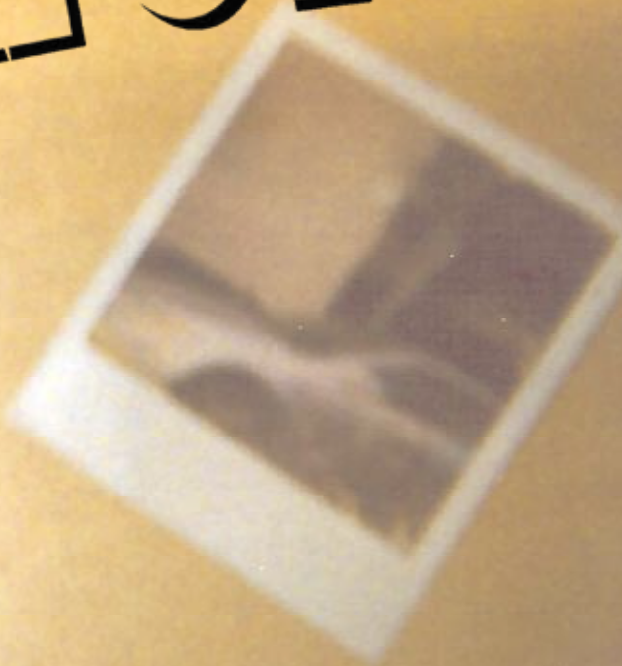
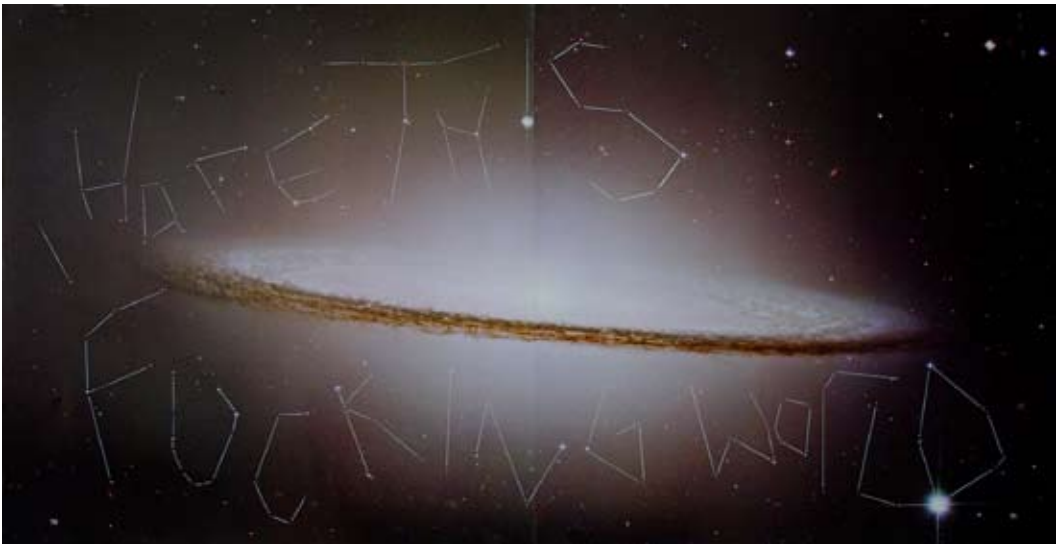


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February 28 - April 12, 2008



Aaron Williams, *800 Billion Stars*, ink on two book pages, 11" X 22", 2007

# **SUPERNATURE**

curated by Gretchen Bennett

Saul Chernick

Andrew Guenther

Matthew Day Jackson

Alexander Kantarovsky

Robert de Saint Phalle

Suzanne Walters

Aaron Williams

## essay by Gretchen Bennett

**SUPERNATURE** is an exploration of a perfect landscape, allowing that perfection can be found in hybrid, abandoned and natural settings. The show is a collection of assembled topography, acting as landmarks, however bare or stylized. It takes a look at how these "places" work on us, exploring the idea that what we take and give back to the land is our propulsion. It explores sentimental themes like romance, distance and longing and dwells on the idea that the land doesn't belong to anyone, but is its own expansive entity; and it holds us or it doesn't.

**Aaron Williams** seems to position himself above the earth, viewing events and circumstances from an outside and outsider's point of view. His is a world dictated by two adolescents, who, as they navigate the topography, both fabricate and affect it; as they wander, they construct their own unique constellations from looking at the night sky. They mix it with their angst and a universe is born.

**Robert de Saint Phalle** dwells in a seemingly lush fringe landscape, intimating unseen worlds within its overlooked edges; he re-presents to us what we think we know already, but much more refined and dark. He writes of his own work:

Now I'm envisioning the image of the world, the everyday, caught between the darkness of space passing through the sunlit sky and the darkness of my eye that allows this image to pass through to my retina. Inner and outer space, both curved expanses of pitch black holding the light. It is always twilight.

**Matthew Day Jackson** draws connections between current and past epic eras, moving seamlessly between them, while fabricating a preferable, suspended situation in the present. Interested in how America's past continues to play out in our current political and social landscape, he presents us head-on with the dire and the dark. Yet, he is optimistic. As he builds a body of work, he also rebuilds and reformats the possibility of a brighter more functional future, incorporating pieces of cultural imagery, both decimated and iconic, as he goes.



