

# ARTnews

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Still Life,  
Updated



**Ad Reinhardt's** Comic Art  
China's Trickster: **Liu Wei**  
**Photographers** Turn Film into Art

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## Kathryn Lynch

### Sears Peyton

In these oil paintings, all from 2013, Kathryn Lynch captured the tranquility and sheer beauty of New York's Shelter Island in a manner that is both whimsical and candid.

Her series of four 22-by-30-inch paintings of tugboats has the uncomplicated and nostalgic charm of children's-book illustrations. *Tug in Greys*, for example, depicts a simple vessel floating on hazy waters. The toylike boat, lacking ornament, is situated in the center of the canvas with nothing but the gray sky above and the murky sea below. In another work, *Tug*, the boat is in the foreground. Absent contours and dimensionality, the small tugboat appears almost cartoonish.

In her landscapes, Lynch paints the view from the shoreline at various times of day, studying light and its effects on perception. In the quaint *Coecles Harbor*, the afternoon sun allows for an uninterrupted view of the waterfront. Kelly-green trees in the distance provide a complementary backdrop for small boats sailing through crystal-blue water. Two tall, painterly trees in the foreground neatly frame the composition. Then, in another harborside landscape, *Pink Moon*, a pearlescent moon illuminates the scene. Here, the water looks gray and swamp-like; the trees in the background are black and unintelligible. This change in light alters the viewer's perception of the scene.

The most enchanting pieces were the night scenes. They capture the intrigue



Kathryn Lynch, *Coecles Harbor*, 2013, oil on panel, 16" x 20". Sears Peyton.

of the seemingly expansive harbor. The large work *Tug in Night*, for instance, features a lone boat navigating dark waters in the dead of night. Shining lights from distant ships provide faint visibility, but nearby forms are indiscernible. Lynch's thick application of paint on paper caused the work to buckle and form wave-like ripples. The glossy finish is reminiscent of the surface of the reflective waters. Though Lynch's techniques are highly simplified, her visual effects are captivating.

—Stephanie Strasnick

## Al Hirschfeld

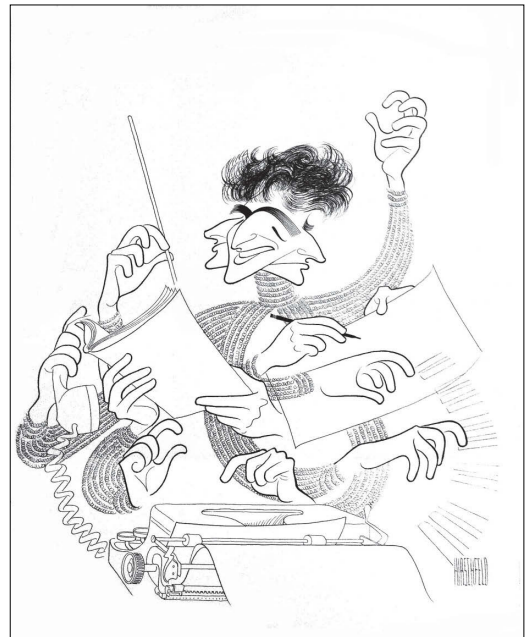
### Donald & Mary Oenslager Gallery for the Performing Arts, New York Public Library

It must have been great to be Al Hirschfeld, whose sketches immortalized generations of Hollywood and Broadway stars and whose surname became a verb. Being "Hirschfelded" (i.e., drawn by the artist) meant being inducted, with a wink, into the inner sanctum of the performing arts.

His drawings, prints, paintings, and ephemera were on view in "The Line King's Library: Al Hirschfeld at The New York Public Library," placing his 82-year career in the context of influences and friendships.

The exhibition highlighted two early sources of inspiration: Hollywood and a trip to Bali. From film stars such as Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart, he learned to select gestures and expressions that instantly defined a persona. In Indonesia, amid dancers and puppets, he saw people as "line drawings walking around."

Hirschfeld's fluid calligraphic mark was the height of his achievement. A straight diagonal slash describes Vladimir Horowitz's



Al Hirschfeld, *Leonard Bernstein*, ca. 1958, ink on board, 30" x 22". New York Public Library.

back. A few strokes evoke Brando's flat forehead and fat lower lip, Baryshnikov's sloping shoulders, and Tennessee Williams's off-center hairline.

While capable of economy, Hirschfeld could be quite elaborate. *Leonard Bernstein* (ca. 1958) is a three-headed dynamo lost in reverie, smiling at the public, and scowling, while a flurry of hands performs tasks from answering the phone to conducting. Ted Shawn's lithe form visually mimics a chorus line of trees vanishing into the distance.

After the birth of his daughter, Nina, Hirschfeld began concealing her name in his drawings: in the folds of skirts, in the kinks of hair, and virtually everywhere else that wasn't obvious. For readers of the *New York Times*, this diversion added a new layer of delight to drawings so sophisticated that subtle character traits are revealed in a curlicue.

Hirschfeld understood that the moving line could be a metaphor for almost anything. His fans compared it to music, dance, prose, and theater. One thing is certain—the drawings themselves are virtuoso performances, every bit as much as the events they capture. When everyone who remembers these 20th-century performances is gone, Hirschfeld's drawings will preserve a sense of what it was like to be there.

—Johanna Ruth Epstein