

Neo Sincerity: The Difference Between the Comic and the Cosmic is a Single Letter

February 22 - April 8, 2006

Curated by Amei Wallach

Artists: William Anthony, Ida Applebroog, Hideaki Ariizumi, Atlas Group / Walid Raad, Tamy Ben-Tor, Paul Chan, Michael Combs, Thornton Dial, Matt Forderer, Regina Gilligan, David Hammons, Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, Melamid and William McClelland, Peter Land, Laura Nova, David Rees, Skart, Nancy Spero, Art Spiegelman, Marie Watt, Olav Westphalen, Paul Zaloom



William Anthony, *Feminist Andrea Dworkin Thinks Rape Victims Should Be Able to Execute Their Attackers Personally*, 2006, pencil and pastel, 22 x 30 in

OPENING RECEPTION:

Wed Feb 22, 6 - 8 PM

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

Art Spiegelman, Alex Melamid, Amei Wallach

Wed March 1, 6:30 pm

PERFORMANCE:

Paul Zaloom's *The Mother of All Enemies*
See website for tickets, schedule, location.

From the Peloponnesian Wars to the Black Death and the war in Iraq, in dire times laughter has always been the best revenge. Laughter dislodges piety and short-circuits programmatic response, and some subjects are simply too big to approach in any other way.

Art Spiegelman coined the term 'neo-sincerity' in passing, and well he should. For more than half a century, most of the art made in sincere response to the Holocaust ranged from banal to inadequate until Spiegelman created his two "Maus" graphic novels and reinvented the Comix. Comics have from the first been boisterous, vulgar, icon-smashing and sadistic - what better language to confront the unspeakable? They are apt expressions of comedy as it has been practiced since before Aristophanes, though only one of the forms wielded by the artists in this exhibition. In the 1970s and 1980s in Eastern Bloc countries irony was the preferred weapon of writers, artists and film makers in search of an expression capable of delineating the gap between language and experience. In this age of anxiety and rage when people turn to "The Daily Show" for their news, irony itself has become the official language of power.

A new generation, particularly writers such as Jonathan Safran Foer, Jeffrey Eugenides, Michael Chabon, David Eggers and Zadie Smith, have found it necessary to invent new modes of comedy that skirt the pitfalls of sincerity and the insincerities of irony by drawing on the whole well-worn arsenal of pratfalls, satire, slapstick and shtick. Art critic Amei Wallach surveys three generations of visual artists who amuse and appall.

Amei Wallach is an art critic and writer based in New York.

For further information, please see www.apexart.org/exhibitions/wallach.htm. Gallery hours are Tues - Sat, 11-6.

291 Church Street
New York, NY 10013
t. 212.431.5270 f. 646.827.2487
info@apexart.org www.apexart.org

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