

Marlborough Contemporary

Pamela Golden — Good Morning! Mr. Williams.

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Good Morning!
Mr. Williams.



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Mr. Williams.**

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The Morning Dip
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
5 × 7.5 cm



This page
**Off to See
Mrs. Williams**

2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
7 × 5 cm

Following page
**Scene 1 – Exterior.
They all laugh down...**

2013
Sumi watercolour
and ink on
Hahnemühle paper
110 × 150 cm





Ready for a Dip
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
5 × 7.5 cm



This page
**Good Morning!
Mr. Williams.**
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
8 × 5 cm

Following page
**Scene 2 – Exterior.
As a triumphant
gleam...**
2013
Sumi watercolour
and ink on
Hahnemühle paper
110 × 150 cm







Previous page
Scene 3 – Exterior.
Seeking something
on which...

2013

Sumi watercolour
and ink on
Hahnemühle paper
110 × 150 cm

This page

The 'General'

2013

Oil and encaustic
on paper
5 × 8 cm



This page
The Irish Lassie
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
5 × 7.5 cm

Following page
Scene 4 – Exterior.
A dog once...
2013
Sumi watercolour
and ink on
Hahnemühle paper
110 × 150 cm







Previous page
Scene 5 – Exterior.
A flash of...
2013
Sumi watercolour
and ink on
Hahnemühle paper
110 × 150 cm

This page
Oh! For a Dip
in the Briny
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
4.5 × 7.5 cm



**Who Said I
Daren't Bathe**
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
5 × 7 cm



The Rough Sea
2013
Oil and encaustic
on paper
5.5 × 8 cm



**Good Morning!
Mr. Williams.**

2013

Vinyl record, 33'20"

Edition of 250 of which
25 are unique versions,
hand painted in Sumi
watercolour and
signed on sleeve



Dialogue

'Paint, men, power, big stories, scale, film, theme tunes' Pamela Golden, David Sedaris and Andrew Renton in conversation*

Pamela Golden

Were you at the School of the Art Institute one of the times Anthony Quinn was making sculpture? Or Peter Falk? Falk came to the life drawing class I was teaching once. I like the images of them with their work more than I like their art. What do you think?

David Sedaris

I wasn't there for Anthony Quinn but saw Peter Falk once or twice, wandering the halls. What nice thick hair he had. I remember the students sort of rolling their eyes. You call that art – but I'm not sure that was the point. Perhaps it was just a discipline thing, or maybe what he liked was that it was so far removed from the theatre. As far as celebrity artists go, I always liked Red Skelton, who painted clowns. I own something by Phyllis Diller. It's a place mat she gussied up and wrote her daily affirmation on. What pleases me about celebrity art is that it exposes the person's weak spot, and makes them vulnerable.

PG

Red Skelton was so clever to use a colour for a first name. I think his clown paintings were all self-portraits, I also like them. I loved that Peter Falk wore a white lab coat in the life drawing class. Like a one eyed medic. Anthony Quinn, so much more macho. I think he used a blow torch. I agree with you about the vulnerability. I too have felt embarrassed when people ask what I do. In the past I've said I was a lecturer/artist, only on the phone have I said I was minister or accountant. When I was a teenager

* Pamela Golden and David Sedaris met as students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1984.

attending Saturday classes at the School of the Art Institute, one day a group of us in the performance class donned berets, decorated a bucket, wore Y.A.S. (Young Artists Studios) badges and stood on State Street. Nobody asked what the charity was. Our instructor wasn't happy. Somehow boundaries or codes were broken, it was all very vague. We kept the money.

DS

It's a real dilemma. If you have a degree and do people's taxes you can call yourself an accountant. If you have a degree and fill cavities you can call yourself a dentist. Calling yourself an artist, on the other hand, calls you into question, degree or otherwise. I didn't call myself a writer until I had three published books and ten things in the New Yorker. Before that, I either called myself a typist or simply said, when asked, that I wrote. It seemed the world should label me that before I started introducing myself that way. The question, I guess, is who is 'the world?' An institution? Your friends? If we can call Peter Falk an artist, is that enough?

