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Pilar Albarracín

« El origen del nuevo mundo »

Boris Achour **FR**
Pilar Albarracín **ES**
Gilles Barbier **FR**
Julien Berthier **FR**
Julien Bismuth **FR**
Mike Bouchet **US**
Alain Bublex **FR**
Massimo Furlan **CH**
Richard Jackson **US**
Adam Janes **US**
Jean-Yves Jouannais **FR**
Martin Kersels **US**
Paul Kos **US**
Paul McCarthy **US**
Jeff Mills **US**
Joachim Mogarra **FR**
Arnold Odermatt **CH**
Henrique Oliveira **BR**
Niki de Saint Phalle **FR**
Jean Tinguely **CH**
Keith Tyson **GB**
Jacques Villeglé **FR**
Olav Westphalen **DE**
Winshluss **FR**
Virginie Yassef **FR**

09
June
—
28
July
2012

OPENING

Friday 08 June 2012
from 6 p.m.
/

UPCOMING

TIEMPOS DE URGENCIA

ARTIUM Vitoria-
Gasteiz, Spain
19 May- 2 September

LE DUENDE VOLÉ

XXIV Festival Arte
Flamenco, Despiau-
Wlêrick and Dubalen
Museum, Mont de
Marsan, France
02-07 July



Gustave Courbet painted *The Origin of the World* as a universal representation of desire, revealing the topography of female eroticism rising towards the mound of Venus with previously unheard-of artistic realism. Equally capable of triggering acclaim and outrage, his picture made the act of looking - or concealing - no small matter.

As most feminists see it, exposure of the female genitalia prompts either rejection or desire in its reversal of the norm of what must not be seen. This is why many artists have repeatedly used depiction of the vagina and the vulva as a gesture of social transgression or transformation. Pilar Albarracín breaks with this triangulation of our desires in her focus on panties, those intimate everyday items that conceal our sex organs, just as numerous other pictures have screened *The Origin of the World*. In her creation of a new origin - a new world - she generates a range of fine-drawn consequences: filling a space with panties disturbs, and alters our way of seeing; and women who speak of their panties are breaking the «deepest privacy» taboo in a fresh statement of what they are and what they have worn. Each woman's panties have a social and individual history, and here, emancipated from an imposed vision of sexuality, they reclaim their right to artistic recycling. In this elevation to the level of art and aspiration to the sacred, these panty-mandalas define a new cosmology freed of the pain of women's loneliness and physical

isolation. Defying the myth of the universal woman, they reflect feminine diversity - diversity of bodies, tastes, decisions - in a circularity that goes counter to the parted line of the vulva. The colours revolt against gender dichotomy, with each shape and each choice of chromatic range conjuring up an anonymous experience of desires assuaged or forgotten. The endless spiral of *El origen del nuevo mundo* (The Origin of the New World) is to be found no longer on the surface of things, but in the depths of the infinite.

The transition from the everyday to the sacred - where the visible and the invisible are no longer eroticised - disrupts the accepted continuity between the upward gaze and the meaning of the signifier. Albarracín's mandalas bring unity to what is observed and the multiplicity of its parts. It is not only the inherent value of the object that moves us, but the accumulation of implied experiences over time. These panties needed to be sorted and categorised, then turned into apposite compositions.

Last but not least, the fact that they are sewn highlights another of Pilar Albarracín's stances: the assertion of sewing and embroidery as feminine technologies.

based on a text by Assumpta Sabuco i Cantó



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PROJECT ROOM

Olav Westphalen

«A Junkie in the forest: doing things the hard way»

“A junkie in the forest” is a project about inspiration and wit. It is also a project about repetition, mechanical production and about the rote recombination of standardized elements. In other words, it is a project about industry.



The cartoonist's “gag-master,” an aleatoric device dating back to at least the 1930s, allows the user to compute tens of thousands of unique joke premises simply by spinning three concentric wheels. Olav Westphalen has developed a substantial body of drawings based on this classic tool of low-brow entertainment as well as on other mechanical systems. (only a selection of this obsessive project is on view here).

At times, the results of his method are what one would expect: high art translations of low art craft, in this case the nondescript language of mainstream cartoons. Clearly, the quick ink lines, the ubiquitous bubble noses and all the other comical shortcuts are as fascinating to the artist as they are unnerving. But these drawings go beyond the negotiation of the hi-low divide, they manage to outgrow their their chummy roots and become that taboo thing: autonomous expressions, they acquire a strange kind of poetry, corrupted and ridiculous, yet not without beauty.

The drawings are frequently punctured by painterly gestures apparently culled from our collective memory of those conveyor-belt productions of academic abstraction from earlier, simpler decades (and which lately have been reappearing in the galleries). On second look you notice that the spill-over, the drips and drop-cloth stains created by these painterly commonplaces, are re-used as forms in their own right, thus obliterating the distinction between product and waste, artistic inspiration and mechanical transport of paint.

Another group of images jettisons the hard-line cartoon esthetic in favor of realistic brush drawings. In these drawings with titles such as “Carla Bruni in a submarine using animals and humans for unfit tasks”, the modular components of a comical situation are juxtaposed in a straight, deadpan manner. Here the joke, if there is one, takes shape entirely in the viewers' mind. But again, there may not be a joke.

Olav Westphalen works with a range of materials and methods: drawing, sculpture, performance. He has also worked as a commercial cartoonist within the art world for over a decade now.

To some extent this entire project is a revisiting of Richard Prince's obsession with low-brow comedy, albeit a complex one. Appropriation is no longer at issue when the artist is appropriating from his own cartoonist self. Instead of stating once again the crisis of authorship, originality etc. “A junkie in the forest” actually re-admits a notion of “wit” and “idea” even of “voice.” To be sure, this is a broken, refracted and bathetic voice. But still. It is a show about industry.

When Seurat, who then was an office worker by day, was asked how he was able to paint his huge canvasses in his kitchen by the light of a single candle, his reply was: *C'est ma méthode.* (It's all in the method).

Sophie Biel



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from 6 p.m.

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ART 43 BASEL

14 - 17 June 2012

ART FEATURE
Jacques Villeglé
Raymond Hains
Pénélope

ART UNLIMITED
(w/Hauser & Wirth)
Richard Jackson
Big Pig

/

UPCOMING

Jean Tinguely
Sept-Oct 2012