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REVIEWS

FEATURED REVIEW

PerpiTube: Repurposing Social Media Spaces

Pitzer Art Galleries



A "PERPIPIPE" AUDIENCE SCREENS *LITTLE DEATHS* (2011) BY CAROLE ANN KLONARIDES, PHOTO CREDIT PATO HEBERT.

THE CHAOTIC DIVERSITY of "PerpiTube" is perhaps best encapsulated by the contribution of Sue Bell Yank, whose video, *An Icarian Fall*, explores seemingly contradictory images of Los Angeles as seen from a distance in a panoramic view, which belies the complexity of the city below, and the fragmented, street level discontinuity. Together they produce a rich, if also overwhelming experience. In her mediation of these paradoxical portrayals, Yank refers to Michel de Certeau's essay "Walking in the City" and economist Jeffrey Goldstein's theory of emergence. Calling the totalizing vision encapsulated by the panoramic view a fiction, De Certeau contended that the Icarian fall into chaos is necessary to comprehend the intricacy of the city. In presenting Goldstein's idea of emergence, defined as "the arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of self-organization in complex systems," Yank suggests a resolution to the antipodes of totality and fracture.

Conceptualizing "PerpiTube" as an exhibition produces a similar tension. As a virtual entity, "PerpiTube" (all works 2011) is that self-organizing system created to exist in perpetuity, a microcosm of its media host YouTube, growing as an organism grows, as if encoded with virtual DNA, as individuals view it and respond. A diverse group of 29 contributors — curators, artists, activists, academics — created the initial content of "PerpiTube," presenting a video in the gallery, one for each day of the exhibition run, which was subsequently posted online. All videos were made specifically for this show. Viewers in cyberspace and observers in the gallery were invited to respond to each contribution, and to each other's contributions, ad infinitum. The real/virtual dichotomy of this self-perpetuating system was apparent on occasions when the presenters played to an empty gallery. This reality poses a set of critical questions: in the virtual world, how important is the 'real' world? Is objectivity possible? How does one determine the reliability of a source?

The show touches on ideas about utopian expectations along with the realities of content on the new 'boob-tube.' In Carole Ann Klonarides' *Little Deaths*, the independent curator and writer raises the question of context, appropriation, and cultural literacy when she quotes Richard Prince saying, "a good artist is a liar and a thief," and Steve Jobs — as well as Picasso — saying, "good artists copy, great artists steal." Klonarides is not asking whether this is acceptable or appropriate, but whether we lose something when audiences do not understand the history of the content that has been absorbed, and by extension, how an artist is commenting on or creating new content by re-contextualizing someone else's work.

The question of literacy, skepticism, and authorship also extends to the arena of social activism, which reached new urgency during the Arab Spring. In Sam Gregory's "PerpiTube" contribution, *Human Rights Activism on YouTube: A Remix* the adjunct lecturer at the Harvard Kennedy School and Program Director for the video advocacy group WITNESS asks how we understand what is true, and from whose point of view information is conveyed on YouTube. Difficult to determine from 7,000 miles away, this is also something reporters contended with during the opening days of the struggle to oust Gaddafi while dissenting voices in the public sphere asked who the rebels were.

The concern of "PerpiTube" is how communities engage in meaningful exchanges and human contact, unimpeded by limits imposed by geography or time. As it extends to critical discourse and artistic content, the question of which voices to listen to is never-ending. "PerpiTube" asks whether these considerations, as applied to new and socially networked media, vary from the same considerations as applied to traditional media. As Shawn Sobers asks in 15 *Autobiographical Moments* in PerpiTubeity, "If Jesus came back today, would he go on YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter? Would we listen to him, would we even hear him amidst the noise?" Setting aside the question of a religious personage, the real questions are about how we perceive a medium like YouTube, the high and low culture distinctions it dredges up, and the questions of documentary versus creative work, source reliability and complexity.

