

"FREEZE FRAME" by Jill Conner

Thrust Projects, New York NY January 11 · February 17, 2008



While the American election process has bypassed or absorbed mainstream feminism, the old saw of women's issues can still be seen in the New York art world. "WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution," which showed last year at MOCA in Los Angeles, just opened at P.S. 1 in Queens, and the Bronx Museum is hosting Carey Lovelace's significant survey of collaborative feminist art. The Bowery's Thrust Projects launched a small prelude to these two recent exhibitions by showcasing a selection of women's abstract paintings as evidence of wide-ranging processes and gestural effects.

Intended to capture the moment in abstraction before a dominant style forms, much of "Freeze Frame" (curated by Elizabeth Cooper, one of the eight contributing artists) carries a hint of déjà-vu. Lisa Hamilton's large *Butterknife* (2007), for instance, features an overlay of colors on flat canvas displaying a similar aesthetic to Lynda Benglis's familiar pigmented latex pour paintings of the late 1960s. The sheer intensity coursing through Elizabeth Cooper's *Untitled (Orange Yellow)* (2007) and Alisa Margolis's *Victoria Park* (2007) also finds an echo in Joan Mitchell's emotionally charged abstractions from the 1980s.

Veronica Tyson-Strait's untitled masonite acrylics, offering the

visual metaphor of woven thread, seek to mark out the painting field by a constant buildup and interlacing of colored lines. Borrowing from the techniques and motifs of street culture, however, the works of Wendy White, Jasmine Justice, Joyce Kim, and Carrie Moyer seem marginally more relevant. Moyer's *Green Sap* (2007) stands out for its warped depiction of concession stand hot dogs, while Kim's *The Samurai Lesson* (2007) portrays stick figures ambling behind the big stick. These small generic border crossings seem somehow reconciled in White's *Block from Smack* (2007), which mixes spray paint, acrylic, metal, foam, and an urban sensibility on canvas. *Skyline* (2007), by Jasmine Justice, constructs a view of the tall buildings outside constructing the piecemeal view of the sky.

As abstractions uncompromised by mixed media and cross disciplines, these works don't take stock of the new. The women-only policy is another inclusion illusion that cannot begin to catch up with the exclusion of women artists from the receiving lines of art journalism. A far more insider strategy is required to make a difference here. A good example of this approach was provided by last year's "Global Feminisms" at Brooklyn Museum's new Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, which, among other novelties, successively brought Judy Chicago's once-controversial sculpture *The Dinner Party* (1974-79) back into the main arena of contemporary art and art history.

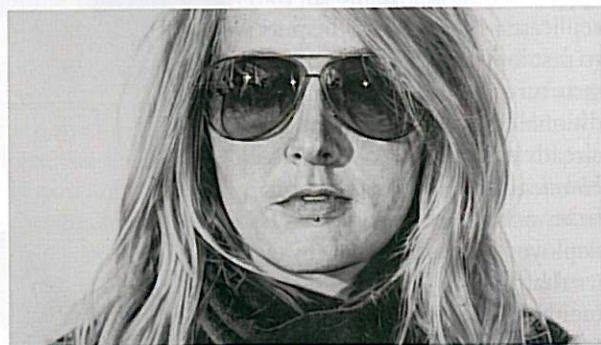
"LARGER THAN LIFE" by Jacquelyn Davis

Stellan Holm Gallery, New York NY December 15, 2007 · February 9, 2008

At Stellan Holm, five large-scale paintings have gravitated toward each other for no apparent reason than their extreme dimensions and vague post-millennial air. This group adherence to a form of image disappearance ranges from media vertigo, to class nausea, to recurring cycles of fame and misfortune. Yet "Larger Than Life" overplays its hand when presenting this international cast of players, who in a different context might look askance at such limited company, especially in this age of web portals and global simultaneity.

For starters, when is oil on canvas ever not "larger than life," either by definition or from having to run the art world gauntlet? In response to this age-old question, Martin Borowski's *Large Red* (2006) departs from his usual architectural renderings by painting a painting in progress, except that here we only glimpse all the paraphernalia and bloody mess involved, never the actual result. Likewise, Brendan Cass's meticulously calculated *Dutch Landscape* (2007), based on images from old travel brochures overlaid with a heavy acrylic impasto, takes us on a rather wistful trip down memory lane. The title subject in Jason Brooks's *Emily* (2007), an acrylic-on-linen painting fashioned after one of his closely realized photographs, dazzles the viewer with brute unreality.

Like it or not, art is usually judged by the company it keeps. Even the simple act of hanging together in the same room forges a link between different works, regardless of their provenance or meaning. Does art, then, owe its existential largesse to the display of infinite inexpressibility? Or isn't it nonetheless the case that these paintings cohere despite themselves, drawn together by a singular disregard for all expressive consistency? The real meeting point here is not between individual



expressions or alliances per se, but relates to the technological fate of the image, now doomed to infinite implosion. For instance, Dwayne Moser's *Untitled Backdrop (Site of Nicole Richie DUI arrest, 12/11/06)* (2007) formulates its own third degree, ironically employing the Warner Bros. Scenic Arts Department to render his crime-scene photograph into a cinematic-ratio screen of celebrity projections, as emptied of life as fame itself. Is the viewer invited here to contemplate the downfall of the image or the disappearance of the image-maker himself? Till Gerhard's *Hölle der Saison* (2006) hints at this unnerving conclusion, his gang of faceless or hooded celebrants adding a further spin to today's peripheral burnout.

(ABOVE TOP TO BOTTOM) CARRIE MOYER, *SAP GREEN*, 2007, ACRYLIC, GLITTER ON CANVAS, 50 X 40 IN. COURTESY THRUST PROJECTS, NEW YORK. JASON BROOKS, *EMILY*, 2007, ACRYLIC ON LINEN, 74 X 132 IN. COURTESY STELLAN HOLM GALLERY, NEW YORK. (OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) RICHARD PRINCE, *KNOW A GUY*, 2000, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 216 X 156 IN. *UNTITLED (FASHION)*, 1982-84, EKTACOLOR PHOTOGRAPH, UNIQUE 40 X 27 IN. *CONTINUATION*, 2004-05, FIBERGLASS, POLYESTER RESIN, ACRYLIC, WOOD, 44 X 69.75 X 82.5 IN. © RICHARD PRINCE. COURTESY SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK