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BOOKS: MAY CASTLEBERRY

Siglio Press: Uncommon books at the intersection of art and literature

Siglio Press is a small, independent publishing house based in Egremont, Massachusetts, known for producing “uncommon books at the intersection of art and literature.” Founded and run by editor and publisher Lisa Pearson, Siglio has, since 2008, designed books that challenge conventions of both form and content.

A visit to Pearson’s airy studio suggests uncommon work, to be sure. Each of four very large tables were covered with what looked to be thousands of miniature squares of inkjet-printed, kaleidoscopically colored pieces of paper. Another table was covered with dozens of book/illustration-size, abstracted images

of deer, made up of colored dots. For the enchanted and the mystified, Pearson kindly explained that these pieces were to be collaged together as artworks by the artist Richard Kraft (a frequent contributor to the Siglio Press and Pearson’s husband). The works would be accompanied by writings by two poets, Elizabeth Zuba and Monica Torre, in an as-yet-to-be-named book, inspired by a found copy of a worn French children’s book from the 1930s called “Robin de Bois” (Robin Hood).

Pearson first encountered the world of alternative publications — magazines filled with experimental writing, artworks in the form of a book, and samizdat literature — as

a young writer living in Berlin just before The Wall came down in 1989. Later, in New York City, she spent a great deal of time with artists “who were always making and assembling, whose continuous art-making made the thin membrane between art and life even more porous,” she explained.

Pearson traces the idea of publishing to a 2001 exhibition of artist-poet Joe Brainard. That show led to “The Nancy Book,” Siglio’s debut title in 2008, and she’s never looked back. The book contains over fifty full-page reproductions of Brainard’s dazzlingly accomplished and witty drawings of the cartoon strip character, Nancy. It includes essays and contributions by Robert Creeley, Ann Lauterbach, Frank O’Hara, Ron Padgett, and other poets of great renown, all thrilled to celebrate and remember Brainard (sometimes called “a poet’s artist”) who died of AIDS in 1994. Pearson said, “My first project with Brainard was such a good experience, I kept going.”

Since then, Pearson, the sole proprietor of Siglio, has designed, edited, and published over 40 books and other printed editions. Her books are characterized by unex-

pected juxtapositions of texts and images and collage-like assemblages, as well as for carefully designed and gorgeously printed volumes. Her list includes many “rediscoveries” of unpublished manuscripts and little-known publications. At the same time, she has commissioned new work from an impressive array of artists and writers such as Christian Marclay, Sophie Calle and Cecilia Vicinua among others.

Though most Siglio books feature work by artists and writers from the 1960s to today, one standout — “Tantra Song” (2011) — showcases vibrant 17th-century Indian tantric paintings collected by poet-ethnographer Franck André Jammes, their modernist feel echoing Hilma af Klint or Brice Marden. Siglio also frequently draws on the spirit of the Fluxus movement, reissuing works by figures like John Cage and Ray Johnson with editions that honor their playful, ephemeral, and poetic origins.

Siglio also excels at photo-narratives rooted in highly specific, often eccentric concepts. “Memory” (2020), by avant-garde writer Bernadette Mayer, reproduces her journal and daily rolls of 35mm film from a