"PerpiTube" reflects the desires of its curators, Pato Hebert and Alexandra Juhasz, and the exhibition's contributors, to participate in a far-reaching community committed to a complex critical discourse. And, as an organically developing and self-organizing system of the kind suggested by Goldstein's theory of emergence, "PerpiTube," which also originates from within a curatorial system that judges who begins the conversation and where it starts, exists in a contradictory space. The critical enterprise to which "PerpiTube" adheres — an unending cacophony of creations, assertions, and counter-positions, which invites continual reassessment — requires that we perceive the contradictions and hold in tension the parts in relation to the whole.

- Christopher Michno

LOS ANGELES

John Outterbridge

LAXART

FOR 40 YEARS John Outterbridge has been a sage in the Los Angeles art scene. Widely acknowledged as a sculptor and installation artist affiliated with the California Assemblage movement, Outterbridge is also well known as a community organizer, namely, for his role as the Director of the Watts Towers Arts Center from 1975 to 1992, and while his output as a dedicated and outspoken political figure has to date overshadowed his own artistic oeuvre, this newly commissioned site-specific installation, "The Rag Factory," at LAXART, in accordance with Pacific Standard Time, may prove to remedy that gross oversight.

Working with the sculpturally complex formal aesthetic of assemblage, Outterbridge has created a body of work that extends through two gallery spaces, the entry wall and a public billboard. In considering the breadth and scope of this new body of work, in which none of the specific artworks have titles, Outterbridge has created an all-encompassing visual experience that transcends materiality and the specificity of any one literal object. Instead, each object exists as part of a larger metaphorical intention wherein "rags" scavenged from the streets of LA and from a rag-processing factory in downtown Los Angeles, are presented as remnants of

PLEASED TO PRESENT

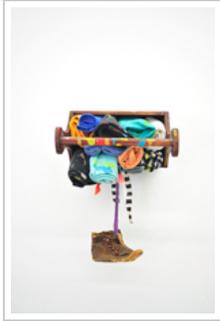
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JOHN OUTERBRIDGE, *THE RAG FACTORY* (DETAIL), 2011. PHOTO CREDIT WILLIE MIDDLEBROOK. COURTESY OF LAXART, LOS ANGELES.

fractured human experience, the leavings that both define personal identity but also indicate a fragile sociopolitical climate, one that is ever-evolving and seemingly spiraling in many directions at once, and indeed it seems these days, downward.

Certain works have a more obvious narrative trajectory, as is the case with the small wall sculptures made from wood and sporting specific iconic objects like horseshoes and strands of wool like dreadlocks. This work in particular references the human body — the crossed horseshoes could be a jaw, and the woolen hair a stand-in perhaps for the artist himself. Other works are more minimal, made again of wood, but propose a more open-ended conversation with the viewer and with the other works in the exhibition, and though these sculptures are not constructed from rags, they support and expand Outterbridge's other more monumental visual statements. The fact these small sculptures are fairly devoid of color also sets them in strange opposition to the rag work, which derives its meaning largely from shape and color in relation to the surroundings. In another work, a pile of rags grows out of a corner of the gallery wall. Outterbridge creates a framework here as well, as several black strips of fabric extend down marking or "framing" the body of the sculpture, anchoring it in space.

The larger sculptural works in the show are reminiscent of Joseph Beuys. In one, Outterbridge employs a wooden crate almost as though it were a sleigh, its cargo — rags — packed tightly under a plastic girdle. This powerful work speaks to issues of space — as in, we are running out of it within the suffocating confines of this beautiful city. Outterbridge is truly a master of the unknowable, crystallizing a series of complicated issues and ideas into a stunning visual vernacular, from "rags" to "riches."

- Eve Wood

Roland Reiss

Pasadena Museum of California Art



ROLAND REISS, *THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE*, 1978. PHOTO CREDIT AND COURTESY OF DON MILICI.

HONORED MASTER OF ART and revered mentor of more than 1,000 MFA students in Los Angeles, Roland Reiss is also one of the first California artists to move from reductive modernist abstraction to postmodern narrative. He initiated the move in 1970 when a retrospective made him realize how little of his life experience was embodied in his abstract paintings. Inspired by his love of French film and committed engagement with Continental Critical Theory — especially Umberto Eco and the Frankfurt School — Reiss decided to address the signifying power of contemporary material culture in small sculptural tableaux. Taking the technical skills he honed while coating canvas in skeins of plastic, he began to cast tiny simulacra of objects that surround and identify us. By 1975 (the very year Eco's *Theory of Semiotics* was published), Reiss was exhibiting two series of sculptural miniatures, the "Philosophical Homilies" and the "Murder Mysteries."

