

# Whitney Bedford

Revue de presse  
Press review



Miami • du 7 au 10 décembre

## Sea, art & money

> Art Basel Miami Beach

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Depuis quinze ans, Art Basel Miami Beach, l'édition américaine de la célèbre foire suisse d'art contemporain, attire sous le soleil les grosses galeries internationales et leur aéropage de collectionneurs qui profiteront, cette année, de la réouverture du Bass Museum et de l'Institute of Contemporary Art. Le secteur principal réunit 200 exposants d'art moderne et contemporain, dont beaucoup d'Américains : Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects y expose les nouveaux paysages de Whitney Bedford, mettant en scène une végétation dorée sur un aplat de ciel bleu parfaitement abstrait [ill. ci-contre]. Le secteur Nova accueille quant à lui des galeries proposant des œuvres de moins de trois ans. Kabinett met à l'honneur 24 solo shows (Anni Albers, Etel Adnan, Haegue Yang...) ou expositions thématiques, telle la photographie japonaise des années 1950 chez Annely Juda (Londres). Survey, enfin, explore 16 projets historiques, à l'instar du focus de la Hales Gallery de Londres sur les jeunes années du peintre Frank Bowling, né au Guyana en 1936. **A. M.**

### Whitney Bedford *The Left Coast (Tall Tales)*

2017, encre et huile sur lin et sur vinyle, 127 x 127 cm.

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Culver City (Californie).

**Prix : 21 000 €**



Vue d'exposition Whitney Bedford, *Bardo Parade*, Art : Concept,  
Paris, 10 février – 1 avril 2017  
Photo : Claire Dorn / courtesy Art : Concept, Paris

## WHITNEY BEDFORD — GALERIE ART : CONCEPT

📌 Critique February 18, 2017 — By Guillaume Benoit

*La galerie Art : Concept présente, jusqu'au 1er avril, une très belle exposition de la peintre Whitney Bedford, *Bardo Parade* qui brouille les sens et, derrière une beauté mystique et radicale, perturbe les attendus de la représentation.*

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Whitney Bedford —  
*Bardo Parade* @ Art :  
Concept Gallery from  
February 10 to April 1.  
[Learn more](#)

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Maîtrisant une multitude de techniques à la perfection, Whitney Bedford, artiste états-unienne née en 1976 développe depuis près de dix ans une peinture plurielle qui l'a conduite à intégrer des collections prestigieuses à travers le monde. Une peinture hautement séduisante qui joue des contrastes entre minutie et approximation pour aboutir aujourd'hui à une affirmation de sa singularité à travers des paysages à nuls autres pareils.



Il émane des compositions de Whitney Bedford une solitude qui est au cœur de sa démarche, isolant sur la toile (ou le bois qu'elle utilise dans ses derniers travaux) des éléments détachés de leur écosystème. Icebergs, animaux, livres abandonnés, membres isolés et blessés, ses sujets variés témoignent bien souvent d'une fragilité ou d'un danger à venir. Habitée et soufflant un vent de romantisme, sa peinture emprunte à la tradition artistique autant qu'à l'imaginaire pour nous plonger dans un univers dont elle redéfinit les règles. Le beau flirte chez elle avec l'horreur, le sublime, objet d'étude et d'expérimentation, se fait source d'épuisement. Avec cette nouvelle exposition, Whitney Bedford explore le Bardo, cet état de conscience alternatif développé dans certaines obédiences du bouddhisme. Après avoir présenté *Arcadia*, terre utopique d'harmonie, en 2008 dans cette même galerie, c'est donc à un nouveau pan légendaire que l'artiste se confronte.



*Whitney Bedford, Hellbenders, 2017, encre et huile sur bois, 91,5 x 122 cm*  
*Photo : Evan Bedford / courtesy Art : Concept, Paris*



Lié à la mort, mais aussi au sommeil, le bardo renvoie à la vie d'un esprit abstrait du corps, en attente d'incarnation. Il exclut ainsi le corps, mais pas le sentiment. À l'image des peintures de Whitney Bedford dont les traits, d'une finesse remarquable, se voient affublés de traces expressionnistes approximatives qui dynamitent le réalisme pour figurer l'adaptation, la focale du regard en mouvement. Sa nature foisonnante de détails se déploie sur des fonds minimalistes, composés d'une à deux couleurs qui inventent des paysages-paradoxes. Ceux-ci renvoient inmanquablement à la flore du désert américain, ces épais branchages qui sont autant d'îlots de résistance à la force de désolation d'une sécheresse, sans chaleur mais tout aussi impitoyable.

*Bardo Parade* rend ainsi compte d'un œuvre aussi frontal que profond qui convainc d'emblée par sa capacité à créer un vocabulaire graphique au carrefour d'une multitude de genres et d'influences. Entre complexité et épure, Whitney Bedford invente un paysagisme radical qu'on ne peut que longer sans jamais saisir l'opportunité d'en pénétrer la nature plane. Dépouillée de toute perspective, elle se fait décor immobile d'un songe irréel et immatériel, paroi symbolique d'une route que l'esprit ne peut observer qu'à la dérobade, emporté dans un élan qui pourrait bien être celui du bardo.



