



Reviews: New York
Pg. 126

Stephen Andrews and Jerry Moriarty

CUE Art Foundation

The two parts of this dual exhibition – one of disturbing crayon rubbings by Stephen Andrews, organized by filmmaker Atom Egoyan; the other of narrative paintings by Jerry Moriarty, selected by comic-book artist Art Spiegelman – echoed and complemented each other despite differences in mediums and subject matter. Although curated independently, the shows shared a strategy of mixing images, themes, and color palettes usually associated with the innocence and nightmares of childhood.

Andrews's pictures, rendered in soft, nearly pastel hues, were based on documentary photographs and videos downloaded from online sources. Some were instantly familiar, such as those of Abu Ghraib prison atrocities, despite the pixel-like texture of the compositions, the result of rubbing crayon against a wire-mesh window screen. Many of the images were ones that the artist hadn't seen in mainstream U.S. media, such as footage of soldiers shooting an Iraqi man, depicted here in both an installation of 190 untitled drawings (2004) and in *Untitled with Voiceover Script* (2004), a DVD animation of these drawings. The most haunting were the most

ambiguous: *Untitled* (2004), for example, featured a giant cloud of black bomb smoke shaped like Mickey Mouse's head: in *Friendly Fire* (2003), two large, round, reddish spheres at the forefront of the composition resembled toy balls but were actually blood dripping on the lens of a TV cameraman who had been shot.

Moriarty's visual vocabulary was more personal and his palette brighter, yet his paintings, often structured like comic strips, shocked in their own way, both visually and thematically. Mostly tableaux depicting the artist's childhood (and adult) memories, sometimes starring Moriarty himself or the artist's alter ego, a 12-year-old girl, these paintings illustrated the dark side of suburban American life rendered in a storybook mode. *Avon Lady* (2000), for example, is an homage to Balthus in which a young girl sits with her white panties, stained with menstrual blood, exposed before the saleswoman of the title; *Sally's Surprise Tree Pee* (2001) presents three sequential frames in which a girl urinates on a neighbor.

There's obviously a kind of profound disjunction between the kind of



Jerry Moriarty, *Bus*, 2001, oil on linen, 60" x 46", CUE Art Foundation

real horror Andrews depicts and the personal, psychological traumas that Moriarty's paintings address. Seen in the context of Andrews's work, however, it's clear that Moriarty also portrays American aggression at its most sinister: sugarcoated.

— *Reena Jana*