

EDUCATION

- 2000 The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Master of Fine Art, Painting and Drawing
1998 The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Bachelor of Fine Art, Painting and Drawing
1996 University of Vermont, Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy and Humanities

Solo Exhibitions

- 2007 Anna Kustera Gallery, NY

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2006 T M / G S : C D / S C, Oliver Kamm 5BE Gallery, NY
CANADA, NY
Tact-Traction, Anna Kustera Gallery, NY
2003 Girls Gone Wild, Bronwyn Keenan Gallery, NY
2001 New Speciation: 4 Voices, Stefan Stux Gallery, NY
Homewrecker, Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago
2000 Poster Designs, Suburban Gallery, Oak Park, Illinois, Curated by Michelle Grabner
Egoberry, Traveling Group Exhibition, The ISA Group, Japan, University of Osaka,
Electraslip Knife, Chicago, IL
Thesis Exhibition, Master of Fine Arts, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL

Selected Bibliography

- 2006 *Purple Fashion #5*: Miami Modernage, Purple Art News Photo Essay
The New Yorker: Tom Meacham/ Gary Stephan /Cheryl Donegan / Stephanie Campos at Oliver Kamm, May 22
2004 *Purple Fashion #2*: Yungay, Peru, Purple Art News Photo Essay
2003 *The New York Times*: Girls Gone Wild, Roberta Smith
2001 *HOT COMMODITIES #6*
New Art Examiner: Electraslip Knife, Lori Waxman
1999 *Purple Magazine #3*: The Seventies, Purple Interiors

Abaton Garage

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By Appointment Only

1:1/1

Stephanie Campos

May 6th ~ May 31st, 2007

Because You're Mine (I Walk the Line)

“Sometimes we find ourselves in the presence of a form that guides and encloses our earliest dreams.”

--Gaston Bachelard, from *The Poetics of Space*

‘I’m sure they can paint a “good de Kooning,” but only I can paint a bad one.’

--Willem de Kooning in response to his imitators in the 1950s.

The artist’s room is an amalgamation of past, present, and future rooms. The studio space, where ideas turn into objects, and objects turn into more objects; Johnny Cash and Talking Heads are played, cigarettes are smoked, oil paint everywhere, and maybe even an old black cat, or a toddler passes through. The spaces of childhood, the latent mysticism of Vuillard’s painted rooms, dense with objects and ornamentation, a person reading in the background. The question of how to bridge the two spaces becomes a question of how to transform flowing time into a tangible presence, a room where art and life are *not* mistrustful of each other. This is the artist’s room—a little dusty and paint stained, containing shiny, creamy objects, found on street corners or made by hand. It is a room of doubles, of paintings that reflect as easily as mirrors.

Stephanie Campos’ installation at Abaton Garage places studio “objects” alongside abstract oil paintings on paper and wood. An ancient, paint-encrusted door, formerly the artist’s studio table, rests against the wall. Like most of the objects in the room, the door/table bears its history of re-purposed functionality, both on its surface and in reference to the art objects that surround it. Polaroids of paintings in process, some with the artist’s self-deprecating wisdom (“eat your food, eat your paint, eat your words”) scrawled all over them, are arranged in a square. A pedestal holds a tower constructed from wood blocks, pens, paper, wax, paint bits, and two astronaut figures perched on top, each looking at their own reflection in a tiny mirror. Like most of the artist’s paintings and sculptures, the tower has transformed over the years, gaining height and junkyard details in each re-incarnation of the artist’s studio. More than the other pieces, it bears the mark of a communal project on its assemblage surface. Originally started as an art project with her two children, the tower has since become equal parts studio totem and studio detritus.



Untitled 1:1/1 Pencil and magic marker on photograph, 2007



Untitled 1:1/1 Oil and various mediums on wooden door, 2007

Campos first conceived her “poured” polyurethane pieces in the late 1990’s at the Art Institute of Chicago. Found objects such as books, cushions, and baby beds would be covered with poly resin (oil plastic) to become rounded, minimal versions of their functional selves. Relocating to Miami after a long trip to Peru in 2001, Campos returned to painting with the lessons learned from her sculptural pieces. Applying thick layers of black, white and red oil paint to wood and masonite panels, she uses brushes and palette knives to choreograph stick-like forms, sharp edges, squares, and rectangles. The result is a roughened, street-smart take on the Malevich square; a seemingly “throw-away” casualness is juxtaposed with a haunting poetic appraisal of the painted surface. In an April 2007 show at Anna Kustera, Campos exhibited “Before, After, Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow;” a painting propped against the gallery wall with a layer of creamy white paint covering half of its surface, and left to gather and dry in a little pool on the gallery floor. The time-based action of painting a painting, the *before* and *after* of a critical moment in the studio, is transferred to the gallery space, an act that feels more like a heartfelt attempt at explicating a painter’s process than a subversive gag. The presence of the studio table/door at Abaton Garage is a similar attempt to bring the viewer into the artist’s experience of the object-hood of her work.

Samuel Beckett gave voice to the radiant impossibility of a self-satisfied artistic expression when he stated, “to be an artist is to fail as no other dares fail.” The sense of “failure” that the painter experiences every time a change is made to the painted surface is a state of heightened emotion that generates continual movement. In a recent artist statement Campos writes, “organize freedom and expect change,” in reference to the hope of self-actualization that comes with each painted form and line. The challenge for painters who want to expand and explicate their practice onto real space rests on how to translate the studio state of “eternal becoming.” Campos’ installation does not fall into the trap of literally recreating a studio space, but instead construes a space from the objects that surround the definitive moment in the studio. The finished art object, the culmination of hours, months, and years of work, is placed alongside the equally time-consuming “projects” of the Polaroid poetry/editing, the painting table/door and the block tower. Time spent *not* painting, the tedium of studio work, is represented not as a negative passivity, but as a sublime state of concentration, an indispensable part of the creative process.

Nora Griffin, 2007



1:1/1 Installation view, Abaton Garage, May 2007



Untitled 1:1/1 Oil, wood and various mediums, 2006