Whitney Bedford, *The Night Ahead*, 2017  
Encre et huile sur bois — 91,5 × 122 cm  
Photo Evan Bedford / courtesy Art : Concept, Paris

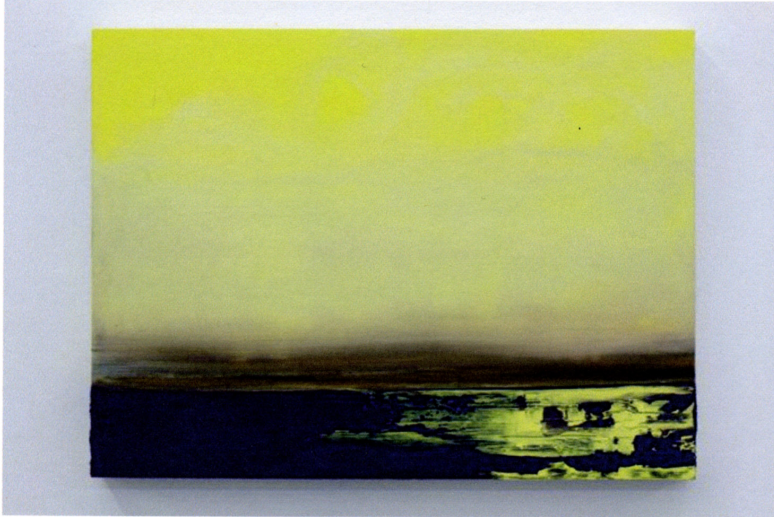
*Alors cette parade qu'évoque le titre de son exposition pourrait tout aussi bien se voir déjouée en une fixité qui ferait du regard dans le voyage psychique ce qui, par son mouvement, défile sous nos yeux. Ici, le fond recouvre littéralement le motif ; la peinture qui le figure, plus épaisse, est comme creusée par le premier plan, renversant avec délice la perspective. Comme inversée, la représentation serait alors le négatif d'une image perçue d'un autre côté, accentuant ce sentiment d'être témoin du regard d'un autre. La réactivation, au cœur de cette présentation, d'une série précédente avec un bateau pris dans la tempête vient s'intégrer à la rumeur d'un monde ballotté et proche de chavirer. Un dernier retournement qui fait de chacun des tableaux le miroir vertigineux d'un imaginaire qui nous laisse sur le bord de la route, révélant ainsi toute sa cruelle beauté.*



# Los Angeles Times

December 8, 2011

## Art review: Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter



Whitney Bedford's hauntingly beautiful new works at Vielmetter draw from a strand of maritime painting tradition exemplified by J.M.W. Turner, incorporate a bit of the Gerhard Richter signature smear, and cast a loving backward glance at old engraved illustrations. They are temporal and stylistic hybrids that hold together spectacularly well.

Bedford has been painting shipwrecks for nearly 10 years and most of her recent works could loosely be categorized as such. Her real subject is the sublime — nature's fearsome, awesome power to evoke it and paint's exquisite potential to describe it, to become it. "Untitled (Yellow Swell)," among the smallest panels at just 18 by 24 inches, depicts a placid sea with electrifying intensity. The ocean is a thick slab of purple beneath an acid yellow sky; the stillness belies an atmospheric toxicity.

On the grand scale of the largest paintings (up to 8 by 12 feet), the L.A.-based Bedford keeps the horizon extremely low, texturing the roiling sea with dense black ink hatchmarks, dangling in the sky oddly languorous streaks of lightning, tilting ships in the tempest and staging a consistently tense friction between flat brown planes and luminous turquoise gestures, concrete gray and that buzzing, ozone-charged yellow.

A small group of glass vials and a vaporizer (made in collaboration with Dane Mitchell) are more esoteric, and less interesting, attempts at capturing a scent specific to the expanse and volatility of the sea. The paintings more than manage that visually, delivering both a jolt of immediacy and a lingering, time-release intrigue.

-- Leah Ollman

## Artist Whitney Bedford draws on shifting landscapes

**Whitney Bedford, whose solo show at Culver City's Susanne Vielmetter opens soon, paints tumultuous landscape scenes that often mirror her changing emotions.**

By Margaret Wappler, Los Angeles Times

November 10, 2011

Metaphors and visual symbols play a big role in conceptual landscape painter Whitney Bedford's life. Take what happened in 2001. The daughter of an international businessman and a flight attendant, Bedford impulsively jumped on a plane to follow a man she had a crush on to Antarctica. When she arrived in Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world and a port to the South Pole, she discovered he wasn't there.

"I was devastated," she said. A master's in fine arts candidate at UCLA at the time, she decided to stay for a couple of weeks and make the best of it. "I took flying lessons and used it as a metaphor for coming back up" from her emotional doldrums.

Now Bedford, 35, works out of photographer Uta Barth's former studio on the grounds of the Santa Monica Airport. But it's not aircraft that Bedford paints as much as shipwrecks, icebergs and lightning strikes, each one an active, often tumultuous, representation of her mood. Icebergs symbolize loneliness; shipwrecks are upheavals in her emotional life. When she paints fireworks, it means she's in love.

