



JAMES COBB

December 4 – January 24, 2004

“...mix it with a woman's whimper,
with a president's lie,
the droning of a TV constantly
in the background grinding our brains to dust
MIX IT UP!

And so I enter Mr. Cobb's work,
those blue faced, tattooed children, the biblical betrayals...”

— Jimmy Santiago Baca
Exhibition Curator

Jimmy Santiago Baca first met James Cobb over 15 years ago at a San Antonio gallery where Cobb was installing his work. One painting in particular struck the poet, and a lasting friendship based on mutual respect for each other's work has developed ever since.

Cobb has been working exclusively in digital imagery since 1998. He decided to incorporate the burgeoning media of digital art into his personal artistic language of painting in the late 80's. Though not fully ready to launch into photography, the only digital medium at the time that registered with him, he opted instead to experiment with the photographic processes of computer digitalization. Cobb began making scans of objects around his yard, then a series of scanned faces and later, a series of scanned people...outputted as full-sized. Having used tattoo imagery in his paintings for years as a powerful means of providing an additional layer of meaning to his work, Cobb thought it would be striking to produce large scans of people who had been "illustrated" digitally.

Wanting to make the work more compelling, he began making scans of his own and his neighbors' children. Daily contact with his subjects ensured a level of trust, which helped to strengthen the intimate pull of the portraits. In order to further forge a relationship between subject and viewer, Cobb introduced another narrative level by covering the children from head to toe with tattoo imagery, thus inviting a nonverbal form of communication.

Cobb's process involved scanning the children in black and white and then tinting the images. The ensuing patterning and layering imagery produced, according to the artist, “some serendipitous results....images that coincided with a child's particular interests....and others that were challenging to the kids,” underlying the inherent paradoxical nature of tattoos as symbols of individuality and conformity. By bringing new meaning to the serenity of childhood through the filter of an unconventional narrative, Cobb has made an evocative statement about the universal good at the core of things.

(Over, please)

Born in La Mesa, California in 1961, James Cobb was first introduced to the “Mail-Art” scene during the late 70’s by wife-to-be Rhoda Mappo, and was prodigiously loyal to the movement, embracing monikers like Nunzio Mifune, the Six-Fingers Club, devoting all his free time to corresponding, creating images, and networking with fellow movement members. Towards the late 80’s, he decided to explore other options such as those offered by the more mainstream gallery scene, and began teaching himself how to paint. A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship and a grant from Art Matters Foundation, New York, Cobb has had solo exhibitions throughout the country.

During the last few years Cobb has been concentrating on creating, recording, engineering, and mixing experimental music. He has recently started a new series of visual work.

CUE Art Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides deserving artists from around the country an opportunity for solo exhibition. Located in New York’s Chelsea gallery district, the Foundation’s 2,000 sq.ft. ground floor exhibition space affords these artists professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. CUE does not promote a particular school of artistic thought or practice; rather, the criteria for selection have been devised with the sole purpose in mind of exhibiting work by artists who have not had a solo exhibition in a commercial venue or have received minimal exposure in New York in the last ten years.

For additional information, please contact Jeremy Adams, Gallery Director / Sandhini Poddar, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, (212) 206-3583.

Upcoming exhibitions:

January 29 – March 6, 2004

David Storey: Selected by Trevor Winkfield

Adrian Esparza: Selected by Kate Bonansinga