



Gay Outlaw: *Black Hose Mountain*, 1998, rubber hose, plaster, silicone, 120 by 180 by 120 inches; at Refusalon.

presence filled the gallery.

Alabama-born and now living in San Francisco, Outlaw (yes, that's her birth name) constructed *Black Hose Mountain* from more than a mile of dishwasher drain hose cut on the diagonal into 2-inch pieces and glued over an eccentric wooden armature so as to protrude at about a 45-degree angle. Each segment of hose is filled with plaster. When viewed from the room's entrance, the mountain's skin of white-cored black hose resembled polka-dot fabric. As you walked around the structure, the pattern kept changing almost filmically, provoking a range of associations: waves, feathers, organ pipes, even penguins. The artist has noted that the mountain's shape recalls the hulking posture of Rodin's *Balzac*.

Like *Black Hose Mountain*, Outlaw's "Chalk Hill" series of hemispheres of tightly packed blackboard chalks also explores illusion and the massing of many single units. Works in this series, two on the floor and one on a

pedestal, all approximately a foot in diameter, look like little Op-art moons. A dot or oval of black paint on the end of each chalk stick makes it appear to have a black core; again, the surface changes as one moves around the piece.

These chalk objects relate to earlier works in which Outlaw layered pencils. She likes using common functional materials, enjoying the symbolic connotations of these old-fashioned communication and teaching tools. Trained in Paris as a pastry chef, she has also concocted sculptures out of fruit, sponge cakes and puff pastry. *Springs in Caramel*, made with cast caramelized sugar, was displayed in the gallery's lobby. Metal springs embedded in a gradually softening and dripping caramel cube created a strange sense of disintegration.

Chalk Cone also provided surprises. It at first looked like a bowl sitting on top of a stand. But walking around the white-painted wooden pedestal, one discovered its open fourth side, which revealed that the "bowl" was simply the top several inches of an elegant, elongated chalk-stick cone 40 inches deep, smoothly plastered on the outside and suspended within the pedestal.

Despite the labor-intensive nature of Outlaw's constructivist work, it has a delicious edge of playfulness that I hope she never loses.

—Betty Klausner

PARIS

Walter Niedermayr at Anne de Villepoix

From a distance, Walter Niedermayr's works look like drawings—expanses of white paper with charcoal squiggles and smudges and daubs of color. But they are actually large-scale photographs of snow-covered mountain scenes arranged as diptychs or quadriptychs. Niedermayr has been photographing mountains since the late '80s. Presented here were ski mountains in the Alps in France and his native Italy. His images aren't romantic landscapes that glorify

untouched nature; they always include humans or at least traces of humanity.

Many of the photos were taken on overcast days so that sky and earth blend into a single field of white. Shot from a distance, they reduce people to decorative specks. Human presence ranges from a lone skier on a desolate, windswept mountaintop—evoking traditions of the sublime in 19th-century painting—to a peppering of people across a slope or a cluster at the top of a lift. Outcroppings of rock, patches of earth, snow fences and ski equipment strategically punctuate the flattened ground. A blue sky and tree-covered mountains on the horizon form a border across the top of one diptych, while a bright orange shed and skiers in colorful clothing dot the white landscape.

Niedermayr's works do more than capture scenery; they also document continuous, yet disjointed, moments. In each frame, he shifts his perspective ever so slightly. It's as if he intends to take a series of photos for a panorama, but then displays them side by side instead of overlapping them to create one continuous image. The resulting repetition of figures and objects in different panels is reminiscent of the Early Renaissance method of depicting an episodic narrative, except Niedermayr's scenes are just seconds or minutes apart. The viewer is left to mentally smooth the temporal and perspectival seams. The connection between the photos can be baffling until a visual pivot is discerned. In a four-panel work, for example, a snow plow is clearly seen in two of the photos, while its nose peeks into the side of a third.

Niedermayr has shown regularly in Europe since 1988 but has remained largely overlooked in this country. However, his inclusion in two New York group shows earlier this year (at Robert Miller and Lombard Freid), not to mention his participation in "Venezia Marghera," a group show at last year's Venice Biennale, may help remedy that.

—Stephanie Cash



Rose Finn-Kelcey: *Jolly God*, 1997, tufted wool rug, 10 feet square; at Camden Arts Centre.

LONDON

Rose Finn-Kelcey at Camden Arts Centre

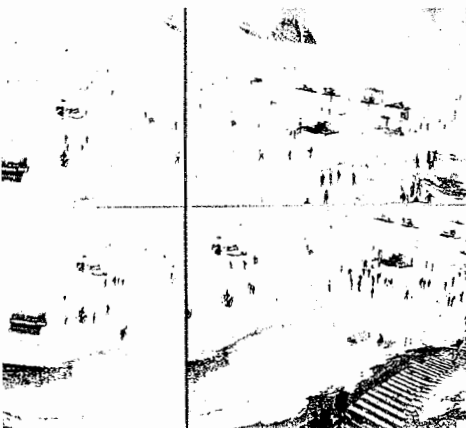
In her latest show, Rose Finn-Kelcey gave each of Camden Arts Centre's three galleries its particular atmosphere. The largest space, made ethereally luminous, was bisected by *The Pearly Gate*, a 7-foot-high wooden structure, painted with gleaming white car paint and scaled up from a toy farmyard gate. Some way off, as if gingerly approaching, were five *Souls*, roughly 4-foot-high chubby rubber sacks, likewise modeled on miniature toys. If Disney ever took on religion we might get images like these: an outsized heavenly portal, souls as sacks of produce. It's as if paradoxical notions of eternity were being unraveled by a resourceful yet childlike imagination. In addition, the gate seemed to be a symbol for any institutional barrier whose authority can be challenged by irreverent representation.

