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SFMOMA PRESENTS

NEW WORK: TIM GARDNER, MARCELINO GONÇALVES, ZAK SMITH

From April 21 to September 5, 2006, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *New Work: Tim Gardner, Marcelino Gonçalves, Zak Smith*, the latest exhibition in the Museum's ongoing *New Work* series. Organized by SFMOMA curatorial associate Joshua Shirkey, the exhibition marks the California museum premieres for three artists from across North America.

Though they work independently, Tim Gardner, Marcelino Gonçalves, and Zak Smith share a common interest in combining and alternating among traditional art-making techniques in an effort to explore new visual articulations of masculine identity through memory, narrative, and desire. Each of the three artists looks to highly formal realist traditions yet departs from convention by employing familiar styles in unexpected ways, invariably inserting himself into the work. Keenly aware of the questionable status of realism as well as their roles as image-makers, Gardner, Gonçalves, and Smith challenge the notions of distance and impartiality that historically have been afforded to male artists, instead insisting that they become part of the viewer's experience.

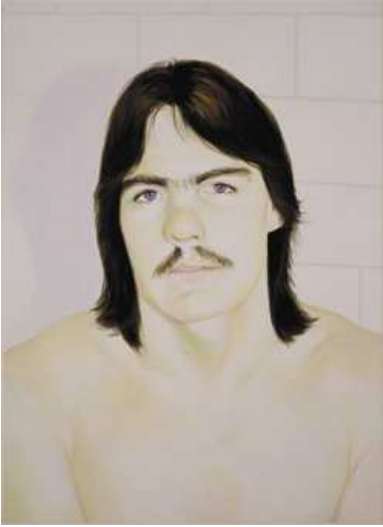
Says Shirkey, "Each of the artists circles around the interrelationship between image-making and masculine identity, ultimately posing more questions than answers. It is this uncertainty that makes their work resonate so profoundly."

Working in watercolor and pastel, Tim Gardner creates hyper-realistic reproductions of isolated moments from his own coming-of-age as entry points to investigate the meaning of manhood. *Untitled (Family Portrait I)* (2004–5) stands out as the largest and most recent of Gardner's pieces in the exhibition, and the only example of his pastel work. The portrait captures Gardner and his two brothers as young boys with their mother and father in the mid-1970s. While deeply personal and specific to the artist's family, the portrait taps into a wider generational nostalgia.



Tim Gardner, *Untitled (Family Portrait I)*, 2004–5; Courtesy Rachofsky Collection, Dallas; © Tim Gardner

continued



Marcelino Gonçalves, *Smalltown Boy*, 2005; Collection Nowell J. Karten, Los Angeles; © Marcelino Gonçalves

The exhibition also includes seven of Gardner's watercolor paintings made from photographs, each rendered with a sensitivity that undermines the documentary feel of the source material. From a series based on photographs of Gardner's brother and friends, *Untitled (Red Sky)* (2002) represents the artist's second-hand experience of a coarse masculine identity. Both *Untitled (Soldiers)* (2002) and *Untitled (Nike Town)* (2002) point to the broader political and commercial implications of manhood: The first depicts a statue of three soldiers—one with pointed gun—in the center of an empty public park; the second shows a young man standing amid an overwhelming retail display of sports shoes. Some of the masculine posturing gives way to reflection when Gardner's subjects are seen alone in nature, as in *Self-Portrait: Moraine Lake* (2002) and *Untitled (In the Morning Light)* (2003), both of which capture dramatic landscapes with crisp clarity. These works herald a shift in Gardner's career; whereas earlier pieces often afforded vicarious experience or used the passage of time as a distancing factor, the landscapes record the artist's first-hand experience of the world.

Born in 1973 in Iowa City, Gardner lives and works in Victoria, British Columbia. He received his BFA from the University of Manitoba in 1996 and an MFA from Columbia University in 1999.

