

## CONTINUING AND RECOMMENDED EXHIBITIONS

February, 2005



Rufino Tamayo, "Women of Tehuantepec,"  
1939, gouache on canvas, 5 x 7".

A small but fascinating survey of **Rufino Tamayo's** paintings and prints displays the mastery of color and ancient imagery practiced by the late Mexican master. Tamayo revered Mexico's rich heritage of Pre-Columbian and folk art. Among the most striking pieces are the many Mixografía prints, a technique originated by printer Luis Remba. According to Remba, "The method allowed the artist to create a collage or maquette out of various materials, such as charred wood, rope, cotton and other natural substances which we would then cast in copper as a printing plate."

In Tamayo's iconic print of floating watermelon slices, the simple images, luminous colors and multi-faceted texture combine to create a shimmering still life. The selection of paintings seems uneven, but there are treasures, including the tiny canvas, "Women of Tehuantepec" (1939). With a few well-placed lines, masterful modeling and an instinctive use of color, Tamayo depicts peasant women juxtaposed with the omnipresent watermelons. A huge painting covers one wall, an odd monochromatic landscape that seems atypical of Tamayo's oeuvre, but it shows the depth of his output. Other paintings contain fragmented images that echo his preoccupation with Pre-Columbian forms in glowing reds, yellows, purples, blues and greens. Among the strongest of is "Figures" (1970), where two archetypal figures seem to engage in a conversation and are knit together by vibrant and distinctive coloration ([The Museum of Latin American Art \[MoLAA\]](#), Long Beach).

**Janet Rosener** gives voice to her attraction to Buddhist philosophy through ethereal Zen-like oil on canvas paintings. A series of small, untitled and washy images, created more through reduction than addition, is her way of expressing beauty in its most serene and minimal form. Using an iridescent silver paint along with encaustics, each painting exudes a scumbled wetness, contrasted by mystically dark umber silhouettes. The work does not reference nature but effects a quiet sense of natural entities whether sky, mist, forest, or ocean waves. Rosener's soft application of paint creates timeless images and meditative atmospheres



Janet Rosener, "Untitled, Catalog No. 15604,"  
2004, oil on Italian cotton over panel, 21 x

([Peter Blake Gallery](#), Orange County).

11".



June Harwood, "Siege", 2002,  
acrylic on canvas, 50 x 50 inches.

Hard edge abstraction is what **June Harwood** has been associated with for decades, so the appearance of even a subtle shift in aesthetic is cause for comment and reflection. Thus dual color masses modulated by active brushwork and the suggestion of a horizon line explode into landscape and even narrative associations that initially seem out of character. But this injection of personality and subjectivity has to be regarded as a bold risk, and therefore significant given the late stage of an already notable career ([Louis Stern Fine Arts](#), West Hollywood).

In his first solo exhibition Los Angeles-based artist **Jeffrey Rugh** presents watercolors and gouaches depicting fictitious and highly stylized interiors. The works quote from different periods in art, architecture and interior design, yet Rugh juxtaposes these elements seamlessly to create believable spaces. The rooms Rugh depicts are crowded designer furniture, sculptures, as well as painting, but they are unpopulated by inhabitants. His colorful palette and well drawn sense of space also allows one to image what might exist beyond the frame. Rugh displays a great sense of style that complements his knowledge of both medium and subject matter ([SolwayJones](#), West Hollywood).



Amir Zaki, "Spring Through Winter," 2004,  
ultrachrome archival photograph, 57 x 45".

Amir Zaki uses photography to document, and the computer to make the original subtly less real. It is often difficult to tell just what has been changed in an image. There are three new series of work here: cantilevered architecture shot from below, swimming pools shot from above, and interior fireplaces shot straight on. While obtuse angles and distorted architecture have entered into Zaki's past work, in these images there is a greater

[MAK Center](#), West Hollywood).



Although born in Hong Kong in 1950, Tseng Kwong Chi has spent most of his artistic career in New York. He was the photographer who documented many of Keith Haring's performances, as well as those by other artists associated with the East Village scene. By what we see here, there is also a performance element in his own work. In 1979 Tseng dressed up as a mysterious Asian Ambassador wearing a Mao uniform, sunglasses and official visitors photo ID. He began to photograph himself in this costume in front of recognizable monuments such as the World Trade Center, the Statue of Liberty, the Grand Canyon, as well as in numerous international locations.



Tseng Kwong Chi, "Hollywood Hills, California," 1979, silver gelatin print.

The black and white prints that make up the "Ambiguous Ambassador Series" are both humorous and poignant commentaries about tourism and borders. Tseng worked on this series throughout the 1980's, until he died from AIDS in 1990, prematurely ending what likely would have been a long and successful career ([Stephen Cohen Gallery](#), West Hollywood).



Ray Martín Abeyta, "Ofelia y la Llorona," 2004, oil on linen, 64 x 80".  
Photo: Bill Phelps

**Ray Martín Abeyta** was raised by Mexican parents in a 300-year-old New Mexico town, is non-religious but loves the rituals and imagery of his ancestral Catholicism, has a Native American tattooed on his arm, lives in Brooklyn, first painted in the Baroque style, and belongs to a hot rod club. It all shows in his work. In his West Coast debut, the artist confronts issues of Latino identity, circa 2005, from colonialism to lowrider culture, with lushly vivid large-scale paintings. Using stylized realism, he provokes the desire to discover what he is all about ([Patricia Correia Gallery](#), Santa Monica).