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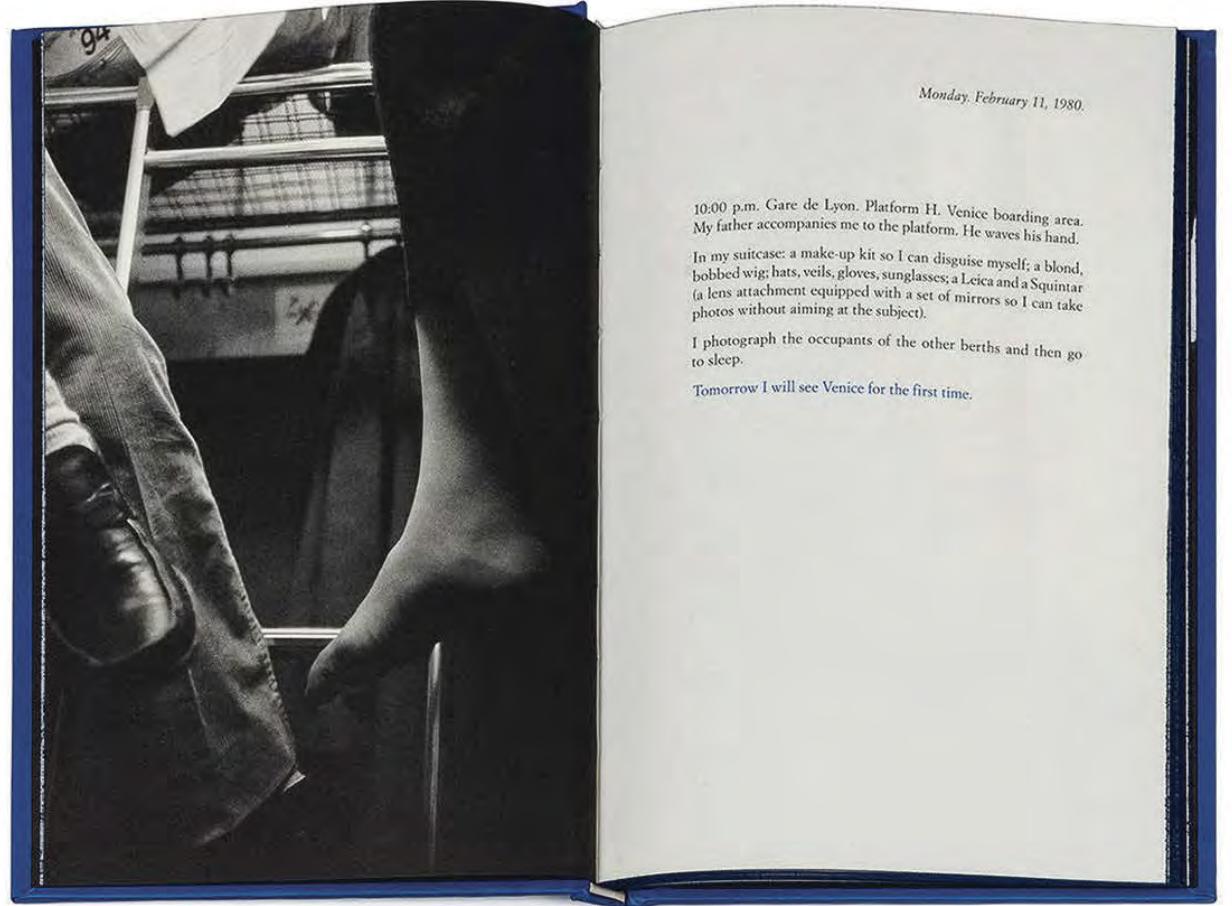
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PHOTOS BY RICHARD KRAFT

Siglio reissue of Sophie Calle's first artist's book, "Suite Vénitienne"

month in the Berkshires in 1971, capturing the texture of each day. "Call and Response" (2022), created during COVID lockdown by composer and visual artist Christian Marclay, pairs his photographs of London's quietest streets with musical scores composed in reply by his friend Bruce Beresford—each image in dialogue with sound.

Siglio books are sold through it's

website (sigliopress.com), as well as museum or specialty bookshops. (The Lenox Bookstore represents a number of Siglio books; the newly opened Lakeville Books & Stationery has copies of "Tantra Song.") In all cases, Pearson strives to make "two or three degrees of connection" with each book buyer, including a "special gift" — often a piece of printed ephemera — with each purchase.



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SPORTS: ALEC LINDEN

Cycling season: A roundup of our region's rentals and where to ride them

After a shaky start, summer has well and truly descended upon the Litchfield, Berkshire and Taconic hills, and there is no better way to get out and enjoy long-awaited good weather than on two wheels. Below, find a brief guide for those who feel the pull of the rail trail, but have yet to purchase their own ten-speed. Temporary rides are available in the tri-corner region, and their purveyors are eager to get residents

of all ages, abilities and inclinations out into the open road (or bike path).

