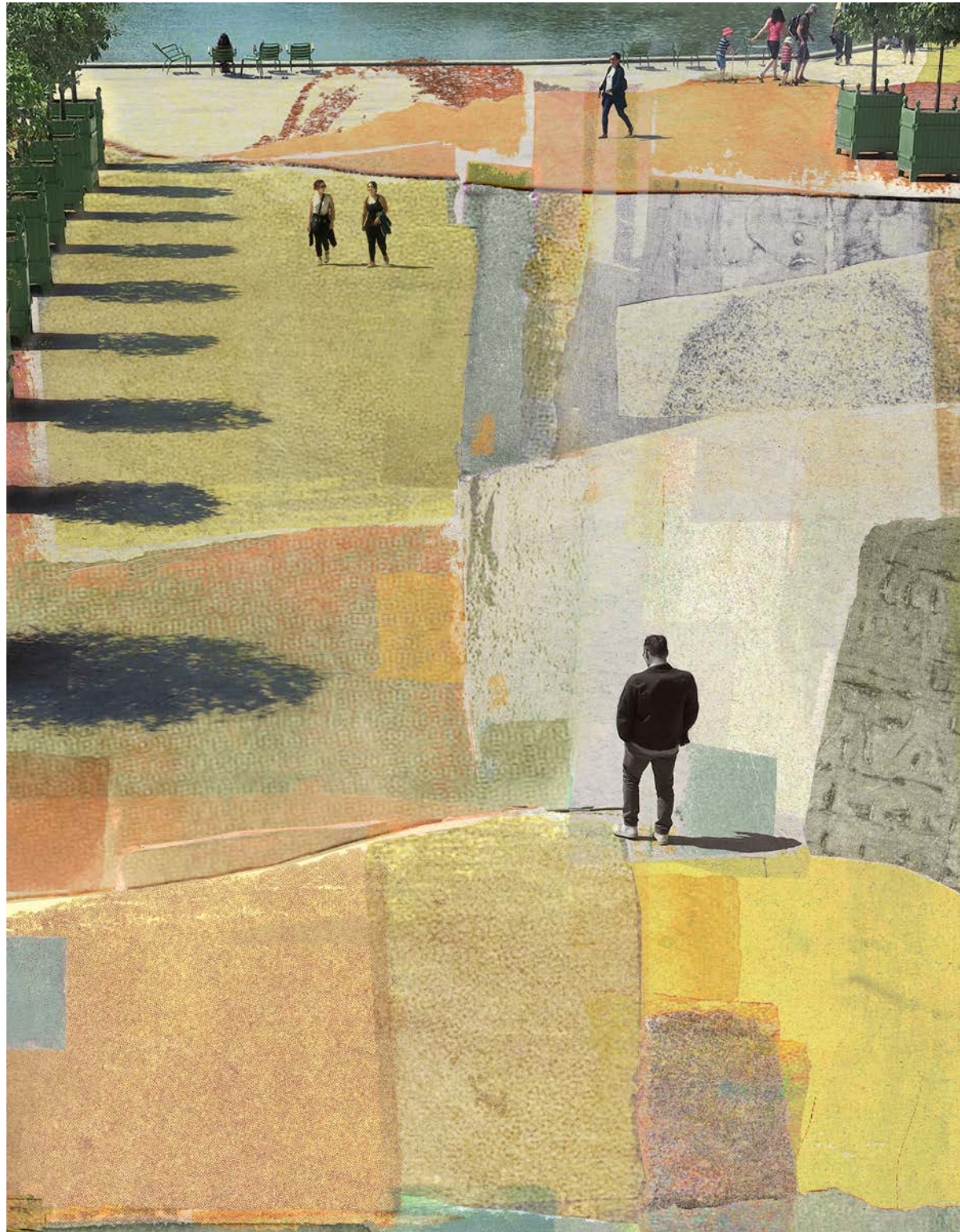
A Field is a Passage

Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 29.25" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



