



THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2012

Robin Rhode at L and M Arts, Venice

Sometimes when there's a whole bunch of chaos going on, it's kind of great to unplug it all for a minute and immerse yourself in a quiet art gallery where nothing is going on but the expression and contemplation of ideas. So that's exactly what I did this afternoon, when I took a break from packing up years of my life, and went down the street to check out the latest exhibition at **L & M Arts**, Robin Rhode's *Imaginary Exhibition*.



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BLOGTOWN



My eye was first caught at the outdoor installation of Rhode's *Sea Bells* - twelve bronze sea shells mounted on top of music stands, so that they could be percussive. I wanted to go bang on them, but wasn't sure that was cool, so I just admired it. Even better that you could breathe in the sea air while checking it out.



Inside the East Gallery, I was drawn in by the images of *Untitled/Houses + Seas*. Pictures of wrecked Post-Katrina homes in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, underneath images of stormy looking waves, all printed on crumpled up aluminum.



It's heavy - especially if you've spent any time there after the wreckage. The anger and sorrow and fear and tragedy of all of that mess came right back to me, but so did the hope. The memories of

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CJ GRONNER

I live in Venice, CA. I write. I love both. I hope you will too.

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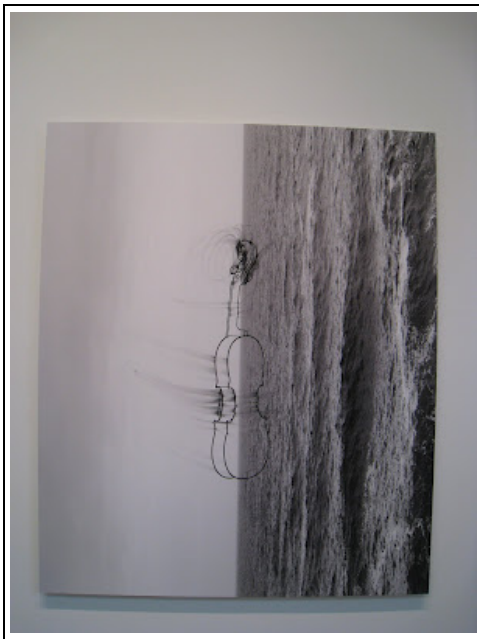
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the spirited people that lived in those houses will inspire me the remainder of my days, and I'm happy that people are still bringing attention to it all, in such a beautiful fashion.



- ▶ 2011 (71)
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On the other side of the wall was a series with a violin against water, which also reminded me of New Orleans, where we helped clean up some homes of musicians, and saw all their instruments ruined by water damage. So sad ... especially there, where their instruments are often their livelihood. I'm not sure if Rhode meant those pieces to tie in about New Orleans, but it did for me.



Untitled/Moon Stamp + Ink Pad takes you a little out of reality with a giant inktpad with a stamp of the moon on the wall above it. A bit like Claes Oldenburg style.





In the West Gallery, I really liked the *School of Fish* series of work. A guy with a fishing rod, casting out for what exactly we're not really sure ... kind of like life.



His fishing guy reminded me of his *Slalom* guy, who looks as if he's about to ski down a mountain of boulders, as if anything is possible.



Yard was interesting, with yardsticks making up a clock face shape. Rhode was born in Cape Town, South Africa, and there are shoes of the style worn by South African kids throughout the piece. I like the

imagination of Rhode a lot (who is now based in Berlin - interesting), and certainly appreciated the way that his work brought me out of my own head and into his, if just for the few moments I had to spare.



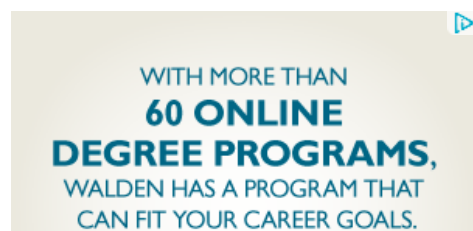
In that vein, the press release for the exhibition says, "The success of Rhode's work lies in its ability to engage the viewer on many levels. Rhode makes very serious art that doesn't take itself too seriously - elegant and thoughtful with just the right touch of humor." That's about exactly what I thought of it as I was ambling back home. Serious, elegant, thoughtful, and a little funny.

See what you think - *Imaginary Exhibition* is up now through April 21, 2012.

L & M Arts
660 Venice Boulevard
Venice
Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 - 5:30

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