

Auder's car trawls the streets of New York in *Chelsea, Manhattan-NYC* (shot in 1990 and edited in 2008), with his camcorder pointed at the pimps and prostitutes who populated a sordid pre-Giuliani New York, now long since disappeared. In *Blind Sex*, 1983, two life-worn lechers stroll the daylight sidewalk among a flesh-baring crowd of street-walkers. Auder cuts to a nearby sightless woman who pauses on a street corner, cane in hand, seemingly oblivious to the illicit transactions surrounding her. In *Untitled (I was looking back to see if you were looking back at me to see me looking back at you)*, 2012/2014, the artist's camera peers through the windows of nearby skyscrapers, catching a single man mechanically spooning dinner into his sad-sack face dappled with TV light, a woman performing a post-shower toilette with thoughtless grace, a sweat-slicked lover mounting his partner from behind, a supine masturbator arching his back in orgasm, and two apartment dwellers on separate floors watching the same asinine program. And when he's not looking through the window, Auder records its interior reflection, revealing a little girl with a pair of binoculars scanning the city alongside him.

Artist-filmmaker Józef Robakowski surveils the spare concrete public plaza in front of his apartment building in Lodz, Poland, in *From My Window*, shot over a twenty-one-year period from 1978 to 1999. A veteran figure within the Polish avant-garde still relatively unknown in this country, Robakowski advocated for a "personal film" that stripped the medium of narrative in order to privilege a thrumming immediacy. Here, Robakowski's gruffly sardonic voice-over description (perhaps invented) of the intimate details of his neighbors' lives defines the arc of the film. Underneath his commentary on the purported homosexual encounter of his neighbor's dog (in fact an innocuous canine meeting), Robakowski intimates a dark joke about police informants and incriminating desire. Alongside these prosaic passings, he films the casual harassments of police shakedowns on the road and the increasingly tense May Day parades, all taking place in view of the artist's window during an era of increasing unrest and subsequent crackdowns.

Robakowski's recordings wryly mimic the police-state reality of his native Poland under Communism rule, in which everyone spied and was spied on. The film ends with this same public plaza videotaped in 1999, ten years after the collapse of Communism in Poland. In a sort of epilogue, he records the construction of a private luxury hotel being erected on the public square.

Auder and Robakowski hint at the impossibility of privacy (even before the sophisticated tracking facilitated by the Internet) and flirt with the temptation of illicit knowledge, probing the boundary where public and private clash and mesh. Now, of course, ever more advanced technology makes the past transgressions of these artists seem downright innocent, shot as they were in a time before our private lives and potential crimes were so thoroughly recorded and stored for easy retrieval, whenever the desire should arise.

—Andrew Berardini

Rachelle Sawatsky

HARMONY MURPHY GALLERY

Last spring, Rachelle Sawatsky mounted five pastel-hued unglazed ceramics and one large, aqueous cerulean canvas to the walls of the Finley Gallery in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles. Glimpsed through the street-level windows, the wall sculptures gave an effect of unprepossessing smallness that nevertheless betrayed an abundance of care, perhaps disproportionate to their modest size. The afterimage of these humble objects lingered in "Stone Gloves," Sawatsky's first show



Rachelle Sawatsky
Heart Break Confusion Disaster, 2014, oil
pastel on paper,
21 1/2 x 27 1/2"

at Harmony Murphy Gallery. Here, she framed sixteen twenty-one-by-twenty-seven-inch drawings between two larger paintings, both *Untitled* (all works 2014), made of unprimed canvas soaked with layers of watercolor. The strict geometry of the gridded grouping into which they were slotted belied the individuality of these sketch-like drawings, each of which had a distinct temperament and visual weather. One evoked her painting from the Finley in its iconography of a coiled chain, seemingly submerged under water—a theme also conjured by the drawings. *Lungs* might have read as an anchor hovering just beneath the marine surface were it not for the heart-shaped mass at the form's very center. In both installations, the individual works served less as exemplary models than as placeholders for a process that promises to yield many further instantiations within Sawatsky's multidisciplinary and ever-expanding practice.

Indeed, one sensed that the hang, a provisional parsing and bracketing of the works on display, was just one ephemeral iteration within Sawatsky's greater open-ended project, which comprises not just painting and sculpture but poetry. While Sawatsky chose not to show her own writing for "Stone Gloves," the title of the show's namesake work—a drawing of two gloved hands outlined in black and groping what appears to be the loopy abstraction of a face—was appropriated from *StoneDGloves*, a 1970 artist book by Japanese-Canadian author, artist, filmmaker, and pedagogue Roy Kiyooka that pairs photographs of workers' gloves, taken at the Expo '70 construction site in Osaka, alongside related poems. In homage to Kiyooka's appositions of words and images, Sawatsky fashioned her titles, developed concurrently with the drawings they accompanied, into a conglomerate poem, presented in a narrow vertical column on the show's press release: "TITLES (Poem) / Skin Colored Gloves / Swagger / Untitled / Butts / The Greatest / Siamese Thinking / Lungs / Smoke / Box / Left Heart Right Heart / Christian Alien / Bricklayer / Heartbreak Confusion Disaster / Love Loving Lobe / Untitled / Stone Gloves / Having Written my Enemy with Love." While these words and phrases corresponded to the drawings on the wall, they did not determine the works' order or placement. Unlike the vertical orientation of the poem, the drawings' four-by-four matrix suggested both the possibility for an endlessly reconfigurable installation and the poem's autonomy from the exhibition that predicated it.

