

MARY BOONE GALLERY

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VIEW TEN : REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

On 7 September 2006 the Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Fifth Avenue location "View Ten: Remember Who You Are", an exhibition curated by Amy Smith-Stewart with work by eight international artists: NINA LOLA BACHHUBER, HUMA BHABHA, SEAN BLUECHEL, JEFF DAVIS, GABRÍELA FRIDRIKSDÓTTIR, DEVA GRAF, KATI HECK and MIKA ROTTENBERG.

The exhibition focuses on our perception of the grotesque – its humor, its tragedy, its beauty and all of its sundry meanings and implications.

The artists in the exhibition propose an alternate reality where the absurd, bizarre and outlandish reign supreme. They deploy various media, including photography, painting, drawing, installation, sculpture, and video, with many works featuring an unusual cast of characters: social outcasts, curious creatures, oddball superheroes, sexual deviants and other outsized figures that both charm and revolt. The subjects' abnormal appearance or abject behaviors destabilize the familiar, challenging socially conditioned perceptions of self, society and the Other.

Mika Rottenberg's site-specific installation, conceived exclusively for the gallery, disrupts the gallery/visitor power structure to comment on conditions of identity, economy and bodily perception. Comprised of a drop ceiling that hovers right above the reception desk, essentially "framing" the receptionist, Rottenberg isolates and amplifies the act of "labor" to preposterous proportions. This drastic shift in scale, recalling Alice's life-changing journey through Wonderland, transforms a day at the office into a radical and ultimately curious proposition.

Deva Graf presents "Gone Missing", a series of black and white photographs of the faceless and misplaced. Based on flyers of missing people, Graf's portraits are actually photographs of 6" sculptures, which she modeled out of sculpey. Presented in pairs, the photographs are sad, eerie, and disturbing. Those with eyes look directly and fixedly with a wide-eyed gaze through us, as if frozen by an unimaginable terror.

All are bald except one that dons a wig and two are missing noses and lips as if in an indeterminate stage of incompleteness. Side by side, the identities appear to be in flux, although hauntingly familiar. We know we've encountered them before and yet they impart a profound feeling of loneliness.

Gabríela Fridriksdóttir is an inventor of strange, sensual and unsettling epic sagas. She works in performance, sculpture, drawing, painting, and video and her subject matter is informed by Icelandic folklore. Her regular use of unconventional materials (hay, dough and milk) recalls

the mythmaker and artist/shaman Joseph Beuys. Fridriksdóttir's primal netherworld of mutilated beasts and preternatural creatures indulges in the forlorn and the opulent, the raw and the spiritual, eventually, culminating in an operatic vision of prophetic proportions.

Huma Bhabha joins together the primitive, prehistoric, and existential to create corporal sculptural hybrids that showcase the weird and the wonderful. "Sell the House" is part-elf/elephant/part-ape and made from clay, packing foam, cardboard, found wood and mesh wire, which the artist has stacked, scorched and modeled by hand. A conflation of history and myth, Bhabha's magical beast excavates the origins of man.

The grotesque and its endless permutations manifest in Jeff Davis's multihued candle sculptures of life-size monster heads, which are made from rubber Halloween masks that have been stitched together, cast in wax, and then melted. While the melting magnifies their hideous distortion, it also imparts an unforeseen splendor. Piled one on top of the other, gorged eyeballs dangle, teeth turn into daggers and wart-afflicted jowls droop. In the end, they are portentous reminders of our own mortality.

Sean Bluechel's ink drawings portray mangled body parts in a dense jungle of biomorphic vegetation. Juxtaposed against these apocalyptic-seeming visions is a series of 14 black and white photographs depicting a live female model in a domestic interior as she is disguised by various household objects. Recalling Hans Bellmer's *La Poupée*, Bluechel's voyeuristic game depicts a playful and sexually explicit peep show. Bluechel's photographs appear in the guise of still lives, but as his heady imagery unravels, we are confronted with a seductive romp of depraved pleasure.

Mika Rottenberg's drawings illustrate a world deeply engaged in scatological activities. Cartoonish figures delight in extreme interchanges of bodily discharge. Red rivers and golden showers pass through cherry colored orifices and jagged jaws set within a primeval landscape replete with human body prints and tropical palm trees.

Nina Lola Bachhuber's monochromatic drawings fuse animal, plant and human body fragments to form a visual language oscillating between abstraction and figuration.

In her dreamlike narrative, we encounter wigs on skulls, hairy knees wrapped in bandages, and chicken legs and lobster claws attached to human torsos.

The grotesque has the uncanny ability to bring out the child in us. Kati Heck's kooky subject matter embodies a baroque sensibility and a proclivity for the carnivalesque. Populated by peculiar characters, often based on friends and family, comic book heroes and fairy tales, the artist herself regularly appears as the protagonist. Typically unfinished, Heck's subjects are often involved in transgressive acts that take place in highly amusing and dysfunctional suburban or domestic situations.

The exhibition, at 745 Fifth Avenue, will continue through 30 September 2006.