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DAVID LIESKE *in conversation with* ECKHAUS LATTA /

Portfolios by HEDI SLIMANE *and* GOSHA RUBCHINSKIY / ERIC N. MACK *on* NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE /

SYLVIE FLEURY *in conversation with* VIVIENNE WESTWOOD / *Projects by* CHARLOTTE PRODGER, K8 HARDY *and* WILL BENEDICT

Hypothesis for an Exhibition

Dominique Lévy / New York

Self-reflexivity, when reflected in a mirror becomes... what exactly? I always feel cautious with the use of *mise-en-abyme* in art, because I see it as a smoke and mirrors ruse to disguise a lack of imagination, the ever-lasting trick from magicians with no inspiration. But for the exhibition dedicated to Italian artist Giulio Paolini, the reflexivity used in the pieces did indeed lead my wandering mind somewhere. The show, curated by Begum Yasar, celebrates the art of self-reflection and enigma with contemporary artists, celebrating Paolini.

The presentation is entitled "Hypothesis for a exhibition", a reference to Paolini's first exhibition proposal in Rome entitled "Ipotesi per una mostra" which remained unrealized until his 2003 retrospective at the Prada Foundation in Milan. Paolini was an expert in twisting the viewer's mind. In his famous canvas *Self-Portrait (Autoritratto)* (1968), which is included in the show, he does not paint himself, but French painter Henri Rousseau instead, although he represents accurately many of his friends. From there, my mind started rambling: If Paolini sees his friends as they are, does he see himself as somebody else, even, as a genius? Did he decide to depict his fantasized self rather than an objective, perhaps too dull, vision of himself? Is the distance between the title's meaning and the painted character, the same between his real self and his fantasized self? Is it the same distance that stand between the two mimetic figures, a sculpture displayed in the show?

The artworks selected by Yasar all celebrate this distance, each in a specific fashion. Josh Smith's painting is a reference to the initial poster for a group show Smith was part of in 2008 in New York; Charles Mayton's photographs are echoing themselves; Antek Walczak's paintings are arbitrary constructs that divert symbols from their original meaning. In one way or another each artist clearly shows the influence of Paolini by adding humor, cynicism or distance into the craft of their art.

by Alexandre Stipanovich

Miko, Vena, Walczak

Algus Greenspon / New York

In a risky but carefully executed exhibition, Dave Miko and Ned Vena present a previously unexhibited part of their practice as painters. Miko and Vena — two friends, one known for sly, subtle compositions bordering on abstraction, the other for systemic, serial abstraction — engage their long-standing practice as graffiti writers to create a set of five oversize canvases. To produce each, the artists spontaneously chose restive and slangy phrases ("Bust This," "Step Off" or "Sick Enough?") and rendered the words in a combination of the two's signature styles. Vena's words in enamel exhibit the kind of late 1990s influence that will be visually familiar to kids growing up in Giuliani-era New York (this writer included) — big chunky type clustered to elide immediate legibility, often shimmering with simulated chromed-out bling and bright, shifting color patterns. Miko, who was most active as a writer in early 1990s New York, presents his letters in a trickier, more abstract style. His language limps across the white canvas, dripping and morphing as it articulates junk-sick hues and pointed, thorny edges. The two exemplify historical moments in graffiti writing: for Miko, a radical approach to a singular style, refuting reference and grasping at the unknown. For Vena, a kind of search for "graffiti" in a pure sense — a search for origin, less concerned with radical inventiveness and more with a play of form. The collision on each canvas creates a curious effect: this is neither a show about post-Deitch "street art" elevated in the gallery sphere, nor is it an exploration of the artists' past, pre-gallery selves — in fact, both chose not to disclose their tag names or sign works. Rather, the paintings seem to hint at questions of cultural legibility and what power pure visual form can sustain (if any) untethered from the context where it does its usual job. The exhibition's third rail is a wall text by Antek Walczak that, in funny and absorbing language, presents the problem of being admired and half-understood ("cool") as a kind of impetus to create, at odds with the radical (and fictitious, sour) alterity demanded of artists seeking to develop a "critical" practice.

by Boško Blagojević

Sergei Tcherepnin

MIT List Visual Arts Center / Cambridge (MA)

The fitful relationship between cause and effect moves through different phases in the sound-based art of Sergei Tcherepnin. Between the two distinctions, first there's disregard, then devotion — and then a kind of reverence, discernible to those keyed to the right frequency, in which all levels of inattention and engagement serenely coexist. Competing senses of surprise and expectation figure in all of Tcherepnin's handlings of sound, and especially so in "Subharmonic Lick Thicket," his show at the List Center at MIT.

All observers, whether they know it or not, are indeed keyed to the right frequency. Tucked away in an intimate room, the exhibit plays with sounds sourced from the inner ear, where noises are taken in as external materials and assessed in ways that transfigure them into bodily forces. For all of us, the architecture of the ear itself works to amplify and alter sound, making the sounds we hear different, at least a little bit, from what actually served as the original stimulus.

Reveling in the mysticism and plain strangeness of this is key to Tcherepnin's art. As has become his custom, Tcherepnin outfitted the room with homely abstract objects, mostly metal sheets cut into endearing biomorphic forms and hung jutting off the wall or else placed on the floor. Some are boxes that can be opened or folded, like Lygia Clark's "Bichos" critter sculptures, and others are rounded fragments that look like so many tongues protruding into the space.

From all of those, electronic sounds emit, with no clear connection between what can be seen and what can be heard, in fact there is any connection at all. Touch one of the objects, however — bend or torque or get one of the tongues wagging — and the sound shifts by way of transducers hooked up to transform each object into a sort of speaker. Sometimes the shift in sounds is subtle and other times it's drastic, and before long it only makes sense to "play" the room simply by moving around it and engaging it on its own unearthly terms.

by Andy Battaglia