

PARKER'S BOX 193 Grand Street Brooklyn, NY 11211
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[PRESS RELEASE]

> **ENRICHED :**

JOHN BJERKLIE, MATT BLACKWELL, ANDREW JAMES.

EXHIBITION DATES: JANUARY 9 – FEBRUARY 2, 2004

GALLERY HOURS: FRIDAY TO MONDAY 1 TO 7 PM



To open the first show of the season, Parker's Box continues its tradition of inviting artists to take up residency in the gallery over the winter break. The three artists in this exhibition, who all live and work in Brooklyn, seem to have maximized this legroom as an opportunity to come together to construct, experiment, and explore ideas creatively. The resulting collaboration seems to invoke a kind of "Last House on the Left" meets My Little Pony.

John Bjerklie and Matt Blackwell have known each other for over 20 years. The two friends share an affinity for materials, methods and subject matter that track a path through their individual labyrinths: specially constructed environments of juxtaposed sculptural, graphic and painterly works. The largest of Bjerklie's installations, a bricolage "money tree", begins in the center of the gallery and reaches through and around the walls and ceiling. Matt Blackwell's paintings, drawings and sculpted characters utilize recurrent subject matter and materials – ceiling tin, mock car batteries, reindeer, bears etc.

One of the dozen or so paintings by Andrew James in this show is titled "electric blues got mythical, then got stupid." A collaboration (of sorts) with his mother, this dyptich brings together an acknowledgement of the traditions of landscape, portraiture and expressionism with the same kind of lopsided formalist view as Bjerklie and Blackwell. James' paintings run through the walls of the gallery, linking haphazard huddles of items and structures and easily joining the longstanding dialogue between the two older artist friends.

The artistic references, affinities and inspiration that exude from the experiments, ideas and trial and error of "enriched" are multiple. A strong kindred spirit with those extraordinary collaborative installations by Paul Thek resonates here, along with staunch Americana (from Bellows and Hartley, to Koons and McCarthy), and European strains of humor and philosophy (Magritte's "bad" period to Kiefer, Beuys and Polke) – the whole thing cooking up a truly extravagant banquet of three very individual artistic visions.

John Bjerklie was born in Los Angeles, California, and has a studio in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he has lived since 1986. Bjerklie has installed works at Socrates Sculpture Park, New York, La Friche, Marseille, and most recently at the Pinson Indian Mounds, Tennessee. **Matt Blackwell** was born in Lyons, New York. He lived in Maine for 14 years and for the past 12 years has lived and worked in Brooklyn. He has shown at Pierogi, Flipside and Exit Art. **Andrew James** was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He recently graduated from the Hunter College MFA program and currently lives and paints his work in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

For further information please don't hesitate to contact the gallery at 718 388 2882 / info@parkersbox.com