



Launa Bacon, *Boybling*, 2004

Beauty and Revulsion

The Art of Launa Bacon

by Craig Stephens

"My work seeks to find a certain vision of the human condition, the grime between reality/nonreality, the conscious and unconscious. My images take shape when I consider the subtle tension between beauty and revulsion found in the human condition," revealed LA-based visual artist Launa Bacon.

Launa Bacon was born in Normal, Illinois in 1974, but spent much of her formative years in

her studio in a barn in Nebraska. She received her BA from Skidmore College in 1997, majoring in Art History and minoring in Studio Art and Asian Studies.

As the recipient of the Sachs Award after graduation, she continued her studies of Hindu art motifs of Indonesia. Bacon's studies of international art and cultures inform her work: she now reexamines the presupposed construct of her own culture's

visual landscape.

Asked how she defines herself as an artist, Launa confides, "I don't know. I simply express what images are inhibiting me at the moment; by whatever medium interests me. The only goal I have as an artist is to have a powerful and original vision that evolves over decades."

Not yet thirty, Launa has risen above the predictable mire inherent of the average arts graduate. Still honing and formulating her artistic identity, Launa offers zealous authenticity as an artist, she is unconcerned with pandering to nepotistic familiars or gimmicky opportunism.

Still she is an enterprising artist. Industrious and ambitious, she has lent her talents to various genres, including painting, performance and installation, having been cited in *The Los Angeles Times* for a recent installation utilizing a vacant ground-floor commercial space in the bank district of downtown Los Angeles.

The web matrix was inspired by the beautiful sights encountered during recent travels in Mexico. In her self-guided road trip throughout the country, Bacon was mesmerized by fields of dew-dropped webs cast among waist-high blades of grass, glistening in the dawn sun.

"At dawn, there was a field of dew-dropped webs casting the most spectacular light...and the lines were so beautiful," she says. "The installation then became about the process and the space, with the webs expanding to intricate shadow paintings on the wall. The Greek myth of Arachne came into play and symbolism wove itself into the murals. Anyway, it was an excuse to go



Launa Bacon, *Web* (detail), 2004

beyond the studio and respond to the space, environment and situations. As for the video piece—just like the idea of having a huge glacier in the heart of downtown Los Angeles in the middle of summer...video is a medium for me."

Constructed with yarn meticulously coated with a sticky epoxy compound, the large delicate webs are cast from wall to wall, and from column to column, transforming the industrial interior with magnificent draping, webs.

Explaining her technical approach to the work and choice of materials, Launa confides, "By combining various painting and sculptural materials such as latex, shellac and epoxy on canvas, the beauty of the surfaces balance the disturbing content."

Like her diverse skillset Bacon cites a range of influences, from the dextrous technical classicism of painter Francis Bacon to the brazen politicized imagery of performance artist Cindy Sherman. As a painter she is diverse in terms of both style and technique, from abstraction to

realism, her canvases speak everything from politicized documentation to ethereal

quality. Visions of a snarling president Bush or an innocent boy in a baseball cap are vehicles for her skilled draftsmanship, while other abstract works, coated in a veneer of laquer or epoxy resin, display an organic, sculptural quality. Both stand as testament to her admirable vision and diversity. "I wish to bring back the coexistence of aesthetic value (beauty) and meaning (content). What is at stake for me is how to address the personal in such a way that explores the pleasures, ironies and the natures of existence that have been culturally naturalized."

Launa Bacon, *The Bigone*, 2004

