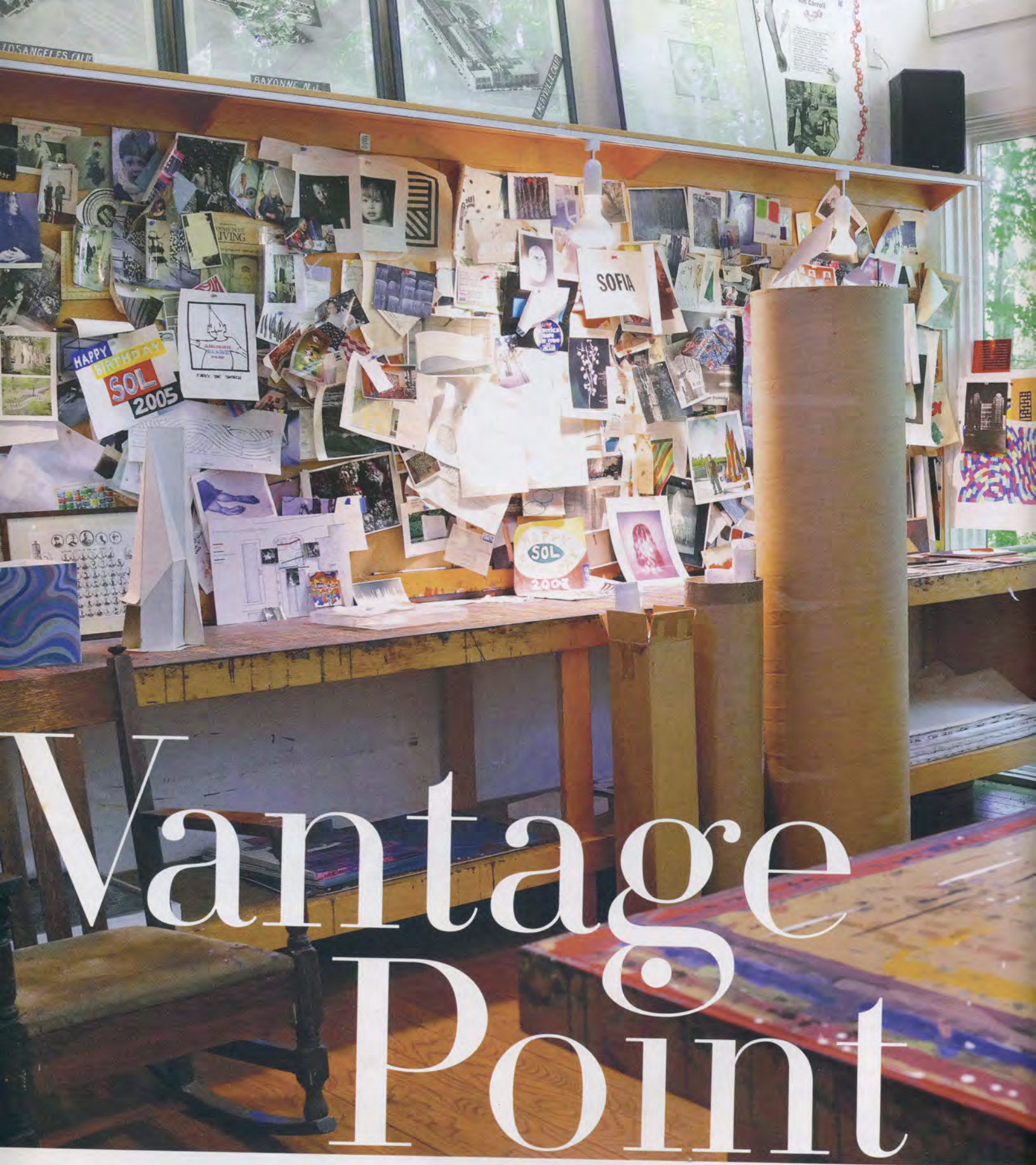




Vantage Point

FROM THEIR CONNECTICUT STUDIOS, FIVE GROUNDBREAKING ARTISTS SEE THEIR WORKS COME TO LIFE

PRODUCED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY HELEN KLISSER DURING | WRITTEN BY ANN LOYND



Stephen Wilkes

From his Westport studio, a fine art photographer views life in focus

Describe your art. I've been a photographer most of my life; I started making pictures through a microscope at the age of 12. My work has always been about discovery—it's a way to explore the world and our relationship with it. **Who or what inspires you?** Art history is a constant source of inspiration. My current obsession is the Hudson River School painters. **Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?** I'm blessed in that my current project, "Day to Night," has almost endless possibilities in terms of subjects and locations. The challenge is finding the places that have both a foreground of human narrative as well as an epic cityscape or landscape. I'm also now looking to add the element of history within this series as I move forward. **What part of your artistic process do you enjoy the most?** I love the process of seeing and looking. I live for the uneasy feeling of never knowing what will happen, or who will appear in front of my lens. **What is the best aspect of your studio?** The high ceilings and my old chestnut floors. **What time of day are you most inspired?** Early in the morning, before the phone rings. **What music do you listen to while working?** Everything from jazz to pop, plus my new favorite, Rozzi Crane. **What was the first piece of art you sold?** A photograph of an empty swimming pool titled, "The Deep End." It was the first picture I ever felt myself in. **Do you collect?** Yes—photography, sculpture, Maori carvings, signs and advertising art. I also collect rocks and unusual objects I find along my travels. I'm particularly drawn to objects that capture a memory of where I've been.



