JOAN FONTCUBERTA
ANGELS - BARCELONA

Joan Fontcuberta (Barcelona, 1955) presents a new project based on Blow Up, the 1966 movie by Michelangelo Antonioni. Starting with duplicated frames from a 35mm copy of the movie, Fontcuberta continues the enlargement exercises initiated by the protagonist of the movie, Thomas, starting right where he left them.

In the first part of the exhibition, the spectator finds large photographs suspended with pins from a rope, emulating the space distribution that Thomas set up in Antonioni’s film. The pictures are successive enlargements of the last ones to be shown in the film.

In the second part, the enlargement continues but through moving images: a projection shows the fragment of the movie in which Thomas starts the enlargement processes and, beginning with one of those images, Fontcuberta carries on the process in continuous movement.

Through video, in constant motion, the last photo-frame of the movie expands and dilates until it looses all its identity and the possibility of being recognized by the viewer. The viewer’s ability to decipher the photograph becomes, in this exercise, one of total subjectivity.

(Translated from Spanish by Emiliano Valdés)

Neus Miró

FLASH REVIEWS

ISABEL SIMÕES
MARZ-GALERIA - LISBON

Isabel Simões’s current exhibition shows a painter engrossed in canvas spatiality, as well as with the place of creation and the place of exhibition. All the works exhibited show the same motive: the artist’s studio floor, which is always located obliquely on the canvas.

As with previous works, the placement of the painted object on the canvas (or paper) is an essential organizational concern — it continues not to occupy the entirety of the picture. The remaining white space not only highlights what was painted but also questions the image itself, transforming it categorically into a fiction. Simões’s concern is not to represent a certain reality, but to depart from one in order to examine other problems, such as the perception of space.

The exhibition title, “Plongée,” is a French word meaning a steep plane or a dive. It relates, in this case, to the perspective view of the painted object, taking into consideration both the artist’s vision of her studio floor but also that of the viewer while observing each work.

The floor is blue and the objects upon it are whited-out. They remain present exactly through their absence — shadows created by the lack of paint. They represent the residue of the studio’s use: tape, tools, wires and stains of paint from previous works.

Filipa Oliveira

MICHAEL DEAN
ALESSANDRO DE MARCH - MILAN

Michael Dean. His body in some place in my hair. Installation view at Alessandro De March Milan

Resting in the corner of the gallery is the root of the exhibition, November to November (2008) — a book of Michael Dean’s writings which capture his sporadic observations. Consisting often in only a few words, fugitive thoughts are pinned abruptly to the page.

A series of wall-hung photographs depicting various objects are loosely taped to glass plates that replicate the dimensions of a page, like their literary counterpart, they follow a structured rhythm but their ability to bind our subject remains no less precarious. A cluster of cabbage leaves cast in concrete in the center of the gallery perhaps represents translation in the absolute: just as language might aim at giving our fleeting experiences a lasting currency beyond their physical scope, Dean’s action salvages these perishable leaves from disappearance. However, the shortfall of language to concretize a subject is played out directly in a video-still (Untitled, 2008), which captures a section of a human body — part neck, part chest — that has no name outright.

The work sets up an encounter in which language and subject recoil but are shown to be mutually reliant. A page of the book has been photocopied, placed over the original leaf, frottaged with a layer of carbon then photographed. In this way, Dean’s exhibition presents a considered and readable illustration of the transgressive and dissident elements that play a role in how we communicate.

Michael Polsinelli

ALESSANDRO ROMA
GALERIE ALEXANDRA SAHEB - BERLIN


The new works of Alessandro Roma are images from a journey. A fairy tale-like passage through richly layered and lushly colored landscapes. As in the work of artists ranging from Odilon Redon to Daniel Richter, Roma’s mythical world is born through color, and in this group of new works the artist’s talent as a colorist blossoms in full. A house, a cloud, a tree, specific elements offer points of reference on the horizon that draw the viewer into the successive levels of the image — beginning with a thin sheen of fabric, wandering through painted surfaces and photographic images, and finally leading into an expanse of color or sky. Some are mysteriously dark and murky; others are full of breath and cold blues.

However, these images are not merely shimmering reflections of the artist’s fantasy but are based on a pilgrimage-like trip undertaken by Werner Herzog, which he recorded in the text Of Walking in Love: in 1974 a friend lies critically ill in Paris and he is convinced that if he manages to reach the city from Munich on foot she will not die. The beauty and magic of a hero’s archetypal ability to charm fate by undertaking an arduous (spiritual) journey are manifested in Roma’s collages, which take his work to a whole new level.

The sculptures in the exhibition somehow have a less otherworldly allure than the wall pieces, but they bring something to the exhibition as a whole — as fragmented shapes that have indeed managed to pass through the translucent curtain separating the enchanted and the real.

Laura Schleussner

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