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LUTZ BACHER

*Peter Halley on INDEX magazine / DAVID DOUARD / Spike Jonze's Her /
PETER SCHUYFF / RYAN TRECARTIN*

plus Speculation on Anonymous Materials / Jeffrey Deitch / Hood By Air / Philipp Timischl

Samara Golden

Night Gallery / Los Angeles

Samara Golden's "Mass Murder" is an attempt to build a *tabula rasa* scenario in order to represent the sixth dimension, where past, present and future happen simultaneously in one location.

According to Golden, the sixth dimension is a convertible with a pair of dark, swollen human legs on the back seat, parked in an otherwise empty lot. It's a decadent, spacious living room, with couches on the floor and on the wall, where no one is allowed to sit because the furniture is made from fragile silver insulation foam and is too delicate to sustain the weight of human souls. There is a piano and a guitar you can't play, and there is a hat with brains scattering out from a hole. There are mirrors everywhere, and the high wooden industrial ceiling reminds you that you are still in a city, although a video projected on an empty wall shows happy people playing on a beach at sunset. It's a family's kitchen, with threatening knives transfixing at dinner time and dozens of stuffed animals lying on the counter next to the fridge, staring at you, while on the radio a familiar voice from the past provides a monotone discourse mixed with breaking news from Orange County. In Golden's world there are no hard edges, everything is smoothed by the hand of the artist or by the smoke blown by a machine. You experience a sense of frustration: you can touch, but you can't grasp; you can try to perceive, but you won't be able to fully understand.

Although the intensity of the show is diluted by the scale of the space, the artist gives a palpable physicality to a complex intellectual construction. Sustaining an unsentimental yet profound tone, Golden's vision suggests that the sixth dimension would be an intimate dreamy state of mind where different layers of life collide, provoking a sense of cognitive dissonance that is dependent upon the intensity of the feeling it evokes.

by Patrick Steffen

Sean Paul

Thomas Duncan / Los Angeles

It is best to imagine Sean Paul's 18 panels at Thomas Duncan Gallery as a running film in which each negative has been spliced at an awkward joint, the image split open. The resulting film stills, frozen as though caught or hung up in the projector, move forward in a staccato rhythm, with bumps and cuts that make the content of the film hard to register. Each panel has the crispness of '60s American pop art, yet ultimately wants the critique of pop offered by European artists like Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter, following close on the heels of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. Paul wants the pop machine to break down and the true contents of capitalist advertising and the ulterior motives of the market economy to come into view.

Paul's fractured views show ads for sex workers, escorts and prostitutes, ripped from the back of weedy newspapers, seen as though through a veil that also reads a bit like a chain-link fence. Some of the images take longer to see than others, coming into full view with phone numbers, while others remain fuzzy and hard to see. His panels reveal the service economy that exists behind the glossy, official images of advertising and the market — groups of workers that feed the prurience of a system both repressed in its desires and oppressive in its need to fill those desires.

In turn, Paul suggests that art is not free of this quandary: artists are behind their images in much the same way that sex workers are in newsweeklies. Paul's formal activities, therefore, constitute a sort of resistance to this condition, rupturing and splitting imagery, looking askew at something barely noticed because it is always in plain view. When the panels are broken off from the series, the overall effect will be lost, but at the moment, in the gallery, it is great to see these complex and multi-layered works in action.

by Ed Schad

James Lee Byars

Museo Jumex / Mexico City

Curated by Magalí Arriola of Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo and Peter Eleey from MoMA PS1, "1/2 An Autobiography" is the most important retrospective on North American artist James Lee Byars since his death in 1997.

Byars oeuvre suggests a unique convergence of the peaceful and tolerant philosophy of the Quaker religious movement, the ritual of Japanese Shinto practice and the drama of Noh theater. The artist expands upon these influences using platonic geometric shapes and the innovations of minimalism and conceptual art. Like artists such as Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian and Mathias Goeritz, Byars explored the interaction between aesthetics and spirituality by way of abstract art and geometry.

Obsessed with the idea of the absolute through perfection, beauty and timeless values, Byars, in his concern with communication in its purest forms, shares an important affinity with Joseph Beuys, who was an influence, friend and occasional collaborator with whom Byars had copious correspondence — shown here through an illustrative selection. Byars's delicate use of objects, paper, fabric and words are in stark contrast with comparable works made by the German artist — empathies and differences that highlight their independent but complementary personalities.

One of Byars's seminal performances, *The World Question Center* (1969), was a program for Belgian television in which diverse personalities were summoned by telephone and asked to formulate a fundamental and universal question. Like earlier exhibitions on Guy de Cointet and On Kawara, the Byars retrospective, which will travel to PS1 in New York, continues Fundación Jumex's reconsideration of globally relevant artists from the '60s and '70s, key decades for later generations of artist.

by Eduardo Egea