

Markus Schinwald's *Jan*, 2009, at Yvon Lambert



Markus Schinwald at Yvon Lambert, installation view



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WEEKEND UPDATE

by Walter Robinson

Years and years and years ago, when the **Whitney Museum** was giving retrospective exhibitions to artists like **David Salle** and **Eric Fischl**, I remember standing there in the gallery, filled with loathing but nevertheless ambivalent; I could see a young art student, sitting on a bench with her drawing pad, copying one of the paintings like it was an Old Master at the Met. The message was clear: never mind my gut reaction, I had better get with the program or forever be one of those reactionary dopes like **Hilton Kramer**.

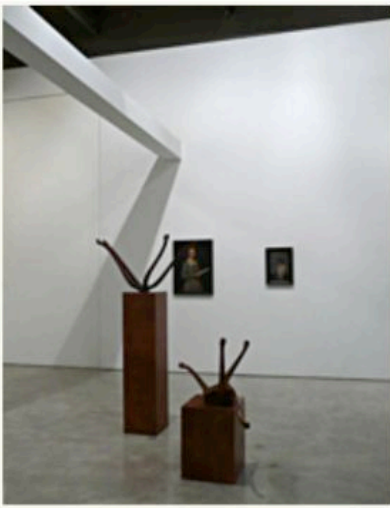
Only one thing to do: stay there and look at the paintings until I liked them. I mentioned this story in passing to **Donald Kuspit** at a Christmas party last month, and he promptly dubbed the dynamic the "Lazarus Effect," a name that no doubt reflects his distaste for the smug curatorial groupthink that prevails in our contemporary museum industry. Me, I just thought of it as a motif that I could use.

So there I was at the opening at **Yvon Lambert Gallery** last week for **Markus Schinwald**, a 40-something Austrian artist having his first solo show in New York, trying to make the stuff in the gallery come alive before my eyes. Why should I care about these odds and ends?

The art itself struck me at first as fairly random, since it consists of three distinct types of works: scavenged 19th-century portraits that have had small prostheses artfully painted in, like the man with a weird string-apparatus tied around his nose; low wooden plinths holding three or four Queen Anne table legs, well polished, arranged like a strange bouquet -- or, as the artist intends, like human legs entwined in lovemaking, making explicit the eroticism the Victorians only imagined; and a life-sized male automaton, seated on a structure of minimalist white beams dividing the space, with a cloth tape bearing a handwritten poem emerging from its mouth.

And notice the crowd at the opening. On the one hand it included gallery director **Chrissie Shearman**, a formidable young art dealer (and former **Artnet** colleague) who is alluring and alarming in equal measure (aren't they all). On the other the show numbered among its fans such art-circuit solons as the globetrotting curator **Okwui Enwezor** and **Dia** director **Philippe Vergne**.

In the end, my way in was provided by *Sherlock Holmes* and **Marcel Duchamp**. If **Guy Ritchie** can idly toy with Victorian history for our amusement, why shouldn't Schinwald? And the various works all come together in their relation to Duchamp's production: the paintings are like *Apolinère Enameled*, his "rectified readymade" of 1916-17; the sculptures like Duchamp's hanging Thonet *Hatrack* of 1917; and the automaton is like, of course, his mannequin-behind-a-peephole, *Étant donnés*.



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Markus Schinwald's *Hans*, 2009, at Yvon Lambert



Markus Schinwald

Plus, Schinwald himself proved to be amiable, and handsome. And, as I found out this morning, liked by the *New York Times* art critic **Roberta Smith**, who says the work makes you "feel the wind in your eyeballs"!

Another return from the dead was provided by a new nonprofit named **No Longer Empty** (NLE), which put together a rollicking group show of Street Artists dubbed "Never Can Say Goodbye," Jan 15-Feb. 13, 2010, at the empty storefront at Broadway and West Fourth Street that formerly was home to the much-beloved **Tower Records**. A wild amalgam of "is this real or is it art," the show features a recreation of the original store -- record bins, album-cover posters and a stage for a regular lineup of performances -- by **Ted Riederer**, the musician and artist who enlisted maybe 50 artists in his project.

Other highlights include a couple of masterful **Vanilla Ice** parodies by painter **Tom Sanford** (coupled at the opening with an Vanilla Ice performance by **Brent Bimbaum**), an installation of cutout pinups from the covers of classic rock records by **Meredyth Sparks** and some amazing oversized versions of album cover art done from Rubik's Cubes -- 400 in each work -- by the Street Artist **Invader**, who typically is known for leaving small bright mosaic "graffiti" at random spots all over the globe.

Also on hand is a checkout counter with a built-in waterpipe (reportedly in action at the mobbed public reception) and a store with a range of cheap multiples, including a Never Records t-shirt reading "You Don't Listen" -- irresistible to any parent -- by **Ramones** marketing genius **Arturo Vega** for \$20 -- "the best price anywhere," Vega said. Also on hand at the press preview, for free: a bumper sticker with a drawing of a fish, reading "Cod Bless America."

NLE, which brings community exhibitions to empty storefronts and other vacant city spaces, was founded by **Manon Slome**, last seen at the **Chelsea Art Museum**, where she was curator, and **Asher Remy-Toledo**, the young art dealer who formerly had a namesake gallery uptown. The group is about six months old and has already organized six exhibitions, including "Something out of Nothing" at the **Invisible Dog** (a former belt factory) in Brooklyn.

