

Home Sweet Home

*'Mid pleasures and palaces
Though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home.*

The very mention of the word “home” brings myriad associations to mind: family, nation, security, community, different cultures, shared beliefs. Yet, what exactly does it mean to call a place home? How does one construct the notion of home, particularly in the increasingly globalized world? *Home Sweet Home* examines the notion of home, not merely as a physical structure, but as a place formed by memories and a sense of belonging. From floor plans to coastlines to birds’ nests to wall paper, each of the fourteen artists in the show shares his or her unique and distinctive interpretation of “home.”

Relocating from another country transforms the notion of home. Korean-born artist Young Kim negotiates a balance between the notion of belonging in two places. The ambiguous location of Kim’s extensive coastline reflects the artist’s unclear notion of home. Hung Liu’s self portrait, *Resident Alien*, is modeled after her green card. The painting’s title refers to the artist being caught between the two cultures that have shaped her life. Long Nguyen’s childhood recollections of the Vietnam War are central to his work. His paintings refer to his homeland and his family’s arduous journey to the US. Like Kim and Liu, Nguyen balances his sense of home between two cultures and countries, both of which inform his identity.

Memory and perceptions of childhood experiences are the source material for Jim Campbell, Lewis deSoto, Jim Christensen, and Mark Bennett. Campbell’s *Constructed Memory* is a nostalgic memento of his childhood home, which burnt to the ground while he was away at college. Lewis deSoto’s series of prints, entitled *Memorium*, also represents houses in which the artist has lived. Likewise, Jim Christensen’s autobiographical sculpture *ideal home* consists of three scale model versions of the first homes that Christensen lived in as a child. Mark Bennett, a self-professed sitcom addict, has created architectural drawings based on the fictional dwellings and towns of television families that he watched as a youth. Bennett reflects on the idealized and stereotyped notions of American life as perpetuated by mass culture.

A whimsical reflection of “home” is incorporated into the work of Stephen Sollins, Cassandra C. Jones and Oliver Michaels. Sollins’ works recontextualize the familiar “Home Sweet Home” samplers, converting them into compositions of Modernist geometric abstractions rather than sentimental musings on hearth and home. Jones

incorporates wall paper, crown molding, and paint to create *Good Cheer*, a site-specific room installation of kaleidoscopic patterns that reveal the humor behind the obsessive presentation. Oliver Michaels' video *Train*, pieces together a seemingly endless array of rooms as seen from the vantage point of a crawling child – perhaps our first and most informative impression of home.

Doug Glovaski, Richard Barnes and Catherine Wagner document aspects of our surrounding environment that reflect a diverse look at “home.” Glovaski chronicles his daily walks through his neighborhood in paintings that incorporate the artist's personal lexicon. Barnes takes the notion of nesting right to the source in his series of photographs documenting birds' nests. Wagner's *Home and Other Stories* series shows various aspects of American homes: objects in ensembles that are carefully arranged for visitors or carelessly disposed in privacy.

Working in video, painting, sculpture, photography and installation, the artists in *Home Sweet Home* have used a combination of acute observation, crystal clear memory, and elaborate fabrication to render their mental, emotional, spiritual and physical interpretations of “home.” The result is a wide range of work that most certainly will elicit an equally wide range of associations.

OLIVER MICHAELS

Train, 2003

DVD

Courtesy of the Artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Santa Monica

Oliver Michaels' work is deceptively simple. He uses low-tech film devices that draw attention to the artist's hand and invite the viewer to suspend disbelief. The rhythm of his videos is set by movement from one space to another, without the aid of sophisticated editing. By using simple effects, Michaels creates environments that appear ordinary at first, but then turn out to be constructed from artificial and orchestrated scenarios.

Train offers an intimate and dislocating experience of interior spaces. Michaels attaches his camera to a model train that passes through a series of rooms that appear connected, but are actually from multiple buildings. These disjunctive spaces become one vast fictional set. A digital print located on the adjoining wall maps out the maze through which the train travels.

MARK BENNETT

The Town of Mayberry, 1997

The Home of Ward and June Cleaver, 2001

Lithograph on Coventry paper

Courtesy of the Artist and Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica

For the past 20 years, Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bennett has made art firmly rooted in the collective American experience of television. His drawings and lithographs are "blueprints" of famous television houses from classic sitcoms. Drawing these fictional dwellings from memory, Bennett documents the minutiae of the characters' lives by constructing their environments with a painstaking level of detail. His floor plans narrate the "American Dream," charting not only the architecture, but also the subtext of our culturally accepted models for living.

JIM CHRISTENSEN

Ideal home (under construction), 2005 (ongoing)

Sugar pine and bass wood

Courtesy of the Artist and Walter Maciel Gallery, Santa Monica

Jim Christensen works autobiographically, creating installations with sculpture and drawing. *ideal home* consists of three scale model versions of the first homes that Christensen lived in as a child. The models are stacked one on top of another. Made in maple wood and based on memory and photographs, the houses are replicated in detail and shown in the early stages of construction with scale model two by four framing.

