

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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## Amanda Ross-Ho: Trick-and-Treater

By Doug Harvey *Thursday, May 20 2010*

**One of the frequent critiques** heard from working artists regarding the gallery-and-museum model of art distribution, second only to not getting paid, is the system's unwillingness or inability to capture the tumultuous, synergistic creative energy of work seen *in vivo* — as incubated in the artist's studio. Token institutional attempts at re-creating or documenting the studio environment are often just embarrassing and are always conceptually compromised by their built-in quotation marks.



*PHOTO BY KEVIN SCANLON*

L.A.-based artist Amanda Ross-Ho has taken those quotation marks and used them to knit an empty Trojan horse out of studio detritus, using labor-intensive processes or random accumulations of debris to create a startlingly original inventory of puzzles and absences that somehow smuggle the off-kilter ambience of the artist's workshop inside the white cube. It's a visually arresting, rigorously reflexive body of work that has propelled the Chicago native from her inclusion in the First Annual *L.A. Weekly* Biennial, to the 2008 Whitney Biennial, to her N.Y. solo debut at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in April.

"New York was great, the whole experience was really intense but satisfying," says the artist after her whirlwind Big Apple conquest. "One interesting aspect of the whole thing was a shift in perspective — despite having shown extensively here and even in Europe, some saw

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my N.Y. solo as an altogether debut — so I was faced with the challenge of producing an exhibition that was simultaneously an introduction to my language and a presentation that further evolved the terms that I have been working with for years.”

That language has evolved into an encyclopedic range of excised studio walls (enough to build a half-dozen by my count) bearing ghostly traces of their former "real art" occupants (artifacts that may or may not actually exist, and whose shroud-of-Turin-like residual vestiges are likely to be meticulous shroud-of-Turin-like forgeries). What's news in New York and London is familiar terrain to Ross-Ho's fans in her adopted hometown, where she mounted three solo shows at Cherry and Martin gallery in as many years, as well as a solo project at Pomona College Museum earlier this spring.

Ross-Ho's idiosyncratic visual vocabulary — scaled-up versions of thrift-store T-shirts and eBay knickknacks, black-painted canvas silhouettes of elaborate macramé patterns, large-scale inkjet prints intermingling autobiographical ephemera with found kitsch — has mapped out a powerful new set of distinctly Angeleno material/ conceptual strategies (already being imitated by up-and-coming grad students).

The improvisational nature of her process means that Ross-Ho has only a vague idea of what will constitute her next show at Cherry and Martin, opening the day before Halloween. "It will be a selection of objects and images that will together form an installation ...," she says, helpfully. "Some trickery and some treachery may be involved."

Given Ross-Ho's penchant for translating everything into its opposite, I'd recommend the tricks.

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