In Recalling a City

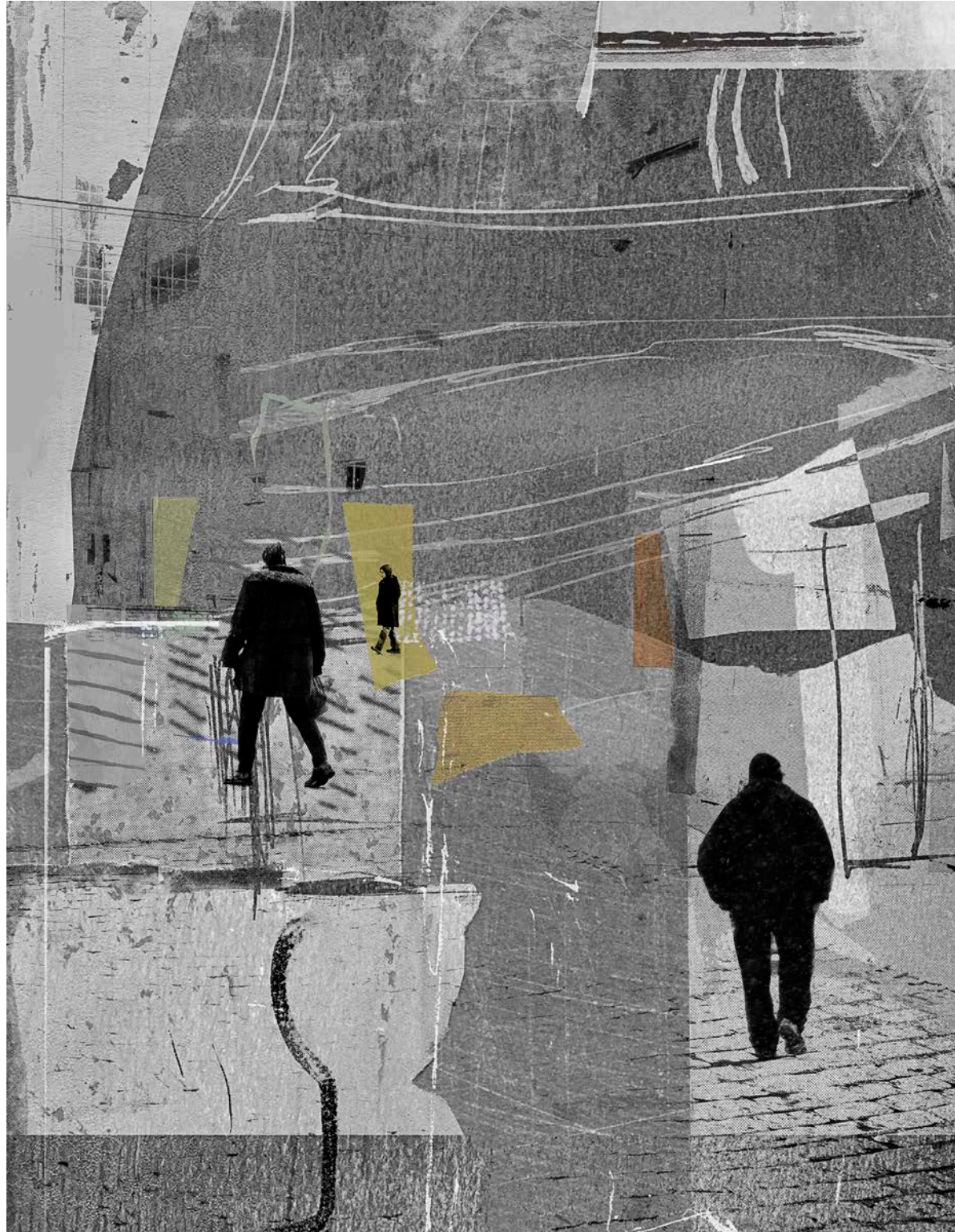
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 29.25" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



The World Wears the Colours
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 29.25" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Reconfigurations
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 29.25" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Ourselves with Ourselves
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 31.5" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Horizontal Tempo
Archival digital collage with colored pencil
14 x 18" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
31.5 x 38" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP



