



Haim Chanin Fine Arts

Hernán Carrara, What's Up in New York? Arte al Día, March/April, 2003, p. 2

**HERIBERT OTTERSBBACH  
at Haim Chanin Fine Arts**

The first solo exhibition in New York of German painter Heribert C. Ottersbach. The exhibit, on view from January 23 through March 22, 2003, features six acrylic paintings on canvas, eleven gouaches on paper and a selection of fourteen delicate pencil sketches. The works gathered, completed between 2001 and 2002, present the painter's sharp vision of modern life and contemporary art. Ottersbach is not solely a talented artist but also a keen social analyst. Ottersbach deconstructs and reassembles photographic images to create dramatic paintings composed of stark contrasting shapes. The works bare the hand of the craftsman deft in the language and technique of painting: on the apparently monochromatic surfaces is a rich and subtle tonal variation. In the manner of Richter, Ottersbach photographs his surroundings and culls visual material from current and historical printed matter.



Heribert C. Ottersbach

He uses digital collage to combine the found images into carefully balanced compositions to be transferred onto the final support, either paper or canvas. The act of painting is crucial to Ottersbach, since the action of the hand challenges the distance seemingly created by the intervention of the machine.

Born in Köln in 1960, Ottersbach was marked by the fall of the Berlin wall and by those episodes in German politics that are considered history-in-the-making. For the painter, the fall of the wall represented the end of the utopia of Modernism. It is around 1989 that Ottersbach begins to use documentary material in his work. Unlike his German predecessor, Ottersbach employs images from the past not as a corroboration of History, but to question the postulates of modernity. The process of cutting, enlarging, and superposing images, mimics the multiplicity of events and perspectives that intervene in the creation of the fabric of history.

Ottersbach uses images that are familiar to the viewer, either from the mass media, as in Ramallah, or from personal experience as in Garbage or Depot. Yet, the apparently real landscapes are a fabrication of the artist. Furthermore, the images take on their full cultural significance, their true value, only in relationship to the observer's interpretations. They have as many meanings as there are viewers, since the meaning depends on individual experiences. Ottersbach both recuperates a historical moment and actively intervenes in the writing of a new story.

Continues through March 15, 2003  
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