

March 31–April 6, 2005  
Issue 496

## Local heroes

MoMA and P.S. 1 survey the past five years of emerging art in New York **By Andrea K. Scott**

**N**ear a stairwell on the third floor of “Greater New York 2005” at P.S. 1, there’s a small, graffiti-style wall drawing by Gardar Eide Einarsson that reads TOTAL REVOLUTION. It put me in mind of a poseur in a Che Guevara T-shirt, and I suspect that’s the point, to critique the mainstream marketing of subversive politics and subcultures. But in the thick of a show devoted to art that’s emerged in the past five years within bridge and tunnel distance of MoMA (which co-organized the show with its affiliate, P.S. 1), the piece underscores a dilemma: When it comes to art, these days the margins and the mainstream are hard to tell apart. Not only has the revolution been televised, it’s already running in syndication.

Many of the 162 artists in this elegantly installed if packed-to-the-rafters show, which extends from the boiler room in the basement to a bathroom on the third floor, will be familiar to New York gallerygoers. (Standouts in this category include painter Dana Shutz’s epic homage to Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulip* by way of Courbet’s *Burial at Ornans*, and Aida Ruilova’s 20-second video projection that puts a goth-girl twist on campfire stories.) For example, Soho’s Guild & Greyshkul gallery, which opened in 2003 in the former American Fine Art space, contributes no fewer than nine artists (ten if you count an existing mural by Ernesto Caivano in one stairwell). Many works not loaned by galleries were provided courtesy of private collectors.

This may sound like inside baseball griping—reading wall labels like box scores to sort out who shows where and who owns what—but there is something a bit dispiriting about the fact that, out of a reported 2,400 submissions

received in response to an open call last year, only ten artists were selected and of those, at least four now have gallery affiliations. Others, like German-born Nina Lola Bachhuber, whose red-and-black ink drawings reveal a soft spot

that—if she’s gifted enough to get into grad school.

If one thing stands out at P.S. 1, it’s the anything-goes approach of young artists. Drawing, video, painting, film, sculpture, photography, digital art and performance-based installation are all in the mix here. Painting can be abstract or figurative, as winningly demonstrated by a grouping of small panels by Richard Aldrich, who shifts styles like an iPod on shuffle, painting multicolored zigzag stripes in one piece and portraying a pretty blond horn player in another.

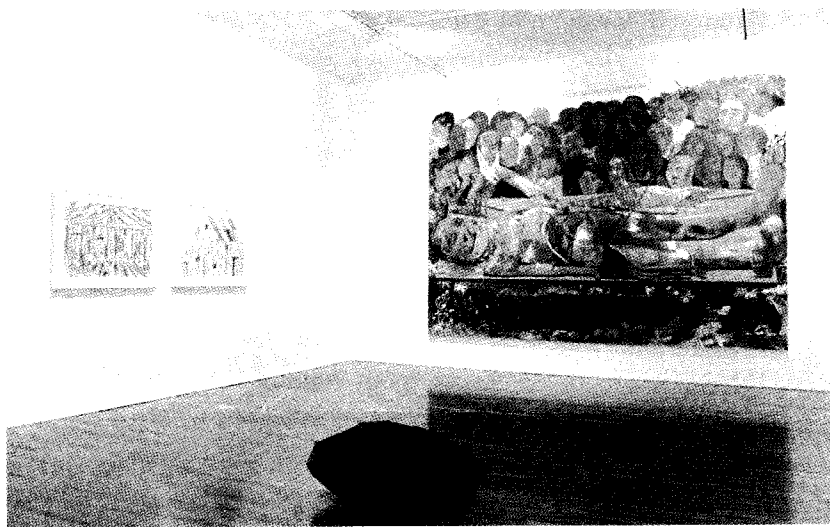
gies in a billboard-size image of Mussolini and his mistress, strung up by their feet post-execution. McEwen inverts the image so the couple appear to be performing a ghoulish dance number. Installed nearby, in what can only be chalked up to gallows humor on the part of the curators, is Paul Chan’s brilliant two-sided allegorical animation, in which a tree is hung with bodies. Both works have a political edge that is more open-ended, and, for this critic, more resonant, than the journalistic drawings of Steve Mumford, who may be New

York’s only embedded artist, sketching American soldiers and Iraqi citizens in the field.

The show has its share of head-scratching moments. What compelled the curators to include not one but two Yeti-themed room-size installations—Peter Caine’s mechanized version and Mark Swanson’s lairlike diorama—in the basement? And how does Ina Swansea, a painter who had a solo show at the blue-chip Robert Miller Gallery in 1998, qualify for emergence since 2000? Certain artists—Banks Violette, Robert

Melee, Will Ryman—have whole rooms dedicated to their work, while others—too many to mention—contribute just a single piece.

Then again, sometimes one great piece is all it takes. Until “Greater New York 2005” I had never heard of the collaborative team King/Diaz de Leon, whose video projection *Prepare a Place* (2003–5) is a high point of the show. A lone violinist enters a stage and begins to play. The scene then erupts into a percussive whirl of rapid-fire edits and multiple performers spin as if in a kaleidoscopic hall of mirrors. The work’s progression from tranquil solo to entropic ensemble recalls the flutter of a single butterfly’s wings setting a weather system into motion. I only hope that King/Diaz de Leon’s inclusion here does the same for the artists’ career. ■



From left: Benjamin Degen, José León Cerillo and Dana Shutz in “Greater New York 2005”

for Louise Bourgeois, or Wardell Milan, whose drawings of wrelters suggest a homoerotic Bellmer, are well on their way (having shown work at the Drawing Center and Artists Space, respectively).

On the other hand, where else do artists emerge but in galleries, alter-

### Review

“Greater New York 2005”  
P.S. 1, through Sept 22  
(see Museums).

native spaces and M.F.A. shows? The latter is where curators discovered Laleh Khorramian’s painterly stop-frame animation *Sophie and Goya* (2004) at Columbia last spring, as well as the haunting, Arbus-like color portraits of albino girls by Tanyth Berkeley. The greatest contribution of “Greater New York” may be to finally put to rest the delusion that artists spring to life fully formed, like Botticelli’s Venus on the half shell. Sure, your kid can do

Labor-intensive drawing trumps video for the ubiquitous-medium award, but that’s hardly breaking news. More noteworthy is the slippage between drawing and other mediums, evident everywhere from the intricate cut-paper sculptures of Yuken Teruya (an enchanted forest, the trees fashioned from shopping bags) and Kristen Hassenfeld (elaborately filigreed decorative objects) to Dominic McGill’s eight-foot-high *Project for a New American Century* (2004), which crosses the graphite political intrigue of Mark Lombardi with the walk-through wonder of a Serra ellipse.

Perhaps in reaction to the gee-whiz factor of so much of the art at P.S. 1—God is in the details, don’t forget your reading glasses—I was particularly impressed by a new strain of appropriation art, evident in the work of Kelley Walker, Wade Guyton, Seth Price and Adam McEwen, who tweaks Pictures Generation rephotographic strate-