



Photography

What's NEW in NYC Photo?

By Carl Gunhouse

Monday, November 5, 2007

Pablo's Birthday

526 W Canal St. Btw. Joe DiMaggio Hwy. & Washington St.

Eric Weeks, *World Was In The Face Of The Beloved*

Weeks is my favorite still life photographer. He creates a wealth of meaning with a minimal number of visual facts, even incorporating insects and other wildlife, without devolving into a National Geographic special. Yet I haven't been as much of a fan of his newer pictures of his wife, fellow photographer Stacy Morrison. John Szarkowski once wrote of Garry Winogrand's photographs of women that his critical functions were undermined by the subject matter. I have suspected the same of Weeks.

Yet as Weeks's series has progressed, the pictures have become something more. The photographs are passive-aggressive yet indecipherable symbols of the couple's relationship. Each image is oddly detached, with Morrison taking on different characters, suggesting that something very personal is going on between them. The line between actor and director has become blurred, making it unclear whose subconscious metaphor for their relationship we are seeing. And the visual skill that Weeks has applied in previous work shines through. Morrison is surrounded by the small details that have made Weeks's nature photographs so enjoyable.

Through Nov. 8th

Pablos Birthday

Jack Shainman Gallery

513 W 20th St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Jackie Nickerson, *Faith*

I was wrong. If I recall correctly, I made fun of Nickerson's pictures of African farmers in her 2005 show *Farm*, I may have insinuated that she wasn't a very good photographer and possibly even said something about her being a second-rate superficial fashion photographer. Well, having just looked at the previous show online, I still don't like it, but I can see how it might lead to this rather enjoyable show, made up mostly of nuns doing nun-type stuff, praying, knitting, holding human skulls.

And I would have never imagined that the nunnery would so closely resemble the interiors of my childhood 1980's grade school. In individual portraits the nuns are portrayed as a charming mix of sweet grandmothers and young dour women, all of whom have chosen a distant husband. There are also portraits of priests that feel a little more like a pointed editorial piece for the Sunday Times Magazine.

Through Nov. 10th

Jack Shainman

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

521 W 21st St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Uta Barth, *Sundial*

Who is this for? Who is excited about the umpteenth Uta Barth show entirely made up of patches of light on walls? Editors for interior design magazines? Uta Barth's parents? People recovering from a recent traumatic head injury?

Through Nov. 24th

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery

Taxter & Spengemann

504 W 22nd St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Nancey de Holl

Cryptic still lifes that occasionally involve a contortionist. Oh, how the experimental European photography of Man Ray, Laszlo Moholy-Magy, and Alexander Rodchenko has returned. I fret that if things keep going this way, it will be the next big photography movement. All that is missing is a cross bearer. It is hard to know what to make of picture of a silver wine bottle exploding with silver confetti, a yoga ball on a stand, or a bucket on top of a piece of painted styrofoam against a pink backdrop or what any of it has to do with my favorite picture, which appears to be the back of a bondage mask in front of glaring spotlights.

But I guess not making any sense is part of the point. And the long Jane Bowles quote that acts as a press release is less than illuminating. At least semi-abstract photographs made in Europe between the great wars had a contemporary art context, whereas these just feel like a dead end, a collusion between terse concept art and high formalism.

Through Nov 24th

Taxter and Spengeman

Perry Rubenstein Gallery

527 W 23rd St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Amir Zaki, *_?_*

Zaki uses a wide-angle lens to create distorted pictures of buildings in California. You might remember his series of modernist homes that he showed at Perry Rubenstein Gallery. Well, now he is back and has taken on odd-looking buildings, 60's churches, old gas stations and anonymous stores on the side of the road. If I am not mistaken, before distorting the building with his wide lens, he has installed and/or found weird, cryptic modernist sign-age reminiscent of Conquest of The Planet of the Apes. If only Perry Rubenstein Gallery could learn the

word that the Apes had heard so many times before, "No."

Through Nov. 24th

Perry Rubenstein

Silverstein Photography

535 W 24th St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Andre Kertesz, *The Polaroids*

Silverstein Photography has done a fantastic job with Andre Kertesz's estate. Their show of images that he had destroyed as a youth that remained only as cut-up contact sheets was amazing. This collection of Kertesz's polaroids, made towards the end of his life, are just as enjoyable. Mostly formal experiments, the images feel as if life is rapidly dripping out of them, as the aging photographer endlessly stares out his window with his camera making still life after still life of small glass sculptures with varying qualities of light passing through them. The pictures are a testament to the power of a quality photographer's ability to make even the most trite things into endearing art.

Through Nov. 24th

Silverstein Photography

Clamp Art

521-531 W 25th St. Btw. 10th & 11th Aves.

Jill Greenberg, *Ursine*

Yeah, so what. I liked Jill Greenberg's last show of monkey portraits, and I even like her new show of bear portraits. Yes, there is no real redeeming artistic quality to the work. They're just big, shiny head shots of monkeys and now bears. If people can with a straight face argue that there is something redeeming about Richard Avedon, I am gonna argue that if you take an evenly lit, superficial portrait, with the most minimal attempts at photographic form, you might as well make it of something enjoyable to look at like a monkey and/or a bear.

Through Nov. 24th

Clamp Art

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