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AS220 State of the Art

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Susan Clausen mixed media: sculpture *outhouses*  

The up-side of Susan Clausens penchant for fourth grade faciles and assorted other modes of regressive fantasy, is the fact that, apparently, in the privacy of her studio, she manages to make it all the way back through the umbilical cord, into a world of pre-conscious gosses where—in all objective manifestations are symbols of mind at large.

No mean feat.

This artists "sculptures" are often hopped down with lumps entirely to do with craftsmanship, which I find aesthetic and tiresome. However, they are just as often fantastic examples of compound metaphor and grand descriptive poetry composed in a language of materiality.

Here-is-the obvious or obscure history of an object, the elements of which it is composed, and the exact juxtaposition of such symbolic entity impacts upon the conscious mind as an spontaneous melody of narrative, incomprehensible otherwise or under any other circumstance.

Some people may fancy Jack Daniels a direct conduit to the mind of god, but I am more inclined to invest my ten cents a minute in the infinte associative play of human consciousness—this here's a collection of short critiques inspired by the work of Jack Daniels.

Some negatives, ostensibly as some kind of historical view of the artists "sculptures" are often bogged down with conceptual form of interpretation. If you study this work with your full attention you will find yourself plopped in the ceiling looking down on a dismally insignificant globe. A point of view as humorous as it is haunting.

John C. Horoschak oil on canvas

"Dragons attacking peruvian &"  

Mr Horoschak has such a huge predilection towards painting on canvas and medium was one of the most effortless and inspired I've ever seen. I think he manages to make it all the way back through the umbilical cord, into a world of pre-conscious gosses where—in all objective manifestations are symbols of mind at large.

Clearly in addition to making gib narrative outs the patterns he worships. Horoschak is layering art historical references just as he juxtaposes patterns on the canvas, and linking the pattern components to "associate" visually as the viewing pattern can be aggregated in a mythology or pure perception. The suggestive and optically appealing magic intrinsic to such patterns offers an infinity of avenues for the artists to pursue.

I think this painting represents a big ambition, and the stuff to make it fully fleshed for a canvas like me. However, I'm gonna award his picture the most ambitious failure award out these negatives have just begun to be explored as interlocking graphic systems and as spontaneous, narrative glyphs which can be aggregated in unimaginable new ways.

AMY COHEN  

Poor pieces of embroidery on linen

I was not familiar with Amy Cohen before her exhibition in the upstairs gallery a few months ago. Although the works shown here are totally different in media and form from the works shown earlier, seeing these spare compositions brought me to a moment of insight into the artists intentions and the degree to which her explorations further that instinct.

Amy Cohen is a square artist.  

Square paintings, square photographs, square embroidery on canvas. Maybe "square abstractionist" is better.

There have been any number of great artists in the lineage of Square Abstraction. Joseph Albers spent the better part of his career paying homage to squares. Ad Reinhardt made the squares carve the terms of the ultimate and postmodern abstract painters like Agnes Martin stage their minimalist meditations without exception in this unperturbable format.

In Cohens case, however, her relentless choice of this format, through a range of media, indicates to me a profound attraction to the equanimity of nature as filtered through the intellectual system of geometry. The works exhibited in the residents show are most reminiscent of Agnes Martin grid paintings—so much so, that few of their history of painting, but only those in their desire to be like pre-existing art.

The drawings I made of these embroidered pieces indicate some very subtle manipulations of form. There is no doubt in my mind that this artist is working towards a serious and very sobering effect in her work (fortunately she appears to be more preoccupied with the look of art, than in the effect of concentration on these highly rarefied compositions.)

Pan Murray assorted black and white photographs AS220 1999

During the early construction work on the empire street complex, Pan Murray made a collection of some totally awesome negatives. 2 or 3 slides of film combined with long time exposure made in the available light, as well as more conventional exposures. Neutra in black and white was more elegantly rendered radiant fields of silver halide. The 16x20 prints made from these negatives and exhibited in the raw space in 1993 were visually sublime in addition to their documentary intrigue. The fusion of photographer and medium was one of the most effortless and inspired I've ever seen.