Andrew Renton

Apart from the celebrities, there was an important group of artists in Chicago at the time, very much centred around the Art Institute. Did it feel like a coherent group?

PG

The Imagists were incredibly important for me. I love that they began as the Hairy Who. Christina Ramberg was an enormous influence. She taught me at the school as a teenager and also later as a graduate student. Ray Yoshida and Phil Hansen were also so important in shaping my ways of seeing and making. Christina was so smart, technically brilliant, but at the same time she would remind me that it was only paint. Their work is

often so uncomfortable and funny. Yes, I too imitated them, more through small mixed-media constructions like one entitled, **In Drag** (1982), a found used turquoise toothbrush which was then bejewelled and given a fluorescent pink satin cape and hung like a painting. I also made large mixed-media installations that sometimes used sound, film and even performers. They always had titles. They often fell apart or components went missing, like a piece made on the traffic meridians for some outdoor installation festival, with mannequins in bathing suits arranged in dance poses.

I think some of the backlash came about because their style was so in your face, at times making you feel awkward.

Phyllis Kind's gallery was such a big influence at the time, as was the Museum of Contemporary Art. There was such a buzz about the place, it became more like a club and the openings were such a scene, packed with all sorts of different people and full open bars.

At that time the School of the Art Institute was still physically connected to the Art Institute. I still feel like certain works in the collection are mine, like family – for better or worse. There is a Ferdinand Hodler painting that looks like one of my uncles. Also, an old African sculpture, a headless mud animal, a single portrait by Manet, Edward Hopper's, **Nighthawks** (1942) and Grant Wood's **American Gothic** (1930). And of course Seurat's **A Sunday on La Grande Jatte** (1884).

AR

Can you see a connection to the type of work you were making at the time?

PG

Yes. It forced me to confront the history of painting whilst attempting to explore it further. The type of work I made in response was directly on the wall, not on stretched canvas. Sometimes it consisted of an installation with too many ingredients (for example, sound, film, furniture and paintings.) After a while I edited and began producing large (cinema-size) figurative paintings in encaustic/oil on roofing felt (tar paper). Their narrative images derived from small studies I made on found photos, which I began to collect. These photos were people from other places and gave off a sense of the exotic. Here I was certainly influenced by Eugene Delacroix's **Arab Horseman Attacked by a Lion**, 1849–50, which is at the Art Institute of Chicago.

DS

I loved those miniature rooms at the Art Institute. The Thorne Rooms – isn't that what they were called? I was as enchanted by them as a little girl would be. I also liked the de Kooning paintings, and wasn't there a Balthus or two? Or perhaps I saw them on a field trip to the south side, when we visited the home of an elderly collector. It was the first time I'd seen famous art in situ, relating with furniture and normal things like newspapers and silverware. It was a much richer experience than seeing something in a museum, though the absence of a gift shop bothered me.

PG

The Thorne miniature rooms have haunted me for decades. I love how you get submerged in their historical time, culture and style. The Balthus painting (**Girl with Cat**, 1937) is eerie in a different way and I feel she is in dialogue with the other works in the room.

The trash/treasure element was truly a gold mine and it had a great impact on my work at the time. I even made a series of paintings out of found baby onesies. Being able to play with so many resources became essential to my practice.

David, I vividly remember your sculptures and thought they were incredible. They gave a nod to the Bauhaus in their craftsmanship and beauty.

DS

As for my own art work at the time, the best I can say is that some of it doesn't embarrass me now. The paintings do, but there were a few sculptures I think are OK. What I'd do is take the motor out of a wind-up toy, encase it in pine, and make a model of a human heart that, when wound, would move awkwardly, like a bird that had flown into a window and broken a wing. I also made little books. The writing in them hasn't held up, but I like the pictures, bits of found trash mainly. Chicago in the 80s really was a gold mine for interesting trash.

