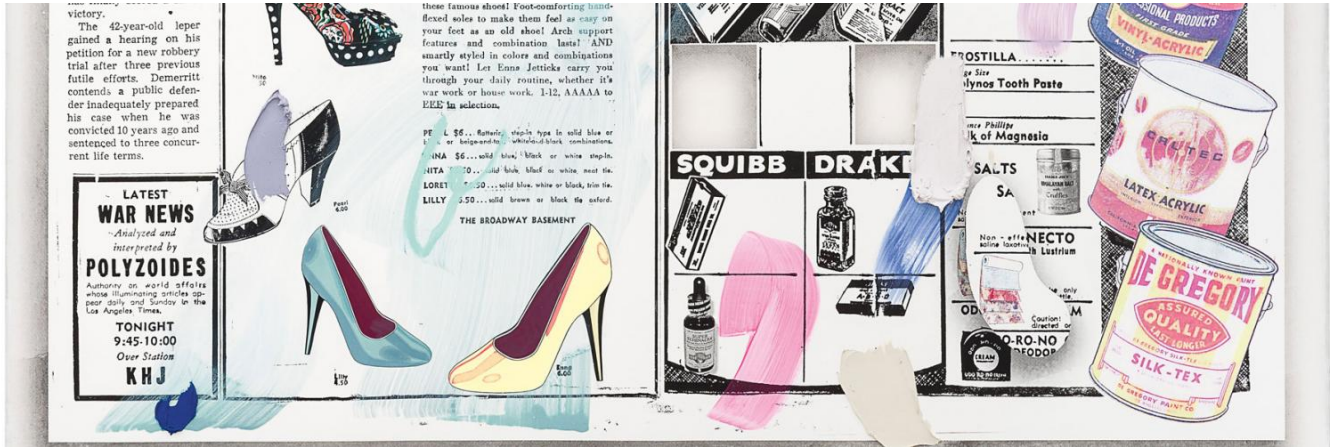


Laura Owens Paints What She Wants and Takes Pleasure in Doing It

F [frieze.com/article/laura-owens-rerun-2021-review](https://www.frieze.com/article/laura-owens-rerun-2021-review)



Deploying local teens as part of its curatorial team, the exhibition 'Laura Owens: Rerun', at the Cleveland Museum of Art's (CMA) contemporary-art outpost, Transformer Station, suggests that Owens and her teenage interlocutors – Jamal Carter, Xyhair Davis, Skylar Fleming, Yomi Gonzalez, Joseph Hlavac, Agatha Mathoslah, Arica McKinney, Maya Peroune and Deonta Steele (members of CMA's arts mastery programme, Currently Under Curation) – were a sympathetic pairing. Owens, who draws from colouring-book pages and deploys paint with exhilarating freedom, has borrowed from and alluded to the spirit of childhood artmaking in her paintings for several years. As such, 'Rerun' has recruited possibly the most fitting local experts to interpret Owens's *oeuvre*: adolescents for whom the memory and material culture of childhood is not a matter of decades ago but mere months.



Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 1995, acrylic, oil, enamel, marker, and ink on canvas, 183 × 214 cm. Courtesy: the artist, Sadie Coles HQ, London and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne; photography: Douglas M. Parker Studio

'Rerun' surveys Owens's professional practice from the 1990s to the present, highlighting earlier pieces such as *Untitled* (1995) – a tongue-in-cheek painting of a gallery, its far wall crammed with tinnily sketched paintings above a vast and foreshortened panelled floor – and her more recent *Untitled* (2016), a large-scale work incorporating thick swabs of paint and screen-printed details of embroidery and children's illustration. Owens also incorporates her own, never-before-presented, high-school artworks throughout the show. From the innocent naïveté of a ponytailed tennis player to a groovy palimpsest of numbers and letters rendered in marker pen (both *Untitled*, 1987), it's an honest move that renders this already-relatable artist all the more approachable and real.

