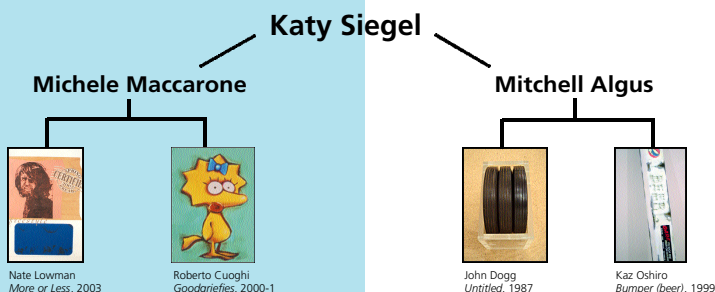


2003 Summer Program



As the line between the press release and art criticism grows ever hazier, dealers and critics get tighter and tighter. Even though they seem to be in the judgment seat, critics depend on dealers: they want to be invited to parties and included in the art world, and even more, most critics need the money from the extra writing jobs that dealers dole out. Dealers, on the other hand, seem to be dependent on critics, hanging on their reviews, but they are often really indifferent to them; critics are interchangeable, only as good as their institutional power and use-value in terms of what they last said in print and where. The two are supposed to be careful around each other, careful about presents and prompting. On the other hand, they are in business together, working to promote artists and accumulate cultural capital and simply get paid.

I don't know any dealers really well; some of them seem nice and smart, some of them seem dumb and venal (or any combination of those qualities), but you could say the same thing about critics—or artists. Some dealers are more helpful than others when you need a slide or information; some of them show better art than others, although not necessarily the nicest or smartest ones. And the smallest galleries are not necessarily better or more edgy or authentic than the more successful ones. Sometimes modesty indicates virtue, and sometimes simply modest ambition—or even bad art.

But maybe it's not a coincidence that I picked two not-so-much-profit dealers for this not-for-profit space. Some dealers start a gallery and then think, "Who should I show?" Mitchell Algus and Michele Maccarone both put the art before the purse, accumulating lists of artists they wanted to see, and then opening their galleries. This also means that they both have a particular "taste," not so common itself in these days of pluralism and diversification (more than diversity), when a lot of people are trying to cover the bases. Mitchell's program is one of painting, sculpture and conceptual art that is fundamentally modernist, but interested in alternative routes, from Charles Henri Ford to Joan Semmel to Nicholas Krushenick to Kathe Burkhart. Using her sprawling gallery on the Lower East Side, Michele shows projects by artists like Christian Jankowski and Christoph Buechel who are based primarily in a post-studio practice, making work for her particular space, altered to their requirements—often in extreme ways.

There's no way to neatly wrap up the four artists that Mitchell and Michele chose into a theme show or a tidy pre-planned conceit. This annual program at apexart is based on personal and professional contacts between critics, dealers, and artists, not on a curatorial concept (which maybe we see enough of in museums and biennials, in any case). Not surprisingly, however, social connections can produce conceptual links and common practices. All of the artists in this exhibition are interested in media imagery and popular culture. John Dogg acts as a kind of father figure to the three younger men, who share a generational relationship with appropriation art, although their various family romances play out in very different ways. They are all good artists that I never would have chosen—except that in a way, I guess I did.

Katy Siegel
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Since 1996, apexart has worked with gallerists to present its Summer Program. Although the format has changed slightly over the years, the aim has always been to tap into the energy of the commercial scene. In the past the program featured separate exhibitions for each dealer ("444" and "222"). This year, all the artists will be featured in one exhibition. For our 2003 Summer Program, apexart invited Katy Siegel, assistant professor of art history and criticism at Hunter College and Artforum contributing editor, to select two New York gallerists to each invite two artists whom they do not represent, and who they felt were under recognized. Ms. Siegel selected Mitchell Algus—who selected Kaz Oshiro and John Dogg—and Michele Maccarone—who selected Roberto Cuoghi and Nate Lowman.

2003 Summer Program

Gallerists selected by Katy Siegel
June 25 - July 26, 2003

Public opening reception:

Wednesday, June 25, 6-8 pm

Gallery talk:

Wednesday, July 2, 6:30 pm

apexart curatorial program

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Mitchell Algus
on John Dogg and Kaz Oshiro

In 1986, at Neo-Geo's apogee, John Dogg mounted a mischievous, obliquely obvious exhibition. Instead of presenting extravagant chrome liquor decanters or pristine purchases from high-end airport gift shops, Dogg showed unaltered Econoline wheel covers. These held their own amidst the grander pretense, cannily acknowledging the class politics that undergird the art world. Seen in the East Village at Lisa Spellman's 303 Gallery, around the corner and down the block from International With Monument and Nature Morte, and just prior to that scene's implosion, Dogg's show was a kind of high-water mark. If not in and of itself an endgame, a notable transition. The end of the inning.

