NEW EDITIONS:

Enrique Chagoya

Enrique Chagoya’s *New Illegal Alien’s Guide to Critical Theory*, published by Magnolia Editions, takes the form of a 94-inch wide mixed media work incorporating pigmented ink and acrylic on multiple layers of plexiglas and amate. Mapping visual links between art history and colonialism, Chagoya’s *Guide* explores the theme of artistic or creative production and its relation to shifting cultural and ideological borders. The *Guide*’s layering of picture planes mirrors the multiple layers of meaning invoked by the intellectual plate tectonics of Chagoya’s method, wherein the borders of various traditions, histories, and languages collide, overlap, and are transformed in ambiguous, often paradoxical relation to one another. As always, Chagoya’s work is less about imparting a fixed message or meaning and more about investigating the shifting, relational nature of meaning itself. Magnolia Editions is publishing the *Guide* as a series, each one of which will vary in both its imagery and construction. As in history, characters and ideas will enter and exit and the landscape will change.

Ralph Goings

*Trio*, a new edition by acclaimed Super Realist Ralph Goings, combines the direct-to-plate copper etching/photogravure technique developed by Donald Farnsworth at Magnolia Editions with layers of UV-cured pigment. The prints possess the rich, precise colors of a Goings painting while also bearing the satisfying plate mark (the indentation made by pressing a metal plate into paper) of intaglio printing. Goings focuses on the play of light, reflections and cast shadows in each composition: “I want the image to speak for itself,” he says in a 2004 interview, “and for my personality not to intrude on the subject any more than necessary to produce the picture.”
Hung Liu has shows this Fall at Bernice Steinbaum Gallery in Miami and Walter Maciel Gallery in Los Angeles, featuring new suites of paintings and mixed media work. Many of the works are diptychs which incorporate both printed and painted elements on linen and wood panels, including elements printed and constructed at Magnolia Editions. The *Rat Years* series takes its cue from the artist’s birth year, the Year of the Rat in the Chinese zodiac. Liu has created self-portraits at various stages of her life: one for each Year of the Rat since her birth and including 2008, another Year of the Rat. Those born during a Year of the Rat are said to be charming, ambitious, and hard-working, making Liu an excellent Year of the Rat poster child. The right-hand panels of her *Rat Years* series reproduce drawings done at the age depicted, giving the viewer a rare chance to see the development of the artist’s style over the years and imparting a profoundly personal, intimate feeling to the series as a whole.

Andy Diaz Hope & Laurel Roth

As part of their collaborative *Future Darwinist* installation, Andy Diaz Hope and Laurel Roth have woven a tapestry edition depicting a cast of iconic fauna drawn from recent developments in genetic research. The artists write that their *Allegory of the Monoceros* marks “the turning point of evolutionary forces from Darwinian natural selection to human-centric evolution.” The branch structure of the central apple tree is based on Darwin’s “Tree of Life,” an early formulation of his theory of natural selection. *Monoceros* is Latin for “unicorn,” and the creatures at the top of the tapestry are narwhals, whose single tusks were once thought to be the magical horns of unicorns. In the place of unicorns or the chimera of classical tapestries, *Monoceros* features Dolly the cloned sheep, a Cerberus made of the first cloned dog fused together with his genetic and birth parents, a mouse with a human ear affixed to its back, and other fantastical but reality-based creatures.
**NEW PROJECTS:**

*Chris Jordan*

Seattle, WA-based artist Chris Jordan has been printing images from his *Running the Numbers* series at Magnolia Editions. Subtitled *An American Self-Portrait*, *Running the Numbers* looks at contemporary American culture by representing statistics via objects: his prints, some as large as five by ten feet, use staggering quantities of objects to illustrate the scale of American appetites. *Toothpicks* depicts one hundred million toothpicks, equal to the number of trees turned into American junk mail annually; *Prison Uniforms* is six ten-foot panels depicting 2.3 million folded prison uniforms, equal to the number of Americans incarcerated in 2005. Jordan writes, “I hope to raise some questions about the role of the individual in a society that is increasingly enormous, incomprehensible, and overwhelming.”

*Monks Chant at Farnsworth Opening*

The opening reception for *Thangka: New Work by Donald and Era Farnsworth* at Turner Carroll Gallery in Santa Fe featured an extraordinary guest performance. Surrounded by the Farnsworth’s tapestries, ten monks from the Drepung Loseling Monastery in Southern India chanted for fifteen minutes in deep, almost supernatural tones, creating a unique and spellbinding atmosphere. The monks were present as a gesture of thanks for the Farnsworths’ support of the Tibet Fund, a nonprofit organization initiated by the Dalai Lama which benefits monasteries, schools, and orphanages in Tibet; the Farnsworths donate a percentage of sales of work derived from thangkas and Tibetan imagery to the Tibet Fund.

