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ARTFORUM

"Boofthle Booth-Booth: Deux Doox—The Hollywood Biennale"

PAULINE

Given the ruinous economy and the resulting shrinkage of the art world, it's hardly surprising that someone would literalize the collapse by squeezing a biennial exhibition into the space of an art fair booth. "Boofthle Booth-Booth: Deux Doox—The Hollywood Biennale," a thirty-artist show organized by artist Mateo Tannatt, attempted to do just that, though the "booth" in question was Tannatt's apartment, which for two years has doubled as the gallery Pauline, and the self-styled "Biennale" label was a parodic reach. As the subtitle "Deux Doox" implies, "Boofthle" was a sequel, and, like last year's installment—which was not explicitly pitched as a biennale—the show coincided with the city's fledgling art fair, ART LA. The title also acknowledges the show's site-specific origins—Pauline sits on a bland side street below the Hollywood sign—and the meaning of the homophonic phrase *doo doo* is hard to miss.

Despite its ridiculous, even asinine, title, which pokes fun at two of contemporary art's easier targets, "Boofthle" was a deftly orchestrated group show, with Tannatt playing both artist and conductor. His presence loomed largest among mostly small-scale works—and not just because he lived there. Tannatt's *Hollywood Social Form/Social Club*, 2009, an oversize, biomorphic abstraction constructed from papier-mâché, partially slathered with plaster, and decorated with seashells, dominated much of what was otherwise his dining room.

Plaster provided a backdrop—literally, as the white walls of the apartment are noticeably spackled—for many of the works on display; two of the walls featured murals by Tannatt, each a grid of yellow dots—a sort of "signature" carried over from his previous silk-screened canvases. Works by other artists were installed on top of these pieces (loosely recalling Chicago-based artist Gaylen Gerber's "Support" series) and divided into sections named after different Hollywood thoroughfares or intersections. "Hollywood Blvd.," for example, was blatantly thematic, with a trio of works—Alex Klein's framed photo *Study for Fool's Gold*, 2008; Kathryn Andrews's *Lubricacion*, 2009, a rented neon sign blinking its suggestive title phrase; and Heather Cook's bleached fabric veil, *Untitled*, 2009—all suggesting the lurid reality of the Hollywood dream.

An adjacent group of work employed a similar tag-team effort: The angular forms of a vintage, untitled Vincent Fecteau sculpture from 1999—sitting atop Alexander May's *A-Frame Fixed Dial*, 2008, a sculpture with a white, pancakelike plaster top—rhymed visually with Lesley Moon's 2008 solarized photograph of her elbows; the thick, impasto brush tracks of Lisa Williamson's painting *Head*, 2008, situated below Moon's image, recalled the texture of the gallery's walls and May's tabletop. Tannatt pulled the whole "Biennale" together, more or less, with similar thematic and material connections.



View of "Boofthle Booth-Booth: Deux Doox—The Hollywood Biennale," 2009.

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Other highlights included a black post-and-lintel sculpture by Nick Kramer; a mottled, jagged, cardboard mobile by Rebecca Morris; twin paintings by Alex Olson, both titled *Jane Birkin Autograph*, 2009—as well as Dawn Kasper's delirious portrait drawings—*enem*—performance relics made between 2005 and 2008; and *Drink Service*, 2009, a humorous array of chalices by Lisa Sitko. Most of the artists here were Tannatt's Los Angeles-based peers, and roughly half were Pauline veterans, for whom collegiality seems a legitimate strategy. Joshua Nathanson, curator of the freewheeling Pauline exhibition "Where Was I? All About the Edges, Bag of Pockets, the Art of Semi-Autonomy" in 2007, was represented here by a resin-coated chair and *8 Minutes Underwater*, 2009, a reproduction of a Matisse painting in drab, Milton Avery browns. Justin Beal, who collaborated with Tannatt for Pauline's "Tasteful Guidance: Alteration Demonstration" show in 2007, contributed two vertical, cast-plaster blocks with voids left by vegetables that had apparently rotted away. Even more tracelike: Darren Bader, the subject of Pauline's only solo show, appears on the checklist as the title of a work dated 2009, but the artist is not physically present nor represented by any visible artwork. The sixth show in the apartment-gallery, "Boothle" is also purportedly the last (though it is unclear whether Pauline will continue off-site). In this sense, Tannatt tacitly adds a third term to *biennial* and *art fair*: *retrospective*. Undoubtedly, the manic energy of this important artist-run space will continue to unfold in Tannatt's solo efforts, but don't hold your breath waiting for Pauline's "Boothle 3-D."

—Michael Ned Holte