

Unrest: Andrew Schoultz at Morgan Lehman

by [Howard Hurst](#) on May 31, 2011



To be honest, I haven't found myself spending very much time in Chelsea as of late. For one reason or another I find myself chasing the promise of art in the Lower East Side along Orchard Street, or running through the galleries scattered across Williamsburg. This said, I was happily surprised when I walked into Andrew Schoultz's opening last week at Morgan Lehman gallery. The gallery features primarily young, emerging artists and the exhibition felt all the more vibrant considering its 23rd street environs.



The exhibit, *Unrest*, is a gargantuan attempt at wrestling with the American psyche. The artist mines symbolism from our national mythology, combining a sense of history with the dissonant bustle of contemporary life. Hulking brick monuments crumble and atomize, obscured by a swarm of personal and historical imagery. Trappings of mysticism and state authority recall the visual vocabulary of our founding fathers. The gallery's press release explains that "The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, The Japanese Earthquakes and the BP oil spill all fuel this new body of work." While none of this is perhaps readily apparent, what we do see is a certain level of zeitgeist, an expression of the collective unease. In "Black Flag Storm" an arc like boat, with sails made from collaged squares of international currency is assaulted by a hail of black

Perhaps what I enjoyed the most was the level of whimsy. There is a sense of playful abandon and optimism that evokes art's ability not only to remind and empower but also to distract and refresh. In an age of Fox News, where politics is dominated by punditry, Schoultz's brand of esoteric caricature is all the more refreshing. We are shown the thin line between the rational and the irrational between the official and the personal. What we are left with is a sense of unease and the possibility of subtle disobedience.