

A SIGN OF THE TIMES While the Cedar Street Tavern—where the Abstract Expressionists famously drank, argued, and threw punches—is long gone, a piece of the Greenwich Village hangout lives on. Before the Cedar was demolished in 1963 (its successor, the Cedar Tavern, closed in 2006), artist Salvatore Scarpitta rescued the bar's sign. Then, as an ode to such regulars as Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline, he turned it into a work of art, replacing its broken neon lights and mounting it on a metal stand.

The sign, as well as paintings and drawings by the bar's famous patrons (among them Kline, Jackson Pollock,



Salvatore Scarpitta rescued this sign from the Cedar Street Tavern and made it into an artwork.

Norman Bluhm, Nicolas Carone, John Chamberlain, Elaine de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, Barnett Newman, and David Smith), is included in an exhibition on view at Washburn Gallery in New York through the 14th of next month. Also on display—photographs of the artists in the show, all shot at the Cedar by Fred McDarrah and Arthur Swoger.

“How ironic,” Norman Kleeblatt, curator of last year’s “Action/ Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning, and American Art, 1940–1976” at the Jewish Museum in New York, says of the show’s centerpiece, “that a relic of the watering hole of Abstract Expressionism, a movement defined by its spontaneity and guts, would find its memorial in a Pop icon, à la Duchamp.”

—Natalie Brewster

Their Cup of Tea

“I got to know my great-aunt Maggie when I was shooting a series about the South,” photographer **Elijah Gowin** says.

He was using her house as a studio, he recalls, and “it soon became clear how curious she was, how playful. She would come down every day to see what I was making, and so slowly she became a participant in these constructed installations I would photograph. She was a very open accomplice. She could build these little narratives out of things—like this teacup—that just happened to be lying around.”

Later Gowin realized that the 98-year-old Maggie (a.k.a. **Margaret Ennis Booher Cooper**), seen here in *Cup* (2002),



Maggie in Elijah Gowin's *Cup*, 2002.

had become an accidental subject of the series. His father, photographer **Emmet Gowin**, had taken numerous portraits of her as well. In tribute to their oldest relative, who worked for most of her life as a weaver at a Danville, Virginia, cotton mill, the Gowins have released *Maggie*. The book, which the Gowins are publishing themselves, compiles 24 portraits taken in the 1960s and '70s (by Emmet) and in 1994–2004 (by Eli-

jah). Elijah's own Tin Roof Press is distributing the title, and an accompanying exhibition is on view at the Page Bond Gallery in Richmond through the 11th of this month.

—Rachel Wolff

To Sum It Up

“What is your formula for now?” asked Swiss curator and critic **Hans Ulrich Obrist**, codirector of Serpentine Gallery in London. “ART = LIFE (±MONEY) x PASSION EXPERIENCE YEARS LOVE (≡INSPIRATION/∞WORK),” responded

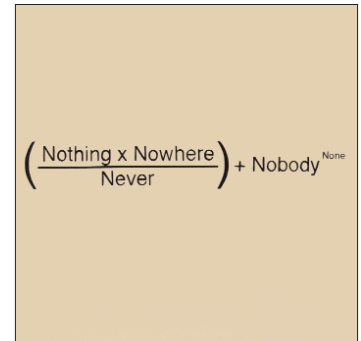
John Baldessari. **Lawrence Weiner** wrote, “IF IT HAS WORTH ONCE IT SHALL HAPPEN AGAIN [SUCH IS THE SADNESS OF LIFE].”

Obrist asked more than 100 artists, scientists, architects, and mathematicians to contribute “an equation for the twenty-first century.” Their responses are compiled in *Formulas for Now*, recently out from Thames & Hudson. The project itself, Obrist writes in the book's introduction, was inspired in part by an interview he conducted with LSD inventor **Albert Hofmann**: at the end Hofmann scrawled the formula for LSD on a piece of paper. Obrist was struck by the formula's “power and utter simplicity,” seeing it as the “crystallization of a potentially complex idea into a single equation.”

The book's contributions, arranged alphabetically according to author—from **Marina Abramović** to physicist **Anton Zeilinger**—exhaust the possibilities inherent in the word “formula.” They range from recipes (Abramović's “My Secret Formula on How to Become a Genius”) to prescriptions (**Gilbert & George**'s “Ban Religion”) to free association (**Dara Birnbaum**'s homage to Formula One auto racing) to a poem by

Louise Bourgeois:

A LOVES B
AND B LOVES C.
This is a strange state of being.
Nothing can be done.
There is no logic.
It is an unresolved mystery.



Keith Tyson's *Operator (Void)*, 2006.

—Alfred Mac Adam