

**JASON MIDDLEBROOK***New York Times*

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## In the Region

ART REVIEW

### Bend Me, Misshape Me

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Last summer in a quiet suburb of Vail, Colo., Kent Logan showed off his private gallery to a group of visitors. Around the building were paintings by [Andy Warhol](#) and sculpture by [Jeff Koons](#), along with flat files filled with hundreds of precious drawings and works on paper. Mr. Logan said he owned about 1,000 works of art and then politely announced that he had promised much of it to museums.

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The "Stylistic Distortions of the Human Form" exhibition includes Chris Ofili's "Black Grapes" (2004).

#### In the Region

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Now Mr. Logan is sending his art on the road, with exhibitions like "Out of Shape: Stylistic Distortions of the Human Form in Art From the Logan Collection" at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center. It comes on the heels of an exhibition of works from his collection at the Denver Art Museum, a beneficiary of his largess, along with the [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art](#).

"Out of Shape" concentrates on works on paper, which amount to about 20 percent of the collection. Mary-Kay Lombino, the museum's curator, made the selection in consultation with Mr. Logan, assembling works by 27 artists that focus on the distorted human figure. The 34 pieces in the exhibition have not been displayed publicly since entering the collection.

The exhibition is divided up according to themes, including full-length portraiture, fragmentation, exaggeration of the figure and the body in motion.

Because the bulk of the collection was assembled in the 1990s, it reflects not only that era's fashionable artists but also the art world's concerns with subjectivity, gender and

sexuality. In this way the show is something of a time capsule.

And yet these themes have a more contemporary resonance, for today the body we are born with is not necessarily "a fixed entity," as Ms. Lombino puts it in the exhibition catalog. In a society in which appearances matter, elective surgical enhancements have become widespread. Some of the works here reflect this new volatility in the human form. [John Currin](#) and Lisa Yuskavage distort the female figure by depicting exaggerated body parts. Ms. Yuskavage's drawing in particular shows a woman in an open, beaded

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body parts. Ms. Yuskavage's drawing in particular shows a woman in an open, beaded jacket with outsized and radically misshapen breasts. She looks deformed, suggesting perhaps the risks associated with cosmetic surgery.

Elements of the comic and the grotesque also combine in Nicola Tyson's wildly imaginative charcoal and pastel drawings, which suggest affinities with Surrealism. "Untitled #67" (1997) depicts a disproportioned woman in the shape of a garlic bulb. It is laughable and ridiculous. Still, I love it.

Other uses of the figure are more conceptual. In a 1985 study for a blinking neon sculpture, Bruce Nauman depicts the outline of a human head with fingers reaching into the nostrils and mouth. Though Mr. Nauman uses the body in this artwork, it is more about human subjectivity, habits and social anxieties.

Several of the drawings are studies for larger paintings and sculptures, some owned by Mr. Logan. Among them are artworks by Jason Middlebrook, Thomas Schütte, Marc Quinn, Oliver Herring, Kurt Kauper and Gajin Fujita. A handful of the larger, finished works are usefully reproduced in the exhibition catalog, though unfortunately none of them are included in the show.

Other drawings are stand-alone artworks. [Chris Ofili](#)'s "Black Grapes" (2004) is from a series of large works on paper inspired by religious themes. It reinterprets the biblical story of Adam and Eve, the pair depicted as a black couple in a jungle setting who look as if they just stepped out of a nightclub.

Mr. Logan has collected the work of artists from New York, Los Angeles, Europe and China, and artists from all of these places are represented in this show. There is also a local artist among the bunch, Nicole Eisenman, who lives in New York but teaches at nearby [Bard College](#). Showing here is one of her absurdist ink-and-collage drawings, "Your Date is Here" (1995), a sarcastic reflection on male-female dating rituals showing a giant naked woman and a man without skin.

Examples of Pop art and its derivatives also turn up quite a lot, including great drawings by Warhol, Mel Ramos, George Condo, Kurt Kauper and John Wesley. Mr. Ramos's 1962 drawing of the superhero character Dr. Midnight is especially alluring, depicting the masked crusader leaping into battle.

Mr. Ramos's drawing encapsulates the look and feel of much of the art in this show, combining a focus on a single, stylized central figure with movement and a dash of humor. These formal elements recur in work after work. But herein also is the limitation of private collections: their one-dimensionality. Private collections invariably reflect their owners' tastes.

*"Out of Shape: Stylistic Distortions of the Human Form in Art From the Logan Collection," Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, 124 Raymond Avenue, Poughkeepsie, through June 8. (845) 437-5632 or [www.fllac.vassar.edu](http://www.fllac.vassar.edu).*