A handful of the paintings focusing on lightning and accidents at sea, some as large as 8 feet by 12, will be on display beginning Saturday at Susanne Vielmetter, Bedford's second solo show with the Culver City gallery.

Drawing on her architectural training as an undergrad at Rhode Island School of Design, Bedford thinks of her paintings as grids first. She charts a meticulous seascape and ships with delicate, skeletal sails. But at some point before the painting is finished, she erases part of her work and fills it in with spontaneous, chaotic swoops of paint, a harrowing process that has the ability to make or break the piece.

"Conceptually, the paint is the destroyer," Bedford says, pointing at one of the stormier seascapes. "It sinks the image."

For Susanne Vielmetter, it was Bedford's risky process, as well as her balance of feminine and masculine aesthetics, that made her want to represent the young artist.

"Whitney's paintings don't have a specific feminist agenda," Vielmetter said, "but there's an awareness of historical issues, and a handling of those issues in a highly idiosyncratic way that I like. She's playing with the male history of the ship, typically seen as homage to conquering new frontiers and wartime conflict."

And she's watched Bedford become more ambitious with scale in the last few years, making grander fields for the outbursts and disruptive brush strokes in her paintings.

"Whitney is an inheritor of the gestural brushwork of the abstract expressionists," artist John Baldessari wrote in *Art Review* in 2005. "She has a unique sense of color . . . I like the heroic romantic aura her work emanates."

Earlier in the year, Bedford traveled to New Zealand, Australia, Beirut and Jordan, among other places, often with friends in the dance-punk collective LCD Soundsystem. When she returned in the summer, she started making the bulk of the work for her new show.

"Travel is how I recharge," Bedford said. "I'm very nomadic that way. It's all about shifting my landscape."



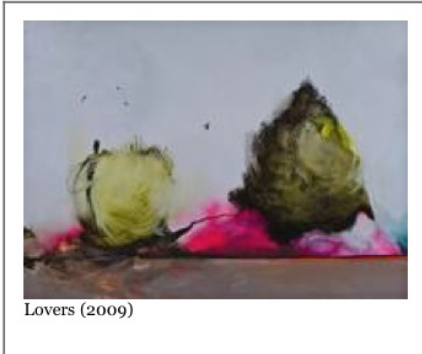
Portrait of painter Whitney Bedford outside her Santa Monica studio. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times / November 6, 2011)



# Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

By Christopher Miles

published: July 02, 2009



Lovers (2009)

You have to give yourself over to Whitney Bedford's paintings, which combine gestural brushwork with more discrete marks

in what the exhibition checklist says is "ink" but appears to be some kind of marker pen, on panel. You have to be open to the possibility that within the clumsy, cartoonish and seemingly simple, you might be able to access the sublime, beautiful and

complex. That's the opportunity upon which these lovely works deliver. A few, more drawn than painted, are more explicitly figurative and deal with Cleopatra at the moment of her reckoning, but the rest, more painted than drawn, are less specifically referential or representational than allusive. Bedford's paintings evoke Goya, which sounds grand anytime someone makes such a claim, and perhaps doubly so here given that most of Bedford's paintings are essentially mashes of smudges, daubs and dashes — more clearly akin to the works of late-modern painters like Philip Guston (in both his Abstract Expressionist and cartoonish phases), or Jules Olitski, who created something of a fusion of Ab Ex and Pop sensibilities. But they do in fact evoke Goya's plays of compositional turbulence, and atmosphere, and his working of point of view in relation to objects and the horizon to generate a sense of simultaneous placidness and trouble brewing. Bedford does a lot with a consciously limited vocabulary — mostly horizontal rectangles divided between ground plane and backdrop by low horizon lines, usually no more than a fifth of the way up from the bottom of the panel. She then drops in lumpy yet prickly forms — mounds of marks — either cut off at the bottom of the panel so as to foreground them; cut off by the horizon line so as to push them into the distance; or cut flat at the bottom so as to make them sit on the plane in middle space. But she tweaks them — in their relation to one another, in slight variations of shape, and in the variety of marks that comprise and orbit them — so as to achieve surprising variety, like a person giving a single word many meanings by means of inflection. Some suggest ships approaching (or sinking) in the open ocean (not surprising, as they often too are evocative of Turner); volcanoes, rocks or hillocks jutting from the land or seascape; bodies on a floor or bed; herds or hordes thundering in the distance; or explosions going off too close for comfort. Bedford succeeds at creating paintings that are pleasurable, humorous and even sweet, while also



## Whitney Bedford

### Arcadia

18 nov. 2008 - 10 janv. 2009

**Paris. Galerie Art: Concept**

L'Arcadie, région de la Grèce au cœur du Péloponnèse au bord de la mer Egée, historiée de monts marbrés et schisteux, tire son nom d'Arcas, patronyme proche de celui d'arktos voulant dire « ours » en grec ancien...

