

This is not one of those shows that just push the limits of printing and technique. Neither is this a show where photography is an auxiliary means for the presented spectrum. From national history—which in Argentina evokes tragically sharp and throbbing memories—to the immediate history of *auteur* photography, Graciela Sacco has created a path that had never before been trodden. We can say that her works are objects, photographs, installations, interventions. What we cannot say is that they will go unnoticed. They have a life of their own. They are alert to human existence.

The title is *Sombras del sur y del norte*. As a title, this may seem innocuous. But only a negative exercised with a deep desire not to see can obviate the borderline situations referred by the artist. These are shadows of the regrettable things that occur both in the South and in the North. Can there be a doubt that a pair of shoes are charged with history? The artist “illuminates” this situation, bringing to the fore what would otherwise we would have to assume, guess, attempt to understand. Curtains, shoes, wood, plexiglass, non-traditional supports that are silent witnesses of the world in which the things that rile us up and the artist points out take place. In her participation in biennials, Graciela Sacco has dealt with open spaces, let’s say... in the exterior or outside of a focalized space, where the work is not subjected to determining parameters controlled by a single architectural frame, by one or two galleries. The de-materialization of the work of art—like the lack of respect for human life—leaves its traces. It is not a square or a rectangle imprisoned inside a frame. In that sense, Sacco’s work pays attention to lived experience.

From a technical perspective, the mediums of heliography and photo-serigraphy are currently used with a certain frequency. But the conceptual channels navigated by Graciela Sacco differ from the general use. If we think of photographic emulsion on supports other than paper, we have to hark back to the origins of photography itself, and beyond that reference we are confronted with those who printed on marble and wood in the 70s and 80s: Siegmann. They created their works with different concepts and different aesthetic results. In terms of the use

of photo-serigraphy, we know that Edith Adi presented notable proposals printing on volume. Unlike all of them, Sacco has developed de-materialization. This is the area the artist masterfully proposes, as was evident in her show. The dimly-lit gallery, the installation of the 2004-2005 series *Sombras del Sur y del Norte:... de la espera*, placed at the back right across from the entrance door, with seven photo-serigraphically printed plexiglass fragments invisibly suspended, ready to move with the slightest breeze or as people walked by.

From a distance, one had to guess it; close-up it was a luxury that highlighted evanescent situations.. The less we see, the more we want to apprehend the image; the less is said—but what is said is what needs to be said—the more we want to know.

Nine works, among which *Sombras del Sur y del Norte: línea de gente*, 2004, 150 x 50 cm, is another heliograph printed on “non-paper.” Formed by three pieces of transparent fabric, it explores the topic of people, often present in Sacco’s work, which often moves away from the framework of figurative representation. *Sombras del sur y del Norte: vistos*, 2004, is an installation on DVD and plexiglass fragments. As we mention it, we must point out that the placement of the installations was well planned, articulating triangles of experiences for the viewer, generating different rhythms as they were interspersed with smaller works. The installations generate a sensation of amplitude, the other works, a concentration of the gaze. Of several works containing shoes, we can summarize the effect of correspondence, of integration, of “visual contagion” developed by the artists by printing them with the grid of the floors small tessera. In conclusion, it is not only human beings who leave their trace, we know well that the environment marks us. The protest work produced since her beginnings by this artist born Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina and recently settled in Spain, integrates itself to the urban, it speaks of the movements, the rhythms, and the saturations of cities. These are not socially-charged works that act in an inflammatory fashion. The show reaffirmed her accelerated glances at situations and spaces that are in constant movement, like islands



Graciela Sacco. From the series *Shades from the South and the North: Line of People*, 2004. 3 pieces of transparent fabric with heliography print. 59 1/16 x 19 11/16 in. (150 x 50 cm.).

that de-materialize: coasts devastated by political tsunamis. Sacco “writes and unwrites” in light.

Graciela Kartofel

Chemi Rosado Seijo

Art in General

If the last few decades have expanded art practices in every direction, they’ve also opened fresh and often contradictory channels for conservative critics. Artists who produce eccentrically personal works are characterized as indulgent narcissists. The makers of highly aestheticized objects are called elitist. And those who work in socially engaged, non-material forms are scolded for making political statements, not art. Chemi Rosado Seijo’s practice could easily fall into the last category and acquire an extra strike against it for aiding and abetting so-called delinquents, namely skateboarders.

