



Aaron Hobson, *Long Cold Night*, from series "Cinemascape," 2008

LOS ANGELES

Aaron Hobson at Drkrn. Gallery

Twelve color photographs at Drkrn offer more fuel for the identity fire that rages in us all. Self-portraiture in photography is nothing new, nor is the use of panoramic, "cinemascape" framing strategies or referencing Hollywood serial-killer cinema. In Aaron Hobson's epic quest to locate identity, camera becomes compass in the search to faithfully orient oneself toward an elusive true north.

This odyssey is understandable, given the artist's residence up there in that "remote Adirondacks region near the Canadian border." The photographs are technically competent and, thematically, point to movies like *The Deer Hunter* and *Fargo*, or classic art photography books like Robert Frank's *The Americans* or Joseph Kodelka's *Exiles*. Hobson, through his narcissism and obvious penchant for gritty dramatics, stripmine stereotypical notions of that chain-smoking, beer-drinking, psychopathic backwoods redneck "other."

A Long, Cold Night is my favorite photograph in this show. Huddled in an abandoned old car in the deep forest, Hobson lights a cigarette against the growing winter chill and lonely exile he has succumbed to. In this photograph there is no movie to remember or history to answer to. The psychodrama has fallen with the trees; only the artist himself and his rugged mountain stage remain standing. —**Darrin Little**

Group Show at Andrew Shire Gallery

"The Horror of Tradition" at Andrew Shire Gallery brought together the work of five LA artists: Sophia Allison, Robert Fontenot, Starlie Geike, Evelyn Serrano, and Liz Young, who make art by sewing. The artists combined traditional materials and techniques with found materials, like American flags, female sanitary napkins and a body bag, in ways that were visually engaging yet tenaciously thoughtful. The show's clever title referenced the differences, both perceived and actual, between terms like "craft" and "fine art" — words that usually mean something quite precise in specific contexts, but which these artists proved could be ambiguous, if not interchangeable.

What I found striking was the extent to which

each of the artists took the concept of craft seriously. Not because they do needlepoint — "fossilizing practices," as the curator refers to them — but more significantly, because their attention to it flies in the face of current art practice. Today, technique is often sublimated to concept, so much so that it can be a detriment to communicating the very ideas an artist wants to highlight. With traditional craft shows, often the opposite happens — artistic technique drives the focus rather than cultural commentary. This exhibition impressively balanced both. —**Anne Martens**

Jasmine Little at Jancar Gallery

We already know Jasmine Little for her tongue-in-cheek art-world hacks done under the moniker Little Chan with her partner Jamie Chan. The innocence of their humor always prevails, even while they pull pranks, such as erecting in their partitioned-off art studio a cardboard fort to spy over the partitions into other studios. Little retains this zaniness in her paintings, not only to extend her exquisite painterly technique, but also for gleefully choosing her subject matter. As to technique, a lot of Matisse's style and colors are pushed in the direction of Nick Lowe's inventiveness: Little's brushstrokes likewise shatter into completely inspired fragments. It takes real courage to make every brushstroke honest. As for content, one can only imagine what she was thinking with *Hubert's Studio*, in which she pays homage to her exhibition mate Hubert Schamlix, purportedly currently devoted to painting female nudes. In Little's piece, Hubert's nudes abound: posing, painting and in paintings-within-the-painting. Also, if you've seen Mike H.J. Chang's website, then you'll recognize some iconography in Little's *Tribute to Mike H.J. Chang* painting. He mimics other artists' work, and you can see his reciprocation at boatship. net. —**Kathryn Hargreaves**

Nancy Reddin Kienholz at LA Louver

Nancy Reddin Kienholz's first solo show sans husband/collaborator Ed Kienholz, is chock full of lenticulars, in keeping with her photographic and sculptural practice. A lenticular is a process in which a printed or photographic image changes when viewed from a different angle. This process is inherently generational in nature, bordering on kitsch even, where the work runs the risk of losing its sense of immediacy and power.

The show is divided into three distinct bodies of work, including images of familiar cultural icons like Santa Claus, Christ, Shirley Temple and the Statue of Liberty. The images are juxtaposed with opposites, such as a sad, poor child transforming into Shirley Temple in the blink of an eye, quite literally. If only it were this easy to change the world, or at the very least, encourage people to think for themselves. Kienholz proposes that it is this easy, which is clearly dangerous terrain, since being alive in today's world is far more

complicated than these images might suggest. Images like *Mohammed and the Klan* (2007) are more clearly politically charged as Kienholz compares the religious zealotry of the Muslim faith to the Ku Klux Klan, implying that they are oddly interchangeable and equally as terrifying. —**Eve Wood**

NEW YORK

Rondinone, Boyce at SculptureCenter

For two summers Ugo Rondinone's aluminum tree has faced Battery Park, its branches bare and painted white, as if to lock in winter. Now at SculptureCenter, through November, he spray-paints the courtyard pebbles a fiery yellow.

He and Martin Boyce call their show "We Burn, We Shiver," and the piece continues indoors where a vintage fireplace hides the old warehouse gate, with no fuel but plenty of soot. A river stone on the floor, cast in bronze and filled with lead, similarly improves on nature while weighing down its processes. For the sole sign of life, the Swiss-born artist leaves his handprint in the sheetrock — his gesture preserved but its impulse denied.

Boyce, a Scottish artist, barely disrupts the hall until one looks up. A rod and the metal twist of a surgical splint make a fragmentary mobile. A half-lit fluorescent fixture covers the ceiling with a broken geometry. Outdoors, cryptic signs cross two panels as shadowy as photographic negatives.

I looked for signs of the former trolley factory's history — and for signs of life amid Maya Lin's pebbled garden. Rondinone's blinding yellow has no time for nostalgia. As for picking up the pieces after the show, maybe someone will paint the pebbles gray. —**John Haber**

Michael Zansky at Nicholas Robinson Gallery

Michael Zansky plays with size and perspective in his cross-media works. He creates tableaux that are presented as sculptures as well as photographs. The photographs serve as documentation of what one might see under a microscope or through a telescope. The assemblages are frozen in time. Balls, busts and taxidermy animals act out fantasies that allude to life and death. These photographic images are seen with mechanized sculptures that depict these narratives in fragments. The title "Western Lands" refers both to the West Bank of the Nile River and William Burroughs' novel of the same name. Zansky plays with Burroughs' sense of the exotic and death. He creates scenarios that draw from history yet exist in the realm of pure fantasy.

Zansky's works are like elaborate stage sets in need of an enticing story. He has an affinity for putting things together, but in this installation the objects and subjects are consumed by the mechanisms that are there to support them. —**Jody Zellen**