

POSTMASTERS

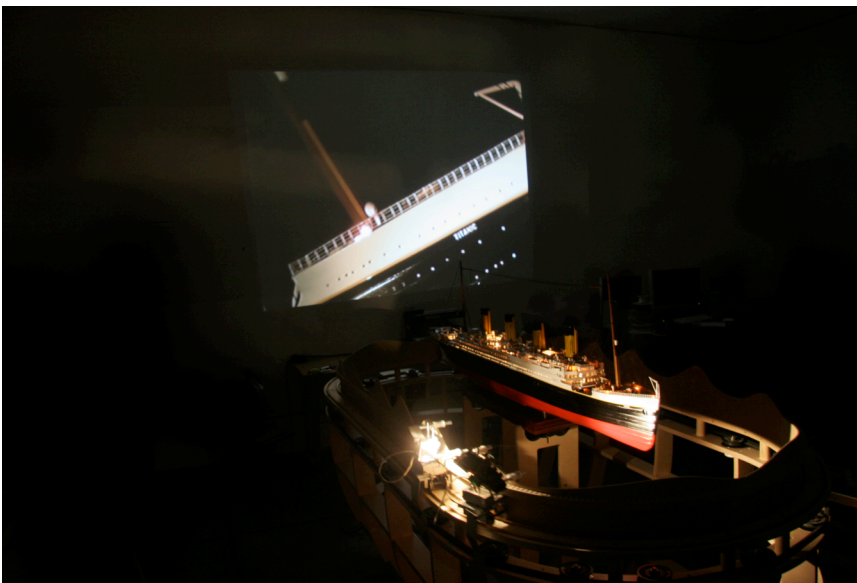
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PULSE MIAMI booth A-07 – December 4-9, 2008

In Miami Postmasters will “show and sell” spectacular doom.



“And the Band Played On”

**JENNIFER and KEVIN McCOY
KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG
DAVID HERBERT
KRISTIN LUCAS
STEVE MUMFORD**

Postmasters Gallery will be presenting “And the Band Played On” at PULSE Art Fair. The title is a reference to the dance band in the first-class lounge of the Titanic, which kept playing as the ship was sinking. (*) The duality of irrational exuberance and looming Armageddon seems to reflect our moment in time, full of doubt and pessimism on one side, and decadent abandon on the other.

Everyday news of wars, religious conflicts, natural disasters, dirty politics, climate change, death of heroes and looming diseases make their way into the artists’ studios. The model of an isolated genius protected by the four walls is outdated and the engagement with the outside world seems to be a contemporary necessity. Today’s headlines are tomorrow’s history. With varying degree of directness, the works of Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung, David Herbert, Kristin Lucas and Steve Mumford are the case in point. All works are very recent and given their content, ideas and media (technology), they could not have been made at any other time.

(*). “As the Band Played on” was also used in 1987 as a book title by San Francisco Chronicle journalist Randy Shilts. **And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic** is a pioneering work of nonfiction which chronicled the discovery and spread of HIV and AIDS with a special emphasis on government indifference and political infighting that has impacted the United States and the world for decades after



JENNIFER and KEVIN McCoy

Jennifer and Kevin McCoy are well known for "cinematic sculptures" - miniature film sets with lights and cameras that generate live footage. By exposing the image making apparatus along with the projected results, their work explores both time-based and physical reality. The dramatic demise of the RMS *Titanic* sinking on her maiden voyage in 1912 became a mythic event reverberating in popular culture - the discovery of the wreck in 1985, and the box office successes of three major films have perpetuated the fame, with the ship becoming a

seminal icon for the spectacle of disaster.

The centerpiece of the Postmasters' installation is "High Seas", a new large scale sculpture with centrally placed five feet long illuminated model of the Titanic which the artists purchased from a hobbyist modelmaker. Moving on 360 degrees circular track, the camera - going around up and down the sloped route - transmits live images of the ship as if she was struggling in the high waves. The contrast of a majestically still Titanic and a violently shifting live video not only reverses the equilibrium of motion and stillness between the subject and the camera, it also challenges the collective memory of the image by exposing "the mechanism of illusion".

While working with the movie magic, the McCoy's do not subscribe to the idea of cinema as reality-escaping dream factory.

In March 2007 Jennifer and Kevin McCoy inaugurated the new galleries of British Film Institute Southbank in London with a solo show and a new commission. Most recently their work was shown at Museum of Modern Art in New York in "Automatic Update," curated from the MOMA collection by Barbara London.



KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG

Born in Hong Kong and now living in New York Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung creates explosive political spectacles in a form of dense, psychedelically flavored video animations. "Because Washington is Hollywood for Ugly People" stars George W. Bush, his cabinet, and an international cast of world leaders and pop stars. It has recently been named one of the Top-Five Art Videos of 2007 by New York Magazine which has its low-rez version online.

"Because Washington is Hollywood for Ugly People", backed by ranting soundtrack of MC Paul Barman, is hitting hard at the hypocrisy of the

political rhetoric of the last few years leading up to the current presidential election. As hilarious as it is scary, the video merges internet-scavenged imagery and original animation with pop graphics to create semi-fictional relationships between political figures, corporations, and mass media iconography. Imagine Bush-headed Jennifer Aniston, Arafat-faced Gozilla, Osama on a cross, Saddam on the skateboard, The Terminator in a tutu, Hillary as multiheaded Hydra, Big Macs in Mecca and more. In her New York Times' review Roberta Smith wrote that Hung's video is "like the cover of the Beatles' *"Sgt. Pepper"* album or the credits of the Monty Python television show, with jet fuel." (July 20, 2007)

A new video in which Tin-Kin Hung takes on the subject of climate change and the politics of global warming will premiere in Miami as well.



DAVID HERBERT

David Herbert is a recent graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Centering on well known American icons (Black Monolith from 2001: A Space Odyssey, Hindenburg Zeppelin and Empire State Building among them) his sculptures tackle the idea of civilization as a whole in final stages of collapse and disintegration. "Beautiful Superman" is such apocalyptic Americana. Over twelve feet tall, skeletal and hanging like dead Christ in a state of progressive decay, this Superman lost his powers. Yet he remains larger-than-life, vibrant and striking. Affirming beliefs in renewal and change, small birds sit on his head and shoulders as if he was St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals, birds, and the environment. A hopeful sign, indicating perhaps that the end of the Empire is not a foregone conclusion.



STEVE MUMFORD

Steve Mumford wanted direct, unmediated experience to inform his work.

He has spent past four years traveling to Iraq to document the war through a series of drawings made there and a subsequent group of paintings made in his studio. He has also visited the Veterans hospitals in the US and most recently spent 4 weeks in the Green Zone at the Baghdad ER.

About the "The Archers" painting Mumford says:

I spent 3 days drawing recovering soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center, in San Antonio, Texas for Harper's Magazine. I drew the amputees doing their physical therapy, learning how to work their artificial limbs, and engaging in recreational activities. The painting

shows an indoor archery range at Fort Sam Houston. It was run by an enthusiastic, spry old volunteer, a veteran of Special Forces in Vietnam, who, with a grin, described for me hunting VC with bow and arrow.

Shown here from left to right are Spc Brandon Dale of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, Spc. Andy Soule, 173 Airborne Brigade, and Sgt Maverick Tuufuli of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

It struck me that morale was surprisingly high among these soldiers. I saw a man without a face happily heading out the front door with his buddies. Soldiers who lost a limb, even two, below the knee could look forward to learning to run again with the new high-tech artificial limbs. But some kids, missing both legs above the knee, seemed truly forlorn and trying to come to terms with their new lives.

Mumford's works from Iraq were shown at PS1, New York, The Moore Space, Miami, Tufts University Art Gallery in Medford, MA, Pritzker Military Academy Library in Chicago, Meadows Museum of Art in Dallas and Savannah College Art Gallery in Atlanta. A book of his drawings "Baghdad Journal" was published by Drawn and Quarterly in Toronto, Canada (2005)



KRISTIN LUCAS

Positioning herself at the center of her projects, Kristin Lucas addresses the complexity of our relationship to the digital realm and the psychological effects of rapid spread technology - the consequences of ever narrowing gap between the real and the virtual worlds. Her most recent works are the series of photographic lightboxes: self-portraits of weakened physical resistance. "Breakout" and "Travel Advisory" are vibrant close-ups of Lucas's face with special effects makeovers wherein the body appears diseased, covered with scars and rash, the virus attacking the vulnerable organic matter. Lucas, the techno-martyr transitioning into her own avatar, is placed within surroundings infused with digital debris and artifice. The portraits translate the complex state of being either/or, physical and virtual in times of transition and mutability.