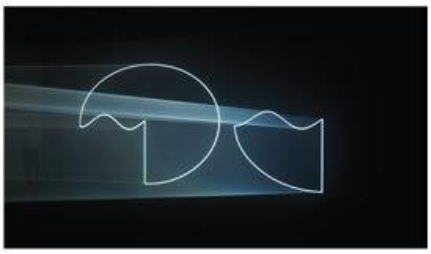
ARTFORUM



Anthony McCall, *Leaving (with Two-Minute Silence)*, 2009, computer, video projectors, audio equipment, haze machines. Installation view.

restrained mathematical drama, one form grows toward completion as the other wanes and disappears. The sound track pauses for two minutes, then all reboots. *Meeting You Halfway II*, 2009, runs a variation on the theme; without sound, a double-edged beam describes a wide curve that shrinks and a tight curve that widens. Closing a fifteen-minute cycle, they join with a silent "click" in a full ellipse, then diverge again.

Mesmerizing if inhuman in their computerized perfection, the projections are in effect ever-changing props or scenarios for the visitor's use; at the show's core is the viewer's passage from outside to inside the light cones. It is like penetrating a Platonically precise cloud. Elegant oil swirls glow on the curved walls of smoke. Metaphors of transcendence like "going toward the light" are inescapable—obviously a far cry from the rigorous materiality of *Line Describing a Cone* (compare the titles). Other pleasures are nonsymbolic, albeit illusory: the impression of solidity and dissolution in piercing the scrim; the claustrophobia of walking toward the cone's apex as if a tunnel were narrowing; the euphoria as one's head pops out of the hazed beam like an airplane above cloud cover; a synesthetic choking as the edge of the cone hits one's throat. In *Leaving*, the percussive "brushing" gradually separates itself from the sound track; it is not a cymbal at all, but the hissing of the haze machine. Whether the work is augmented or diminished by this peeling apart of basic function and quasi-narrative overlay—i.e., the traffic-and-water recording turning the beams into headlights or lighthouses—depends on individual perceivers.

The soundscape of this piece is a collaboration with composer David Grubbs, and it is the first time since 1972 that McCall has used sound. He is also returning to outdoor installation. One group of drawings presented *Projected Column*, a twirling pillar or "coherent convection" (as McCall has described it) of haze, which will be installed on the river Mersey in Liverpool, UK, in 2012. A second drawing consisting of three panels showed *Crossing the Hudson*, a proposal to incrementally illuminate the Poughkeepsie Bridge in New York with white LEDs over 365 days (the drawings depict Day 295). If McCall's early work balanced what-you-see-is-what-you-see materiality against the funky chanciness of low-tech means, and his newer pieces set digital precision against mortal reverie, then perhaps these open-air proposals will mix it all up.

—*Frances Richard*

Annette Lemieux

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

Annette Lemieux's equivocal place among those contemporary artists drawn to reminiscence—let's call them "nostalgics"—is far from commensurate with her prominence in what might be termed Feminist Conceptualism. This obliquity owes something to the fact that she works "off scene," in Boston (despite her continuing New York presence in galleries of note), and also to her attraction to cryptic, elusive themes. Lemieux's political sarcasm is masked by sweetness and reductivist abstraction, and her infinite links of insinuation are a deterrent to facile acceptance, unwanted to begin with. Her references at times seem so teasing and premeditatedly capricious as to defy comprehension. But the artist's commitment to the bare bones of Minimalism's rectangle, circle, and grid is rarely placed in jeopardy.

The present circumstances are no exception. "The Last Suppa," as the recent exhibition was discomfitingly titled, is trash talk, a cracker-barrel pronunciation of "the last supper." *Table for One* (all works cited, 2010), a red-and-white-checked tablecloth tondo in the shape of the host, exemplified her formal concerns while also, granting the larger Christological setting of the show as a whole, serving as a reference to the Eucharist, the sacrament inaugurated at that portentous meal.

In her past work, Lemieux has proved herself as partial to the Great Depression myths perpetuated in the day's radio broadcasts and black-and-white movies as she is horrified by the postwar depredations of the New England farm and mill town as they drift off into bedroom suburbs. Born in Virginia but raised in dying Torrington—hence embittered working class and lapsed Roman Catholic—she is one acutely class-conscious Connecticut Girl. (I once described her as Agnes Martin with an ax to grind.) The metanarrative of her oeuvre is the plucky, independent woman: the single mom surviving on minimum wage, welfare, or alimony and still yearning (perhaps) for her big lug, either divorced or gone off to a Roy Lichtenstein world of macho warfare—to Korea-Vietnam-Kuwait-Iraq-Afghanistan-"On Terror" conflicts colorized by the cinematic duplicity and gung-ho of the Greatest Generation. In the end, Mom's guy is, of course, her daughter's dad, MIA. All this and more is implicit or explicit in the snapshots and period objects incorporated into Lemieux's work, which, when not expressed as painting incorporating photography, is often met as assemblage.

In contrast to these earlier soapy dramas, "The Last Suppa" was a spare installation of but seven works invoking halcyon state fair days recalled, as it were, through a religious prism. A gilt straw hat, for example, becomes *Halo*, arguably reflecting a yearning for a lost, purer, rural world—albeit one filtered through the appropriation of the images of advertising. Elsie, of all seemingly absurd creatures, is awarded the plum role, as golden calf or sacrificial bovine—in *Holy Cow!* Andy Warhol can be sensed—not only his Byzantine taste for gold and silver but also, more explicitly, his *Cow Wallpaper*, 1966. To be sure, the show's roots run far deeper, back to Theo van Doesburg's *Composition VIII (The Cow)*, ca. 1918. That famous de Stijl yellow square symbolizing sun, butter, cream, and milk provides a perfect historicist backdrop for today's bright, televised duplicities—the fetching, bonneted logos of partially hydrogenated virtual food.