AR

Interesting trash and miniatures! Pam, were you working at a very small scale even then?

PG

Yes, walking through the museum I watched how long people would look at works – in terms of engagement, I guess. I did some works in slide mounts, very intricate collages – fiddly to make and easy to lose. Small in scale, large in title. Often working in sequences or series, and arranged like musical patterns. Walker Percy's book **The Moviegoer** was deep in my mind. Have you read it?

DS

The first things of yours that I remember were portraits on tar paper. I want to say they were of dictators. Can that be right? I'm talking 1986? '88? I saw them at Feature, which was such a great hanging out spot, so different from the other Chicago galleries at that time.

PG

Yes, dictators at Feature. I think it was 1986. It was such a terrific place; Hudson [Director of Feature] brought in unusual work and took risks. I actually worked there when he opened the gallery. My job was to be informed. It was truly the end of an era and we all were moving on. The spirit shifted, close friends lost to AIDS, and the art world became more about commerce.

AR

Do you see a connection between this era and the new work you have made for this show?

PG

Curiously there seems to be a connection; paint, men, power, big stories, scale, film, theme tunes. Hopefully the work appears as unanswered questions.

AR

And there's always a story there... A narrative backstory – maybe one we don't know in full? Your paintings seem to fill the gaps, or maybe play up the enigma of images detached from their origins. Can you talk a little about the "Good Morning! Mr. Williams." series? Where do these images come from?

PG

The images are loosely based on a 1912 photo album of a children's choir that went on a camping holiday to the

seaside town of Abergele, Wales. The title "Good Morning! Mr. Williams." introduces the characters who play out the story from a type of haunting, evoking memories of the Welsh Prince, Madoc. According to legend, Prince Madoc sailed to America landing in Alabama in 1170, centuries before Columbus, before eventually returning to Abergele. It has been said his ship has been sighted as a ghostly reminder of his erasure from history. Maybe the story will come back to life through juxtaposing the erasure of history with a contemporary relic? There are several layers that are interwoven alongside the myth of Prince Madoc and the boys' holiday. These led me to the Led Zeppelin song **The Battle of Evermore**, J.R.R. Tolkien and **La peine du talion (Tit-for-Tat)** 1906, an early colour stencil film fairy tale in which an entomologist in pursuit of rare insects gets his own back.

AR

Is this story interesting because it links your home country with the one you adopted as home?

PG

I really dislike being called an expat. How do you feel about it, David? How does living in the UK impact you? Years ago I thought that Americans were better at communicating visually and the British through language. Now I wonder if this is the case?

DS

I hear 'expat' a lot more in France than I do here. Whether in Paris or London, though, it always makes me shudder. I think it's a romantic and ultimately outdated term. The people who use it are the same ones who ask what café I write in. As if, I always think. 'Expatriate' suggests that, like a pre-operative transgendered person, you were born in the wrong country, like you were meant to be Italian but

instead grew up in Saint Louis. In fact, nothing makes me feel more American than living outside the United States. Our nationality is so deeply ingrained. Maybe that's the romance of 'expat.' The word suggests that the old can be cast off with a simple move to Hackney.

AR

But that move to Hackney... It must have affected your work. Can you pinpoint anything specific that has changed by making that move? How did the context impact on your practice? That's a question for both of you...

PG

Yes, it surely did affect my work. I lived in Hackney before it was cool. Hackney physically felt isolating, desolate and sinister. Every evening on the corner stood a man, a shadow in a dark overcoat and trilby hat. We referred to him as Gregory Corso, which somehow made it feel safe. At the same time there was an incredible community of artists. Specifically due to the difference in scale of physical space in London, my focus became making smaller paintings with larger stories.

