

# Art in America

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## REPORT FROM NEW YORK I

### Return to the Real?

*A youth-oriented survey at P.S.1 presents work, much of it politically aware, by 160 New York City artists who have emerged since the millennium*

BY ELEANOR HEARTNEY

**G**reater New York 2005 took up residence at P.S.1 just in time for the opening of a flurry of spring art fairs in New York City. The sprawling exhibition was preceded by a buildup of expectations based in part on the freshness of the first edition of this show in 2000. Once again, Greater New York was posed as a full-scale collaborative effort between the curators of P.S.1 and the Museum of Modern Art. It includes more than 160 artists selected from a pool of over 2,000 submissions generated by both professional recommendations and an open call for proposals. The curatorial team that selected the final show was composed of P.S.1 director Alanna Heiss, MOMA director Glenn Lowry, P.S.1 curatorial advisor Robert Nickas, P.S.1 curator Amy Smith-Stewart and MOMA curator Ann Temkin, and headed by Klaus Biesenbach, who is a curator at both museums.

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In an equally absurdist vein is Marc Swanson's *Kill Moon 3 (self portrait as Yeti in his lair)*, 2005. Tucked away in the gloomy bowels of P.S.1's basement, a furry albino creature sits under the only illumination, a small window. He is surrounded by real-looking dead bunnies, hanging rats and sequined antlers, apparent evidence of the satisfaction of his primeval appetites.

The humor of these last two works extends to a number of other nonapocalyptic works in the show, suggesting that comedy, fortunately, has not been completely vanquished by the pervasive gloom.

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What may we conclude about the state of art in New York, at least as represented by this show? Overall, the work reveals an attraction to the theatrical, a weariness with conceptual rigor and a drive toward narrative. Ideas are broad, but not necessarily deep, and they tend to be presented in an easily digested form, a tendency compatible with a wider culture dominated by soundbites, Fox "News" and Hollywood blockbusters driven by amazing special effects. The show suggests that artists are connected to events in the outside world but have little sense of what to do about them, other than to create artworks that incorporate their frustration, rage, apprehension or sense of the absurdity of contemporary life. □

*"Greater New York" is on view at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, Queens, Mar. 13-Sept. 26.*



Marc Swanson: *Kill Moon 3 (self portrait as Yeti in his lair)*, 2005, mixed-medium installation.