geoff mitchell
on dead highways
january 20 - march 17, 2007

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studio channel islands art center is a non-profit arts organization located on the campus of California State University Channel Islands. Our mission is to provide a dynamic center of creativity and inspiration in our community through innovative exhibitions and programs that foster understanding, learning, and a love of enthusiasm and complete confidence that we present the work of Geoff Mitchell.

Michele DePry Lesoff
Gallery Director

credits:
photography: studio channel islands art center
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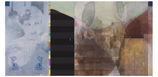
GEOFF MITCHELL: MEMORY IN MONTAGE
by Peter Hayes

There is a "language" to every means of communication, a system of signs ordered into a structure that allows for communication of ideas. In the case of the visual arts, this order or schema has resulted from intuition and experimenting. Its coordinated system of elements relies on a coherence according to more than just formal arrangement. The practice of collage and assemblage has been a part of the history of modernism since the early 20th century. Contemporary linguists, celebrities from artists such as Schwitters, Rauschenberg and Cornell, are noted for speaking through composition, for making our eyes follow patterns of ideas, for arrangements of large and small, for making us see the world in a different way. Geoff Mitchell's work is a contemporary montage that parallel them in photography and film. Geoff Mitchell paints as if he were building fiftcates, you know, this + this + this + this + this. But in Mitchell's work the whole is different than the sum of its parts.



the candidate (blue opera) | mixed media on panel | 48 x 96 inches | 2006

In Mitchell's carefully organized canvases, everything, you could say, adds up. Nothing is accidental. Nothing is random. Nothing is left to chance. Nothing is left to the imagination. Every part of some element = may be a possessed or obscured in the sequencing. Mitchell's montage method concerns itself less with the issue of visual material than with the acceleration of meaning—the speed of communication. Like the Dadaists, Mitchell's work is not about the accumulation of sensation. As pieced and measured as an English lexicon's sentences, Mitchell's stories, often almost heraldic compositions gain their strength and tension not from the abnormalness in their elements, but from the new drama that emerges from their juxtaposition—and, conversely, from the fact that the elements are not juxtaposition—of the elements. Mitchell's work is about "relations" but from a basic and brief between them, it overemphasizes or downplays. Aging Knowhat of the eyes across and around the paintings.

As we, the Lost-Mitchell paintings we immediately notice a recurrence of images of once historical and human. Figures of skin or involved in mundane activities whose gaits and perhaps lives are frozen in time. Mitchell's "people" are, in fact, not people at all, but representations of them they ought to inspire nostalgia, but few really do. Rather, they invoke in romantic, perhaps novelistic description, as if setting up for a costume drama or a period piece. The uniforms and the mannerisms are not quite contemporary, but they are not quite from a specific time in history or story. Something definitely happens; it happens, however, not in the mind or scene, but around it. Mitchell, you could say, is recounting him a tale, but a poem—moving on conditions, composing a narrative that is not quite a story. Mitchell's work recalls Stephen Crane both into our time rather than simply setting another Civil War battle in motion.

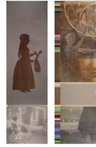
everyday: learn more about phone | mixed media on panel | 48 x 96 inches | 2005

Finally, what engages us most profoundly about Mitchell's art is not what it says, but how it talks. Pinsky: through its elements might appear, it speaks in verse. The elliptical relationships Mitchell establishes between his whole, segmented, and excepted pictures provide narratives too oblique to be called stories. Yet, they are, in fact, stories. The viewer, in the end, is responsible for filling in the image-relationships blank as its take responsibility for their meaning. Mitchell makes us his simple life decorders. But the encryption in his poetic mysteries. The images are up to him, the meaning up to us.

December 2006

when the bullets stop, so do | | acrylic on panel | 48 x 36 inches | 2005

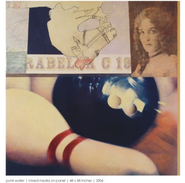
the wolf | mixed media on panel | 48 x 48 inches | 2006



neurotic with a bow | mixed media on panel (triptych) | 36 x 120 inches | 2006

headboard | mixed media on paper | 36 x 22 inches | 2005

white apple | mixed media on panel | 48 x 48 inches | 2006



pure water | mixed media on panel | 48 x 48 inches | 2006

geoff mitchell

current representation:
the lowe gallery, santa monica/atlanta.

selected solo exhibitions:
2006 "on dead highways", studio channel islands art center, camarillo, ca.
2005 "light", ostrovsky street artist warehouse, houston, tx.
2004 "the candidate", the lowe gallery, santa monica, ca.
2003 "classroom hallways(s) 1-9", gallery gallery, minneapolis, mn.
2002 "the candidate", the lowe gallery, santa monica, ca.
1999 "new paintings", scratch gallery, minneapolis, mn.

selected group exhibitions:
2006 "revisiting/photographs", gallery 2, hermosa beach, ca.
"revealed", the lowe gallery, santa monica, ca.
"the lowe gallery at 10", the lowe gallery
"lyfest", kaiserin cultural center, los angeles, ca.
2005 ghettoglass gallery, los angeles, ca.
"the lowe gallery at 10", the lowe gallery, santa monica, ca.
"regional faculty exhibition", governor's state university, university park, il.
art miami, miami beach convention center, miami, fl.
"the lowe gallery at 10", chicago, il.
school gallery, chicago, il.
2004 quincy art center, quincy, il.
"the lowe gallery at 10", chicago, il.
"chicago solutions show", curated by ed paschke, gallery on wabash, south chicago, il.
"the lowe gallery at 10", chicago, il.
sarah wetzler gallery, philadelphia, pa.
2003 "the lowe gallery at 10", chicago, il.
carnegie fine art, san anselmo, ca.
thirteenth floor gallery, chicago, il.
2001 "contemporary chicago", the gallery, minneapolis, mn.
dc space, chicago, il.
2000 wazi factory, minneapolis, mn.
"the lowe gallery at 10", chicago, il.
"turns and exit", cultural square gallery, minneapolis, mn.
cultural square gallery, minneapolis, mn.
1999 "contemporary chicago", the gallery, minneapolis, mn.
international workhouse space, stavanger, norway.
1998 foyer space, graz, austria.

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