Reiss worked on the miniatures throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Representatives of each remarkable series are now on view at the PMCA, allowing a retrospective view of Reiss' accomplishments of the period. "The Dancing Lessons" presents dance studios as metaphors for everything from the banking institutions to art world fads. "The Morality Plays" deal with the different ways in which middle class families find meaning in life. Set in American living rooms, they are populated by toppled pillars of text that provide clues to the morality inscribed. Several of Reiss' later series involve miniature human figures. The "Adult Fairy Tales" are depictions of human interactions in the corporate context. Each includes both wry parodies of modernist sculpture as well as bloody weapons depicting the potential violence implied in the repressive discourse of 1970s business offices. "History Lessons" are mythic portrayals; "China Dreams" deals with the fantasies Americans have about other cultures; "F/X" addresses the fantasies of filmic visions. In short, Reiss surveyed many of the dominant narratives that construct identity in Western culture. His intriguing tableaux mirror the visual texts with which we determine who we are.

Also exhibited at PMCA is Reiss' *Castle of Perseverance* (1978), a full-scale portrayal of an American living room, with everything from couch to potted plant to open envelope precisely carved from golden brown particle board. Parts of the installation may recall the work of Richard Artschwager, but there is a significant difference: whereas Artschwager's pieces can be read as minimalist translations of the *shapes* of American furniture, Reiss' *Castle* — especially as seen in the context of this show — is much more about the meaning of the furniture.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the PMCA exhibition is that it looks so current. Created three and four decades ago, Reiss' sculptural tableaux would fit comfortably next to contemporary artworks by anyone from Jeff Koons to Mark Ryden to Takashi Murakami. Like all three of these celebrated bad boys, Reiss looks at the objects and images of contemporary culture, reproduces them in fairly realist fashion, and tweaks their presentation in order to compel viewers to reconsider their social construction and signifying power.

- Betty Ann Brown

Photography Into Sculpture

Cherry and Martin



DALE QUARTERMAN, *MARVELLA*, 1969. PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERT WEDEMEYER. IMAGE COURTESY OF CHERRY AND MARTIN, LOS ANGELES.

"PHOTOGRAPHY INTO SCULPTURE" in 1970 was a seminal, traveling exhibition first held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Organized by curator Peter Bunnell, it broke new ground with the three-dimensional works' departure from "straight" photography's then-dominance in a fledgling art field. Poised near the end of the modernist era yet before art photography's commercial acceptance, it anticipated postmodernist strategies of appropriation and contemporary art's embrace of hybridity, while smartly evoking historical precedents. An exhibition at Cherry and Martin with the same title revisits this iconic show with many of the same works to demonstrate LA's central role in a nascent, radical aesthetic.

The first "Photography into Sculpture" introduced a new approach of playing with illusionism, experimental techniques and unorthodox materials, exemplified in works such as Ellen Brooks' *Flat* (1969), a low-hung shelf with miniature rolling turf and an image of an embracing nude couple; and Douglas Prince's *Floating Fan* (1967), an assembly of graphic arts film sandwiched between clear acrylic to create a play of depth between foreground and background.

Although the exhibition does offer works that still seem fresh — such as Michael de Courcy's *Untitled* (1970/2011), with towers of screen-printed cardboard boxes featuring scenes of waves, birds and clouds; Carl Cheng's U.N. of C. (1967), a comical 3-D scene of two bears humping under puffy clouds near rows of American and California state flags; or Ted Vitoria's *View* (1970), a camera obscura that in a Dada-like gesture contains a feather twirling inside it — many works in "Photography into Sculpture" seem dated, weighted down by the era's stylistic, cultural and political concerns. The original show predated the rise of women artists and widespread use of color photography, so

collectively, they have the appearance of relics from a more insular period.

