

# ART PAPERS

STRIKING IDEAS + MOVING IMAGES + SMART TEXTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008 US \$7 CAN \$9 UK £6 EU €8



ANTICIPATION  
ICELANDIC ART +  
STORYTELLING

ATTACHMENT  
TO THINGS:  
VISHAL JUGDEO

RESTRAINT  
VICTOR MAN COMES  
OUT OF THE COLD

BIENNALES  
MERCOSUL +  
ISTANBUL





hibition *Everything to Gain*, but it also serves as a convenient makeshift theater for his two video works on view. Here, Lulic seems to revel in the functionality of modern architecture, despite its ties to social unrest.

Kreider also conjures modernism and monumentality, although he is concerned with inversion rather than implosion. The centerpiece of his exhibition, *Restless Attractor*, 2007, is an assemblage of oversized outlet converters, cords, and adapters cast in pigmented urethane. Orchestrated and seemingly logical, this configuration is nevertheless non-functional as it channels the ghost of Nikola Tesla, the famous electrical engineer who not only invented radio but also the alternating current electric power (AC) system—or so indicates the brochure.

Tesla is the sort of mad scientist to which artists frequently gravitate. He is often depicted as a brilliant but borderline personality, who retreated to desolate Colorado Springs to conduct trials and freely explore his creative urges. *Restless Attractor* does not invoke the drive or imaginative impulse that seemed to haunt Tesla, however. The humble monument of converters and cords simply, and quite literally, pays homage to Tesla, the marginal genius, whose unbelievable experiments opened the way for technological revolutions.

In other works, Kreider relies on common objects to bring unease and fright. In *Behind their Teeth*, 2007, simple but precise incisions suffice to transform milk jugs into a series of disturbing skeleton faces that, cast in porcelain, lie inverted on an improvised table.

Also on view is a series of drawings of different phrases and words spelled backwards: “Trepan,” “New Work,” and “Bottomless Pit.” Such inversion reaffirms the centrality of mold making to Kreider’s process. He makes forms from molds. Looking at the negative of an object—that is, the expectant space of the mold—can

often reveal unexpected qualities. What’s more, one needs to project *through* the mold and imagine looking at it from the other side in order to anticipate its outcome. This mental rearrangement could be seen as a desire to experience the threshold between opposing forces. Or, perhaps Kreider is suggesting that to experience the other side—death, madness, electrical shock, and the like—one needs to project oneself across that threshold.

—Micah Malone

## LEADED RICHMOND

Curator N. Elizabeth Schlatter developed *Leaded: The Materiality and Metamorphosis of Graphite* from rather simple concepts [Harnett Museum of Art, University of Richmond; August 23—September 30, 2007]. Featuring work by a diverse group of international artists, the show is premised on the fact that graphite is a material that speaks to both artists and non-artists alike. As such, *Leaded* begins and ends with graphite. Many of the artists in the exhibition share her views on the universality of the medium: graphite and its mass-produced vehicle, the pencil, are ubiquitous, unprivileged, and already understood. Following this logic, *Leaded* is conceptually straightforward yet artistically complex and challenging. It is articulated around three general themes: Graphite as Content, Graphite as Transformative Agent, and Graphite as Sculpture. Of course, many of the works easily engage two or more categories.

Though Schlatter certainly recognizes that many artists primarily use graphite to draw, *Leaded* is not a survey of contemporary works on paper. It is first and foremost a show about material. While it is certainly interesting to ponder the results of any extreme investigation of material, the most successful works in the show extend materiality beyond experimental manipulation into signifying experience and meaning in the world.

Gloria Ortiz-Hernandez’ works are, in fact, drawings. As such, they provide a fairly easy entry into the exhibition. *Sum II*, 2004, and *Sequitur III*, 2004, arrangements of graduated circles and squares on pristine sheets of paper, initially seem like exercises in the simple control of the pencil. Yet simplicity, as we know, is hardly ever simple. These drawings transcend both hue and monochromy to become meditative studies of shape and space, which evoke landscape, light, and air.

Hernandez’ drawings set a bar for delicacy, which the show foregrounds as a property of graphite. Delicacy

ABOVE, LEFT: partial view of exhibition [courtesy of the artists and the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, OR], foreground: Peter Kreider, *Everything to Gain*, 2007; background: Marko Lulic, *Unsocial Sculpture*, 2007; ABOVE, RIGHT: Sarah Lovitt, *Chain*, 2003-2007, wax and graphite, variable installation dimensions, full length of chain: 179 inches [courtesy the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York]

