

ARTS & PERFORMANCE

04.22.09



Above: Joe Johnson's "Bolt. Fort Wayne, IN," part of his "Mega Churches" exhibit; below: Daniel Heidkamp's "Astoria (Bikes)," featured in his show "The Arrangement."



By Cate McQuaid
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

A pleasing visual shock

Daniel Heidkamp's aptly titled show "The Arrangement" at LaMontagne Gallery focuses on compositions of color, pattern, and form. Hot, buzzy tones rub against one another and set off retinal sparks; punchy patterns agitate the paintings. The result is a pleasing, aggressive, visual shock. Oh, and he's actually painting people, which gives the paintings added layers of character and narrative, but these seem secondary to the sock in the eye delivered by the arrangements themselves.

The slope-shouldered slackers in "Astoria (Bikes)" stand in a blankly orange space, defined only by a zebra-stripe crosswalk and cars floating behind them. They wear Hawaiian and camouflage shirts. Their bikes cast red shadows; skin tones range from creamy pink to garish yellow-orange. The punky tones grab at you and push you away.

"Keep on Stepping" is a brilliant complement, all in electric blues. Two black men shimmy on a beach washed in eerie blue moonlight. Patterns on their clothes light up like neon. Heidkamp juxtaposes so many hot blues and violets here, it's hard for the eye to comprehend, and thrilling.

Boru O'Brien O'Connell's tongue-in-cheek photographic portraits of men, also at LaMontagne, bitingly send up notions of masculine perfection. They feature ordinary guys, middle-aged and beyond, posing outdoors, aiming with the precision of catalogue models for an ideal expression of manly solitude. Light chisels the face of the man in "Thinker and Actor," whose eyes gaze inward as he clasps a golden retriever to his chest. The danger is that viewers might take O'Connell seriously; images like this show up in magazine ads and commercials all the time. The men in some of these pictures could easily be shilling for erectile dysfunction medications.

JOE JOHNSON: Mega Churches

At: Gallery Kayafas,
450 Harrison Ave.,
through May 17. 617-482-0411,
www.gallerykayafas.com

DANIEL HEIDKAMP:

The Arrangement

BORU O'BRIEN O'CONNELL:

Mavericks and Daydreamers

At: LaMontagne Gallery,
555 East 2nd St., South Boston,
through May 2. 617-646-4640,
www.lamontagnegallery.com

NOURISHMENT: New Work by

Jeffu Warmouth & Ellen Wetmore

At: Art Institute of Boston, 700
Beacon St., through May 3.
617-585-6600,
[www.lesley.edu/aib/
events/events.html](http://www.lesley.edu/aib/events/events.html)