

Flash Art

Aperto San Francisco

Abraham Orden

is part of the full blush of life San Francisco has brought to the folk aesthetic. His work, now collected heavily and in high demand around the world, is a kind of folk-couture: it's obsessive, but with a self directed flair; it's an instinctual outpouring of sensibilities that leaves just a faint aftertaste of the shrewdness that runs deep under the surface. More importantly, it channels all the dark beauty and all the mystical naturalism that has been brewing here over the last decade.

Another important artist in the gallery, Will Rogan, has recently shown in Hanley's new Los Angeles space, which may prove an important outlet for Bay Area talent. In his photographs and videos, Rogan finds moments when chance seems more than it is, and the viewer feels a cosmic interconnectivity about the world. Rogan, a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and now a student at UC Berkeley, makes what local critic Glen Helfand calls "psychedelic conceptualism." His work can be seen as part of a lineage of Bay Area conceptualists including Paul Kos and Tom Marioni in the 1960s.

Other artists Hanley has shown over the past year or so complete the impression that the gallery is essential to the scene. Xylor Jane is a fixture of the community whose dirty-hot fluorescent drawings based on simple algorithms are only recently getting the attention they have deserved for years. Sean

McFarland came out of his MFA at California College of the Arts in 2004 to an acclaimed solo show of his meticulous photographs of photographs of cityscapes, which for all appearances are harmless enough, but in fact impeach the nature of representation tersely and without nostalgic sympathy. Shaun O'Dell, along with McHargue, taps into a localized aesthetic and makes the most of it with his large doodle-esque ink drawings. Simon Evans, who recently moved to England, makes text-based work that doesn't dull with time.

The downtown gallery establishment consists of around 30 galleries. Of those, no more than four can be said to have a serious stake in the local contemporary art scene. Gregory Lind Gallery is one of the newest, but in the three years his gallery has been open, Lind has amassed a stable of 24 artists, just over half of which reside in the Bay Area. His artists describe him as an attentive, supportive dealer, and his presence has given life to many of their efforts. In an art world that increasingly disdains the regional, Lind deserves respect for following his interests against the grain and putting so much effort into building local infrastructure. It's exactly this sort of gallery that's needed in any small city, a fact that Lind recognizes and consciously pursues.

The prevalent aesthetic at Gregory Lind Gallery is clean, colorful, and graphic, but in each artist there is an undercurrent, a depth beneath the graphic surface.

Often it's in the form of an involved dialogue with art history. Sarah Bostwick makes laser-accurate reliefs of landscapes in pure white plaster. The white-on-white relief 'drawings' are coldly precise, evoking memories of minimalism, but without surrendering their representation, and thus their specificity and the warmth of depicting the real. Amy Rathbone, who worked for Sol LeWitt for years, makes her own wall drawings. They are systematic and repetitive abstractions, like LeWitt's works, but they speak to the character of their space, and grow organically. They lack the rigid, modernist majesty that LeWitt has mastered, but replace it with a more modest flexibility that doesn't claim so much for itself and allows for unexpected pleasures.

Heather Marx Gallery makes a fair showing of local artists and represents a few strong talents like Paul Mullins; his lush parodies of farm life may seem a little over-slapstick to last the test of time, but his raw talent for painting carries it through. Michael Arcega and Libby Black also start with humor and find their ways to beautiful objects. Each has a taste for irony — Arcega for the political variety and Black for the consumerist. Black makes paper constructs of designer objects only just absurd enough to be removed from reality, like a Louis Vuitton bicycle. Among Arcega's many projects, a favorite are his drawings made of hair, like *Haircraft Carrier* (2004).

As an artist transitions emergence to the full stride of career, their avenues of reputation in San Francisco attenuate; they aren't forced to move, are compelled to seek reputation in other cities, like Angeles, while remaining here. Stephen Wirtz Gallery, Catharine Clark Gallery are viable support structures for artists. Wirtz is home to many of the better-known Bay Area talents like Larry Sultan, Ulrike Palm Laurie Reid, Todd Hido Deborah Oropallo. They may be household names, but they have vibrant careers and international exhibition schedules.

Catharine Clark represents a mix of established artists around the world and San Francisco artists on the Josephine Taylor's SFMOMA exhibition and popularity of Reuben Lorch with the press and on the Coast gallery circuit attest to the growth of the gallery, which is regarded highly for its eclectic time-based program and heavy schedule of participatory art fairs that gives it a presence in the national scene.

The past year has seen a kind of gallery opening in the Bay Area. There are several young, ambitious dealers and curators opening exhibition spaces under the rubric of participating in the larger cultural dialogue. Lisa Dent G has had some interesting elements and has attracted some

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