Andrew Gunther, 3007, acrylic and oil stick on unprimed canvas, 60" X 50", 2007

On first take, **Andrew Guenther's** paintings contain evidence of the everyday and a quiet life in process. But they are filled with sweet normalcy, then mixed with a tinge of acid and regret. They are hopeful, but seem to nod to some past apocalyptic occurrence, making the things we live with seem to glow like rarified relics.

**Suzanne Walters** possesses a Hudson River Painters' take on depicting the natural world, gathering images of the Canadian wilderness and translating them back in her studio, putting things raw and punishing through a filter of calm. Her study at close-range has not brought us back to this wild world; it has brought this place, along with its primal rules, to us. We realize we've missed it.

**Alexander Kantarovsky**, combining his own experiences and memories with references to film, art and history, creates images that serve as a channels between both past and

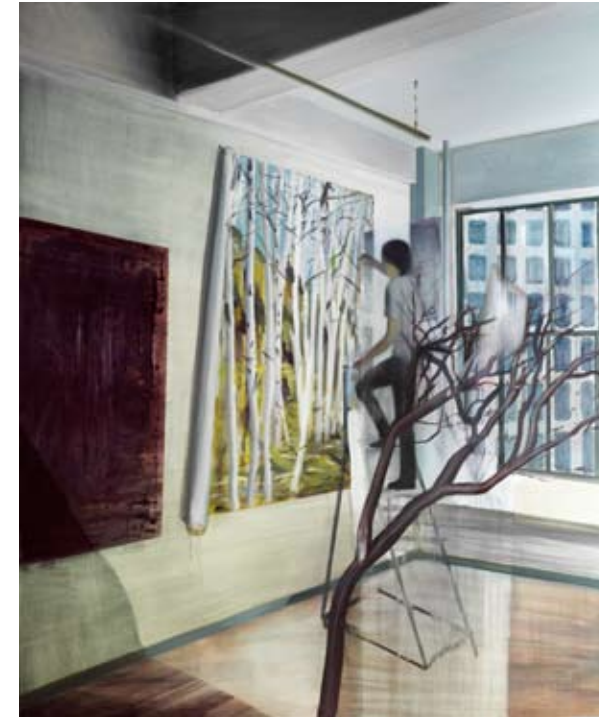
present and East and West. Viewing his paintings, there is a sense of also being viewed. If these are an émigré's travel brochure, they serve as a lush and open navigational tool, nonlinear and layered.

**Saul Chernick** has created a fictive world, imagining the narratives in his drawings as part of a larger mythology set in Protosapia, in his words, "an Eden-like environment that serves as both laboratory and breeding ground for an alternate or 'would-be' human species." This is a place where beaming up is just a matter of calming down and settling in. A car crashed and abandoned becomes part of the laced landscape. All elements are evenly integrated and you feel at home. Paddy Johnson, of Art Fag City, writes in her essay, "The Drawings of Saul Chernick", Chernick names the inhabitants of his early world Protosapiens, which literally translated means

before we were wise ..the characters in Chernick's drawings suffer for God's failings. The half breasts of the manish figure in "Portrait of an Unfinished Person", implies that a greater force has removed man's ability to nurture..." Ultimately, the land of Protosapia is not a garden of fruits and pleasures; it is a place where strange desires and hopes are shaped by the hands of unknown gods."

This exhibition's position is reflected in Nancy Princenthal's writing on Vija Celmins. In Material Fictions, Princenthal cites Dave Hickey:

Dave Hickey claims that Celmins's work is a long protest against her early uprooting. During which she recast herself from refugee to nomad. 'The refugee is not really a traveler at all but a sedentary from whom the past rushes away,' Hickey writes.



Alexander Kantarovsky, You, oil on canvas, 72" X 60", 2007

'The nomad, on the other hand, given the opportunity to make art, will celebrate her exteriority by intensifying what is always there.' Home, in other words, is where the art is. But it is a peculiar residence that Celmins has fashioned, a locus of absolute, permanent displacement. Her mature work is a repeated image of uninhabitability, without foothold or air. It depicts space liquefied or rarefied, and further carbonized in the rendering. It is a space of drowning or asphyxiation, and, though without fantasy's comforts, of dreams.

-Parkett 44, 1995 p. 28, Nancy Princenthal, Vija Celmins: Material Fictions

Supernature offers a temporary platform from which to survey the possibilities of place and home. The work shifts from sweet to acidic, according to your position in the gallery. It carries the protean message, This is home, there's no place that's home, as if Aaron William's two protagonist's, over-armed with experience, hope and wounds, will never agree.



Susan Walters, *Wolf with Deer*, watercolor on paper, 11" X 15", 2007



Saul Chernick, *Repose After Collision*, ink on paper, 13.25" X 19", 2006



Robert de Saint Phalle, *Standing Water*, urethane and steel, 5' X 4' X 4', 2008 Photography by Steven Miller



Matthew Day Jackson, *Dymaxion Map*, poster and needlepoint, 25" X 38", 2008 Photography by Steven Miller

**SUPER  
NATURE**

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