Arcas, fils de Zeus et de Callisto, fut changé à sa mort en constellation — celle dite de la Petite Ourse. Le dieu des bergers, Pan, serait également originaire de cette région. *L'Arcadie* (1590), essai pétrarquiste d'analyse des sentiments dû à sir Philip Sidney, brode autour des personnages mythologiques. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, à la suite de Cervantès, associe *L'Arcadie* (1781) au paradis terrestre. Les peintres n'ont cessé de traiter du thème, de Greuze à Fernand Léger.

L'Eden — âge d'or, temps fort, des copains, de l'aventure ou de l'innocence — n'est pas seulement prétexte à exploration picturale, il donne matière à réflexion et cette réflexion porte plus qu'à son tour sur la matière du tableau. La peinture n'est-elle pas un rêve révolu ? Beaucoup de bruit pour rien ? Que de temps perdu pour peu de gain ? La peintre ou la peintresse ignore, ou feint d'ignorer, ces questions, évite l'aporie, cela vaut peut-être mieux ! surmonte l'inhibition qui tue le projet dans l'œuf.

Whitney Bedford, pour être plus précis, ne se situe pas, n'a jamais fait dans le premier degré de l'artiste face à son motif. Elle trimalle dans son chevalet des munitions conceptuelles, de quoi donner le change, le cas échéant, en se référant à l'histoire de l'art ou à la sienne propre.

Elle fait dans la peinture de genre : des paysages, des marines, des ciels étoilés de volatiles succincts, suggérés, hachurés, sur fond rouge, par exemple, d'autres fois ultra violet, placés plus haut qu'à l'habitude comme pour faire un clin d'œil au regard même de l'observateur. Romantique expressive, elle lisse, vernit, astique et cire ses toiles composées de grandes plages monochromes hérissées de traces de brosse à reluire.

Lorsque Whitney Bedford le décide, elle dessine. Lorsqu'elle dessine, elle peint encore. En noir et blanc. Des thèmes du bon vieux temps de l'éternel retour. Des faits divers et pas si variés que cela. Elle donne volontiers dans le sous-genre des naufrages géricaldiens et des radeaux de rescapés médusés inspirés par des clichés trouvés dans de vieux journaux, recadrées et démesurément agrandies.

Des gravures d'Epinal nous présentent des noyés et des victimes d'hydrocution croqués dans le style des xylographies d'urériennes revues et corrigées par le pop'art. Whitney Bedford fait du Hogarth, pas du William, plutôt du Burne.

Démocrate, comme tout un chacun, Whitney Bedford a mis en exergue à son exposition la première page du NY Times avec une photo du nouveau couple présidentiel, celui qui cassa la baraque dans l'Alabama comme dans l'Illinois, quelques jours avant le vernissage de la galerie Art : Concept.

Les peintures pures alternent avec des dessins rétro, comme ce portrait de moustachu 1900, au look vaguement proustien. Les traces de pinceau sont des coquetteries assumées par l'artiste. La mythologie du Nouveau monde se juxtapose à celle de la Grèce antique. Une jeune femme, nommée non pas Désir mais Léda, rapproche une bestiole informe de sa bouche. Est-ce du pâté d'alouette ou du foie gras d'oie ou un tout autre cygne ?

### Œuvre(s)

#### Whitney Bedford

- *Arcadia*, 2008. Encre et huile sur bois. 101,5 x 132 cm.
- *Blue Birds*, 2008. Encre et huile sur bois. 38 x 46 cm.
- *Untitled (Landia)*, 2008. Techniques mixtes sur bois. 46 x 56 cm.
- *Untitled (Yellow Storm)*, 2008. Encre et huile sur bois. 56 x 66 cm.



# LIVE FROM LOS ANGELES

Sonia Campagnola

IT DOESN'T COME AS news that the Los Angeles art scene is growing fast. It's evident in the sheer quantity of new galleries, events and museum exhibitions. But LA's core strength is in its artists.

The art world generally aggregates in circles around galleries — everywhere it seems except Los Angeles. LA is different. Although galleries are the ultimate meeting point, for many reasons — mainly because LA's expanded geography is difficult to navigate — art communities here often emerge around artist studios and art schools. Large industrial complexes are rented relatively cheaply and then divided internally into smaller spaces, each taken by an artist. Even if we are past the time when groups of artists might share missions and manifestos, it often happens that artists with similar attitudes come together in the same workspace. In a way, Los Angeles is to New York what Berlin is to London. Like Berlin, LA has a high concentration of artists; and like Berlin, LA might not

have the strongest market, but it's a place where art gets made.