What the newer exhibition fails to do is to attribute the sculpturally photographic revolution in vision more emphatically to the person who sparked it — Robert Heineken — through stronger placement of his works within the show, or a clearer textual statement, though images of his work have been used to promote the exhibition. Heineken created UCLA's graduate program in photography, and as teacher and exemplar encouraged others to experiment the way he did. His pieces built upon antecedent movements such as Dada, Surrealism and Fluxus, as well as the ingenuity of later artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell. Among his works in the show are elegant tonal fragmentations of the female figure in the form of moveable squares, such as *Multiple Solution Puzzle* and *Figure Cube* (both 1965).

Days after the original show's debut, critic Hilton Kramer panned it, claiming that by attempting to bridge photography and sculpture, it did a disservice to both. Although media mash-ups are now the norm in art, photography as a practice still faces flux and continues to be underappreciated. In that sense, things aren't much different than they were 41 years ago. Yet by utilizing this show to look back on photography's history, one gains both insight and a renewed hope for the medium's resilience.

- Anne Martens

Matt Johnson

Blum & Poe



MATT JOHNSON, *STAR IN A JAR*, 2011, COURTESY OF BLUM & POE, LOS ANGELES.

ENGAGING the world without leaving a mark is a difficult task for a human being. As a species we collect, create and destroy even while having idealistic goals. Matt Johnson heightens our awareness of these interactions through a series of mythological artifacts.

A large piece of granite entitled *Touch the Void* (all works from 2011) appears fresh from a quarry and sits in the middle of the gallery. The igneous stone was formed from volcanic activity; the process of cooling is thought to have taken millions of years. Despite the boulder's permanence, a handprint is carved on the surface similar to the way lovers mark their initials into a tree. The longevity of granite and its altered history seems to touch upon an engaging and uncomfortable relationship between humankind and our environment. Unresolved is the artist's varying interaction with the actual piece of granite. The weighty sculpture is essentially an appropriation from nature.

Johnson's light-handed touch continues through the installation. The vacuous interior of the gallery is glaringly obvious. This strategy works with objects that can command a space but smaller pieces like the literally titled *Pyramid of Dust* — reminiscent of Man Ray's photograph *Dust Breeding* (1920) —

requires a much more intimate space to highlight the fragile media collected from the artist's studio.

In one darkened room, a Kerr mason jar sits atop a white pedestal. Within the crude container, a single light bulb, evoking a set-up for catching fireflies, reflects off the white walls. Titled *Star in a Jar*, the magical qualities of the work are enhanced by these words. Embodying humanity's efforts to contain the physical forces of the universe, it's an ironic gesture since many of the objects in the exhibit are made from common materials.

The 9-foot tall bronze piece titled *Hiroshima Buddha* is the most successful of the show. The Buddha's meditative expression juxtaposed with its surface treatment is unsettling. The serene form has been violently ripped open from neck to belly. Large drips around the sculpture's exterior suggest that an explosion melted the details from the figure's face and body. The relic appears ready to topple over as the Buddha leans back at a foreboding angle. This image not only evokes nuclear war, but also the Taliban's destruction of ancient Buddhas in Afghanistan as a demonstration of political power. A slow and unfolding discourse, Johnson's voice varies from controlling (*Star in a Jar*) to almost absent (*Touch the Void*). Disquietingly, Johnson's works recall the influence of his former teacher, Charles Ray. Like Ray's *Family Romance* (1993), for example — where a nude nuclear family displays an uneasy closeness through interlocked hands — Johnson subtly affects symbolic space through a recombination of seamlessly executed literal elements.

- G. James Daichendt

Miranda July

MOCA, Pacific Design Center



MIRANDA JULY, *ELEVEN HEAVY THINGS*, 2011. THE ARTIST IS PICTURED ON THE RIGHT. PHOTO CREDIT OLIVIA JAFFE

WE CALL BAD PUBLIC ART "plop art" for a reason. Like giant metal turds, or hulking bronze zits dotting urban vistas, bad public art often takes the form of pompous engorged versions of famous artists' work, or worse, fiberglass renditions of city mascots, or bronze memorial statues of dead white men. The public often engages these monstrosities by making fun of them, photographing friends picking bronze noses, or applying makeup à la *Dazed and Confused*. Ask any child or bored adolescent and they will tell you that public art with DO NOT TOUCH signs should be melted-down and turned into swing-sets. Miranda July's "Eleven Heavy Things," a collection of sculptures outside the Pacific Design Center, takes the bronze public art behemoth to task, closing the distance between the viewer and the artwork, while leaving room for the multiple forms of communication that may exist between them.