DS

I'm much softer than you are, Pam. Then too, you moved to England when you were young. I was already old, so chose to live in Kensington. I appreciate that it's quiet here. After New York and Chicago I've had it with other people's loud music and barking dogs. I can't write with all that going on. My world is actually very small. I go between home, the grocery store and the post office. There's a program now that allows you to print your own stamps but I don't dare try it as it'll leave me with one less place to go.

PG

Do you remember Andrew how we met? At an opening I was carrying a book that I was reading, **The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci**, by Jonathan Spence. You noticed the book and had either read it or others by him. So we met over a big story.

AR

Now you remind me... Yes, I'd read it! I was interested in a couple of things. Firstly, a new way of writing about history. But also I loved this idea of the memory palace; a mapping of memory, which seems to make recollection something material, almost independent of its origins. Would it be too much of a stretch to suggest that there's something of that in your work? I'm thinking of the new series of paintings that have as their origins the type of photographs we've all taken in order to remind us of a moment before it is gone. You can certainly piece together a bit of narrative that ties the images together – a schoolboy trip, camping, singing, the sea, etc. But over time, the reason for making the image fades away, and you are left with an image somehow freestanding and no longer connected to where it came from. It's still a memory, not yours, but you've taken possession of it...

PG

I love that idea of taking possession of memory. Sure there is the element of collective unconscious in terms of the types of photographs we have all taken. That then puts you as the narrator and puts you in the image.

January 2014

Pamela Golden

Born

1959, Chicago, Illinois

Lives and works

London, England

Education

1984 School of the Art Institute of Chicago, M.F.A. in Painting, Art History Certificate Programme

1981 Northern Illinois University, Dekalb B.F.A. in Painting, Minor in Art History

1975–78 Young Artists Studios, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Selected Solo Shows

2014 Good Morning! Mr. Williams, Marlborough Contemporary, London

2013 Auction Paintings, World Legend, Lisbon

2007–08 Love and Hysteria, Fondation Elektra, Paris

2005 The Word, Gimpel Fils, London

2004 Nothing Personal, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

2002 Even the Car is Dead, Graystone, San Francisco

2001 Even the Car is Dead, Gimpel Fils, London

1999 Fassbender Gallery, Chicago

1998 You Know I've Been At Sea Before, Gimpel Fils, London

Art Jonction, Nice

You Know I've Been At Sea Before, Galerie Reckermann, Köln

1997 From the Corner of it All, Book Works Library Relocations, RIBA, London

1996 Plumbers, Gimpel Fils, London

1995 The Shadow of Your Simile, Margaret Murray Fine Art, New York

La Signora Watson versa Il Caffè, The British School, Rome and Pino Casagrande, Rome

Jilted, Rheinhard Hauff, Stuttgart

1994–95 Galerij S-65, Aalst, Belgium

1993 Advice for the Injured, Gimpel Fils, London

Galerij S-65, Aalst, Belgium

Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, England

1992 Galerie Froment & Putman, Paris

1990 Galerij S-65, Aalst, Belgium

1990 Interim Art, London

1991 Interim Art, London

1989 Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

1988 Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

1986 Saint Xavier College, Chicago

Arts Club, Chicago

1985 Dart Gallery, Chicago

1981 Northern Illinois University, Dekalb

Selected Group Shows

2012 A Sort of Night to the Mind, A Kind Of Night For Our Thoughts, Illusion and Materiality in Contemporary Painting, Artary Gallery, Stuttgart

2011 Biennial, The Drawing Room, London

A Sort of Night to the Mind, A Kind Of Night For Our Thoughts, Illusion and Materiality in Contemporary Painting, Arch 402, London

2010 Abstraction and the Human Figure in CAM's British Art Collection, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

2009 A Sort of Night to the Mind, A Kind Of Night For Our Thoughts, Illusion and Materiality in Contemporary Painting, Herbert Read Gallery, University of Canterbury, Kent

