

## CAUGHT AND CALLED: 2003 BY JANE HAMMOND Spotlight Paper by Jeanette Pfothenauer, 2017




- **Title:** *Caught and Called*, 2003
- **Artist:** Jane Hammond born 1950, in Bridgeport CT, is a contemporary conceptual artist that works in print, paint, and sculpture. Her work is often based on dreams and/or literature. She is known for her use of appropriated images, creation of an art system using them, and certain colors, and for her collaborations with authors transforming their written words into visual images.
  - **Education:**
    - B.A. (Art) Mount Holyoke College, 1972 (studied biology and poetry)
    - M.F.A. Arizona State University, 1973-74 (studied ceramics)
    - M.F.A. (Sculpture) University of Wisconsin- Madison, 1977<sup>1</sup>
  - **Exhibitions:** She had her first solo exhibition in 1989 at Exit Art in New York and her first museum exhibition in 1993 at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Since then her recognition has grown and she has exhibited within the United States as well as internationally. She currently lives and works in New York,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.artnet.com>

NY. Hammond is represented by Galerie LeLong in New York and the Greg Kuchera Gallery in Seattle.<sup>2 3</sup>

- **Medium:** Oil paint on wood panel. 52.5”x89”x6”
- **Ownership:** PSAM purchased this artwork with funds provided by the Barron Family Foundation
- **Art Movement:** This artwork is part of Hammond’s Rebus Paintings which are large works that resemble open 3-ring notebooks and is Conceptual Art.
- **Technique And Methodology:** *Caught and Called* is part of Ms. Hammond’s Rebus Collection.
  - **What is Rebus?** Rebus is defined as a representation of words or syllables by pictures of objects or by symbols whose names resemble the intended words or syllables in sound; It is also described as a riddle made up of such pictures or symbols. An example of a rebus as word play is:

H +  = Hear, or Here.

- **The Rebus Collection**

In the Rebus collection,. Hammond selects images from her 276 borrowed images, arranges them on paintings shaped like gigantic three-dimensional 3- ring open spiral notebooks and creates rebuses for the viewer to solve. The viewer must use specific names of the images in the paintings to create another name and another image in the form of another person. The rebuses when solved disclose unlikely pairings of cultural icons. “With these paintings there are now at least three bodies in the room: the painting, the viewer and the surprise guest—the third person who only exists within the relationship that each viewer will have with the work at a very particular time and place”.<sup>4</sup>
- **Unlikely Pairing of Cultural Icons:** *In Caught and Called*, Hammond uses her images and directions given in the painting to spell out “Harry Houdini” on the left side of the notebook and “Joan of Arc” on the right side of the notebook.

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<sup>2</sup> “GalerieLelong-Artist” [www.galerielong.com](http://www.galerielong.com)

<sup>3</sup> “Jane Hammond – GregKucheraGallery – Seattle” [www.gregkuchera.com](http://www.gregkuchera.com)

<sup>4</sup> Jane Hammond Rebus Paintings by Tery Meyers, Weatherspoon Art Museum

- **My Impressions/Analysis:** These Rebus Paintings continue Hammond's focus on creating works that reflect her fascination with books, the written word, and images of every day life. Here she does it with a sense of humor and playfulness.

This comes after her collaboration with Ashbery and the "word to image" association of 60 titles. With the Rebus works she goes from pictures to words. It is yet another "system" for her to express herself. I view this collection as a kind of release and exhale for her from an intense period and coming back to place that taps into the humor, whimsy and ironies that she sees in life. Her statements in a March 22, 1993 interview lead me to this conclusion<sup>5</sup>.

During the interview Hammond references Duchamp's readymades (of which he only made 12) noting that he didn't make a lifetime practice of readymades. She likewise did not make a lifetime practice of making Rebuses. She made only six. Like DuChamp she believed that one work should not be a refinement of the work that came before it, or even a variation. In fact it could be a contradiction. This was in keeping with her philosophy of having an art system rather than an art style. She goes on to say that one of the interesting things about art is that it holds all of the aspects of yourself; your intellect, your autobiography, your emotional life, and your sense of humor.

I think she was comfortable making a change and was expressing her whimsy and sense of humor – in addition to making the viewer think and reflect. After all, she has stated that her goal is "... to make painting as complicated, inconsistent, varied, multifaceted as you are, as I am, as life is...." (See *New York Times*, October 13, 2002, section 2, p. 35)

- **Recent Works**



Ms. Hammond no longer limits her painting to her image bank or to a limited number of colors.

*"Fallen"*, a 2004 sculpture (left) is made up of hundreds of individual handmade leaves each of which has the name of soldiers killed in Iraq.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Inside the Studio, Two Decades of Talks with New York Artists*, p 115

The sculpture i 9"X 130 " X 89", is made of foam, cotton, rag paper, acrylic paint, sumi ink, archived digital ink jet prints and gouache.<sup>6</sup> It began with 1,511 leaves but Hammond has continued to update it, a recent exhibition of the piece had 4,229 leaves.

