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The District Art Review

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“exposing & providing insight into local art”

[May 3, 2010 New Paper Cuts: The Art and Science of Rock Posters](#)

Paper Cuts: The Art and Science of Rock Posters

March 25, 2010 – April 25, 2010

Atheneum

201 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Having gone to *Paper Jam: The Art and Grime of the East Coast Rock Poster*, curator Anthony Dihle’s show at Civilian Art Projects last year, I went into *Paper Cuts* with a pretty good idea of what to expect. (Admittedly, details of the show have been forgotten, due to the haze of \$2 Pabst Blue Ribbons, sweaty hipsters, and the obscenely loud band playing at said venue.)

The rock poster, regardless of medium, possesses a unique attribute that other forms of art typically lack. In its foundation is the element of practicality; the poster represents a band’s identity, aesthetically preparing its audience for the music to come. It’s essentially selling us music, similar to the functions of book illustrations and graphic design/advertising. Needless to say, these types of shows are always drastically different from the run-of-the-mill painting exhibit at a gallery.

Paper Cuts epitomizes this marriage between music and art. Within the spacious Atheneum, the walls are plastered in rock posters, covering music from all genres such as The Melvins, Ted Leo & The Pharmacists, and Depeche Mode. Major labels and local acts are all included here and given equal attention. In fact, the music seems secondary to the artwork, given the several instances where I had no idea who the poster was advertising for. The Junior League Band? Never heard of them, but for \$25, I’m sold. Chris Stamey and Peter Holsapple? Fine, I’ll check them out after the poster’s framed and hanging in my house.

Despite this somewhat homogenous aesthetic spanning rock posters over the last few decades, the prints are undeniably impressive. I feel the exact same way about Anthony Dihle’s shows as I do about Radiohead – they might change with the times but they’ll always exceed expectations.



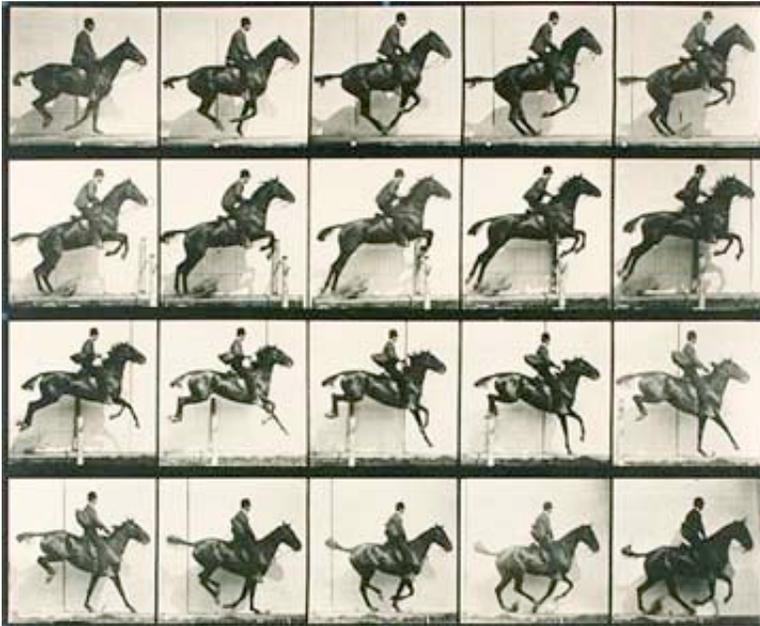
John Foster / Bad People Good Things, "Rogue Wave" (Silkscreen)



Anthony Dihle / Dirty Pictures, "The Shots Vase" (Silkscreen)

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[April 24, 2010 Helios: Eadweard Muybridge in a Time of Change](#)



Photograph courtesy of Corcoran Gallery of Art

Helios: Eadweard Muybridge in a Time of Change

April 10 – July 18, 2010

Corcoran Gallery of Art

500 Seventeenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20006

I promised myself I would only review smaller shows and mostly independent galleries, but I felt the need to mention this one. Eadweard Muybridge is currently on view at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and, as I'm sure you've already seen the glowing reviews, it's truly an important exhibit to witness. Despite the bells and whistles ([stereoscopes](#) for each visitor), the meat of the exhibit is really in the latter half, chock full of his famous motion-sequence photographs (shown above). Not only is this show just really a lot of fun to go through, it's also vital (and still relevant) to understand the origins of our modern-day motion pictures.

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[April 24, 2010 Mia Feuer: Suspended Landscapes](#)

Mia Feuer

Suspended Landscapes

Transformer Gallery

1404 P Street, NW Washington, DC 20005

Currently exhibiting at the hole-in-the-wall venue that is Transformer Gallery, located off P Street (dwarfed by the massive Whole Foods next door) is Mia Feuer's *Suspended Landscapes* installation. You're confronted with the installation even before you enter the gallery – and once you've entered, the hanging construction is so tremendous it borders on invading your personal space. There are cranes and pulleys, colored bright blue and red, tangled and covering almost every square inch of the gallery. In fact, in order to move around the piece, you're forced to duck and weave through Feuer's industrial forest.