July's most successful works on the PDC lawn employ text as a way to direct viewers towards certain actions. One simple white pillar, approximately 8-foot tall, with a small hole in its center surrounded by hand-drawn black text, reads, "This is not the first hole my finger has been in; nor will it be the last." As a work that specifically calls attention to the not-so-hidden sexual undertones of any upright phallus, and the previously mentioned naughty gestures apropos to adolescent interactions with public sculpture, this particular work resonates as both hilarious and subversive. If only this monument to peculiar orifices was translated into more languages and installed near the Washington Monument, or proximal to a sculpture of, say, Dick Nixon, July's implicit critique of poking through symbolic power would be made even more manifest.

These text-employing works find their formal counterparts in cloud-like headpieces designed to frame visitors' own heads. While such formal peculiarities work like predictable public art — providing colorful shapes to be seen from a distance — when experienced in person they perform differently than the other text-laden works, providing costuming instead of a prompt. Of all July's cloud-like forms, one patterned in faux Burberry plaid makes a funny reference to the work's posh surroundings, as if suggesting what is on the minds of elite consumers.

What makes July's 11 awkward sculptures particularly enjoyable is that they are each designed to be part of a photo op, implicitly requiring both an actor and a spectator in order to achieve a desired effect. One views the work twice: once in person, and then again on the internet, a viewing experience perfectly suited for the Facebook generation, where every action must be photographed and made public in order to be remembered, and concretized as real.

In not taking its role as public art too seriously, July's work is able to make a very serious proposition about how we might conceive public art as something that must take its audience's body and photographic agency into account. Her work may not be the weightiest of propositions, but it certainly creates a lasting and multivalent impact. Just Google the work to see what I mean.

SAN FRANCISCO

Matt Borruso

Steven Wolf Fine Arts



MATT BORRUSO, *BEYOND*, 2011, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

BAY AREA-BASED ARTIST Matt Borruso's work presents a quirky and eccentric exploration into dark corners of the soul. Coming from a background in punk rock, where he performed with the band Crucifix, Borruso rejects the homogeneous, seductive and glossy world of mainstream and consumer culture, preferring instead to inhabit a shadowy world of his own creation.

The artist is drawn to cult images of horror and sci-fi, juxtaposed in his work with pictures from advertising and do-it-yourself craft — particularly images of the crocheted afghan, which in his hands becomes a kind of emblem for rejection of society. Using vintage LP album covers and snippets from old magazines and books, Borruso employs a cut-paper collage technique to create unsettling small-scale tableaux of attraction and repulsion, the exotic and the banal.

In *The Vanishing Point* (all works 2011) a pink and blue baby blanket obscures what appears to be a skeletal corpse. Shreds of skin and flesh cover a bony up-thrust arm, while long brown hair cascades down. A mechanical contraption of metal and wood, being adjusted by a hand entering from the left, grounds the image. Hide offers a tropical landscape with craggy mountains and ferns growing along a bubbling stream, a massive afghan in warm hues of red, orange and yellow cascades down from the peak, anchored by a small bowl. We may view the recurring device as censor or panacea, a shield from the horrors we confront or a symbol of the insidious charms of the homely and familiar.

Taking the cover of Lou Reed's Rock 'n' Roll Animal album as a point of departure, *Peach Fungus Animal* relies on a strong geometric composition, thin violet bands sectioning the square. Lean, orange-hued arms cross above the singer's head, here replaced by a dodecahedron composed of spheres, overlaid by a slab which appears to be cheese, topped by a thick slice of peach, filled with some dark goo. Limp, rather sordid looking semi-transparent objects — which could be animal, vegetable or mineral — glom onto the center of the page.

