

Making Sense of White Noise
(the paintings of Philippe Hurteau)

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Philippe Hurteau's paintings, completed during his 6-month residency at Raid Projects, engage with the city of LA as an iconographic and metaphysical playground. His use of the stereotypical to explore notions of the relationship between image and reality are particularly relevant here in Los Angeles. This is, after all, the city of dreams, of desires, where the film industry dominates and projects to the world an illusion very different from the reality.

Hurteau's paintings of women tread an ambiguous path between pleasure and pain, of lust and concern.

Violence and the Erotic are uncertainly related and film's portrayal of the female, particularly the porn industry, is suggestive of the degradation and abuse underlying the dream. The impossibility of fulfillment, the constant delaying of complete satiation is in correspondence to the small increments of gratification, which is the basis of consumerism.

Quick and instant gratification without depth encourages the need for the second and third fix- ad finitum. It is diversions from the real experience, anonymous and impersonal.

Francis Bacon's sliding and shifting images of horror and existential angst are replaced here by the superficial and transitory in a metaphorical uncertainty reflecting this time and place. The degrees of separation, via steps in technological replication (from the actual person, via the recording device, to the Web, onto the computer screen then eventually onto a canvas) emphasize the anemic loss of connection and substitute an icon which has lost its clarity in the transmission of information.

This is also true of Hurteau's images relating to the city itself, the freeways and streets and the ever-present Hollywood sign (for most of the world Hollywood IS Los Angeles). His paintings reclaim the artistic process as a critical discourse into the media saturated landscape, both physical and mental.

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