

# SO PUNK ROCK

HER NEW BOOK, *M TRAIN*, IS WOWING THE CRITICS AND HER FIRST ALBUM, *HORSES*, TURNS 40 (YES, 40!) THIS MONTH. PATTI SMITH IS RIDING HIGH. BY DEBORAH L. MARTIN

Patti Smith is exactly where she wants to be. But that's not unusual for the 68-year-old punk-rock poet laureate. Her new book of personal essays entitled *M Train*, was published last month to critical acclaim ("Not that I care," she says), and she is currently on a tour celebrating the 40th anniversary of her seminal album, *Horses*, which comes to the Beacon Theatre this month. "Forty years is a long damn time but I wouldn't perform this material if I wasn't still connected to it." Spoken like, well, Patti Smith.

Talking with Smith feels like being invited by a literate neighbor to discuss a volume of French poetry over a pot of Moroccan mint tea. But she is a shape-shifter, becoming by turns a mystic, a shaman, a punk-rock priestess. "Someone told me that they read *M Train* and said I seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time sitting in cafés. I took that as a compliment. I do my best thinking in cafés," Smith explains with an edge of challenge in her voice. While she may like the visual references to European intelligentsia and Beat poets sitting at wonky tables, heads wreathed in smoke, she has spent a lifetime doing everything but sit around.

Smith arrived in New York in 1967 intent on being a poet and artist. In a Manhattan apartment belonging to friends, she met photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, and the two became lovers. "We were each other's muse," she says, noting that it was as if they had "never been strangers." Mapplethorpe photographed her

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Portrait of the artist: Just two years after her arrival in New York, Patti Smith was photographed by Norman Seeff (1969). The images from that shoot with then-lover Robert Mapplethorpe have since become iconic. "He gave me confidence. He taught me to trust myself," Smith says of Mapplethorpe.



extensively and encouraged her to put her poetry to music, and so she did, most notably for the St. Mark's Poetry Project in 1971. "I wanted to infuse the written word with the immediacy and frontal attack of rock 'n' roll." Accompanied by guitarist Lenny Kaye, she read her poem "Oath," which begins, "Christ died for somebody's sins but not mine." It would later become the opening line of the first song on *Horses*, "Gloria: In Excelsis Deo."

"I wanted to have my own voice," Smith says, "even if I didn't really know what that was at the time." Bands like the Stooges and the Ramones were regular performers at CBGB and Max's Kansas City, and Smith held her own in that rough crowd. "[The] thing about the Ramones and those guys, it was homegrown, you know?" Smith looks fierce, defensive when she says this. "We didn't know we were starting a movement. We just wanted to sound like what we wanted to hear. When you saw a band at CBs, you felt like you could do that. We were hungry, but fuck it, we were in New York City."

In 1975 she signed with Arista Records and released her first album, *Horses*. It is considered the first punk album ever recorded and is on virtually every "best album ever" list in existence. It is anarchic and angry, and imbued with smoky poetry.

Forty years later, Smith's résumé features 16 published works (including the 2010 National Book Award winner *Just Kids*) and 11 studio albums, and her story includes one of the great artistic and romantic relationships in pop-culture history (with Mapplethorpe), a hiatus and a happy marriage (to Fred "Sonic" Smith, ending when he had a heart attack and died in 1994), two children, a comeback, and her unquestioned and iconic status as the high priestess of all things avant and punk. But what's next?

Smith looks out the window, then pulls on her black coat and ever-present watch cap. "I'm going to get some coffee. I have some writing to do." *Patti Smith and Her Band perform Horses on November 10. The Beacon Theatre, 2124 Broadway, 212-465-6500; beacontheatre.com* **G**

## Modern Master

A SHOWCASE FOR NEW TALENT AT THE WHITNEY.