One example of such an artist studio complex is the one shared by Stephen Rhodes, Sterling Ruby, Nathan Hylden and a handful of other budding LA artists. Rhodes is now showing at Overduin and Kite. Lisa Overduin — former director of Regen Projects for almost ten years — and Kristina Kite opened their own gallery recently. They don't have a full stable of artists yet, but are building it gradually, seeking artists of any age and working within any media, although with an unstated but evident preference for conceptual work. The Stephen Rhodes exhibition is their third show. Inside, the gallery space is loaded with images and sounds. The central piece, *Ruined Dualisms* (2007), is a video installation featuring a hypothetical duel projected from 4 different vantages onto 2 screens (back and front). The same sequence — the preparation for the duel — is shot over and over again; but the fatal moment, the

gunshot, never occurs, even as the sound component builds to an unfulfilled climax. You have the frame but not the picture, the setup but not the action; irony and frustration are the engines of the work. Every moviegoer is familiar with such suspense-building techniques, in films as divergent as *Kill Bill* and *Inland Empire*. But finding this cinematic move in an art gallery, deconstructed in a three-dimensional environment made of screens, paintings and crumbling ruin-like sculptures, is unusual and intriguing to say the least.

## WAY OUT WEST

LA is far away. Its charm and free spirit come from this factor too. But out in the far West, galleries are often looking at Europe as a destination and resource. LA artists take part in major international exhibitions and biennials, and they are represented at fairs such as Frieze and Art Forum Berlin. It is in Europe, more so than New York, that LA galleries discover





artists and conduct business.

Marc Foxx is one such LA gallery that pursues new European art. Their show of emerging Belgian artist Cris Brodahl consisted of black-and-white and sepia oil-on-linen paintings with wooden side panels that suggest a constructivist sensibility. Brodahl's paintings have a dark mood and seem to come from a "new conceptual existentialism" that is especially evident in continental Europe. Her odd portraiture aesthetic is reminiscent of early 20th-century photography and religious iconography. If the figuration in these portraits is a moment of reality, the brushstrokes that erase portions of the anatomical features push them into abstract space. The wooden panels, hiding the paintings from each other and enclosing them within a delimited space, accentuate the impression of segregation and punishment. Terms such as devotion, ritual, esotericism and introspection come to mind.

At MOCA's Focus series — dedicated to young LA artists — Matthew Monahan also pursues a Mitteleuropean-type vocabulary that references Thomas Schütte as well as Expressionism. Curated by MOCA's Assistant Director Ari Wiseman, the exhibition consists of a large grouping of sculptures and works on paper presented as an installational whole. They are anatomical studies that recall the historical avant-garde in their multifaceted geometrical understanding of the volumes and masses of body parts.

Instead of presenting his sculptures in the classical museum vitrine format for which he is known, here Monahan more successfully shows them released from the glass case. They achieve expressive freedom as pure sculpture, disinheriting what still remained in his work of the relic and cabinet-of-curiosities cliché.

### SLEIGHT OF HAND

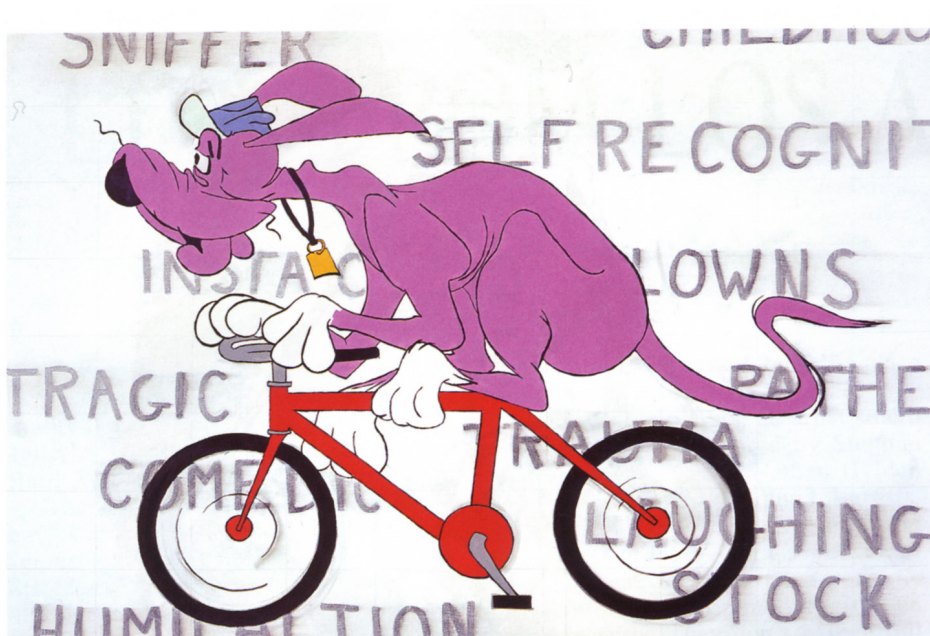
At Cherry and Martin — a small but forceful young gallery freestanding in West LA among a row of shops that sells everything but art — Whitney Bedford shows her new series of paintings sourced from the iconography

From top: **WHITNEY BEDFORD**, *Houdini (Pink Shadow)*, 2007. Ink and oil on unprimed paper, 188 x 188 cm. Courtesy Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles; **RUBEN OCHOA**, *Infracted Expansion (I cannot tell a lie, lightning struck down the first one and my father chopped down the second)*, 2007. 8 wood pallets, bonding cement, wire mesh, burlap, rebar. Installation view. Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects.

