



contact

As the month-long Contact Photography Festival of more than 500 artists draws to a close, NOW's art writers deliver tips on the exhibits you don't want to miss.

1 Sam Taylor-Wood

When/Where: part of The Constructed Image group show at MOCCA (952 Queen West), to June 3. 416-395-0067.

What: British art star Sam Taylor-Wood celebrated the inauguration of her spacious, airy studio by having herself professionally trussed up, suspended from its ceiling by a dominatrix and photographed. With the ropes digitally erased, she floats prone in midair.

Why: Digital alteration is often criticized as cheap wish-fulfillment. Taylor-Wood elegantly sidesteps this problem by artfully balancing exhibitionism, restraint and preening exuberance.

Buzz: This definitive Contact show also includes excellent work by nine other artists, including Kim Joon, Ilkka Halso

and Erwin Olaf. Especially haunting is Karen Ostrom's dreamlike backroom installation in which an elderly woman floats over a park overrun with sawhorses.

DAVID JAGER

2 Roger Ballen

When/Where: Clint Roenisch Gallery (944 Queen West), to June 16. 416-516-8593.

What: Photos of the white underclass in remote areas of rural South Africa taken in the 80s and 90s as apartheid was ending.

Why: Instead of a taking a photojournalistic approach, Ballen adds props, markings and sculpture that transform the dwellings into subtly disorienting sets. While his subjects' extreme poverty and marginalization are palpa-

ble, the added touches make them seem less like Walker Evans sharecroppers and more like actors in a Beckettian theatre of despair.

Buzz: Ballen masterfully frames the grotesque in a way that makes it suddenly, surreally transcendent. Harmony Korine would approve.

DJ

3 Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller

When/Where: Part of Projections, at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery (7 Hart House Circle) and three other venues at U of T, to June 17. 416-978-8398.

What: The Muriel Lake Incident is a miniature movie theatre in a plywood box that's open at one end. Listening on headphones, the viewer is drawn into two storylines: the projection of an

experimental film and the hushed conversation between two friends in the cinema.

Why: Once over the awkwardness of peeking into the miniature cinema, you take a disturbing journey, eerily dreamy and Lynchesque.

Buzz: Perfect orchestration of multiple symbolic layers and stories, masterful illusionism and superb craftsmanship.

BIARKE MADSEN

4 Isabelle Hayeur

Where/When: Jessica Bradley Art + Projects (1450 Dundas West), to June 16. 416-537-3125. (Hayeur also has an outdoor installation at the Drake Hotel, 1150 Queen West, to May 31.)

What: Slightly exaggerated images from the modern battleground of sub-

urbia, construction sites of modular houses. Chateau dwellings decorated with Martha Stewart props are quite unnerving in the context of the excavation of the countryside.

Why: Hayeur stealthily stitches together multiple photos, her hybrid technique mirroring the constructed lifestyle that drives suburban development. She subtly and ironically sends up these mechanically produced landscapes by questioning aesthetic and moral values.

Buzz: Though the critique touches on environmentalism, the work can't be pigeonholed as an eco-statement. Hayeur's parodies take a fresh look at how politics shapes the visual world.

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