

san francisco art magazine

Departments

Arts and Culture for the Underemployed

Body Parts, Anatomical Creations Both Graphic and Subtle at Space Gallery

Curated by Christina, Jo Marzen, and Ray Morrone

reviewed by Rachel S Rosen
edited by Cordelia Chadwick



Garrett MacLean
I'm Glad That You're Out of My Life

Over 25 artists, two bars, live performance music, a dj playing *Apostrophe* by Frank Zappa ... is this a gallery reception or am I at a club? Both, actually. Space Gallery is a lively blend of art and informal "hanging out," the perfect show for people intimidated by the art scene as one gallery-goer put it. Ray Morrone, a video artist who leases this beautiful locale, told me more about how shows at Space Gallery are put together. Space Gallery has been around and doing art exhibits for 7 years; Morrone took it over in June of 2005 and started doing exhibits on a more regular basis, but the acquisition of a liquor license eight months ago enabled the gallery to get more serious ... and more funding. After all, the gallery only takes a 10% commission on purchased work, generally sold at affordable prices (\$20-\$3,000). The gallery houses two exhibits a month, one that is assembled by the gallery and one that is produced by a "guest" curator, so the space is able to house a large amount of rotating work. The artists will usually hang their own show, which adds an engaging touch, enabling contributors to have a sense of ownership over the entire process.

I was able to attend the reception for *Body Parts* on December 28, 2006 and enjoyed the informal lounge-feel, the blending of art-and-hip-bar-scene. Looking around, I saw vagina mannequins, fetish bindings explored in sculpture, Dali-esque porcupine happy-trails--diverse work ranging from kitschy sculpture to psychedelic photographs. The bulk of the work seemed

well thought out and executed, not rough and off the cuff, as some themed group shows can be. Some works were tame, like exquisitely detailed graphite drawings; some were wildly grotesque. Some your bubbe could have made with broken household items; others one experienced viscerally like featured-artist Garrett MacLean's photographs of stitched wounds.

Gallery receptions provide a unique opportunity to meet all of a group show's artists at once. I was able to speak to Garrett MacLean at length about his artistic process. MacLean (hiddenstitches.com) works primarily with photographs, and sees the gallery as a way to advance his artistic career and to have his works seen by many. His true love, however, is creating street art by placing photographs in random places--the more random the better, like under trash can lids. The reason: the more random the placement, the longer the work will remain intact. MacLean is interested in the process of a stranger finding his work and being startled out of complacency, more than the actual artwork itself. Think of it as a way of changing peoples' perception about art and public space. For MacLean, tagging is often a vapid procedure, whereas true aesthetic change derives its value from the element of surprise and challenge ... meaning the viewer's experience is as important, if not more, than the artist's act. Active in both New York City's and Paris's gallery and street scenes, you can view more of McLean's work at Millionfishes.com, an art collective in San Francisco of which he is a live-in member.



Genea Barnes
aqua/aqua 4

about what the piece is going to look like in my mind, but by the time I layer the third exposure onto the image, I step back and realize that the work has taken on a life of its own." Barnes' art is some of the most mature and professional I saw at both Space Gallery and Artwork SF; she treats the figure in a unique and subtle way that captivates the viewer and sets her work apart from the average.

Luck struck twice that night, as I got to meet Genea Barnes (Geneabarnes.com), an up and coming Bay Area photographer. Using traditional methods, such as one sheet of live film scanned to print to create her triple exposed photographs, Barnes participated in her first show with Space Gallery that night. Artwork SF (49 Geary Street) usually represents her work, and she recently took part in the group show *Skin Deep*. Barnes has been actively exhibiting her work in the Bay Area since 2001, and was pleased to find another quality venue to display her photographs.

Genea Barnes' work is quite intricate; while her subject matter remains figurative, the narrative of her pieces are as abstract and intense as a lucid dream. Barnes remarked, "I have a pretty definite idea

Of course, many other kinds of people fluttered about this opening. I met Laurence Toney of Art.com, which is launching a new branch focusing on local artists that will emerge in about a year. He wants to know what makes the local art scene "tick" to help emerging artists and to develop his company. On the opposite side of the spectrum, I met those who knew little about art but were interested in Space Gallery. Belle came to the opening because she saw an ad on Craigslist.com; her friends chickened out of coming to the show, but Belle was drawn to the gallery out of curiosity. Belle is a poet, who finds "art inspiring, even though I know little about it, and people watching the most inspiring act of all. What strange and exciting people come to these openings! I find it interesting." There were many like Belle and Laurence Toney, checking out the artwork and the scene with curiosity.

The most engaging "happening" at the show was a performance piece called *Parts is Parts* by Kim Harmon (myspace.com/therealkimharmon), who is currently pursuing her second master's degree at New College of California's Experimental Performance Institute. She sat in an armchair, naked except for black duct tape over her erogenous zones, hands and feet bound in studded leather cuffs and chains. Her body was delineated into cuts of meat by permanent marker, like an animal in a slaughterhouse. As she read a book about preparing pig meat, a man shaved her legs and Shanti Sankar played a song she had composed called *Natural World* on guitar. The performance was wonderfully strange, and I was compelled to talk with Kim Harmon. I inquired about her process in creating this piece, and she remarked that her inspiration was Space Gallery's theme; she was encouraged by the call for art on their website.



Kim Harmon
Parts is Parts

Harmon's narrative is an integration of feminism, animal rights, and anti-corporate sentiment. Addressing contemporary understandings about body, identity, and fragmentation, Harmon made a statement about the commodification, dehumanization, and fragmentation of women and animals. She confided that as a vegetarian, she used the book *The Sexual Politics of Meat* as her point of departure. Harmon will be performing a version of *Parts is Parts* scheduled to take place at counterPULSE, San Francisco, May 19 - 20, 2007 as part of STREAMfest and an evening-length version at the San Francisco Fringe Festival in September 2007. The latter performance will take place along with a related week-long installation/endurance piece.

The show truly covered the gamut: gory, erotic, gory and erotic, humorous, ludicrous, and strange. The best part, for me at least, was uncovering an art space that was welcoming to artists and to the general public, a show that was informal and a bit exotic, where curious people came to find answers, connections, and ideas. Space Gallery seems to be emerging as a place where artist, curator, viewer, and prospective buyer can come together to talk shop and

experience local art.

-- Rachel S Rosen

Rachel is an artist, freelance writer, and educator in the Bay Area; her myspace is www.myspace.com/artwrite.

**Space Gallery
1141 Polk Street (at Sutter)
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 377-3325
www.spacegallerysf.com**

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