

dark-skinned woman relaxing outdoors at a table, with a twisted apple tree in the background. The fruit is scattered



Julie Speed, *The Anchovy Eaters*, 2009, oil on panel, 24" x 30". Gerald Peters.

over the grass. A dog beneath her chair snarls at the viewer, as another sits on a chair with an apple in its mouth and a third rests under the table. Of course, apples and nudity conjure associations with Adam and Eve. But the dogs?

Beyond her skills as a painter and conjurer of characters, Speed is an exceptional colorist, capturing the yellow-green of the grass, the transparent blue of the sky, and the warm brown of the woman's skin.

Also on view were Speed's more ethereal works, including her gouache *Snow White* (2009), in which amorphous white, pink, and beige flowerlike organisms float in space, their tendrils interlacing. As demonstrated by the works here, Speed's exceptional skill as a painter matches her rich imagination.

—Valerie Gladstone

Neil Folberg

Flomenhaft

In this inventive exhibition, "Serpent's Chronicle," photographer Neil Folberg reinvented the story of Adam and Eve's plight in Eden. Thirty-five photographs, shot a short distance from the artist's home in Northern Israel, depicted the darkly romantic tale from the Serpent's point of view. As such, the talking villain never appeared in the images themselves.

Arrows on the gallery floor guided viewers through the sequence of dramatic

events. Folberg's unusual methods of production and presentation, such as transferring giclée prints onto silk and

hanging them from a rod two inches from the wall, or framing more-traditionally printed photographs in thick Plexiglas boxes, rendered the images especially compelling.

Beginning the story were color images of massive trees, their roots tangled but hearty, their fruit unripe but nevertheless fallen to the ground. As the narrative progressed, earthy browns and fertile greens gave way to black-and-white close-ups of Adam in repose and of Eve's long and tempting tresses.

More color pictures ensued, but the lighting became darker, in keeping with developments in the subject matter. The artist titled each photo with un-



Neil Folberg, *Was He the First to Lose a Diamond?*, 2009, pigment print on rag paper, 33" x 24". Flomenhaft.

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abashedly purple phrases (*Might They Yet Find Solace?* or *You Weren't Meant to Remain Immortal*).

These lush depictions used subtle anachronism, metaphor, and theatricality to memorable effect. Near the final image in the exhibition, a black arrow on the floor pointed visitors out the door, silently but effectively banishing them from the room. —Doug McClellmont

Kukuli Velarde and Ian Ingram

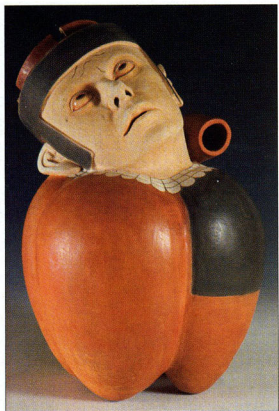
Barry Friedman

Peruvian artist Kukuli Velarde's installation, in this gallery's main space, consisted of a multitiered grouping of 21 apparently pre-Columbian clay vases, collectively called *Plunder Me Baby* (2006–10). It quickly became clear, however that the sculptures were not historical artifacts but newly made ceramic forms, each bearing the face of the artist. Caught in suspended animation, her countenance is, by turns, terrified, angry, and confused.

The story, according to Velarde, is that these culturally significant figurative objects have awakened to discover that they have been removed from their homeland and now reside in a storage room at some unnamed museum. A concern with colonialism, cultural identity, and self-deprecation also informs the showy, masterful, nearly life-size self-portraits that make up her "Cadavers" series (2004–10). Drawing from nature, Catholicism, deconstructed cultural myths, and notions of sexuality, Velarde toys in these paintings with traditional expectations of womanhood. In *Love Me Dios-ito*, *Love Me* (2009), the artist depicts herself as a Saint Sebastian figure, letting vulnerability and beauty share the stage with gore and violence. She is tied to a plank and is being devoured by a toothy beast; numerous arrows pierce her body and her breasts are mutilated, yet flowers and cherubic angels surround her protectively.

The 13 large paintings here—colorful oils on metal

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Kukuli Velarde, *Colla Apocholable, esta cunumi es facilita cheap and delicious!*, Tiwanaku, Bolivia, AD 500–1000, 2010, brown clay and underglazes, 18" x 11" x 11½". Barry Friedman.

sheets—were bolted to the gallery walls by Velarde, making the bolts themselves a part of the intense and oppressive metaphorical depiction. It is not the case, Velarde wants to show us, that the more a person suffers, the better he or she becomes.

