

March 20, 2006

WEEKEND UPDATE

by Walter Robinson

One highlight of the Armory Show was the **Lehmann Maupin** booth, which had been done up at the direction of émigré artist **Ashley Bickerton** with bamboo walls and Indonesian furniture made of black wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl decorative patterns. Bickerton is the new Gauguin, having relocated from New York to Bali some years ago, and the artworks he periodically sends back to New York (this installation was done in collaboration with **Sonnabend**, Bickerton's New York dealer) are redolent of what can only be called island mania, festooned with driftwood and all sorts of flotsam, and decorated with the artist's high-key California Kool-style self-portraits as a wacky beachcombing fool. Just check out his photograph on the Lehmann Maupin website. I want that hat. An exhibition of new work opens at the gallery in May.

Most of the fairs have issued their post-show reports, and the Armory Show notes that 1,570 people went to its benefit vernissage, which raised \$600,000 for the **Museum of Modern Art**. Overall, the fair had 47,000 attendees, an increase of about 20 percent from the 40,000 visitors in 2005. Among the visitors was designer **Donna Karan**, who picked up **Gabi Trinkaus'** *You Can Sleep* (2006), a striking collage of a nighttime New York cityscape, for a sweet \$23,000 from dealer **Georg Kargl** of Vienna.

The big attendance numbers can be a mixed blessing. **Zach Feuer** wryly noted that he did all his business in the first day or two, and that Saturday and Sunday were nothing but tourists. "It's torture," he noted, good-naturedly. Feuer had sold the major works in his booth, including an installation of six paintings and a sculpture by German artist **Anton Henning** for prices ranging from \$9,000 to the high \$20s, and hit a new high for a work by **Danica Phelps**, \$24,000 for a work that traces a year's worth of her economic transactions. Art advisor **Ellen Kern** bought it for a client.

Leaning against the wall of Feuer's booth was a raggedly looking cardboard

box, all taped up and stuffed with paper and other litter. The painter **Jules de Balincourt** had bought it from a man on the street for \$300, thinking that it was a computer (it was not -- add "charming naiveté" to Balincourt's bundle of esthetic attributes). Now he was trying to get his money back by selling it to a collector. "There were no takers at \$300," Feuer deadpanned. "So I'm raising the price to \$1,500."



Jules de Balincourt's "computer" sculpture at Zach Feuer