

Tauba Auerbach

Tauba Auerbach is a San Francisco–based artist whose work is currently included in the group exhibition “No Information Available” at Gladstone Gallery, Brussels. She will present new work at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art this February, as part of a show for this year’s Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art Award winners.



1 THE HAIRSTYLES OF OMAR LITTLE FROM *THE WIRE* (I’M ONLY ON SEASON TWO, HOWEVER) Nearly every time he appears on *The Wire*, Omar (played by Michael Kenneth Williams) has a new and more amazing configuration of braids. His hair is a work of art: complicated, mathematical, and beautiful. Whoever decided to make such a priority out of this detail—thank you.

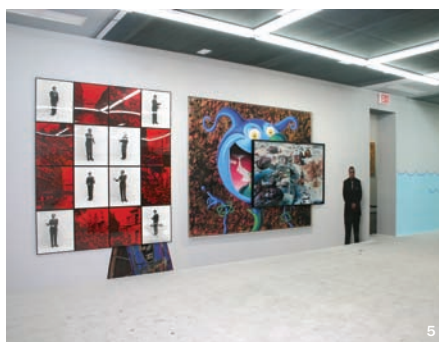
2 THE GLASSER LIVE SHOW WITH BODYCITY Cameron Mesirow, aka Glasser, has one of those voices that you want to keep hearing. Her innovative singing is the nucleus of this band (though *band* is too limited a word). The creative entities brought into its orbit are testament to her music’s quality and power: Accompanying prerecorded iPod tracks is live guitar by Matt Popieluch, backup vocals by Rebecca Spielman and Madeline Gorman, choreography by Los Angeles–based “dance democracy” bodycity, and custom stage outfits for Mesirow by Ida Falck Eien. Glasser is one person’s project that has inspired the collaborative efforts of many.

3 STERLING RUBY, “SUPERMAX 2008,” MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES After having attempted to make good paintings with spray paint for months, I saw Sterling Ruby’s show this past summer and thought, This is exactly what I was trying to do, only better. And to a different end. The show was sinister yet candylike, with the densely packed gallery filled with cages, drippy monuments—*cum*—prison shanks, bloody plasma–colored resin monoliths frozen in time, implacable fluorescent and black paintings, and stuffed, bleach-stained fabric droplets. Tall and narrow with windows only at the top, the room felt like an inverted panopticon.

4 EQUILIBRES (WALTHER KÖNIG, 2006) Published last year, this book of photographs by Fischli & Weiss is simple yet great. Each image shows everyday objects unbelievably balanced, one on top of the other, or else jammed into door frames, making bridges high off the ground. The still life has been turned acrobatic. Somehow, these tableaux do not feel precarious, which is the truly magical part. The act of mastering gravity in this way reads as a jolly sort of defiance—a positive rebellion.

5 “WHO’S AFRAID OF JASPER JOHNS?” TONY SHAFRAZI GALLERY, NEW YORK There is really too much to talk about here. Walking through this show on a sickening white carpet—contributed by artist Rudolf Stingel—one occupied both the past and the present states of the gallery. Shafrazi’s preceding exhibition, featuring work by Donald Baechler, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Kenny Scharf, had been photographed, printed on a 1:1 scale, and pasted onto the gallery’s walls—on top of which a new collection of art by the likes of Francis Bacon and Lawrence Weiner was hung. The show was bookended by Rob Pruitt’s *Eternal Bic*, 1999 (an endlessly burning Bic lighter affixed to a table), and his Viagra-dosed waterfall running down the front stairs. Conceived by Urs Fischer and Gavin Brown for Shafrazi, the whole thing solipsistically folded in on itself, doubling back in a kind of Möbius strip of logic.

From top: *The Wire*, 2002–2008, still from a TV show on HBO. Omar Little (Michael Kenneth Williams). View of “Who’s Afraid of Jasper Johns?” 2008, Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York. Glasser (background) and bodycity performing during Bastille Day celebration, West Hollywood Park, CA, July 13, 2008. Photo: Matthew Spencer.



6 MARBLE MOTIFS IN FALL 2008 FASHION SHOWS BY JIL SANDER AND DRIES VAN NOTEN These two design houses revived and improved upon an old concept in different, but equally beautiful, ways. In pantsuits and bags, Jil Sander's fall palette of solid grays and muted colors was peppered with bold, photorealistic prints of black-and-white marble; knit sweaters approximated these patterns in an abstract, pixelated way. Dries Van Noten's similar but more psychedelic deployment of such patterning was found in the patchworking of several bright, sometimes metallic, marbled prints within single garments. In both cases, there was a harmonious synthesis of the graphic and the organic.

7 THE VALERIE PROJECT In 2006, some members of the Philadelphia-based band Espers composed an alternate sound track to the 1970 Czech New Wave film *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* (directed by Jaromil Jires), which revolves around the sexual politics of Eastern European youth as the eponymous Valerie gets her first period. Recorded and performed live during screenings (I saw one at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco), the new score turned an already great work of cinema into a truly symphonic and transcendent experience—mirroring the film's tactile, dreamlike, and waywardly ominous qualities. The sparse vocals were a ghostly highlight.

8 THE HYPNOSIS INDUCED BY MICK BARR AND DANIEL HIGGS (SEPARATELY) I lived a block away from musician Mick Barr for at least a year before I finally made it to one of his shows. Opening for Gang Gang Dance at San Francisco's Independent under the name Octis, Mick stood alone onstage with his guitar and didn't just shred but channeled a nuanced, unearthly power, playing a thirty-minute guitar monologue that made me lose my bearings in space. The set was played at warp speed, with tones stretching and contracting while rhythms mutated and multiplied—a beautiful use of such virtuosity. I had a similar experience a few years back seeing Daniel Higgs play the jaw-harp in support of his solo album *Magic Alphabet*. With no effects and only a microphone, an amazing variety of sounds came forth, from droning, sympathetic tones to heavy percussion. It was a full-body experience. I forgot that the music was coming in through my ears.

9 CABINET For several years now, I've enjoyed this periodical, which defines itself more by approach than by content. In not restricting itself to any one genre, *Cabinet* has the luxury of existing as a general forum for inquiry; anything is fair game. I've read great articles on everything from hyperbolic space to the history of remote controls. In presenting such subjects side by side, the magazine puts forth the notion that curiosity is a binding force among many disciplines.

10 MANTIQUES MODERN I went into this New York store for the first time a few months ago and left feeling slightly changed. The place was exquisitely curated, but not in a precious or obvious way. Each piece in the shop has been carefully considered and cared for: Items such as inverted animal-face pin trays and vintage ivory pen sets grace glass shelves and perfectly treated wooden tables. The whole experience made me question my own taste, as I found myself repeatedly thinking: I never would have picked that, but it's amazing. □



Clockwise from top left: Model in suit from Jil Sander's menswear for the autumn/winter 2008/2009 season, Milan, January 12, 2008. Photo: Karl Prouse/Getty Images. Model in dress from Dries Van Noten's ready-to-wear collection for the autumn/winter 2008/2009 season, Paris, February 27, 2008. Photo: Francois Guillot/Getty Images. A screening of *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*, 1970, with a live score by Espers as part of their Valerie Project, Royal Festival Hall, London, 2007. Photo: Heather McMonnies. Austrian bronze cat pin tray, ca. 1920, from Mantiques Modern, New York.

