



LUCY HOGG
WASHINGTON

Supernatural suggests the possibility—albeit failed—of a break with this logic through a collective action that, far from being inchoate and directionless, takes direct aim at forms of social and economic power. Most interesting about this juxtaposition is the question it poses concerning the relationship between media, representation, historical memory, and politics.

Images of the urban space reminiscent of Dan Graham and Andreas Gursky, and which Arden defines as “landscapes of the economy,” make up the third phase. This series consists of images that capture the occasionally grisly intertwining of nature and history, most strikingly captured in *Tree Stump, Nanaimo, B.C.*, 1991. Through dramatic juxtapositions of the inner city spaces of Vancouver’s Eastside and Strathcona neighborhoods with the surrounding suburban spaces, as in *Landfill, Richmond, B.C.*, 1991, and *Monster House Coquitlam, B.C.*, 1991, Arden tackles the disappearance of the past and the ubiquity of what he calls the “sudden, brutal appearance of the new.” These works visualize the deeply ambivalent relationship between modernization and modernism. Historically, modernism sought to challenge the logic of capitalist modernization in invoking the “new.” Now, modernization has appropriated both concepts—modernism and the new.

The most recent phase of Arden’s work is characterized by “breathing tableaux”—frozen images that “thaw” ever so slightly before freezing anew—and *World as Will and Representation*, 2007, a durational collage titled after Arthur Schopenhauer’s influential book. Set to music, it is a slide show of a massive image archive that Arden has assembled over many years from the Internet, posing some of the same questions as his earlier work. The reference to the dyspeptic, mid-nineteenth-century German philosopher is ironic insofar as Schopenhauer adhered to Kant’s dualistic schema, whereby appearance is quintessentially expressed in painting and reality in music. By contrast, Arden challenges us to think about appearance’s *reality*.

—Samir Gandesha

Lucy Hogg calls *The Last Pony* a personal meditation on the end of painting [Meat Market Gallery; November 2—December 16, 2007]. According to her, the focus of the exhibition—a large equestrian painting that has been reworked through a series of digital prints and a video—also alludes to the Bush administration. But for viewers overlooking the gallery’s press release, neither concept makes itself readily apparent. Instead, they are confronted by the inexorable tension produced by juxtaposing the single canvas with multiple inkjet versions of the painted image in the artist’s studio. Against the strength of this pairing, the video installation tucked away in a smaller back gallery comes across as an afterthought.

On first impression, the exhibition calls to mind a very traditional way of working. The series of digital prints presented on one gallery wall suggests studies based on a color wheel. Now linear, it passes from warm through cool tones, at which point the eyes jump to the painting: a massive purple-blue horse set in a landscape of muted reddish-browns and greens. Despite the obvious similarities between prints and painting, the relationship seems antipodal. Hanging unframed before the viewer, the horse’s adrenaline-charged body declares itself through lively brushwork, the physical qualities of the paint, and the work’s immense scale. While its bulging eyes, flared nostrils, taut muscles, and writhing mane and tail all speak of panic, light entering the gallery’s front window underscores the painting’s materiality—the articulation of paint textures, contrasting matte and glossy passages, and planar deformations in the canvas.

The viewer’s relationship to the prints is completely different. Set within the crisp white borders of their paper supports, these images of the painting in the artist’s studio, where the canvas rests on paint cans as if it were still in the process of being painted, have been drained of any sense of materiality or impressive scale. Their presence suggests posters. Details are not only fuzzier, but the surface texture, which possesses a fine felted quality, appears unaffected by the presence of the

same light. Though the painting’s color varies in each image, the appearance of its immediate surroundings remains unchanged, bringing about the realization that the eyes have been misled. In fact, the prints feature versions of the completed painting. Rather than coming to a final color scheme through the course of painting, the artist has multiplied the possibilities by creating a series of studies after the fact.

One wonders if Hogg has not made an error in describing her work as a rumination on the end of painting since her exhibition both invokes and questions painting’s history, traditions, and related ideas. In *The Last Pony*, 2006, she merges George Stubbs’ *Whistle-jacket*, c. 1762, a picture of a horse against a blank background, with the landscape from Diego Velasquez’ *Philip IV on Horseback*, c. 1634, a figure known for his disastrous performance in matters of finance, foreign policy, and military matters, then shepherds the image through a color metamorphosis that culminates in prints and a video which rolls through the gamut of selected schemes. The exhibition points up the ongoing copying, reinterpretation, and investigation into new or alternative media that artists have practiced over centuries.

Though the press release states that Hogg’s interest in photography has now superseded her painterly concerns, the canvas cannot be seen as a mere artifact meant to be hidden away in storage. Does the artist plan to continue to paint for the purpose of digital exploration? Or is it possible for her to satisfactorily pursue her investigations of painting without applying a brush to canvas? And though her digital prints and video take the painted image into new realms, are images that can be consumed more easily preferable to works that challenge us through their physical intensity? This exhibition poses many interesting questions.

—John Gayer

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: **Roy Arden**, *Supernatural*, 2005, DVD loop for projection, with audio (collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC; purchased with financial support from the Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation and the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program); **Lucy Hogg**, *The Last Pony*, 2006, oil on canvas, 120 x 92 inches (courtesy of the artist and Meat Market Gallery, Washington)