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Art

Knifed

R.C. Baker
Tuesday, November 21st 2006

A sign on the front door orders you to "acknowledge that a dangerous condition exists inside" and to release the gallery from any liability. But upon entering, you are confronted only by such exquisite conundrums as a rickety chair whose four legs have been cobbled into a single still planted in a teacup. (Pitarch's five-foot-tall sculpture is as perfectly balanced as a stork.) Nearby lies a clothespin with its jaws forced open by the sawed-off section of one of its own wooden flanges, like a crocodile cannibalizing its own tail. A sketchbook in which the drawings have been erased, the ragged tailings compressed into a dull-gray, eraser-shaped block resting next to it, documents the simultaneous eradication and transfiguration of the artist's ideas. As you exit you might finally notice the ceiling of the entrance hall, where dozens of butcher knives, points barely embedded in the plaster, threaten to rain down upon your skull.

photo: Jaime Pitarch/Courtesy of Spencer Brownstone Gallery



Play Hard, 2006

Details:

Jaime Pitarch
Spencer Brownstone
39 Wooster Street
Through December 22

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Runnin' Scared

Shelly Silver Saves a Bus Route
by Roy Edroso
(5:44PM 05/22)

Taliban in Lipstick: Jihadis Posed for Rather Gay "Passport Photos"
by Elizabeth Dwoskin (3:23PM 05/22)

Memorial Day OUTRAGE! Obama Will "Apologize for WWII," Say Rightbloggers
by Roy Edroso (2:44PM 05/22)

Sound of the City

Week in Review: "I Am the Best Filmmaker in the World."
by Camille Dodero (6:59PM 05/22)

Meet Trey Bananastasio and His Good Friend Goudacris
by Camille Dodero

'Henry Darger: The Vivian Girls Emerge'

Although cowboys lassoing nude little girls—whose eyes bulge and tongues erupt as they are yanked to their feet by their throats—is standard fare from this outsider icon, other works in this concisely conceived show verge on abstraction. The 10-foot-wide *Battle of Calverhine* (circa 1929) is built up from myriad cut-out images of soldiers and explosions, achieving a beautiful, all-over, Pollock-like dynamism combined with the textural complexity of *Anselm Keifer*. Elsewhere, a form of proto-pop arises when type bleeds through a newsprint lamb nuzzling a Vivian princess. *Andrew Edlin, 529 W 20th, 212-206-9723. Through Dec 23.*

Robert Morris

Combining art-historical references (a slab of Hopper-esque light across a floor, Courbet's close-up of a vagina) with texts etched into the oil paint—"Hidden in plain sight shadowed by blindsight absent from foresight"—Morris, as he has often done throughout his career, explores the collision of memory and image. Like de Chirico's depopulated, shadowy plazas, Morris fills his paintings of eerie interiors with portraits of his family or figures visible only through windows. *Leo Castelli, 18 E 77th, 212-249-4470. Through Dec 22.*

David Bates

The vibrant colors, blocky shapes, and dark outlines in these paintings—dead tree branches slash across an orange sun reflected in black water; quick brushstrokes of purplish gray form a rain squall; an owl's feathers are as geometric and colorful as a Navajo blanket—convey the audacious beauty of the landscape and animals around Southern swamps and lakes. Bates's striking portraits of Katrina survivors capture both stubborn resilience and resigned sadness. *DC Moore, 724*

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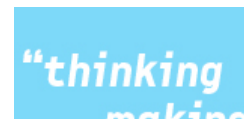
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(4:20PM 05/22)

Live: The Shins Make Us, Er, Wince The Night Away at Terminal 5

by Dan Weiss (3:30PM 05/22)

La Daily Musto

Your Memories Of Hitting Puberty?

by Michael Musto (3:30PM 05/22)

Prejean's Mom Had Same-Sex Relationship?

by Michael Musto (2:00PM 05/22)

(6:00PM 12/31)

(6:00PM 12/31)

All City

Neckface Has Really Been on Postal Shit Lately, No?

by Camille Doderio (6:16PM 05/22)

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'Looking at Music' and Philip Guston at the MoMA; 'Early Buddhist Manuscript Painting' at the Met
August 27, 2008

Philip Guston: Galumphing Master
June 17, 2008

Philip Guston: "Works on Paper"
June 17, 2008

More About ...

Robert Morris

Philip Guston

David Bates

Zoe Crosher

Andrew Edlin

Fifth Ave, 212-247-2111. Through Dec 22.

Ivan Navarro

Navarro has filled part of the gallery with stick figures made of straight and circular fluorescent tubes; they crawl forlornly along the walls, their round heads hanging low. In the darkened main space, chairs made from blacklight neon glow eerily; the outline of a basketball backboard hovers much too high for any of the dispirited figures to attempt a dunk.
Roebling Hall, 606 W 26th, 212-929-8180. Through Jan 10.

Jannis Kounellis

These sculptures of abandoned clothes tightly lashed with wire and shoved through holes in steel plates or bound to naked metal bed frames evoke collective memories of bureaucratic, mechanized mass murder, along with more contemporary nightmares of torture and extralegal imprisonment. A broad plane of battered wooden tables spreads out from a wall covered with worn and shapeless shoes; the tabletops are bare save for a water-filled enamel basin holding a cleaver, around which a goldfish slowly swims, like a drifting, bloody polyp.
Cheim & Read, 547 W 25th, 212-242-7727. Through Jan 6.

Zoe Crosher

In her photographs, Crosher flash-blasts the interiors of hotel rooms around LAX, making garish drapes and generic furnishings as bright as the **Los Angeles** sky beyond the windows, each of which frames a landing or ascending plane. The compositions include out-of-focus air conditioner grills, water bottles, and takeout cups, their blurriness emphasizing the jet-lagged ennui of the transient. *DCKT Contemporary, 552 W 24th, 212-741-9955. Through Dec 20.*

Philip Guston

In 1970, Guston actually pissed people off with his cartoonish paintings of **Klansmen**, bottles, and big, cyclopean heads ("A mandarin pretending to be a stumblebum," huffed the *Times's* **Hilton Kramer**). But the critics were looking back only as far as Guston's gorgeous abstractions of the '50s, while the artist himself was returning to the Krazy Kat comics and Renaissance frescoes that so influenced him in his youth. These drawings (exhibited for the first time) of clunky clocks, disembodied hands holding cigars or pencils, and a few early, brushed-ink abstractions reveal anew that Guston, far from being a rarefied aesthete, was a masterful and determined maverick. *McKee Gallery, 745 Fifth Ave, 212-688-5951. Through Dec 22.*

More by R.C. Baker

Aimé Mpané: 'Faces/Recent Works'

David Haxton at Priska C Juschka; Mie Yim at Michael Steinberg; Erin Rachel Hudak at Jan

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