

## REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS @ LAMONTAGNE GALLERY

REVIEW BY **ANAIS DALY**

PUBLISHED: JUNE 13, 2007

At a new gallery on Melcher Street, Gallery Lamontagne (named after its owner, Russell Lamontagne), showcases the work of three artists who hail from various parts of the country in an exhibition titled "Regional Highlights". In this roundup, are Miles Comwell Huston, hailing from New England, Kate Levant coming east from Chicago and last (but not least), Jacques Louis Vidal comes to Boston via Houston. "Regional Highlights" addresses the world from a reoriented perspective of reference.

The gallery itself, new to Boston, is a space worthy of new methods for exhibition. The large loading dock is open to the street but just high enough to instruct the visitor to enter through the glass door to the right. The curator of the show, Justin Lieberman (who attended the SMFA), now shows internationally and is represented by Zach Feuer in New York.

To quote Lieberman from his press release he comments that these artists are "experimental sociologists", studying subjects deemed unworthy of serious attention. All the artists address subcultural themes as in the collage, Mud People, Foam Party, Rorschach images and Da Vinci posters. Their subject experimentation ties them to an artistic practice mimicking the style of underground culture, which highlights their rejection of any formal artistic reference.

Miles's work with City Hall is an interesting mix of regional love and locale democracy. Is the model of city hall, painted in latex and sand from City Hall Plaza a modernist coffee table, an ironic criticism, or a conceptual jab at Tom Menino? An answer might be found in that the Model, the painting and the burlap construction really do visually construct a *Conversation with City Hall*, as opposed to a singular criticism.

Kate Levant's pieces have a tension that permeates from the work into the surrounding space. The work is charged with expressive and pragmatic sensations of deep fear, yet there is also moments of mirth. Specifically in the anti-silhouetted legs coming out from the wall. After turning your back on the disfigured face of Bob Marley, who's nose droops into an old sock and almost winks with his covered eyes. The sense of gaiety slightly offered in the legs piece mirrors Kate's attitude at the opening.

Jacques Louis Vidal, makes collages with the X-acto swivel knife



Jacques Louis Vidal, *Dolly*, Photo Collage on archival paper, 2007



Miles Huston, *Solution for Elderly Walker*, wood, found materials, 2007

that are not only tight in presentation but also startling in affect. From *Mud and Foam* to *Dolly* to *Marvin Zindler*, the work is cohesive and animate to its viewers, making it readable and accessible to the viewer while investigating subversive subjects. The cuts are precise and fluid at the same time and the assemblage reconstitutes these snippets, à la Raoul Hausman, into a new form - also easily recognized from the vernacular.

The work is diverse in medium from ceiling height banners with looming white faces to tightly constructed topographic collages. These three artists don't just continually readdress the same old ideas and methods. They have a sense of genuine investigation into the pragmatic and mimetic communication of a subcultural perspective. The three artists address a similar subject matter in their own ways, giving coherence to the exhibition.

#### Lamontagne Gallery

*"Regional Highlights"* is on view May 30 - July 28, 2007 at LaMontagne Gallery.

*All images are courtesy of the artist and LaMontagne Gallery.*



Kate Levant, *Witches Wrumble*, Plastic, acrylic paint, thread, electrical tape, 2007

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