



Thinkspace Art Gallery
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Mostly Memory

New works and an installation from
ARMSROCK & ELBOW-TOE

Also showing in our project room:

Life Sentence featuring new works from Jon Todd

Opening Reception: Friday, Dec. 12th 7-11PM

On View: Dec., 12th – Jan. 2nd, 2009

(Los Angeles, CA) - Thinkspace Gallery is proud to present *Mostly Memory*. This exhibition will feature new drawings, paintings and an installation from ARMSROCK and ELBOW-TOE.

Memory is housed in everything around us. In our culture, our cities, our beliefs, and customs, it can be found everywhere. Memory is a monumental thing. It's reach long and uncompromising, and at the same time it is so forever fleeting, incomprehensible and changing. And everything eventually becomes memory.

ARMSROCK and ELBOW-TOE have both been working very directly with memory. Over the last few years they have been creating a body of work which is all ephemeral, and is therefore, today, mostly memory. Each artist is approaching the concept of memory from a completely different angle. They are creating a world within our space where reality and history mix with fiction and myth. Where the idea of that which is recognized as the base of what is and could be. For good or ill, the final call is up to the viewer.

ARMSROCK bio/ statement:

ARMSROCK is an urban-artist and activist who, for the last several years, has been working with the human condition in the urban environment. He has been working with the medium of drawing in various ways to explore and comment on the city and the society that's housed within it. He has been trying to question the role of art and artist in society by making art that is ephemeral, for free and for everybody. By creating hundreds of unique drawings of his fellow citizens, and placing these original pieces on the walls of the city, in an attempt to generate a critical understanding of the stories and fates that houses around and in all of us, he hopes to send a signal or raise a question about the details and mechanisms of our society. In so many ways it seems to me that we are living in times suffering from amnesia. The forgetting of collective history serves many different purposes, but mainly it serves those who are in power, enabling them to remain that way. We seem to forget because we are easily distracted, and we seem to forget out of convenience. Sometimes history is too brutal, too horrible, to remember in detail. "To remember" is derived from the Latin "re-cords" which means "to pass back through the hear". This means traveling a path that cannot only be tread with the calm and distant gaze of the passive observer. As humans, we are all intertwined in the fabric of our individual and collective history. When looking upon events of a historical nature, and therefore often a distant nature, all of that which belongs to the past, we can often remove our empathic understanding from those who were a part of these events. The events themselves take on the form of condensing symbols, becoming abstract. But if we travel the path of remembrance with heart, we can no longer remain distant. As individuals we cannot take the weight of the entire world on our shoulders, and we should not live in a landscape of collective memory colored only by guilt. Guilt to me seems like a form of punishment that I in many ways find counterproductive, because when dealing with atrocities of the past I figure that our aim should be to recognize them, reflect upon them, and strive not to repeat them. I can see one place where guilt could be a fitting term to apply. If we deliberately chose not to remember, as individuals as well as collectively, we make ourselves guilty of indifference. And history has by now proven that the indifference of some always has been the foundation for the suffering of others. To me "to remember with heart" means acknowledging the events of the past and not trying to keep them at "an arm's length". We are all fragments in each other's "history", and this must also mean that we cannot keep the history of others at a distance.

Some of the things that chisel themselves most deeply into our collective memory, also become some of the most diffused aspects of our history, perhaps because of the sheer number, is the great man-made catastrophes. In context of the exhibition "mostly memory" I have chosen to work with the victims of the catastrophes. The stories that I have chosen to portray are all built upon very specific historical events, but I have chosen to let them intertwine with each other and also with events of a more mythical nature, in the hope that I might be able to create something that is timeless and allegorical, perhaps striving to create something that stands as a symbol, a memorial of sorts.

I feel that I could never come close to portraying the real horror of the situations that I am confronting, but I feel that I must try to at least make however vague a blueprint in an attempt to acknowledge my own empathic understanding and fear. I feel that I must make a "report" on what I see, and a lot of what I see is the darkness of our heritage, and the utter impossibility of our situation. I find that in the recognition of these there lies a hope.

Artist's blog: <http://www.armsrock.blogspot.com/>
Check out a recent interview here: http://www.thecitrusreport.com/story/armsrock_765
Check out a video with the artist here: <http://www.jtsetgraffiti.com/2008/06/05/test-yt-post/>
SNEAK PEAK: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thinkspace/sets/72157606341876562/>
MAIN PAGE: <http://www.thinkspacegallery.com/2008/mostlymemory/index.php>

ELBOW-TOE bio / statement:

ELBOW-TOE is a Brooklyn, NY based artist that has been creating introspective urban art for several years. His artwork for the streets is grounded in myth, symbolism and poetry and is primarily executed in woodcut, stencil or large-scale charcoal drawings. His oeuvre is a study of human gesture as communication and he utilizes public spaces as stages for private moments. He is particularly interested in the ability of environmental forces outside his control to create a timeless quality to the work thereby allowing it to feel as if it has been memory and is part of the collective unconscious.

