



Diana Shpungin,  
*I Especially Love  
You When You Are  
Sleeping*, 2011,  
graphite pencil,  
citrus tree, citrus  
leaves, medical tape,  
newspaper obituaries,  
24 x 36 x 68".

stylized, performative videos, and this exhibition was, in an oblique but fundamental sense, a collaboration as well—not only with Shpungin's late father, a surgeon who died in 2006 and who was the indispensable focus here, but also with the late Felix Gonzalez-Torres, to whose work the show's title (and, in some cases, contents) explicitly nodded and whose spirit also hovered over Shpungin's estimable enterprise.

There was a vivid sense of catharsis in the work, coming not only from the artist's own feelings about her father, but also from the liberation she clearly felt in showing on her own for the first time. The exhibition's dozen-odd works—comprising more than one hundred individual drawings, four hand-drawn animations, and a clutch of sculptural scenarios (including a ton of potatoes spilled for the taking, à la the Gonzalez-Torres piece from which the show takes its name, in a suitably claustrophobic cellar)—infiltrated the whole of Stoyanov's modest Lower East Side space. Yet for all the variety of media and approaches, it was the pencil that emerged as Shpungin's signal tool and operative motif: obviously in the drawings and animations, the former sometimes augmented with medical tape or bits of drywall, but also in the sculptural works in which objects—a broken chair in *A Fixed Space Reserved for the Haunting*; a dead citrus sapling, complete with fallen leaves, in *I Especially Love You When You Are Sleeping* (both 2011)—are painstakingly hand-coated in graphite. Sober and fugitive, the medium is one well suited to conjuring shadows, both literal and figurative.

If erasure was a favored gesture here—both of the two sculptural objects, for instance, are paired with stacks of newspaper obituary sections from which personal details have been censored—so, too, was repetition. Seriality is implicit in Shpungin's hand-drawn animations like *Endless Ocean*, 2011, in which her father is pictured on a beach in silhouette, improbably holding a seagull by one foot as the bird struggles to fly off, or the evocative *His View*, 2011, in which the work's gaze, up from the ground and into a sun-dappled tree, is interrupted for only a moment when a silhouetted woman first places and then removes a bouquet from what is presumably a grave. And it is explicit in *Until It No Longer*, 2007–11, a series of forty-nine identical small pencil drawings of Shpungin's father in his casket, representing a ritual of both mortification and resolution.

These low-key acts of remembrance find their apotheosis in the show's centerpiece, *1664 Sundays*, 2011, the aforementioned potato spill that is meant to point simultaneously to the two figures at the conceptual heart of the project. A welcome bit of formal relief from the relentless black-and-whiteness of the rest of the show (you know you're deep in the world of the monochrome when it falls to potatoes to provide a moment of "color"), the work takes its title from the number of Sundays that daughter and father were both alive. The

piece—which includes editioned bags bearing the recipe for a favorite weekend snack using the tubers—offers not a riposte to but rather a diffident acknowledgment of the elegiac power of the original: a participatory act of transubstantiation that gathers up the past and sends it out into the future.

—Jeffrey Kastner

## Matt Keegan

### D'AMELIO TERRAS

Titling his recent exhibition for Milton Glaser's iconic I♥NY logo but replacing the original's stylized heart with a stylized apple, Matt Keegan framed the show as a tribute—albeit a periodically ambivalent one—to the city. In an interview that takes the place of a press release, Keegan grills the veteran designer about, among other things, his negotiation of the myriad changes that New York has undergone in the course of Glaser's lengthy career. The designer is philosophical, admitting that times are still tough for many, but finally sides with his hometown: "It's hard for me to imagine living in any other place. I would not do that by choice." A similar blend of criticism and affection, both characteristic of the insider, epitomizes Keegan's take.

The greater part of the show was occupied by groups of small color photographs attached with magnets to a band of thin, wall-mounted metal panels. These were painted in various "industrial" colors—the checklist names "George Washington Bridge Gray," "Munsell Gray," and more—while a selection of abstract metal sculptures that occupied odd areas of wall and floor were decorated in, to take two varietals, "Pulaski Red" and "Federal Blue." Even—in fact, especially—the bridge-and-tunnel brigade should make the connection. The photographs themselves depict moments from everyday life around town. Some of the locations—streets and storefronts around Chelsea—will be familiar to gallerygoers. Other scenes are harder to place but share a focus on the odd conjunctions of permanence and ephemerality that metropolitan life produces. The style is more or less indistinguishable from that of a hundred other urban shutterbugs—I overheard one skeptic deride it as "hipster Flickr"—but perhaps that's the point. These images may not always be extraordinary in and of themselves, but they work perfectly as documents of an extraordinary place in that they reflect its serendipitous character.

While at a quick glance the arrangement of the photos appears random, they turn out to have been assembled—albeit casually—according to visual and thematic connections. *Untitled (Group 1)* (all works 2011), for example, includes details of a Con Ed poster, a pair of rusted manhole covers, and a hard-hat worker in repose. Other pieces



View of "Matt  
Keegan," 2011.

group images of overstuffed bodegas, sliced-up subway ads, or close-ups of *The Panorama of the City of New York*, 1964, the periodically updated diorama installed permanently at the Queens Museum of Art. Added to this off-the-cuff frieze of Gotham observed was a limited-edition artist's book composed of images, based on a PBS series, cataloguing key moments in the city's physical and cultural expansion—here an engraving of Peter Minuit “purchasing” Manhattan from the Canarsie Indians for a handful of trinkets; there a Jane Jacobs obit—and a pair of curtains printed with a stack of books based on a reading list of books about cities.

