

'New Art From Chicago'

Road Agent Gallery
Dallas Texas
Jan 2009

Anne Lawrence, associate director of Road Agent, has brought a slice of Chicago's contemporary art scene to Dallas. Scott Anderson, Aaron Baker, John Parot and Steve Reber are comrades in art whose disparate works create an off-kilter harmony. In addition to a city, what unites these artists is a collective penchant for science-fiction fantasy and yesterday's vision of the future. The work of Mr. Reber, a sculptor, and Mr. Baker, a painter, are the strongest of the four because of innovative materiality and frank use of plastics.

The objects by Mr. Reber are at once nondescript and unique, anonymous yet perverse. Made out of plywood, burlap, aqua resin, plastic laminate and plastic glass, *This Place Is Yours* seems like a setup for a still-life painting that one might've seen on the set of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. A split metal pot sits atop a plastic platform covered in tan burlap. A small, orange transparent piece of plastic glass leans up against a large geometric form covered in faux-wood laminate. Made from a similar amalgam of materials including plywood and MDF, Mr. Reber's *Fast Pack/Ice Pack/The Narrows* looks like a docking station for a spaceship. Mr. Baker's *We Were Never Meant to Last* is a bright circular painting of leafy organic forms. The surface is alternately flat and built up, with colorful abstract patterns creating a planarity from which sculptural plant forms emerge. Applying thick globs of paint to plastic glass, peeling it off and strategically transferring it to the canvas, Mr. Baker enlists an unusual process in the creation of the almost three-dimensional fluorescent orange leaves.

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Parot round out the show with less striking works on paper. Mr. Anderson's *Rendezvous* is small but memorable in its imaginative juxtaposition of forms in a lifeless landscape. A drippy blue head floats ominously over an unpeopled encampment behind which hovers a highway ruin. In *The Cliff*, Mr. Parot combines ink and gouache collage on Rives, printmaking paper with an absorbent surface, to create a black and hot-pink swirl of striped human faces and seaweedlike form.

Charissa N. Terranova

- "New Art From Chicago: Scott Anderson, Aaron Baker, John Parot, Steve Reber" is on display through March 1 at Road Agent, 2909-A Canton St. Hours: noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.