

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Locale

Curated by Kris Kuramitsu

at Margo Leavin Gallery

15 July - 19 August 2006

At times all I need is a brief glimpse, an opening in the midst of an incongruous landscape, a glint of lights in the fog, the dialogue of two passersby meeting in the crowd, and I think that, setting out from there, I will put together, piece by piece, the perfect city, made of fragments mixed with the rest, of instants separated by intervals, of signals one sends out, not knowing who receives them.

-Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

Margo Leavin Gallery is pleased to present *Locale*, a group exhibition curated by Kris Kuramitsu featuring recent work by artists Lisa Anne Auerbach, Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn, Shannon Ebner, Noriko Furunishi, Alyssa Gorelick, and Brenna Youngblood.

The works in this exhibition involve landscape as a conceptual category. The artists, all of whom live in Los Angeles and work in the media of photography and video, consciously engage this very traditional genre with contemporary concerns of history, social geography, narrative structure and the contentious nature of representation itself.

Lisa Anne Auerbach's photographs cataloguing small stand-alone businesses arose from her experiences cycling through the streets of Los Angeles. She noticed seemingly unnoticeable buildings inhabiting interstitial urban spaces, in mini-mall parking lots and sandwiched between large buildings. They are tiny structures, small personal and family businesses in a sea of chain stores that she calls "monuments to modesty." By presenting these photographs, she creates an empathetic relationship between the viewer and the structure and redraws a personalized mapping of the city.

Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn create engaging video works that subvert expectations of conventional narrative and complicate the relationship between performer, filmmaker and audience. In *Can't Swallow It, Can't Spit It Out*, the relationship between the performer and filmmaker unfolds as we follow them on their search for stories as they navigate the City of Los Angeles. Using humor and poetic storytelling, Dodge and Kahn extend the possibilities of the medium to create a new relationship to the landscape of the city.

The photographs of **Shannon Ebner** document the artist's temporary interventions into the landscape, interventions that seem to conjure pathos and longing from the empty lots of the city. In the *Dead Democracy Letters* series, Ebner places large letters into undeveloped landscapes around Los Angeles. In *The Doom*, the letters are bodies revealing their artificiality and fragility, calling to mind contemporary politics and turning sloganeering and boosterism on its head. *Hollywood Recession* takes on the iconic Hollywood sign and all the hopes and dreams that it represents, flattening the landscape and obscuring the boundless sky with the gritty reality of the material world.

Noriko Furunishi's large-scale landscapes are simultaneously disorienting and seductively beautiful. Furunishi digitally sutures elements of many different photographs to create spaces that constantly shift in scale and orientation. Foreground and background fluctuate, horizon lines multiply and our sense of rootedness disappears as the body becomes disoriented in relation to the overwhelming strangeness of the landscapes. These images comment on our conflicted relationship to nature, updating the conventions of landscape painting and photography, upending our desire for visual mastery.

Sculptural and photographic work by **Alyssa Gorelick** investigates photography as a medium using the subject matter of "natural" landscapes. The installation *Gather* brings the space of the viewer into the representational space of the photograph, playing with reflection and image. The marked artificiality of the field of flowers, common blooms for suburban landscaping, creates a curtain of manufactured nature. Her works alter the conventions of landscape photography, layering representation upon representation and providing a space for questioning photographic seduction.

Brenna Youngblood collages material from her personal image archive, layering fragmented photographs with paint, resin, and found materials to create expressive and evocative landscapes. The resulting works are dynamic visualizations of a subjective experience of the urban landscape, accumulated narrative vignettes that verge on abstraction.

Margo Leavin Gallery is located at 812 North Robertson Boulevard in Los Angeles.

Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.