

Reviews

and one foot is poised on a jazzy oriental carpet. A pair of Victorian silhouette portraits adorn gold-flocked wallpaper in the background. We may naturally think of Kara Walker or Lari Pittman.

Holding Tenderly to What Remains stands out as the sexiest image of the bunch. Here, piercing, ice-blue bedroom eyes are cast toward an unknown vision as the subject's hand parts a drape to search behind. Funky hanging globe lights illuminate an undefined, fawn-gray interior space. Another flannel-clad guy, he also wears a rock 'n' roll T-shirt, here emblazoned with *Madonna Live at Coachella*. The rather ominous title may suggest the ravages of the AIDS epidemic, and heightens the melancholic nature that undercuts the campy humor and celebratory aspects of the work.

What unifies us as a community, as human beings, is our shared need and desire for meaning, love and passion in our lives. Artwork succeeds by its ability to transcend motivation or subject matter to engage the viewer, inviting them into the world it creates. In Gobel's work, the brilliant display of color and shape, and the poignancy of an elusive love affair, draw us right in, like moths to a flame.

—Barbara Morris

James Gobel: *Bear Hunting* closed in March at Marx & Zavattero Gallery, San Francisco.

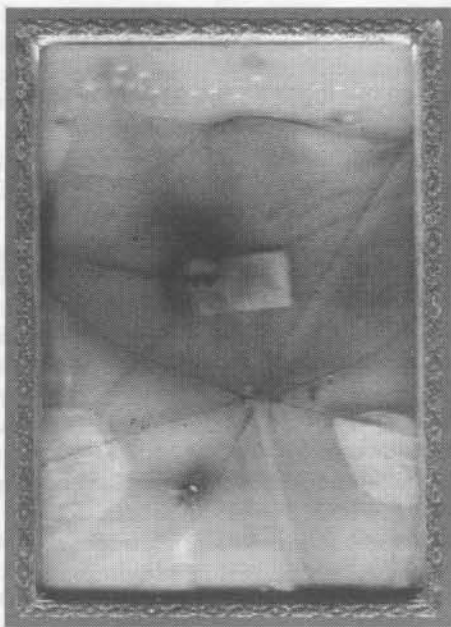
Barbara Morris is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

Jane Rosen and Joshua Hart at Braunstein/Quay Gallery

Jane Rosen's talent is in finding the shadows of things, the soft sepia tones of birds and mammals, the quiet and penetrating turn of a beak or gaze of a feral eye. Her recent show at Braunstein/Quay Gallery was a muted collection of painting and sculptures, evoking both the seen and the hidden of nature.

It is too simple to call her paintings "paintings"—they are more like sculptural plaques colored by coffee and marble dust, shaped and textured by layers of

gypsum stone. They often depict birds or deer, sharing the frame with grids and mesh in gentle, forest-y tones. It is as if the living and the geometric each echo the shadow of the other, an ecru play of liquid and stone, soft-hard textures, shades of rust and gray and black. *Dusk* (*Cooper's Hawk*) is a white-gray shadow of a perched bird—roosting in coffee and cream, or waiting behind a fog—leading the viewer to



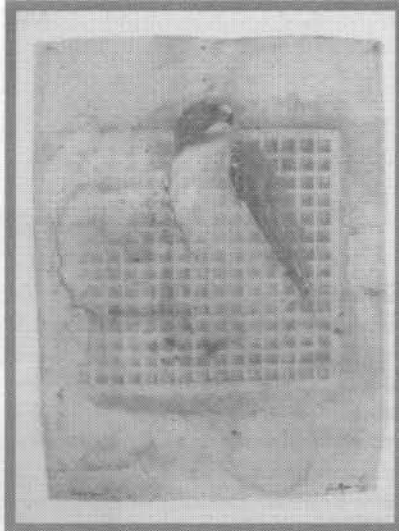
reconsider if there is much distinction between the substances humans and nature brew.

Rosen's sculptures are more evocative, less precise renditions of similar subject matter—and she pays as much attention to the material as to the shapes she forms with it. The *Gamut* series—vaguely animal sculptures in

Provençal limestone—is composed of rough, raw stone figures on pedestals. *Sphinx* is the sharply angled idea of a sphinx; *Mayo* (named for Rosen's dog) is barely chiseled as if the shape of a dog was found in the stone, then sketched in pencil on the surfaces and in the grooves. In *Klimt*, one can see some of Klimt's reaching lines and lateral segmentations, but the piece is just as evocative of a burned-out tree trunk. *Rodin*, on the other hand, is the opposite of Rodin's smooth, precise figures. It is a rough, highly textured, largely undefined shape—perhaps the Rodin-esque figure is buried underneath?

Rosen also has a sense of humor, evidenced, for example in *Oh Deer* and *Wall Foot*. The former is a wall-mounted sculpture, a nearly five-foot high narrow bird's body with a deer head sculpted around a bundle of sticks, producing an organic, witty quality. *Wall Foot* emerges bony and elongated from the base of a wall, as if it were impishly waiting to trip an innocent passer-by. Rosen captures the private lives of creatures in her works—both the comic and dramatic sides. And because Rosen respects this privacy, we don't quite gain entry into it.

Rosen shares the gallery with Joshua Hart, who was once her assistant. His works are not so much about the interiors of creatures, as about the surfaces of materials—especially the reflective sur-



Above: Jane Rosen, *Amber Squared*, 2007, casein, ink on paper, 30" x 22"; below: Joshua Hart, *Untitled*, 2007, graphite, glass, 12" x 5" x 3-1/2", at Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco.

faces of mirrors. Mirrors sit at odd angles in the space—too high or too low to reflect images, and thus refract only light, playing against the walls. While this is an interesting enough touch,

Hart's most successful work is a series of small picture frames mounted on a narrow shelf. The frames have no pictures in them, but are cracked and smudged, with clear caulk squashed behind the glass. These are malfunctioning picture frames, bringing to mind some gray space of the imagination between Norman Bates and the Addams Family, in whose parlors the objects would be equally well-suited. Some are almost like landscapes, with little holes drilled in the surface, or a dark blob that could be the British Isles or terraced hills or a dim, ovoid lake. They are both familiar and eerie, signifying desire and loss, the impossibility of representation, nostalgia, return. If Rosen gives us a glimpse of the peaceful inner life of animals, Hart jostles us with a peek into the unsettled interior of our own psyches.

—Jakki Spicer

Jane Rosen: *Gamut* and Joshua Hart: *Homemaker* closed in March at Braunstein/Quay Gallery, San Francisco.

Jakki Spicer is a freelance writer based in Alameda.



Katina Huston: *Untitled*, 2007, 12" x 2", at Dolby