Ian Ingram's mixed-media self-portraits, with their disarming power and impressive technical bravura, manage to avoid mere narcissism. Ingram uses pastel, watercolor, charcoal, and occasionally thread and beads to create his own image, captured at important moments in his life, including his wedding and the birth of his first child. The large (55-by-39-inch) works here were occupied mostly by the artist's face in extreme close-up, although some of them included the artist's shoulders or torso. So effective are his depictions, it was almost as if Ingram had created his own Mount Rushmore as a monument to his life. Seldom do we see vulnerability and intensity coexisting so harmoniously.

—Doug McClellmont

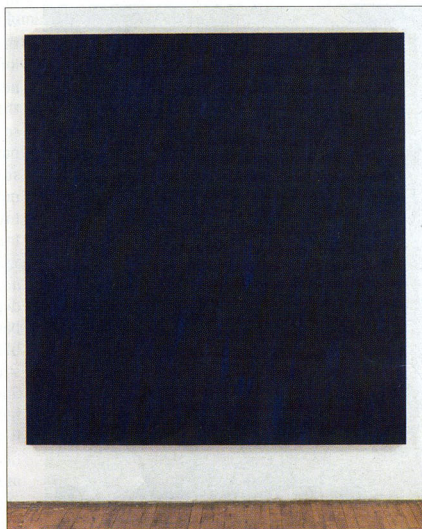
Marcia Hafif

Newman Popiashvili

The four "Black Paintings" (1979–80) by seasoned abstract artist Marcia Hafif filled this gallery's modest Chelsea space. First shown together at Sonnabend Gallery in 1981, the paintings look remarkably vibrant, remarkably undated. Precisely installed, placed to maximize dialogue among them and with the site, they demonstrate the kind of attention to detail and specifications that Hafif shares with other so-called reductivists, including Robert Ryman.

The actual titles of the works, *Black Painting: Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber II*, for example, underscore the complicated, even visually paradoxical, concepts of black and monochrome at play here. They are inevitably slow paintings, all apparently similar at first glance. However they gradually reveal distinctive patterns and tonal shifts, from black to deep blue with a hint of ruddy warmth, conveyed by vigorous, matter-of-fact brushwork.

Hafif wrote an essay in 1978 called "Beginning Again," in which she offered ideas for the reconstitution of painting, then under attack as "dead." The "Black Paintings" constitute one realization of those ideas, emphasizing that form and content



Marcia Hafif, *Black Painting: Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber II*, 1979–80, oil on canvas, 84" x 78¾". Newman Popiashvili.

sit on top of the fundamentals of painting: oil paint, a support, and a neutral application of paint that avoids the expressive.

Seen in the context of the current re-consideration of the works of the '70s and '80s, her elegant, flickering, sensuous surfaces, 7 by 6½ feet, slightly vertical in orientation, and scaled to the human body, continue to engage. They prove that there is, after all, something in the application of paint to a surface that remains profoundly gratifying, conceptually if the history interests you, visually if it does not—or, ideally, both.

—Lilly Wei

Deborah Turbeville

Staley-Wise

Titled "Past Imperfect," this retrospective of photographs taken since 1975 for such magazines as French and Italian *Vogue* highlighted Deborah Turbeville's haunting and distressed vision of glamour. The grainy sepia-toned archival pigment prints here, often streaked or blached out, portrayed detached women who, positioned in palatial ruins or muddy woods, appeared like well-dressed apparitions. The cinematic quality and offhand beauty to the images was underscored by their mode of presentation—they were unframed and tacked to a wide strip of brown butcher paper, which wrapped around the gallery and bore handwritten notations. The effect was evocative of both a filmstrip and a marked-up contact sheet.

Turbeville, who started out as a fashion editor, was fired from *Harper's Bazaar* for producing pages that weren't sufficiently dedicated to clothes. So she decided to try her hand with her own camera, wandering the streets of Dubrovnik while there on a fashion shoot. She received strong encouragement for her out-of-focus pictures from Richard Avedon, who advised her to study technique (she never did). Working intuitively on her own assignments, she chose shadowy stairwells, seedy bathhouses, and the surreal landscape of a mannequin factory to plant her models in. Are these remote women, whom Turbeville refers to as "furtive cats," and who seem to be dematerializing in the moody atmospherics of the images, waifs or prostitutes? Although their implied narratives can be unsettling, the images themselves are ethereal and hard to forget.

The antithesis of these obscured women hovering in limbo is Turbeville's