

Letter From the Editor

The pace of innovation in our post-industrial economy has conditioned us to favor “the new.” We often hear the idiom that “new is better,” but lately L.A. has been graced with several stunning exhibitions of works by artists that have been at it for decades—proving that duration can be just as provocative as novelty. Recent examples include: Agnes Martin’s fantastic retrospective at LACMA; *Revolution in the Making* at Hauser Wirth & Schimmel; the inclusion of artists like Kenji Shiokava and Huguette Caland in this year’s *Made in L.A.* biennial at the Hammer; and Barbara Kasten’s survey at the MOCA Pacific Design Center.

Like other artists featured in this issue—Joan Snyder, Ed Boreal—Agnes Martin chose a specific and unconventional path for herself. She desired to escape the “fascism of language,”¹ and instead exist in an in-between state of being. She explained, “when you give up the ideas of right and wrong, you don’t get anything. What you get rid of is everything, freedom from ideas and responsibility.”² Ed Boreal went the other way—throughout his career becoming more tied to radical ideas (he states in this issue: “I’m a more political animal than I was before”). Yet, it is the distinct *choosing* that unites these artists. *Choosing* where to situate their lives and practices (even if, in Martin’s case, the chosen space is a liminal one).

These lifetimes of work prove not only an undeniable technical prowess by the artists responsible, but also that dedicating a lifetime to artmaking (even with some years stepped away from it, as was the case with both Martin and Boreal) is really one of the most decisive actions a person can take.

Martin’s gutting of identity and self exemplifies her dedication to Eastern philosophies, and a lifetime devoted to meaning and craft over her career. Her steadfast inquiry towards the application of care and intention to her paintings is formidable. In contrast, Boreal’s intentionality has been concentrated on political activism and advocating for marginalized voices ever since he turned his back on the commercial art world. This kind of focus is often the result of sacrifice.

As the internet is ceremoniously stripped of its capital *I*,³ perhaps we should take a moment to abandon our obsession with the appeal to novelty, and instead investigate if there might be something to learn from the dedication to duration proven by recent masters of craft. As we flounder through present-day concerns, and grammatical incongruities, artists like Martin and Boreal remind us of the importance of slowing down and forging our own paths.

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1. Morris, Frances, and Tiffany Bell. *Agnes Martin*. Millbank, London: Tate Enterprises, 2015. Print.

2. Agnes Martin/Ann Wilson, *The Untroubled Mind*, in Delehanty (ed.) 1973, p. 19.

3. This April, the AP announced that they will officially begin using a lowercase *i* in the word internet. On June 1, 2016, the *New York Times* followed suit. “In our view, it’s become wholly generic, like ‘electricity or the ‘telephone,’” explained Thomas Kent, The AP’s standards editor. See: Bromwich, Jonah. “Bulletin! The ‘Internet’ Is About to Get Smaller.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 2016. Web. 12 June 2016.