

R E V I E W S

C O L O G N E

DAVID ZINK YI

LUDWIG MUSEUM



DAVID ZINK YI, *Untitled (Cuba-Project)*, 2005. Video still, detail of the installation *Independencia I*.

MIAMI CLASSICS, A Place of Business, 2006. Exhibition View at Artforum, Cologne.

A man is sitting in a rowboat with his back to the viewer. Before his — and our — eyes is the weather-beaten Havana skyline; behind his back, invisible and in the far distance, Florida. An unusual view, it is in fact forbidden to travel by boat off the Cuban coast — there is always the possibility of an escape. The film shows the rowing man's movements in a single shot for almost eight minutes; despite all his efforts, he hardly seems to get going. There is a similar image on a second screen opposite: in the foreground is the back view of the same man, traveling along the Malecón, Havana's ocean promenade, on a motorbike.

The two projection screens form the narrow, transparent walls of a box-like space in which viewers become witnesses of a 'true story.' The protagonist of both films narrates, in Cuban Spanish, off camera, the myth of a "magical space without an entrance or an exit," created from a hollowed-out tree trunk, its openings covered with animal skins, through which a feeble light passes into the interior. In this space lives a king who is also a god. To pass the time he jumps between the two membranes and constantly invents new rhythms through which he communicates with the outside world and at the same time receives news from it.

"Independencia I," the title of the whole installation, refers to the independence with which a drummer's hands beat out two different rhythms — "this thing that we carry inside, this thing that divides us." Placed between the two screens, viewers occupy the place of the mythological god-king in the drum. His rhythmic "independencia" is paradoxically based on the condition of being shut in, and is in a relationship of dialectical tension with it. It would seem obvious to suggest that the situation of the "space without an entrance and without an exit" can also be read as a metaphor for life in the Cuban political system. The narrator's laborious progress indicates striving for independence. Zink Yi's unsentimental work leaves it open whether the narrator is to be seen individually or collectively, and whether independence can be achieved, or remains the hope principle.

Barbara Hess

(Translated from German by Michael Robinson)

MILAN, BRESCIA, COMO

DANIEL BUREN AND JAN DE COCK

In the climactic scene of Luis Buñuel's *Belle de Jour*, an Asian client seduces Séverine by showing her the mysterious contents (never revealed afterwards) of a small box; an "obscure object of desire" that perfectly embodies the alluring dynamics of the gaze. With his large, monochromatic, maze-like but locked-up 'Chinese boxes,' Jan De Cock — who is, self-admittedly, fond of cinema and its techniques of spectacle, from the Latin

spectare, meaning to look — exploits the same off-screen magic to attract viewers and direct their movements. That's why his interaction with Daniel Buren for "Denkmal 4, Casa del Fascio, Piazza del Popolo 4, Como" is fascinating — given the visual sensibility both artists share while working in situ, i.e., activating the perception of a given site by mirroring and multiplying its geometries.

De Cock and Buren worked together — although one before the other — in three adjoining cities: Milan (at Francesca Minini Gallery), Brescia (at Massimo Minini Gallery), and Como (the pivotal location, challenging one of the best examples of '30s Rationalist architecture in Italy). Generational conflict aside, the key feature of this collaboration seems to be a genuine, productive wrestle.

De Cock does his best to seal and conceal his sculptures: in Milan, he occupied the lower portion of the external facade; in Brescia, the whole 'white cube,' restricting access to a balcony at the entrance; in Como, he installed a smaller structure inside the building, closed for restoration, and another two on the nearby square, as if establishing a cinematic sequence. Buren does his best to open them up. His tools are simple: striped paint and small squared mirrors act as windows, reflecting the viewers, the sky, or whatever is 'out,' disclosing the hidden perspectives of De Cock's beautiful modules, thus turning them into kaleidoscopic *cabanes éclatées*.

Barbara Casavecchia

B U D A P E S T

DAN PERJOVSCHI

MŰCSARNOK

Sharp, condensed drawings that comment with a peculiar blend of criticism, irony and humor on the hottest social, political and cultural issues of the day have long become Dan Perjovschi's trademark. They appear in various formats, from his own notebooks to pages of newspapers and walls of art institutions.

Based in Bucharest, Perjovschi shows a lot abroad, mostly in Europe and in the USA. In order to counter the financial and administrative constraints arising from his East European background, the artist has developed a strategy that allows him to freely move between the exhibition locations: he draws in situ and shows works-in-progress. He deliberately accepts the ephemerality of his work, which disappears with the installation of further shows.

