

PINK IS KINK.

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by Jennifer Teets

If the thematic 'pink' –organizational choice for this year's Nina Menocal booth at the 2004 Armory Show– sarcastically juxtaposes the emotive response, in this case, the objectification of pink as serene and inexorably fragile, then why the allure towards 'kinky'? Perversely gentle, perhaps, this year's selection of artists engage an array of visually austere subjects –bruised cherub adolescents, glamorized terror reports, fuchsia "camouflaged" war vehicles, allegorical, though subliminally disgruntling paradises, amongst others– which artfully tinker with abstraction, political and linguistic consequence, and the innate notions of beauty.

Cuban artist duo Elsoca and Fabián (Adrián Soca Beltrán, 1976, Havana, Cuba, Fabián Peña Díaz, 1976, Havana, Cuba.) initiated their careers in the performance/action art arena, though have recently solidified a meticulous body of work defined by crushed insects as their primary 'drawing' material. Repulsion shakes hands with lyricism in the sordid phrase, "Nothingmorebeautifulthantoflyandfall". Like Elsoca and Fabián's scrupulous engagement with time, emerging artist Adriana Riquer's (1976, Mexico City) artistic process delineates the painstaking construction of sumptuous, amoebal, cellular like forms. The consequence of leisure, or better yet, boredom configures Riquer's formal practice. Fernando Carabjal (Chicago, 1973, lives and works in Mexico City) is another, young artist who works with a variety of materials, such as chalk and colored pencils, when constructing objects and installations. His drawings, on the other hand, while poetically titillating, relate more to the written practice of verse. Desolation and disaster meet in Carabjal's melancholic circus ring.

Whilst Balam Bartolome (1975, Ocosingo, Chiapas, lives and works in Mexico City), Magali Lara (1956, Mexico City, lives and works in Cuernavaca, Mexico), and Gabriel de la Mora (1970, Colima, Mexico, lives and works in Mexico City) share the same medium of preference, painting, their

styles differ by the thematic constituents that define them. De la Mora has explored, sardonically, the indigenous condition and the present defects of modernism on cultural tradition while Lara, revealingly emits notions of introspection and reflexive through her chromatically eloquent large-scale works. Bartolome, on the other hand, sarcastically gives way to a sexual-semantic game in such works as *Lucky in Love* (2001) or *Dream* (2002). If Bartolome is particularly interested in the humorous construction of quotidian signs, words and images, de la Mora gives way to yet another ironic intersection, contrasting historical artworks with the ideal modern joke.

On the other hand, locality and cultural specificity are both reoccurring questions in the work of Atelier Morales (Juan Luis Morales, 1961, Havana, Cuba, and Teresa Ayuso, 1960, Havana, Cuba. Both live and work in Paris). The duo's digital photomontage works contemplate loss, abandonment, and cultural stereotype through images such as flying seats and chairs (see works from the series *It's only life*, 2004). Visual deception, however, is present in Francisco Larios' (1960, Guaymas, Mexico, lives and works in Monterrey) allegoric digital photographic series (see works *Plants & Animals I*, (2003)) and *Plants & Animals II*, (2004)). The painterly like floral passages feature hidden torture scenes; children and animals frolicking in romanticized pastures. Similar to Larios' practice of digital construction, Cuban artist, Arturo Cuenca's (1955, Holguín, Cuba, lives and works in New York City) recent work hints to the relationship between semantics, photography and painting. Utilizing a philosophical platform, the artist has constructed a body of work specifically tied to temporal movement in still photography.

Lastly, perhaps, artists Miguel Ventura (1954, San Antonio, Texas, lives and works in Mexico City), Carlos Aguirre (1948, Acapulco, Mexico, lives and works in Mexico City), and Cecilia Noriega-Bozovich's (1954, Ancash, Peru, lives and works in Madrid) work best adheres to the aforementioned notion of the perversely gentle. Noriega-Bozovich's curiosity in the fetishist marketability of toy collectables has lead her to produce a series of war vehicles, oddly enough, in "camouflaged" fuchsia. Outlandish, though sublime, (*Cansada de Guerra* project (2003-04)) offers a hedonistic meal for the recent gruesome times. Miguel Ventura's complex, methodical approach to the construction of his utopian dystopian social model a.k.a. language game, the *New Interterritorial Language Committee (NILC)*, has generated a series of installations based on the 'mimicry and parody of basic language vocabularies'. These highly conceptual works scatologically meander such perversions as, "joyfully bruised cherubic boys, braid-shaped medicinal excrement cookies, and grammatological pregnancies". Furthermore, parallel to Ventura's interest in hierarchical, power-infested language structures, Carlos Aguirre's current artistic endeavors contemplate the semiotic foundation of U.S. news headlines. Scanned magazine clippings of the word "terror" at once comment on political subversion as well as the glamorized excessiveness of media coverage today.

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1.- taken from artist statement.

2.- Jusidman, Yishai. "Miguel Ventura, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil", Artforum, September 2002, pg. 210.