



Laura Henno, *Il deserto rosso*, 2009, print on diasec mat, 47 1/4" x 61".
Le Centre Photographique d'Ile-de-France.

it is unclear whether they are supporting one another or struggling with each other. Such ambiguity gives Henno's work its force. —*Laurie Hurwitz*

UP NOW

Marjetica Potrč

Galerie Nordenhake
Berlin
Through January 21

In her latest architectural case study, Slovenian artist Marjetica Potrč tackles sociopolitical issues surrounding Ramot Polin, a housing project located in Jerusalem that was built during the 1970s. Utopianism, the collective spirit, and the perceived failure of Modernist



Marjetica Potrč, *Ramot Polin Unit with Sukkah*, 2011, bricks, wood, wood-wool plates, tar paper, metal, reed, and plastic, 11' 6" x 13' x 13', installation view. Galerie Nordenhake.

architecture are all investigated in this evocative exhibition, titled "In a New Land."

Ramot Polin Unit with Sukkah (2011), a

reconstruction of the dodecahedral unit of the housing project, dominates the gallery. In Potrč's take on the structure, a single unit in black with bright yellow geometric overlays playfully embodies the settlement's hive-like design. Various vernacular details, such as a small AC unit, a steel drum for water, winding electric cables, and mirrored blue windows, ornament the structure's exterior. Attached to the front is a simple wooden sukkah, the ephemeral shelter used during the Jewish festival of Sukkot. These ad hoc addi-

tions, which radically transform the shape of the structure, mimic the modifications made to Ramot Polin by its own residents, who have altered the dwellings to meet needs not addressed in Israeli architect Zvi Hecker's original "visionary" design.

On the gallery walls, three series of lively ink-on-paper works (all 2011) offer commentary on related issues. The colorful, cartoonlike drawings that make up "In a New Land" reflect on the struggles of the kibbutz movement in its quest for utopia. "The World of Things," executed in somber black ink, addresses the rise of consumerism, pitting the ideals of nomads, kibbutzniks, citizens, and settlers against each other.

While this exhibition does not represent a new approach for Potrč, the works coalesce into a powerful—and ultimately optimistic—chronicle of a community rising up through the cracks and flourishing. —*Alicia Reuter*

Gehard Demetz

Beck & Eggeling
new quarters
Düsseldorf

The uncanny wooden sculptures of Gehard Demetz seemed to have stepped into the gallery from some other world. His life-size depic-

tions of stern-faced children are at once familiar and remote, innocent and sinister. Such dichotomies are reflected in the virtuoso Italian artist's technique, as well.

The figures are carved not from a single block of limewood but from individual segments that are slotted together in such a way that gaps in the construction are sometimes visible, while their backs remain jaggedly unfinished. The gaps suggest fragility, and some even resemble open wounds.

In this exhibition, titled "Contentitore" (Container), the air of paradox was intensified by a contrast in the method of carving employed by the artist: a broadly "chopped" style for hair and clothing and



Gehard Demetz, *It's Warmer Now*, 2011, limewood and acrylic paint, 67 1/4" x 15 1/2" x 16 1/2".
Beck & Eggeling new quarters.

astonishingly smooth, lifelike contours for the children's skin. Demetz acquired his skills among the master craftsmen of the Tyrol, famous for their religious art.

The ominous quality radiated by the figures has been dramatically intensified in Demetz's latest works. A grim-faced boy stands, legs astraddle, holding a black crucifix before him like a machine gun. Another's body has been pierced by an object that resembles a tabernacle, while a girl has a jerrican—a potential bomb—embedded in her torso. These suggestions of violence and violation are chilling enough in themselves; combined with the concentrated but passionless gaze of beautiful children, they are even more unnerving. Furthermore, the blocks from which the artist's figures are carved include plinths that raise the children to eye level with the viewer.

For the first time, the artist has "extrapolated" two of the accessories used here, producing autonomous, exquisitely

COURTESY GALERIE LES FILLES DU CALVAIRE, PARIS

PHOTO ©EGON DELORI

PHOTO GALERIE NORDENHAKE, BERLIN/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GALERIE NORDENHAKE BERLIN/STOCKHOLM

detailed sculptures of a tabernacle and a jerrican with Gothic ornamentation. The extraordinarily fine craftsmanship of the Tyrol region is usually expended on kitsch and religiosity. Demetz achieves a formal irony by applying these techniques to charged objects.

