

HP GARCIA GALLERY

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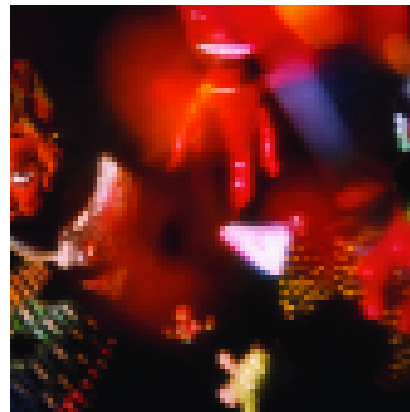
BARBARA RACHKO

Gods and Monsters

Open to the public from 29 September through 24 October 2009

Gallery hours are 1 to 6 PM, Tuesday through Saturday

Contact: 212.354.7333 or info@hpgarciagallery.com



HP Garcia Gallery is pleased to announce *Gods and Monsters* an exhibition of photographs by Barbara Rachko. The exhibition will continue from 29 September through 24 October 2009. A reception for the artist will take place on Wednesday, 7 October from 6 to 8 PM.

A commercial pilot who subsequently became a naval officer, Rachko made frequent trips to Mexico and Central America, where she became entranced by folk figures located in local mask shops, markets, and bazaars. With these powerful visual elements, the artist's hyper-real portraiture was transplanted by a mysterious "cast of characters" serving as connections to the universal unconscious. She began with pastels of small tableaus and worked into life size sets that would frequently incorporate her self-portrait.

While these pastel paintings were "methodical, labor-intensive, and highly representational," the thematic subject matter evolved to reveal the infiltration of the unconscious into daily life, a universal millennial theme that became horrifyingly personal and real when her husband died on September 11 on board the plane that hit the Pentagon.

The subsequent *Gods and Monsters* series, which – unlike so much new photography – rejects the digital manipulation process in favor of the "synchronistic accident," required a conscious embrace of the Uncertainty Principle. "Each image is an unrepeatable surprise," the artist writes in her statement. "Always I am letting go, breaking habits learned as a painter and a photographer, exploring, and seeing what will happen."

The artist refers to her new technique as "painting with a camera." The thematic variations resulting from crossing these disciplinary boundaries frees the unconscious material into its own mysterious dance. There is an ironic twist at work here; the artist's pastel paintings were composed from photographs. This ouroboric interchange between mediums requires a metamorphosis of soul. Such an achievement is approached by dissolving realism (the representational painting) via the darkroom into the dreamscape of the photograph, thereby achieving a post-digital transformation of the medium into the vehicle, once again, for pondering the very nature of reality.

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