BY SUZANNE CHARLÉ

Rachel Rose has been attracting a lot of attention from the art world lately thanks to her painterly video installations—intensely researched works that grapple with current anxieties about our relationship to the natural world and our increasing interest in and reliance on advanced technology. Up next for this winner of the Frieze Art Award:

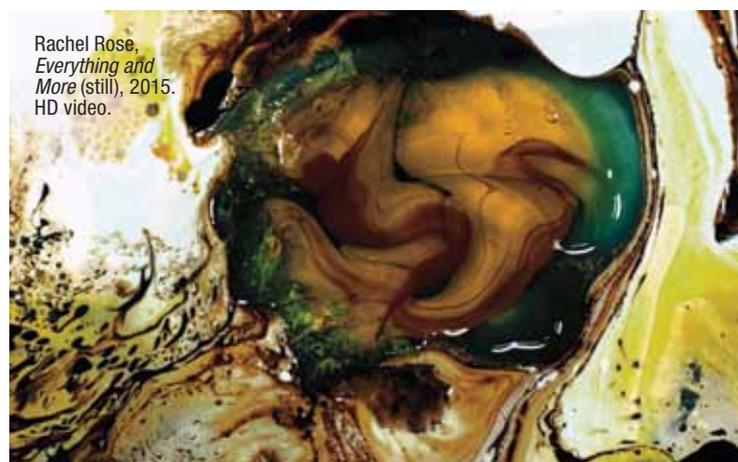
*Everything and More*, a commission by the Whitney Museum of American Art, which will be part of its emerging artists series (October 30, 2015 through February 7, 2016, 99 Gansevoort St.; 212-570-3600; whitney.org.) Recently, we spoke with the 28-year-old about the exhibition.

**Q: How did you decide on the title?**

**A:** *Everything and More* comes from David Foster Wallace's non-fiction book that traces a technical and social history of our conception of infinity in math.

**Q: Tell us about creating the artwork.**

**A:** I interviewed astronaut David Wolf about



Rachel Rose, *Everything and More* (still), 2015. HD video.

what it was like during his space walk outside the International Space Station and how detached he felt from self and body and his heightened sense of color in outer space. I structured the piece around the interview, and used other sound works in relationship to it to bring out the underlying feeling that we always confront the sublime through limited, finite means.

**Q: Who has inspired you?**

**A:** Rirkrit Tiravanija—amongst others—and many filmmakers, particularly the [film] editor Walter Murch, who wrote *In the Blink of an Eye*. (He also worked on *Apocalypse Now*, *The Conversation*, and *The Godfather*.)

## OBJECTS OF DESIRE

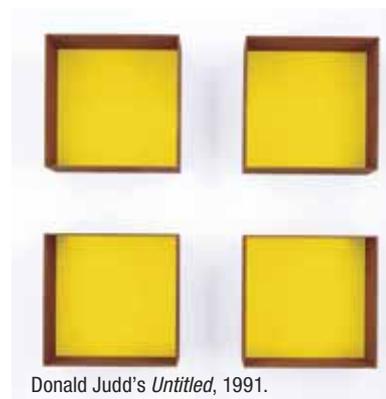
*Art world icons at David Zwirner.*

**Must see:** Two shows at David Zwirner Gallery (November 7–December 19; 537 W. 20th St.; 212-727-2070; davidzwirner.com) displaying seldom-seen works by 20th-century greats, painter Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964), and Donald Judd (1928–1994), the oft-called minimalist, who consistently disavowed the term.

**Downstairs:** Likely the largest collection of Donald Judd's imposing Corten steel sculptures ever assembled.

**Upstairs:** The biggest Giorgio Morandi exhibit since the Met's important show in 2008 with 30 paintings and 10 works on paper.

**Artists' Artists:** Morandi and Judd exerted a huge impact on other artists in their insistence on the "objectness of things." Masters of material, light, and space, Morandi—with his serial and reductive imagery—and Judd—who radicalized sculpture with his use of nontraditional materials—continue to inspire artists today.



Donald Judd's *Untitled*, 1991.