

ARTFORUM

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

WINTER PREVIEW:

45 SHOWS WORLDWIDE

ROBERT IRWIN

NORTH KOREAN PAINTING

PAUL THEK

TRISHA BROWN



\$10.00



with *Post-Partum Document*. The pun in the title *Multi-Story House*, 2007—the work is a collaboration between Kelly and Ray Barrie—is a reminder that no narrative of wrongs redressed should be allowed to obscure other injustices just as deserving of being righted. Texts, laser-cut into cast acrylic panels on the interior of a model house, acknowledge the achievements of the women's movement: EVERYONE HAD A VOICE. YOU DIDN'T SPEAK FOR OTHERS. But on the exterior we discover voices of a different register: I GREW UP DODGING BULLETS IN ANGOLA. SO THE TERM FEMINIST DIDN'T MEAN MUCH. Kelly takes a key moral position: There have been and will be prejudices that do far greater harm than even sexism. This sense of relativism is underlined again in *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*, 2001; a woman recounts the story of a boy abandoned during the Balkan war (he survives and is returned to his loving family), and thereby makes a case for the political justice of Kosovo's war for independence. In conjunction with *Post-Partum Document*, we have two stories of love for a son wherein Kelly leaves us to weigh up the differing destructive consequences of the various subspecies of bigotry, whether prejudice against women or prejudices based on race or religion.

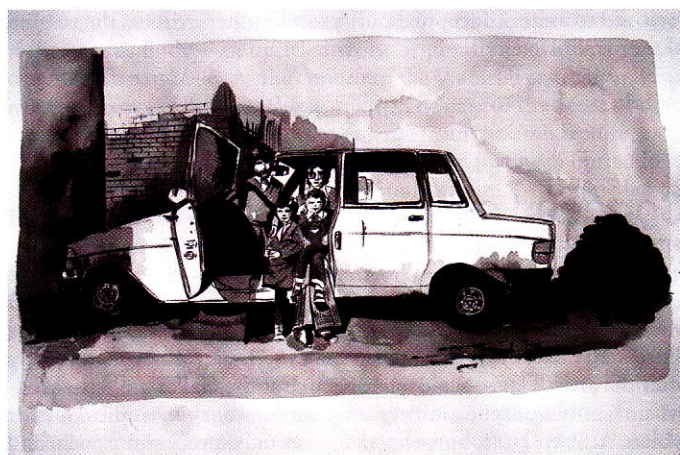
Habitus, 2010, also in collaboration with Barrie, is a model of the Quonset hut-like Anderson shelter that provided housing during World War II in Britain. Various wartime family remembrances, laser-cut into the structure's curving roof, can be read in its mirrored floor. MY FATHER WAS STUDYING LAW IN VIENNA UNTIL THE DIRECTOR GAVE HIM AN ULTIMATUM: EITHER JEW OR JUDGE. AFTER THAT, THEY LEFT FOR ENGLAND AND NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT. WELL, NO, THERE WAS ONE THING MY MOTHER REPEATED OVER AND OVER. "YOUR UNCLE WENT OUT ONE DAY AND NEVER CAME BACK. HE WAS A DENTIST. I STILL HAVE HIS TOOLS." Shadowing the intimacy of her earliest narratives, these accounts, quietly gruesome, cut to the bone of collective memory. Far from being mired in a cause, Kelly—because she experienced the hard-won gains of the women's movement—has kept the faith that substantive transformation, beginning with activism and consciousness-raising, remains within reach.

—Ronald Jones

MADRID

Tamara Arroyo GALERÍA JOSÉ ROBLES

Better than any of Tamara Arroyo's exhibitions to date, "*El arte de la memoria*" (The Art of Memory) summarized her concerns as they are expressed in drawing. The title correctly posits memory and its relationship with artistic representation as the focal point of her work. Although her oeuvre is polymorphic (Arroyo has also used photography, architecture, video, and so on), it finds in drawing a precise medium for formulating analysis and venturing suggestion. The artist herself has no doubt about what she wants to intimate; for more than a decade, her work has involved the recovery of her past by means of images purportedly documenting her childhood. At the same time, Arroyo has never ceased to be aware of the fact that the exercise of memory entails invention, distortion, and falsification. She highlights the element of fantasy that all manual representation involves, establishing a direct relationship between the artist's hand and subjective distortion. She suggests that art is a means of inventing or summoning desire, as opposed to reality. In this case, as Arroyo has stated, the desire in question is to recapture moments from her childhood, a time of her life when she was a sort of nomad who experienced an overwhelming sense of instability and loss of identity on account of her family's recurrent moves.



