

## ART

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Museum of Modern Art**  
"Stephen Shore"

This immersive and staggeringly charming retrospective is devoted to one of the best American photographers of the past half century. Shore has peers—Joel Meyerowitz, Joel Sternfeld, Richard Misrach, and, especially, William Eggleston—in a generation that, in the nineteen-seventies, stormed to eminence with color film, which art photographers had long disdained. His best-known series, "American Surfaces" and "Uncommon Places," are both from the seventies and were mostly made in rugged Western states. The pictures in these series share a quality of surprise: appearances surely unappreciated if even really noticed by anyone before—in rural Arizona, a phone booth next to a tall cactus, on which a crude sign ("GARAGE") is mounted, and, on a small-city street in Wisconsin, a movie marquee's neon wanly aglow, at twilight. A search for fresh astonishments has kept

Shore peripatetic, on productive sojourns in Mexico, Scotland, Italy, Ukraine, and Israel. He has remained a vestigial Romantic, stopping in space and time to frame views that exert a peculiar tug on him. This framing is resolutely formalist: subjects composed laterally, from edge to edge, and in depth. There's never a "background." The most distant element is as considered as the nearest. But only when looking for it are you conscious of Shore's formal discipline, because it is as fluent as a language learned from birth. His best pictures at once arouse feelings and leave us alone to make what we will of them. He delivers truths, whether hard or easy, with something very like mercy. *Through May 28.*

**Guggenheim Museum****"Joseph Albers in Mexico"**

From the mid-nineteen-thirties to the late sixties, Albers and his wife, Anni, often travelled to Mexico; this striking show makes a case for the country's impact on his art, as the German modernist faces off with the craftspeople of Chichén

Itzá, Tenayuca, Uxmal, and Teotihuacán. A photograph, taken by Albers on his first visit to the pre-Columbian ball court at Monte Albán, compresses the structure's shadowed stone bleachers into a thrumming zigzag pattern of narrow diagonal stripes. Its formal connection to his 1942 lithograph "To Monte Albán," in which twin rectangles are circumscribed by concentric boxes, is clear. The show includes scores of photographs, many of them combined into meticulous typological collages, never shown in Albers's lifetime, and a judicious selection of drawings and paintings. For every pairing that specifies inspiration—"To Mitla," a 1940 oil-on-Masonite painting in a stepped pattern of blue, red, brown, violet, and olive, echoes a nearby photograph of serpentine stonework—there are half a dozen juxtapositions emphasizing an affinity for geometric repetition. The genius of the show, organized in six geographically themed segments, with an addendum of seven "Homage to the Square" paintings, is to give equal weight to the ruins and to Albers's manifestly enraptured take on them, enabling viewers to participate in a living dialogue between artists separated by centuries. *Through March 28.*

**Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art****"Barbara Hammer: Evidentiary Bodies"**

The American artist is best known for her groundbreaking films, which are joyful studies in female subjectivity and formal experimentation. A selection plays on a loop in this concise survey, notably "Dyketactics," from 1974, a now iconic slice-of-life snapshot set to a Moog-synthesized score, and several strikingly erotic Super-8 shorts. Also on view are archival materials, which convey a playful approach to art and activism, as well as early diaristic and psychedelic works on paper. A grid of photographs documents performances that Hammer organized, including "Homage to Sappho" (1978), in which a group of women gathered outside the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and released balloons carrying slips of paper inscribed with lesbian artists' names. In the dreamlike "Pond and Waterfall" (1982), visitors are encouraged to remove a stethoscope from a hook on the wall and listen to their own heartbeat while watching Hammer's aquatic footage—a beautiful moment in a revelatory show. *Through Jan. 28.*

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

**"Agnes Martin, Richard Tuttle: Crossing Lines"**

Ten stately gray paintings by Martin show extraordinary range, from "Leaves," made in 1966, in which hundreds of close-set graphite lines create an almost audible buzz, to "The Sea," a penumbral square, from 2003, whose narrow white furrows evoke oracle bones. Martin achieved optical transcendence by accumulating small exactitudes until they were too many for the eye to take in. In contrast, Tuttle's site-specific sculptural responses to Martin's works are deceptively slight—each one is a squiggle of wire nailed to the wall above a graphite drawing that riffs on a shadow. Ambiguity has rarely looked as precise. *Through Jan. 13. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St. 212-421-3292.)*

**"All Good Art Is Political: Käthe Kollwitz and Sue Coe"**

This crackling show, titled after a quote from Toni Morrison, displays prints and drawings by Kollwitz, a German social realist who died in 1945, and Coe, an English antiwar, anti-capitalist, and



In the phantasmagoric "Tincture #1" (above), by the young American painter Michael Stamm, a ginseng root daydreams. At the DC Moore gallery, through Feb. 3.