



I LIKE THE ART WORLD AND THE ART WORLD LIKES ME
NEW YORK

Although commenting on an insider game, art about art—or in this case art about the artworld—does document a certain moment in time, often with wit and irony. *I Like the Art World and the Art World Likes Me* gathers works that variously riff on the idea of art about art [EFA Project Space; January 14—March 5, 2011]. Curated by Eric Doeringer, an artist whose “bootlegs”—essentially quickly made diminutive copies of famous contemporary artworks—are also featured in the exhibition, *I Like the Art World and the Art World Likes Me* spatially implies no hierarchy, although Doeringer puts forth three distinct categories in the show’s catalog—The Appropriators, The Documentarians, and The Critics. Titled after Joseph Beuys’ 1974 performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*, in which he cohabitated with a live coyote in the René Block Gallery in New York to make a political statement, Doeringer’s exhibition showcases artists who in some cases bite the hand that feeds them.

Some works are parodies or recreations of specific artworks, such as Nancy Drew’s feminized takes on the stereotypical masculine action painters. Her garishly orange-hued *Island Fire*, 2008, for example, reworks an Arshile Gorky painting with flock and glitter. Aneta Grzeszykowska’s photographic recreations of Cindy Sherman’s film stills are more straightforward. Had they been done by a male artist, they might have acquired another layer of interest, flipping the gender association on its head like in Drew’s canvases. Although Doeringer’s knock-off canvases work best when he sells them himself—as in the “everything must go” approach of his installation at the GEISAI art fair in Miami in 2007—they nevertheless make one ponder whether art, in the end, is just another commodity.

Doeringer’s work also makes an appearance in the documentary wing of the show, with a copy of his *Cremaster Fanatic Fanzine*. Fans of the lionized Matthew Barney submitted their own artwork for the zine, which the website *CremasterFanatic.com* further expands upon. Less tongue-in-cheek is the work of Loren Munk,

a painter who gathers information like a slightly mad art historian. In *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, 2006-2010, he maps the location of artists’ Brooklyn studios with colorful lines that form the roots of a tree emanating from a map of the borough. *Dead Write*, 2008, is slightly more sinister: it identifies Manhattan critics’ homes on one side, and those of prematurely dead artists on the other. Although “No correlation is implied” appears in bold letters at the bottom of the work, it still conveys the distrust or love/hate relationship that some artists feel towards critics.

It is the so-called Critics, however, who put forth the show’s most scathing contributions as they spare neither particular artists, nor the artworld’s machinations. William Powhida and Jennifer Dalton’s *Our Condolences*, 2008, six note cards made in response to the recent crash of the art market are both comical and completely on-point. One features a cartoonish drawing of a tombstone reading “Your Career 2001-2008 R.I.P.” and the phrase “I am so sorry for your loss of representation.” Pablo Helguera, whose practice encompasses performance, writing, and the hybrid form he calls performance lecture, presents several works. *The Pablo Helguera Manual of Contemporary Art Style*, 2007, is meant to help art professionals navigate the artworld’s slippery terrains, with helpful chapters including *What to Say When We Don’t Like the Work*. Along similar lines, Helguera’s online advice column *The Estheticist*, also available in print form as a pamphlet, had me snickering at times, although his opinions for the most part are on the money.

Transcending the overarching theme, Filip Noterdaeme’s performative *HOMU Booth*, 2008, stands out for its dadaesque take on the museum as revered institution. Originally staged in his Brooklyn apartment, Noterdaeme’s Homeless Museum of Art transforms into something resembling Lucy’s psychiatry station from *Peanuts* to deliver both institutional and market critique, as Noterdaeme engages the visitor with a cerebral show-

and-tell of the objects in its collection. The most cynical, yet perhaps painfully accurate piece in the exhibition is William Powhida and Jade Townsend’s *Art Basel Miami Beach Hooverville*, 2010, a graphite on paper drawing shown here as a limited edition print. The intricate work depicts artworld players lining up for free bread while commenting on the chaos around them in an imaginary shantytown outside of the convention center. While over-the-top, it certainly sums up both the financial meltdown and the egregious behavior seen over the last few years in the artworld, a system most artists are complicit with no matter how much they critique it.

—Chris Bors

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Alex Gingrow, *Younger Than Jesus made me throw up in my mouth a little bit. Okay. A lot.*, 2009, graphite and acrylic on paper, 22 x 30 inches (courtesy of the artist, Brooklyn); William Powhida + Jade Townsend, *Art Basel Miami Beach Hooverville*, 2010, archival inkjet print, 38 x 50 inches (courtesy of Eric Doeringer, Brooklyn)