As the title suggests, Perjovschi's present show, "From Now On" in the Budapest Műcsarnok, has an increased performative character. It is the first time the artist has started the drawing process during the exhibition opening. In this way, he builds in the conjunctural element — already present in the theme of his drawings — in the very structure of the work. By doing this, he also takes some risks; but on the other hand, he develops a more relaxed relation with the host institution, which for local artists is a place of consecration rather than of experiment. Ultimately, Perjovschi presents a fresh blend of drawings that comment on the international political agenda, starting with the current Israeli/Lebanon conflict and ending up with the USA's extensive



EVAN LEE, *Every part from a Contaflex camera disassembled by the artist during winter 1998, 2006*. Giclee print, 102 x 127 cm. Courtesy Monte Clark Gallery, Toronto.

presence in the world, locating Budapest at the confluence of history, tourism, art and the expansion of the neoliberal economy.

As usual, Perjovschi doesn't spare irony when viewing his own position within the immediate context. His solo show is a 'summer show' located vis-à-vis that of Rembrandt in the opposite building of the Museum of Fine Arts. Between them lies the Square of Heroes.

Judith Angel

T O K Y O

TATSUZO HYAKUDA

MARU GALLERY

This exhibition features one of the most unusual painting subjects: meat. Hyakuda's latest paintings are bold close-ups of raw chunks of red meat, minced meat, minced meat coming out from a mincer, and a suet cube (indispensable in the cooking of *sukiyaki* or Japanese beef stew).

The composition is blunt, with just the meat (and mincer) depicted life size, and the brushwork rough. Acrylic paint trickles down the canvases. Such characteristics produce a strangely light, transparent *matière* that neutralizes the otherwise too vivid impression of what's painted. This approach might have something to do with Hyakuda's background in interior design. Like a designer, he may have adopted the style that best materializes his vision, of which the effect is a singular balance between the matter and the subject.

Food, furniture and other items of everyday life are among the favored subjects of young Japanese contemporary painters. However, their works tend to be akin to monologues addressing the artists' own feelings and eluding the core, crude issues of life. Hyakuda's previous series portrayed children, nude or half-naked, in some strange atmospheres. They seemed as though they had just woken up from a nightmare or escaped domestic violence. A strong attraction towards bare life, life's crude realities and anxieties, emanates from Hyakuda's canvases.

This interest may connect Hyakuda's art to German Expressionism, but what makes his works intriguing is that the unquiet subjects are rendered in a rather nonchalant manner, as if to cynically remind us that we are as helpless as a chunk of meat or a naked child.

Satoru Nagoya

T O R O N T O

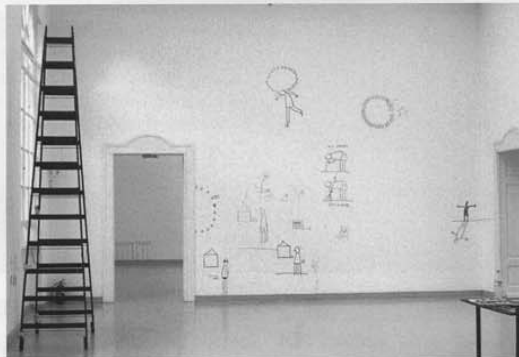
EVAN LEE

MONTE CLARK GALLERY

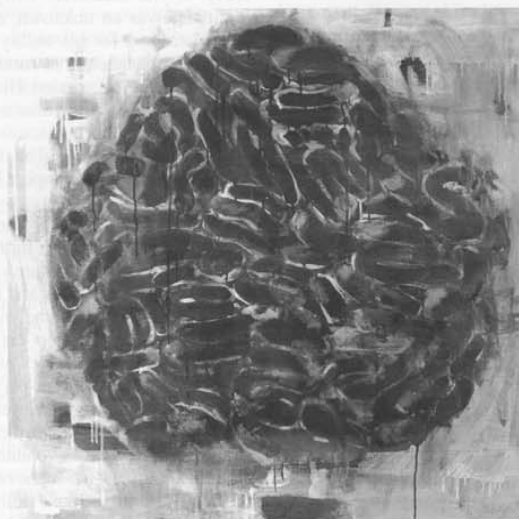
Going one step beyond the film-less photography of the digital age, in the series of pictures presented at Monte Clark Gallery, Evan Lee eliminates the camera as well. The Vancouver artist presents images created with a flatbed scanner. Printed as photographs, the works do not immediately betray their provenance as so-called camera-less pictures. In the gap between their appearance and their origin resides the work's conceptual dimension, one that has deep epistemo-



JAN DE COCK, *Denkmal 4*, Casa del Fascio, Piazza del Popolo 4, Como, 2006. Installation view. Courtesy Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia and Francesca Minini, Milan.



DAN PERJOVSCHI, *From Now On*, 2006. Wall drawings, Mücsarnok, Budapest.



TATSUZO HYAKUDA, *Minced Meat*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 116 x 116 cm. Courtesy Maru Gallery, Tokyo.

R E V I E W S



Covers by Enrique Metinides for the tabloid *La Prensa*, published between 1960-70. Photo: Christoph Draeger.