STEPHEN SOLLINS

Elegy (This is my house...), 2004
Embroidery and removed embroidery

Elegy (How dear to my heart...), 2003-4
Embroidery and removed embroidery

Courtesy of the Artist and Brian Gross Gallery, SF

Stephen Sollins' *Elegy Series* reflects the artist's ongoing investigation of everyday objects. Sollins transforms secondhand, embroidered linens into geometric abstractions by re-formatting the original pattern. Sollins removes the thread from the original design, counts the stitches by color and then re-embroiders squares in a geometric grid onto the linen. Each colored square of the new design consists of the same number of stitches, per color, as the original sampler. The colored square with the most stitches, and therefore the dominant color of the original, is always placed at the upper right of the grid with the size descending from right to left. By superimposing the new, controlled textile design on top of the ghost of the original, Sollins eulogizes the anonymous craftsperson while elevating commonplace linens to fine art.

While Sollins's new designs obscure the original patterns, it is clear that he has chosen a very popular sampler sentiment reflecting fond memories of childhood associated with home.

LEWIS DESOTO

Memorium Series, 2001-2005
Pigmented inkjet on Somerset paper

Courtesy of the Artist and Brian Gross Gallery, SF

Lewis deSoto is known for integrating the past with the present in his work. In the *Memorium* series, deSoto investigates the memory of space. Each piece in the series is a reconstruction of a house or space where the artist has lived and is based on perceptions and impressions from experience rather than actual measurements. The artist states, "Within these images is a desire to remember and simultaneously forget what happened there."

HUNG LIU

Resident Alien, 1988

Oil on canvas

Collection of the San Jose Museum of Art

Oakland painter Hung Liu combines Western and Chinese traditions to create larger-than-life images of everyday people who have been lost in the sweep of history. Born in China in the 1940s, Liu came of age during Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution. As a young woman, she trained as an artist in Beijing, where she was taught to paint in the Social Realist style so that she would be able to serve the state by making colossal mural paintings of Mao and other prominent members of the Communist Party.

In 1984, after years of working as an artist and teacher in China, Liu immigrated to the United States and began making paintings informed by a wider perspective on her nation's history. Liu's self portrait, *Resident Alien*, is modeled after her green card. Above her image, Liu inserts humor by using the name "Fortune Cookie," a sexual slang for Chinese women. The painting shows the artist caught between the two cultures that have shaped her life and speaks to her ambiguous sense of home and identity as an immigrant in America.

JIM CAMPBELL

Constructed Memory, 2006

Custom electronics, LED panel and Plexiglas

Courtesy of the Artist and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

Jim Campbell's art consistently probes the questions of perception, time and memory. Much of his recent work harnesses the visual impact of LED (light emitting diode) displays, by transmitting digital video through LEDs, in order to create moving-image sculptures. But, these works are not so much about an LED display as they are about the perception of a recognizable moving image through extremely low resolution and with very small amounts of information. *Constructed Memory* is a nostalgic memento of his childhood home, which burnt to the ground soon after he left for college.

Campbell possesses both a technical background in engineering and an artistic background in filmmaking. "My work has been very influenced by science. Using technological tools and scientific models as metaphors for memory and illusion, my work seeks to interpret, represent and mirror psychological states and processes, and their

breakdown. Time and memory, individual and collective, electronic and real, are the elements of my work.”

RICHARD BARNES

Carpodacus purpureus californicus (Purple finch), 2000

Color iris print

Courtesy of the Artist and Hosfelt Gallery, SF

Richard Barnes' photographs touch on themes relevant to science, history, archeology, and architecture. Recent projects explore the conditional meaning and value created when museums collect and display objects, and how that meaning is deconstructed when objects are recontextualized. He has been given access to areas of museums that are hidden from public view, photographing objects wrapped, crated, or in storage. Our present day relationship to our history and the ways we collect and catalogue its residue are thematic threads entwining a broad range of work.

The body of work in the ICA show consists of "portraits" of bird nests taken from the collection of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in Camarillo, California. This work addresses, among other things, the contrast between birds' incorporation of human debris -- string, newspaper, dental floss, hair etc. -- in the construction of their nests, and the human urge to bring nature into the home.

YOUNG KIM

Untitled (Line), 2000

Painted Sheetrock

Courtesy of the Artist

“Leaving my country was not a simple task. I now realize that I never really left nor never really arrived.” This statement is at the core of Korean-American artist Young Kim’s work. Since her immigration from Korea in 1974, she has negotiated a balance between the sense of belonging to two places or not to any place, of displacement as well as newfound freedom. Through the use of maps and archeological references, Kim’s work explores the concept and reality of the borders that divide and define all the nations.

Untitled (Line) addresses geographical boundaries based on real borders between countries that are not bound by water. To achieve the precise detail of these works, Kim traced coastlines and borders onto panels of sheetrock painted pale tones of grey, green,

and blue and then meticulously carved her relief directly onto the sheetrock. The images oscillate between positive and negative space, increasing the ambiguity of time and place.

DOUG GLOVASKI

Mapping the City – Arguello St, 2006

Oil and acrylic on canvas

Collection of Lisa and Steve Daidone

Mapping the City 3, 2006

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the Artist and Dolby Chadwick Gallery

Doug Glovaski grew up in the sanctity of the suburbs in a time when kids were free to roam the neighborhood and families congregated in each other's backyards for summer barbecues. Everyone knew everyone and there was a strong feeling of community. Glovaski equates "home" to "familiarity" and a feeling of security in his surroundings. Since leaving the safe haven of his childhood home many years ago, he has endeavored to find that feeling of home in his other places of residence.

In his series *Mapping the City*, Glovaski attempts to familiarize himself with his current neighborhood in San Francisco. He walks around the neighborhood in an attempt to "make it feel like I belong here." He refers to the graffiti-like symbols within the paintings as territorial markings, a way to insinuate himself into the landscape.

CASSANDRA C. JONES

Good Cheer, 2005

Wallpaper installation

Courtesy of the Artist and Nathan Larramendy Gallery, Ojai

In her site-specific installation *Good Cheer*, Cassandra C. Jones digitally manipulates internet images of cheerleaders to create colorful, kaleidoscopic images that appear as intricate floral patterns. Upon closer scrutiny, the images slowly dissolve into recognizable human forms. The interlocked, splayed limbs, upraised legs and bare midriffs of the cheerleaders slowly become visible. Jones reproduces these images on wallpaper, which she hangs in a room reminiscent of a grandmother's dining room.

STEFAN KÜRTE

Clouds, 2006

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Artist and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco

Stefan Kürten's paintings investigate the house as a site of warmth and comfort. The point of departure for his deliberations are 1950s and '60s detached houses. He works from black and white photographs, adding color and ornamentation in a shimmering ground of silver and gold. The real house becomes an archetype that has no concrete location. The paintings are always devoid of human beings. Thus, Kürten's compositions become a projection plane for the viewer's own fantasies and ideas about life and home.

CATHERINE WAGNER

Christine T., San Francisco, Ca., 1991

Mimi and Mel K., Brookline, Ma., 1991

Johnnie M., San Francisco, Ca., 1991

Silver gelatin prints

Courtesy of the Artist and Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco

Catherine Wagner's series *Home and Other Stories* chronicles domestic interiors. Always absent of human figures, the photographs focus instead on the conscious and unconscious details of living spaces that most reveal aspects of the inhabitants. According to Wagner, the series grew out of her search for a home. "Our real estate agent took us to places that were not ours, and I saw it as a fine line between intimacy and voyeurism. The way we organize our homes reflects the gamut of family, love, intimacy, alienation, isolation, domesticity. Home is an array of emotions that reveal who we are."

LONG NGUYEN

Tale of Yellow Skin #50, 2007

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Artist

This monumental painting is the latest in Vietnamese-born artist Long Nguyen's *Tales of Yellow Skin* series. Going beyond the racially derogatory connotations of "yellow skin," Nguyen's work seeks to find a universal theme through his own personal history. Born in Nha Trang, Vietnam in 1958, Nguyen and his family fled their native country in 1975, along with millions of other refugees. His turbulent memories of his childhood in war-torn Vietnam are at the heart of the series. The paintings, which glow in various tones of yellow, are highly textural, incorporating images of human organs, bone fragments, seed pods and other organic matter. Works from later in the series, like this one, emit a softness that make them almost soothing. Perhaps Nguyen has reconciled his current life with his painful past through the yellow skin series.

JOHN SLEPIAN

The Kiss

Two Channel Video

Courtesy of the Artist and Catherine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

John Slepian's digitally generated photographs, video installations, and interactive computer installations investigate what it is that makes us feel human—something, according to Slepian, that is becoming harder to delineate in this world of rapidly advancing, and often shifting technologies. His work uses organic forms that are apparently derived from the human body – things that look like cast-off limbs, detached orifices or pimply buds. Though enormously simplified, these imaginative computer-generated creatures exhibit identifiable gestures and behaviors

The Kiss consists of two monitors with two fleshy blobs that are trying - against all odds - to kiss each other. These hairy creatures squirm and sniff in isolation, desperately looking to make contact with the other. As a viewer, we identify with them and project our own desires in their plight to find each other.

ASYA REZNIKOV

Mapping

Single Channel Video Loop, 23 minutes

Courtesy of the Artist and Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York

Born in Russia in 1973, Reznikov moved to the U.S. at the age of five. As the first English-speaking member of her family, she became the translator for her home, straddling two cultures, languages and identities. Her work reflects on this cultural upbringing and explores themes of travel, language, identity in different cultures as foreigner and traveler, immigration, emigration, and otherness.

In her 23-minute video, *Mapping*, Asya Reznikov writes the names of the seven continents in 23 languages to make a drawing of the world map. The slow process of handwriting creates contours with text and characters. This simple act offers a way of seeing the globe through language – serving as a reminder that there are multiple tongues across the earth that define culture, identity and place.