

Reality with a twist at Swan Coach House Gallery

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For the Journal-Constitution

Published on: 09/02/2007

It's reality with a twist in "Manipulating the Commonplace," as curator Marianne Lambert effectively serves up paintings, drawings and sculptures from nine Southern artists who reinterpret the ordinary.

Case in point in this Swan Coach House Gallery show: Dennis Harper's literal and metaphorical interiors wax quirky on the surface and psychologically charged beneath.



Swan Coach House Gallery

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Dennis Harper's 'Gyromancer' is filled with surrealist elements, heightened by angles and planes that create a dreamlike and intriguing scene.

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REVIEW

"Manipulating the

Commonplace" Through Sept. 22. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Prices: \$100-\$5,000. Swan Coach House Gallery, 3130 Slaton Drive, Atlanta. 404-266-2636, www.swancoachhouse.com

Bottom line: Pleasurable viewing with an edge.

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In "Gyromancer," a young girl gyrates with her Hula-Hoop while dogs wander in the foreground. Angled walls in the background host a dreamlike dance of animals, an old man emerging from a fenced pen, and a tiny winged torso, hovering in a threshold. This surreal composition of containment and detachment offers personal riddles with art historical echoes.

Silas Durant's accomplished oil, "Window in Time," captures an elderly woman focused on the cards she's dealt. Her face is deeply lined in slightly thickened brush strokes, while her strong, rounded fingers stand out against the flat floral pattern of the table covering. Behind her, "Wheel of Fortune" seems frozen on "spin again" and barren trees viewed from the window heighten the isolation of this intense portrayal.

On the lighter side, Philip Carpenter skillfully juxtaposes pop culture icons and classical painting. Mickey Mouse takes on the Renaissance in "Art in America," while "After Durer" stars Bugs Bunny pointing a know-it-all finger at Albrecht Durer's famous hare. Joanne Catalfo spices up the still life with her seemingly staid carrots, red peppers and scallions, splayed and dangled in decidedly suggestive manner. Sculptor Greely Myatt whips up a slice of All-American life with stacked scoops of ice cream in wood and plaster, along with a mouthwatering boxful of lifelike cupcakes à la pop [artist](#) Wayne Thiebaud.

Hooper Turner's beautifully executed "Pradada (Luggage)" seduces us with the ultimate in contemporary reality — advertising imagery. His lovely model leans back on a rumpled bed in an alluring pose that marries familiar tricks of fashion photography with wry reference to early 20th-century Dada, a movement known for its use of the "ready-made" object, as well as "anti-art" art.

Turner's soft-sell hard-sell painting thus epitomizes the exhibition's message of text and subtext — manipulation of the commonplace is subtle and powerful. Even when we recognize it, we nonetheless succumb.