Borruso also presents the two-channel video installation *How To See*. One video shows violent imagery of a stagey fist-fight between a Caucasian guy and an African-American, their conflict motivated by the reluctance of one to don special glasses which will reveal that rich city-dwellers are actually space aliens; the other features a young Anne Bancroft bullying Patty Duke, as a wild Helen Keller, into submission in *The Miracle Worker*. The underlying theme of bestowing "vision" lies well submerged beneath the contrast of the Academy Award winners and the B-movie hacks, all slugging it out for dear life.

The show's titular phrase, "Hermit's Revenge Fantasy," may evoke the Unabomber, and his decidedly inappropriate form of social protest, along with the grim image of his cabin. However, unlike the stark sense of deprivation one picked up on with Ted Kaczynski, Borruso's fantasy seems to suggest that living well may be the best revenge — "well" in his case implying full immersion in esoteric kitsch.

- Barbara Morris

More American Photographs

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts



WILLIAM E. JONES, *RESTAURANT, CANTON, OHIO*, 2011, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY, LOS ANGELES.

IN THE 1960s, LYNDON JOHNSON said, "In the quiet of the American conscience, we know that deep, persistent poverty is unworthy of our nation's promise." But by the 1980s, the notion that the poor dragged down the American economy had been successfully sold to middle-class voters, ushering in 30 years of trickle-up income redistribution, financial shenanigans, the dismantling of the New Deal, and economic decline. The sad results of this economic Darwinism are now plain to see.

"More American Photographs," a survey of social documentarian photography from the Depression and the current day, is thus relevant and timely. Curated by the Wattis Institute's Jens Hoffman, the show pairs work by Farm Security Administration (1935-1944) photographers — along with an ancient 4x5 Graflex camera, a rousing documentary on the Tennessee Valley Authority, and photo books like Walker Evans' *American Photographs* — with images by a dozen contemporary photographers who were commissioned by the Wattis to document our current dilemma.

The starkly elegant FSA images of Esther Bubley, Marjory Collins, Jack Delano, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Carl Mydans, Gordon Parks, Arthur Rothstein, Ben Shahn (better known as a painter), John Vachon and Marion Post Wolcott are no doubt sobering to viewers who grew up during the '80s and '90s, but, in the Occupy Wall Street age, they are no longer dismissible as ancient history. Small (by contemporary standards), and monochrome, they still pack an emotional punch. Rothstein's photo of a billboard, set amid shacks, proclaiming "World's Highest Standard of Living," and Vachon's photo of a National Association of Manufacturers billboard, touting "the American Way," wear their irony proudly; Wolcott's movie theater's "colored" rear entrance, with a lone shadowy figure ascending the steps beneath a gaudy Dr. Pepper ad proclaiming "Good for life," shows that American culture has made progress beyond 1939 Mississippi. If Mydans' mule team farmers and Lee's frugal rural Christmas dinner seem relics of a bygone age to contemporary urban audiences, the humanity of Bubley's Greyhound employee and Maryland sunbathers, Collins' black women at Pennsylvania Station or at a Maryland picnic, and Evans' sharecropper Floyd Burroughs — still transcend time and space.

Recorders of the current scene include Walead Beshty, Larry Clark, Roe Ethridge, Katy Grannan, William E. Jones, Sharon Lockhart, Catherine Opie, Martha Rosler, Collier Schorr, Stephen Shore, Alec Soth, and Hank Willis Thomas. Their larger-format color photos are mounted on the gallery's outer walls, surrounding the FSA photographs. If they are somewhat more objective in tone, and less polemical, letting viewers draw their own conclusions, the difference may be partly due to the blurring of class lines in America in recent years, with investment having trickled down to the middle class and the migration of photography from photojournalism toward the fine arts. In any case, as Faulkner said, "The past isn't even past." Opie's Los Angeles shopkeepers, Rosler's new immigrants, Clark's and Schorr's young cowboys, and Soth's migrant workers in Minnesota are the contemporary American versions of Evans' and Lange's sharecroppers; the odd landscape that they traverse, as depicted by Grannan, Jones, Shore and Thomas, is one we all recognize and share.

- DeWitt Cheng

NEW YORK

Carrie Moyer

Canada



Carrie Moyer, *Belladonna*, 2011, COURTESY OF CANADA, NEW YORK.