An upside of the unforgiving medium of watercolor is that it can be used to create mysterious surfaces that play well against the literalness of photo realism. Such is the tension in large scale (5-6 feet) works by **Cindy Craig**. She captures the insides of our favorite hangouts: discount retailers with row upon row of products and ambling shoppers, or fancier type department stores with their high ticket cosmetics.



Cindy Craig, "Candy," 2004, watercolor on paper, 38 1/4 x 51".

She treats the rhythms of color and shape abstractly. There is a color field composed of repeating "Tab" drinks, and a skin product display begins to have the feel of cotton candy or lace--that is until every painterly detail coalesces, at which point you just marvel at the painting chops ([Hunsaker/Schlesinger Gallery](#), Santa Monica).

To imagine **James Richards'** works, think of a very open, almost expressionist cross hatched lattice of yarn or twine strung across a hollow rectangle. Then imagine an artist applying thick, oozy pigment on this lattice here and there to suggest an abstract pattern or some random flora or seed pod. The rest of the image--and there is no real image per se--is hinted at by bands of yarn and bright twine randomly coiled around the stringed infrastructure. Yarn bunches and opens, lines up and expands, ebbs onto the edge of thick painted sections. You can always see through the panels into the supporting wall. Richards is at times unabashedly decorative, but uses the stuff of "low" craft to create sophisticated, enchanting works ([Shoshana Wayne Gallery](#), Santa Monica).



Cai Guo-Qiang, "Painting Chinese Landscape Painting," digital rendering of proposal for Miramar Air Show day program. Performed October 15, 2004, Six T-34 skywriting propeller planes.



Shizuka Yokomizo, "Untitled (Hitorigoto)," 2002, 13 x 13 3/4", digital C-type print.

Despite the diversity of media, from painting to video to various forms of public art, including Hiroshi Fuji's recycled toy collaboration with the children of San Ysidro and Cai



Guo-Qiang's explosive displays, curator Betti-Sue Hertz employed a steady thematic undercurrent for **Past in Reverse: Contemporary Art of East Asia** that provides continuity to the exhibit. The lure of Yiso Bahc's "Wide World Wide" is stereotypically eastern--elegant order, subtlety and quiet beauty. But there is another, and crucial, level--the title's nod to "www;" the map's omission of the name of the continents, countries and influential cities; the list of unknown cities; the supplemental illumination. Bahc's qualms about access and inclusion in global culture are firmly grounded in the twenty-first century. Hertz includes an interspersing of historical objects from the museum's collection that provides viewers' with a wider context for reflecting on the contemporary artists' blend of cultures and traditions ([San Diego Museum of Art](#), San Diego).



Y. David Chung, "Black Belt Jones," 2003, oil stick and graphite on paper on wall.  
Photo: Roger Marshutz.



Rico Gatson, "The Art of Battle," 2003  
9 monitors, DVDs, plywood, and mixed media, TRT 10:00.  
Photo: Roger Marshutz.

Organized by New York's Studio Museum in Harlem and curated Christine Kim, Black Belt is an in-depth look at an intersection between African American and Asian American cultures from the 1970's and '80s. The artists gathered here spanning from the emerging to the well established and include among others: David Hammons, Mark Bradford, Kori Newkirk, Paul Pfeiffer, David Dao, Patty Chang, and Cynthia Wiggins. Taken as a whole, the work on view confronts and engages you with issues of race and class by drawing on images and themes associated with popular culture and contemporary life. Among the most interesting individual pieces is Clarence Lin's "Housing Project: The Prison Industrial Complex," a room-sized replica of a prison cell ([Santa Monica Museum of Art](#), Santa Monica).



Benjamin West ranked as one of our premier artists at the birth of the Republic, and was especially known for his interpretation of literary subjects. A group of three paintings and related preparatory studies inspired by English poet Edmund Spenser's Elizabethan-era masterpiece "The Faerie Queen" are not only an excellent sampling, but instructive of West's own torn allegiance between colony and crown (

[Timken Museum](#), San Diego).

Benjamin West, "Fidelia and Speranza,"  
1776, oil on canvas, 53 3/4 x 42 5/8".  
The Putnam Foundation, Timken Museum of Art.

A career survey of works by Robert Graham include teenage half torsos with pubescent genitals exposed (which we are told are not, by the way, sexual), as well as his amazing line drawings of reclining nudes, sometimes undressed, sometimes wearing just shoes that make them look even less covered and more "watched" than if completely nude. Also included will be two experimental videos not seen before and dealing with--what else---the female nude. It is very hard to fault an artist with such a sensuous, gifted understanding of the female form; Graham is a draftsman's draftsman. It is also very hard to buy the idea that this work is not part of long line of voyeurism celebrated by the Classical tradition ([Ace Gallery](#), Beverly Hills).