➤ **Influences:**

Authors, other artists and literature as well as her dreams have been a major influence on Hammond's works. She is an artist who has been influenced by the Conceptual art movement and some of the artists associated with it. It is a movement that prizes ideas over the formal or visual components of the artwork. The artist believed that simply articulating an artistic idea was enough to make it a work of art, and that concerns such as aesthetics, expression, skill and marketability were all irrelevant standards for judging the artwork.<sup>7</sup>

Hammond in describing those who have influenced her, says that she is most deeply in love with authors and artists who are particularly open - such as John Cage (American Composer, Music Theorist, Writer, Chess player and Philosopher (1919-1992)), and Marcel Duchamp (French Naturalized Painter Sculptor, Chess Player and Writer (1887-1968)).<sup>8</sup>

Cage is best known for revolutionizing modern music through his incorporation of unconventional instrumentation and the idea of environmental music dictated by chance. He is also known for his collaborations with artists like Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg. These partnerships helped break down the divisions between the various art mediums, and allowed for new interdisciplinary work to be produced. Cage's influence ushered in groundbreaking stylistic developments key to contemporary art and paved the way for the postmodern artistic inquiries, which began in the late 1960s and further challenged the established definition of fine art. (See Footnote 12)

Duchamp is generally considered to be the father of Conceptual art. He challenged the notion of art when he produced his first readymades. This was a term made up by Duchamp to designate mass-produced everyday objects taken out of their usual context and given the status of art simply because the artist chose it and said it was art. (See footnote 12)

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<sup>6</sup> <http://artnet.com> Jane Hammond

<sup>7</sup> Conceptual Art Movement Artists and Major Works | The Art Story  
<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-conceptual-art.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Inside the Studio Two Decades of Talks With Artists in New York, edited by Judith Olch Richard, pages 114-117

The most notorious of his readymades was a 1917 work entitled *Fountain* – it was a porcelain urinal. *Fountain* was submitted to the 1917 Society of Independent Artists under the pseudonym R. Mutt. The initial R stood for Richard, French slang for "moneybags" and Mutt referred to JL Mott Ironworks, the New York-based company, which manufactured the porcelain urinal. The work was rejected by the Society. (See Footnote 12)

While Ms. Hammond does not identify John Baldessari (born 1931-an American conceptual artist known for his work featuring found photography and

The titles he suggested were witty and included colloquial phrases. The titles suggested included: "Irregular Plural", "Do Husbands Matter", "Heavenly Days," "Kibosh," "Freezer Burn", "The Peace Plan", "The Stocking Market," "Bread and Butter Machine", "Good Night Nurse" and "Forests of Fire."

By December 1994 Hammond had made paintings for 13 of the titles that Ashbery suggested to her, reusing one four times and another twice. To date she has made 62 paintings with those titles – all paintings with the exception of one print (*The Wonderfulness of Downtown*)<sup>9</sup>

The title "Irregular Plural," was originally one of her least favorite titles suggested by Asbery. Hammond said that it was one of the harder titles for her because she didn't want to do something about grammar or language. (An irregular plural noun is an irregular noun in the plural form. An irregular noun is a noun that becomes plural by changing its spelling in other ways than adding an "s" or "es" to the end of the word).

Hammond decided to translate the grammatical phrase "Irregular Plural" by painting an open book, with two types of matching motifs on the facing pages—including jesters, breathing masks, and cages—chosen to highlight their sameness and differences.<sup>10</sup>

Using another title suggested by Asbery " Good Night Nurse" Hammond relied on her dreams to compose the work *Good Night Nurse* 2000-1. This title was a take off on the title of the children's book "Goodnight Moon". *Good Night Nurse* first appeared to her in a dream. It occurred after she had visited her

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<sup>9</sup> Paper Pulse A conversation with Jane Hammond by Faye Hirsch, Art On Paper March April 2002 <http://janehammondartist.com/paper-pulse-a-conversation-with-jane-hammond/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.artnews.com/2013/02/11/profile-of-jane-hammond/> Jane Hammond; Down the Rabbit Hole of Photography By Hillarie M. Sheets

nephew, who for years had been struggling with a life-threatening disease. She dreamed he had died, and she was letting him choose the shape of his coffin.

*Good Night Nurse* is set in a red studio. Young boys play leapfrog, with a catcher's glove; soccer ball and other things lie at their feet. Their actions are frozen in white, like the marble of memorials. Scattered about are sarcophagi and the disembodied head of a nurse.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the nine- year collaboration with Asbery, Hammond is quoted as saying that she had to have something to do to keep panic from setting in. In fact, she had already begun her collaboration with Raphael Rubenstein, a poet and art critic born 1955, Lawrenceville Kansas. They collaborated on a book entitled *Be Zany, Poised Harpists / Be Blue, Little Sparrows*. That is a title that she and Rubenstein made up together by using a two-letter word, followed by a four-letter word, followed by a six-letter word, followed by an eight-letter word, because that relates to the poems inside of the book.<sup>12</sup>

About ten years prior to her collaboration with Mr. Rubenstein, Hammond had heard him read his poem "Six Sex," a bawdy tour of European cities in six stanzas, each with six lines of six words of six letters. For the artist book, she chose Rubenstein poems based on two stanzas and four stanzas, and then commissioned one of eight. She illuminated each poem with a different system of image making, from digital renderings of vintage postcards backed with erotic drawings to pullout photographs and a foldout print. For each book in the edition, she also concocted different covers from collaged and handmade paper. (See Footnote 10)

It was after this collaboration that she began her Rebus Collection of which *Caught\_and Called* is one of six Rebus Paintings.

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<sup>11</sup> *ART/ARCHITECTURE; To a Painter, Words Are Worth a Thousand Pictures* By Amei Wallachoct. New York Times Oct. 2002

<sup>12</sup> <http://artequalstext.aboutdrawing.org/jane-hammond-raphael-rubenstein/>

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