

eyewash @ Parker's Box

[PRESS RELEASE]

193 Grand Street Brooklyn NY 11211 718 388 2882 www.parkersbox.com

www.eyewash.cc

> NEW AMERICAN STORY ART

MAC ADAMS, DOTTY ATTIE, SUE COE, RENEE FRENCH, CARLA GANNIS, DAVID KRAMER, LARRY KRONE, NATE LARSON, JOE SACCO, SCOTT TEPLIN, JIM TOROK

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, OCT 15, 7-9 PM

EXHIBITION: OCT 15 – NOV 15, 2004

GALLERY HOURS: FRIDAY TO MONDAY 1 TO 7 PM

PERFORMANCE & VIDEO: FRI OCT 29, 7-9:30 PM WITH JON KEITH BRUNELLE, DAVID KRAMER & LARRY KRONE

NEW AMERICAN STORY ART is a collection of visual stories by eleven American artists.

Story Art, the term for that genre of visual narrative art that has focused exclusively on just that: telling stories, initially evolved as a bi-product of conceptualism and post-conceptualism in the early 1970's often utilizing the sequence format already familiar in comic book culture. Three major museum exhibitions gave recognition to Story Art in the 1970's, and among the better known practitioners were artists like John Baldessari, Alexis Smith, Duane Michals & Laurie Anderson.

The exhibition, *NEW AMERICAN STORY ART* has been conceived to provide a sampling of work being made in this area today by emerging artists alongside others who have already produced long-standing bodies of work over the last thirty years. Examples of the latter include Mac Adams, Dotty Attie and Sue Coe who all add continuity to the exhibition in historical terms, while also offering new works dealing with current concerns. The evolution of Story Art since the 1970's is of particular interest as artists have increasingly exploited the potential of computers and new technology as well as installation art, in their constant quest for new ways to tell stories. While some of the younger participating artists are clearly influenced by earlier practitioners of Story Art, others seem to derive their imagery and ideas more directly from currents in American popular culture including film and television, music videos and video games, cyber reality and fiction, web-blogs, advertising, tabloid newspapers, underground comic books etc.

Story-telling by contemporary artists may deal directly or indirectly with political and social issues as well as elements of autobiography, all of which sometimes merge into a questioning of art and artists and the world in which they live. Social and political commentary surfaces in Dotty Attie's assemblages of small picture and text panels from the *Resistance and Refusal* series (2002), and in Sue Coe's photo-etching, *9/11*, in which both the subject and her familiar gritty style will return viewers' thoughts to the myriad stories that came out of our own recent tragedy. Similarly, Mac Adams' work is often strongly political, like his *Portrait of Karl Marx* (1991), but his ongoing photographic work, like the *Half Truths* series represented here, is more ambiguous, setting up open narratives based on crime scenes, for example. While most of the artists in this exhibition offer work that tends to be more introspective, Joe Sacco is the exception with drawings from his internationally acclaimed graphic novel: *PALESTINE*, (2002). Sacco lived in Palestine for several months, creating diaries & sketches for the book, and as a visual artist, his use of the medium of Story Art has allowed him also to function as both a reporter and novelist. Personal implications are apparent in much of the work, like that by the youngest participating artist, Nate Larson whose photographic *Stories* offer interpretations of banal personal experiences as signs of a higher order infiltrating our lives. Larry Krone personalizes the touching lyrics of *Sea of Heartbreak* (the 60's Country and Western ballad) by using strands of his own hair to write the words, while the sixteen stories that make up David Kramer's installation deal with the artist's usual mix of wonderment, confusion and frustration with the modern world. Jim Torok is similarly known for his musings about the artist's lot in life, often with autobiographical overtones. In the work he shows here, he deals instead with the artist's life by creating a cartoon storyboard of the old Kirk Douglas movie *Lust For Life*, painting a story about a movie about a book about the life of Van Gogh. Scott Teplin has also created a kind of story board entitled *Roman's Candle*, in which the narrative thread explores "Roman's" fascination with fireworks. The characters that recur in Carla Gannis' stories seem to mix biography, alter egos and autobiographical overtones as seen both in her back room installation *Sister Gemini/The Artist's Studio* and her interactive website, www.sistergemini.com. Finally, Renee French's prints recall dated scientific illustration with their chart-like drawings. She focuses on the details within a story. Her 'portrait series' is concerned with how a story is interpreted even after linear telling is eliminated.

NEW AMERICAN STORY ART is a collaboration between eyewash & Parkers Box.

Parkers Box is in its 5th season of exhibiting experimental contemporary art, and in October the gallery will also participate in the international contemporary art fairs, Frieze, London and Fiac, Paris.

eyewash is a migratory gallery that collaborates with other art spaces or sometimes inhabits non-art spaces for unique exhibitions. eyewash was founded in 1997 by Larry Walczak, who curated *New American Story Art*.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Annie Herron, (1954-2004). Annie was a vital figure in the development of the Williamsburg art scene, founder in 1991 of the pioneering gallery, Test-Site, and co-director of eyewash from 1997 to 2000.

Special thanks to Galerie St. Etienne, PPOW, Adam Baumgold Gallery, Fantagraphics and Tim and Nancy Grumbacher