

REGEN PROJECTS

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LOS ANGELES AREA

ELLIOTT HUNDLEY Regen Projects II

ELLIOTT HUNDLEY'S AMBITION is on a cosmic scale. His massive standing or hanging assemblages are panoramic fragments of worlds within worlds. Juxtaposing found elements to create personal mythologies he exposes an ongoing reconfiguration of Western cultural mythologies. Hundley's work always involves reaching back, an immersive bricolage through dream, private theater and culture both contemporary and historical.

In recent years, Hundley has assembled an entire oeuvre around works of the classical playwright, Euripides. His current exhibition, "Semele" (all works 2011), is titled after one of the principal female instigators of the *The Bacchae*. Semele herself does not appear in the play but her mythology is one of its key underlying sources, and is referenced by Hundley throughout.

Hundley's assemblage panels scan in a kind of chromatic and rhythmic wave motion, a visual respiration that reflects the way time



Elliott Hundley, Installation view: "Semele," 2011

and actuality expand and contract in his work. His "performers" are simultaneously magnified on the panels into the iconic demiurges of tragedy and shrunk to asteroids in this swirling cosmos, existing in several dimensions that might all be termed parenthetical. They conjoin with other colonies and constellations: insects, stars, dust and debris, and — most importantly here — language. Spare tires, architectural fragments, Louis XVI chairs — the archaic and anachronistic meet in a kind of tournament to oblivion.

The mapping of the surface is distinct from any narrative that might be imposed, but from one figure to another, or pair of figures, nude or semi-nude, we can sketch out a loose choreography of dance, performance or fabrication: many of the pairings feature props recognizable as the free-standing sculptural assemblages in the show. Hundley has also collaged into them contemporary and historical text and imagery. Where Cezanne's apples appeared in *Lightning's Bride*, Hundley footnotes eyes that run with a fragment of Matisse's *The Dance* (1909). Yet in the upper portion of one of the panels we see a Union Jack being waved. From various book or magazine pages, we have, on one hand, *Leaving her sisters in their dancing place* in some proximity to *Oh earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you*.

The sculptures have a clearly performative value. You can see this straightaway in *tearing flesh from the bone*. At the same time, they stand on their own as sculpture, or props transposed from the play, as in *swarming over*, a tangle of branches arching over a low-hanging

cantilever support that is weighted down with a large rock.

Two paintings were unusual among the painted elements of Hundley's many assemblages. They carried little resonance with the sweeping chromatic schemes of the large assemblages, loosely composed and tentative in choice of color — not the Dionysian note one expects to close on in a show like this. Yet the larger impact is focused and sustained and leaves the viewer, not unlike Semele herself, scorched by its fire and blood. As Euripides himself might have expressed through his blind prophet Tiresias, "They speak of what will come in future days."

—Ezrha Jean Black

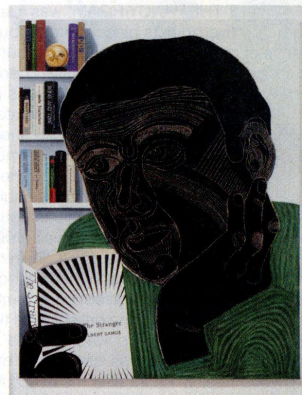
NICOLE EISENMAN Susanne Vielmetter

NICOLE EISENMAN'S SENSE OF HUMOR is always a marked part of her work, and is at times more ribald than others. Yet the salient and sustaining characteristic derives from a deep understanding of loss and the difficulties inherent in what Kierkegaard referred to as the "human condition." Expanding on the body of work most recently shown at Leo Koenig in 2009, Eisenman uses humor as a means of accessing a more complicated personal narrative, turning up the volume on her own artistic practice, as these new paintings reflect an unwavering commitment not only to painting as a singular and uncompromising form of expression, but also toward telling visual stories as a reflexive tool to a deeper human understanding.

One might even go so far as to call these paintings "existential," which emphasizes the individual attempting to achieve a fulfilling life, faced with obstacles that must be overcome, and the external and internal factors involved in attempting this, including the potential consequences of the existence, or nonexistence, of God. In the painting *The Tea Party* (all works from 2011), Uncle Sam sits sipping tea in a bomb shelter with a family who appear to be assembling some kind of deadly weapon. The woman serenely cradles a rifle as though it was a child, and the men are red-nosed and ardently fixated on the task at hand. The American capitalist's dream has finally gone under as Uncle Sam's infamous finger cradles a sagging tea bag and points downward toward Hell.

Other works like *Séance* speak to our growing fascination with the occult, though what is particularly affecting here is Eisenman's use of color as a kind of spiritual conduit as each figure seems to vibrate, their gnarled hands like templates or neon imprints of their own human existence pressing down into the tabletop. Are they summoning a spirit from the other side or pushing something deeper down inside themselves?

In *The Drawing Class* we witness the image from one artist's point of view. Only from there can we see the distorted and nearly vanishing figure in front of her. It's implied that the rest of the



Nicole Eisenman, *Guy Reading The Stranger*, 2011

REVIEWS

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