

and this show features his landscapes from the 1920s and early 1930s, his defining period. He has a kinship to George O’Keeffe in the way he abstracts, stylizes and honors mountains, icebergs and bare stretches of land. “Isolation Peak” (1929) is one of his most iconic works — a peak with a pyramidal top that is brownish as the snow cap is melting away, with a blanket of a snow still cloaking the rest of the mountain. In the foreground are the contours of furrowed land, some sections brown, some sections already green. In “Ellesmere Island” (1930) ice floes drift before low mountains which look to be warming under the streaming sunlight from above. Though none of the works here are owned by Steve Martin, but actor and art collector has adeptly curated a handsome show. Martin discovered and began collecting Harris work two decades ago (Hammer Museum, West Los Angeles).

Scarlet Cheng

Visiting **Alexander Yulish’s** show “Immovable Thoughts” can be an overwhelming experience, but in a positive sense. People’s inner lives as revealed in a public space is all too frequently trivial in focus or expression. As the New York-born artist says, “Art is about intimacy. I use the brush like a blowtorch to melt away the surface and express what lies below.” Inspired by people and events from the artist’s life in the past year, his contorted



Lawren Harris, “Isolation Peak, Rocky Mountains,” 1930, oil on canvas, 42 x 50”, is currently on view at the Hammer Museum. © Family of Lawren S. Harris.

subjects with their twisted features, which at times recall the works of Picasso and Francis Bacon, tell us about their worries, habits, sexuality, solitude, isolation and, yes, their pets, always presented inside their homes, implying confinement. The artist carries this out in exuberant colors and a combination of fine lines and thick black brushstrokes that are loosely rendered. In “I Appear Missing,” a man sits on a chair with folded legs. His wrists are touching with his hands positioned in opposite directions. The man’s eyes are painted on different levels. His mouth is off center. The asymmetry creates a sense of chaos and disharmony. On the upper right the painted letters “ACE Gallery 2015” appear, signed by Yulish underneath it. This is probably the most biographical painting in the show and could be interpreted as expressing the painter’s stress or distress about the show’s opening (ACE Gallery, Beverly Hills).

Simone Kussatz



Alexander Yulish, “I Appear Missing,” 2015, acrylic on canvas, 62 x 48”, is currently on view at ACE.

Richard Renaldi’s “Touching Strangers” project has a high ‘stunt’ quotient, but there are plenty of riches to absorb when said stunt doesn’t overwhelm its context. The ‘stunt’ in question is his strategically random pairing of two strangers (sometimes three) plucked from urban settings, and whom the artist succeeds not only in getting them to pose, but in having them touch each other in varying degrees of intimacy. They’re at their best when there’s an ambiguity in the subjects’ connection, as in, for example, “Ekeabong and Andrew, Venice, California, 2013,” an African-American woman



Richard Renaldi, "Shalom and Jeff, Brooklyn, New York," 2013, archival pigment print, is currently on view at Loyola Marymount University.

and man who could conceivably be a couple; or "Josette and Juan, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2012," another possible couple. But wait ... doesn't she have too many tattoos, while he looks a tad too conservative to be with her? He holds his right hand around her waist, and with his left gingerly clasps her hand. The stiffness eventually overshadows the ambiguity, a rich process of seeing first with curiosity, then wonder and finally clarity. There are many instances of contrast in race and/or religion. "Jeromy and Matthew, Columbus, Ohio, 2011," in which a thin and intellectual-looking African-American barely grazes his hand over the shoulder of a white, cowboy-hatted and boot-wearing lad, gets a 't' for tension. A clear favorite, arguably the best of the bunch, involves the teen pairing of "Alex and Maria, Washington, D.C., 2013." He is a backward-baseball-cap-wearing, thin white boy sans t-shirt, with boxers well exposed a few inches above his belted jeans. She a pretty Latina, perhaps a popular girl, who appears very unlikely to be intimate with his type — possibly a skater, but the shy, reticent kind. Their expressions, subtle though they are, say it all: she's assuredly confident in the moment, while, he, with just the slightest whiff of mischief, seems grateful for her partial embrace. This is where the layers go deep and get interesting (Loyola Marymount University, Laband Gallery, West Side).

Michael Shaw

Nonagenarian **Charles Garabedian's** work created in the last two years, titled "Sacrifice for the Fleet," is a stunning renovation of Greek plays, Biblical texts and Armenian manuscripts in 18 large scale paintings and drawings on paper. Having decades ago boycotted the idolization of imagery in which each dimension of every part of the nude human body is tediously perfect, Garabedian's hero's and victims become method actors, skilled in striking poses that will amplify their emotional states. The elongated arms and legs wrapping the downed figure in "Study for the Furies" resemble a serpent's nest. The shallow background in "The suffering of Orestes" lends the painting a stage-like appearance. Where figures in this series appear clothed, as in "The Good Thief" or "Clytemnestra and Iphigenia," it often seems that Garabedian, in the role of costume designer, is purposely attempting to lure viewers to the realization that the emotions displayed by the principals in his work are timeless. Every painting in the show grew out of a drawing. A powerful vibrancy is activated in Garabedian's charcoal studies that, as his concepts grew, become translated into the colorful paintings.

As Iranian artists often use the Shahnameh (Book of Kings) as their muse, which is considered a masterpiece in Iranian culture, **Tom Wudl**, also uses a long ancient text for inspiration: the "Avatamsaka Sutra" (The Flower Ornament Scripture). This Mahayana Buddhist scripture. This epic piece of writing (the English translation is over 1600 pages long), composed by multiple authors over a number of years, reveals how reality appears to an enlightened



Charles Garabedian, "Sacrifice for the Fleet," 2014, acrylic on paper, 47 3/4 x 68 1/2", is currently on view at L.A. Louver.