In blithe retrospect, Dogg's show was casually prescient, anticipating Neo-Geo's evolution into the proactive, materially ascetic mode of institutional critique. This shift in focus—from the accessories of power to the social organization of power—was a moral one. It shed in one shot the congenial complicity of the 80s art world. Dogg's was the smart, "I can live without that," frills-free version. Just right for the then impending bust.

Kaz Oshiro was born in occupied Okinawa, Japan. He lives in Los Angeles. Oshiro makes flawless *trompe-l'oeil* replicas of American sub-cultural artifacts: Marshall amps, Fender stacks, sticker-festooned car bumpers, appliances. These function as cultural *memento mori*, memorabilia without the real moment, made of constructed memories only. Oshiro is acutely aware of the compromises cultural engagement entails. In a contemporary reformulation of Rauschenberg's

famous dictum regarding his work's position between art and life, Oshiro pretends, trying to "hate something that I like and like something that I hate. I hope to create Post-Pop Art [painting] that juxtaposes Pop and Minimalism with the flavor of Neo-Geo, appropriation, and Photorealism, and present them as a still-life of my generation."



Kaz Oshiro, *Fender Amp (PIL)*, 2001
acrylic and Bondo on canvas stretched
over wood, 15 1/4 x 7 1/4 inches

In contrast to Dogg's shrewd, offhand knowledge, Oshiro's art is one of earnest, insightful malapropisms. Where Dogg's art was deadpan jocular, Oshiro's is lovingly deadpan. And where Dogg was the cryptic, laconic insider, Oshiro is the avid, observant, not-quite-outsider.

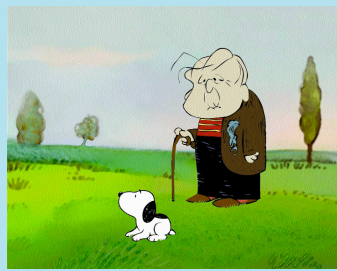
Kaz Oshiro's work has not been shown in a gallery exhibition in New York. He is represented in Los Angeles by the Rosamund Felsen Gallery. This is significant. Rosamund Felsen is the godmother of West Coast Helter Skelter, the long-running, appropriately apostate successor to Virginia Dwan's fastidious, now annoying, Zen philology. Felsen represented Chris Burden and Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw and Jeffrey Vallance. Kaz Oshiro is her latest addition to this distinguished lineage.

Mitchell Algus
© June 2003



John Dogg, *John Not Johnny*, 1987, mixed media, 28 inches diameter

Michele Maccarone
on Robert Cuoghi and Nate Lowman



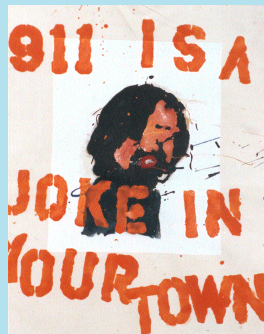
Roberto Cuoghi, *Goodgriefies*, 2000-1
video still

Robert Cuoghi's art practice addresses cultural and social estrangement. In his self-imposed outsider position, Cuoghi's marginalization is extreme. He grew his fingernails into elongated spirals that negated his ability to function normally. He wore glasses that inverted everything he saw, rendering him unable to make sense of the visual world. He gained weight, dyed his hair white and dressed in his father's clothes; even more, he studied his father and learned his gestures and habits in order to take on this new persona. This performance became a daily practice, a living sculpture with no commodified art product except for some scant documentation, such as the odd photo. It exists primarily as a story passed by word of mouth. Cuoghi claims no space with his performances. He demands nothing of his audience as he proceeds with his artwork alone every moment of every day, prematurely aged, uncomfortably overweight—an extreme endurance test.

During this period, Cuoghi made *Goodgriefies*, an animated video. At the very beginning of the video, he appears as a pastiche of himself and his father, as an old man in a grey suit wearing round spectacles. The video itself explores the complications of generational identity and relationship through the medium of familiar cartoon characters. Characters appropriated from *Loony Tunes*, *Scobby Doo*, *The Flintstones*, and *Peanuts* are montaged and combined with those from more contemporary series such as *The Simpsons*, *Beavis and Butthead*, and *South Park*. Just as Cuoghi has intensified his genetic relationship to his father by collapsing the temporal space between them, *Goodgriefies* takes figures

like Charlie Brown and Bart Simpson, one the child of the other, and forces them to co-exist as peers, at the same moment in time.

The father also plays a central role in the work of Nate Lowman. Inspired by his own father, who wears a beard, Lowman has been collecting images of men masked by facial hair: Jim Morrison, Jerry Garcia, Tom Cruise, John Walker Lindh, and Ted Kaczynski, among others. He fastidiously collages, appropriates, paints, photographs, and arranges these found and created



Nate Lowman, *More or Less*, 2003
installation detail

images in a constantly growing and fluctuating project. The giant wall installation is heavily loaded with social and generational iconography of madness, rebellion, politics, and violence. Lowman himself is a second—or is it third? fourth?—generation appropriation artist, building on the work of artists like Andy Warhol, Richard Prince, and Chivas Clem that take media images and re-evaluate them.

Michele Maccarone
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