



Lead

***From Here to Over There:
The Transubstantiation of the
Private(s) in the Culture of the Mass***

by Jeffrey S. Librett PAGE 31

Postmortem

***The Theory of Whiteness:
An Interview with Tom Johnson***

by Domenick Ammirati PAGE 42

Book Passage

Theater, Revolutionary or Not

by Chris K. Lee PAGE 50

First Degree

Thomas Hirschhorn: Camotopia

by Sue Spaid PAGE 10

The Third Degree

State of the Disunion:

Hans Haacke and T.J. Clark

by David Carrier PAGE 22

Six Degrees

***The New Zombie: Tupac-n-Biggie
in Clichy-sous-Bois***

by Gean Moreno PAGE 28

Reviews

Anya Gallacio by Brendan Threadgill **4** (Blum & Poe, Los Angeles CA December 10, 2005 · January 14, 2006) **Linda Besemer** by Frances Colpitt **4** (Angles Gallery, Santa Monica CA October 21 · November 26, 2005) **Sol LeWitt** by Malik Gaines **5** (Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles CA November 12, 2005 · January 7, 2006) **Ali Acerol** by Ezrha Jean Black **6** (Warschaw Gallery, San Pedro CA October 6 · November 25, 2005) **Graciela Sacco** by Ellen Berkovitch **7** (Stephen Cohen Gallery, Los Angeles CA November 10 · December 24, 2005) **Kai Althoff** by Alex Segade **7** (ACME, Los Angeles CA October 15 · November 12, 2005) **Tony Feher** by Laura Richard Janku **8** (Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco CA 4 November · 16 December 2005) **"Perfect City Telepathy"** by Erik Bluhm **9** (Egyptian Theater, Hollywood CA September 18, 2005) **Wayne Gonzales** by Aneta Georgievska-Shine **16** (Conner Contemporary Art, Washington DC November 4 · December 17, 2005) **Ryan Sluggett** by Lance Carlson **16** (Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary, AB, Canada November 24 · December 22, 2005) **Jeremy Shaw** by Jody Zellen **17** (Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles CA November 4 · December 11, 2005) **David Ryan** by Ezrha Jean Black **18** (Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica CA November 19 · December 23, 2005) **Shirin Neshat** by Maria Zimmermann Brendel **19** (Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum for Contemporary Art, Berlin October 1 · December 4, 2005) **"All the Pretty Corpses"** by Michelle Grabner **20** (The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago IL November 13 · December 23, 2005) **Pam Wilson** by Michelle Grabner **20** (Moniquemeloché Gallery, Chicago IL November 18 · December 31, 2005) **Huang Yong Ping** by Carla Ruth Dunham **21** (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis MN October 16, 2005 · January 15, 2006) **"Beyond Green"** by Ryan Griffis **38** (Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago IL October 6, 2005 · January 15, 2006) **Piotr Uklanski** by Gean Moreno **39** (Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Miami FL December 4, 2005 · February 6, 2006) **"Blur of the Otherworldly"** by Cara Ober **40** (Center for Art and Visual Culture at UMBC, Baltimore MD October 20 · December 17, 2005) **John Sonsini** by Eve Wood **41** (ACME, Los Angeles CA January 7 · February 4, 2006) **Rockwell Kent** by Sue Spaid **46** (Portland Museum of Art, ME June 23 · October 16, 2005) **Steven Harvey** by David Carrier **47** (Gallery Schlesinger, New York November 15 · December 17, 2005) **"VII"** by Helena Winston **48** (Hasted Hunt Gallery, New York October 15 · December 23, 2005) **Zebedee Jones / Marcia Hafif** by David Carrier **49** (Baumgartner Gallery, New York NY October 15 · November 16, 2005 / Danese, New York NY October 14 · November 12, 2005) **Mike Kelley** by Helena Winston **52** (Gagosian Gallery, New York November 11 · December 17, 2005) **Patricia Piccinini** by Susan Ross **53** (Robert Miller Gallery, New York NY October 22 · November 30, 2005) **Robert Gober** by Jennifer Davy **54** (The Menil Collection, Houston TX October 28, 2005 · January 22, 2006)

Anya Gallacio BY BRENDAN THREADGILL

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles CA December 10, 2005 - January 14, 2006



Along a stretch of the I-40 in north-eastern Arizona lies the Petrified Forest National Park. From the seat of your car you can see giant Triassic pines littering the desert floor, turned to stone over 225 million years. The process of petrification, where organic material is replaced with minerals like quartz, takes place in geologic, not human time. In this state park (a rigidly controlled exhibition venue in its own right), the yearly monsoons wash away the dirt and sand, uncovering stumps and fragments for observation.

Shadow on the Things You Know (2005) is Anya Gallacio's latest foray into the terrain of entropy, permanence, and transformation. While she is

not strictly an exponent of process art, which relies on decay and impermanence to make work, her goal is always to create enduring objects out of wood, bronze, and ceramics that only show traces of their mutation, so to speak, offstage. *Shadow* is comprised of two rooms containing a pair of wild rose hips cast in bronze, branches from a California pine, and a bronze cast of a section of apple tree trunk, from which are hung clusters of monotone porcelain apples. Placed around the perimeter of one room are the rose hips and dried pine trees with peeling bark, the exposed trunks of which are painted white and bright blue. The presence of fruit and buds on the apple tree and of rose hips and pinecones on the pines implies growth and fertility, whose eventuality has been blocked by direct bronze casting and the severed pine limbs. The image we are left with is one of life cut short or "burned out," a petrified germination.

There is something unsettling about spending time with these objects. Standing alone in the gallery one cannot help but empathize with the anthropomorphic stance of these broken and severed limbs, whose relationship to the concrete floor is one of utter detachment. They are like severed limbs, cleanly and coldly grafted flush to the industrial surface, which still bears traces of seemingly productive use. Adding to this moribund effect is their placement against blank walls, tending to frame them as either abandoned produce or decontextualized emblems of violent change. And as if to shed further light on the inherent duality of these mutant life forms, an incongruous skylight and rows of fluorescent tubes mix natural with artificial light, one alternately washing out the other. The skylight implies that we're meant to see the work with a glint of reality, the natural light shining down on the once living trees offering them the possibility, having adapted to this hybrid environment, of new growth.

These stark mutations wrought upon wood, porcelain, and bronze far exceed the conventional handling of such materials. By taking dead branches and stumps and then direct-casting them in bronze, a closer, "wilder" relationship is implied between the living organism as subject and the sculpture as inert object. Just like when Hans Solo gets cast in carbonite in *Star Wars*, all hope of life and regeneration is no longer attached to the emptied-out organic husk, but its permanent metal surrogate. Organic decay can be seen as an affront to institutional authority, countermarching the art world's conservancy drive as well as the resale value of collections. Gallacio's objects reaffirm an even more intractable cultural dominance over entropic forces, leaving us all to ponder our collective and perhaps not too distant fate.

ANYA GALLACIO, *SHADOW ON THE THINGS YOU KNOW*, 2005 (DETAIL), BRONZE, GLAZED PORCELAIN, ROPES, 89 x 85 x 71 IN. COURTESY BLUM & POE, LOS ANGELES.

Angles Gallery, Santa Monica CA October 21 - November 26, 2005

Fortunately for us, Linda Besemer continues to reassess the finality of modernist abstract painting. In what has become her signature format, Besemer constructs a pliable, sheet-like painting from paint alone, eliminating the hierarchical relationship of surface and support. Reversing the terms of painting's objecthood—so crucial for the 1960s shaped canvas that emphasized the obdurate nature of the support, to which the image was made to correspond—Besemer objectifies the plastic image itself.