*Donald & Era Farnsworth, Mythos Totem II, 2008; Jacquard tapestry, 96 x 75 in.*
“The Missing Peace” in Tokyo

A Conversation with Deborah Oropallo

This conversation between Deborah Oropallo, Donald & Era Farnsworth, and Nick Stone took place at Oropallo’s studio in Oakland on November 14, 2008.

THE WILD WEST

NS: The Wild West series you’re printing at Magnolia grew out of the previous Guise series where you merged 17th century portraits with sexy fetish costumes. How did you get from one to the other?

DO: There is a certain kind of pageantry and adornment that I’m drawn to that runs through both bodies of work. In Guise, I focused on the symbolic function of the 17th century portraits that represented the power of aristocrats, emperors and kings through elements of dress, gesture and other signifiers of wealth and power. I wanted the merged images of women selling sexy fetish and thematic costumes to elevate maids, widows, nurses, and brides above the rank and file and make them the new royalty. I was depicting images of famous women in history that did not exist. When I finished the series with Jersey Girl, there were a couple of cowgirls at the end of that work that I really liked and I wanted to use but I couldn’t find enough equestrian portraits that I liked. It was then that I turned towards the American west.

NS: What does the west mean for you as someone who grew up in New Jersey and moved to California later?

DO: My mistaken image of the Wild West started when growing up in the 50s. There was always this promise of a new frontier, something better, more raw or untamed. Which is what I was thinking when I left the east to come here in ’79. My mom was a painter, she used to copy calendars and sunsets. She did a pastel of these wagon trains crossing the desert which I always looked at as a kid. I was about 4 years old. It was an early work of hers because it said ‘Angie’ on it, she might have been 18. It hung in my grandmother’s house. It portrayed these wagon trains moving west. I still have it. It was completely incongruous in my grandmother’s big dark house. But it had this warm light. It was a small window in all that darkness. Something in that to me, even as a kid, said “leave, go there!”

Of course, the west was not the 50’s portrayal of John Wayne and Roy Rogers. To me, if you ever saw the Jim Jarmusch movie, Dead Man, with Johnny Depp, music by Neil Young– now that is truly what the west was probably like. Which is horrifying, but real. At the same time, I love many things about the west, fictional or otherwise. I went to the rodeo this summer...

NS: You did?

DO: We go every year. We have a house up in Mendocino so we always go.

NS: You go to the rodeo every year?

EF: That really surprises me!
DO: I love going, I have to say. The all-women’s posse is always my favorite part. I went to one rodeo a couple of years ago; it was the year that Johnny Cash died. We’re standing there at 11 o’clock at night, it’s 100 degrees, and they have the all-women posse come out on their horses in costumes. The horses are beautifully groomed and the women are wearing glitter, and the horses are all done up, even their manes are braided. All the cowboys, you see them in the background sitting on the fence, the guys that are about to come out on the bulls, hats in hands over their chests. Traditionally when they start every rodeo, they always have one horse race around the arena full speed with the flag snapping when they play the national anthem. But that year, they were playing Johnny Cash, and it was moving and so beautiful.

I think I want a hybrid of images that might reflect a notion of the pop west that exists today. Although there is a female sartorial humor in this work, I’m not just making fun of it. Is it the female equivalent of the Marlboro Man, symbol or stereotype – I’m not sure.

ON DIGITAL MEDIA

NS: Both the Wild West series and Guise are based at least in part on images downloaded from the web, and modified digitally. Can you talk about the process of developing the work using a computer?

DO: If anything has influenced my work the most in the last eight years, it’s been the web and the use of the computer. By that I mean, not just specifically for my artwork – it has become a quotidian tool: to shop, to travel, see video, to contact people, etc... everything comes from there. It also presents a deluge of imagery. You might start out looking for something, and inevitably, what you find is better than what you were looking for. Just Google “snowman” and you will see what I mean. The web has shown me that reality truly is better than fiction because I couldn’t make this stuff up.

Initially, just the content was coming from the web; it wasn’t, to me, going to be a way to work. That came separately. I was always doing work that was photo-based. Eventually I began using my own photographs. Later, they became silkscreens. The screens allowed me to make large images quickly and retain a certain kind of immediacy to them that I felt painting burdened down – I couldn’t get away from my own hand.

