

any artist's work based on just three examples—the most you can ask is for a good introduction. In *3 x 5*, we find five artists well worth following.

—Katherine Satorius

3 x 5: Matthew Jordan, Andrew Miksys, Lisa Robinson, Amy Stein, Dana Weiser closed February 3 at Paul Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles.

Katherine Satorius is a freelance writer based in Santa Monica.

Meg Madison at Kristi Engle Gallery

Meg Madison's second solo exhibition at Kristi Engle Gallery, 12.26, displays a continued commitment to the quotidian that she so successfully employed in her previous show, *Surface Streets*.

With visual charm and formal rigor, *Surface Streets*, which was on view in the summer of 2005, consisted of a collection of nearly 150 small-scale prints that documented the artist's every entrance or exit from an automobile over a period of two weeks. Undertaken in response to a minor traffic accident, *Surface Streets*

underscored the kind of heightened and directed awareness that results from being jarred out of a familiar routine and into a state of critical self-consciousness. A similar disruption from routine, in this case watching an old home movie of Christmas morning on mute, led to Madison's most recent project, *12.26*. Inspired by the rise of disposable culture that has accompanied the commercialization of the Christmas holiday, Madison first sought out those melancholic post-holiday symbols: Christmas trees slumped at the curbside.

Like her *Surface Streets* series, *12.26* reveals as much about the artist and her methods as it does about the products of her inquiry. Though the body of the

show is organized mainly around her later efforts in large tree-recycling yards and official dumpsites, Madison also includes a group from her first study of abandoned Christmas trees. Unframed and hanging on cheap butterfly clips, these prints are toned with garish primary colors. Though it is interesting to watch the series develop conceptually, ultimately the inclusion of these prints only serves to further emphasize the fact that Madison chose wisely in pursuing another aspect of this subject. Her work in the municipal tree dumps is smart and elegant, moving beyond the simple and overt associations of the ephemeral and disposable culture of the curbside trees. In the dumps, her project expands to create a fascinating picture of mass consumption situated in the natural and man-made world.

From a technical standpoint, Madison's chromogenic prints are also an indication of her thoughtful artistic practice. The chromogenic process faithfully represents the broad range of green hues, from juniper and jade to the dark, waxy evergreens that characterize winter growth. Her commitment to the accurate and nuanced representation of these colors could easily have been overlooked or exaggerated in a digital process. The abstract *Rain on Mulch Dust, New York* captures the subtlety of this verdant palette as it mixes with rain on blacktop producing rich swirls of jewel-like colors and the luxurious texture of velvet.

These are the colors, albeit not in this form, that inspired the inhabitants of cold and dark northern European climes to first bring trees inside the home. There, coniferous trees were the only signs of green growth during the long winter. The export of the tannenbaum tradition to the United States in the late nineteenth century is only the latest step and quite far removed from the ancient human desire to connect with visible signs of life. However the original meaning of this pagan tradition grows more and more obscure as the distance from the poles increases until it seems particularly redundant in Southern California.

With its focus on abandoned Christmas trees haphazardly strewn in front of a neatly landscaped hillside, *Tree Recycling, Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles* lends strong evidence to this incongruity. Like rehabilitated animals set free in the wild, these cut fir trees appear broken and domesticated even in contrast with the controlled landscaping of the Hollywood Bowl.

In *Christmas Tree Mulch, Randall's Island, NYC*, the desecrated remains of dead yuletide trees threaten to overcome the natural landscape. A mountain of shredded evergreens entirely obscures the trunk of a leafless deciduous tree in the middle of an open field. Only the



Andrew Schoultz, *Untitled (Tree)*, 2005, on paper, 9' x 7', at Taylor De Corral Gallery, Los Angeles.

thin, bare branches of trees can be seen reaching above the ground of newly made mulch.

Madison gently directs her photographs to speak on this subject. In doing so she reveals both the irony found in the multitude of signs. Taking her work to the nostalgia evoked by the trash on December 26, her viewers really work with the symbolism of the Christmas tree in an unfamiliar setting with a more sophisticated choice of subject matter. Seen in her work on *Surface Streets*, Madison excels at these observations; she is a master of the philosophy of the vernacular.

Meg Madison: 12.26 closed at Kristi Engle Gallery, Los Angeles.

Kim Beil is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles Beach.

Andrew Schoultz at Taylor De Corral Gallery

Figural elements, sharp diagonals bisect rectangles, trees bloom bits of dolla- quixotically heroic world. Schoultz's imagining. The effectively straddled the



Andrew Schoultz, *Untitled (Tree)*, 2005, on paper, 9' x 7', at Taylor De Corral Gallery, Los Angeles.