

## AMERICAN IDYLL

March 31 – May 1, 2004

Harun Farocki  
Christopher Lucas  
Paul Chan  
Josephine Meckseper  
Martha Rosler  
Carissa Rodriguez

Kelley Walker  
Karen Kilimnik  
Rachel Harrison  
Andrew Rogers  
Robert Gober

This exhibition presents artists who, through both direct and more poetic practices, have created work which contrasts starkly with the hypocritical and bombastic policy making of the current administration. Ironically titled, this exhibition attempts to present positions which undermine the political views, policies and agenda that the Bush Administration has pursued with a reckless vengeance. The content is political, but an effort is made to avoid the polemics which characterize that which is being critiqued. The works traverse a variety of approaches, some directly political, some imaginative, and some ambiguous and left to interpretation. In times of war, it becomes the artists' job, in testing freedom, to show the tension between the government's demand for stability and our own sense of in/de-stability. A war doesn't guarantee that artwork will be made this way, but the stark dichotomy of these interests during such times increases the possibility of its creation.

Harun Farocki's black-and-white film from 1969 entitled Inextinguishable Fire is a mock documentary explaining the devastating properties of Napalm B and the methods of its production. The film details how the division of labor in Dow Chemical, and larger society by extension, creates a system in which blame is shifted to an ever-elusive and unpunishable culprit. The work of Christopher Lucas is deeply involved in mysticism, eastern religion and world politics. With a sewn banner Cosmosabbat, 2002, and a dispersed dye painting White Jesus Christ, 2000, Lucas inaugurates his quasi-messianic space cult. His Sephira Sortie, 1999, an elocation of cabbalah and military hardware, captures the contemporary interplay of belief, faith, destiny and force. Also included is White Cross, 1981.

With his generous conceptualism, Kelley Walker creates artworks on CDs which can be multiplied, altered and distributed, and suggest a rare level of freedom of information. His images of disasters are overlaid with blooming psychedelic patterns and manipulatable op-graphics. Paul Chan will show prints derived from his animation Happiness Finally After 35,000 Years of Civilization, 2000-2003. In his computer-drawn interracial orgy scene, he interprets Charles Fourier's social utopian dream, which begins with the satisfaction of our most basic desires. The innocence of the unbridled revelry is maintained as the hermaphroditic Darger girls borrow erotic postures from Arbus, Balthus, Bernini, and Matisse. The orgy scene is juxtaposed with a map of broken monuments.

Karen Kilimnik's fantastic and whimsical paintings affirm that an interior imaginative space can still thrive, despite the abundant contemporary evidence to the contrary. Her vivid and fanciful imagination as far away from the presidential mentality as is conceivable. Her painting is entitled Satan as a Knight, 2003. Rachel Harrison's multimedia sculpture In the Zoo, 2001, plays to feelings of instability and dread – the Fassbinder still of Petra von Kant, an image of rage and disappointment, and a blue phone with a the receiver off the hook and instructions to dial 911 hang on a precarious open wood armature. Everything seems to be falling apart and all seams are exposed.

Josephine Meckseper's work addresses the complexities of demonstration politics, whose dynamics engage with idealistic aims as well as the systems and strategies which they critique. Evoking the more utopian promise of the 60s and 70s, she will contribute a handmade fabric rug, which can be read as both a prayer rug and a love rug, constructed of psychedelic patterns, Palestinian scarves, tacky lace and worn denim.

Andrew Rogers from Tennessee will present his very still photographs of the Southern landscape, which hint at symbolic meaning beneath their pristine surface. He captures a landscape overtaken by kudzu and littered with beautiful tobacco and cotton plants. Together with a steel shed church, a repossessed home, and a cash loans strip mall, Rogers' images inform different levels of economy.

Martha Rosler's photographs of storefront manikins in patriotic merchandise engage in dialogue with many of the criticisms waged against America and Americans today. They are fractured and ominous, cloaked in red, white, and blue. The poignancy of Robert Gober's 1992 fictionalized newspaper advertisement in which he is featured as bride, made during Bush Sr.'s term as president, is only heightened in light of the current attempts by his son to amend the constitution to ban gay marriage. Carissa Rodriguez's project takes it's title from Baudelaire's depiction of urban transience: "thousands of floating existences – criminals and kept women – which drift about in the underworld of a great city." The photo transparencies narrate a desire for mobility and everyday resistance to being defined by what one produces. Executed as picture-events, they are attempts at carving out temporary spaces beyond (or between) impossible conditions of lawlessness and dependence.

For further information please contact the gallery at [info@greenenaftaligallery.com](mailto:info@greenenaftaligallery.com).