

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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ART IN REVIEW

## ART IN REVIEW; 'Now Playing'

By MICHAEL KIMMELMAN

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D'Amelio Terras  
525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea  
Through Aug. 8

This lively, don't-miss show combines three up-to-the-minute impresarios -- Scott Hug, John Connelly and Daniel Reich -- who specialize in a slice of youth culture. They were invited to share this gallery, dividing it up, each installing his own group of artists, the shows blending together. Many of the artists (Christian Holstad, Bjorn Copeland, Assume Vivid Astro Focus) have already exhibited conspicuously in New York, in events like Mr. Hug's "K48 Teenage Rebel: The Bedroom Show" at Mr. Connelly's gallery last winter, or in Mr. Reich's gallery.

The spirit afoot, as in previous shows by them, blithely mixes media into total environments. The operative analogy here is a treasure hunt. You look for what interests you in the hubbub. Allusions fly to cartoons, hip-hop, television, neopunk culture, pornography and Chinese landscape painting. The whole is inevitably greater than the parts, making the three curators into the real über-artists.

Strength in numbers goes along with the general low-key, anything-goes collective mentality that prevails. This attitude partly harks back to the 1960's, still a touchstone for many young artists, self-consciously or unconsciously, but it's the 60's filtered through the darkening lenses of the 70's, 80's and 90's.

Superficially, we get groovy colors, ad hoc materials, decoration and pattern, coyly combined with vaguely utopian proposals for communal participation: Mr. Hug's contribution, for example, is to invite artists, many of the ones from his bedroom show and occasional magazine, to mix music and images onto CD's and DVD's and then produce jewel boxes or more elaborate containers for the disks. Visitors can listen to the CD's by popping them into a boombox or watch the DVD's on a little television while lounging on bean bag chairs. The disks and their sometimes catchy packaging come in limited editions, democratically priced from \$20 to \$100.

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In Mr. Reich's installation Nick Mauss and Shelby Hughes construct a tent with wood, fabric, paper cutouts and a little garden of crystals, plants and clam shells -- an invitational refuge from adulthood.

Mr. Mauss also makes minutely patterned little abstract drawings. In Mr. Connelly's part of the gallery, Kim Fisher's geometrically decorative abstract paintings derive from the designs of fancy gemstones, and David Altmejd's delicate sculptures of werewolf heads, adorned with glitter, paint, beads and wigs, seem to be glamorously decomposing. They're improbably beautiful. Likewise, Gerard Maynard's colorful paintings on paper, like Rorschach blots, spontaneous looking but in fact painstakingly made over many months, mix generic 60's psychedelia with other sources, including Chinese scholars' rocks, which Mr. Maynard has mapped onto a computer.

Kitsch is O.K. in this nearly egalitarian context. Sissel Kardel's bucolic painting of a watery landscape with nude, loosely done, which in another context might not look O.K. at all, here is passably ensconced in a protective aura of carefree irony.

The difference between the aura of this show and, say, the aura of Katharina Fritsch's austere grouping of heavyweights across the street at Matthew Marks Gallery, or between this show and the survey of 1980's artists at David Zwirner Gallery, is both generational and instructive. The sex is casual, style-conscious and gender bending. Androgyny dovetails with a breakdown of the old separation of the sexes according to materials and methods, like knitting or sewing.

At the same time, the attitude is not really utopian: the undercurrent is pessimistic and sometimes even aloof. There's no expectation of art as an agent of social reform. The artists deal in fashion, which means they traffic in who's in and who's out. Even the slapdash construction belies strict art school craftsmanship and technical fussiness. These are objects to be bought and sold, never mind that they're presented as part of a temporary environment, as if haphazardly.

All of this makes the show not cynical but layered, sociologically and visually speaking. The moment it captures, like all moments, is surely fleeting. Catch it if you can. MICHAEL KIMMELMAN

Photo: An installation featuring works by several artists, organized by John Connelly, one of three impresarios whose efforts fill D'Amelio Terras. (D'Amelio Terras)

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