



Robert Wilson, *Living Rooms*, 2013, various mediums, dimensions variable, installation view. Musée du Louvre.

Victor Burgin

Richard Saltoun and Ambika P3
London

Since the 1960s, British artist Victor Burgin has made Conceptual art pieces that combine passages of academic-sounding text with photography. At first glance, his posters and prints often look like up-market advertising, but closer inspection reveals sly commentaries on gender, class, and consumerism, always shaped by the crisp, Minimalist aesthetic that he developed as a student working under Donald Judd at Yale.

Burgin's early works offer provocative questioning of material aspirations. The show at Richard Saltoun included works on paper from the '70s and '80s, such as the well-known piece *Possession* (1976), in which a photograph of a couple embracing is accompanied by the words "What does possession mean to you? 7% of our population own 84% of our wealth." Burgin arranged that year to have 500 copies of the poster plastered all over the English city of Newcastle, demonstrating the extent to which he



Raymond Depardon, *Salon du camping, Porte de Vincennes*, 1960, C-print, 9 3/4" x 9 3/4". Grand Palais.



Victor Burgin, *Revolutions*, 1989, silk-screened poster commissioned by the French government, 33" x 23". Richard Saltoun.

conceived his work as an address to the general public and not just the art world.

Other pieces on view were a bit more esoteric. *Think About It* (1976/2011) includes a close-up image of Rodin's *The Thinker* next to a photograph of a man who appears to be deep in thought, as well as a long block of text that might once have sounded cutting-edge but today rings like a parody of postmodern jargon.

Meanwhile, an exhibition at the University of Westminster's nearby Ambika P3 art space included a large selection of Burgin's more recent photography and films. The films have a quiet, contemplative air and coloration that stand in sharp contrast to the black-and-white austerity and political bent of his early work. Taken together, these two unaffiliated exhibitions gave a rich sense of Burgin's bold yet refined interplay of word, image, and concept, and neatly demonstrated this influential philosopher-artist's range of talents. —Roger Atwood

Leonora Carrington

Irish Museum of Modern Art
Dublin

Leonora Carrington's life had an epic quality, imbued with magic and myth. Born in England in 1917, she moved to Paris in the '30s and worked alongside Surrealists André Breton and Max Ernst

(with whom she was romantically involved for some years) before fleeing Nazi-occupied France for Mexico. She remained in Mexico City until her death in 2011, painting fantastic beings and cosmic dramas in lyrical dreamscapes. This terrific show, curated by Seán Kissane, displayed Carrington's remarkable body of paintings, sculptures, and tapestries.

Icons and motifs derived from Surrealism, so often applied as a route into the subconscious, were used to evoke the deeply personal and allegorical in the artist's work. Her scenes are never static, and figures are depicted in constant motion or transformation. In *Darvault*



Leonora Carrington, *Darvault*, ca. 1950, oil on canvas, 31½" x 25". Irish Museum of Modern Art.

(ca. 1950), a figure with both feline and feminine characteristics reaches toward two boys in black capes (they represent the artist's sons, according to the show's catalogue) who spin like dervishes in a spare, de Chiricoesque courtyard. And in *Three Women around a Table* (1951), a woman's head appears to metamorphose before our eyes into an ibis.

Kissane's decision to organize the works by theme, rather than chronology, worked well, emphasizing Carrington's ahead-of-her-time interest in examining female archetypes, including witches and femmes fatales. In *The Giantess (The Guardian of the Egg)*, ca. 1947, a towering earth goddess parts the white shroud covering her shoulders to release a flock of geese, while tiny peasants and farm animals flee across a landscape worthy of Bruegel. The figure exudes fertility and power, yet, with her tiny face and dainty

feet sticking out beneath her robes, she appears strangely vulnerable.

Subtitled "The Celtic Surrealist," this show sought to emphasize Carrington's Irish roots (her mother was born there) by highlighting the traditional Irish elements in her richly allusive compositions. Ultimately, the Irish connection seemed merely one minute aspect of Carrington's complex pictorial language—but it hardly mattered in a show as strong as this.

—Roger Atwood



Dii Hildebrand, *Abandoned Building*, 2013, acrylic on linen, 76" x 58". Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contemporain/Centre Space.