My current body of work is an allegory about memory's power to hold us back or move us forward. The central character in this parable is a 6 x 10 foot linocut of an Everyman, who has lost it all and wanders the plains with all his belongings strapped to his back. He navigates a world in crisis by learning from his past. The remainder of the characters that he encounters, are individuals lost in regret.

I have developed these paintings and prints during the American housing and credit crisis of the past year. In contemplating where we are and where we might be, I have found myself looking back at history, remembering the Great Depression, and considering what effects it had on the American psyche. The uncertainty that existed then is present now, and I am addressing the kind of escapism through nostalgia that can occur in the midst of calamity. Every character that the Everyman sees is gripped by this need to escape their present circumstance. They are people lost in a memory at the very point when they should be paying attention to what lies ahead.

Many different artists have inspired the flavor of this world including the photography of Walker Evans, the films of the Cohen brothers, the music of Tom Waits and the theatre of Robert Wilson.

Artist's blog: <http://street-fodder.blogspot.com/>
Artist's Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/guy_on_the_streets/sets/
Check out a recent interview here: http://myloveforyou.typepad.com/my_love_for_you/2008/06/qa-w-elbowtoe.html
Check out a video with the artist here: <http://www.jtsetgraffiti.com/2008/11/03/elbowtoe-street-art-and-studio-work/>
SNEAK PEAK: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thinkspace/sets/72157606341876562/>
MAIN PAGE: <http://www.thinkspacegallery.com/2008/mostlymemory/index.php>

Also opening on Fri, December 12th in our project room:

Jon Todd – *Life Sentence*

Like a Faberge egg smuggled into the gulag, Jon Todd's series of paintings evoke the symbolic, coded illustrative aspects of seemingly dark and dreary prison tattoos and cast them in a colorful and buoyant reworking.

Todd's works explore diverse pictorial traditions ranging from Japanese ancestral markings, golden-age American tattoos, and Mexican wrestling imagery. His multimedia collages draw on the gravitas of these steeped traditions in order to tell personal, contemporary stories.

The particular power of Russian prison tattoos stand as a form of positive self identity and individualization in the face of festering institutionalization and marginalization lends itself as a rich source upon which to explore more personal narratives of friends and acquaintances, some caught in a web of institutional health and correction. Todd's works are hopeful and optimistic, almost precious, testaments to life and the living.

Starkly colored, like some piece of freshly smeared urban graffiti, Todd's work is presented often in refined Victorian picture frames, itself an indicator of the sort of delicate balance that he brings to each of his compositions.

Todd is a Toronto-based artist. He has recently exhibited in Montreal, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Toronto.

Artist website: <http://www.jontodd.ca/>
Sneak Peek at Life Sentence: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thinkspace/sets/72157606482334419/>
Life Sentence Main Page: <http://www.thinkspacegallery.com/2008/project/lifesentence/index.php>

Also this December:

December 4th - 7th: Join us at the *GenArt Vanguard Art Fair in Miami during Art Basel* where we will be previewing our 2009 lineup with work from: Alison Sommers, Amy Crehore, Andrew Hem, Anthony Clarkson, Anthony Pontius, ARMSROCK, Bo130, Brandi Milne, Brian Viveros, Camilla d'Errico, Cherri Wood, Damon Soule, Dan-ah Kim, David MacDowell, Elbow-Toe, Ekundayo, Esao Andrews, Fafi, Imminent Disaster, Joao Ruas, Johnny "KMNDZ" Rodriguez, Kelly Vivanco, KuKula, Matthew Feyld, Michael Alvarez, Microbo, Mr. Jago, Neasden Control Centre (aka Stephen Smith), Paul Barnes, Peter Taylor, Reuben Rude, Sarah Joncas, Seth Armstrong, Stella Im Hultberg, Timothy Karpinski, Tony Philippou, Yosuke Ueno

Coming up in January, 2009:

"From the Streets of Brooklyn"

Group show curated by Ad Hoc Art

With featured installations from Gaia, Imminent Disaster and Ellis G. and a group show featuring works from over 40 of Brooklyn's finest.

Exhibition run dates: January 9th – February 6th, 2009

Opening reception: Fri, January 9th 7-11PM

Thinkspace Gallery is located at 4210 Santa Monica Blvd (near Sunset Junction), in the Silver Lake area, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Gallery hours are Thursday through Sunday, 1:00 to 6:00PM, and by appointment. For more information, please call 323.913.3375, visit www.thinkspacegallery.com, or email contact@sourharvest.com.

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