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Essentials

Info & map event: "Mark Booth: Spanish Still Life or a Large List of Merged Animals."

Art & Design

- Info & Map Review

Critic's Rating

Art review

Mark Booth

TOC Blog

Candice adds performances through October 31 12:01am

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TOC Poll

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"Spanish Still Life or A Large List of Merged Animals," Hyde Park Art Center, through Jan 4.

"Still life with a decapitated head, a liquid called 'pear' and a small book no larger than a fingernail," recites a smooth male voice, which emerges from the speakers lining the Hyde Park Art Center's 1,800-square-foot Gallery 4.



Booth, 'Untitled, 2008.' Photo: Original image: Juan Sánchez Cotán, Still Life with Game Fowl (1600/1603), courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Chicago artist Mark Booth projects fragments of Spanish Baroque artist Juan Sánchez Cotán's Still Life with Game Fowl (1600/1603) on opposite walls of the gallery, filling these black-painted surfaces with the mundane shapes of a cabbage, melon, quince and four dead game birds. As parts of Cotán's painting subtly fade in and out of focus, the voice continues to make statements that begin, "Still life, with..."—prompting viewers to seek connections between what they hear and what they see. Booth's descriptions are detailed and have an easy flow, evoking closed captioning. Yet they barely respond to Cotán's content: Phrases such as "a compassionate minaret on its knees making bows for tame rabbits" suggest a surreal fantasy world rather than a conventional still life.

Booth has stated elsewhere that he's drawn to Cotán's "additive accumulations"—his tendency to retain the same objects in his many still lifes, while adding new ones—which Booth's repetitive, listlike narration seems to echo. The relationship between the artists isn't apparent here, so it's frustrating that Booth never explains why he appropriated Cotán's work. Yet he ably demonstrates that language can both conjure fantastic pictures in the mind and fail to bridge the gaps between sight, sound and imagination.

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— Candice Weber

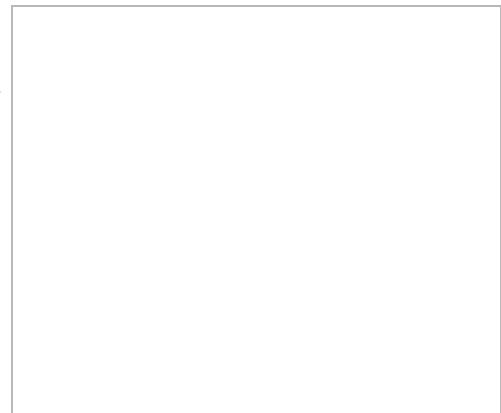
Time Out Chicago / Issue 195 : Nov 20–26, 2008

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Posted by Joe on Fri, Nov 21, 08, at 4:48pm How pleased Pat must be that he has frustrated Jim's ass. Flag as inappropriate

Posted by Pat on Fri, Nov 21, 08, at 3:25pm How pleased Jim must be, that he has kissed Mark's ass



Art & Design blog

Five things to do today: Pink Party, Blood Feathers 9/7/10

Pink is turning 31 (in gay years that's like 50), and KK will get this tribute party started with a Funhouse Martini, Pink performances from Aurora Sexton and a pink-frosted b-day cake.

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"Street Anatomy" Vanessa Ruiz curates a show with guts at the International Museum of Surgical Science, through Nov 19.



"The Stagehand's Unseen" Kelly Kaczynski moves mountains at three walls through Oct 23.



"Ground Floor" TOC's Fall Preview issue looks at Chicago's next art stars, appearing at the Hyde Park Art Center through Oct 31.



"Chris Ofili: Afrotranslinear" TOC's Fall Preview issue explores Ofili's first local

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Essential advice for our scholastically minded citizens.

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Posted by **Jim** on Fri, Nov 21, 08, at 1:09pm

How pleased Mark must be, that he has frustrated the critic.

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