BARBARA STRIGEL

THE ARTIST

Barbara Strigel is a photographer, collage artist and bookmaker living and working in Vancouver, British Columbia. She was born in Philadelphia and studied photography and printmaking at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. For over 20 years she taught photography, pottery and graphic design in Seattle where she also advised a literary magazine. Her collages, photographs and handmade books have been shown in both Canada and the United States. Her work has been published in Diffusion Annual, PDN, Don't Take Pictures, Photo Ed and Book Arts Du Livre and Contemporary Collage Magazine. In 2019, she was recognized in the Top 50 in Photo-Lucida's Critical Mass. In 2022, she was recognized as a Finalist in LensCulture's Fine Art Photography Awards. Strigel is a prolific world traveler across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, and her imagery incorporates snapshots of cities from around the globe.

A Field is an Overture

Archival digital collage with colored pencil
18 x 14" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP
38 x 30.5" • Edition of 5 + 1 AP

KELDA VAN PATTEN



R E S T L E S S
S Y M M E T R I E S

FOTO RELEVANCE HOUSTON TEXAS

JUL 16 - SEP 3, 2022

KELDA VAN PATTEN
R E S T L E S S
S Y M M E T R I E S

Cover Image: More elegantly muscular than delicate (after Strange Plants III)

Archival pigment print
15 x 17" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
36 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP

RESTLESS SYMMETRIES

BY GEOFFREY C. KOSLOV

Restless Symmetries brings together two artists of differing backgrounds who share common ground in their art. For Barbara Strigel, her images are a visual essay on the nature of our perception of cities. For Kelda Van Patten, her work is in the style of a not-so-classic still life with visual reference to our internal environment and our inner selves inspired by selected poetry. Both artists exhibit a common energy in their work: a certain anxiety, pleasure, restlessness and motion. One exhibits symmetry in architecture from various countries; and the other a correspondence between symbolism embedded in both words and images. What appear to be disparate works come together in Restless Symmetries.

At first glance, Kelda Van Patten's images appear very distinct from those of Barbara Strigel. Van Patten speaks about influences on her art: "So many artists and art movements have influenced me, from 17th century Dutch still life painting to the 1980's Pictures Generation. I love the collage work of dada artist Hannah Höch, the use of color in Matisse's still life paintings, the smart sculptural installations of Sarah Sze, and, of course, I am super excited about what is happening in contemporary photography today; I especially admire artists such as Lucas Blalock, Daniel Gordon, and Sara Cwynar. Charlotte Cotton, in her book, *Photography is Magic*, really speaks so eloquently to the current generations of photographers between Generation Z and Gen X, who are interested in constructed photography and contemporary image culture."

Van Patten then addresses her own work in this excerpt from her artist statement: "I seek to invoke a sense of surprise or contradiction through the consideration of photographs that occupy liminal spaces between artifice and truth, imagination and the real, and mimesis and the origin. The subjects that I photograph are mined from the natural world and kitsch... For example, I think of artificial flowers, fruit, and plants as kitsch objects that attempt to mimic the blooming beauty of nature, while virtually eliminating the process of decay from the natural world... My printed photographs are often cut and taped to the wall and rephotographed. In that sense, my work embodies the natural cycles of change: perpetually unfolding, and in a permanent state of suspense."

Her photographs have a certain attraction and beauty, so it may seem odd for Van Patten to use the word "Kitsch" to describe them. The term *Kitsch*, as used to describe art, or an item, is considered to be an object

in poor taste, but sometimes appreciated in a knowing way, like artificial flowers in place of living ones. Van Patten considers kitsch in a broader sense, and seeks to reference that world, rather than create images which are kitsch themselves. Inspired by the poetry of Mary Ruefle, Van Patten's images hold a deeper reflection on how we live. Ruefle's writings on color deeply inform the work, and Van Patten's titles often directly reference passages of her poetry, such as the following: "Green sadness is sadness dressed for graduation, it is the sadness of June, of shiny toasters as they come out of their boxes, the table laid before a party, the smell of new strawberries and dripping roasts about to be devoured; it is the sadness of the unperceived and therefore never felt and seldom expressed, except on occasion by polka dancers and little girls who, in imitation of their grandmothers, decide who shall have their bunny when they die. Green sadness weighs no more than an unused handkerchief, it is the funeral silence of bones beneath the green carpet of evenly cut grass upon which the bride and groom walk in joy."

