

## TOP TEN



## Matt Keegan

Matt Keegan recently arranged two exhibitions and a series of events titled "Etc." at Andrew Kreps Gallery in New York. The third issue of *North Drive Press*, an annual collection of printed material and art multiples that he edits with Sara Greenberger Rafferty, will be released in May. Keegan's work is currently featured in "Shape Shifters" at China Art Objects Galleries in Los Angeles and will be shown in "Supports," opening this month at Roger Björkholmen Galleri in Stockholm.

**1 A FIA BACKSTRÖM PRODUCTION** Since 2003 Fia Backström has created exhibitions as artworks (and vice versa), with every part of the show—from the invitation card to the installation—designed to make viewers aware of their own viewing. The "productions" (six in Backström's own home) have lasted anywhere from one night to one month, exploring a range of topics from socialism to being blonde. Most recently, "Herd Instinct 360," a series of gatherings at Andrew Kreps Gallery, drew connections between Warhol's Factory and religious and corporate cults.

**2 CHAMPION FINE ART** Run by artist Drew Heitzler and dancer Flora Wiegmann, the recently closed Champion Fine Art had two locations (first in Brooklyn, then in Los Angeles) and hosted twenty-one artist-curated exhibitions, each accompanied by a catalogue published by the curator in an edition of one hundred. With participants including Josh Smith, Carol Bove, and Walead Beshty, the series had quite an impressive run. If you missed out, stay tuned for *Zero*, a book documenting the project (scheduled to appear later this year), and for Champion's next incarnation—a bar in Los Angeles.

**3 ROBOT, IN PERSON, SOAP\_LAND RECORDS** Artists John Miller and Takuji Kogo (as the band Robot) are currently working on this CD, which features bizarre (though surprisingly listenable) songs based on personals taken from Lavalife and other dating services that sell the chance to find your soul mate—by age, income, sexual preference, and hobbies. Some of the subjects have modest needs, like the gentleman who wants "a girl who can play bass guitar. Well, OK, I just want a girl. Bass guitar, you can learn it really easy." Pop at its best.

**4 HURRAY, NICOLE KLAGSBRUN GALLERY** For their show at Nicole Klagsbrun, Hurray—a band composed of artists who recently began to

make artworks together—presented film and audio recordings of their performance at Oliver Kamm 5BE Gallery. The installation required visitors to start the two tracks manually on separate machines. In addition, due to the type of film used, the projection showed only a dark room with flickering lights. The inevitable disjunction between auditory and visual showed that such artworks can sometimes be out of sync with reality, opening up new spaces for what may be considered a successful archival record.

**5 BAS JAN ADER, ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES** Organized by Jay Sanders for PERFORMA05, this screening of Bas Jan Ader's films—including *I'm Too Sad to Tell You* (1971) and *Fall II, Amsterdam* (1970)—offered a rare opportunity to see the artist's familiar stills in moving form. The program also featured Rene Daalder's documentary on the artist, titled *Here Is Always Somewhere Else* (2005), which made me see the importance of archiving one's peers and lovers and, of course, oneself.

**6 ADAM PUTNAM'S "PASSING TIME" LECTURES** Adam Putnam, with help from Tracy Williams, Ltd., recently organized this informal lecture series, featuring presentations by him and other artists. Some gave traditional talks, like Jesse Bransford, who spoke on the construction of memory; others opted for a looser interpretation of the format, like Lorenzo de los Angeles III, who presented a mind-boggling light show. The series resulted in a collector-worthy publication on each presentation and additional talks in institutions as far afield as Oslo.

**7 NEW DOCUMENTS** Leslie Hewitt eschews high production values to develop a more economic approach to imagemaking, taking pictures of photographs, books, magazines, and pieces of paper arranged on wood or carpeted floors. The results capture both the casualness of a snapshot and the formal construction of a sculpture. Hewitt seems part of a more general trend of photographers,

including Shannon Ebner, Michael Queenland, and Eileen Quinlan, who make pictures that contain a sense of intimacy though they have the power and presence of something more monumental.

**8 JOAN DIDION, THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING, KNOPF, 2005** Published this past fall, Joan Didion's *Year of Magical Thinking* offers a personal investigation of death and mourning in an incredibly generous and honest manner. Using structural and linguistic repetition and quotations from other literary sources (like portions of an etiquette manual outlining "proper" approaches to mourning), Didion has written a reflection on the very possibility of communicating loss through words.

**9 DOWNTOWN FOR DEMOCRACY** If the idea of grassroots action in New York seems idealistic (if not impossible) to you, then consider Downtown for Democracy. Already known for its successful fund-raising events for the Kerry campaign in 2004, D4D is shifting its focus from the national to the local with a "Take Back New York" campaign. D4D writes that "just as the current Right Wing Revolution began at the local level in the Texas of the 1970s, so America's next progressive resurgence will begin right here in New York."

**10 TEACHING** Another grassroots action: This past semester, I taught a basic drawing class at Columbia University. The students, mainly freshmen, possessed neither a vast understanding of materials nor a storehouse of art-historical knowledge, which pushed them to solve problems in a more immediate manner, making impressive works in original ways. To witness their progress was truly humbling. □

From top: View of "Herd Instinct 360," Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, 2005. Bas Jan Ader, *Broken Fall (Geometric)*, 1971, still from a black-and-white film in 16 mm, 1 minute 54 seconds. © Bas Jan Ader Estate. Leslie Hewitt, *riffs on real time (6 of 10)*, 2002–2005, color photograph, 24 x 30". From the series "riffs on real time," 2002–2005. Matt Keegan's Columbia University art class, New York, 2005.

