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"KIRK DOUGLAS AS VINCENT VAN GOGH, LUST FOR LIFE, 1956," 2012, **Arthur K. Miller**
ACRYLIC ON MASONITE, 18" x 13"
PHOTO: COURTESY GEORGE KREVSKY GALLERY

Strangely, while there is a threatening quality—there are plenty of scalpel-sharp objects to be found—or fairly gross subject matter, the overriding playfulness of the scenes dampens any visceral reaction; it's all just devilishly good fun and make-believe. Additionally, the gallery walls were altered—with peeling wallpaper, dripping paint, and the like—to resemble an interior like one might find in the photos, and one of the large props seen in several of the images was mounted along the walls and ceiling: the viewer becomes the subject; the fantasy loop is complete.

—CHÉRIE LOUISE TURNER

SAN FRANCISCO

Louis Grant/Arthur K. Miller: "Lust for Life"

at George Krevsky Gallery

In "Lust for Life," two New York painters, both veterans of this gallery's annual summertime baseball-themed shows, take on the questions of identity, memory and history, as preserved by photographic artifacts and refracted by painting. The show title refers of course to Irving Stone's 1934 novel about Van Gogh and the 1956 Vincente Minnelli bio-pic adapted from it, nicely invoked by Miller's acrylic painting of a straw-hatted Kirk Douglas glancing askance at the viewer (or MGM publicity photographer). If the identity-politics art of the 1980s and 1990s often suffered from excessive political correctness, the exploration of self by Grant and Miller might be termed "post-identity" art, following the pattern of "post-gay," "post-black" and "post-feminist" art. American society and demographics have changed, and the cultural differences around race and gender, once charged with accusation and defensiveness, are now, in the no-drama-Obama age, no big deal, for most of us. (At least one hopes so.)

Louis Grant, well known for his celebrity and sports portraits, ventures here into racial history, portraying middle-class black life of the 1920s through the 1940s with a blend of social realism, magic realism and abstraction: Reginald Marsh, Henri Rousseau and Arshile Gorky come to mind. His modestly prosperous subjects, undoubtedly taken from old photos, preen and pose in their Sunday best in *Cafe Zanzibar #2*, *Eddie with Latest Car*, *Two Sisters After Church* and even *Cranky Little Girl with Parents*. The paintings are nostalgic, almost mythic. Arthur K. Miller explores movie culture, but without the irony or social critique associated with Pop Art: his paintings meticulously duplicate in Technicolor the black-and-white glamour photos produced by Hollywood's Dream Factory for theater posters, fan magazines and (as I remember) amusement-park vending machines. Errol Flynn, dressed in Sherwood Forest green, aims an arrow; Bette Davis, Rita Hayworth and Marilyn Monroe pose, alluringly; James Dean and Marlon Brando reprise their indelible roles from *East of Eden* and *The Godfather*, respectively, flanked by non-thespian members of our national—bipartisan?—pantheon: Custer, Poe, Houdini and Kerouac. Conceptual humor for the artsters, and celebrity glamour for the civilians: to appropriate a movie title, *Something for Everyone*.

—DEWITT CHENG

SAN FRANCISCO

Don Voisine: "Paintings" at Gregory Lind Gallery

Pascal's adage that "All man's miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone" sounds constricting, but serious painters know that only concentrated practice makes perfect. Brooklyn-based painter Don Voisine came of age during the Neo-Expressionist era, but disliked its arbitrary emotionality. Looking for a motif that would provide structure for his abstract paintings (like Jasper Johns' "things the mind already knows"), he began in 1980, painting from the floor plans of places where he lived or worked (including, with poetic justice, the apartments he painted or rehabbed). Thirty-two years later, Voisine no longer needs to rely on floor plans or architecture books, but his paintings retain the feeling of lived experience and inhabited space, with all their unruly contradictions.

