

Scope Finds Its Comic Side

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PHOTO GALLERY
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NEW YORK—A two-word review of this year's **Scope**, the fair's eighth edition, would read "Cartoons, everywhere." Rarely can there have been an art fair in which a single source material was so ubiquitous — and this one hits you within seconds of entering the Scope tent. One of the first booths you encounter is that of New York-based **Greene Contemporary**, where, among other things, **Nathan Skiles's** entertainingly anthropomorphized cuckoo clocks peer out from the back wall as though from one of **Walt Disney's** animated forests. At \$3,000 each, these have already proven successful for the gallery, with one of them going to a New York collector before they had even arrived at the fair — the buyer was sufficiently persuaded by an e-mailed image.

At **Eli Klein Fine Art** there is a gaggle of Chinese artist **Zeng Jianyong's** moon-faced children, all wide-eyed, looking slightly sorry for themselves, and exhibiting the disconcerting lifelessness that is a result of their being sourced from the pages of children's illustrated books rather than flesh-and-blood kids. **Ada Gallery**, meanwhile, has gone directly to the source, with examples of original hand-drawn underground comic book pages by cult filmmaker **George Kuchar** on offer for \$12,000 each. And **Jonathan LeVine** also picks up the theme, which is not surprising given that slightly creepy cartoon characters have been central to the gallery's style since it opened. LeVine's installation of pictures and soft sculptures by **Camille Rose Garcia**, backed by specially produced artist-designed wallpaper, is one of the most captivating displays in the fair.

Garcia's aren't the only cartoon-derived sculptures, either. Scope debutant **Okay Mountain**, from Austin, Texas, has **Jesse Greenberg's** bizarre gaming machines, which seem to have stepped out of some acid-fuelled comic book, while Scope stalwart **Rare Gallery** has a set of four **Johnston Foster** *Life Psychotic* shark sculptures at \$7,000 each.

So all-pervading is the cartoon theme that even a lot of the work that falls outside of it is infected by it. There is *Without You Baby, There Ain't No Us*, a special project commissioned by the Scope Foundation from the young Swiss artists who call themselves **The Invisible Heroes**. This is the group who last year staged the hilariously Dada-

esque installation with dollar bills for sale for a range of different prices. Apparently they are still looking for a buyer for the bill they priced at \$4 million.

This time around they have produced a series of colored pencil drawings based on video clips sourced from YouTube. These are priced at \$300 each, or \$450 for some special "adult" examples based on YouPorn videos. Though these aren't literally cartoon-based works — with one or two exceptions, like *Buddy Rich at the Muppets Show* — the combination of hand-drawn technique and video source material is enough for them to be dragged under the cartoonish spell of the fair. The same happens to **Allison Schulnik's** *Hobo Clown* video at New York's **Mike Weiss Gallery**, as well as **Marc Séguin's** *La Piñata*, a stuffed American bald eagle painted with tar, presented by Miami's **Charest-Weinberg** and suspended high above the fair's entryway. In this context, the taxidermic bird seems to have flown in directly from the world of Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote.

One of the most engaging things about Scope's director **Alexis Hubshman** is that every edition of his fair has a new, added dimension. This one has an event called "Cheap Fast and Out of Control," which runs alongside the fair and presents bands; movies; a store selling books, prints, discs, and artists' multiples; and a "Personal Development Auction," where visitors will be invited to bid for artists' services and skills. Consequently, a few hours spent wandering around the dealers' booths can only scratch the surface of the entire Scope experience. Even in the midst of this overcrowded Armory week, that must be a good thing.

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