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ARTGUIDE DIARY IN PRINT PREVIEWS PICKS NEWS TALK BACK BOOKFORUM

log in

search

classifieds subscribe advertise back issues contact us register

PICKS

artguide



New York

- David Hammons
- "Omission"
- Cameron
- "Counterfactual"
- Mark Esper
- Tony Conrad
- Charles Long
- Carrie Moyer
- Crystal Liu
- "Photography and the Self: The Legacy of F. Holland Day"

Los Angeles

- Tomory Dodge
- Amy Bird
- Amy Bennett
- "The Collectible Moment: Photographs in the Norton Simon Museum"

San Francisco

- Bill Owens

Miami

- "Forms of Classification: Alternative Knowledge and Contemporary Art"

Toronto

- "We Can Do This Now"

London

- "Victor Grippo: Tables of Work and Reflection"

Berlin

- "Sexwork: Art Myth Reality"

Hamburg

- Stefan Kern

Neuenkirchen

- Inga Svala Thórsdóttir

Naples

- Jota Castro

SAN FRANCISCO

Bill Owens

ROBERT KOCH GALLERY
49 Geary Street, 5th Floor
January 4–February 24

Starting in 1972 with his career-making series "Suburbia," Bill Owens has made it clear that he's down with the burger-and-brew set. That black-and-white and color series of the now-vanishing American middle class has been on view in several recent exhibitions, a durability that tends to obscure the fact that Owens continues to create images from a "just-folks" perspective. The nine recent digital photographs in Owens's current show, "Flesh," reveal a consistent interest in appetites and physical pleasures and a visual wit reminiscent of Martin Parr. Four of the pictures are juicy close-ups of pork—a still life of pig snout in a French butcher's case, a crispy slice of bacon, a middle-aged guy hungrily chomping on a rib, and a perversely sexual view of roasted pig. Two others focus on lingerie, including a view of a Vanessa Beecroft–like army of reedy mannequins in Prada panties installed in the foyer of the designer's flagship Manhattan store. Another captures viewers checking out the naked and abundant Leigh Bowery in the Lucian Freud painting at the Met. That these images stem from travels beyond suburbia doesn't seem to weaken Owens's unique voice. Rather, he offers something of an American international perspective, in which the stuffy museum is made commensurate with a carnival poster of a green demon ravishing a curvaceous naked lady. The pictures also suggest that Owens's shift to digital photography has enabled him to fully engage a personal quest to slake his voracious appetite for images.

—Glen Helfand

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MIAMI

"Forms of Classification: Alternative Knowledge and Contemporary Art"

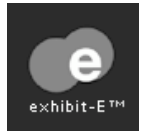
CIFO – CISNEROS FONTANALS ART FOUNDATION
1018 North Miami Ave.
December 6–February 18

This exhibition, curated by CIFO director Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, queries—and occasionally makes light of—defeat and nothingness. Using classification systems as the unexpected framework for a meditation on the central place loss and absurdity hold in everyday life, the show proves surprisingly evocative. *The J Street Project*, 2002–2005, an installation by Susan Hiller, uses photographs to document 303 streets throughout Germany officially named for the Jews who inhabited them before the Holocaust. It is paired with *Rescue Archaeology (Lockers)*, 2005, by Mark Dion, which preserves slices of urban history by amassing refuse from three renovated and/or destroyed Manhattan building sites (one of which is the Museum of Modern Art's sculpture garden). The combination proffers an uncanny, eerie solicitation to consider the ghosts that haunt these locales. Mathilde Ter Heijne's *Women to Go*, 2005, displays 180 postcards that feature black-and-white images of anonymous women. Viewers are invited to browse and take the cards, which feature thumbnail biographies of yet another 180 women, easily identifiable by the events in their distinguished lives. Conflating known with unknown female identities, Ter Heijne scrutinizes the criteria by which the former becomes the latter. The inevitable nod to Bernd and Hilla Becher is made by the inclusion of *Winding Towers*, 1968–97/2005. Yet Jimmie Durham's farcical performance returns viewers to less cerebral realms: The artist stars as a crabby bureaucrat in *Smashing*,



Ribs, 2001, digital pigment print, dimensions variable.

links



Victoria Miro Gallery



Cristina Guerra

Contemporary Art



Mark Dion, *Rescue Archaeology (Lockers)*, 2005, mixed media, 88 x 81 x 32".

- Moio & Sivelli
- Vienna
- Imogen Stidworthy
- Thessaloniki
- "Masquerades: Femininity, Masculinity, and Other Certainties"
- Lisbon
- Noé Sendas
- Pedro Cabrita Reis
- Moscow
- Pavel Filonov
- Alexandria, Egypt
- Wolfgang Winter and Berthold Hörbelt
- Beijing
- "New York, Interrupted"
- Taipei
- "Dirty Yoga: The Fifth Taipei Biennial"

2005, a video in which he maniacally destroys every decorative object handed to him by an attractive secretary before dutifully noting it in a ledger.

—Lara Taubman

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TORONTO

"We Can Do This Now"

THE POWER PLANT CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY
231 Queens Quay West
December 16–February 9

What is the role of an artistic community in defining a city's cultural capital? As cities around the world increasingly rely on art to sharpen their international profiles, local artists often become the unwitting promoters of a city-state's corporate cultural identity—a case in point being the YBAs rounded up in '90s London to help Britannia rule again. If the group show "We Can Do This Now" is any indication, then Toronto-based artists are providing anything but a coherent image to match the city's ambitious expansion projects, from the new wing at the Art Gallery of Ontario to Daniel Libeskind's "crystal" forming atop the Royal Ontario Museum.

The cross-generational selection—which runs from Ian Carr-Harris to Oliver Husain—portrays an aesthetics caught between the local and the international and defined in conflicting ways. Carr-Harris pairs a model of the Tate Modern with one of The Power Plant—two electricity stations that were turned into contemporary art centers as the industrial revolution surrendered to the culture industry on both sides of the Atlantic. Daniel Young and Christian Giroux's *Alouette*, 2006—a reproduction of the first space satellite launched by Canada, in 1962, just after those of the Soviet Union and the US—demonstrates that the most significant means of gaining international recognition remain invisible from the ground. Kelly Mark's two-channel DVDs showing artist couples talking simultaneously about how they met each other are not social portraits of love, Toronto style. Rather, Mark suggests that confessional reality TV is a new form of internationalism, which has replaced space programs, foreign policies, and even postage stamps. Since the interviewees talk over each other's words, it seems that the content doesn't even matter.

—Jennifer Allen

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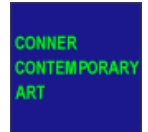
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Daniel Young and Christian Giroux, *Alouette*, 2006, aluminum and PVC, 32.5 x 30 x 28".