I love a systematic approach to painting. Something to intercept your hand and ideas and throw a wrench in them. Ever since paint-by-numbers, Etch-a-Sketch, spin art you name it; that’s what I grew up on. I mean to me, paint-by-numbers were the first conceptual paintings: all sevens are blue, all sixes are green, and that is how I used color with the screens, one at a time. Layer by layer.

DF: And traditional tapestries, discontinuous weft-faced weaving, are still paint-by-number.

DO: I’ve never been a paint-from-the-hip kind of painter. One who simply emotes on canvas. I have always operated with a different kind of thought process. Which is why a systematic approach is appealing to me. I was always torn in grad school between Elmer Bischoff, because I loved painting, and Jim Melchert, because I really felt like I was in another conceptual place. I wanted the two to meet some-

where, but I didn’t know how. I was always crossing that bridge back and forth, because Jim would say, “why are you going to paint that doormat? Just stick it on the wall.” So the digital work also helped me to traverse that bridge one more time, in a different way.

DF: You’re in control. Imagine trying to instruct Kodak to do this for you: ‘I’m submitting these five pictures and I’d like you to eliminate the skin tone’ – you had no control when you had to send things off to a lab. Certainly, doing it in a darkroom would have been extremely difficult – or painting it onto different layers of film with liquid opaque. Working digitally, you get to go back and work on the underlayers, where if it were strictly a layer upon layer painting, there would be no undo factor; if you wanted to change something, you’d have to paint over and repaint. In this case you can go back in
and edit layers that you worked on five days ago.

NS: You talk about this work as photography, but at the same time you approach the work as a painter. Does digital work lie somewhere in between the worlds of photo and paint?

DO: I have gone over every inch of these images – not only just finding them, because these came from hundreds of websites of just hats, boots or horses and I put them together – but I go over every inch of that image as if it were a painting, considering the way that everything relates to everything else, the color, form, composition, opacity, movement....

People ask me, ‘why do you refer to these as paintings?’ It’s hard for me not to see them as painted after twenty years of eyeing up a canvas in this way.

To me if I could separate them, photography is to painting like a foot is to a footprint in the sand. What you see is what you get; there’s a certain truth there. I think the digital medium is more fiction, and that’s why it has much more of an affinity to painting; it’s malleable and it’s closer to that camp, but it also has the reproductive qualities of photography. So I feel the two kind of excluded sisters are reconciled in the digital image. I don’t think people realize how close it is to painting because they have some notion of a handmade thing. The computer is just a conduit between my thinking and the art object. Just like a brush, pencil, camera, or chisel would be.

The software is funny, all the tools in Painter – it’s a pretty cheesy program, really – I love the way they co-opt all the terminology like tracing paper, the paint bucket, and my favorite: divine proportion – when it’s really none of those things. Options with names like “Auto Van Gogh,” Pop Art Fill,” or Corel Masters make you kind of embarrassed to even be there! But I still see potential there; which reminds me of Ross Bleckner and how he used an airbrush. When you think of an airbrush, you think of the side of a bus or a motorcycle; like you can’t possibly do anything good with an airbrush. And yet you look at those paintings Bleckner did around 2000 and they’re amazing. He took that tool and he did something else with it.

INSPIRATION

NS: The back-and-forth between painting and photography has been developing for many years. As a painter, was there a turning point when photography spoke to you like a painting would?

DO: The day I saw photography really hit the big time was 1989 in the Whitney Biennial, the Starn Twins’ Stretched Christ. That was the first time I looked at photography and thought, ‘ok, this work has broken out of photography and into the realm of painting.’ It broke some kind of barrier. Their work was very painterly, raw, and by taping pieces together they conquered scale. Christian Boltanski and Annette Messager moved photography even further towards installation... I think there was a big shift at that time. Chuck Close, who’s kind of the pivotal one because he was there then and he’s there now – in the 60s, for James Rosenquist (originally a billboard painter) or Chuck Close, Warhol – the only way to make a photograph big was to paint it. That was the only way to generate a big realistic head: they didn’t have big printers, big paper or the technology. Chuck Close was doing digital before there was digital – he was breaking things down into pixels,
and so it’s no surprise that he would actually use this method now.

