

TOKYO

## Takayuki Kubota

The exhibition "Noisy Surface" at Gallery Q in Tokyo consisted of a series of planar works with dark brown, shiny surfaces, which seemed like obsolete minimal, color field abstractions. But the captions stated that the materials included "magnetic tape, wood panel, dust, acrylic panel, air." One work, measuring 130 x 80 cm, was titled *Portrait of Sunday Morning (Aug. 6, 08:12-12:06)*. The wood panel was coated with horizontal threads of magnetic tape in which Kubota recorded the noises he heard during the three hours and 54 minutes on that Sunday morning. Smaller works

bore recordings of shorter time lapses on certain days this year. If someone ran a magnetic head on the tape, the panels would turn "auditory landscapes" of those seen (heard) by the artist. Such invisible 'materials' as dust and air — packed somewhere underneath the transparent acrylic panels on top of the surfaces — tacitly told the process of making the works. Quiet with a well thought out concept, Kubota's works explored a unique realm of art where our visual and auditory senses mingle in pure imagination.

—Satoru Nagoya

**Takayuki Kubota, exhibition view at Gallery Q, 2006. Courtesy Gallery Q, Tokyo.**



MELBOURNE

## Simon Obarzanek

Eighty black-and-white portraits of adolescents stare beguilingly at the viewer. Shot at close range, we witness rows of young people on the cusp of adulthood at Karen Woodbury Gallery in Melbourne.



Yearning and expectant, Simon Obarzanek has fastidiously and swiftly captured a frontal stare against a neutral background with aching yet awkward beauty. This series commenced in 2002 as Obarzanek has trawled through train stations, agricultural shows and shopping centers in search of five minute interludes with his sitters. The associative range of these haunting portraits reminds us of Larry Clark, Diane Arbus and Thomas Ruff. Physical attributes and anomalies such as blemishes, protruding ears, freckles and fine strands of hair sweeping across a forehead become compelling details. Anonymous yet unique, his detached suite of images sits somewhere between identity photos and an obsessive archive. The result is quietly unsettling.

—Natalie King

**Simon Obarzanek, Untitled #46 from the series "80 Faces," 2002/06. Silver gelatin photograph, 33 x 25 cm. Courtesy Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne.**

## AT THE GALLERIES

LONDON

## Matthew Smith

Matthew Smith is the first artist to show at Associates Gallery, a new nonprofit gallery in Hoxton, initiated and directed by artist Ryan Gander. The curatorial emphasis at Associates is on new talent, and the exhibition forms the first solo exhibition in London for Smith, who graduated from Central Saint Martins last year. Exploring questions of conceptual art and the authenticity of ideas, Smith subtly subverts the familiar in his work, changing its emphasis and associations in the process. The show contains found cultural ephemera such as record sleeves and an old copy of NME (New Music Express), defaced by the artist's scribbles, alongside elements of functional shelving and a freshly plucked nectarine. The most



**Matthew Smith, Typical Affair, 2006. Mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy Associates Gallery, London.**

intriguing work here, a paper portrayal by Smith of his favorite old leather jacket, sees the coat become a formless heap, stripped of its cultural symbolism and thus its power. —Eliza Williams

BERLIN

## John Bock

John Bock took the visitors of his spectacular rock opera for quite a ride at the dark storage space of the State Opera House, turning it into a gothic multilevel arena with the audience behind railings on narrow landings, a view into the deep pit showed a large police van hanging in it, bottoms up. It was flanked by popular German Indie rock band Blackmail plus supporting house orchestra string section on one side, and a gigantic video screen on the other with live coverage from inside the vehicle. The video projection invested the bizarre scenario with cinematic proportions: Anne Tismer and Thomas Loibl, both well-known theater actors took over the roles of captain and first mate, a.k.a a farmer and his wife, both hysterically out of control, and assisted by the artist as "Minne-gangssmutje," climbing around the outside of the large dangling van in scary heights, delivering commenting monologues, performing with the band, manipulating the vehicle, and producing additional prop-sculptures.

The inspiration for the piece came from the circumstances of the sinking of the French frigate Medusa on the African coast in 1816, the accounts of mutiny and cannibalism, and the famous painting by Géricault, that rendered the whole incident symbolic for the



**John Bock, Medusa im Tam Tam Club, 2006. Courtesy Klosterfelde, Berlin and Anton Kern, New York. Photo: Jan Windszus.**

moral decay of post-revolutionary France. The sinking frigate turns into a contemporary police van, hovering eight meters above ground and most of the action into a bizarre prolonged moment just before the disaster, just before intense last minute action allows the protagonists a narrow escape into the bowels of the building.

What appeared to some as improvisational was in fact carefully scripted — four notebooks available at the entrance detailed every aspect of the performance in John Bock's sketches, scripts and plans. If in the performance the artist was secured both by a security line and a net, in his notebooks he allows complete access. Complemented by a fifth volume with documentation of the actual performance and an informed essay, due on bookshop shelves soon, this will allow for the most radical insight into his artistic thoughts and visions.

—Detlev von Jouanne