ONE OF THE PARADOXES of painting is that the result of the painter's protracted engagement with his or her materials reads as a collection of simultaneous pictorial events. Even where "process" is paramount (e.g., Pollock at zenith) a picture's framing edge implies a freeze frame. Carrie Moyer's method plays with this effect, elaborating upon an underlying, highly readable compositional armature and slowing viewers' visual consumption from our accustomed scarfing-down pace to a leisurely graze. Borrowed from small preparatory collages, the armature is a structuring influence but does not declare itself too loudly; it's not a sloganeer, more like a thesis advisor.

Her recent show features moderately large acrylic-on-canvas works, sometimes including glitter, and often with the whitish raw canvas and/or stark white gesso utilized as color. Moyer favors a shallow space constructed of overlapping shapes with clear edges but no obvious referent. Matte, opaque surfaces play against shimmering glazes; undulating contours against jagged ones; insipid colors against gutsy. *Belladonna* (all works 2011) most resembles Moyer's work from a few years ago. Bulbous, tumescent shapes are loosely contained within a central region the shape of a cartoon keyhole, inverted, that engages the canvas edges but is otherwise surrounded by a straightforward black ground.

No collages were included in the exhibition, though several are reproduced in the accompanying catalog. The issue of how political sentiment (to wit, militant queerness) manifests in abstraction is a nonstarter as there is little such content visible to the naked eye — that is, an eye not readied for the search by the growing body of literature referring to Moyer's erstwhile work as a maker of posters and other agitprop graphics. Any such vestige is like the bicycle in de Kooning's *Woman and Bicycle* (1952-3) — evidently discernible at one time but now qualified out of existence.

Stroboscopic Painting #1 may be an exception. From a swirl of red and black, a dense blue-gray wedge with a parabolic nose sails across the picture plane from left to right, trailing yellow shock waves in its wake. The title suggests a source in Harold Edgerton's photograph *Bullet through Apple* (1964) or similar motion-study images. Whether the hurtling shape is a Delta of Venus barreling into realms unknown or just another rampaging phallus is hard to say, but a nod to Lee Bontecou is inferred from the yawning orifice into which the projectile plunges.

Elsewhere, shapes and textures recall insect wings, rock formations and tree limbs. *Into the Woods* surprises with a massive orange blob resembling a paramecium under a microscope, making for an arresting shift in scale. Hard-edged black silhouettes bump against areas dappled with a flurry of fingerprints and fleecy white films that dissipate into nothingness. *Down Underneath* addresses the marine associations of these free-floating spaces, with a dominant black guppy-like feature equipped with a caudal fin like a plasterer's knife. Undulating gently in the vicinity, as if on an ocean current, are ribbon-like bands in distinctly non-confrontational colors that evoke seaweed, sea foam and sand.

- Stephen Maine

Crazy Lady

Schroeder Romero & Shredder



KATHE BURKHARDT, *FUGUE*, 2010, IMAGE COURTESY OF KATHE BURKHARDT.

YOU HAVE TO HAND IT TO Brooklyn-based curator Jane Harris for assembling a group of works that delve into a subject that many would probably rather ignore — madness, and specifically the traits and characteristics of madness relating to women. The most convincing in the show are those works that make one uncomfortable through the use of autobiography, and while some of them have a marked lo-fi aesthetic — such as the videos of Kathe Burkhart and Lisa Levy — their connection with reality makes one pause and take note.

In Burkhart's 19-minute video *Fugue* (2010), the artist interviews a woman who had an affair with Burkhart's husband. Although the exercise seems quite cathartic, seeking out this woman, who claims she did not know Burkhart's husband was married, brands the artist a gonzo masochist. Levy treads similar confessional ground with her postcards made from a hospital stay where she participated in a study for depression and subsequent medication study, yet her most potent piece is the mixed-media assemblage of pill bottles entitled *Happiness You Can Buy* (2003), a more humble and personal

version of Damien Hirst's *Holidays / No Feelings* (1989).

On the opposite end of the spectrum technically is Daniella Dooling's *Thorazine Rebel* (1997), made in collaboration with Les Leveque, whose music-video soundtrack and use of slow motion, superimposition and close-ups are in sharp contrast with both Burkhart's and Levy's approaches. While Dooling's video is also based on a personal experience, an LSD overdose and hospitalization, her obsessive and erotic scratching of temporary bug tattoos all over her body contrasted with '70s rock music such as David Bowie's "Rebel Rebel" is pleasurable on several levels: visually, aurally and conceptually.

