

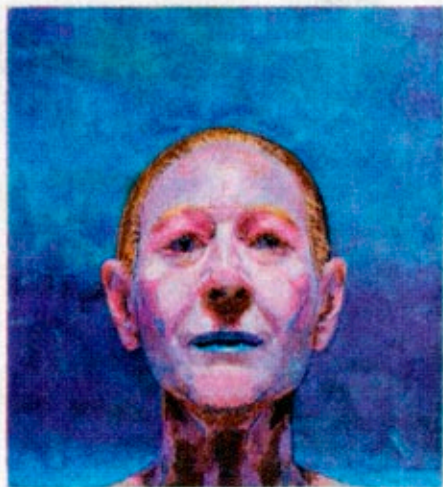
around at night with a camera equipped with a strobe, taking pictures he sold to the subjects: three pictures for 200 yen. The whores, the thuggish Yakuza, the bartenders, and their trade all presented themselves to the brilliant light of his flash after first arranging themselves in the poses they wanted immortalized. It seems to me these pictures are as much about class as they are about sex, about low-end fantasy and cultural longing as about libido, about cut-rate despair as about whoopee.

The 50-odd pictures on display are all black and white and untitled. Many show packs of young men, the typical group being four, out for the night. One bunch are all in snappy black suits, pointy shoes, and dark aviator glasses. The four hunker down at an intersection with the white stripes of the crosswalks forming a backdrop. Another group posed at a bar are dressed like American teenagers. One wears a plain white T-shirt, one a white football jersey with a large number 42 on the front, another a white turtle-neck, and the fourth a white vest and a cowboy hat.

The rest of the pictures are mostly of women. Roger Scruton, the British philosopher, wrote recently about prostitution that, "Sex and contempt are adjacent regions in the psyche of the typical client; and a prostitute must willingly accept that she is being spat upon." The women smile wanly. Some dress as two-bit geishas, or as dyed blonde Caucasians, or as hip chicks. When they are naked they show their bodies awkwardly, without the practiced stances of professional models. And it is all so sad.

— William Meyers

Until December 22 (160A E. 70th St., between Lexington and Third avenues, 212-717-9067).



FRANCIS M. NAUMANN FINE ART

Susanna Coffey, 'Celeste' (2006).

APRÈS NOUS, LE DÉLUGE

Francis M. Naumann Fine Art

"Après Nous, Le Déluge" resists easy characterization as much as the Sèvres porcelain that motivated it. Painter Don Joint asked 16 artists to respond to "A

Taste of Opulence," the Metropolitan Museum of Art's current exhibition of its Sèvres collection. This lively show is both a jam session between artists and an actual sale of Sèvres pieces in the rear showroom.

If Sèvres provided conspicuous consumables for Louis XV's era, gallery products fill that bill today. There is an engaging inevitability, then, about this pairing of paintings and porcelains. While some artists curtsy more than others to the theme, all remain very much themselves.

Pride of place goes to Douglas Vogel's "Does This Mean Anything?" (1975/2006). A found terra-cotta head, coiffed in 18th-century style, lies on its side to suggest decapitation. Marie Antoinette after the guillotine or a cloaked reference to beheadings closer to us in time? Equal parts warning and Duchampian frivolity, it carries the frisson of execution. In a waggish way, so do Eileen Foti's miniatures of doomed aristocracy, painted on French-fry containers and laid out on the watered silk of casket interiors.

Cindy Sherman's bouillabaisse tureen, "Madame de Pompadour (née Poisson)," created in 1990, is good fun. Ms. Sherman appears as Madame (born Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson) around the exterior of a tureen painted inside with gorgeous fish.

Susanna Coffey's characteristic mug shot is the scaffolding for delicious, porcelain-like tones set against a celestial blue background. Her modus operandi is perfectly suited to this kind of tongue-in-cheek enterprise.

Don Joint's "Nécessaire" (2006), painted on small marble tondis, extracts winsome curves and color combinations from Sèvres handles and contours. Ro Lohin's lively "La Vie en Rose" evokes the stippling of particular Sèvres techniques.

Evelyn Twitchell is an inventive abstract painter whose work deserves wider exposure. It was a pleasure to find included her darksome "Evening Tree" (2006). Trevor Winkfield's "Sèvres Corset Bouquet" (2006) is a riff on the stasis of decorative forms; it infuses them with a calculated disenchantment. Deborah Rosenthal's richly impastoed "Symmetria" (2006) observes the theme with sensuous, delineated forms that summon analogies between the lines of vases and the female body.

Mario Naves's lovely collage gives little quarter to the theme beyond an enveloping calm that derives from the dominance of blues that hold textural excitement in check. By contrast, Randy Stoltzfus's panel painting, dappled with gold leaf, is an unfeigned homage to the motif.

Maureen Mullarkey

Until December 22 (22 E. 80th St., between Madison and Fifth avenues, 212-472-6800).