Riederer's **Antagonist Art Movement**, which traces its beginnings back to 1988, is putting on a live show at the space all day on Jan. 30, 2010, and still more events are planned for the following two weeks.

Next, it was off to Chelsea, on an admittedly whimsical search for more artworks that somehow embodied a notion of resurrection, or simply of getting up and walking around. They turned out to be surprisingly easy to find.

At **Sean Kelly Gallery** on West 29th Street, is another impressive installation of projected-line artworks by **Anthony McCall**, who has apparently now discovered a way to translate his light-and-smoke show to the outdoors. For the 2012 Olympics in London, in fact, McCall is making something called *Projected Column*, a kind of controlled vapor trail of heated water and steam that can extend as much as four miles up into the air. I can't say I believe this is possible, but Kelly assures me it is so. It goes in at the Mersey Docks as an Olympics art commission.

Across the street at **David Nolan Gallery**, the popular "endless line" artist **James Siena**, who typically shows at **PaceWildenstein**, is exploring some new imagery -- which includes a drawing of a rather long if flaccid penis, titled *Member*. Here, the notion of rebirth has an erotological dimension. Can you relate? (The price is a definitely robust \$6,800.)

Well, that's about enough of that. It's too late now, but the just-ended show of **Anna Von Mertens** at **Sara Meltzer Gallery** was worth seeing; she came up with simple, Washington Color School-type "auras" of iconic portraits from art history -- *Whistler's Mother*, **Van Gogh's** self-portrait, **Caravaggio's** *Bacchus* -- and translated them via dye to fabric, highlighted with patterns of stitches (she's a quilter).

The young German artist **Hannes Bend** got a nice welcome for his first U.S. exhibition, held at the tiny **Half Gallery** on Forsyth Street on the Lower East Side, with website plugs from *Vogue* and other fashion mags -- is he their type? The Berlin-based critic **Ana Finel Honigman**, who used to be a colleague here at *Artnet Magazine*, has also given him a favorable notice. He makes small fractured hard-edge color abstractions (that start at \$1,800), as well as lifelike sculptures of animal heads, done with sugar. Go figure.

One stand-out in "**In/Sight 2010**," the show of Native American art at the **Chelsea Art Museum** organized by **Clarissa Dalrymple** and **Michael Chapman**, are the paintings of the young artist **Cloud Medicine Crow**, who came down to the opening all the way from Alaska. He calls his paintings, which include images of the police pulling over Indians cruising in their old GTOs, "Reservation Realism." He had sold a couple of works by the opening, for a few thousand dollars each.

A mesmerizing film by the young (b. 1982) Yale MFA **Meredith James** is included in "Symbol Rush" at **Newman Popiashvili Gallery**. The work, which is silent, shows the artist, who apparently knows about set design, passing through several faux environments, like **Rene Magritte** come to life, or a surreal *Get Smart*, or perhaps a **M.C. Escher** drawing done in real time. It's \$1,500 in an edition of three -- and James was "signed" by dealer **Marc Jancou** on the day of the show opening.

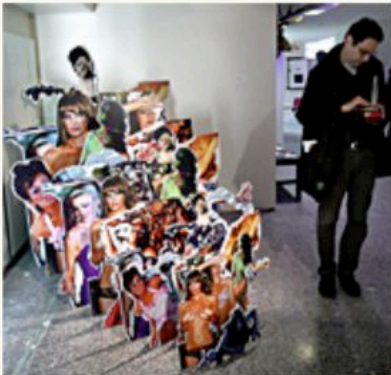
Marlborough Chelsea takes another leap into the contemporary art scene with "Look Again," a group show organized by a pair of young curators, **Casey Fremont** and **Karline Moeller**, both 20-somethings. The survey includes a special installation by **Tony Feher** of bottles of orange soda, their labels removed, hung by string from the ceiling. "That stuff is practically archival," he says.

British filmmaker **Steve McQueen's** *Hunger*, his jarring movie about **Bobby Sands** and the **IRA**, is now available on DVD for \$39.95; for more info, see www.criterion.com. . . . Troublemaking art-cartoonist **William Powhida's** raspberry for the **New Museum**, dubbed *How the New Museum Committed Suicide with Banality*, is available as an archive digital print on rag paper from **Schroeder Romero & Shredder**, in an edition of 20 with four artist's proofs. Last week only a few were left, at \$1,150 each.

For "The Incidental Person" at **Apex Art**, visitors can pick up a free lined notebook titled *People Never Notice Anything* (named after an



No Longer Empty founders Asher Remy-Toledo and Manon Slome



Meredyth Sparks' *History (sleeves)*, 2009, in "Never Can Say Goodbye" at the former Tower Records store



Anthony McCall's *Projected Column*, 2009, at Sean Kelly Gallery



James Siena's *Member*, 2008, at David Nolan Gallery

observation by **Holden Caulfield** in *The Catcher in the Rye*) -- but they're supposed to use it to jot down their observations, and then return to the gallery next month and give a short public presentation of the contents. . . . Artist and theorist **Joseph Nechvatal**, who splits his time between Paris and Ludlow Street, has collected his writings in *Towards an Immersive Intelligence: Essays on the Work of Art in the Age of Computer Technology and Virtual Reality, 1993-2006*, published by **Edgewise** (\$10).

WALTER ROBINSON is editor of *Artnet Magazine*.



Meredith James' *Present Time* (still), 2009, at Newman Popiashvili Gallery