The self-pronounced "pandrogynous" Breyer P-Orridge, aka Genesis P-Orridge, is best known as a founding member of the pioneering industrial music group Throbbing Gristle and for his outré body modification experiment with his late wife Lady Jaye Breyer, in which they underwent a series of plastic surgery procedures to resemble one another in essence to combine their identities. The result of the collaboration is clearly shown in *Topless Poor-trait* (2008—2010), photographed by Michael Sharkey, and is said to be inspired by cut-up techniques employed by Brion Gysin and William Burroughs — kindred spirits with the artists and collaborators themselves.

Lizzi Bougatsos' *Untitled (Istanbul)* (2008) gives the show a dose of comic relief. Her diptych, in which posters of Turkish female models from advertisements are defaced through the use of ceramic, glass and horsehair, could be compared to Marcel Duchamp's *L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919), whose target was the *Mona Lisa*. The addition by the artist of braces to one of the women's teeth and horsehair to the other's glabella, giving her a unibrow that Frida Kahlo would be proud of, are in stark contrast to the more radical explorations into the mind of a crazy lady that Harris gathered; yet this works to the artist's favor, as less is more, unless you are a therapist charging by the hour.

- Chris Bors

Do Ho Suh

Lehmann Maupin

BROAD, THREE STORIES TALL, and incredibly detailed, Do Ho Suh's *Fallen Star* (2008-2011) looks all the more solid for the ample space left to circulate around it. The artist has sliced a model of row apartments wide open, but he seems to have disturbed nothing in twenty years. Suh came to study at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1991, and apparently the wide range of income and diversity struck the young sculptor from Korea. One can pore over his rooms imagining distinct lives in each one.

The building has a warm brick front, a stately entrance and a gabled ceiling with dormer windows — and Suh has labored over them



DO HO SUH, *HOME WITHIN HOME*
— PROTOTYPE, (2009-2011),
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND
LEHMANN MAUPIN GALLERY,
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all. The one-room apartments have room for one's worst excesses, and residents seem uniformly to have indulged in them. They range from the prototypical male dorm, with an awful taste in rock posters, to a painfully old-fashioned mix of porcelain and patterned wallpaper. Every space is filled to excess, from furniture to dust to books on the floor. One can share a sense of wonderment, familiarity and maybe regret at one's own past choices. But on one end the apartments come apart, in a torrent of wood and other debris. Look, a visitor said to his son, they are taking the building down.

Not quite. A few more steps and one sees a small house — Suh's childhood home in Korea — crashing right through the back of his life in Providence, trailing a parachute-like fabric that evidently failed to break its fall. The artist takes things personally, and the sculpture is a confluence of histories still his own. East has met West before in Suh's work, as in *Reflection* (2008), a model arch based on both Korea and New York's Chinatown. In *Fallen Star* the crash suggests a twin heritage, but also a twin loss. No wonder the model house has many lives but no people. *Home Within Home* (2009-11), a still spookier version in glowing green resin, skips even the furniture.

As for the party crasher, it looks Western enough, too — even with its traditional wood screens and a sign out front in Korean — but we are not in Kansas anymore. Weather and climate change aside, is all this a parable of globalization?

As in this past summer's exhibition "Otherworldly: Optical Delusions and Small Realities" at the Museum of Arts and Design, dioramas have uses as natural history and as nostalgia, from the stiff-paper suburbs of James Casebere to the Dutch interiors of Jimbo Blachly and Lytle Shaw. Suh just happens to pack multiple histories into one diorama. They also tend to stand for the artist at work, and here the very first room is a messy studio. It may say something that the life-size sculpture in Styrofoam and resin of his "Specimen" series (2011) tackles thermostats, fuse boxes, light switches and bathroom fixtures — all means of control. It may say something, too, that Suh has stretched sheer fabric over them all, like nylon stocking fetishes. For the artist, house and home appear to be inseparable from personal history and desire.

- John Haber