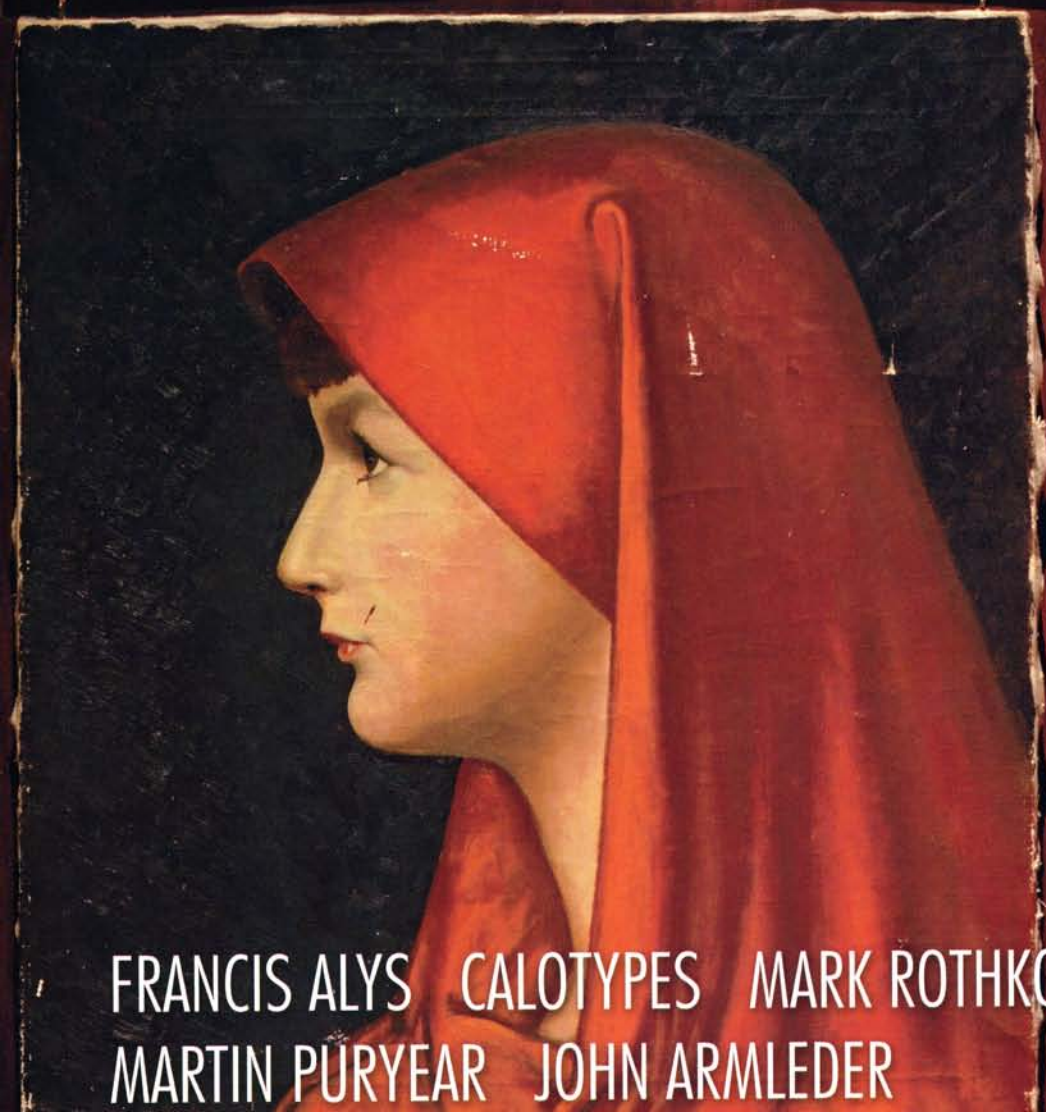
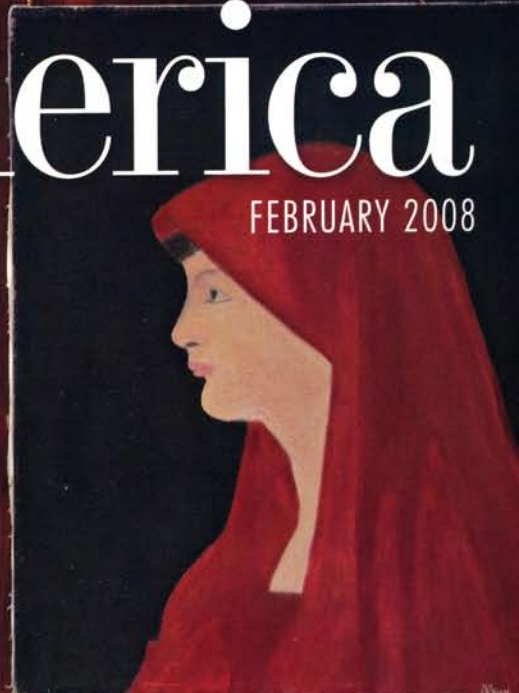