—David Galloway

'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial), 2011'

Istanbul

Given world events of late, but especially in the Middle East, it was timely that this Istanbul Biennial focused on



Elizabeth Catlett, *Sharecropper*, 1968, linocut on paper, 17½" x 16¼". 12th Istanbul Biennial.

art and politics, albeit from a deeply emotional, the-personal-is-political point of view appropriate to an exhibition dedicated to the late Cuban American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996). Called "Untitled," Gonzalez-Torres's usual title for his works, the show was inspired by the artist's minimalist and conceptualist language. Curators Jens Hoffmann and Adriano Pedrosa translated Gonzalez-Torres's themes into a clean, integrated, comprehensible, and often poignant presentation of around 500 works.

Ryue Nishizawa designed the elegant and effective structures for the installation, using corrugated steel partitions to underscore a sense of the temporary and transitional. The biennial was concentrated in two enormous waterfront

warehouses, though there were a number of excellent parallel events scattered throughout Istanbul.

Over 130 artists from around the world were gathered into more than 50 solo presentations and five thematic group shows that specifically referred to works by Gonzalez-Torres. These were "Untitled (Abstraction)," "Untitled (Passport)," "Untitled (History)," "Untitled (Death by Gun)," and "Untitled (Ross)," the last being the name of the artist's lover. They discussed formality, nomadism, cultural identity, politics, the personal, violence, and (gay) love.

While most of the artists were contemporary, there were some from earlier generations. Elizabeth Catlett's prints depicting African Americans, such as

Sharecropper (1968), were on view in an engrossing series of rooms that featured women's art from the 1920s to the '70s, one of the biennial's high points. *Drawing with the Camera—Circle in the Square* (1979), a photographic installation by Dóra Maurer, a major, if underknown, Hungarian conceptual artist, was a standout in the abstraction category. Other artists in the exhibition included Eylem Aladogan, Kutluğ Ataman, Mark Bradford, Theo Craveiro, Adrian Esparza, Dani Gal, and Gabriel Sierra.

Although the emphasis on South American and Middle Eastern artists was unsurprising and rewarding, ultimately this was, for once, more an exhibition about esthetic issues than locality and the romance of Istanbul.

—Lilly Wei

Sophie Bueno-Boutellier

Freymond-Guth Fine Arts Ltd.

Zurich

Minimalism met up with *Arte Povera* in "Adriatique ... 3h du matin" (Adriatic ... 3 a.m.), an austere yet eloquent exhibition of six works by Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, a French artist who currently lives and works in Berlin. Four wall pieces that fuse painting, sculpture, and installation art had a random feel, but are actually carefully executed manipulations of basic materials: white paint and canvas.



Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, *Gidian Studies*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 65" x 29½" x 4". Freymond-Guth Fine Arts Ltd.

To make each of these works, Bueno-Boutellier started out with approximately six-and-a-half yards of canvas, to which she applied an uneven layer of off-white acrylic paint, leaving bare patches that gave the fabric a faded, aged appearance. She then folded the canvas into irregular geometric kite-like shapes to produce a sort of subtly nuanced linear "painting." The soft folds and raw edges of these pieces, some of whose titles refer to poems by the French Surrealist Robert Desnos, create shadows that enhance their three-dimensional, sculptural quality. *Gidian Studies* (2011) was particularly effective, its subdued tonalities at odds with the rugged, paint-stiffened material.

Two additional sculptural works, more site adapted than site specific, combined found objects with elements that looked scavenged but were, in fact, produced by the artist. *Etoile de Mer* (Starfish, 2011) was composed of a weathered plank—crafted out of plaster—that rested on two wooden feet and leaned against a gallery wall, a neatly folded canvas triangle, a coiled root, and a small dowel-shaped object. These components were positioned with studied precision, off center, against a white wall panel framed in natural light.

Equal parts rough and refined, Bueno-Boutellier's work felt well suited to this gallery, located in a former garage, which still carries vestiges of its utilitarian past.

—Mary Krienke