The San Juan-based Seijo has consistently focused on this social group that in many ways embodies the renegade spirit now largely absent from the global art world. Skateboarders, like artists of earlier generations, are often viewed as a public menace and are left out of civic dialogues, and yet they are the practitio-

ners of a dangerous, defiant, and beautiful art form. To be fair, these misunderstood "artists" guard their outsider status in order to protect the independent spirit of their practice.

Seijo's *Historia Sobre Ruedas (History On Wheels)*—produced during his fall 2005 residency at Art in General—explores many aspects of this dynamic as it plays out in the urban landscape of New York City. With the larger goal of creating a skateboarding map of the city, Seijo gathered an astonishingly lucid, ground-level document of the city's built topography, while interacting with and networking the city's myriad communities of thrashers, or skateboarding enthusiasts. Seijo took hundreds of photographs of public plazas and less-formal open spaces, carefully noting features that are of particular interest to skateboarders—wide steps, railings, and areas of flat or inclined concrete, which directly shape the choreography of skateboard movements. These photographs were assembled at Art in General into collage-like landscapes or merely stacked in groups for visitors to peruse.

Often, these locales were photographed without skaters, which leaves the viewer to imagine the incredible feats of these urban athletes while focusing on the surfaces they activate. This is the underlying message and beauty of Seijo's project. As a New Yorker, one can view these collages of architectural details and empty spaces and recall the remarkable grace and palpable risktaking on display

throughout the city on any given day in Union Square, Washington Square, Battery Park, Hudson River Park—everywhere that skateboarders enliven the city with their specific, highly evolved performance art.

Of course, this is the reason skateboarders pose both a threat and a liability to property owners and the city. Their presence is real and has an impact on property values and public safety, as well as the social and aesthetic life of the city. Seijo's project created an unofficial forum for bridging these various concerns. During the run of the residency, skateboarders visited Art in General and hung out in the studio-cum-gallery provided for the artist. Books, skateboarding videos, and beanbag chairs were provided for the public to make this space a comfortable place to gather and learn about skateboarding. Skid marks on the wooden floor attest to the demonstrations and activity that took place here during the residency.

The product of Seijo's touring, research, documentation, and interaction was the creation of a clearly designed map of the most active skateboarding sites in the city—from Downtown, to Midtown, to the Upper West Side and northern Manhattan. Depicted as a network of lines with branches, the skateboarding map lays over a standard city street map, with circles specifying prime destinations for New York City thrashers. This map was grandly recreated with black electrical tape across one long gallery wall and on a smaller scale as a decorative decal for skateboard

decks. Discussions are under way with a local skateboard manufacturer to produce the map and custom skateboard design for wider distribution. As Seijo notes, the map is "an homage to the skaters of the city... I want to keep it conceptual, not officialized."

Seijo is active on the international art scene and was included in the 2005 "S Files" at El Museo del Barrio, 2004 Bial de Cuenca, and 2002 Whitney Biennial. He has already explored relationships between the histories of art and skateboarding in previous exhibitions. Seijo's map points out that some of New York's most active skateboarding sites are the plazas and steps surrounding art museums, a telling coincidence not lost on the artist or his audience.

John Ewing

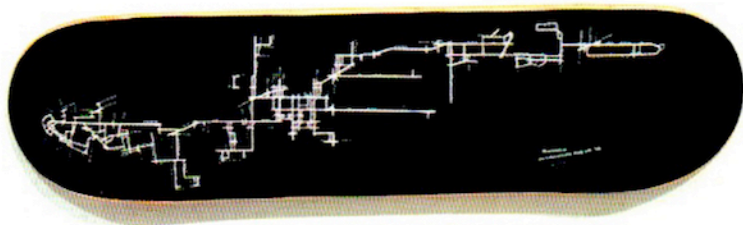
Alexandre Arrechea

Magnan Projects

Through the gallery window on Tenth Avenue, one sees some unexpected objects and some works of art on a wall. The objects compose Alexandre Arrechea's installation *Dust*, which gives the exhibition its name. There are five life-size punching bags made of blown glass, containing debris from places in the world that are significant to the artist. On the wall are eight watercolor paintings held with surgical pins from the series *Dust* and *The Limit*, on topics that intertwine conceptually and on which the artist worked simultaneously. One's mobility is a symptom of our time—what one gets from each place and what one gives to each city in which one lives, even if briefly, are significant exchanges for Arrechea. Many of these things are not tangible, like friendships, affections, and aromas, and Arrechea represents them with mounds of debris that are securely contained, out of reach at the bottom of each punching bag, while the transparent bags express the force with which these moments have impacted the artist.

