



SALON 94

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Art in Review
KEN JOHNSON

‘EVERY REVOLUTION IS A ROLL OF THE DICE’

Paula Cooper
534 West 21st Street, Chelsea
Through Feb. 14

With this group exhibition, the independent curator Bob Nickas has orchestrated a temporary, resonant Iraq war memorial.

At one end of the Paula Cooper Gallery a waist-high knight in armor and a gathering of toy guns, spears and battle axes covered in imitation gold leaf by John Miller stand on a peacock-feather carpet by Carol Bove. A centrally placed construction of silver-painted concrete blocks with a low, black, corrugated metal roof by Robert Grosvenor resembles a desert bunker and a tomb. A pair of smashed automobile windshields by Kelley Walker lie next to it.

On the south wall a pointillist painting by Wayne Gonzales projects the hazy, photographic image of flag-draped coffins in a cargo plane. Three dead sentinels stand nearby: cartoonish legs with only a naked spinal column from the waist up by Jason Fox; a drooping head on a pike lovingly carved from red-and-green striated marble by Barry X Ball; and “Ghost,” a blocky specter made mostly of white plastic foam by Huma Bhabha.

Videos by Joan Wallace show a white frosted cake exploding in slow motion, revealing bloody red insides. A star within concentric rings drawn in graphite on a black panel by Gardar Eide Einarsson adds to the funereal mood. A small photograph of a ruined sphinx’s rear paw by Trisha Donnelly called “The Hand That Holds the Desert Down” might be a metaphor for human hubris. And a text piece by Louise Lawler that reads, “Once there was a little boy and everything turned out alright. The end,” though created in 1993, seems here an allusion to our recently departed president.