London Calling Wilkes is excited by the endless possibilities his "Day to Night" series has to offer. The artists examines "Day To Night, Trafalgar Square," 2013 (ABOVE AND TOP). See Resources.



Stitch In Time Conceptual Art founding father Sol Lewitt's Chester studio remains untouched since his passing in 2007. A paint-splattered table sits next to a note board full of cards, photos and thoughts from the artist. See *Resources*.



THE ARTS HAVE LONG HAD A home in Connecticut. With their respective mediums, visionaries Gary Komarin, Frances Palmer, Robert Cottingham, Stephen Wilkes and the late Sol LeWitt are responsible for pushing the boundaries of art in this region and beyond. Here, they open the doors to their private workspaces and talk with *CTC&G*.

Sol LeWitt

An intimate glance into the Chester studio of a Conceptualist icon

A key player in the Conceptual Art movement, the late Sol LeWitt helped revolutionize the definition of art in the 1960s when he wrote, "The idea becomes the machine that makes the art." This notion, that art is a manifestation of an idea, was the backbone for his now-famous wall drawings (more than 1,100 have been executed), which serve as a set of instructions that can be repeatedly installed. Connecticut-born LeWitt also created hundreds of works on paper, photographs and sculptures he referred to as "structures." Since his passing in 2007 in New York City, LeWitt's work can be seen in public institutions and galleries worldwide. Until 2033, LeWitt's wall drawings will be on display at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in a solo exhibition titled, "Sol LeWitt: A Wall Drawing Retrospective." Here, *CTC&G* steps inside this great artist's private Chester studio, where his legacy lives on. In this intimate space—largely untouched since his death—every note and line speaks to his sense of being, frozen in time. A chockfull note board of photos, sketches and postcards, an unmoved calendar, and a floor and table alive with drippings of paint are markings from the past—still as vibrant and vital as when LeWitt left them.



