

Hasta Mañana

June 30 – August 12, 2011

Greene Naftali is pleased to announce *Hasta Mañana*, a group exhibition featuring works by Trisha Baga, Helen Marten, Ei Arakawa (with Das Institut, and with Silke Otto-Knapp respectively), Scott Lyall, and Ken Okiishi, which examines a recent shift in contemporary art production. Even though the transition from the industrial age to the information age has been underway for some time now, changes are still palpable as things get increasingly processed and compressed. There is a continual dissolution of opposites afoot—private/public, interior/exterior, self/other, real/virtual, here/there—opening up into a kind of digital haze. Doubling as both performers and prop managers, these artists articulate and stage this new dislocated terrain, and they use a variety of materials, from computer files to tanning beds, to do so. As opposed to modernist and even postmodernist paradigms, the artists in this show do not adhere to medium-specific conventions or ideas of site-specificity. Their practices are rather site-generic, digitally mashing up spaces, places, and things into a visionary—almost psychedelic—breakdown of figure and ground. It's a kind of pattern and decoration composed of pixels, digits, and technological hiccups. The idea of the performative is central to all this work for, like a web browser, it can be constantly modified, remade, and “refreshed.”

In his *BLACKY Blocked Radiants Sunbathed*, Ei Arakawa, moonlighting as United Brothers (also the legal name of his brother's corporation) in collaboration with Das Institut, has returned to his hometown of Iwaki City, Fukushima, Japan, some 50 km from where the power plants melted down, to put on a campy performance at his brother's tanning salon with some of its regular customers and a host of his high school paintings. As the regulars vamp around these hot rod tanning beds, Das Institut paintings are projected onto them. Light rays and aesthetic rays alike hit the body, altering it, blending it into the environment around it. There is something apocalyptic in this scene. Arakawa's other contribution to the exhibition, *Lives of Performers*, a collaboration with the painter Silke Otto-Knapp, takes hints more from the dancing body than the tanned one. People move from stage to painting to park here, only to be captured again by video. It's another way to reanimate life.

Helen Marten similarly stages a vertiginous realm with a new kind of apocalyptic wallpaper in which everything solid has melted into air and relics of industry such as locomotives have taken on a new life in the realm of information. There are also leftover crumbs of craftsmanship and conviviality, signs of civic and social contracts—the baker baking, hands clinking glasses—that similarly seem eclipsed in this realm, fading into the dusk of memory images. They are shadows of things no longer here. The malformed, coy and flirtatious ladders she has hung on and around this ground—unable to support any body, but also bodily themselves—twist and turn leaning on the walls.

Continuing to explore this strange terrain in short non-narrative videos (that occasionally mimic 16mm films), Trisha Baga engages an unruly space by acting out in landscapes where sawdust and beer cans stand in for trees and planes take off but never really get off the ground. Surfaces glimmer, overlap, and pop out. With New York's Statue of Liberty, disco balls, and the recent Gay Pride parade figuring prominently, life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness take center stage—though where exactly it will take place (in what body, in what interface, on which screen) remains unclear.

Somewhat similarly but executed by radically different means, Scott Lyall's portal-like print-outs composed of powder-coated vinyl invite the body in and deny it at once. They are not quite figures and not quite grounds; they are successful coordinates in a closed set of differences, evoking modernist precedents from Richter to Kelly. Like other artists in this show, he, too, finds the sticker a helpful device, perhaps because it lacks the objective autonomy of a painting but is still able to slip into space, barely there, altering the environment a bit. Dependent on the wall for its very form, it is also slightly tricky to pull off.

Offering a somewhat more recognizable realm—a skewed New York—Ken Okiishi shows us an ever so slowly spinning umbrella done up in the wallpaper print from the legendary Gino restaurant, which somehow speaks of an authentic “guy’s” New York where Ed Sullivan had lunch everyday and the food wasn’t so good. Naturally, Okiishi has turned it on its head and attached it to a disco motor, marshalling a number of his digital collages from the early 2000s to surround it. Shoving his fist into the frame with a David Wojnarowicz face attached, Okiishi confronts the city’s new regimes of bodily order—from Times Square to Crunch—with a haunting death mask of the recent past. Captured on a cheap digital camera, these images come at us with a kind of urgency and brutality. With all these artists, space is the place—it’s just not clear what space it was, is, or will be.