

Bodega is Fukengruven

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At *Bodega*, the current exhibition is all about going with the flow. The show is entitled *Fükengruven*, a tongue-in-cheek bumper sticker reworking of the 1990s Volkswagen advertising campaign "Fahrvergnügen" or "driving enjoyment". The appropriated term means what it sounds like: "fucking grooving" or generally just having a good time. Needless to say, that is what Bodega's four person show is. On display are works by Joshua Abelow, Phil Cote, Pia Howell and Orion Martin.

The works in the show are predominantly based in formal elements like color fields or line studies and almost all of them are non-representational, with a few exceptions. Two pieces stand out because they are particularly figurative compared to everything else, one very much so.



Orion Martin, "Untitled". Photo courtesy Bodega

Orion Martin's untitled profile of a man on yellow paper is quite a divergence from the rest of the artwork. It is the only full human representation in the exhibition and it is dichromatic and print-like. The black paint on yellow field hearkens to the colors of hazard signs and yellow jacket wasps, making it striking and somewhat anxious-making. The figure's toothy grin and bulbous features are unsettling and it's almost as if he takes enjoyment by letting the lit cigarette in his hand smoke up the surrounding area.



Pia Howell, "Blue Boobs". Photo courtesy Bodega

bodega

Many of Pia Howell's paintings are in blue, black, and white, bringing to mind the ubiquitous instructions on forms and applications everywhere to only use blue or black ink. They have a clinical feel but are also primitive, composed of thick brushstrokes and minimal content. "Blue Boobs" is the other loosely figurative work in the show and stands as a pretty self-explanatory print: a pair of breasts in white on a blue field. Somewhat amusing is that the outline of the boobs themselves is not the blue part of the painting at all. Its title also implies a bit of wordplay in the vein of the infamous "blue balls" of every man's erotic dismay or the wacky little blue-footed booby birds of the Galapagos Islands.



Joshua Abelow, "Untitled", "Untitled", and "Untitled Self Portrait". Photos courtesy Bodega

Joshua Abelow's works are strongly design-based. Almost all of them are variations on a theme of squares and triangles and solid blocks of color. They immediately seem very flat, but are painted on burlap, so at a close vantage point they are actually quite rough and bumpy. Once again, he has an individual figurative standout, this one in the form of a cowboy self portrait complete with a Mona Lisa smile and ten-gallon hat.



Phil Cote, "Day/Nite". Photo courtesy Bodega

There are a few paintings by Phil Cote but by far his most impressive contribution is a big room-like installation. It is probably the most vibrantly colorful aspect of the show and almost verges on functionality, appearing as part painting frame, part bookshelf, and part bunk bed. It is called "Day/Nite", although with its color scheme it appears to be overwhelmingly daytime themed. One wall is painted a flat shade of black, however, perhaps implying the encroaching nighttime.

Bodega's quirky show is definitely Fükengrúven and rather fun. It doesn't attempt to be overtly philosophical or conceptual, but it does offer some playful images and sexual innuendo which come together for a show that isn't afraid to embrace its abstractness and general simplicity. The exhibition will be on display through July 29.