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## ArtDiary International



**Art Diary International 2009/2010** is now out, packed with contact information for galleries, museums,

artists, curators, critics, and other professional arts services around the world.

## NEXT POST – 18 solo shows under one roof

Tate Osten

28 February - 2 May 2009

Rupert Ravens Contemporary, Newark

Rupert Ravens Contemporary is not a prestigious launching pad in the curatorial star system yet, but in the age of curatorial studies, Newark should emerge soon as a highlight on the art map. "Next Post" is an 18-solo-projects exhibition comprised of expanded painting, video/light installations and sculpture. Rupert Ravens chooses a comprehensive curatorial focus: from the monumental to the anecdotal, from the abstract and the conceptual to the figurative. The cathedral-like space enshrines the objects in the show as autonomous, self-contained oeuvres. It could become a daunting task for a curator to set up a unified show in this kind of space, but Rupert Ravens masterfully conducts "Next Post" like a symphony.

The windows on the ground floor display light works by Donald Bruschi and a playful installation by Saya Woolfalk; different in nature, they correspond in their color and linear composition. Next, colossal figures of Egungun spirits by Zethray Peniston represent ancestral communication with the present and declare a resurgence in figurative sculpture. These powerful statues become a natural part of the painted fields by Fred Gutzeit that surround them. Ornamental and somewhat casuistic, the visual language of Gutzeit's *Lee Wall* unexpectedly expands and interprets Peniston's masquerade.

In the next niche, plastic towers of pink and green with a Matisse-like palette represent 'new material' sculpture by Gae Savannah. Her celluloid "bricks" (clear tote bags) form the towers *Vanitas* and *Veritas*. They correspond surprisingly with the wooden "bricks" upstairs in the installation by Cordy Ryman, where joyous two-by-four wooden planks inhabit walls and corners like the skeleton of some edifice parading its daring fuchsia, red and orange outfit. Both Savannah's and Ryman's instinct for color emerges like a child's universe of building blocks in the adult world of calculated proportions. Both delicate and bold, "made in china" objects gingerly cling to one another and, suddenly, feminine flirtatious images from a "Barbie world" turn into an aggressive statement on the meaning of beauty acquisition in life, the joy of possession and the emotional essence of the art.

Corresponding but not competing with Ryman's colors are the clear plastic wall constructions by Doreen McCarthy that surround her centerpiece — a large inflated muddle of curls that three dimensionally resembles Gutzeit's paintings. Rupert Ravens's curatorial impulse redesigns the exhibition as art and offers bold methods of presentation; his intuition brings harmony to this vast show.

Although the artists are from different backgrounds, they seem to share an interest in the overlap between painting, sculpture, video and light (LED-based) work, and the curator appears to exploit the connections between these facets. For example, the works by Gary Clemenceau and Thomas Eller are spectacular elaborations of photography and open out the medium to be re-imagined and liberated from predetermined experiences. Disney Borg's (dNASAB) sculptures explore fiber-optic technology. Miya Ando's steel panels are juxtaposed with Elio Franceschelli's oil and water containers and both make reference to the paper packaging materials in Bradley Wester's work.

The lower level of the gallery is a black box of experiments with light and video. Light works by Regine Schumann, Eric Michel and Tim White-Sobieski generate immediate impact. White-Sobieski combines 12 channels of video with a pulsating light panel and 12 aluminum sculptures; moreover, floating screens reinforce the dynamic quality of the installation. The curator as artist has gained momentum and has released his vision of eternally changing identity into 18 modes of artistic expression.

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