

GALLERY HOPPING



Christian Faur's "The Land Surveyors" is composed of 20,000 hand-casted encaustic crayons.

Coloring Without Lines

Christian Faur's technique is more than a gimmick using crayons

BY JOE BENDIK

From a distance, the work hanging on the walls of Kim Foster Gallery appears to be digitized, a high-resolution set of images. There's something haunting and life-like about them, however. They have a majestic 3-dimensionality and certainly no sense of Photoshopped art. As I approached, the images became more abstract. That's when I noticed that these weren't prints or pixels at all, but were created by using actual tips of crayons—with endless hues of subtleties. I truly have never seen anything like this before: a whole new form of art. It's sculptural, yet it's also painting and photography. The work on view is part of Christian Faur's first solo exhibition, *The Land Surveyors*.

In his Artistic Statement, Faur states: "I think of it like a game, with a set of axioms that are established at the outset through the limitations of the material or forms from which the work is constructed, which then dictates what can and cannot be 'said' within the boundaries of the chosen medium. This material limitation can also be a strength, as there is the potential to contain thoughts and ideas in unique ways, so that the 'medium' can become the 'message.'"

Using a unique digital mapping system, Faur boils the images down to pixels, then plots each point. As impressive as this technique is, it would merely be a work of gimmickry were it not for the careful choice of subject matter and colors. These pieces possess a depth of meaning that is as compelling as its method of creation.

Using photographs from the Great Depression as source material (drawing

After pixelating the original photograph, he finds a tone that feels suitable, then continues with the arduous task of recreating these photos via points of crayons.

an eerie parallel to our current economic situation), Faur transforms these black-and-white photos into faded color. Inspired by Franz Kafka's novel *The Castle*—which deals with the battle between achieving goals and being burdened by the system—Faur explores the plight of the downtrodden, while always depicting them retaining a sense of dignity. Considering

Faur's modus-operandi, this is quite an achievement.

Faur's meticulous methods involve casting his own crayons and creating his own colors. After pixelating the original photograph, he finds a tone that feels suitable, then continues with the arduous task of recreating these photos via points of crayons. The crayons are mounted in a series of squared panels of 15-by-15-square-inches. Some works use up to 20,000 crayons.

He told me how each step of the process can be potentially lethal. For example, to mount the crayons to the (hand crafted) panel, he needs to fire up the back of the panel with a blow torch (to melt the back of the crayons). This is the final step. If he holds the torch even one second too long, the entire square is rendered useless, turning into a burned-brown mess.

In a way, Faur is subverting the digital format. By using an old photo, digitizing it, then eventually rendering the images in a very "analog" form, this is his version of digital-to-analog conversion. ☞

Christian Faur: The Land Surveyors
Through July 17, Kim Foster Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. (betw. 10th & 11th Aves.), 212-229-0044.

ART WEEK

THURSDAY, JULY 15

Chris O'Donnell, Jason June, Josh Egnew, Ryan Bonilla, Stephanie Tamez, Thomas Hooper

Metanoia

P.J.S. Exhibitions

238 W. 14th St.

Reception: 7 p.m.–10 p.m.

P.J.S. Exhibitions, an edgy and avant-garde West Village gallery, presents *Metanoia*, a collection of twisted and visually captivating works opening July 15.

Aptly titled *Metanoia*, the Greek word for a change of will and the reforming of one's mind, the exhibit will showcase the mind-bending, detailed and somewhat dark artwork of Chris O'Donnell (*New York Adorned*), Jason June (*Daredevil*), Josh Egnew (*Three Kings*), Ryan Bonilla (*Bellum Concepts*), Stephanie Tamez (*Brooklyn Adorned*) and Thomas Hooper (*New York Adorned*). Bevin Robinson and Patrick Sullivan will be co-curating the show, which runs through August 29.

"We're excited to have this many accomplished artists under one roof," says Patrick Sullivan, owner of P.J.S. Exhibitions. "*Metanoia* will have some very high caliber talent on display."

Each artist has already left a very permanent mark on the art world. From highly acclaimed tattooing to laser etching, they have established amazing reputations for creating everlasting work. Pieces on display will include drawings, paintings and etched metals, ranging from dark religious iconography to bright fantastical images.

THURSDAY, JULY 22

Ludmila Aristova, Arlene Baker, Jessica Fromm, Sheila Hecht, Marilyn Henrion, Malka Inbal, Anne Kolin, Bruce Laird, Pat Feeney Murrell, Tina Rohrer, von Schmidt

Twelve, featuring the work of Augusto Bordelois

Noho Gallery

530 W. 25th St., 4th Fl.

Reception: 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

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