

Laura Owens

27 April - 27 May 2006

Robots in the garden, lions, hunters, romance and war are some of the images in Laura Owens' new work created for this exhibition. Owens' influences are wide, ranging from DADA performance to hindu relief, which inspired the figures to the right. Elsewhere she has broken away from the fine arts to delve into wallpapers and textiles. In his catalogue essay for Owens' exhibition at LAMOCA in 2003, Paul Schimmel observed, "Unlike many postmodern artists, whose works are characterized by the seamless appropriation or cut-and-paste of various pre-existing elements, Owens makes no effort to cover up her inspirations or to couch them in irony - nor does she limit herself to borrowing from others."¹

Beyond the straightforward beauty of Owens' paintings and drawings is a constant questioning of her chosen media. She has rejected naturalism in favour of depictions, representations. Her magpie-like approach to resources is echoed in her application of paint and the arrival of foreign elements in her collages. Evident too is an unashamed pleasure in ornamentation, a delight in pictorial elegance, which affords decoration a new dignity. Owens combines abstract elements with representational elements to create a highly personal vocabulary: a vocabulary which translates into an elaborate, elegant and quietly exuberant whole.

This is Laura Owens' third show at Sadie Coles HQ. Owens has had solo exhibitions at Inverleith House, Royal Botanical Garden, Edinburgh (2000), Isabella Gardner Museum, Boston (2001) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (2003), which travelled to three further North American institutions. Owens' paintings have been included in many key international exhibitions including the 2004 Whitney Biennial.

The current exhibition will travel to the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. In the summer, Laura Owens will also have a solo exhibition at the Kunststhal Zurich, touring to the Camden Arts Centre, London.

¹ Paul Schimmel, *Laura Owens* (Los Angeles (CA): The Museum of Contemporary Art), page 29.