Art in America

FEBRUARY 2008



FRANCIS ALYS CALOTYPES MARK ROTHKO
MARTIN PURYEAR JOHN ARMLEDER



was made of white and off-white chenille stapled to walls that Herzog built or altered. Some angled subtly inward, pooling daylight from narrow floor-to-ceiling windows and creating small alcoves of shadow where they peeled away from structural walls. Schumacher's composition, played on hidden speakers, began with recordings of workday studio noises (firing a staple gun, ripping fabric, a dog barking). These were augmented by other instrumental and synthesized sounds and combined in computer-modulated sequences that were experienced as random; they varied between euphonic and rather violently jarring.

Similarly, *W(E)AVE*'s visual associations ranged from the raw (post-surgical staples came to

not exclusively. The mostly floral figures in the chenille's design are closely related to motifs that appear in traditional decorative plaster moldings and ceilings; the Aldrich's own past as a residence dating to the 18th century is relevant here. In other words, *W(E)AVE* bridged the frail and the stolidly architectural, in an operation supported by a vigorous formal impulse. Herzog has long been interested in how a solid textile can (literally) unravel, or how a flimsy sheet of cloth can be gathered by not much more than a single thread into full three-dimensionality. Along with Schumacher, she has here dismantled, with deceptive delicacy, the structures of a traditional residence, all the way down to the natural forms and materials that are its deepest memories.

—Nancy Princenthal

PHILADELPHIA

Daniel Heyman at the Print Center

"The Abu Ghraib Project," an exhibition by Daniel Heyman at the Print Center, brought the stories of 17 victims of torture to light. Previously, Heyman has portrayed hooded, caped prisoners from the notorious Iraqi jail—arms suspended by wires, feet teetering on inflated balls. However, in his recent work, the Philadelphia-based artist transforms shadowy strangers into real-life individuals. You can see their features, know their faces and read their stories.

Heyman was invited to accompany the special prosecutor for a legal team to Istanbul and Amman, Jordan. The lawyers were initiating a class-action suit on behalf of a group of Abu Ghraib victims who had been released without charges. Heyman listened, through an interpreter, while the people gave their testimonies. He drew their portraits first on paper and then on copper plates with a stylus, inscribing parts of their stories directly on the plates in reverse lettering. The words weave around the faces as if the individuals are bursting through the text and confronting us directly. When Heyman ran out of copper plates, he made watercolor portraits on paper, hand lettering the testimonies like graffiti on a prison wall.

This exhibition included six black-on-white drypoint prints from the "Amman" series and



View of *W(E)AVE*, with Elana Herzog's wall installation and Michael Schumacher's 11-channel sound piece; at the Aldrich Museum.

seven drypoint-with-chine-collé works on terra-cotta-toned paper from the "Istanbul" series (as well as some woodcuts). In addition, stenciled text covered the gallery floor in the manner of a prayer rug. The words recounted the testimonies of two women talking about the same event—one the victim, the other a witness. The space seemed to reverberate with a cacophony of voices that would not be silenced.