Opposite: **MATTHEW MONAHAN**, exhibition view at MOCA, Los Angeles, 2007.







of magician Harry Houdini. Houdini here embodies as metaphor the will to escape from the rules and constrictions of the external world, and, moreover, the notion of challenge as an ideal to pursue.

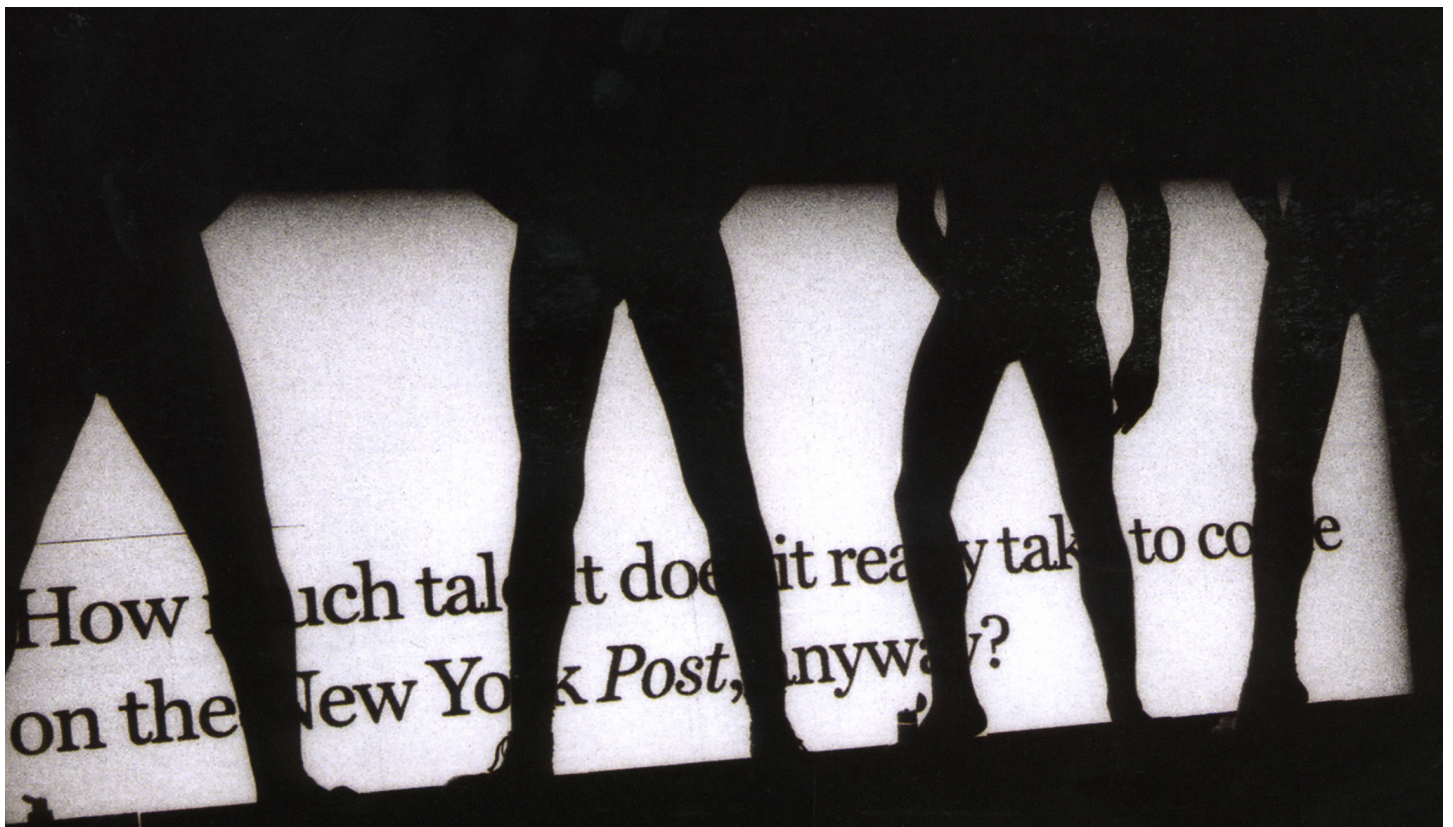
As in her previous shipwreck paintings, the subject matter here is not just a means to painting, but is central to the comprehension of her work — this is also why the artist thinks of herself as a “conceptual painter.” Made with ink and oil on paper, the subject is merely suggested with quick brushstroke gestures. This technique emphasizes the flimsy physicality of the paintings, reinforcing the idea of escape and challenge. Referencing these issues, Bedford simultaneously imbues her work with a grand mythos and evasiveness.

Tricks and magic are in the air. Concurrent with Francis Alÿs’s inspiring solo show at the Hammer Museum, their project room features works by up-and-coming New York artist Jamie Isenstein. This show develops from a prank by P.T. Barnum who, in his American Museum in New York in the mid-1800s, fooled visitors with a sign that read “This way to the Egress.” Visitors that didn’t know that “egress” meant “exit” followed the sign thinking to enter another room featuring an exotic bird. Instead they found themselves outside the museum. Isenstein performs in the costume of an odd bird, staring at visitors from a gold-framed window opening in the wall, as if inside a painting. Constantly shifting from a fictional plane to a real one, her work confounds our belief in what we see. The exhibition recalls an amusement park with Surrealist objects, such as a door’s keyhole through which one can see one’s own eye reflected in a mirror, or an empty bird cage with a constantly swinging perch, suggesting a small phantom companion.