For those lucky enough to already possess their own bike, perhaps the routes described will inspire a new way to spend a Sunday afternoon. For more, go online to check out two ride-guides from local cyclists that will appeal to enthusiasts of many levels looking for a varied trip through the region's stunning summer scenery.

There is no better way to get out and enjoy long-awaited good weather than on two wheels.



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North Canaan:

1 Railroad Street
North Canaan, Connecticut 06018
(860) 248-3010

Open Wednesday to Sunday,
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

With three locations in the Northwest Corner, this outfit offers a speedier way to zoom on two wheels through the hills with electric-powered offerings for sale or rent. Rentals are available for two hour trips, half days or full days, with several sizes and models in both throttle and pedal assist e-bikes of various styles. Route maps and e-bike trainings are on offer for renters, and guided tours are available on select weekdays. Visit the website, call or email at info@coveredbridgebike.com for pricing and more information.

Each location has its own suggested routes of varying difficulty. Ethan at the Kent location says, "The first place we send people is Macedonia Brook," the shady and bucolic state park just northwest of downtown. For

a more involved ride, Ethan also recommended the quiet country roads that wind through the picturesque hill valleys to the east of town, especially off of Kent Hollow Road and toward Lake Waramaug.

Spencer, who works at the newest location in North Canaan, said that a dual-state two hour ride that takes cyclists into Massachusetts in Ashley Falls, then down into Taconic on Barnum Street and back to North Canaan via Twin Lakes Road and Cooper Hill Road, is his favorite. At the company's West Cornwall location next to the its namesake bridge, Spencer said a classic ride is up River Road all the way to Falls Village, where riders may visit Great Falls or find some refreshment at the soon-to-open Off the Trail Café. For a longer journey, Spencer suggested continuing up Housatonic River Road north from Falls Village, where it turns into dirt and passes through gorgeous riverside farm country.

NEW YORK

The Music Cellar

www.music-cellar.com
Instagram @the_music_cellar
14 Main Street
Millerton, New York 12546
(860) 806-1442
Scheduling is available via call or text 24/7

The Music Cellar is an all-instrument music school for aspiring instrumentalists, but it also rents beach cruiser bikes during the warmer months. "They're perfect for the rail trail," says owner and music instructor Johnny, referring to the currently 26-mile (and expanding) bike and footpath that passes just outside the storefront. "You don't have to worry

Continued on page 8

FIND THESE TWO RIDES ONLINE

BIKE ROUTE: KENT HITESHEW, SALISBURY CYCLIST

A scenic 32-mile loop through Litchfield County

Whenever I need to get a quick but scenic bicycle ride but don't have time to organize a group ride that involves driving to a meeting point, I just turn right out of my driveway. That begins a 32-mile loop through some of the prettiest scenery in northern Litchfield County.

BIKE ROUTE: JEREMY KOCH, NORFOLK CYCLIST

Ancramdale to Copake

This is a lovely ride that loops from Ancramdale north to Copake and back. At just over 23 miles and about 1,300 feet of elevation gain, it's a perfect route for intermediate recreational riders and takes about two hours to complete. It's entirely on quiet roads with little traffic, winding through rolling hills, open countryside, picturesque farms and several lakes.


Read more at lakevillejournal.com/tag/bike-route



PHOTOS BY ALEC LINDEN

Cyclists head south on the rail trail from Copake Falls.


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... bikes

Continued from page 6

about hitting little bumps or potholes or curbs or whatever – they’re good all-purpose bikes,” he said.

Unique among area bike rentals, the Cellar offers rates starting at \$20 for those looking for a shorter ride up to \$50 for the day and Johnny said that he’s happy to accommodate sliding scale pricing for locals might have trouble affording the full rate. “It does help keep the lights on, though,” he said, “so if you’re renting bikes, you’re helping kids learn music!”

