

Elana Herzog
P.P.O.W.
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Made of soft, worn, acrylic blankets, chenille bedspreads, plastic shower curtains, '60s-era draperies, beads, and elastic ribbon, Elana Herzog's latest sculptures belie their abstraction through richly allusive references to domesticity and the body. Thus, while Herzog successfully imbues her humble materials with artful poise, she nonetheless retains the *frisson* of their past use. Gathered and sewn into sensuous folds and pleats, the works have a stylishly abject frippery; what you might get if you mixed Betsey Johnson's clothing with Mike Kelley's scatter art. *Untitled #6* best conveys this aesthetic. With its baroque festoons of chenille and tawdry canopy of plastic beads, it has the cheap aura of a low-budget porno prop (from the "The Salacious Tales of Scheherazade" perhaps).

The sometimes stuffed, always billowy forms also draw attention to the architecture they (and we) inhabit. Indeed, they seem to grow organically from the space itself. *Untitled #1*, for example, emerges from a corner and sags toward the

floor. Large upholstery staples, which crudely fix it in place, stream out across the walls, clutching bits of fabric and fuzz. Like a drunken march of ants, the randomness of the staples—those that remain and those that have been pulled out—suggests a state of entropic rebellion. Juxtaposed with the dull civility of the work's striped butterscotch fabric, the unsightly staples achieve a poetic expressivity, even as they poke fun at notions of taste and decorum.

Untitled #7 similarly incorporates the gallery wall by marring it. High up, beyond eye-level, a long, jagged gash descends from breast-like bunches of floral-patterned curtain. As counterpart to the curtain's delicate, breezy cotton, the violent inscription evokes the less savory side of femininity. In spite of, or perhaps because of, its locker-room euphemism, it too has a kind of debauched beauty.

Though Herzog may associate the domestic with the female, she avoids doing so reductively. Tweaking formal conventions as well as social, she draws into her equation questions of beauty and order. In the end, Herzog's play with bad taste aspires to more than a challenge, and emerges as an evolving aesthetic.

Jane Harris is a writer and curator living in New York.

Polly Apfelbaum and Lynn McCarty
A.R.T. Inc.
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Since last fall, A.R.T. Inc. (aka Art Resources Transfer Incorporated) has presented a series of exhibitions conceptualized as "conversations" between a gallery-selected artist and an artist of his or her choice. Throughout, transcripts of the artists' discussions and IRIS prints made in conjunction with the exhibitions have supplemented the work on view. Each exhibition in the series has provided a visual and intellectual coherence that continues in the project's eighth offering, featuring Polly Apfelbaum and Lynn McCarty. Here the two artists reveal a shared affinity for saturated color, seductive surfaces, and imagery achieved through the careful accretion of layers of material.

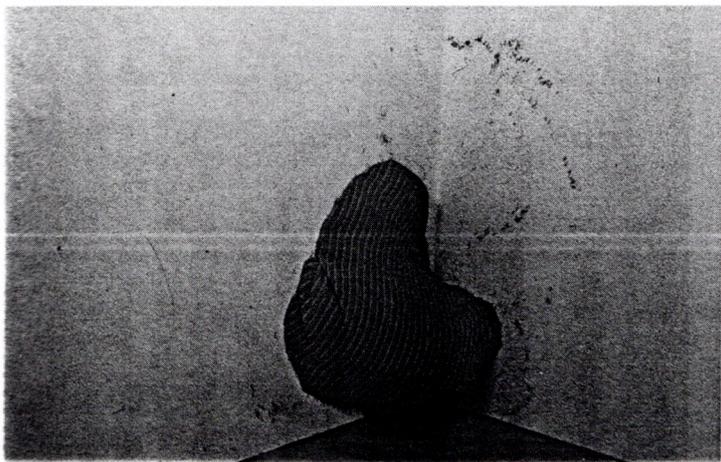
In *Love Boat*, Apfelbaum assembles hand-dyed velvet shapes into a spill on the gallery floor. Her palette includes fuschia with blue, lime green with purple, and viridian with brown. These garish combinations belie the elegance of their velvet surfaces. The work sparks associations with stained glass and wallpaper flocking; its shape, an island or road kill (according to the transcript of the discussion between the artists, I'm not the first to think so). It thwarts expectations with a visual

opulence that avoids classification as painting, sculpture, or installation. Yet, the demand that we look down to see it evokes the panoramic distance and grand scale of a wide-sweeping vista. This distance transforms *Love Boat* from a humble collage of hand-cut fabric scraps into a vast, imaginative terrain entered in for the pleasure of our contemplation.

In McCarty's *Leapfrog*, a green apparition rises before a spotty, fleshy ground that assumes the complexion of the painting's subject. The subject itself is a frog, many frogs, or perhaps a cactus. McCarty's titles make clear that she invites visual free-association with her images, but the real focus in these paintings is the organic perfection with which McCarty applies paint on sleek, aluminum surfaces. Each untrammelled layer takes part in shaping form through the circumstance of its application. Hence form becomes a lucky accident, and imagery a surprise born of evolution. This works to best advantage in *Oh No*, an underimage of circular shapes that is circumscribed by a black, waxy surface. The black toggles between frame and ground, and the image shifts from ghost to Pop explosion, sustaining an exquisite tension between surface and image.

Elisabeth Condon is an artist based in New York who teaches painting at Bennington College.

Elana Herzog
Untitled #1, 1998. Fabric, staples, dimensions variable. Courtesy of PPOW.



Polly Apfelbaum
Zabriskie Point, detail, 1997.

