



"ARTEMIS," 2006

Hung Liu

OIL ON CANVAS, 80" x 80"

PHOTO: COURTESY TURNER CARROLL GALLERY

Dominick. All work with basic materials and present installations that expose artistic processes or extend aesthetic visions to embrace concepts of urban and industrial blight. McDonald's sculptures from three series of works—*Tiny History*, *Minor Monument*, and *Self Portrait*—are the most numerous, although each artist is well represented with conceptually engaging work. McDonald's small *Tiny History* pieces, arranged on a shelf along one wall, seem to draw inspiration from urban landscapes, as do his *Minor Monuments*: painted hydrocal and mortar sculptures which look like small cement pilings or pole barriers, ubiquitous but unheralded features of parking lots and service stations everywhere. Despite their unrefined, irregular surfaces, and their scattered placement through the gallery, the consistency of appearance from sculpture to sculpture provides the disparate group of objects in the exhibition with a connective thread.

A selection of Vanderlip's series *Drawing for Sculptures of Buildings* is the most basic in terms of presentation: graphite and silvered Mylar works on paper thumbtacked to the walls. This seemingly amateurish way of exhibiting art feels right for this kind of show: as anti-Finish Fetish as you are likely to find. And there is cohesiveness to Vanderlip's body of work, in the works' architectural feel. Potter's threaded fabric sculptures contrast soft, plush materials with subtle and not so subtle visual references to bodily functions and organs, innards exploded outward into sprawling and writhing displays. Two of her weavings, *Aerial Anatomy of an Unseen Event* and *Spearheading the Universal*, stretched over frames, lie somewhere between Abstract Expressionist painting and crazy quilts. Dominick's mixed-media scul-

tures make reference to the art historical figure Frederic Remington. But unlike Remington's visions of "noble savages" rendered in polished bronze, Dominick's horses and riders are defeated, fallen sculptures that lie limp and ineffectual—a direct challenge to Remington's majestic visions of the West. By contrast, the artist's works on Plexiglas, with surfaces ground roughly by power tools, take on a geometric, mandala-like beauty.

"Urban Untitled" is a provocative exhibition. Despite its anti-aesthetic nature, it has a kind of charm. Stripped of all veneer of pretense or affectation, these unadorned works are a paean to things seldom thought of in the artistic vernacular.

—MICHAEL ABATEMARCO

## SANTA FE

### Hung Liu, Deborah Oropallo, Squeak Carnwath: "Heroes" at Turner Carroll Gallery

Hung Liu's *Artemis* more than hits the mark. Organized around Turner Carroll Gallery's Bay Area contingent—in particular, Hung Liu, Squeak Carnwath, and Deborah Oropallo ("all heroes" according to one gallerist)—the works in this exhibition take aim at the theme of heroism from three perspectives.

Among the works on display were Hung Liu's large elegant painted portraits of anonymous prostitutes taken from historical photographs that survived China's Cultural Revolution. As successful as these images are, it is her large, spare, 80-inch square painting *Artemis* (2006), that truly takes flight. The central figure is a young, androgyne drawing a traditional bow, aiming her arrow up and to the viewer's right. In the lower right hand corner, a strange, ominous, quarter-circle shape reminds one of certain sweeps of paint that Jasper Johns employs, often by dragging a ruler or yardstick around a pivot point. This

dark shape evokes memories of Michelangelo's boat of the damned in his *Last Judgment* fresco, with all the black and white drama of a Käthe Kollwitz lithograph. There is a shadowy suggestion of souls consigned to some terrible fate. Are they refugees of war, or prisoners awaiting execution?

Like Hung Liu, Deborah Oropallo also creates painterly images from photographic sources. Her digital depictions of female superhero-type costumes, largely missing flesh and figure, are all about pose and absence. By isolating tatters of slick and glittery costumes, Oropallo emphasizes the emptiness of the postures of power that the absent heroes here assume, as well as drawing attention to the deep fetishism inherent in the hero's guise. An ethic of heroism comes to be merely an empty form in a contemporary society ruled fundamentally by a love of money and materialism. Finally, Squeak Carnwath posits herself as redemptive artist-hero in a very real world way through the funky, scrawled, environmentally active messages that lace through the single large canvas she exhibits. Her wild, journal-page aesthetic always represents an anything-goes space for reflection and inspiration. Full of rich incident, her tactile surfaces hold tight to an innocence and dogged optimism that is itself heroic in this difficult day and age.

—JON CARVER

## HOUSTON

### Al Souza: "Fundamentals" at Moody Gallery

Al Souza, a virtuoso of collage and assemblage who has claimed all sorts of printed matter—from maps to movie posters to jigsaw puzzles—as fodder for his obsessive, layered deconstructions, took his X-acto knife to antiquarian books for his 18th solo exhibition at Moody Gallery. An influential professor at the University of Houston, Souza typically leaves enough of his source material's original imagery visible—albeit fragmented—for viewers to glean hints of its subject matter. In these newest works, Souza calls our attention not just to the contents of the books he collects in the vintage bookstores of Western Massachusetts, where he spends his summers, but to their physical makeup. As several ongoing series reveal, every part of a book is fair game, from the spines after Souza has removed the binding materials, to the pages' marbled or gilded "front" edges. Souza cuts 3/4 inch sections by hand from the edges, then arranges stacks of the sections into boxes made from aged wood, much of which was left over from a studio he built 40 years ago. While the use of weathered materials to frame these compact assemblages highlights their handmade quality, Souza's recombined edges give the works an unexpected opulence, whether due to the rich patterns



"CULTURAL DETRITUS 2," 2011

Al Souza

FABRIC, PAPER, GLUE, 16 1/4" x 13 1/4"

PHOTO: COURTESY MOODY GALLERY