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Residency Projects II

GROUP SHOW

SEP 08 - OCT 15

by Jessica Brier

Throughout *Residency Projects II*, there is explicit interest in physically activating two-dimensional works on paper. (The exception is Jessica Ingram's photographs, which explore a distinct set of questions that space constraints do not permit review of here.) As noted in the press release, both Zachary Royer Scholz and Renée Gertler explore the "relationship between sculpture and photography," using these media in concert to create trompe l'oeil objects that underscore art's status as once-removed from reality.¹ Gertler's faux-disposable bags and matchbooks each hold within a miniature constellations of stars. Gertler has created her own tornado in a teacup, the cosmos in a container, each equally as mystical as the night sky. Scholz has created several works of varying opacity that explore the physical displacement of different surface textures. Perhaps the most successful is the installation *43.543.523.511 (shelf displacement)* (2011), consisting of a wall-mounted shelf and two equally sized photographic prints, one depicting the messy, dappled gallery floor, adhered to the top of the shelf, and one the same pure white as the shelf, replacing the perpendicular piece of floor that appears to have been stripped away. By effectively switching these starkly contrasting surfaces, Scholz makes us aware of their unique characters that would likely be overlooked outside the gallery.

Elisheva Biernoff and Jennie Ottinger are both painters who consistently use the multifaceted nature of paper to activate their work beyond two dimensions. Among other work on view, Biernoff has created a book of screen prints titled *Long Story Short* (2011) in the style of a children's picture book. Immaculately detailed scenes of natural disaster are printed on cut-out pages that overlay onto one recurring scene of a



Jennie Ottinger. *Candide*, 2011; oil on canvas paper; 16 x 13 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Kala Art Institute, Berkeley.

lovely cluster of candy-colored houses on a rolling hill. Biernoff's signature WPA-style use of color translates perfectly to both the medium of screen-printing (she typically works with acrylic paint) and the idiom of children's-book illustration. Ottinger has animated her loosely painted figures, pulled from the story of *Candide*, in a stop-motion digital video, cleverly employing disembodied eyes and mouths, which also appear floating in the accompanying works on paper depicting each character, to animate them on screen.

This exhibition showcases the results of a residency experience that allowed four artists to push their experiments with two-dimensional works on paper into active space. While these artists may be quite familiar to many frequenters of Bay Area contemporary art galleries, Kala affords viewers a new lens through which to see their work.