Clockwise from top: SEAN LANDERS, *Buford*, 2007. Oil on linen, 127 x 187 cm. Courtesy China Art Objects Galleries, Los Angeles; STEPHEN RHODES, *Ruined Dualisms*, 2007. Installation view. Courtesy Overduin and Kite, Los Angeles. Photo: Joshua White; CRIS BRODAHL, *The Collage (series)*, 2007. Oil on linen, 127 x 98 x 6 cm. Courtesy Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles; JAMIE ISENSTEIN, *This Way to The Egress (detail)*, 2007. Installation at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Opposite: DASH SNOW, *Untitled (Penis Envy)*, 2007. Installation, 8mm film on DVD, performance. Courtesy Peres Projects, Los Angeles/Berlin.





Isenstein's show, curated by Ali Subotnick, coincides with her New York solo show at Andrew Kreps. The two exhibitions together make up a strange world of humorous and invisible presences, not too engaging and not too pretty either. Her work satisfies the order of the day: a bit of magic, performance, and low-budget but well-crafted sculptures and objects.

#### RETURN OF THE REAL

Ruben Ochoa's work provides a reality check. For his first solo show at Susanne Vielmetter he realized two large installations and several photographs, built upon observations of the surrounding urban landscape. A young LA-based artist, Ochoa sees this show as the continuation of a work from 2006, when he placed at LAXART a large picture of a freeway wall that looked like a piece of real estate transposed from the street to the gallery. A similar maneuver is explored in the new main work at the gallery. A set of pallets covered with concrete serve as bases for an unnatural landscape of concrete stumps with steel rebar armatures like

skeletons. Through the lens of the LA landscape, Ochoa expresses a widening dichotomy between nature and artifact.

After three years, Sean Landers returned to LA for a second solo show of five new paintings at China Art Objects Galleries. They are a continuation of an LA-centric narrative started almost ten years ago at Regen Projects and then developed in several stages from an original group of clown paintings. In two of them, Nick Nolte is portrayed as a "huffer," his clown-like face spotted with spray paint as a result of sniffing it. Landers says, "Sometimes people, when drunk or high, do things that are regrettable. That humiliation is interesting to me since so much of my writing has used that access point into the mind of the viewer." The painterly crudeness evokes irony but also pathos. Three other paintings revolve around cartoon characters from the late '60s, when Landers was a child, combined with his signature texts in the background. In typical Landers fashion, the paintings function together as a multifaceted self-portrait of the artist.

#### GLITTER IN THE GLOOM

At Peres Projects, darkness is exposed at the heart of glitter. Dash Snow's show includes a number of new works, but the exhibition's centerpiece — a performance that served as subject matter for the Super 8 film and photos on view — can't be exhibited. About 30 guys, recruited from craigslist.org, were invited to the gallery at night to masturbate in a line, one after the other, while the artist and his assistants shot pictures. Snow felt his privacy was violated last year when New York Magazine published an article that probed into his personal sex and drug habits. So a large illuminated screen with the text "How much talent does it really take to come on the New York Post, anyway?" was the surface on which Snow's performers came.

The actual art on display can't replicate the un-sexy and pathetic sweaty dreariness of that night-time environment, nor does it satisfy the questions that come to mind watching the reactions of other viewers, some shy, some voyeuristic, some speechless. Like it or not, this is a show that we will be talking about for a while. ■

*Sonia Campagnola is Senior Editor and US Editor of Flash Art*

NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2007 **Flash Art** 103





## WHITNEY BEDFORD

*Baltimore, Maryland, 1976. Lives in Los Angeles.*

Whitney Bedford's paintings are a surprising cocktail of sea battles and boardings, portraits of seadogs and [...] backgrounds where wood panels are made extremely smooth by multiplying the coats of paint. It makes them seem dematerialized, as if sprayed in quick successive layers. Some of the scenes seem to have been painted by a gliding hand in a caressing stroke, leaving just a faint felt-tip-pen trace. The more descriptive action scenes are violently inscribed onto the panel by brush or felt-tip strokes forming a bush-like figure: the painting's nucleus. (*Yves Brochard*)

**Represented by:** Art:Concept, Paris; Cherrydelosreyes, Los Angeles.

**Image: Merry Blackbeard, 2004. Ink and oil on panel, 46 x 38 cm.**



## Les allusions fantomatiques de Whitney Bedford

Whitney Bedford vit à Santa Monica. Est-ce pour cette raison qu'il a du goût pour les histoires de mer, de pirates et de canonnades ? Ce jeune artiste – né en 1976- s'est attaqué à une tâche plutôt inattendue, ressusciter la peinture de marine, avec combats navals, mâts brisés, vagues vertes, coups de vent et de feu. Il peint à l'huile sur bois, avec une dextérité certaine et un plaisir non moins certain, qu'il s'efforce de communiquer au spectateur. Mais comme il est d'aujourd'hui, les toiles jouent sur l'inachevé, l'équivoque, les allusions fantomatiques. Est-ce l'amorce d'une œuvre dense ou seulement l'amusement d'un jeune artiste brillant ? Il faudra attendre ses prochaines courses pour le savoir.