Finally, in a nine-minute documentary video, *Biography/Biographer*, Keegan's father recounts his experience of meeting various heavy-hitting colleagues of Ed Moses when he was a teenage employee of the private North Hills Golf Course. Noting their craven deference to the influential and controversial developer, Keegan Senior conveys an admiration for the scale of Moses's accomplishment but ends up rounding on him for wielding individual power to a fundamentally undemocratic extent. It's a neat personal-political footnote to the extraordinary career recounted by Robert Caro in his 1975 biography of Moses, *The Power Broker*, dovetailing nicely with the younger Keegan's diverse vision of New York as an endlessly captivating mess of designs, compromises, and accidents good and bad.

—Michael Wilson

## Zofia Rydet

### BROADWAY 1602

If she is now remembered at all, Polish photographer Zofia Rydet (1911–97) is probably best known for “*Zapis Socjologiczny*” (Sociological Record), 1978–88. This epic cycle of images—her last—consists of more than thirty thousand negatives and documents the humble realities of Polish village life, focusing in particular on ordinary people at home. The black-and-white shots, though predictably gritty, aren't quite as dry as their censuslike title suggests; many celebrate a surprising flair for interior decoration on the part of their otherwise unassuming subjects. “The World of Feelings and Imagination,” Rydet's previous

series from the 1970s, is more fanciful still, making use of photomontage to describe a fantastical landscape explicitly informed by Dada and Surrealism.

At Broadway 1602, eleven entries from “The World” were presented in conjunction with “THREAT,” a survey of post-Surrealist art made by women in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. The juxtaposition was a helpful one, making it clear that Rydet's vision is not without its echoes, both in Europe and America. The press release for the group exhibition argues that Surrealism might be considered “an inherently effeminate art form” insofar as it seemed to suggest ways of investigating explicitly feminist ideas without recourse to the didactic. A set of collages by Penny Slinger from 1977 was among the works pre-

sented here in support of that claim, though even these, with their images of naked women under threat, seem fairly strident next to Rydet's work. Although both artists employ the same method and format, producing results that look superficially similar, Rydet's visual language is broader and stranger.

Working in collaboration with Rydet's heirs, the Warsaw gallery Asymetria has facilitated several recent presentations of her oeuvre, and the selection that was on display in New York has a slight air of having recently been exhumed from some rusty plan chest. If Rydet is enjoying a revival, it is a justified one. In addition to its correspondence with Slinger's contemporaneous body of work, “The World” also exhibits similarities with practitioners of collage, from Hannah Höch to Linder Sterling. If anything, Rydet tends to hew closer to the style of the more recent of these two examples, exercising notable restraint when it comes to the number of elements she incorporates into each composition.

A typical work in the series locates a figure or figures in a desolate land- or seascape, dark skies and stormy waters contributing to a baleful atmosphere. The figures are not always human—often they are statues, mannequins, or (this being post-Surrealism after all) blank-eyed dolls. An overarching mood of abandonment and melancholia is reflected in titles such as *Leavings* and *Sentimental Ballad*, and the combination of the ruined and the futuristic echoes the blighted Zone in Andrei Tarkovsky's dystopian sci-fi movie *Stalker* (1979). In *Threat* (all circa 1975), mannequins loiter in small groups on a choppy-looking body of water, giant ears sprouting among them like bullhorns. In *Expectations*, all five subjects of a family portrait are given the same head, its stony, downcast face seemingly borrowed from a weather-beaten statue. And in *Landscapes*, a female torso seen in fleshy close-up is paired with another antique monument as a cold sun sets on the distant horizon. In her essay on the artist, critic Urszula Czartoryska writes of Rydet's ability to conjure “a different kind of life” through the practice of “faithful wandering.” Creator of an exhaustive kitchen-sink survey in “Sociological Record,” Rydet was revealed here as an accomplished explorer of less tangible realms.

—Michael Wilson

## Chris Kraus

### REAL FINE ARTS

Over the past decade, writer and cultural critic Chris Kraus has gone to great lengths to distance herself from her earliest works, a handful of experimental films made between 1981 and 1996. In a recent lecture, she described them by turns as “unwatchable” and “pathetic.” (They are neither.) Her public disdain for her films, as well as her more veiled contempt for them in her novels (including the brilliant, semiautobiographical *I Love Dick* [1997], narrated by a “failed filmmaker”), might be less an earnest expression of private feelings than a witty ploy to pique our interest, to get the works back into play. In any case, hindsight's always a bitch. In the spring of 2008 the films were on view at Berlin's Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender and for a month this past summer they were shown alongside posters, screenplays, and shooting notes at Real Fine Arts in “Chris Kraus: Films.”

Kraus is known for her ingenious and candid writings, which blend 1970s-era New Journalism with critical theory and punk panache. If there's a connection between her publications and her films (there are probably many), it's that both exude “a terrible megalomania, an insistence on being present,” as she notes in this exhibition's pensive accompanying text. “Much as I loathe the idea of a *feminine ecriture*, I have to admit that the impulse to do this seems very female,” she adds.

Zofia Rydet, *Landscapes*, ca. 1975, black-and-white photograph, 10½ x 9". From the series “The World of Feelings and Imagination.”