Kelda Van Patten views her titles as much a part of the image as what is cut and pasted into the work. She layers in meaning both in the construction of her images and in the titling of her works. "The titles of my work are an integral part of the piece itself; I think of them as another layer of collage. They are often short phrases that integrate found language appropriated from poetry or prose. Of particular influence is the poet, Mary Ruefle. In her book, *My Private Property*, she intersperses short, visually vivid prose that describes the sadness of certain colors. I reference these often, and feel that the words are in collaboration with the shades of color used in my work, particularly in the series, Always in Flower and in a Fruit."

The artist uses many materials in her constructed still life images which reference femininity by investigating the domestic space. She incorporates elements such as cutouts of lipstick, books on gardening and entertaining, houseplants, and especially florals and fruits, both real and artificial. In her own words, Van Patten is both celebrating and critiquing how fruit and flowers are often used as a reference or substitution for the female and female identifying body in Western culture. As in much of her work, she subverts the stereotypically feminine imagery by cutting, tearing, folding, taping, piling, spilling, and using photoshop in ways that expose rather than conceal. She reveals mistakes and imperfections rather than covering them up, in direct conflict with the long-standing tradition in media and advertising of concealing and touching up. Van Patten also frequently photographs flowers and fruit that are no longer in their so-called "prime," referencing and critiquing the "forever young" aspect of these artificial objects.



The table laid before a party, the unperceived and therefore never felt and seldom expressed; the funeral silence of bones beneath the green carpet of evenly cut grass (the sadness of green, after Mary Ruefle)

Archival pigment print
15 x 15" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 30" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



The secret lies in selecting the right plant for the right spot

Archival pigment print
20 x 20" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
40 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Human organs, words with too many meanings, and insomnia (the sadness of Purple, after Mary Ruefle)

Archival pigment print
15 x 18.5" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 37" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Never do they cease to be in flower and in fruit (in reference to King Alcinous's orchards, Homer, Odyssey, Book 7)

Archival pigment print
15 x 19.5" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 39" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Beneath an ordinary glance dwells an explosive (after Mary Ruefle)

Archival pigment print
15 x 20" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Fruit of the Loom/Womb

Archival pigment print
15 x 20" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



Pleasing but unnecessary
Archival pigment print
15 x 20" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



She never utters precisely the nature
Archival pigment print
15 x 20" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
30 x 40" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP



KELDA VAN PATTEN

THE ARTIST

Kelda Van Patten is a visual artist and art educator residing in Portland, Oregon. Kelda's photographs create disorienting pictorial spaces that merge photography with the cut-out, collage, and painting. Kelda is a recipient of the Regional Arts and Culture Council's Make Grant (2021), in the top 200 for Photolucida's critical mass, and she has held residencies at NES (Iceland) and the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology (Oregon). Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions including Blue Sky Gallery, Carnation Contemporary, and Well Well Projects (Portland, Oregon), Southern Exposure (San Francisco), the Cuernavaca Museum of Art (Mexico), and Platform Gallery (Seattle). Kelda's work has been featured in several online and print publications including Fraction Magazine, the.waiting.room.gallery, In the In-Between, and Platform Gallery. She holds an MFA in Craft and Material Studies from Oregon College of Art and Craft and Pacific Northwest College of Art, an MAT in art education from Lewis and Clark College, and a BFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute. Kelda teaches visual art at da Vinci Arts Middle School and Portland State University.

The jungle in the parlour

Archival pigment print
20 x 15" • Edition of 7 + 2 AP
40 x 30" • Edition of 3 + 2 AP