Once through the gate, visitors entered a dark, claustrophobic second gallery to confront an image of God woven into the thick pile of 10-foot-square pink carpet displayed on an angled platform. Titled *Jolly God*, the work depicts a malevolent-looking seated man wearing an eye patch and floating among clouds. The carpet's serrated edges and postmark motif closely replicated the source of Finn-Kelcey's celestial vision—a Vatican postage stamp.

The third room was a sound-proofed retreat carpeted in musty-smelling hay, with additional bales in the window arches blocking out street noise and natural light. Hundreds of small black circles

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Walter Niedermayr: *Vedretta Piana II*, 1996, color photograph, 4 panels, 43 1/4 by 53 inches each; at Anne de Villepoix.



Review of Exhibitions

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painted on an end wall seemed meant as a graphic symbol in negative of the clear night sky. They also suggested the children's game evoked in the work's title, *Join up the Dots*. This transplanted barn seemed to express Finn-Kelcey's ambivalence toward her rural origins and her subsequent displacement to the city.

Following some 15 years of introspective performances which took self-doubt as their theme, Finn-Kelcey turned to installation around 1987. One of her earlier efforts was *Bureau de Change* (seen at New York's New Museum in 1990), in which an enlarged image of van Gogh's *Sunflowers* was created by thousands of coins laid on the floor mosaic-style. While that work addressed questions of economic and esthetic value, her recent installations have engaged more metaphysical themes. Somewhat mischievously, this show spoiled illusions of a dignified afterlife with a dose of worldly disenchantment. —Mark Harris

Tim Noble and Sue Webster at 20 Rivington Street

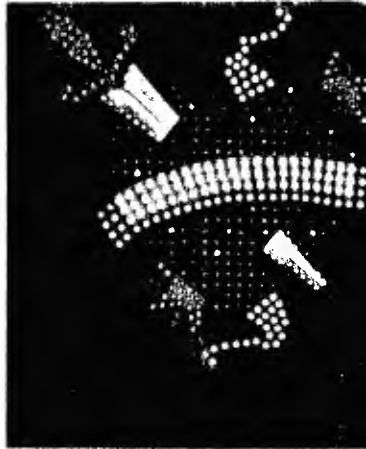
This show of well-conceived sculptures and installations using computer-sequenced electric lights probably came as a surprise to viewers acclimated to the tacky esthetics and low-grade materials previously relished by London misbehavers, Tim Noble and Sue Webster. Only last year they were introducing themselves in their "British Rubbish" show at the Independent Art Space as "The Shit and the Cunt," flaunting scatological art jokes and the fabricating abilities of glue-sniffing adolescents.

As the visitor moved through this year's show, which included one major piece on each of the gallery's three floors, there was a cumulative theatrical effect. The first work encountered, *Toxic Schizophrenia*, was a wall structure of flashing light bulbs which re-created the classic tattoo design of a heart pierced by a dagger. Sophisticated light sequencing made for a mesmerizing display of alternating colors that depicted blood

draining from the heart. The work was inspired by the Blackpool illuminations, an end-of-summer ritual in which the traditionally working-class seaside resort of Blackpool comes alive with flashing lights celebrated for their unashamed vulgarity and for being the closest thing in Britain to Las Vegas neon.

On the next floor, looking like an enlarged piece of costume jewelry, was *Excessive Sensual Indulgence*, a flashing-lightbulb fountain which created the illusion of spraying water. Individual bulbs were designed to produce two different colors, one directed straight ahead, the other spreading across the wall in atmospheric halations.

The duo's uninhibited approach to the entertainment value of the art work was most telling on the top floor, where a single spotlight, beaming up from floor level, showed two freestanding assemblages on metal poles. At first sight, the sculptures looked like random accumulations of bus tickets, plastic toys and empty cartons. However, on the wall behind, these two structures cast perfectly realized shadows of Noble's and Webster's profiled



Noble and Webster: *Toxic Schizophrenia*, 1997, mixed mediums, 102½ by 78½ inches; at 20 Rivington Street.

heads, severed, facing each other, impaled on spikes and dripping blood. Titled *Miss Understood and Mr. Meanor*, this work was a further homage to aspects of British popular culture, from matinee sleight-of-hand performances to touristy chambers of horror such as the London Dungeon.

More closely wedded to local iconography than most young British artists, Noble and Webster also carry their attitudinizing and wit more lightly than many of their better-known contemporaries. —Mark Harris

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