Sawatsky often employs writing as a catalyst for other forms without necessarily implying a direct, causal connection between them: The written page becomes a locus for free-associative experimentation. And each image implies a fragmentary response to some elusive narrative—or dream—taken the artist renders surprisingly vivid. This appeal to the oneiric, taken together with Sawatsky's avowed interest in the

sensible as inherently subjective, could foster a kind of indulgent solipsism, the formal manifestations of which might have relevance for the artist alone, and it is to her immense credit that she makes such intimate subject matter relatable. *Love Loving Lobe* pictures three figures ramming themselves into a disembodied ear. A riff on the doubting Thomas as well as a weirdly sexualized image of penetration, it might further be understood as an allegory of viewing, whereby the unmarked but permeable boundaries of the thing afford the viewer access to its fluid subject matter and the uninhibited consciousness of its maker. For Sawatsky, these dreamlike images provide a fertile ground for interpretation, both revealing unconscious desires and, perhaps, serving as agents of their resolution.

—Suzanne Hudson

Frances Scholz

TIF SIGFRIDS

The most coherent moments in Frances Scholz's *Trailer I* and *II*, both 2014, ostensibly promo shorts for her as-yet-unmade film *Amboy*, are recurring snippets of writer (and friend of the gallery) Chris Kraus (re) delivering a lecture she once gave on Jason Rhoades. For Scholz's project, Kraus has swapped Rhoades's name for "Amboy," the documentary's doubtful subject, a fictional painter "you haven't heard of"—resulting in phrases intended for Rhoades's practice but here projected onto Scholz's prolific every-artist. For example: "It was mostly just a bunch of people hanging around eating and drinking." Projected at a wild angle that cut across two gallery walls, the videos were delicious, schizo—scenes and images strung together incoherently without plot, *AMBOY* and *COMING SOON* crawling up the screen every thirty seconds. But is it? Whereas Scholz's previous exhibitions have hung on her facility in negotiating various painterly dichotomies—portrait versus landscape, vertical versus horizontal, abstract versus concrete—the present show seemed to fly free from such preoccupations. Here, Scholz stripped away the "work," creating and exhibiting an artist as "pure" pretext. Amboy—Amgirl?—has no artwork, no body, no fixed gender—just a name, a gallery, and a lot of friends "hanging around."

The story of *Amboy* begins, apparently, with Scholz's hunt for a sci-fi writer's widow, leading the artist from Cologne, where she is based, to Amboy, California—a "ghost town" in the Mojave (population: four males) whose material shell exists even as Amboy the artist

does not. At Tif Sigfrids, five framed snapshots document the area's humble attractions: salt ponds at sunset; a mobile chicken shack; a crater in Amboy (the work is subtitled "Black Pussy," simultaneously an allusion to Rhoades's practice and a quick jab at James Turrell's *Roden*). These impersonal scenes are arranged in a huddle around an expanse of sand as bare as a blank canvas awaiting a painter of vision. Amboy, the artist, remains withdrawn, but his patrons keep showing up: LA collector Juliet McIver—a friend of the gallery who for the past couple of years has been airlifting curious artists and curators to Amboy—pilots the Bellanca propeller plane at the end of *Trailer II*.

In another scene, outside an iconic house by the Viennese-born LA architect Rudolph Schindler, Mark von Schlegell, actual sci-fi author and sometime art writer with ties to Scholz's Cologne, gives an actual lecture. A "plant" in the audience turns out to be Noura Wedell, a writer, editor, and fellow intellectual from Semiotext(e), the publishing house that Kraus helps run and that published two of von Schlegell's books. Yet another friend, the actor Paul Giamatti, makes a virtuosic cameo, memorably munching a cigar and mumbling darkly: "Fiction . . . He's talking about me. . . ." Cut to bits by Stephen Malkmus, Sergej Jensen, Eleanor Antin and other actual, art-famous people killing time in a hallway, in the desert, on camera. . .

How recognizable are the faces in Scholz's freewheeling "who's who"? Basically not at all, unless you too happen to have an "in" to the LA network sketched in the *Amboy* trailers' sutured, frenetic montage. Scholz appeared in the gallery sans any evidence of the artist's "hand." Found school chairs; perfunctory landscape photos of salt ponds, craters, and dirt; a crazily keystoned projection—the films amount to a shaky and sunbaked cop of certain tropes of the American-boy artist and his art-world entourage. While the viewer is busy spotting celebrities in *Amboy*, Scholz crafts a convincingly "exhibition-y" exhibition from these same stock myths—with a cagey nod to the absent Amboy's complicity in perpetuating them. Her looping, low-budget trailers-without-a-film career into each other; Scholz straps herself to these artist-fictions like one half of a tandem skydiving team (boy and girl). It's not clear—and not important—where one ends and the other begins, only that they always plummet toward a noplacel called *Amboy* (coming soon).

—Travis Diehl

VANCOUVER

Rochelle Goldberg

THE APARTMENT

Ceramic forms that resemble excrement and snakeskin, fiber-optic cables drenched in resin, deflated pleather cushions—Rochelle Goldberg's sculptures beckon like abject sirens, compelling the viewer to touch them. *Lust*, which appeared as a parenthetical in "The Local Link (Lust got in the way)," the artist's first solo exhibition at the Apartment, demonstrated the centrality of desire in her production of objects that simultaneously attract and repel.

Two of the sculptures were self-illuminated by LED lights embedded within their fiber-optic-cable limbs in an otherwise nearly dark gallery. Both the floor and the bottom seventeen inches of the gallery walls were painted gray; in such low light, it was difficult to ascertain where floor ended and wall began, almost as if the space had been flooded. Another illusionistic ruse appeared as one's eyes adjusted: Three mirror-plated tuna cans, *Comma*, *Cut*, and *Cana* (all works 2014), seemed to be mounted on one of the walls. On closer inspection—as one reached out to touch them, that is—it became clear that they were actually recessed into the wall.

View of "Frances Scholz," 2014.