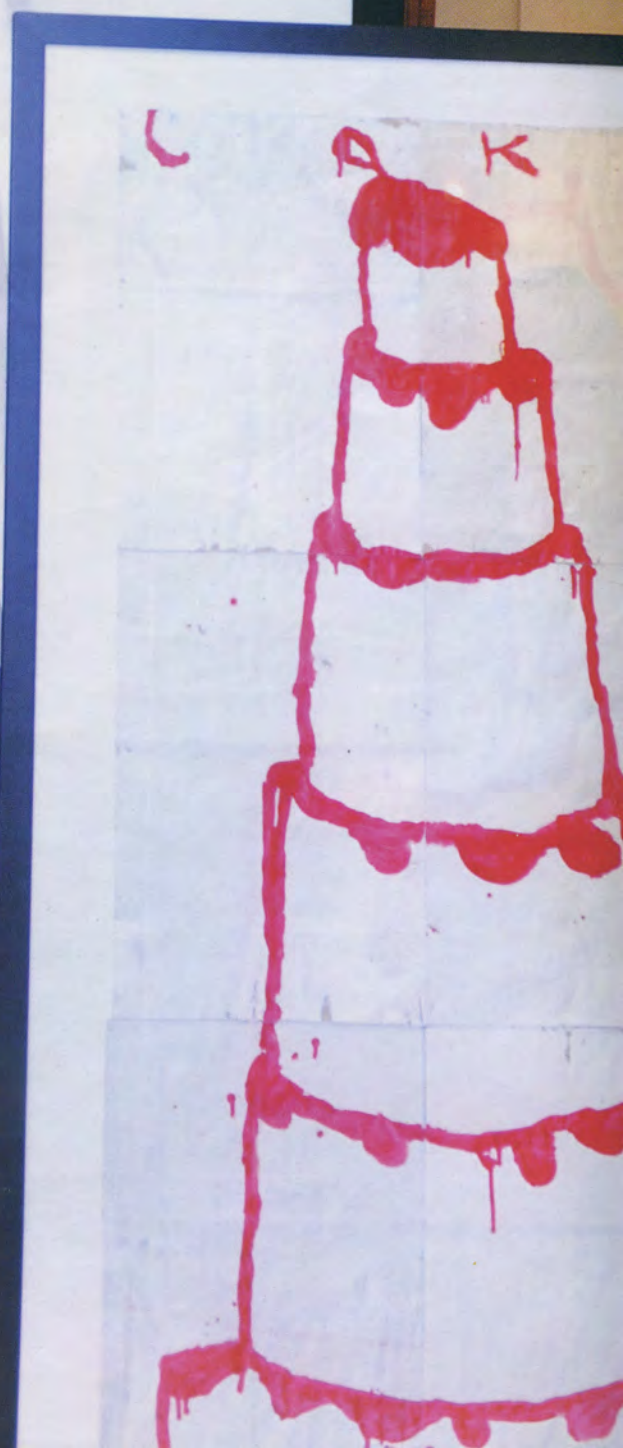
Gary Komarin

An abstract painter takes the road less traveled in Roxbury

Describe your art. My paintings travel on their own roads in many ways. I am there to assist and guide. I work without premeditation and follow what is in front of me. The trick is to know when to stop. **Who or what influences your work?** Nearly everything. It all goes into one big soup. **Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?** I watch everything in a sense—from a repaved road with new asphalt meeting old concrete to a jerry-rigged door in an elevator stairwell, or the radiant smile of a passing stranger in an Italian café. I like to look at the edges of things, to the *non*-event rather than the event. **What part of your artistic process do you enjoy the most?** Painting. I like when the canvas is on the floor and I'm moving around it rapidly, big brush in hand letting paint flow and drip and colors collide. I create chaos and then pull back and have a look. I like to get lost in the painting. **Do you listen to music while you work?** I like listening to some really good music (everything from Bach to Bob Dylan, Ella Fitzgerald, Philip Glass and Sara Vaughan), taking a moment to sit and look at what I have been painting, to slow things down and breathe. **What time of day are you most inspired?** In the late afternoon after all the morning busyness is out of the way. **What is the most indispensable item in your studio?** My long-handled brushes, my music—and of course lots of paint, mixed to creamy consistency like melted ice cream on a hot summer day. **What is the last show that you saw?** Rothko in London.

Stroke Of Genius (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) Gary Komarin moves "Rue Madame in Red" in his Roxbury studio. (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) "Dirty White, Tapping Reeve" is crafted from water-based enamel on canvas.

Let Them Eat Cake "Cake Stacked, Red on Creme" leans against a painted stairway (THIS PAGE). See *Resources*.



In Full Flower (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM THIS PHOTO) Frances Palmer loves the geometry of these ball dahlias grown in her garden. After creating plaster casts from the picked flowers, Palmer takes an impression with clay and cuts out the shape. The potter photographs a finished collection. In a group of finished vases, a short urn shows the flowers after the pot has been fired; the gold luster on the tulipiere is an additional step. She applies the clay flowers to a previously thrown pot. The artist in her garden. See *Resources*.





Frances Palmer

Plants and pottery go hand-in-hand for this Weston potter

Describe your art: I make hand-thrown or hand-formed functional ceramics. I work in white earthenware, terra cotta and high-fire translucent porcelain.

Who or what influences your work? I'm influenced by my garden and the flowers that I grow. Also, I have a master's degree in art history, and I spend a good deal of time combing the centuries of ceramics history. **What part of your artistic process do you enjoy the most?** Working in my studio or in my garden and having time to think. **What is the most comforting aspect of your studio?** My Wittus Shaker-style wood-burning stove. **What time of day are you most inspired?** Very early in the morning, with a cup of coffee. **Are you a collector?** I am a collector of ceramic, garden and design books. I am also an avid collector of dahlia tubers. **What was the first piece of art you sold?** A painted flower vase.





Robert Cottingham

A converted barn in Newtown becomes a photorealist painter's paradise

How did you get your start? In 1969, I began showing my work at the O.K. Harris gallery in New York. I was one of several artists there who were doing representational painting—soon to be called Photorealism. My particular subject matter at that time was of the urban landscape, including neon signs, movie marquees and storefronts. I later expanded my subjects to include oil trucks, machine parts, houses, railroad cars, and, most recently, perfume bottles. **What influences your work?** I received a National Endowment for the Arts in 1974–1975 that allowed me to travel to 27

cities in the U.S. and photograph thousands of images that I still refer to today. **What is comfortable about your studio?** I had it converted from an original cow barn, which was the main reason we bought the Blackman Farm property in the first place. The space is airy, bright and efficiently equipped. **Do you listen to music while working?** I fill my studio with the sounds of jazz and classical music. **What are the most indispensable items in your space?** The two large easels I designed. They allow me to work in a wide range of canvas sizes. **What is your post-gallery watering hole or restaurant?** Other than the local Connecticut restaurants, my New York watering hole would have to be the Broome Street Bar. It's usually my first stop when I arrive in Soho. **What time of the day are you most inspired?** Inspiration can strike at any time!

All Of The Lights Robert Cottingham paints the finishing touches on a photorealist depiction of a neon sign (THIS PAGE).

Modern Master The artist comments on works in his Newtown studio (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP). He recently expanded his subject matter to perfume bottles (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT). Cottingham steps outside his studio, a converted cow barn (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT). See *Resources*.





Time Traveler

To create "Day To Night, Tunnel View," Yosemite 2014 (ABOVE), Wilkes photographed one angle for approximately 15 hours. A large print of the work hangs in his Westport studio (LEFT). See Resources.