

# Grammar.Police

December 02, 2005

## Remembrances of Exhibits Past

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It's not a Sunday brunch in the District until representatives from all three branches of the federal government make an appearance at the table—at least, in conversation. Maybe it's everyday overindulgence in politics that explains why the District has so rarely seen politically oriented art over the last few years. As if a number of people came to the realization at once, several galleries buck the trend with season openers that bring the political to the fore. Improbably, these shows feature heavy political themes without any mention of Washington.

### G Fine Arts

"Blasts," a group show at G Fine Arts curated by New York-based curator Paul Brewer, explores the explosion as both a notion and phenomenon. Working in a wide variety of media, the show's artists work under an expansive understanding of the term. Louis Cameron takes a topical route with *Warfare Riddim*, a video loop featuring an animated digitized Atari graphic (lifted from a DJ Spooky album cover). Cameron's pixilated burst reduces violence to a sample, a kilobyte-sized, media-ready message. Christoph Draeger's *The Last News* picks up the media sensationalism angle with a video installation featuring artist Guy Richards Smith, who delivers satirical newscasts against a video loop showing the successive destruction of the world's capitals.

Maggie Michael lends a new work, *Explosion #8*, which demonstrates a formal approach to the theme. The 21-foot-long mixed media drawing incorporates more motion than the biomorphic, dripped acrylic paintings that have characterized her previous efforts. The human body can still be detected in the piece, but splattered ghastly throughout in the form of curvy, evocative marks that hint at human devastation.

Also working from a formal direction, Rosemarie Fiore's *Firework Drawing* takes the explosion meme quite literally. The New York artist detonates fireworks in tubes in order to blaze the trace imprint onto paper. The collages she makes from these annular imprints marry the violent imagery and automatic process that characterize much of her work. Like a bomb, *Firework Drawing* is an act of calculated chaos.

But in a show that for the most part makes the explosion seem like an altogether polite affair, it's **Joy Garnett's** contribution, *Jog* that hits hardest. Garnett's painting is modeled after a photograph taken during the first Gulf War; brilliant Kuwaiti oil fires roar in the distance as a jogger, gas mask equipped, runs in the dusk. Plumes of flame are mirrored in the oily road surface. The fact that the man pictured is jogging, not fleeing, serves as a perfect reminder that these devastating events change people in such unpredictable ways.