Now, approximately four years later Pan has returned to these negatives, ostensibly as some kind of historical view of AS220's ontology.

I think it is safe to say that a lot has happened since those images were first exposed, amongst the most prominent in my view, is a strange souring in this photographs view of life. I personally blame this on the fact that she became a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Designing in the interim. But it could just as easily have come from an overdose of AS220.

At any rate, though a few of the new prints created for this show contain glimmers of their original brilliance, they have most obviously been chosen with a rather deliberately irony—cuz the ambient display of significant persons, most blatantely moved up as a cloying cliche in an old fashioned photo display complete with oval matte cuttings.
ANGELA GIUSTI xerox and pastel on paper
"When you put your hands on my body"

Ah yes, the enigmatic Miss Giusti, whom I have still never met but who continues to intrigue me with the work she showed at AS220. In the valet-art mart she has a display of pure plastic surrealism in the manner of Joan Miro and Paul Klee, but in the residents show her piece, although still clearly surreal in influence, has more to do with dada and its contemporary equivalent—ambivalent advertising.

The title and motto emblazoned typographically across this odd post-modern artifact is also taken directly from the ambiguous and ineffably suggestive lexicon of advertising. As a message "when you put your hands on my body" exploits the imagination of the person who reads it. It means nothing in and of itself. It is however a very rich and provocative theme for an artist as gifted as Ms. Giusti in combining images and units of significance into connotative constellations with astronomical possibilities for suggestion, intrigue, and full cognitive adventure.

MARK PEDINI acrylic and acetate on wood "devils handiwork:"

Mark Pedini is another one of AS220's ambitious resident painters. The works he is showing here are a far cry from the muted cubism he was favoring in his show last year with Doug Forcier.

How exactly has this guy gone from Lionel Penninger knock-offs to east village cartoon abstraction is a mystery to me cause he's a shy one.

At Any Rate these two new paintings explore repetitive abstract expressionist cartoon motifs—Horny diabolical apothe in one, fatal figures in the other. The extreme verticality of these pieces of painted wood makes for an unavoidable association with totems, at the same time as exploring painting as vertically read narrative pictograms.

All of it is shot through with wandering borders and patterns recalling many abstract expressionist painters, but it is the self-conscious east-village ugly paint surface and the totemic depictions of fantasy and the pre-conscious void, which make this pair horrendously trendy yet so visually astonishing. These vivid pictures are capable of rendering conscious magical states of mind as well as otherwise inexplicable visual thinking.

CHAR GERTT assemblage "SLAYMAKER"

I am relatively assured that this artist is a staunch believer in THE DUCHAMPIAN FINGER. Her work in last years exhibit was a recreation of one of his classic "readymade" sculptures.

This year she has chosen to strike out on her own, into the sargasso sea of phenomenal flotsam just waiting to be designated "art" by her discerning digit.

In addition to the readymade revelation at the heart of this work, there are also some additions to the composition which complicate the overall metaphor. This elegant icon of brute force is flanked by a couple of metallic bug-lookin' things what don't look entirely estranged from the monicker "slaymaker". Are they killer bees?

This is a deceptively thoughtful artist, who offers subversive messages couched in tasteful objets d'art, art objects brimming with sardonic irony, intricate humor and ordinary beauty.

CATHY HAMILTON oil on canvas "Green"

I was thinking as I walked over to the gallery to see this show for the first time that I wished Cathy Hamilton would push her nudes towards more obviously erotic circumstances.

So I was pleasantly surprised to discover the painting she has chosen to include in this show "green".

The first thing that struck me was the luminous surface of the painting, and the most wonderful torso of a woman irradiated with a soft green glow. The cropping of the figure is also a welcome change from those odd full figure portraits.(I never understood the concept of Alec K Readfarm bare-assed posing like he was Martha Washington.) Oh yes, and then there is the rubber glove.

Is this meant ta be sexy or iz it an art historical reference tying this 'realistic' painting to some classic works of surreality? Cautionary tale? Joke? Optical delight for this elegant detailer of refined painterly observations?

Personally I prefer to think she's headed towards Balthus or even better, Rubens in rubber.