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RAYMOND PETTIBON

11/18/10
 DAVID ZWIRNER
 NOV 6 – DEC 21, 2010
 by *chris bors*

NEW YORK



In Raymond Pettibon's previous exhibition at David Zwirner in 2007, the artist demonstrated shifting formal interests, moving from a limited palette to an increased use of color, while adding paper collage. This present show sees Pettibon continuing that course. A prolific artist who drew album covers and concert flyers for the 1980s hardcore band Black Flag long before he was recognized in the art world, you can still sense a "Do It Yourself" aesthetic. The rough-around-the-edges quality of his drawings and his unabashed insights into contemporary society remains refreshing.

One week before the show opened, Pettibon holed up in the space to make new drawings on-site, adding to work and writing text on the walls. The gallery left his drips of paint on the floor, reminding us that he's made the pristine environment his temporary studio, but the strategy is a tease: If he had covered the entire space, to create a walk-in installation, the results could be unforgettable.

The title of the exhibition, "Hard in the Paint," refers to the well-defended area on the basketball court immediately under the hoop where it is most difficult to score, and which is blocked off by painted rectangular lines. The term is also slang for an individual with a confrontational temperament, and communicates the immediacy of Pettibon's work. Large block letters spelling out "OBAMA NIG" painted on one wall along with other text highlight the underbelly of America and present the attitudes of the most ignorant opponents of the first African-American president. If there is any doubt these opinions exist, the Associated Press reported that after his election, several North Carolina State University students admitted to writing, "Let's shoot that nigger in the head," in an area on campus used to promote free speech.

Equally in-your-face is *No Title (She loves me...)* (all works, 2010), a drawing of a flower whose accompanying text, "She loves me—Fuck the bitch I'll keep the flower," recalls the x-rated nursery rhyme jokes of passé comedian Andrew Dice Clay. While the connection between the images and the writing in Pettibon's drawings is often clear, they are perhaps most successful when the correlation is puzzling. *No Title (A look. A...)*, for example, a colorful and confident rendering of a grasshopper features the phrase "A look. A look understood." Taken from Robert Louis Stevenson's essay about communication and the importance of truthfulness, "Truth of Intercourse," the ambiguous association is far from a predicatable drive to the hoop.



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Meredyth Sparks, *Untitled*, 2010

Mixed Media. Courtesy Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, and the artist.

Extraction, the most recent series of mixed media collages

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