When I think about when I first started making art – I guess I was always making art as a kid, every artist does – I felt like I really didn’t know what art was until I saw paintings in the museum. The Whitney, to be specific. That was the 60s, I was 13. My sister brought me to New York where we saw all these painters: Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg, Warhol. And I thought, “oh my god, this is incredible, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life.” Good thing I didn’t notice they were all men! Then I wondered, how did painting get here? So I studied art history in college and went to Europe to study painting. But the point I’m getting to is this: In the 60s, all the painting I was looking at – and painting was always my first love, still is, even though I’m really doing photography here – all those painters: Rosenquist, Rauschenberg, Johns, Close, Warhol, they were all using photography for painting. So that’s the time I came to modern art. Then by the time I got to grad school it was the 80s. Still, painting was grabbing from photography. Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, David Salle, Ross Bleckner, Terry Winters, Anselm Keifer: these artists were not depicting images directly like the pop of the 60s. It was more just source material, a point of departure. Then in the 90s the tables turned; photographers like Jeff Wall, Andreas Gursky, Cindy Sherman, Mariko Mori, Gregory Crewdson, Uta Barth; lots of them were taking big cues from painting. A Gursky photograph of a grey carpet or soccer field could be as abstract as a Richter painting.

NS: I read an interview with Ralph Goings where he said that he didn’t like going to shows, because he would get so involved with the problems that other painters were working on that he would get wrapped up in them and forget about the problems he was trying to address in his own process. It sounds like that is not an issue for you.

DO: No, I love going to see shows in New York. I love looking at art as much as making it. It’s just a huge part of the dialogue, I think. It’s great to be in the company of great work. As an artist looking at art, you understand how difficult it is and what it takes, so you appreciate greatness in others. Last year when Gilbert and George were here, they claimed that they don’t look at art – that’s kind of ridiculous. You can’t be in a vacuum. If their work is in a museum, they are walking past other work to get there.

That is how I fell in love with painting as a kid: New York museums. All of the artists that have influenced me and whose work had a tremendous impact at the time I saw it, have this in common: each artist pushed the boundaries of what I thought good art was capable of. I can name every one of those firsts: the first time I saw Philip Guston, Bruce Nauman or Rebecca Horn, Christopher Wool, Sigmar Polke, Christian Marclay, or Matthew Barney – and every one of those was an experience of being in a museum, looking directly at a solo body of work. It always had that same impact: it’s overwhelming, inspiring, and sometimes you may not even like it, but you can feel it working. It will stop you in your tracks. But it can’t come from a book or looking at someone’s art in a magazine... you have to be in the room. It’s a feeling you aim for in your own work but as a viewer looking at other work, it’s equally satisfying.

NS: What have you seen recently that gave you that same feeling?

DO: There was a great Thomas Demand show at 303 last year. On that same trip to New York, there was a piece that this Chinese artist [Zhang Huan] was doing at Pace. Inside the gallery they built a huge concrete platform. It was literally ten feet high and maybe fifty by thirty feet wide.
You couldn’t see up on top of it as you walked in. There was just this big cement stage taking up almost the entire space. You could barely see an artist sitting on a mechanical bar with a seat attached that was going to roll across the whole block. He was sitting there with ashes and a spoon, dropping them slowly onto the concrete. The gallery built a catwalk high above the whole thing... once you climbed up there, you started to see that the ashes made a photographic black and white image out of three tones of ash; a white, a gray, and a black, basically. The concrete was the tablet. But the drawing could just blow away if you opened the door. Its forcefulness had to do with its scale, the materials, the weight, its portrayal of death, beauty, and real time. It was both delicate and massively heavy, permanent and fleeting.

NS: What was the last show that you saw in San Francisco that was impressive?

DO: One piece that I had been anxiously waiting to see – and it did not disappoint – was After ‘Invisible Man’ by Jeff Wall. That is one of the best photographs of the decade. There was another piece I was also waiting for... I had wanted to see it when it was shown in New York, but I didn’t make it. It was the Douglas Gordon video at SFMOMA of the elephant. Gordon shot footage of an elephant in Gagosian gallery. First you see the elephant laying down asleep; the video captures the elephant gradually trying to stand up. He circles it slowly with his camera... you feel its age and skin folds in detail... you watch how much time and effort it takes to lift its own weight, you see a close up of its eye, the size of a plate, and it’s just the most beautiful, compelling moment. You may think you know what an elephant is... but you have never seen an elephant in this way. An artist can illuminate life in this way that nothing else can.

EF: Well, I think artists are not just intellectual. They’re responding to things on so many different levels –

DO: And verbal is not usually one of them!