Besemer's process is reminiscent of the technique Ron Davis used to create his resin dodecagons of 1968-69. On slick, horizontal surfaces from which the paintings could be removed when dry, the works were produced upside down, from front to back. What appears as the top layer of paint was applied first, figure before ground. Unlike Davis's, Besemer's paintings are frequently two-sided. After one side is completed, consecutive layers of white acrylic are applied until the painting is about a quarter of an inch thick and serves as the surface for the second side of the painting. The finished work is folded over a horizontal aluminum rod and adjusted so that one side hangs visibly below the other.

In several ways, the exhibition at Angles, which included ten major paintings, marked a new direction for Besemer. Only three paintings were hung over the somewhat distracting towel-rack-like rods. In the others, observable means of support were eliminated altogether and the paintings, with only one side visible, were allowed to drape flatly, but not rigidly, against the wall. Their rubbery, sheet-like pliability nevertheless remained in evidence, emphasized by the paintings' highly reflective, glossy surfaces. Most importantly, a new illusionistic pattern of bulging ellipses has replaced the straight stripes and plaids of her previous paintings. The close-set curved and narrowing lines that create the appearance of convex bubbles are perpendicularly juxtaposed to a fewer number of differently colored lines, creating a warped grid. Obviously indebted to Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely, the pattern of lines derives from the traditional technique of two-point perspective (the thinner the line, the farther away it appears; the thicker the line, the closer). In Riley's and Vasarely's work, the flatness of the painting is overcome by the illusionistic protrusions. In Besemer's hands, however, the painting's existence as a quarter-inch-thick, draped plane of plastic material reveals the fraudulence of illusion.

Folded over a rod, the top register of the orange-striped *Multibulge Fold #5* (all work 2005) is the back and opposite end of the front side visible below. A large bulge, centered in the top section, is juxtaposed to two smaller offset bulges below. Vertical stripes of red, orange, purple, and green bend around the outer edges of the bubbles and, through a technical feat of registration, precisely match as they cross from the upper to lower register. I was especially impressed by the three 60-by-44-inch *Single Bulge Sheets* hung closely together, flat against the wall. With green lines, yellow lines or red lines, a big, human-scaled vertical bulge dominates the center of each nearly symmetrical composition: the multicolored vertical lines don't quite mirror one another. The plastic colors are full-blown, richly saturated hues, given an added pop by their paler yellow or pink grounds. Especially in the case of *Black Single Bulge Grid Sheet*, the soft glow of light from between the stripes, combined with the high gloss surface, conjures up the luminosity of stained glass.

Sol LeWitt

BY MALIK GAINES

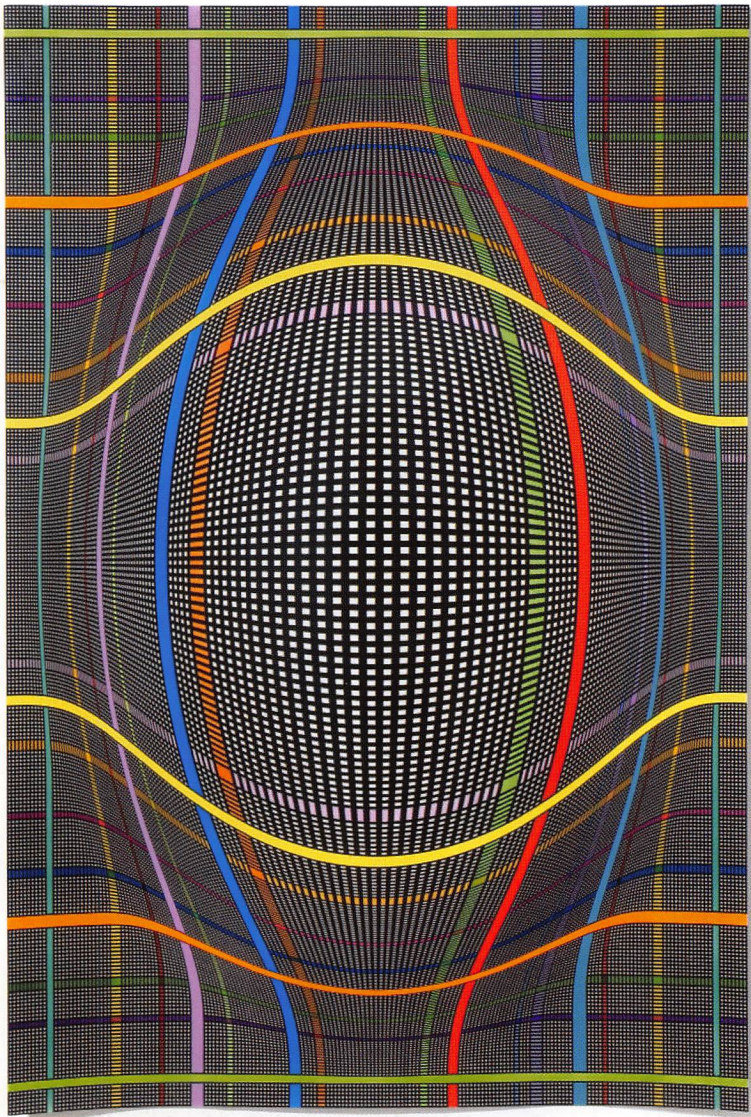
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles CA
November 12, 2005 - January 7, 2006

