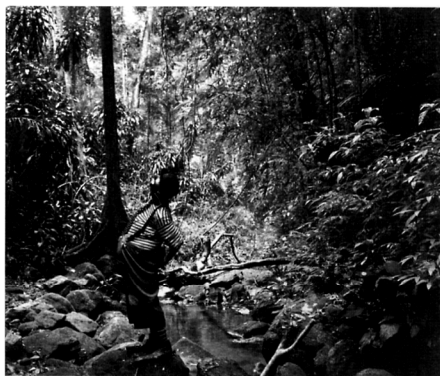


Flash Art

REVIEWS



JULIAN ROSEFELDT, *Clown*, 2005. 3-channel film installation, surround sound, Super-16 mm on DVD, 11 mins. Courtesy Max Wigram, London.

with red nose and oversized shoes, his movements are amusing, naturally, yet painful to watch, as he slips and slides in the stream, falling over repeatedly. Regardless of his handicaps though, he tenaciously makes his way across the three screens and disappears into the heart of the jungle once more.

Drawing on the poignancy inherent within the clown figure, as well its art-historical relevance, particularly in works by artists such as Cindy Sherman and Paul McCarthy, Rosefeldt creates a scene that is familiar and ridiculous in equal measure. Although clowns typically carry theatrical associations, here, as in the first two films of the "Trilogy," the central figure seems blithely unaware of an audience and plays out his looped enterprise with no acknowledgement of the viewer. Instead, he ritualistically measures the limits of his own world, repetitively battling against the same inevitable perils.

Eliza Williams

HELEN MAURER

PUMP HOUSE GALLERY

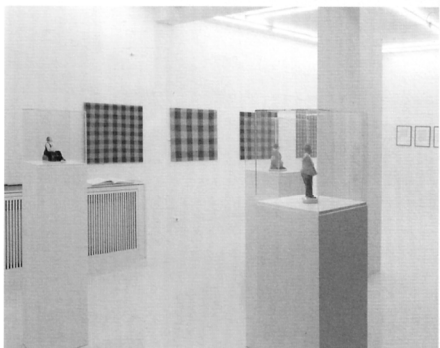


HELEN MAURER, *High Tide*, 2006. Courtesy the artist and Pump House Gallery, London. Photo: Angela Moore.

Surrounded by ethereal dream-like images, the viewer moves through the spaces of this gallery as if through rooms in Maurer's mind. Using light and glass, Helen Maurer has enveloped these vertically stacked rooms with a phantasmagoria of vivid images evocative of Victorian magic-lantern shows. Using the reflective and diffusive qualities of glass in tandem with overhead projectors and spotlights in innovative ways, Maurer has created a series of landscapes and seascapes that ring of nostalgic childhood memories. By constructing miniature tableaux in colored glass that don't make much sense visually until backlit and projected onto the wall by overhead projectors, she creates magical fantasy worlds. By using reflection, foreshortening and anamorphic distortion, the complexities of Maurer's intricate installations are not resolved until the light hits the walls, when all is transmuted, through a mesmerizing alchemy of light, into a series of plausible scenes.

Unlike the metaphysical, psycho-perceptual explorations in James Turrell's light works, Maurer's works are imaginative, whimsical and child-like, fairytale books rather than the physics lab, like stage sets rather than optical illusions. The difference in scale between the 40-cm-square tableaux and the wall-engulfing images that they create, via the overhead projectors, transforms not only the pictorial qualities of these works, but also the surfaces, textures and colors of the glass; all those metamorphoses are adroitly compensated for in the production of these works. Maurer handles glass and light with equal facility. Light reflections seem to ricochet around the gallery, but nothing is arbitrary here; intersecting and diverging beams and planes of light all contribute to the panoramic scenes that envelop the viewer. Everything is precisely calculated, intricately conceived, in this frozen choreography of fragile images. 'Slow art' at its best, Paul Virilio would love this.

Roy Exley



HILDUR BJARNADOTTIR, view of the exhibition at Galleri i8, Reykjavik, 2006. Photo: Vigfus Birgisson.

REYKJAVIK

HILDUR BJARNADÓTTIR

GALLERI I8

After a brilliant start in the late nineties with her enormous crochet circles of cotton yarn, where high reliefs of swan heads, or of human skulls, circumscribed otherwise commonplace tablecloths, Hildur Bjarnadóttir continues to deconstruct textile art in every possible way. Her *Tchotchke*, 2003, which was shown last year at the Boise Art Museum, Idaho — a retrospective which guaranteed her the Icelandic Visual Arts Award, 2006 — is a velvet pile embroidery on linen with the indispensable roses and lilies, over which the statement "Painting is the only real art form" is stitched with particular care.

In *Lassoing*, 2003, a short video loop of Will Rogers' legendary *The Ropin' Fool* from 1922, where the master cowboy exhibits his notorious skills with the lasso, Bjarnadóttir brought her connotations to a feminist level, leaving it to the spectator to evaluate the actor's astounding performance as the epitome of masculinity. The only conclusion she draws herself is presented in a set of schematized linear graphics, called "Lasso Drawings," imitating the circular motion of Rogers' swinging rope.

With "Background" at i8 she continues her ironic disclosure of art's wobbling hierarchy with three different types of works: *My Three Grandmothers*, a set of three glazed porcelain figurines from 2005, extols three of her close relatives by virtue of their own commonplace taste; *Foundation*, an exquisite feminine handwriting turned into a particular font; and *Gingham*, a canvas with appurtenant pattern, whose fibers she has decomposed in order to reweave them after having dyed a certain amount with acrylic colors. By their penetrating modesty, Bjarnadóttir's works jeopardize the lingering male prerogative in visual arts, with its great myth of stern formalism, which continues favoring high art as the relevant expressive mode.

Halldór Björn Runólfsson

PARIS

DANIEL DEWAR & GRÉGORIE GICQUEL

GALERIE LOEVENBRUCK

In 1872, in "History of Romanticism," Théophile Gautier claimed that the cultures of the Middle Ages and East Asia became the two ways out of modernization and its concomitant insipid positivism. Only a few years later, the British Arts & Crafts founder William Morris expressed his own opposition against industrial progress, denouncing the "deprivation of all pleasure and holidays in the sacred cause of labor," favoring a return to hand-craftsmanship. Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel's recurring references to the Arts