Printed on the glass of one of the bags is "49 Walker Street, Nueva York"; on another one is the address where he lived in Madrid, and so forth, including Cuba. Each punching bag is held by an iron band and hangs from the ceiling with chains. The

Chemi Rosado Seijo. *History on Wheels*, 2005. Mixed media. Photo: Julio Grinblatt.



however. *Deusa do Ébano* (2001) of a smiling dancer wearing a shiny costume and head wrap is imbued with happiness and tenderness, as is *Foliana do Ilê Aiyê* (1999), in which another dancer smiles broadly for the camera.

Overall, Valdir Cruz's photographs give a human face to the carnival of Salvador da Bahia. These remarkable, memorable images document an extraordinary festival that will hopefully continue to maintain its local flavor despite the increasing pressures of the tourist industry.

Tatiana Flores

Sebastián Romo

Galeria Ramis Barquet

In the catalogue for *Made in Mexico*—ICA Boston's "up-to-the-minute," 2004 survey of Mexican contemporary art—Sebastián Romo makes this revealing statement about his homeland: "In contrast to other countries where the 'everyday' is based in mass media, in Mexico the 'everyday' can be recuperated and transferred to another context without having belonged to a publicity campaign or as an article of export for use in any place."

These qualities—freshness, independence, adaptability—thoroughly inform Romo's exhibition. Loosely translated from German, *zauber* means a kind of magic or charm. Indeed, this charmed selection—including mixed-media works, chalk drawings, and a photography installation—draws together a variety of information, sources, and forms into an unusual grouping that benefits from its quirky combination.

One subset of the work is constructed in a jigsaw format. Applying inkjet images to medium-sized, rectangular sheets of puzzle board, Romo has recomposed a handful of photographic images so that each work contains bits and pieces of the others. This is a nifty trick on the eye, which tries to focus on the primary images—mostly prim portraits of young Latinas—but which nevertheless gets caught up in fragments of trees, landscapes, signs, and skin (from porn magazines, perhaps). These combination images are all related, in a fashion, yet hover in a kind of imagistic purgatory. They slide from

register to register but never fully resolve as the eye moves across the otherwise neatly made puzzles.

Another group of work is composed of medium-to-large, chalk-on-blackboard drawings, each mounted on simple wooden supports. Some of these are hung; others are casually leaned against a gallery wall. The white chalk on the black surfaces complements the enigmatic subject matter—a human skull, a Maltese cross, a tree branch with blossoms, a long dagger and swirling smoke. Like freehand doodles on a schoolroom blackboard, though of a higher order, these drawings convey that freshly made feeling. They recall chalk works by other artists, of Gary Simmons in particular, and carry the uneasy but thrilling sensation that a swipe of the hand or a cloth could erase them. This transitory, imperiled elegance is accentuated by the mysterious, gothic imagery.

Arrayed across one length of the gallery, and in several other places, are combinations of photographs, pinned directly to the walls. These well-recorded snippets from the life of an itinerant, international artist depict an eye on the move, a porous sensibility in motion and in flux. Random views of airports, doorways, street corners, highways, rain-streaked apartment windows, tabletops, etc., coalesce into a detached, fluid mood of wistful longing. It is the emotional diary of the artist as voyager, told in snapshots.

These photographs are all the same size and displayed in a linear, gridlike fashion, with a few random offshoots. This neat presentation imparts an order and rhythm to what is no doubt a disordered jumble of experiences, locations, and memories. The tidy schema creates a hospitable context for this random collage and extends its influence to the other work in the show. Romo's light, orderly touch allows this eclectic selection of work to mix easily, suggesting that a refined eye can wrest an aesthetically pleasing order from both visual culture and a peripatetic life.

John Ewing

Tomás Sánchez

Marlborough Gallery

The new exhibition of works by Tomás Sánchez is a window into a very personal



Valdir Cruz. *Deusa do Ébano* (Ebony Goddess), 2001. From the *Carnival # XXXIV* series. Photography on gelatin silver print.

interpretation of landscape that the artist has been working on, for a long time, and which has now matured into a signature theme that he has serialized.

Tomás has worked and developed the theme of the imaginary landscape within a spiritual framework that has been compared, accurately, to traditional Chinese landscape painting. It is also a trait that was noticed very early in his career (by critics such as Gerardo Mosquera in *Sus*

Sebastián Romo. *The Construction of Identity*, 2005. LightJet prints on puzzle board. 27 x 25 in. (68,6 x 63,5 cm.).