Johnny said that with the Harlem Valley Rail Trail at his front doorstep, he usually sends riders for a journey on the reclaimed abandoned railbed. The path currently stretches from Wassaic to the hinterlands of Hillsdale, with another 20 miles to Chatham planned to be built in the next five years pending funding. Johnny

said riders can choose to head north for sweeping valley vistas below the Taconic mountains, or, “for a more shady ride, you could go south – also equally scenic, lots of wildlife. You can go all the way to Wassaic Station and jump on a train to New York.”

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Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Located a dozen or so miles up the rail trail is the “ye olde bike shop of the Hudson Valley,” as described by its owner Sam. The shop is just two years from its 30th birthday, and appropriately exudes small-town charm

without skimping on modern equipment and service. “It’s the best little bike store in the Hudson Valley,” said Northeast resident Dan Sternberg, who was clad in a cycling kit outside the store on a sunny Friday afternoon in June.

The shop is situated steps from the rail trail, just below the deep, clear and refreshing water of Ore Pit Pond in Taconic State Park, a short jaunt from the old Copake Iron Works site and a mere half mile from the parking lot for one of the Taconic’s region’s treasures and the store’s namesake – Bash Bish Falls. Sam offers day tours to highlight the richness of the region – not only in its natural resources but also the pastoral, cultivated splendor of the farm roads that cut through the hills to the west of Route 22.

Sam says he plans to start running multi-day tours, drawing on experience he had guiding extending bike excursions while operating a lodge in Colorado. Also upcoming is a pop-up shop in Millerton for the summer, which he anticipates opening shortly once the permitting is in order.

In addition to tours, the shop offers sales, repairs and rentals, starting at \$35 for a two-hour hybrid bike session (\$15 for kids) and \$45 for two hours on an e-bike. Visit the website for full pricing details on four hour, full day, multi-day, and weekly rates. Bookings can be made online or via phone.

Sam says he likes to direct guests towards the scattered gems of restaurants, bars and shops that pepper the rail trail corridor and into the hills and dales beyond. The Copake General Store, dishing coffee and café fare alongside locally-produced provisions is just down the road, while market and cultural center Random Harvest and beloved seafood peddler Zinnia’s Dinette sit a close ride away in Craryville. For a summer afternoon tipple, Roe Jan Brewing Company is up the rail trail in Hillsdale, and the creek-side beer garden atmosphere of

the Lantern Inn is a somewhat stouter 25 miles down the path in the other direction.

MASSACHUSETTS

Berkshire Bike & Board

www.berkshirebikeandboard.com
Instagram @berkshirebikeandboard
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01230

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With Berkshire locations in Great Barrington and Pittsfield, and two other satellites in Hudson, New York and Bloomfield, Connecticut, Berkshire Bike & Board offers the gamut of cycling needs – a wide variety of gear, expert sales assistance, service and repairs, and of course, rentals.

All four locations carry an e-bike, which costs \$69.99 for a single-day rate or a discounted price of 49.99 for longer rentals. The Great Barrington store also offers a non-electrified gravel bike for a single day rate of \$99.99 or \$79.99 for multiple days. All bookings for rentals are made online on the company’s website.

Great Barrington employee Wyatt described the gravel bike as “a little more aggressive” than a standard hybrid, and “able to handle packed dirt, a little bit of loose gravel, back roads, but not be super slow like a mountain bike” on pavement.

He said both the e-bikes and gravel bikes are well suited to handle one of his favorite routes, the Alford Loop. An approximately 20 mile ride, cyclists take Alford Road northwest out of Great Barrington, and then upon reaching Alford, may choose to take East Road to West Road or vice versa for a scenic and easy circle through the Berkshire forest and fields. In Wyatt’s words: “Great loop, super quiet, not a lot of cars.”



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ART: LAURIE FENDRICH

A trip to The Clark to find 'A Room of Her Own'

'A Room of Her Own,' the exhibition of the art of twenty-five women artists working in Great Britain between the last half of the Victorian Era and the end of WWII at The Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, is best understood as a case study in what it took for women artists to gain a foothold in the male-dominated art world. The 87 wildly variegated works of art range from paintings, drawings and prints, to ceramics, stained glass and the decorative arts, with artistic styles ranging from the Pre-Raphaelites to Cubist-style modernists.

