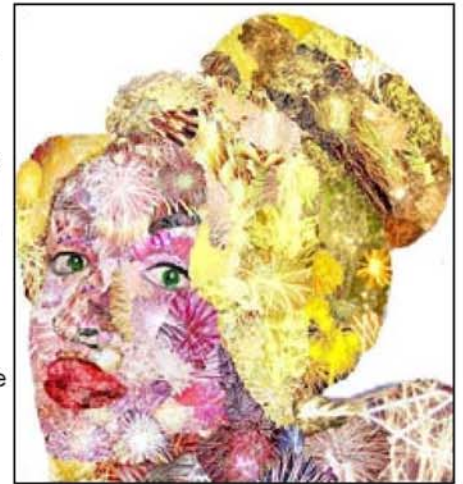


Oh, to live on Sugar Mountain

LaMontagne Gallery opens with 'Regional Highlights' — plus 'Endosymbiont' at Axiom, and Joel Janowitz at Victoria Munroe

By RANDI HOPKINS | June 20, 2007

Melcher Street in South Boston still feels like a little piece of the late 19th century: interspersed with islands of noisy, 21st-century construction, its old brick buildings house varied commercial operations including printers and bookbinders, design studios, and creative spots like Studio Soto and Soundscape. There, back on May 30, LaMontagne Gallery, which is run by directors Russell LaMontagne and Emily Isenberg, threw open the door to its just-above-street-level loading dock and popped the cork on bottles of pink champagne, inaugurating the 1500-square-foot storefront space at 51 Melcher Street with the Justin Lieberman-curated "Regional Highlights," which is up through July 28. Miles Huston enigmatically re-engineers architectural forms (Government Center, a geriatric walker); Kate Levant's assemblages use found objects and detritus to evoke an uncanny tribal feeling; Jacques Vidal's cut-and-layered topological collages of iconic figures include Dolly Parton and the Rorschachian face/vase image.



Jacques Vidal, *Dolly* (detail)

LaMontagne, who was one of the original partners in LFL Gallery in New York, and Isenberg, formerly assistant director of exhibitions at Elizabeth Leach Gallery in Portland, Oregon (Emily also worked as a gallery assistant for me at Allston Skirt Gallery), hope to provide a platform for emerging conceptual artists in Boston, focusing on visual, sound, and performance art. They also intend to bring in interesting guest curators; in addition to having Lieberman for "Regional Highlights," they've signed up the acclaimed Bob Nickas for their fall show.

New-media art in Boston has been gaining in credibility and quality over the past years. I have to admit to being slow onto the bandwagon here (I'm rather low-tech and slightly interactivity-averse), but fine venues — including Art Interactive and Axiom Gallery — and such tireless curator advocates as George Fifield have laid the groundwork for excellent and unusual work. In "Endosymbiont," a new show curated by Dana Moser and on view through July 15 at Axiom Gallery, Jake Lee High, Jerel Dye, Sean O'Brien, and Fred Wolfink redefine the gallery itself as an interactive monument, turning it into a biological cell that feeds off the sounds and electromagnetic fields of passing MBTA Orange Line trains and the actions of pedestrians and commuters at the busy site

Joel Janowitz's art imbues the familiar, observed world with a captivating wash of light and poetry. For a summery treat, catch "Joel Janowitz: The Monotypes" at Victoria Munroe Fine Art through July 21.

"Regional Highlights" at LaMontagne Gallery, 51 Melcher St, Boston | Through July 28 | 617.482.4800 | "Endosymbiont" at Axiom Gallery, 141 Green St, Boston | Through July 15 | 617.676.5904 | "Joel Janowitz" at Victoria Munroe Fine Art, 179 Newbury St, Boston | Through July 21 | 617.523.0661

On the Web

LaMontagne Gallery: www.lamontagnegallery.com

Axiom Gallery: www.axiomart.org

Victoria Munroe Fine Art: www.victoriamunroefineart.com