

**Travis Miles on “Nexus” at Sam Lee Gallery, Los Angeles
August 29, 2007**

(http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/blogon/2007/08/travis_miles_on_nexus_at_sam_l.php)

Graceful unease is on display in Sam Lee Gallery's second-ever show, a group exhibition title 'Nexus' that has me eager for the gallery's upcoming slate of solo shows. The eleven artists on display are loosely united by a mood of pastoral insecurity that is as redolent of 'Et in Arcadia ego . . . ' as it is of the current national climate of threat.

Pipo Nguyen-duy (whose solo show opens at Sam Lee on 8 Sept) has produced a series of ominous, large-scale photographs of abandoned greenhouses in northern Ohio that documenting the 'wilding' of man-made natural spaces. In a sample from the series on view, Nguyen-duy contrasts the spontaneous, organic design of spiraling haystacks against the vaulting lines of a greenhouse roof, ironising the symmetry of his own composition.

Brooklyn-based Chris Doyle impressed me with his miniaturist watercolors of suburban homes. Created from memory, and in marked contrast to his usual large-scale work, these delicate structures float on white backgrounds as if emerging from the fog, attended by all the threat of lonesome, Lynchian Americana.

Looking conspicuously disheveled on its paper backing, Seattle-based Thuy-Van Vu's masterful painting of Jersey City rubble explores the stochastic grace of discarded material, all delicate lines and precarious balance, with a striking palette of blues and browns. At the same time, this entropic beauty points toward the inevitable destruction of domestic space and becomes an unintentionally sinister sequel to Doyle's miniatures.

Chris Barnard's clever painting of a B2 Stealth Bomber positions the aircraft in the domed space above a sports arena at sundown, employing the plane as both a visual gag on a kicked football and a bold compositional element in a melancholic statement on the twilight of national pride. The sky itself becomes an abstract field in Darren Hostetter's graceful paintings of helicopter profiles against monochromatic backgrounds. Gridlocked in noisy patterns, these graceful figures imply that an aerial apocalypse will look a little bit like beautiful wallpaper.

Earth and sky meet in Macha Suzuki's utopian, bird-like construction placed coyly in the middle of the gallery space. A miniature garden tops a sloping, pink-winged bubble, as if suggesting that any new Eden should be mobile, weightless, and ready to fly. Suzuki's solo show at Sam Lee in February 08 will be something to catch.

Travis Miles is a writer and independent curator living in Los Angeles. In London and New York, he has organized comprehensive retrospectives of films by Jean-Luc Godard, Miklos Jancso, Eugene Green, Babette Mangolte, Yvonne Rainer, Peter Watkins, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Michael Haneke, and others.

14 July – 25 Aug
Sam Lee Gallery
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