Curator Alexis Goodwin's starting point is Virginia Wolfe's famous 1929 essay, "A Room of One's Own," which argues that for women to write fiction, they first need to have their own physi-

cal space in which to write. The proposition seems close to self-evident, but when women were mostly confined to the roles of wife and mother, it was revolutionary. Goodwin applies Wolfe's idea about women writers to women visual artists, arguing that as was the case with writers, they needed their own physical spaces before they could make art. Although some artists in the exhibition did this by carving out corners within their homes, the more driven and financially independent set up art studios outside their homes. Interestingly, only 7 of the 25 women had children.

Much of the art on display consists of weavings, fabrics, or decorative designs — forms that, until the 1970s,

Continued on next page



Gluck, Medallion (You/We), 1936, oil on canvas. Ömer Koç Collection. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London

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... The Clark

Continued from previous page

were dismissed in the art world as “domestic arts.” By giving them the same amount of attention as the “high art” of painting (which women were traditionally excluded from), the exhibition demonstrates that women knew how to fit art-making into their domestic lives.

Some artists, such as Mary Lowndes (1857-1929), made successful businesses for themselves. In 1897, after attending the Slade School of Art in London, she became an assistant to a stained-glass designer. She then co-founded Lowndes and Drury, a stained-glass studio and workshop, made her own windows for various churches, and became influential in the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain.

In 1907, Lowndes became a founding member of the Artist's Suffrage

League. Along with such artists as the embroiderer and fabric designer May Morris (daughter of William Morris, who was associated with the Arts and Crafts movement) and Marianne Stokes (a German-born artist whose painting *Polishing Pans*, c. 1887 is a tour-de-force), made banners and posters for women's suffrage protests.

The boldest and most independent woman in the show is the lesbian artist Gluck, who shortened her name from Hannah Gluckstein. Coming from a wealthy family that financially supported her art career, she was able to build her own large studio. She cut her hair as short as a man's, wore men's clothing, and led an intense romantic life of many loves and losses. “Medallion (You/We)” (1936) offers a self-portrait in profile that crisply overlaps a similar profile portrait of Nesta



PHOTO PROVIDED

Dame Laura Knight, *A Balloon Site, Coventry*, 1943, oil on canvas. IWM (Imperial War Museums), Art. IWM ART LD 2750 © Imperial War Museums / © Estate of Dame Laura Knight. All rights reserved 2024 / Bridgeman Images

Obermer, a married socialite who was Gluck's romantic partner at the time.

Vanessa Bell, sister of Virginia Wolfe and a founding member of the Bloomsbury Group, also shrugged off societal norms. Married to a straight man with whom she had two sons, she openly had another child with a homosexual friend. Her “Self-Portrait” (c. 1915), along with the watercolor and gouache “Design for Omega Workshop Fabric” (1913), are the most modern works in the exhibition.

My own favorite work is Winifred Knight's “The Deluge” (1920), painted while she was still a student at the Slade School of Art. It portrays the biblical flood, but makes the arc almost an afterthought, and instead focuses on the doomed human beings frantically trying to run away from death. It's an action-packed painting by a gifted artist who, by the time she died in 1947, had been almost completely forgotten.

Painters Anna Airy and Dame Laura Knight each had long, strong careers. Airy's two pictures from 1918, rendered in multiple shades of brown, silvery whites, and bits of red, include busy male and female workers inside the vast interiors of war-time factories. The astonishingly prolific Dame Laura Knight persisted in trying to get the

all-male Royal Academy of Arts to recognize her achievements, and in 1936, she was finally elected the first woman full member since its founding in 1768. “Take Off” (1943), with four men in a cockpit packed together like sardines, and “A Balloon Site, Coventry” (1943), with a line of women and men pulling hard on the ropes controlling a humungous air balloon floating above their heads, use inventive compositions to convey the nerve-wracking physicality of the moment.

