

Flash Art International

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SUPPLEMENTO N° 183 A FLASH ART N° 192 GIUGNO - LUGLIO 1995



Vanessa Beecroft (cover: Play, 1995. Photo Amin Linke) - The Wonder-Bra(in)? - Gary Hume - Jean Nouvel
Philip-Lorca diCorcia - Alan Charlton - Ross Bleckner - Ricardo Brey - Josephine King
Bridget Smith - Raymond Pettibon - Eleanor Antin - Annette Messager - Cityscape: Toronto



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RICARDO BREY

Cuban in origin, Brey is an artist who finds himself at the junction of cultures. Teased somewhere between America and voodoo, this son of a slave from a communist country has been working in an oeuvre that deals with violent images, constructed in an attempt at resolving an area of disturbance. Each piece constitutes something like a meeting place based on collision as a form, like so many *microzones* of accident.

Mixed with the simple materials that refer to the natural register (wood, fabric, feather, and sand) are elements of civilization which often transpire also as elements of protection (a crash helmet, cycling goggles, umbrellas). Installed in the midst of the permanent antagonism of a nature confronted with its own domestication, what the artist does is register the cataclysm of his assemblages in which there is no possibility for reconciliation in sight.

As if after the hurricane (of the type that might well raze Cuba), Brey's work, rich in disaffection, serves as a scattering of cases issued by the catastrophe. Brey installs what is tantamount to temporary, devastated equilibrium, disasters which at the same time are our chance for survival within a culture of recovery where no one knows who is directing the cycle. Does culture overwhelm nature or does nature recycle our production? The demiurgy of this artist is without particular origin and bears no form other than that of a cyclone which scatters nature and culture alike, keeping within order and disorder and sweeping, indiscriminately, across our territories. Nature and culture will perish together in the gust, while what the artist hears is the wind that heralds its arrival.

It is not without a hint of humor that one installation is entitled *Oasis*. Plastic tubing, umbrellas, and eiderdowns all interpenetrate *pêle-mêle* with each other, the scene resembling the aftermath of an accident we know nothing about, having only the enigmatic remains to go on. All these elements are included in an ensemble of blue paper speckled with marks created by the projection of water and sand, resulting in a feeling of collision,



OASIS, 1993. MIXED MEDIA, SIZES OF THE ROOM. COURTESY NATHALIE OBADIA, PARIS.

but with neither reference nor center.

Frank Perrin

(Translated from French by Christopher Martin)

As Paris-based critic and curator Frank Perrin explains, in Ricardo Brey's

work we find an irresolvable violence. No shelter is offered, particularly in this work, Oasis. We come upon this piece as if after a storm, when the time has come to take stock of what has happened. Unbiased, Oasis hovers on the razor's edge, between stillness and fury.