Her subject matter, evident through the juxtaposition of her title and the installation itself, is one that never ceases to interest me. What's most impressive however, is Feuer's delicate balance in relaying her message. With most social commentary, the message too often comes off as obnoxious and overbearing, creating an even greater divide between opposing views. Feuer seems to have found a sophisticated, yet still effective, means of communicating her thoughts on industrialization and the impact humans have made on our environment. The pulleys ultimately keeping her construction from collapsing on top of its visitors only serve to remind us that our fabricated world is hanging by a thread (in this case, quite literally). Its sheer scale is both daunting and disorienting, a feeling all too familiar from walking through Richard Serra sculptures. At the same time, the playful red and blue primary colors make it a bit more light-hearted. Were the constructions painted black and gray, the tone created by her piece would be entirely different. In a way, it almost seems that this is her way of telling us that there might be a silver lining to this convoluted mess we've created. Amidst the destruction of our planet's natural landscape, there's also construction and creation, and ultimately hope. If anything, Feuer's symbolic Pandora's Box seems to serve as a word of caution.



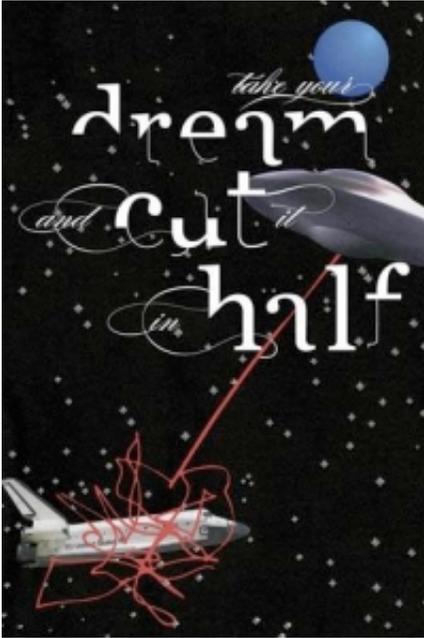
Suspended Landscapes, view from below



Suspended Landscapes, view from back of the gallery

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[April 7, 2010 Corcoran College of Art + Design: Take Your Dream And Cut It In Half](#)



Corcoran College of Art & Design 25th Annual Print Portfolio

Take Your Dream and Cut it in Half

March 24–April 3, 2010

Civilian Art Projects

1019 7th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

Remember when you were a sophomore in college, your ideas about the world still not quite ripe and your mind easily impressionable? (For me, I seem to be permanently in this stage of my life.) At school – regardless of whether you were studying business, art, literature, or music – your primary concern was to satisfy the professors you admired and make Mom and Dad proud.

That being said, when entering this one-room exhibit comprised of 32 prints by students (both undergraduate and graduate) and faculty of Corcoran College of Art + Design, the academic environment that birthed this body of work is pretty apparent. All prints, approximately 9 by 12 inches (give or take) and arranged either landscape or portrait, are framed using almost identical wooden frames. The homogenous formatting tells me one thing: these prints were created with the purpose of a print exchange in mind. Not that there's anything wrong with print exchanges – I would be lying if I said I hadn't taken part in my fair share of those in my lifetime. In fact, the sheer range in voice and style throughout these prints, given the strict parameters, is impressive. It seems that despite the vast array of viewpoints (32 to be exact), the body of work seems to represent the institution that is Corcoran's printmaking department as a whole, as opposed to allowing each individual's voice shine through. Regardless of imagery, subject matter, and print medium, the show participants adhere strictly to the specific size given to them, with not a single one branching into the third (or fourth) dimension or beyond the size constraints. Few, if any, ventured into the realm of texture or a print material outside of Rives BFK. Clare Winslow's "Kenyetta", a screen printed memorial of sorts, stands out in its maximization of medium, creating a bit of trompe l'oeil with its translucent layers. Another screen print, this one by Frank C. Pappas, shows the United States Capitol – expertly convincing me that it could easily be an etching. "Real Life Is So Black And White", a photolithograph by Tracy Pilzer, realistically depicts a color television in a black and white wheat field. Had I not taken a closer look, I would have missed that the color television was, in actuality, cut out and affixed onto the print itself (letting me spend the rest of my evening wondering what lie below the cut-out TV).

At the end, despite numerous memorable prints, there's an undeniable undercurrent of obligation, as is the case with all academic-based exhibits. The talent exhibited through this collection of prints by Corcoran College of Art + Design is indeed formidable, though not quite shown to its full potential.

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- Welcome to The District Art Review, a one-woman operation whose goal is to review current art exhibits in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. I am not writing this on behalf of any galleries or museums, but rather of my own accord. My only motive is to expose interesting local art shows, in hopes of creating more exposure and allowing insight into the DC art scene (as well as document the things I've seen). If you know of any shows you think I should review or just find interesting, please feel free to email me at atoastedheart@gmail.com. Or you can always just leave a comment.

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