

Purvis Young: Paintings from the Street

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida, September 6–November 26, 2006.

Anyone who doesn't 'get' Purvis Young after seeing 'Paintings from the Street' doesn't want to or hasn't taken the time to, as this exhibition offers an antidote for both symptoms, for missing out on Purvis Young constitutes a visual and spiritual and moral deficit. Beyond relying on the labels used to explain Purvis and his images of wild horses, floating heads of angels, soldiers, and musicians, revellers and protestors, cityscapes with hovering insects, pregnant women with padlocks on their heads, guest curator Skot Foreman instructs us best on how to consider Purvis' artwork with one word – visceral. This approach allows the work to be most potent, seducing the viewer to pretend that he or she is Purvis Young, that very sentient medium through whom mystery flows and who offers hope through his fresh eyes in an otherwise desperate place he calls home. How Purvis, to quote museum curator Wendy Blazier, 'records so ingenuously,' mystifies but impassions viewers, but does not explain the artwork. It is to be experienced and this smartly installed exhibition of more than 100 paintings offers visitors an experience.

Gary Monroe



Ted Gordon

The Ames Gallery, Berkeley, California, July–September 2006.

This small show highlighted the changes Southern California artist Ted Gordon is able to ring on his favourite theme: heavily patterned drawings of men's faces. Often interpreted as self-portraits, they share a family resemblance – triangular noses, staring eyes, fleshy or mustachioed upper lips – but, like snowflakes, they're infinitely varied. Rhythmic overlapping lines in marker, crayon, and ballpoint, often deeply incised, render eyes as spirals, scarabs, or rose windows, cheeks and chins as undulating abstract forms, flesh as pink, green, or lavender. This selection of mostly recent work indicates that Gordon is less interested in going somewhere new than in following his perseverating line deeper into his own eccentric process.

Tessa DeCarlo



Dr. Lakra

Kate MacGarry, 95-97 Redchurch Street, London E2., June 9–July 15, 2006.

Coming from a tattoo rather than an art background, Dr Lakra's imagery fits well into the Mexican traditions of the popular and the macabre. Using old photographs and advertisements from vintage magazines, along with found objects, he embellishes their surfaces with tattoo imagery, resulting in an incongruous and kitsch effect. On the edges of Outsider Art, his work is now in the Saatchi Collection.

John Maizels



Damian Michaels

Australian Outsider Art

Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, Sept. 19 2006–February 2007.

Curated by Alan Sisley, Director of the Orange Regional Gallery in NSW and Philip Hammial, champion of Australian Outsider Art, this is a rare chance to view works by over twenty Australian Outsiders. The exhibition is varied, with works ranging from the intricate model buildings of now-murdered convict Javier Lara-Gomez to the complex coloured drawings of Damian Michaels and Liz Parkinson. Some of the artists are already quite well known; the Convey family of Stephen, Sylvia and Tony are well represented as are Anthony Mannix, Gunther Deix, and Hammial himself, while others are introduced to an overseas audience for the first time, including Janine Hilder's startling constructed figures, Travis Mitchell's haunting spiritual pieces and the flowing forms of Andrew Rizgalla. It is hoped that the show may travel to London and it certainly deserves to be widely seen.

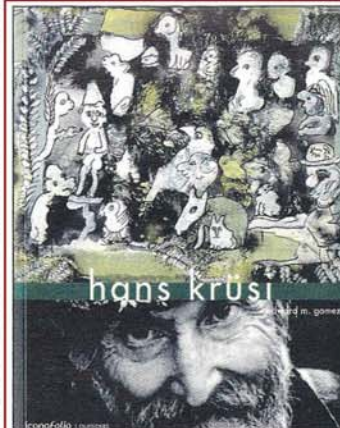
John Maizels



Stephen Convey



Liz Parkinson

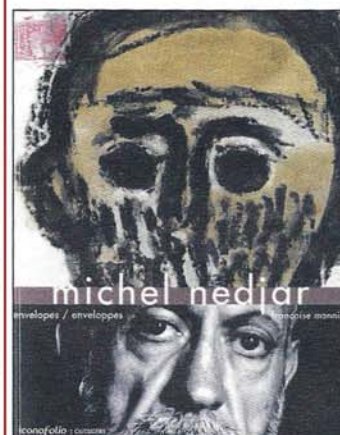


Hans Krüsi,

Edward M. Gomez, Iconofolio Outsiders 1. ISBN 2-35237-009-4.

This is a charming presentation of some of Krüsi's voluminous output, with thirty-five colour plates and a brief account of his life and working circumstances. Selling his work alongside bouquets outside the railway station, he lived a typical Outsider's existence. With his spray technique and multiple stereotyped images, Krüsi sometimes looks like the Andy Warhol of Outsider Art: one could see his dalliance with kitsch as innocent and optimistic, or as being a bit tongue in cheek. Though he has a characteristic lightness of touch, there are glimpses here of a darker side to his work.

David Maclagan



Michel Nedjar: envelopes,

Françoise Mannin, Iconofolio Outsiders 2. ISBN 2-35237-010-8.

This little book, with forty five colour plates and a poetic meditation on the layered 'addressing' of Nedjar's images drawn or painted on used envelopes, is well suited to the format of this new series. Here is a fascinating overlap of inscription: Nedjar's original address overlaid, not only with his impressive figures, sometimes scary, sometimes plaintive, but with his confident date and signature. The scale – slightly less than real size – feels exactly appropriate, and the whole production is excellent, and powerful.

David Maclagan