The fourteen oils on panel shown here feature white rectangular "skies" almost completely blocked by large diagonal black planes; at top and bottom, horizontal bands (or window sashes, "something you had to 'step over' to get into the picture") of bright color, accentuated by thin strips of a second color, partially frame the "views."

"PINK TWIST," 2012

Don Voisine

OIL ON WOOD, 16" x 12"

PHOTO: COURTESY GREGORY LIND GALLERY

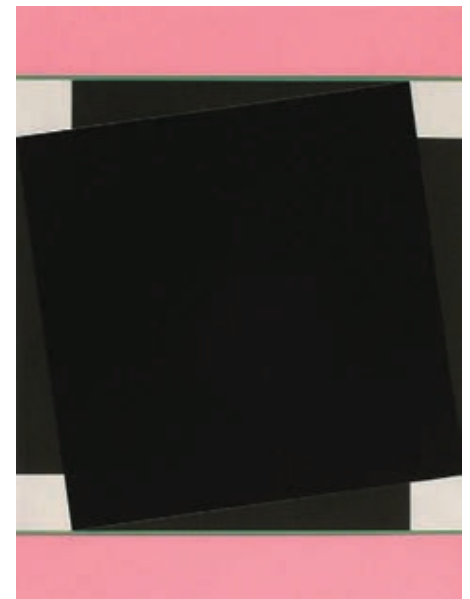
That sounds simple enough, but "complex paintings with strict limitations" like *Scene, Redacted*, *Slide*, *Sprockets* and *Pink Twist* (all works cited 2012) belie their modest size and refuse to sit still. (They also defy easy photographic capture, incidentally). Clues given by composition (overlapping planes), color (glossy versus matte black and dark gray) and painterly nuance (the "grain" of repeated brushstrokes, the tape ridges where paint has built up) agree in places, but they also conflict in others, or they're ambiguous, so that space seems situational as in Cubism, expanding or collapsing depending on context and location. Dark areas read as voids, but also as weighty; white grounds, too flip from presence to absence. That perpetual oscillation, says Voisine, is "the air that activates the space of the paintings. That's where the paintings breathe... charged, resonating with implied speed, curve and thrust... [that] seem to extend beyond the edges of the picture plane, shifting perceptions of scale and perspective." Behind the paintings' stately facades, things are stirring.

—DEWITT CHENG

OAKLAND

"Hidden Agenda" at Vessel Gallery

"Hidden Agenda" at Vessel gallery highlights paintings by Rose Anne Critchfield, and also features sculptures by Alex Abajian + J. Lin-Hsien Kung, Luke Heimbigner, Wayne Shaffer, and Cyrus Tilton. All of the works in this exhibition display a dedication to craft, an interest in organic shapes, forms, or textures, and a balance of contemporary and modernist aesthetic. Critchfield's works on panel and linen are laboriously built, and her process even extends to formulating her own proprietary gesso to prepare the surfaces. Bold, graphical compositions made with materials traditionally associated with drawing—watercolor and ink—emphasize the delicate texture of the





"UNTITLED," 2012
Rose Anne Critchfield
 INDIA INK, OIL, AND
 GOUACHE ON LINEN ON PANEL, 8' X 4'
 PHOTO: COURTESY VESSEL GALLERY

substrate, as if picking up the "tooth" of an artisanal drawing paper. Her ink brushwork, while referring to calligraphy, appears entirely improvisational, and results in networks of pattern, wherein the pigment pools and reticulates. *Untitled* (2012), and *Bunker 14 (rewrite)*, (2011), also incorporate areas where the ink patterns have been filled in or traced over with richly colored oil paint, both emphasizing the phenomenological texture of the ink and gesso, and reasserting the artist's intentional hand, recalling the intense mark-making of contemporary painter Xylor Jane. The pieces including this additional layer of intervention best celebrate traditional materials while still engaging with contemporary trends in painting like accretion and highly repetitive marks.