Sol LeWitt has become something of an inadvertent identity artist, if one's willing to accept "Patriarch of Conceptual Art" as an identity. With his new group of works, the innovator seems to be communicating from this social space, one in which simple ideas form the subject of complex art and where money is no object.

Following the pragmatic strategy for which he is renowned, LeWitt has again used a mathematical system to deal with geometric form, which results in autonomous objects, in this case five large mounds comprised of slick peaks and valleys. Each of these mini mountain ranges is coated with a slick, shiny surface, alternating black and white in a pattern that must be the result of a predetermined formula. Each mound is roughly square at the perimeter of its base, and its highest peaks are just slightly taller than a smallish art critic. There is a welcome sense of playfulness to these objects, especially given that their worked exteriors reveal nothing about their integral mass. On the walls around the gallery, several lovely gouaches surround the sculptures, their thick black and gray lines curving and arcing across the white paper surfaces like waves of darkness.

While the gouaches are serene and austere, the sculptures command attention. The large forms, each titled *Splotch* (followed by an identifying number), are like doodles in three dimensions. To make them, LeWitt's tools ranged from opposable thumbs to sci-fi illusions. The artist took hand-drawn designs to his longtime fabricator, Yoshitsugu Nakama, who passed them through software programs and hardware interfaces, leading to visual models that have been translated into real objects via printouts and some crafty assembly, ending in layers of epoxy resin, fiberglass, and paint. Unlike some of LeWitt's earthier projects, these new objects look like designs for an as yet incomprehensible future product. The influence of computer technology is both obvious and misleading. As with other such elaborate projects that have been given their due, one might wonder to what extent machine progress happens at the urging of well-funded artists trying to square circles.

This is not to begrudge LeWitt access to fantastical toys. LeWitt's celebrity has been an especially deserving one, if only because his numerous contributions are regularly commensurate with the reverence he's shown. At a crucial art historical moment, he's turned us away from genius expression toward a more democratic aesthetic that has reverberated across our cultural milieu. Now, a generation later, his work continues to highlight the overall value placed on his ideas—not to mention the legitimacy that so many of today's post-conceptual artists derive from this importance. In this exhibition of flashy sculptures and pretty drawings, the concept that is most foregrounded is the artist's historical trajectory. Intriguingly, this march of progress seems to have led, at least on a visual level, to an incorporation of values that conceptualism once so rigorously eschewed—namely, quirky expression.



(TOP) LINDA BRESNER, BLACK SINGLE BULGE GRID SHEET, 2005, ACRYLIC PAINT, 74 X 50 IN.; COURTESY ANGELES GALLERY, SANTA MONICA; (BOTTOM) SOL LEWITT, SPLOTCH #18, 2005, FIBERGLASS, 68 X 68 X 68 IN.; COURTESY MARGO LEAVIN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES.