

Ultrasonic VI : Appropriate

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New work by six emerging or mid-career artists: Theodora Allen, Sebastiaan Bremer, Alika Cooper, Mark Mulroney, Okaymountain, Andrew Schoultz. Through October 22 at Mark Moore Gallery.



The practice of appropriation has been historically elemental in social and societal critique. By borrowing elements of the signifiers, icons and motifs of a given visual parlance, the artists in Ultrasonic VI have distinctively embraced adoptive techniques to illustrate the gravity of context and repetition in our communal ideologies. Sourcing retro postcards, records and film stills indicative of popular Americana, UCLA MFA candidate Theodora Allen paints seemingly insignificant fragments of a master image. An ordinary vase of flowers appears a pedestrian still life until recognized from the background of a popular Gram Parsons album cover - its initial familiarity refashioned based on shifting cultural association.

Photographer Sebastiaan Bremer mines autobiographical memories and experiences to unearth ostensibly hallmark images of familial mannerisms and archival traditions. Meticulously dotting his chromogenic surfaces with hazy swirls of acrylic Braille, Bremer covertly distances his landscapes and portraits from assumed communal affiliations with every allusive speck. With nearly cubist technique, Guam-born Alika Cooper paints figures and scenes that are at once iconic and disconnected in their candidly inelegant likenesses. Exploring the myth of fame and beauty, she oftentimes appropriates characters from media imagery – Farrah Fawcett's features become angular and alien while Grace Jones suddenly seems less so.

At first glance, Mark Mulroney's cartoonish superflat paintings appear to be Archie and Looney Tunes comics gone awry. His lighthearted palette and style filches a jocular sensibility akin to the mass graphics of childhood, but actually evaluate the implicit lewd and malicious desires we are raised to oppress. Similarly, artist collaborative Okaymountain repackages, reconstitutes and rekindles our consumerist desires with a sardonic edge. With ten members, the group creates installations and multi-media assemblage works that mimic the stock vernacular of our communal materialism, yet tweaks them just enough to reveal our superficial insecurities and convictions.



Finally, Andrew Schoultz's large scale collaged paintings employ notorious emblems of imperialism and globalization – from the Trojan Horse to the American flag – that dissolve into a patterned frenzy of chaos and whimsy; not so dissimilar from our systemic modern habits. Initially historical in allegory, they ultimately issue a sense of foreboding anticipation.