

ON THEIR WAY UP

The San Francisco Bay Area: Ten Artists On Their Way Up

Out of the rich, artistic landscape of the Bay Area, I was asked to pick ten artists whose work merits closer scrutiny. I chose Joyce Baranowska, Tony Bellaver, Andrea Brewster, Bette Burgoyne, Bill Bury, Rene de Guzman, Chris Komater, Melissa Pokorny, Georgia Kohm Smith, and John Wilson White.

In any survey, it is difficult to make only ten choices. That is especially true for artists in the Bay Area because there are so many outstanding examples. To make my job easier, I used three primary criteria. First and most importantly, the artist had to make work that was both technically and conceptually challenging. Media made little difference. Second, the work had to show real commitment to, and engagement in, the current art dialogue. I hate to use the euphemism "cutting edge" here, but their work could be characterized as such. Third, the artist must already have had some success in the art world. This not only gives an indication of their potential but it says something about their personal drive. If we're talking about artists to watch for, drive surely plays an important role in who gets seen.

I found it difficult not to be subjective when it came to this assignment. I know many of the artists on this list and have had the chance to watch their work develop over time. Many of them are near my age. Some of them are just getting out of graduate school and have had only a few shows, some have been exhibiting artists for five to nearly ten years. I guess it could be argued that the choice of these ten people represent my personal biases in contemporary art. What cannot be denied, however, is that this is a very strong group of artists. I believe they are and will continue to be strong voices in the cultural dialogue in the Bay Area for years to come.

Ray Beldner

CHRIS KOMATER

Chris Komater is an artist who is obsessed with film noir from the 1940s and '50s. In his photo and installation work, he explores how these films define and frame male identity. In an ongoing photo series, he montages his face into old publicity stills in order to subvert as well as complete his identification with these images.



Photo: Mitchum seduces Chris Komater with a show of paternal affection.
NIGHT OF THE HUNTER
Directed by CHRISTOPHER NUTTEN • Starring ROBERT MITCHUM
Screenplay by CHARLES LANE CAULFIELD • Produced by PAUL DEERING
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"Robert Mitchum seduces Chris Komater with a show of paternal affection" by Chris Komater. Gelatin silver print.