Annette Lemieux, *Twelve*, 2010, acrylic silk-screen ink on wood, two parts, each 37 ½ x 40 x 2".

In several pieces, Lemieux makes use of a delightful smiling girl found in a livestock catalogue of the 1950s. She appears in various incarnations, most effectively in *25 Hail Marys*, where she invokes the charming and the penitential at one go. Warhol's astral divas—Marilyn, Liz, and Jackie—likewise memorialized as gridded screens, are transformed in this reredos, Lemieux's parochial confessional.

Perhaps the most ambitious piece in the show, however, was *Twelve*, a mirroring photo on wood (two panels, with the right reflecting the left) of a group of young calves caught behind a fence of loose wire squares, their ears numbered 0001–0012, heifers marked for ownership and/or slaughter and, in the context here, as referent to the apostles. Underlying such works is the status of the cow: symbol of maternal nurture yet also, in our green moment, a menace—the source of excessive manure, that problematic effluvium, part fertilizer and part poison for our ponds, rivers, and aquifers.

Such troubled readings of "The Last Suppa" could be pondered as one sat upon a photographically rendered bale of hay (that also served double duty as altar) situated midgallery. Saint Andy's ghost still hovers in the fairground-become-shopping-mall Brillo Box.

—*Robert Pincus-Witten*

Marlo Pascual
CASEY KAPLAN

While so much of today's common wisdom around appropriation grants that tactic a kind of distanced purview, from which an artist might critique while simultaneously participating in prevailing modes of cultural representation, we all too rarely account for the ways in which a sort of lasciviousness attends the venture—especially, perhaps, as younger generations take up its presumed look and legacy. Walking into Marlo Pascual's first solo exhibition at Casey Kaplan, one had the feeling that the artist could be some crusty old cinephile: If she were a man, I might think he was a creep. Though the images she uses are "borrowed" and so—one might argue—not truly reflective of the artist's conscious (or even unconscious) drives, they nonetheless feel wholly *touched*, if not downright caressed, as though they have had bestowed upon them a hyperbolic, not exactly healthy, kind of attention.

Having trolled the usual sources (eBay, vintage shops) for old stuff, Pascual picked a number of images, many produced in amateur photography clubs in the style of various 1940s and '50s quasi-filmic genres, from glam pics to pinups, portraits to interiors. Cropping and enlarging the pictures, and placing them in an odd, minimal, domestic-type space (featuring a few chairs, a lamp, a thick band of wood, seemingly marking a threshold on the floor but moving up the wall and interacting with works hung there, etc.), Pascual rendered the photographs uncanny and unreliable. Her images—which include the back of a woman's very blond, very processed, very styled head; two female legs, scissored to look sexy; a pair of hands, nails manicured to points so that they look nearly like claws (and two fingerprints, enormous from being blown up, on the photograph's surface); a woman, face obscured, perky nipples evident, standing in a shower, à la *Psycho*—now exceed themselves in more than just size.

Although Pascual's medium is ostensibly the photograph, she wields it in the least photographic way she can. Refusing to bend either to timeworn clichés of the medium or to its most seductively complicated theorizations, Pascual instead coaxes the found images she uses into a different kind of utility, creating for her paper characters scenarios that escape equally the firmly fictional and the firmly factual. The critical writing on her practice that has appeared thus far wants to usher this other mode of the photographic into the realm of the sculptural (and one sees why, since Pascual seats her images in a

View of "Marlo Pascual," 2010.

larger, three-dimensional context of which "real things" are a part and also, in some cases, treats the images as things themselves, "cracking" them as though they were glass, for instance, or placing other objects on top of them)—but this too quickly bypasses the queerness of her move. For, while disallowing any pretense of *disinterestedness* when it comes to appropriating her images, Pascual also undermines still attendant romantic notions of the photograph, thus placing her images in an unexpected interstice: Her practice highlights the affectual dimension of both photography and appropriation, and crucially points to how often women continue to operate representationally as things to be looked at. (The three images where men *do* appear include one of a dark and handsome guy turned literally on his head; the other two chaps, in separate frames, gaze vaguely in each other's direction across the wall, looking like a couple of Howdy Doodys, with their hands to their mouths as though calling out to each other.)

Pascual's photographs act as strange placeholders, gesturing to where they were found (rather than cutting ties) while suggesting that new contexts can be made to reinvigorate them and perhaps ultimately issue a kind of challenge. This is why the creepiness of some of the images' past lives still lingers, and why Pascual's use of them ushers in a surprisingly feminist camp humor.

—*Johanna Burton*

Philip Guston
MCKEE GALLERY

Many of the small oil panels that Philip Guston produced between 1969 and 1973—of which this show featured almost fifty—depict scenes from the artist's life, and are thus infused with an uncanny sense of the biographical. The cigar in the 1973 work of that title must be his, for instance; and so must the shoe depicted on one untitled and undated canvas. The paintbrushes in an untitled 1972 work are certainly his own, suggesting that the paintings pictured in other works—one hangs on the wall by a nail; another is centered, in effect a painting within a painting; and a third is on an easel—are by him too. Wandering through the exhibition, it was hard not to think, *That* must be the armchair he sat in, *that* the coffee cup he drank from. The hooded figures in several works are the same Ku Klux Klansmen Guston depicted many times, perhaps most famously in the early painting *Conspirators*, 1930, but they are also Guston himself—as *The Studio*, 1969 (not in this exhibition), with its hooded figure in the process of painting himself, makes plain: It is a self-portrait of the artist as conspirator.

Taken together, these panels might be taken to form an extended, if eccentric and repetitious, predella, similar to those on which incidents from the life of a martyred saint were depicted: Guston's version