**Galerie Art:Concept, 16, rue  
Duchefdelaville, Paris-13<sup>e</sup>. M° Chevaleret.  
Tél. : 01-53-60-90-30. Du mardi au  
samedi de 11 heures à 19 heures.  
Jusqu'au 6 novembre.**



# whitney bedford

self-portrait/autoritratto



Today, paintings of shipwrecks and battle scenes have once again become an expression of both the importance of passion and despair as well as the passion of despair. They are connected to a hidden, or imagined, imagery of our time. Academia has marked a place in history for naval painting as much as it has editorialized it. I like coming from this school and trying to update it, or even capsize it, in a way that only a hybrid of educations and living on the edge of the Californian coast can do. My paintings are battlegrounds on which structures and meanings are torn apart. They start from the old academic pictures of battles at sea and lost ships. I draft the pictures, sometimes even composing a hybrid of different old battles to form a new, collaged picture. I then utilize this as a base structure on which my process of mark making can further exaggerate or otherwise comment on the image. This vocabulary of drawn and painted marks reclaim the image as something new, something mine. I re-mark the source to remember it. This process creates a dialogue between old

and new images—it pulls apart and rebuilds. It's a push and pull between direct depiction, imagination, and memory. Because memory is individual, subconscious, and always shifting, I allow myself to be liberally subjective with my materials. Sometimes it is the paint itself that sinks the images. Other times, I push the paintings to reduce their images to abstract forms or landscapes that connote a different space, one aged by time and impossible to revisit. My work is characterized by the friction of change and metaphors of desperation. They come from a history of words and places, of accidents and attacks, of love and loss. In their storytelling and mark-making, they capture a passion that becomes a violence that, in turn, becomes chaos. This element of chaos is also what is beautiful about them. The paintings become then ex-votos of things lost in "beautiful" accidents.

Whitney Bedford was born in 1976 in Baltimore, Maryland. She lives and works in Los Angeles. Photo Credit: Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles.





▲ Whitney Bedford *Untitled (Rio)*, 2004, ink and oil on panel / inchiostro e olio su pannello, 40 x 50,8 cm. Photo by / Foto di Joshua White, jwpictures.com.

◀ Whitney Bedford *Long Field*, 2003, ink and oil on panel / inchiostro e olio su pannello, 36,8 x 60,9 cm.

## whitney bedford

Oggi i dipinti di naufragi e scene di battaglia sono tornati a essere espressione sia dell'importanza della passione e della disperazione, che della passione della disperazione. Sono connessi a un immaginario nascosto o immaginato del nostro tempo. L'Accademia ha assegnato alla pittura navale un posto nella storia e l'ha documentata. Mi piace il fatto di provenire da quella scuola e di cercare di attualizzarla; ma anche di capovolgerla, come solo un ibrido di influenze e la vita sulle sponde della costa californiana possono fare.

I miei quadri sono campi di battaglia sui quali vengono fatti a pezzi strutture e significati. Antichi quadri accademici che raffigurano battaglie sui mari e navi perdute sono il loro punto di partenza. Faccio uno schizzo del quadro antico, a volte una composizione ibrida di vecchie battaglie per formare un'immagine nuova, un collage. Quindi lo utilizzo come struttura di base sulla quale il mio processo di imprimere segni può ulteriormente esasperare, oppure commentare, l'immagine. Questo vocabolario di segni disegnati e dipinti recupera l'immagine

come qualcosa di nuovo, di mio. Ri-marco il materiale originario per ricordarlo. Tale processo crea un dialogo tra immagini vecchie e nuove, demolisce e ricostruisce. È un avanti e indietro tra rappresentazione diretta, immaginazione e memoria. Poiché quest'ultima è individuale, subconscia e sempre mutevole, mi concedo di essere largamente soggettiva con i miei materiali. A volte è la pittura stessa a far naufragare le immagini. Altre volte forzo i quadri a ridurre le immagini che rappresentano a forme o paesaggi astratti che connotano uno spazio differente, invecchiato dal tempo e impossibile da rivisitare.

I miei lavori sono caratterizzati dalla frizione tra mutamento e metafore della disperazione. Discendono da una storia di parole e luoghi, incidenti e assalti, amore e perdita. Nella loro narrazione e nel loro imprimere segni catturano una passione che diviene violenza, che a sua volta diviene caos. Questo elemento di caos è anche la loro bellezza. Allora i dipinti diventano ex-voto di cose andate perdute in "grandiosi" incidenti.

Whitney Bedford è nata nel 1976 a Baltimora, Maryland. Vive e lavora a Los Angeles.

Traduzione di Laura De Tomasi. Credito fotografico: Black Dragon Society, Los Angeles.