

ARTS



Mary Beth Gregg's "Muff" is showing at Soil through May

Art Attack

by various contributors

WHAT TO CHECK OUT WHEN YOU'RE OUT AND ABOUT

It's always thrilling to hear about a new gallery popping up, especially in this art-unfriendly economy. Word has it that Tom Landowski, former director of Foster/White Gallery, has given birth to a beautiful new space in the heart of Belltown (403 Cedar). The first show, which opens May 3, features the work of filmmaker and photographer Vincent Gallo, Chris Burden and Seattle artist Jena Scott. Landowski is also bringing back his Fortune Cookie film screenings the third Saturday of every month at 6pm. The Tom Landowski Gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday from 11am-6pm, with extended hours on Saturdays. Let's welcome this new viable art space to the neighborhood. For more information go to tomlandowskigallery.com.

On another note, local artist Karen Liebowitz is bringing back some of the fresh art she experienced at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine to Soil Gallery. It was in Maine that she hooked-up with six other artists and came up with the idea of a group show called "Dress Me Up," which is a twist on the infamous Madonna song. In the exhibit, artists look at how "performance" exists in everyday life and how the roles of costumes, facades, gazes and behavior come into play. The artists in the show are mostly from New York and San Francisco including Nicole Agbay Cherubini, Donna Conlon, Linda Ford, Mary Beth Gregg, Nicola Lopez, Rachael Schuder and, of course, Liebowitz. This may also be one of the last times to catch Liebowitz, since she has been accepted to the grad school art program at UCLA. "Dress Me Up" opens Saturday, May 3, at Soil Gallery with a reception from 7-10pm.

If you missed Michael Leavitt's fabulous "Art Army" action figures in December at Area 51's Trademark show, you now have another chance catch these little three- to seven- inch figures in action in their first solo show. "The Art Army® vs. The Man" will open at the Showbox's Green Room in May and run until the end of June. Intricately sculpted of synthetic clay, Leavitt has now created an "enemy" for his art heroes. So now the likes of Frida Khalo, Van Gogh, Warhol, Björk and Pollack will face the dangers of Darth Bush, Donald McDonald, Britain E. Spears and the three-headed John Tesh/Michael Bolton/Kenny G. monster. There will also be an animated video of drama created in Leavitt's head. This is one of the better ideas surrounding art and pop culture these days. Don't miss the opening reception May 31, 6-10pm. Check out artcardmmike.com. -Karla Esquivel

"ABFALL" AT HOWARD HOUSE

Robert Yoder's show, "Abfall," up until May 23, is an easy kind of viewing experience. The show presents some modest works on paper, a few Lego abstractions and three largish collage works. Yoder seems interested in working a "neo-geo, ab-ex look by way of jokey, post-modernist method" angle which entails the artist producing flat, graphic, abstract works using newspaper clippings, road rubbish, and children's toys.

Yoder's conceptual bag isn't necessarily very original, but it still has its charms. While an artist like Ellsworth Kelly (many moons ago) endeavored to conceal the real-world sources for his painterly abstraction in his finished works, Yoder delights in shoving those sources into view - in fact, those sources become the only genuinely appealing element of the work.

If you imagine the on-the-wall, graphic Lego abstractions as paint on canvas, they would just be bland Peter Halley knock-offs minus the day-glo coloring, or worse, office art, but the Legos make the work infinitely cool (self-deprecatory, ridiculous, strangely desirable). Yoder's

"body of work" may not push any new buttons, but the individual pieces hold their own. -Benjamin Crotty

THE UTILITY POLE PROJECT IN POST ALLEY

There's no reason to join the First Thursday crowd when you can customize your own "art walk" in a couple of simple steps. First, gather a few frustrated post-art-school friends - especially if they're desperate to use their expensive education in meaningless pseudo-intellectual discussion. Then, after a couple glasses of expensive merlot from the Pink Door, you can stumble off the beaten path of the Seattle gallery scene.

Start with the Post Alley Sculpture Garden and check out Diane Falchuk's "Series Three: Saturate". It's very intellectual, and at the same time, it's very punk rock. The exhibit is a construction of four telephone poles covered in a thick layer of poster scraps in the shape of images. Two of the poles display faces of well-known popular icons, one of Superman and the other of Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz. The other two are works in progress, which will be completed over the next couple of months.

Falchuk began the Utility Pole Project in the Spring 2000 as an exploration on "urban roots communication." She began photographing the decaying leftovers of concert posters on utility poles, because they reminded her of the decaying colors on Italian frescos. They inspired her to construct an uplifting spiritual aesthetic out of objects in our dreary urban landscape. With "Saturate," she explores the visual language of art in the public arena; the recognizable American icons in each piece are posed with the enlightened expressions of religious figures. With these images, Falchuk wants us to react and communicate to art that exists outside of a gallery.

It's a bit of a walk from The Post Alley Sculpture Garden to the rest of the galleries during First Thursday. However, it will give you just enough time to discuss this concept of "outsider" art - then run quickly "inside" to the galleries to escape the pouring rain. -Mary Blalock

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