MICHAEL RILEY, Darrell, 1989-1990. Gelatin silver photograph, 38 x 38 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. © Riley Foundation/Viscopy.

logical implications for the medium.

The centerpiece of the show is *Every part from a Contaflex camera disassembled by the artist during winter, 1998* (2006). Like a skeleton minus its musculature, the pieces of the camera lie on the surface of the picture as if collapsed in a pile. The image, which reveals the complexity of the mechanism and the surprising delicacy of its parts, also serves as an apt metaphor for the dismantled hierarchies of the digital age.

A suggestion of just how the digital realm is reorienting our relationship to time and space is the most compelling aspect of this show. Conceptually, the picture plane offers a view that is downward and horizontal. Except that it doesn't, because the images are mounted vertically on the wall. It is a confusion that profoundly disorients cultural assumptions about what constitutes the space of looking.

All works in the exhibition fall within the genre of the still life, the portraits' being composed with cheap props like plastic fruit or the brightly colored lures used in fly-fishing. In the show's literature, Lee specifies the paltry cost of the materials, perhaps unnecessarily emphasizing that imaging technologies will always trump dollar store aesthetics — because in every instance he achieves luscious results. The subject matter also points to the tradition of the memento mori: creating pictures of wealth as an illusion, the artist suggests the vanity of all human endeavors.

Rosemary Heather

MEXICO CITY

ENRIQUE METINIDES

CELDA CONTEMPORÁNEA

The work of Enrique Metinides, a photojournalist with fifty years of experience, is one of those cases that irrupts into the art world every blue moon and satiates its thirst for the idiosyncrasy of the outsider. Only ten years ago Metinides was an unknown, esteemed only by tabloid readers for his ability to report on the human drama inherent in natural disasters, accidents and crimes of passion. His work came to the attention of the art world after a show held in 2000 in Mexico and the publication of the book *El Teatro de Los Hechos* (The Theater of Facts), edited by fellow photographer Fabrizio León.

A recent show of his work at the Celda Contemporánea gallery clarifies Metinides' modus operandi and offers further clues to understanding the genuine nature of his work in its original context: the front and back covers of *La Prensa*, the tabloid with the widest readership in Mexico. An unedited direct-cut video included in the show, shot by Metinides, who began using a video camera in the '90s, displays the raw material with which he works: street level scenes of firemen rescuing victims and paramedics aiding a gunshot victim: As a Red Cross volunteer he was usually the first to arrive at the scene of the crime, where he would use his camera skills before reporters could translate the situation into words.

In the journalism business since he was only twelve-years-old (his nickname was El Niño, the

Kid), Metinides has tried to depict the chaos resulting from a school bus crash or the story behind a suicide pact. He usually exhibits his work with the help of journalistic captions that provide needed facts and descriptions to complete the visual story. This sometimes turns his images into a highbrow version of "reality shows," while negating the aesthetic and social implications of photography and photojournalism. The mass media's craving for fear and loathing of violence is thus imbued into his work, which presents a desolate view of calamity and despair.

Metinides' show deserves credit for its ability to use photojournalism as a tool to mirror the role of imagery in the deconstruction of the class system in Mexico. Metinides' oeuvre is a place where the upper, the middle class and the disenfranchised converge.

José Springer

CANBERRA

MICHAEL RILEY

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

This comprehensive retrospective pays tribute to Michael Riley — a prolific and seminal indigenous artist whose visual dexterity embraces family, community, land, environment and history with breathtaking beauty. Riley (1960-2004), a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi man, spent his early childhood on Talbragar Aboriginal Reserve outside Dubbo in western New South Wales, moving to Sydney in 1976. Within ten years, Riley was photographing Hollywood-style glamor portraits of Aboriginal women instilled with chic confidence. Riley chronicled his community in ongoing series of black-and-white studio portraits imbued with endearing tenderness and trust. During this burgeoning period for indigenous photography, Riley founded Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative with a group of artists including Tracey Moffatt in 1987.

Working across portraiture, social-documentary and conceptual photography as well as film, Riley's vast opus captures the experience of disenfranchised communities in rural Australia alongside sensitive and poignant depictions of loss and landscape. Archival material and ephemera including test strips and clippings are laid out as background material in vitrines, while films are presented in a separate screening room. Curated by Brenda L. Croft, "Sights Unseen" spans two decades and highlights Riley's renowned series "Sacrifice" (1992), "Flyblown" (1998) and "Cloud" (2000) presented in a final, contemplative room. The latter is like a visual epitaph, depicting single, soaring motifs — angel wings, an iridescent boomerang, a fragile locust, a cow and the cross — a symbolic tableaux suggestive of sublime yearning and other-worldliness.

Touring to Dubbo, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, "Sights Unseen" is accompanied by a substantial publication that affirms the immense impact Riley has had on colleagues, artists, curators, writers and family members. The intimacy of these touching reminiscences is testimony to the enduring qualities of Riley as a person and an artist.

Natalie King