



Patrick Doyle, *Sphericity*, 2007, steel, 120 x 120"

## Singularity in the Communal Tide

Gallery Pierro in South Orange New Jersey  
by Kat Hennessy

As an indie curator, Rupert Ravens has the ability to see beyond the white cube, while his ability to find just the right place for the art he selects is unmatched. For instance, a previously unused gallery closet is redesigned to display Adam Brown's *Bions*, 50 palm size electronic creatures that respond to the presence of life forms. Outside, and above the entrance of the building is Tom Broadbent's giant inflated *Don't Cry*, which teeters between a behavioral command and a comment on global warming. Patrick Doyle's strapping 10 foot steel sphere, *Sphericity*, has universal presence as it sits nearby, cradled in the architecture of the porch space.

Many of the artists in the show address the diversity of cultures through unique international expressions: Nicholas Hlobo, from Johannesburg, South Africa offers *Deka*, which is made from a Xhosa tribal ceremonial initiation blanket used to mark a boys graduation to manhood. The artist reshapes this

through her "mix 'n' match" fashion accessories.

A. Kimberlin Blackburn also demonstrates delicacy in her intricately beaded sculptures, which emulate a sacred preciousness as she celebrates universal deities of life from her Hawaiian archipelago.

There is also a dark side to this exhibition, where artists purge their deepest fears. Grace Graupe Pillard entangles art and life through her photographic prints. She digitally places illustrative "cut-out" characters from war scenes, over a placid location photo of such places as the Rockefeller Center Ice Rink, downtown Manhattan or Broad Street in Newark bringing the Iraq war to the streets and sidewalks of our homeland. German Pitre uses black paint and stuffed animal innards to cover the landscape of his canvases, a metaphor for the loss of innocence to the political machine.

A video installation by Moscow artist Victor Alimpiev, *Summer Lighting*, provokes fear in the viewer by juxtaposing large groups of young school girls tapping fingernails on desks in seemingly orchestrated yet thun-

object by hand, sewing it with red stitching to suggest healing.

Gae Savannah crafts monuments to femininity through an abstract arrangement of beads, hair adornments and fabric – soft sculptures that she places on tiny Chinese foot pedestals. As a result, these works challenge art history and the values of Fine Art

Tom Broadbent, *Don't Cry*, 2007, installation view



dering manner with loud bombing and lightning on the western Russian front – another contemplation of war versus innocence. Brian Dettmer uses the medium of melted cassette tapes to form a skull entitled *(80's Pop)* – evidence of the day the music died.

Ravens not only considers gender and politics throughout, but the construct of time as well. Loren Munk depicts art-time through a giant painted collage, *Big Art History*, where he arranges the eras of art eloquently in the organized fashion of an extended board game. Sculptures like James A. Brown's, *Various Memorial Poles* join gathered objects repurposed with striking power. Willie Cole's *Man, Spirit, Mask* with graphic scarification, along with Ujjima Kuumba Majied's, Madame CJ Walker's use of hair and extremely frail cloth, and Del Geist's geographic layered and supported stone *Nila* appear to be creations from some ancient exotic tribal world.

Artist D. Dominick Lombardi drives art into the future with *Heads (Post Apocalyptic Tattoo Series)*, showing where one day the human condition may land, as our forms mutate over time in both 2D and 3D. The simplicity of these graphics are also echoed in the



Foreground: Nicholas Hlobo, *Deka*, 2007, initiation blanket, ribbon, plaster of Paris, wooden chair and table. Background: Joan Semmel, *Cornered*, 2006, oil on canvas (on right), 48 x 54"

glass blown "black face" sculpture of Fred Wilson. And finally, we witness Joan Semmel's *Cornered*, a work that sums up an absolute in art, the entry back into painted realism.

This show appears to continue the magic of *Newark Between Us*, a

biennial style exhibition Ravens curated that featured the work of 97 artists in 30,000 sq. ft space just one year ago. And like that exposition, Raven's curatorial vision creates a visual cathartic that weaves art, culture, gender, time, and individual identity.



Left: German Pitre, *Mercenary Empire*, Neo-colonial reformation, dreams of domination, through American democracy and capitalism, 2003-2006, C-print mounted on plexi, 50 x 60"  
Right: Les Ayre, *King Tut's Tomb*, 2007, installation view



Wall: Willie Cole, *Man, Spirit, Mask*, 1999, multi-media prints.  
Left: Veron Urdarianu, *Waterhouse*, 2006, Wood, paint, and plexiglas  
Front: A. Kimberlin Blackburn, *Haven*, 2006, Glass beads, acrylic, wire on wood