

Baldwin, Rosecrans, "Artists/Models", THE MORNING NEWS, 8 September 2008.



Artists/Models

Interview by **Rosecrans Baldwin**

*Hope Gangloff has expanded her palette. This is big news if you've loved her illustrations and paintings as they've popped up, black and white and red all over (plus some blue). Her new paintings, though, on show at **Richard Heller Gallery** in Santa Monica, are game-changers from what I've seen—watery, bustling, with characters rendered in onion skins.*

As Gangloff opens our conversation below, "I reckon it's fair to say that I had a huge experiment going on. I wanted to work with colors other than my favorite color scheme. I think it's important to not get too comfortable in medium or technique."

"Artists/Models" is up on view at Richard Heller Gallery now through Oct. 4, 2008. All images courtesy Richard Heller Gallery, copyright © the artist, all rights reserved.

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What are you striving for with the new pictures?

I reckon it's fair to say that I had a huge experiment going on. I wanted to work with colors other than my favorite color scheme. I think it's important to not get too comfortable in medium or technique.

The experiment started with eight large panels painted different bright color fields—neon orange, hot pink, bright green, bright blue, and a couple were of this strange tangerine color. And then I pretty much went nuts painting on them as fast as I could and tried to force myself to roll with distortions, thinking that the distortions are important to the gesture. I wanted to create skin tones that were unfussy—that might look like

they were a drawing on paper in some parts; in places it might look like a huge coloring book. There was also the challenge of fitting all the panels into my tiny studio; I had to shuffle the paintings like a deck of cards, leaving a pile in the corner and working on two at a time, or three at a time if I felt like blocking my shelving unit.

Where do the scenes come from? Who are the “artists/models” we see?

Of course, all the people I’ve painted for the show are friends of mine. In this case, they are mostly artists. Thus the title of the show, artists/models.

The one with the girl and the Olympic posters behind her is artist Blaze Lamper. She wasn’t ever caught this hungover by me, but she modeled for it fairly well.

The painting of the sharks and wiener dogs is “based on actual events,” but similarly to the way the movies exaggerate, I did take the liberty of throwing the wiener dogs (Sophie and Oolie) into the painting, when in fact they were safely at home the evening Juan Valdez was stuck in shallow water surrounded by bull sharks. And Juan was actually fishing with David Brooks that night. But as I painted David Brooks for my last show (guy on sofa with his king charles spaniels), I substituted Brian Booth, who regularly fishes with Juan in the Florida Bay. In research for this painting, I had a great fishing trip with Juan and his wife and Brian (and the dogs!), and we chased around sharks and caught a tarpon and some bone fish (catch and release style).

The painting of the two guys in the Amazon is titled Mefloquine after that terrible drug you can take to combat malaria. There are other drugs you can take, but Mefloquine is the cheapest because it’s the most dangerous. The side effects include severe debilitating hallucinations that last for weeks if not months, nausea, night terrors, headaches, to name a few. Why would anybody take this? Because not everybody has health insurance. Jason Search and his boyfriend Matt Mayfield took a little trip down to the Amazon, where Jason had the worst possible side effects. He essentially tripped his way through their vacation, whereas Matt had no side effects.

The woman on the piano is Iris Cohen Brooks, David Brooks’s ex-wife, who is a New Orleans native. A favorite model of mine, she is built like a cabaret dancer because she was one. This was a particularly strange color experiment—her skin is a powdery transparent pink. That particular wall paper is a favorite of mine to draw as well.

As you’re painting, how conscious are you of the final idea? When does the painting come to life?

I think it’s fair to say that I usually have some idea of either color scheme or composition before I start a painting, but seldom both. I start something, and if it doesn’t feel right, or if it’s the wrong size (which it usually is first shot) I sand it off and start over.

What other artists working right now are you excited about?

Artists that lend to the way I work include a good many that work in my neighborhood, or that I went to school with. Yuri Masnyj, my husband Ben Degen, Blaze Lamper, Gavin Anderson, Jason Search, Amy Gartrell, Eric Furtman, David Brooks, Jeff Barnett Winsby, to name just a few. I actually am being rushed to get out the door right now—it’s time to go to Lake George for the traditional last week of summer brouhaha. So you’ll have to excuse me being brief here.

No worries. Last question: What comes next?

Next is a show in Rome in December. I don’t know exactly what I’m going to do—but I have some Roman ideas.