Breaking into the male-dominated art world was — and still is — a job in itself. To the women who managed it, we owe at least this belated recognition.

“A Room of Her Own: Women Artist-Activists in Britain, 1875-1945” is on view through Sep. 14.

Laurie Fendrich is a painter and writer living in Lakeville, CT. She is a 2016 Guggenheim Fellow and is represented by Louis Stern Fine Arts in Los Angeles.



COMMUNITY: JENNIFER ALMQUIST

Bringing Du Bois home: a tribute in bronze

On Saturday, July 19, a life-sized bronze sculpture of W.E.B. Du Bois will be unveiled at 2 p.m. in front of the Mason Public Library on Main Street in Du Bois' hometown of Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

All are welcome to attend this free public event, the highlight of a weekend-long celebration. Speakers include former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Pulitzer-prize winning biographer of Du Bois David Levering Lewis, and Imari K. Paris Jeffries from Embrace Boston whose mission is, "To dismantle structural racism through our work at the intersection of arts, culture, community, research and policy."

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, arguably the father of the civil rights movement in America, was one of the founders of the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights organization, in 1909. The first Black American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, he was a ground-breaking sociologist, and author of sixteen books, including his 1903 series of essays, "The Souls of Black Folk." He graduated from Searles High School in Great Barrington in 1884. The community of the local Congregational Church, next to the Mason Public Library, supported the boy's early education.

The arc of his life was extraordinary, from young Willie Du Bois working at the Great Barrington A&P, matriculating at Fisk University and Harvard, receiving the Lenin Peace Prize, having a national holiday celebrated on his birthday in China, to his death in his adopted country of Ghana, the day of the 1963 March on Washington. News of his death elicited a moment of silence from the 260,000 gathered near the Lincoln Memorial.

"I believe in Liberty for all men: the space to stretch their arms and their souls, the right to breathe and the right to vote, the freedom to choose their friends, enjoy the sunshine, and ride on the railroads, uncursed by color; thinking, dreaming, working as they will in a kingdom of beauty and love."

—W.E.B. Du Bois

DuBois attended The Amenia Conference of 1916 and 1933, early meetings of the NAACP at Troutbeck. DuBois wrote: "The Amenia Conference was a symbol. Because of our meeting, the Negro race was more united and more ready to meet the problems of the world than it could have been without these beautiful days of understanding. How appropriate so tremendous a thing should take place in so much quiet and beauty there at Troutbeck, a place of poets and fishermen, of dreamers and farmers. Those who write the history of how the American Negro became a man must not forget this landmark event."

Artist Richard Blake, recipient of the National Sculpture Society's Medal of Honor, created the bronze sculpture that will sit centrally on a curving Sheffield marble bench in the redesigned library plaza. Blake reflected, "My public sculptures com-

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... *W.E.B Du Bois*

Continued from previous page

memorate social activism and those who have fought for social justice. I want to shed light on overlooked American heroes.”

“This moment represents years of dedication from many people,” said Ari Zorn, co-chair of the W.E.B. Du Bois Sculpture Project. “We are bringing Dr. Du Bois home in a way that invites everyone to sit with him, reflect with him, and carry forward his legacy. This sculpture isn’t just a monument — it’s a space for justice, remembrance, and stewardship.”

July weekend events include two programs hosted by Chesterwood, the historic home of sculptor Daniel Chester French, plus the fourth annual Du Bois Forum Roundtable

at Jacob’s Pillow. The Unveiling Ceremony includes music featuring Wanda Houston, Gina Coleman, and the Randall Martin Band, with a performance of the Black National anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” a song used as a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Martin Luther King, Jr., an admirer of Du Bois, honored him in a speech at Carnegie Hall, “Du Bois the man needs to be remembered today when despair is all too prevalent. His love and faith in Negroes permeate every sentence of his writings and every act of his life.”

More information is available online at webduboissculpture.org

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Sculptor Richard Blake in his studio at work on his sculpture of W.E.B. Du Bois.