Tamara Arroyo
Family Volvo
ink on paper
15 x 22". From
series "*Ejercicios de memoria III*"
Exercises III

The works shown here relate to the connections—fragile ones, Arroyo claims—between individual memory and images created on the basis of recollection. The three series of drawings in this show, as well as the fifty-minute video *Curso de dibujo en movimiento* (The Course of Drawing in Motion) (all works 2010), develop this idea. On the basis of memory and without the help of photographic documents, "*Ejercicios de memoria II*" (Memory Exercises II), "*Ejercicios de memoria III*" (Memory Exercises III), and "*El arte de la memoria*" depict spaces, events, and objects connected to the artist's past, many of them linked to members of her family and her sentimental bonds with them. The iconography of these drawings includes the various music devices—cassette-tape player, stereo system, Walkman—in use when she was young, as well as the cars her parents owned. The series "*El arte de la memoria*" shows figures from classical statuary transformed into superheroes and other such childhood icons. The style of these images evokes the mirror play Arroyo has set up between drawing and photography: All of this work contrasts with the ability of photographs and related techniques to freeze time. Instead, the drawings imply that the ephemeral images produced by the mechanism of memory reflect largely invented recollections.

—Pablo Llorca

Translated from Spanish by Jane Brodie.

BEIRUT

Setareh Shahbazi 98WEEKS PROJECT SPACE

Toying as they did with notions of time, space, depth, distance, and displacement, the works that made up Setareh Shahbazi's first solo exhibition in Beirut could more accurately be considered a single installation functioning as a spatial intervention. The 98Weeks Project Space, run by the cousins Marwa and Mirene Arsanios, is essentially a hole-in-the-wall, a tiny storefront in the neighborhood of Mar Mikhael, with a bathroom and a set of stairs leading to a study area furnished with shelves, makeshift tables, and mismatched chairs.

Although Shahbazi was once aligned with one of Lebanon's leading galleries, Sfeir-Semler, she says that at this point in her career she prefers to realize new work in more ephemeral, less institutional spaces, where more playful experimentation is possible. She also lives upstairs from 98Weeks, and that helped turn "I'm Glad That Things Have Changed" into a performance of the labor that goes into making such a show. For days before the opening, one could catch sight of her painting walls, hanging images, arranging objects, or hopping on and

off the elevator with a tray of coffee cups and a *macchinetta* in hand. To stress the significance of seeing an artist at work may sound romantic or sentimental, but it makes sense in this instance, as the work in "I'm Glad That Things Have Changed" displayed the different seams and stages of Shahbazi's creative process.

For nearly a decade, the artist has perfected an idiosyncratic form of digital painting, using a mouse and the most basic tools in Photoshop to transform old scanned photographs into sleek, highly graphic compositions. By the time the final images are printed, nothing of the original photographs remains except the basic shapes of certain objects and figures. The completed pieces resemble Pop art, industrial design, or pages from a stylized children's coloring book. They are

flat, colorful, and smooth, with a vocabulary of visual elements—including rocks, trees, flowers, birds, a lion, a plastic chair, a woman with an elaborate headdress, an infant, a pair of young girls in nineteenth-century dress, public sculptures, and architectural icons from Beirut's modernist era—repeated from work to work like the codes of an invented language.

On occasion, Shahbazi has turned her images into large, theatrically arranged cutouts. But until now the overall atmosphere of her work has always been slick, seamless, and cool. In striking contrast, "I'm Glad That Things Have Changed" featured digitally manipulated hybrid images layered onto the grounds of still-visible photographs, cutouts combined with cables and illuminated lightbulbs, a ship's buoy made of rope, and a small glass vase on the floor filled with flowers—a gift at the opening

that the artist left there, feeling it went well with the installation. The photographs used as a base for paintings and cutouts were culled from boxes of family photographs that Shahbazi retrieved from Iran when her parents moved back there after twenty-five years in Germany. So walking into "I'm Glad Things Have Changed" was like entering a memory or a dream that had been artfully recomposed to account for the distance between then and now, sleep and wakefulness.