2007–08 Residents, Fondation Elektra, Paris

2007 Thoughts, Feature, New York

Artfutures, Bloomberg Space, London

2005 Almond Milk, Primo Piano Living Gallery, Lecce, Italy

2004 No Particular Place To Go, Apt Gallery, London

Drawing Show, Gimpel Fils, London

2003 In Portraiture Irrelevance is Ugliness, Museum Schloss Hardenberg, Velbert

Twilight, Gimpel Fils, London

2002 Jerwood Painting Prize, Jerwood Space, London & Waterhall Gallery, Birmingham

Location: UK, Gimpel Fils, London

2001 Multiplications, British Council Touring Programme, UK

Total Object Complete With Missing Parts, Tramway, Glasgow

The (Ideal) Home Exhibition, Gimpel Fils, London

2000 Mommy Dearest, Gimpel Fils, London

London Calling, Gimpel Fils, London

1999 Nature / Culture, Gimpel Fils, London

The Sea, Murray Guy, New York

Landgang: Vision-Utopie-Sehnsucht, Galerie Fabian Walter, Basel

The Great Hall, Bury St. Edmunds Art Gallery, Bury St. Edmunds

1998 What is a Photograph?, Five Years Gallery, London

1997 History, Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull; Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh & Eastbourne

Libero blu, Galleria Blu, Milan

1996 Private View, Bowes Museum (curated by Penelope Curtis and Veit Gorner), County Durham

1995 Heteronymns, London

1994–95 Women and Paint, Mendel Gallery, Saskatchewan, Canada

Galerij S-65, Aalst, Belgium

1992 Nothing is Hidden, Rear Window Gallery, London

Mind the Gap, Gimpel Fils, London

Curt Marcus Gallery, New York

The Anonymous Museum, Chicago

1990 Drawing Invitational, Central Washington University, Washington Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

Paula Allen Gallery, New York

1988 Latitudes Focus on Chicago, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado

Drawings, Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

Gardens, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Good Painting, State of Illinois Art Gallery, Chicago

The Flower Show, Betsy Rosenfield Gallery, Chicago

1987 Chicago Art, Moreau Gallery, St. Mary's College Notre Dame, Indiana

New Chicago: Quiet & Deliberate, Tangeman Fine Arts Gallery, University of Cincinnati, Ohio

Surfaces: Two Decades of Painting in Chicago, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago

Red Dot Show, Bates Gallery, Chicago

Dark Laughter, Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago

Morality Tales: History Painting in the 1980s, curated by Independent Curators Incorporated, touring exhibition through 1989, Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University;

Laguna Art Museum, California; Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida;

Musée du Québec, Canada

1986 Golden-Lebergott-Wexler, Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

New Works from Gallery Artists, Dart Gallery, Chicago

USA Exchange, Managua, Nicaragua

1985 A Chicago Souvenir, Dart Gallery, Chicago

Engagement, Feature Gallery, Chicago

Artists to Watch, Dart Gallery, Chicago

New Order, Feature Gallery, Chicago

Looking at Men, Artemesia Gallery, Chicago

1984 Chicago Head, Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago

Chicago Print Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Six Painters, Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago

Group Exhibition, School of the Art Institute, Chicago

Artist Call, A.R.C. Gallery and School of the Art Institute, Chicago

1982 Group Exhibition, School of the Art Institute, Chicago

The Other Show, Chicago

1981 Bus Surf'n in Dekalb, Dekalb, Illinois

Illinois Bell Works on Paper, Chicago

1980 Traps for Artists, Dekalb, Illinois

Charlotte Moorman's Avant-Garde Festival, New York

Collections

Arts Council of Great Britain, London, England

Cable & Wireless plc, England

Christie's, London, England

D.E.G.W., London, England

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal

Lever Brothers, London, England

MAG Collection, England

Standard Life, Edinburgh, Scotland

Private collections in Europe, America and Australia

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Pamela Golden
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15 Jan – 15 Feb 2014

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