The men and one woman are dressed in street clothes. Some have scars or are missing limbs. Their eyes seem focused on their inner horror, mouths captured in grim expressions as they relate their experiences. The works' titles are the first line of each person's testimony: *When I Saw My Son, Our Eyes Were Covered, He Could Feel the Dogs' Breath, and Jasim Was in a Cage*. Each portrait demands individual attention. Together they bear witness to events that we might acknowledge but cannot comprehend. Like Picasso's *Guernica* and Goya's "Disasters of War," they are skillful works of art that provide haunting images of man's inhumanity to man.

—Anne R. Fabbri

CHICAGO

Lorraine Peltz at Gosia Koscielak

When parents die, issues surface. The survivors try to come to terms with the life just ended, as well as with their own. In the case of artists, their work may move in new directions. Such is the

case with the painter Lorraine Peltz, whose mother grew up comfortably in Hungary, lost everyone but her sister in World War II, and then came to the United States, where she married, raised three children and had a happy life. Missing the culture that was destroyed, the elder Peltz triumphed by re-creating it as best she could in her new home and passing it on to her daughters.

Peltz was working through her mother's recent death in "Chandeliers, Starbursts, etc.," her exhibition of 16 oil-on-canvas paintings made in 2006-07. This work is transitional; there's no simple break between the artist's earlier exuberant paintings and the latest work, in which darker symbols have begun to appear. Many of the paintings combine imagery from the past and the present—and it seems likely that the work will continue to evolve.

Peltz paints bright color fields in loose vertical strokes. Layered on top and cascading down the canvases are daisies, starbursts,

Lorraine Peltz: *Afternoon Delight*, 2006, oil on canvas, 36 inches square; at Gosia Koscielak.



Daniel Heyman: *Jasim Was in a Cage*, from the "Amman" series, 2006, drypoint, 27 by 22 inches; at the Print Center.

mind; up close, the violence with which the heavy-gauge tacks tear into the wall was evident) to the decorous, even elegant. Lined up in rows, the staples evoked embroidered threads of silver and gold. The fabric itself, in several shades of white, was lacy and floral, and its ghostly remnants suggested more than a touch of Miss Havisham. In some places threads hung lavishly, in woeful cataracts; elsewhere they dangled in more tentative, cobwebby strands. A few cropped bolts of cloth fell forward onto the floor, where they trailed like the train of a not-quite-pristine bridal gown. *W(E)AVE* gave the room character in a sense that was almost narrative.

But not quite, and certainly



View of Jon Rajkovich's exhibition of plywood and mixed medium sculptures, 2007; at Lisa Boyle.

white lilies and other cheerful (often girly) imagery. *Afternoon Delight* (2006), whose title refers to a 1970s pop song, may speak of the artist's teenage years. On a vibrant orange background, childish daisies recall the Flower Children—or hippies—of the '70s. Inside a comic-strip speech bubble near the bottom is the outline of the lower half of a leggy woman in a puffy little skirt and very high heels, which may suggest Peltz's adolescent ideal of beauty. Speech bubbles in this and other paintings always contain visual material, never words.

The draperylike, shimmering background of *Stardust* (2007) is a more somber dark blue, with a transparent chandelier lightly sketched on it. The chandelier simply floats in the middle of the painting; its chain is not attached to anything, as if occupying the ambiguous space of a dream or a memory. Peltz associates chandeliers with the elegant interiors in which her mother grew up. The artist also puts plums into some of her paintings,

Warren MacKenzie: Two stoneware vases, 2003 (left) and 2006 (right), both approx. 18 inches high; at the Rochester Art Center.



which she connects to slivovitz or plum brandy, a traditional digestif popular among Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe.

Peltz is a born painter and experiments extensively with color matching and effects. Her imagery is flat because, as she tells it, she "grew up on Hans Hofmann and Mark Rothko, color guys who reassert the picture plane."

—Victor M. Cassidy

Jon Rajkovich at Lisa Boyle

In his second show at Lisa Boyle, Los Angeles sculptor Jon Rajkovich has progressed significantly from his previous, jokey, highly finished works made of bright-hued latex and plastic. Fashionable wit has been supplanted by charming playfulness, while the artist retains his attraction to discrepancy. The seven exhibited sculptures (all 2007) are hodgepodge constructions of sawn, clamped and glued plywood. They are meticulously spackled, sanded, partially primed and then left unfinished, which emphasizes Rajkovich's process of assembly. Long rectangular channels undulate through the pieces, creating the effect of carved, three-dimensional doodles.