EF: -- the intuitive, the spiritual, and just many, many different levels. And you can look at the work later and realize that the artist caught and expressed the essentials of the time – it’s like you realized it before, but maybe not consciously.

DO: I often think, anytime you have intention, a ‘big idea,’ it’s like the death knell. For me, art is more like suddenly noticing something, more than making something.

DF: I remember Chuck Close said, “inspiration is for amateurs.” If you sit around waiting for an idea, waiting for the inspiration, and saying, aha, now I know what I’m going to paint – forget it. You have to be painting and then it just happens. It comes to you only in the doing of it.

DO: In the same vein, I find writing about art a most daunting task. No matter what you write, when you re-read it, it never rings true. It’s difficult to put something so intangible into words. You can’t recreate the moment of how intuition operates while making art. Art is experiential, that’s all. The best education you can have about painting is to look at one.
ON THE WEB: Magnolia Editions Blog

Visitors to Magnolia Editions’ website will notice a new link under “News”: the Magnolia Editions Blog is now online and updated weekly with photos documenting the latest activities at the studio. Recent posts include photos of new test weaves for Chuck Close, Hung Liu’s opening at Walter Maciel Gallery, and the Combat Paper Project in the Magnolia paper mill. The blog also features links to reviews of gallery and museum shows of work created at Magnolia Editions, including this interactive, panoramic view of a recent tapestry show at Sylvia White Gallery:
http://panomatics.com/nextgen/la/sylviawhitengallery/

SHOWS & EVENTS:

Gail Severn Gallery
Contemporary Group Show
New works by contemporary artists, including three pieces from Deborah Oropallo’s new series printed at Magnolia Editions.
December 24 - February 2, 2008
Opening reception Friday, December 26, 6-9
Mon - Sat: 9 - 6, Sun 12 - 6
400 First Avenue North
Ketchum, ID 83340
(208) 726-5079
http://www.gailseverngallery.com

Live Edge Design
Open house/book signing, Dec. 6
Open house for Live Edge, LLC, which creates furniture from wood salvaged locally from the urban forest, and

book signing for Zen Architecture: the Building Process as Practice by Paul Discoe. Tapestries by Hung Liu, Squeak Carnwath, William Wiley, and Donald and Era Farnsworth are currently on display in the showroom, which was plastered by the Natural Builders.
Saturday, December 6, 3-7
2311A Magnolia St
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 251-8889
live@liveedge-prefab.com
http://www.liveedge-prefab.com

Walter Maciel Gallery
Rat Years
New works by Hung Liu including elements printed at Magnolia Editions. This show features self-portraits from years designated “Year of the Rat” in the Chinese zodiac, beginning with the artist’s birth year and continuing through 2008.
November 1 - December 20, 2008
Tues - Sat: 11 - 6
2642 S. La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(310) 839-1840
info@waltermacielgallery.com
http://www.waltermacielgallery.com

Bernice Steinbaum Gallery
Cycles
New works by Hung Liu incorporating painting and mixed media, including elements printed at Magnolia Editions.
November 8 - December 27, 2008
Opening reception Saturday, November 8, 7-10
Tues - Sat: 10 - 6
3550 North Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33127
(305) 573-2700
http://www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

Hillside Terrace, Daikanyama
The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama
An exhibition inspired by the messages, vision and values of the Dalai Lama, curated by Randy Rosenberg and featuring 88 contemporary artists from 25 countries, including Squeak Carnwath, Chuck Close, Lewis deSoto, Donald and Era Farnsworth, and William Wiley.
October 17 - November 9, 2008
Hillside Forum, Hillside Plaza & Studio Hillside
18-8 Sarugaku-cho, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo, Japan
support@missingpeace-ja.org
http://www.tmpp.org

Brian Gross Fine Art
Ed Moses: New Work
New paintings by Ed Moses.
November 6, 2008 - January 3, 2009
Reception for the artist: Thursday, November 6, 5:30 - 7:30
Tues - Fri: 10:30 - 5:30
Sat: 11 - 5
49 Geary St, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 788-1050
gallery@briangrossfineart.com
http://www.briangrossfineart.com

Pierogi Gallery
Andrea Way created one painting each day in 2007; all 365 paintings will be exhibited together.
November 14 - December 22, 2008
Tues - Sun: 11 - 6
177 North 9th St
Brooklyn, NY 11211
(718) 599-2144
info@pierogi2000.com
http://www.pierogi2000.com