

Art in America

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REVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS



Sherrie Levine: *Cadéau*, 2006, polished bronze; *Flatiron*, 2001, bronze. Dog: 5 1/2 inches high; at Paula Cooper.

NEW YORK

Sherrie Levine at Paula Cooper

Sherrie Levine's decision to call her exhibition "Men, Women and Dogs" was both tactical and descriptive. The title is borrowed from a collection of James Thurber drawings published in 1943 with an introduction by Dorothy Parker. Dour Clement Greenberg reviewed the book, noting that Thurber's drawings express "the profoundest dissatisfaction with contemporary experience and, by inference, with society," a judgment that Levine (who has appropriated Greenberg's titles in the past) might have applied to Greenberg himself.

In her new work, Levine revisits the re-photographed photograph and its investigation into authorship and originality, which she famously began with *After Walker Evans* and *After Edward Weston* (both 1981). Her *After Edward Curtis* (2005) consists of five black-and-white photographs that have the fetishized allure of their sources—portraits of Native Americans by a photographer known to have retouched his work by removing inapposite objects and introducing "authentic" ones, in the interest of preserving a vanishing culture's history. Levine's two six-part suites of *Dark Bark Collages* (2005) were ranged on opposite walls of the gallery's smaller space like

a *Via Crucis*. They were introduced by *Dolorosa 1* and *2* of the same year, a pair of iris prints of faded tin retablos bearing the image of the sorrowful mother of Christ. In a nod to Thurber, Levine added *After Man Ray: Man and Woman* (2005), her photographs of Man Ray's Dada diptych of an egg beater and its shadow, and a lamp holder with clothespins and shadow.

In the larger space was *Nature Morte (Suite III)*, 2004, 16 framed sheets of handmade paper, each 24 by 36 inches, with the look of white moiré silk. They were distributed on opposite walls and like the bark collages recalled Levine's reprise of her earlier plywood "knot" paintings, shown in the same vaulted space in 2003. *Nature Morte* communed across 16 bronze sculptures (all 2006), distributed in pairs on eight vitrine-topped white pedestals, which were positioned in two rows in the center of the space. Every pair faced its twin. There were only four different sculptures in total, each appearing in quadruplicate. A patinated casting of a human jawbone seems to refer to and complete Levine's jawless *Human Skull* of 2001. A polished bronze *Flatiron* facing a bird-dog with game in its maw together form a work titled *Cadéau after Man Ray's 1921 flatiron*, though here minus the tacks. The highly polished bronze *Head* is based on a phrenologist's model, and *Coat*

is a disembodied, surrealist topcoat resembling a tree trunk. All have antecedents in such cast and editioned kitsch as Levine's parrot, *Loulou* (2004), and her *Unhorned Steer Skull* (2002). The new work finds Levine in good form, offering what amounts to a magisterial set of consequences of her previous work. —Edward Leffingwell

Anne Deleporte at Roebing Hall

In this impressive exhibition with the unusual title "0," French-born New York-based artist Anne Deleporte presented a group of recent painted collages on aluminum panels, two murals and a video, which address in various ways notions of copyright, originality and appropriation.

The video projection, *Whistling*, features hypnotic, nearly abstract images of spotlights scanning a concrete wall, accompanied by whistling sounds appropriated from the soundtrack to Fritz Lang's "M."

At the core of the exhibition, however, were the painted collages. Deleporte, who has an extensive exhibition track record in Europe and has lately been showing more frequently here, is known for photo works using layered images and manipulated surfaces in which she treats the emulsion as a kind of paint. In this show, she used a reductive process in the murals and in the aluminum panel pieces, which range from 2 feet square to long horizontals about 2 by 10 feet. After covering each surface with pages from newspapers, she overpainted most of the panel with flat, pale blue latex house paint. This luminous tone, used throughout the exhibition, evoked a hazy summer sky and also lent the entire exhibition an ethereal, dreamlike atmosphere.

On each of her expansive surfaces, she leaves unpainted only certain small fragments of the newspaper's photographic images and bits of text. In some ways, the technique recalls

works by veteran *décollage* artists such as Mimmo Rotella, Jacques de la Villeglé and Raymond Hains. Deleporte similarly relies on chance juxtapositions of found photos to make new and sometimes jarring compositions. Differing from the randomly torn and fractured *décollage* works of her predecessors, however, Deleporte's pieces are deliberately and carefully formed by isolating selected images in the expanses of celestial blue.

While the photo fragments in most pieces are tiny, an enormous thumbprint several feet high dominates *Photo Fresco Mural*, which measures 10 by 11 feet. Appropriated from a billboard advertisement for an ink brand, the work suggests a



Detail of Anne Deleporte's *Large Photo Fresco Mural*, 2006, latex paint and newspaper on wall; at Roebing Hall.

theme of immigration control and identity. Art-historical references abounded in the show, especially in the most ambitious and striking work on view, *Large Photo Fresco Mural*, covering three walls of a side room. Amid the vast blue field, images of well-known artworks appear as if to retell the history of art. In one area, a singer from a Degas pastel contrasts with an Olmec stone head nearby. In another place, figures on an ancient Egyptian frieze play counterpoint to a detail of a Pollock drip painting. Elsewhere, Man Ray's iconic 1930 photo, *Tears*, has a renewed emotional impact as Deleporte isolates the face's over-mascaraed eyes and glass tears, emphasizing the subject's heavenward gaze. —David Ebony