The works frequently bear supplementary embellishments: a duck-shaped wicker basket, a hanging potted plant, a lemon, a string of beads. These accessories are vestiges of Rajkovich's earlier appropriationist tendencies (in the Haim Steinbach mode) and are generally unnecessary, although entertaining. His attached objects are best when idiosyncratic, unexpected and thoroughly integrated into the works. The hanging plant in *Gilroy Ripple*, for example, remains a foreign element in the

sculpture, whereas another wall piece contains a rectangular tube painstakingly built around a long tree branch. This is both delightful to discover and significantly suggestive, distilling in one detail Rajkovich's rich merger of careful handicraft and the haphazard.

The most impressive component of the show was a centrally placed floor piece, *Lion Paw*, which measures 60 by 40 by 24 inches. Propped up on one side by support struts, it appears to be pieced together from sections of unfinished wooden sign lettering. The work is taller in its "hind" section, gently falling off and becoming more horizontal as its looping wooden forms swirl to the front. A found cast-concrete lion's paw, resembling the metal feet on old bathtubs, discreetly supports the rear section.

These sculptures reveal an artist who is genially exploring and personalizing an expressive vocabulary. His fertile blending of found with formal elements and his dialectic of finished and incomplete take his work beyond its irony-laden art-historical sources. Hopefully, Rajkovich will continue on this rewarding path.

—Mark Staff Brandt

ROCHESTER, MINN.

Warren MacKenzie at the Rochester Art Center

When he returned to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago following World War II, Warren MacKenzie happened to take a pottery class and found his future. He responded to useful objects from many cultures, and a particular influence was Japan, as filtered through two years' apprenticeship in England at the workshop of Bernard Leach, who had trained there. MacKenzie lived and taught in Minnesota after that, first at the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art and then the University of Minnesota, until retirement. His artistic progeny includes several generations of utilitarian potters who have made the Upper Midwest one of the centers of such activity in the U.S.

This retrospective, which travels until 2010, opened at its organizing institution (where it was curated by B.J. Shigaki and Kris Douglas) with a small selection and documentation of MacKenzie's collaborative work with his first wife, Alix (1922-1962), who was primarily the decorator of pots he threw.

Her early death and his lack of confidence in his own decorating skills led to the features that became characteristic of the work he is still producing. One is a concentration on sturdy forms embellished by simple physical manipulations of the clay, such as faceting; he also relies on the beauty of a few favored glazes, such as the Japanese *tenmoku* (a deep, rich brown-black) and *shino* (a thick, creamy off-white); or he exploits combinations of surface application and gesture, as when the quick motion of his fingers leaves curving parallel tracks through wet glaze.

Yet the surprise in seeing 375 works from 35 private and public collections spanning half a century is their variety, when his work is presumed to be a known quantity. The most striking effect is the repeated communication of tactility, which invites touch but also conveys it so effectively that you can imagine handling the objects. The installation offered an eye-level row of 21 tea bowls to make the point and to draw your attention to subtle differentiations in height, fullness and surface (displaying gloss, finger lines, spots, incisions, drips, ridges, splashes, dip levels, roller patterns and some specialized glaze effects, such as the pebbly "orange peel").

MacKenzie's forms are always decisive and clear in profile, yet they seem carved or whittled rather than machined, and convey qualities of ease and pleasure rather than control. His pottery seldom pursues earthy associations, or the fleshy-body allusions common to thrown clay, but often displays a resolute posture evoking bone structure. He makes the standard forms: platters, bowls of all sizes, vases, covered jars, etc. (though little actual dinnerware). The proportion of planes, the fall of glaze and the low centers of gravity communicate stability, while the generous size of these serving forms identifies a social ethic motivating the work. At 83, MacKenzie shows no signs of pulling back and has even developed new shapes by combining bowls and cylinders into tall forms.

—Janet Koplos

LOS ANGELES

Susan Silton at Solway Jones

Susan Silton's first solo show at Solway Jones comprised five gregariously colorful,