Cyrus Tilton's *The Hammer and the Nail* (2011), an assemblage representing a bird and a snail, made from wood, muslin, steel, and paper, that both hangs from the ceiling and rests on a pedestal, is a sharp, allegorical contrast to Critchfield's abstraction. But Tilton's layering of materials and the obvious hand-craftsmanship parallels the painter's methods. Conversely, *Creatures* (2012), a set of metallic glass sculptures with smooth, bulbous central shapes and long whimsical legs, made by Abajian + Kung, almost seem to have grown or hatched without human intervention, but formally echo the swooping, organic shapes of Critchfield's ink strokes. Luke Heimbigner's *Range 6* (2011), a topographical sculpture cast in bronze and steel, reflects another aspect of the paintings. When placed among Critchfield's work, its miniature mountain and eroded surface suggests what the natu-

ralistic ink texture would be like if projected into three dimensions.

The works in "Hidden Agenda" display an unselfconscious emphasis on form and materiality in the modernist tradition, but the exhibition as a whole, and Critchfield's paintings in particular, maintain a playful, reflective sense of process in dialogue with contemporary craft and painting.

—MARY ANNE KLUTH

SEATTLE
Patrick LoCicero
at Linda Hodges Gallery

The 53-year-old artist Patrick LoCicero has turned his flair for nostalgic collage painting to a new series involving endangered and extinct bird species in his tenth Seattle solo show since 1997. His grouping of 21 mid-size oil-and-collage canvases at Linda Hodges Gallery commemorates and memorializes obscure birds that summon up memories of formerly idyllic or Edenic worlds in much the same way that LoCicero, an adjunct professor of painting at Cornish College of the Arts, has always preferred a lost world of American or European



"ART HISTORY," 2012
Patrick LoCicero
 OIL ON CANVAS WITH COLLAGE, 40" X 32"
 PHOTO: COURTESY LINDA HODGES GALLERY

innocence. This time around, at least, the birds connote a current, living world of pollution and other perils to natural habitats. Instead of cutting and pasting old ads for children's toys or women's cosmetics (as in his earlier work), the artist uses Victorian portrait engravings, samples of now-worthless monetary currency and images of 18th-century ladies and gentlemen to allude to how, in some ways, the rise of the Industrial Revolution endangered birds long before our contemporary eco-crimes.

Botanic specimen prints background the bird in *Art History* (all works cited 2012). Cameos of bewigged worthies glare down on a long-legged ostrich in *Promenade*. Antique travel memorabilia fragments support the bird in *Baggage*. For most of the series, including *European Vacation*, *Passenger* and *Carnival Pelican*, the bird is presented at dead center, as if posed for taxidermy or science-museum display. A few, such as *Courting*, *Signatures*, and *Little Soldiers*, pair male and female together, an effect that is all the more ironic or sad in that any procreative efforts seem ultimately doomed for those extinguished by progress.

With a substantial career and numerous exhibitions across the nation in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and elsewhere, LoCicero's ingenious technical formula of collaging risks being undercut by the predictable centered composition. That's why *Vase Parade*, *History of the World*, and *Water Lilies*, with more widely dispersed elements, suggest a heartening new direction. LoCicero affirms for the first time that his engine of nostalgia can also point to a present, continuing moment of ecological danger for vulnerable creatures—and the rest of us.

—MATTHEW KANGAS

DENVER
Gregory Euclide:
"Observing only the ease of my own slipping toward your unknown"
at David B. Smith Gallery

Creative people often juggle two careers—the actor moonlighting as a waiter is so familiar, it's the butt of jokes. But visual artists are luckier than theater people since many are able to make a living teaching art. That's the case with Gregory Euclide; however, his rising reputation as a contemporary artist has turned the whole thing upside down. At this point, his art career is where his bread is buttered, though his experience as a teacher clearly impacts his work. Euclide, who was the subject recently of a solo exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, is being featured in an amazing follow-up at Denver's David B. Smith Gallery. The show has the epic title of "Observing only the ease of my own slipping toward