

## 'Paper Beats Rock' at cherrydelosreyes

**N**amed after the children's game, "paper, rock, scissors," the exhibition at cherrydelosreyes aims to raise the status of the lowly paper to the performative heights of the other media used to mark it up such as paint and ink. The metaphor of the game expands within the show as paper is not just the supporting medium, but is also the subject of many works. The exhibition's connection to the children's game opens up ways to playfully turn the phrase "paper beats rock," investigating the synthesis of pop culture and the artistic process.

Comprised of works on paper, sculpture and video installation, the most notable pieces were those that push the boundaries of the medium both as cultural artifact and art medium. Like a visual double entendre, works such as Libby Black's *Pucci Shoes* and *Private Dancer* and Charlotte McGowan-Griffin's *Night-Sea Crossing* offer up paper as a sculptural form, embodying within its illusion of dimensionality a cultural discussion of what is represented. Black's paper sculptures project objects of desire: Pucci-designed shoes (heeled slippers in the signature Pucci

Ansel Krut, *Bloody Finger*, 2004, ink on paper, 15" x 11", at cherrydelosreyes, Los Angeles.



fabric design of multicolored swirls) and a Louis Vuitton boom box complete with headset and rock music tapes (among them Tina Turner's *Private Dancer*). Her choice of luxury objects are notable for the iconic status they had in the 1980s and 1990s, which eventually led to the cheap, mass reproductions of them in recent times. As both art object and paper object, Black's "knock-offs" render the pieces as more precious while simul-

taneously maintaining the kitschy sensibilities of its current street counterparts. McGowan-Griffin's ton-*lo* light boxes, *Night-Sea Crossing*, present another dual meaning as the effect of shadow images

against the luminescent blues and greens elicits a fantasy window. Both Black and McGowan-Griffin works push the use of paper beyond its intended two-dimensional form. In the process, the images they embody reveal new ways to view paper as an idea.

William Basinski and James Elaine's collaborative super-8/video work *Trailer for 1000 Films* presents paper as the subject. The two-minute video shows the fluttering of paper during a ticker tape parade, with businessmen and women shuffling their way through the mounting snow of paper in the streets.

Accompanied by a melancholic, electronic music composition by Basinski, the slow down affect of streams of paper, wafting and coiling in the breeze as they float down appears lifelike. The somber notes of the composition really meld with the video when the paper is seen in the aftermath of its glory, as trash that the daily pedestrian trudges through to get to work. There is a note of finality to the tone of the piece that raises paper to act as a symbolic concept of society and the passage of life.

There are more traditional two-dimensional works on paper which seem to act as counterparts to its other manifestations. Elliott Hundley and Ansel Krut hold the more traditional end of the spectrum as both put images onto paper in their works. Hundley presents the process of accretion on paper both in terms of ideas and medium. His piece, *Medea's Craft*, is heavily worked in some places to the point of wearing through the paper. An agglomeration of images, the work evokes a dreamy meandering reflection of his process. Krut's satirical, comic drawings have a punk sensibility in the rough lines and subject matter that reveals their lineage to flysheets and broadsheets.

David X. Levine's series of abstract shapes and forms is the most sophisticated in terms of pushing paper as a two-

dimensional work. The drawings appear sculptural as the heavy layering of colored paper and graphite creates a noticeable form on top of the white background. On first glance, the pieces

appear to be collages but closer inspection reveals otherwise. In *Fred Neil*, Levine takes the subtle sculptural elements in his work to a more explicit three-dimensional level. When viewed as a series, the reading is minimalist: the pencil on paper becomes the essential character that defines the qualities of each piece.

By tracing the meaning of paper as both medium and subject, *Paper Beats Rock* navigates the ways in which paper has permeated culture and society. The title is a playful platform for metaphor, pulling other secondary facets of the works to the fore: the relationship of paper to the art idea in both form and content.

—Christina Valentine

*Paper Beats Rock* closed August 14 at cherrydelosreyes, Los Angeles.

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