The exhibition is split between the two wings of Transformer Station. In the first, larger gallery, paintings by Owens are displayed alongside a precise selection of objects from the museum's education art collection: a miscellanea of items distinct from the institution's permanent collection designed to circulate within Cleveland-area schools. Selected from more than 10,000 options, this tiny sampling hints at the

editorial interests of Owens and her curatorial team. Blocks for fabric printing, Mexican ceramic tiles, a cross-stitch embroidery sampler and two ceramic vessels shaped like a parrot and a frog, respectively, are united not only by their role in the education collection but also their historically disenfranchised status as objects of museological value. Much like Owens's paintings, these finds point to themes of decoration and craft as well as the gender issues these aesthetic impulses reflect on, including *démodé* notions of female domesticity and the creative innovations of women artists. Ultimately, they furnish touchstones for understanding Owens without recourse to a Eurocentric, male-dominated history of painting.

Screwball Ideas Essential

DEARBORN (Mich.) April 26 (UPI)—In an unorthodox engineering laboratory, a man who once borrowed a rail road to carry an experiment is experimenting a world of lesser risk based on flight.

After the war, he says, the common citizen will use small planes that can land in the back yard, but—

Almost covering the Atlantic overnight will be commonplace. But want of something else to do in his spare hours, he has in production a "flying" automobile.

Deeply immersed in war production work, mechanical engineer James H. Booth delights in giving professional "advice" to the public. A trip-hammer ahead of ideas, he is a natural inventor.

IDEAS PROVE PRACTICAL
At work, Booth believes his plans are practical, which gives an initial impression of their practicality. A trip-hammer ahead of ideas, he is a natural inventor.

PLANE DESIGNER
Booth built and flew the first airplane in the world. He has since designed and built many other airplanes. He is now working on a flying automobile.

He once suggested that the airplane principle could be used in a flying automobile that could be put in a window.

Booth says he is working on several "military secrets."

Should be considered that civilian use in the postwar period.

Convict Leper Gets Hearing for New Trial

MIAMI (U.S.)—Shunned by his fellow convicts, William (Strazy Bill) Demeritt wants out of jail so he can die in a hospital for lepers.

And, after a long string of setbacks during his confinement, Demeritt has finally scored a small victory.

The 42-year-old leper gained a hearing on his petition for a new robbery trial after three previous futile efforts.

Demeritt contends a public defender inadequately prepared his case when he was convicted 10 years ago and sentenced to three concurrent life terms.

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Explosion Unlikely to Derail Private Space Travel

The explosion of the Antares rocket has raised questions about the future of commercial space travel—but analysts say private launchers remain on the horizon.

This is going to be a setback, there is no doubt, said Fredrick Jost, director of the Center for Advanced Earth Astronomy at the University of Texas-Rewville, who is helping in the transition from federal to commercial space travel.

Space flight is inherently risky, he said in a statement. As we push the frontiers of space, there will be setbacks. But our commercial space ventures will be made, he stressed.

AUXILIARY ACTIVITIES
BY SABINE MASON
More than 100,000 veterans in California hospitals are making crepe paper flowers for the war.

Of the 18,000,000 people enumerated in the United States, 10,000,000 are being made here in California.

Frank Colburn, an orbital aviation vice president, said in a press conference that the company will not pursue further flights until the cause is thoroughly investigated.

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Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 2015, acrylic, oil, Flashe, and screenprinting ink on linen, 274 x 213 cm. Collection of Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg. Courtesy: the artist, Sadie Green HQ, London and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne; photography:

Jorit Aust

If the first gallery adheres to typical modernist conventions of exhibition design (i.e. white walls backgrounding evenly spaced, autonomously presented objects), the second gallery dissolves such divisions and aforementioned hierarchies by mixing the elements presented separately into a glorious synthesis of colour, pattern and appropriated imagery united by the handmade wallpaper of *Untitled* (2021) crafted specifically for the show. Here, thanks to Owens's unique blend of digital and analogue imaging and printing technologies, the animal vessels attributed to the Chimu and Moche peoples of the pre-colonial Andes break free of their plexiglass display cases, enlarged and duplicated, so as to spontaneously intermingle with other local and global references (including clippings from Cleveland's *Lakewood Ledger* newspaper, cacti and parrots from the Mexican tiles, and thumbnails of paintings by Vincent van Gogh) against a lilac surround.

Committedly rejecting the normalizing effects of conventional wisdom, Owens's art embodies her own radically independent taste. She paints and assembles exactly what she likes and takes enormous pleasure in doing so.

'Laura Owens: Rerun' is on view at Transformer Station, Cleveland, through 30 May 2021.