

krupic kersting galerie | |kuk
jülicher strasse 14
d-50674 köln
tu-fr 2-6 p. m. | sat 12-4 p. m.
member of bvdg & cologne-galleries

T 0221 29 88 28 88
M 0176 49 30 88 31
E info@kukgalerie.de
I www.koelngalerien.de
I www.kukgalerie.de



jon shelton – gunslingers, hoodwinkers and tea baggers | opening reception: nov. 4th, 2011,
6:30 p. m. | exhibition: nov 5th through dec 16th

the whole of this exhibition deals with certain ongoing sociopolitical phenomena in the united states. some of these may well be projected onto the european political landscape in the not so distant future, some are already here and others will hopefully remain uniquely american.

the exhibition highlights a situation in which an alarmed and intentionally misinformed citizenry is subjected to the permanent influence of opinions manufactured by well heeled individuals, corporations, and special interest groups. designed to exploit these fears, the opinions are pitched by think tanks, pushed by media conglomerates and sold by politicians; creating a public discourse that is increasingly emotional and hostile, if not outright combative. one of the results of this constellation is the permanent political sideshow on its surface, which espouses an ever narrower reading of american history. this sets up a disconnect between the reality of the country's past and an oversimplified, hyper-patriotized and redacted version thereof, one which precludes basic considerations about how the whole of this history relates to america today. patriotism is not only 'the last bastion of scoundrels', it is again the first port of call for intolerance and 'fundamental conservatism' throughout the country. enormous swaths of history are glossed over and others glossed up, in order to produce what ronald reagan referred to as 'motivated forgetting'. to call 'american exceptionalism' into question is considered utterly unpatriotic, and to address the conundrums of this 'exceptional' country's history in the public sphere is often an act of futility and potentially one inviting verbal, if not physical aggression. the reasons for this are many but the result is a failure [or inability] to recognize the intrinsic relationship between foreign and domestic policy; to understand how these affect one another, the influence that special interests have in shaping them, and what it means in real terms when they are implemented.

related aspects of this situation are addressed in the wall drawings in the back room of the gallery as well. these drawings deal with a recent phenomenon in america, the tea party [1]. billed as 'astroturf' by critics and a 'grass roots' movement by proponents, in reality it might be more appropriate to think of the tea party as a 'sod' movement [in both senses of the definition], representing the calculated cultivation of certain emotions in the populace by interest groups, in order to be harvested and then 'rolled out' to cover the arena of public opinion. the drawings present images largely hidden from the light of day because they operate below the grassy surface of the movement, namely the multi-billion dollar financial and organizational networks that enable, set free and then channel the energy of the tea party [1] in order to serve their own interests in terms of shaping public policy and legislation. in the end, all of the drawings in the exhibition are about the instrumentalization of [mostly] white middle class fears to divert attention and redirect public anger away from the most powerful members of society, and towards those who are the weakest. there is a long and complex history of this type of activity in america [as there is everywhere], particularly as pertains to the exploitation of racial, gender, class and increasingly religious difference, for political and economic gain.

moral fundamentalism and lawlessness [particularly violent lawlessness] have existed side by side in america since its very beginnings [2]. the framed drawings in the back room are snapshots of aspects of this from everyday american life. the ongoing series of drawings freedom in america, is part of a larger group of drawings, objects, etc. entitled capitalism without borders; a body of work investigating various aspects of history and their relationship to narratives confluent to politics, economics and power in contemporary society.



the images themselves come from societal and media observations as well as topical research. the freedom in america series is defined firstly by its format and materials but also by virtue of its subject matter. the drawings are executed in a caricaturist style which refers to the fact that messages presented by the media and ideas expressed by persons therein, are often so extremely stereotyped and outrageous that they have something almost surreal or cartoon like about them. the images of the series stem from watching, reading and listening to a variety of 'conservative' [3], 'mainstream' [4] and public [5] u.s. media. these sources are parsed for content and presentation daily and are combined with real life experiences and research, documenting and anticipating the results of various aspects of the aforementioned sociopolitical situation and refracted through the dirty lens of a national historical narrative.

work on the wall drawings will be ongoing throughout the exhibition and whitewashed upon its conclusion.

[1] an acronym for 'taxed enough already' and referring to the boston tea party of 1773, its two main groups are the tea party patriots and tea party express.

[2] post 1492 america and especially beginning with the jamestown settlement [1607] and the mayflower compact [1620].

[3] fox news, newsmax, drudge report, rush limbaugh, etc.

[4] cbs, nbc, abc, cnn, new york times, etc. also referred to as the 'lamestream' or 'liberal' media.

[5] pbs and npr also referred to as 'the socialist propaganda machine' and c-span which broadcasts unedited speeches, press conferences, senate committee hearings and congressional debates, also referred to as 'sleep-span'.

jon shelton - cv

detroit, michigan [usa]. lives and works in cologne

shows [selection since 2000]:

2011 gunslingers, hoodwinkers and tea baggers. krupic kersting galerie, köln

2010 current drawing. tibor de nagy gallery, new york

2009 reDiscover. galerie slowboy. düsseldorf

2008 margin milieu. museum ludwig, köln

2007 projektraum. cicognani galerie, köln

2006 passagen. international design in cologne, köln

2005 OESPG [TFO]. chelsea kunstraum 2 [ckr2], köln

2003 topoi of nature. galerie völcker & freunde, berlin

2002 special projects and other things. künstlerverein malkasten, düsseldorf

2000 black box. galerie olaf stüber, berlin

publications:

2008 margin milieu / daytime lobbyists [mit gerrit göllner]. 750cid, köln / detroit.

1998 oscitant / osculent. edition howeg, zürich.

1994 nitrous oxide / espresso machines. walther könig verlag, köln.

collections:

2009 museum ludwig / grafiksammlung, köln

2009 kunst- und museumsbibliothek der stadt köln

1999 deutsche nationalbibliothek, leipzig

1998 zürcher stadtbibliothek, zürich

1998 schweizer landesbibliothek, bern

internet:

www.oscitantenterprises.com [web jon shelton]

www.drawingcenter.org [viewing program / jon shelton] drawing center, new york

www.museumludwig.de

www.kukgalerie.de