FILM: PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

The Bad Cinema desk goes international

Gerardo De Leon and Eddie Romero, two major names in the Filipino film world, made four “Blood Island” films between them. The first was released in 1959 and is a modest but stylish black and white horror movie. The remaining three were made a decade-plus later, and are properly schlocky.

The whole shebang is now available in a slipcased set from Severin Films.

Terror is a Man (1959): Odd economy reworking of “The Island of Dr. Moreau.” Odd because it has a lot of weird plot that gets in the way of the story, and economy because there is only one man-animal hybrid, and because they shot it in black and white. Good production values throughout,

which is also confusing when you’re expecting dreck. Decent monster and no nekkidity, because it was 1959.

The universe comes back into balance with the next film in the series, “Brides of Blood Island” (1968). Shot in color, very little plot to get in the way of the story, man-eating plants, day-for-night continuity problems, cut-rate Desi Arnaz, bargain basement Vincent Price, one bald henchman, mild bimbotation, a bit of gratuitous nekkidity, a sex-crazed beast, mutant transformation, a regrettable and lengthy dance of triumph scene, and nuclear radiation (which explains the art in the castle). I suspect Sam Raimi had this flick

Continued on next page



PHOTO PROVIDED

The chlorophyll monster in *Mad Doctor of Blood Island* doesn’t stand up to close inspection, so the filmmakers wisely don’t let the audience get a good look.

Summer Concert Series

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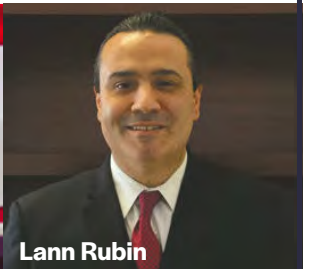
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...film

Continued from previous page



PHOTO PROVIDED

**I'm confused! I look a little like Vincent Price, but I sound
nothing like him! And why is that tree trying to eat my wife?**

in the back of his mind for the first
couple of "Evil Dead" movies.

The Mad Doctor of Blood Island
(1968): Well, here we are back at
Blood Island. This time we're look-
ing for the cause of a strange disease
that turns the natives green. Turns
out it's simple -- crazy Dr. Lorca shot
a cancer patient up with a rare chlo-
rophyll strain he found on the island.
It's just science. Gratuitous nekkidity,
green blood, dismemberment, a sort
of luau/orgy hybrid, and every time
the monster is about to do some-
thing the camera zooms in and out
rapidly, perhaps to prevent the audi-
ence from getting a good look at the
lame monster costume. Spoiler: The
beast hides out in a lifeboat as the
gang sails away from Blood Island,
the better to set up...

...Beast of Blood (1971), in which
the monster kicks things off im-

mediately by blowing up the boat,
perhaps in protest of the producers'
decision to drop the word "island"
from the title. Dr. Lorca's got a whole
army of green mutants now, and the
islanders aren't up to much in the
resistance department, so it's up to
Bill Foster (John Ashley) and Myra
the reporter (Celeste Yarnall) to get
things sorted out. Which they do,
eventually, but not before there's
some highly dubious surgery, a
henchman who can only grunt, the
usual nekkidity, an artificial head
that talks, and plenty of extra fake-
looking blood. Bonus points for the
hero's Modified Elvis haircut, a bold
choice in 1971. This movie is an
excellent example of the plot getting
in the way of the story, but when a
man sets out to watch all four Blood
Island movies, he's got to tough it all
the way through.

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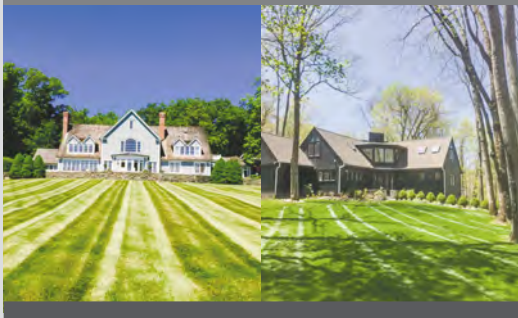
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