Shahbazi once described her relationship to photography as abusive. Here, she seemed rather tender and warm toward the medium. The aged pink cast of the embellished photographs and the spatial configuration of the objects on view, dramatizing the height of the ceiling with two walls of deep marine blue, made palpable the slippage between what is faithfully remembered and what is freely imagined.

—Kaelen Wilson-Goldie

BUENOS AIRES

Rosana Schoijett

ZVALETA LAB ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO

In 1904, as Virginia Woolf lay in bed suffering from a nervous breakdown, she reported hearing birds singing in Greek. Later, the birds in her novel *The Waves* would play a striking role paralleling the

developing consciousness of the characters. A similar metaphorical parallelism between birds and the human psyche permeates Rosana Schoijett's splendid collages.

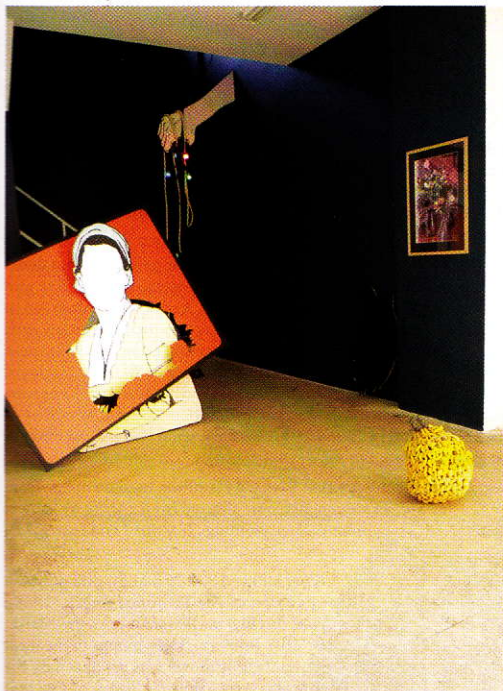
Schoijett creates images that trip over themselves with narratives that at times even contradict one another the way only collage can: In *Untitled* (all works 2010), the coy mistress of Vermeer's painting *The Girl with a Wineglass*, circa 1659–60, has been turned into a harpy—or is it a dove? In another collage (also *Untitled*) a woman, her head hidden by heavy, suffocating cloth, plays a virginal with feathery hands. The image, from Vermeer's *Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, circa 1670, is rich with associations; she could be a siren luring men to their death, or also Philomela or Procne, who in Greek myth became a swallow and a nightingale respectively.

Drawing from old art magazines, Schoijett creates her collages by sewing images together with only a few loose stitches. This gives them an almost sculptural quality: The image springs out of the plane, flutters, while maintaining a delicate stability. Her works recall Lily Briscoe's painting in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, "A thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses." For there is also a reverse side to every image: If you were to turn a collage over, you would see the threads crisscrossing on the back. The stitching looks like a constellation on an astral chart. At the same time there is an archeological feeling to the work, as Schoijett uses images as layers embedded in the compositions.

A second group of works presents a series of photographic silhouettes, head-and-shoulders profiles of people linked to the Argentine contemporary art scene. While the uniqueness of each person appears in the recognizable contours of their features, at the same time each is shown as an unfathomable shadow, with all trace of individuality effaced. Schoijett exploits an ancient tradition: one that recognized man's soul in his shadow and a shadow in his soul. In *The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl* (1814), Adelbert von Chamisso told the tale of a man who sells his shadow to the devil in exchange for a bottomless wallet, only to realize that a man without a shadow is a man with no identity. At the bottom of Schoijett's work also lies a question about the construction of individuality—how it can be created, invented, and manipulated.

This is not a new preoccupation: Her photographic series "Kiosko," 2003–10, showed the artist, who at the time worked as a photojournalist, posed beside prominent figures on the Argentine political and fashion scenes, sometimes smiling candidly, in other works looking distant or even patronizing. Some of the photographs were hilarious, some uncomfortable, but as a whole they gave a lucid sense of just how rickety and contingent an image of someone can be. Schoijett's new work is a courageous step toward a more intimate exploration, but the original questions remain. Then as now, the sanctuary of personality has been smashed into pieces, shattered by the same person who helps, in her pictures, to construct it.

—María Gainza



View of "Setareh Shahbazi," 2010.