Marcelino Gonçalves seeks to uncover alternative masculine narratives by revisiting longstanding stylistic representations of manhood and authority. *New Work* presents 10 oil-on-panel compositions by Gonçalves, including one brand-new work. In a sequence of small, 12-by-12-inch paintings (from a series entitled *Twelve Inches*, 2002), Gonçalves paints men alone and together, allowing erotic subtexts to emerge. Compositions include a group of tightly huddled athletes in striped uniforms and two uniformed police officers escorting a young man. In other pieces, Gonçalves applies a thin layer of oil paint over a graphite underdrawing, producing works that possess a gauzy, ghostlike quality and allow for multiple layers of meaning. *Rifle Lessons* (2005), from a series based on a 1970s boys' summer camp brochure, shows a counselor teaching a young boy how to handle a weapon. *Swimming Hole* (2005) captures a group of campers swinging from tree branches into a small, secluded body of water; the subject matter and its luminous rendering are a direct reference to the idyllic work of Thomas Eakins. In *Smalltown Boy* (2005) and *Untitled* (2004), Gonçalves moves away from group scenes to focus on single subjects, creating his most intimate works.

Born in 1969 in San Diego, Gonçalves lives and works in Los Angeles. He received a BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1995 and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1999.

Influenced by graffiti and comic books, Zak Smith's graphic style renders his work unmistakably contemporary. At the same time, his subject matter—often women, many of whom are sex workers—and

his affinity for Art Nouveau decoration situate him in a more complex art-historical context. Working primarily in acrylic and ink on paper, Smith is committed to beauty and the pleasure of looking, while remaining hyper-conscious of the troubled dynamic between male artists and female models.

From a series titled *Girls in the Naked Girl Business*, the portrait *Voltaire* (2004) pictures a woman sitting cross-legged on a graffitied concrete ledge, gazing steadfastly and unashamedly at the artist and viewer. The detailed background of the composition is rendered mostly in black and white, with splashes of color adorning the subject's clothing, hair, jewelry, fingernails, and tattoos. In another portrait from the same series, *Amber* (2004), the subject is completely nude, positioned in an interior space relaxing on a bed amid richly textured pillows and fabrics, her hair and lips painted the same fiery red as the bedspread. In depicting his subjects as self-possessed agents of their own sexuality, Smith signals a cultural shift in how women in the sex trade are viewed.



Zak Smith, *Most Accurate Self-Portrait to Date*, 2004; Courtesy Michael and Ninah Lynne; © Zak Smith

The portrait *Varrick in a Shirt I Made That Has a Monkey* (2003) depicts one of the artist's muses, Varrick. The geometric decorative patterning that defines Smith's work can be traced to the chaotic interplay of shapes and colors in the environments he depicts and on the tattooed, pierced, and highly accessorized bodies of the sitters themselves. In *Most Accurate Self-Portrait to Date* (2004), Smith himself appears, with green hair, against a background wall-papered with his own pictures and notes. Here, Smith takes a turn as the one being looked at, allowing himself to become both subject and object.

The exhibition also features one example of Smith's abstract painting, *Welcome Back to Fucked* (2005), and a contact-print drawing, *Life Will Not Break Your Heart It'll Crush It* (2002), both of which incorporate a progression of boxes inspired by comic book narratives. An installation of new drawings rounds out Smith's presentation in the exhibition.

Smith was born in 1976 in Syracuse, New York. He attended the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and Yale University. He currently lives and works in New York.

Exhibition curator Shirkey will lead a discussion at noon on May 26 in the Koret Visitor Education Center about the evolution of all three artists' work. An illustrated brochure, with an essay by Shirkey, will be available in the galleries at no cost.

The *New Work* series is generously supported by Collectors Forum, an auxiliary of SFMOMA and the founding patron of the series. Major funding is also provided by Mimi and Peter Haas, Nancy and Steven Oliver, Robin Wright, and the Betlach Family Foundation.

Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our Web site at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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