A Welcome Dose
Of Misanthropy

The Irish writer Claire-Louise Bennett's first novel, *Pond*, dabbles in a black art we don't get enough of in unseriouse: misanthropy.

Mr. Bennett's unnamed narrator is a young academic who's gone to live in a stone house in a remote coastal village in Ireland. She's in flight from something, though she's not entirely clear.

When a favorite worm is killed by a cat, she thinks, "I wanted to take that out of her heart and see its soul backside in an explosion of silk." (E. Rona liked to say something similar about his editor.) When she gives a small party, it seems to her that she is "simply not inviting."

She recalls an academic conference at which a man descended to her. In one of the many oddly funny passages in this surprising book, Bennett responds: "Why don't you fall over? Why don't you become engorged in some cables near the screen at the front of our way out and fall over and why don't you smash your head off a very sharp corner of the desk where writer 1 sat and delivered my oh so charming missive and cut your head open ever so slightly so that a little bit of blood drags out. Just a little trickle of blood so that you don't look injured, only stupid and a bit ill?"

She's aware that she can sound like an "everlasting tool," and she's in touch with the part of herself where "hooliganry and superstition overlap most obstinately." She can live with this self-analysis.

"Pond" is a slim novel, told in chapters of varying lengths that resemble short stories. There's life in the Continues on Page 18

A Chronicle
Of Abandon And Abuse

Like many driven artists, Diane Arbus was a pitiless self-editor and a liberal self-documenter. The editor produced exquisitely hard-edged images, now classics of American 20th-century photography. The documenter saved every shred of preparatory matter that went into making those images: research files, handwritten notes, rejected alternatives and old experiments on which new work was built.

After her suicide at 48 in 1971, Arbus's family found boxes filled with such material in her Manhattan apartment, including a cache of unpublished photographs from the late 1960s, when she officially began her career as an independent artist. In 2007, her daughters, Doon Arbus and Amy Arbus gave all of this to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is showing a selection of some 80 early pictures, most for the first time, in "Diane Arbus: In the Beginning" at the Met Breuer.

The presentation, conceived by Jeff Rosenheim, curator in charge of the Metropolitan's Department of Photography, is terrific: vast and moody, with a kind of offbeat format. The museum rarely attempts in its Fifth Avenue headquarters. You walk off the Met Breuer's second-floor elevators and into the Continues on Page 22
A Brontë Exhibition, ‘Jane Eyre’ Included

In Charlotte Brontë’s “Jane Eyre,” Jane tells Mr. Rochester, “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you.”

Brontë’s original 1847 manuscript will be open to that page at the Morgan Library & Museum, starting Sept. 9. The document will be part of an exhibition honoring the 200th anniversary of Brontë’s birth, a collaboration with the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, England, that purports to be the largest Brontë exhibition ever presented in New York City.

The show, “Charlotte Brontë: An Independent Will,” is to include literary manuscripts, letters and rare printed books from the Morgan’s collection, along with personal artifacts, drawings and photographs from the Parsonage.

In addition, the Morgan will borrow for the show two portraits of Brontë from the National Portrait Gallery in London (which currently has a Brontë exhibition up) and the “Jane Eyre” manuscript from the British Library.

Highlights include Brontë’s earliest surviving miniature manuscript, her portable writing desk and paint box, a blue-and-white floral two-piece dress she wore in the 1840s and a pair of her ankle boots.

“The unifying theme of the exhibition is Brontë’s own independent will,” said Christine Nelson, the Morgan’s curator of literary and historical manuscripts, “the ambitious steps she took to attain creative success and the bold stance she took as a woman writing under a male pseudonym,” Currer Bell.

Artwork Returns to Dia

Lawrence Weiner’s “Cadmium & Mud & Titanium & Lead & Perrous Oxide & So On . . .” was first displayed as part of his solo exhibition “Displacement,” at Dia Center for the Arts in New York City in 1988. The work was a bold rethinking of what a sculpture could be, in which words — like “metals,” “pigments” and “mud” — were written across the floor, substituting language for actual materials.

Now, 25 years later, that piece is returning to the Dia Art Foundation for good. It will be permanently installed at Dia:Beacon in the Hudson Valley, on the museum’s back facade, an area previously off limits to visitors.

“It’s a piece that I’m very attached to and it was in my first show at Dia,” Mr. Weiner said in a telephone interview. “It was a way of building a structure that didn’t have a hierarchy of what was dangerous and what was necessary.”

Starting next Friday, the work will be visible from the back lawn and from the Metro-North train tracks that pass the museum.

“Everything’s that kind of piece. It’s very memorable,” the museum’s director, “materials that can be used in the process of making.”

A ‘Disaster Paintings’ Tour

Between 1983 and 2000, the artist Donald Sultan created his “Disaster Paintings,” featuring images of fire and industrial mishaps rendered in Masonite tiles and tar. But over the years, they have scattered to various public institutions and private collections.

Now, apparently for the first time, a group of them will be shown together at not one museum, but five in succession.

Opening at the Lowe Art Museum in Coral Cables, Fla., on Sept. 29, “Donald Sultan: The Disaster Paintings” will include 73 of the 73 works in the series.

The show will then travel to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art in Washington; the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh; and the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Neb.

“They’re quite dark — you’re in the middle of a toxic spill or the pollution of rivers or the Rust Belt disintegration of factories,” Mr. Sultan said. “I wanted people to see them again and re-evaluate them.”

While Mr. Sultan used imagery from newspaper photos as his source material, the paintings have powerful resonance today, said Allison Hearn, an assistant curator at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, which organized the show.

“It’s a real moment to show a body of work, given all the energy and interest the disaster and environmental scenes have right now,” she said.

Arabian Group Show

The collective GCC, composed of eight artists with ties to the Persian Gulf, was formed in 2013 during Art Dubai and has since shown at institutions like the New Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and MoMA PS1.

On Oct. 13, the collective is coming to the Mitchell-Innes & Nash gallery with “Positive Pathways (+),” an exhibition that includes installations, wall sculptures, video and sound.

The show focuses on how the “positive energy movement” and body-healing practitioners, which are gaining momentum in the Middle East, have become partly co-opted by local governments, with the creation of new positions like the United Arab Emirates’ minister of happiness, and the emergence of life coaches and feng shui consultants.

“They are commenting on the culture of the West,” said Lucy Mitchell-Innes, a founder of the gallery, “and how it’s being used in various Arab countries in the Middle East.”

Artists’ Award in Texas

Ever since the Arthouse at the Jones Center and the Austin Museum of Art merged in 2011 and became the Contemporary Austin in 2013, this Texan museum has sought to define itself as an institution that commissions new work.

Now the museum is announcing a $100,000 unrestricted award to be given to an artist every two years, financed by Suzanne Deal Booth, a museum trustee. The Suzanne Deal Booth Art Prize will underwrite a solo exhibition for the winning artist — along with a publication and public programming at the museum’s downtown Jones Center for contemporary outdoor sculpture park.

“It does all the things we want to be doing as a contemporary art program,” said Louis Grachos, the museum’s executive director. “It’s meant to push artists to create a new body of work.”

A work by the GCC collective, which will have a New York show.