

ARTFORUM

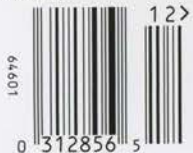
DECEMBER 2003

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

BEST OF
2003



\$8.00





Pamela M. Lee

Pamela M. Lee is associate professor of art history at Stanford University. She is currently completing *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*, forthcoming from MIT Press early next year.

1. **Marine Hugonnier, *Ariana*, 2003**, still from a color film in 16 mm, 18 minutes 36 seconds.
2. **Philip Guston, *By the Window*, 1969**, oil on canvas, 78 x 81".
3. **Sculpture of Chakrasamvara and Vajravarahi, Nepal, late fourteenth century**, copper with gilding and semi-precious stones, 16 1/4" high.
4. **Chris Ware, frames from *Quimby the Mouse*.**
5. **Bill Siegel and Sam Green, *The Weather Underground*, 2003**, still from a color film in 35 mm, 92 minutes.
6. **Jocelyn Robert, *The State of the Union* (detail), 2003**, mixed-media installation, dimensions variable.
7. **Adobe Books, San Francisco, 2003.** Photo: Andrew McKinley.
8. **Richard Prince, *Untitled (cowboy)*, 2000**, color photograph, 48 x 76".
9. **Johnny Cash, "Hurt," 2003**, still from a music video by Mark Romanek.
10. **Burning Man festival, Black Rock Desert, Nevada.** Photo: Steve Saroff.

1 Marine Hugonnier, *Ariana* (Venice Biennale) In the hothouse laboratory that was "Utopia Station," French-born, London-based artist Marine Hugonnier's 2003 film *Ariana*, a spare, poetic meditation on a trip to Kabul, might now be read as a fitting riposte to the *blague* and bombast of the "embedded" reporting of America's *other* unfinished war. In attempting—and failing—to film a panoramic view of the city, Hugonnier assembled footage that was quotidian where mainstream media images of Kabul were traumatic, and reflective where others were reactive. *Ariana* represents a frustrated geography less of the non-Western other than of Hugonnier's own perspective and culture.

2 Philip Guston (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) As myth would have it, Philip Guston abandoned abstraction because, as the artist himself once wrote, he was "sick and tired of all that Purity." But what could be more "pure"—at least to this Gustonophile—than the outsize eyeballs, immobilized limbs, and nervous fingers that populate his late work? As Michael Auping's traveling retrospective (originally organized for the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth) so persuasively demonstrated, Guston could endow a shade pull with as much affective purity as graced the skittish, anxious pinks of his abstract canvases.

3 "Himalayas: An Aesthetic Adventure" (Art Institute of Chicago) The title of this exhibition of devotional art from India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet (organized by visiting curator Pratapaditya Pal and the AIC's exhibition coordinator, Betty Seid) makes me wonder if some museum bureaucrat was hoping to capitalize on the Discovery Channel's recent penchant for everything Everest. Cheesy name notwithstanding, this show's lucid presentation of the densely layered, even obsessive worlds of Hindu and Buddhist art from the sixth through the nineteenth century was a transformative museum experience.

4 Chris Ware, *Quimby the Mouse* (Fantagraphics Books) Following on his triumph with *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*

(Pantheon, 2000) comes cartoonist Chris Ware's latest graphic novel, *Quimby the Mouse*, his anxiously awaited collection of . . . student efforts. If that makes you think Ware (one of the only bright notes to a rather dismal 2002 Whitney Biennial) might be coasting (or capitalizing) on his relative celebrity, think again: His hapless tales of a bipolar Mickey-like character are resplendently baroque—far more complex, structured, and spacious than your average multichannel digital-video installation. Neo-McLuhianites sounding the death knell of print culture take note: Chris Ware has revitalized the space of the page in the postmedium era.

5 *The Weather Underground* Bill Siegel and Sam Green's terrific documentary on the Weathermen, the ultraradical splinter faction of the Students for a Democratic Society, perfectly illustrates the truism that one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist. Some would call this a lesson in moral relativism, but the sickness of recent foreign and domestic policy may bring us closer to an understanding of the Weathermen's rage than we might ultimately like.

6 Jocelyn Robert, *The State of the Union* Robert, a Canadian new-media artist and musician who divides his time between Quebec and the Bay Area, won the New Image award at the 2002 Transmediale festival in Berlin with his video installation *L'Invention des Animaux*, 2001, in which an airplane is made to sound and behave like a bird that has just flown the nest. With 2003's *State of the Union*, Robert takes inspiration from a passage in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, playing war-film footage in reverse. While some of Robert's work is an uncanny digest of postwar experimental cinema—one thinks of Michael Snow, with whom he has collaborated, or Ernie Gehr—his crossed taxonomies and inverted worlds suggest a peculiar brand of contemporary neorealism.

7 Adobe Books (The Mission, San Francisco) Adobe Books is your typical shambling mess of an independent bookstore—the anti-Borders—that also happens to put on some of

the most provocative. But the real attractiveness of the space is and visual pursuit of faux rapprochement to coexist as distinct. At a time when more aesthetic and they showcase, an aggressively no art by granting it

8 Richard Prince question of the last a whine than an in hate us?" many of sisters have been I reason why "they "we" ask such que Richard Prince, w images are seduct pathologies of An summer's Venice Bonami and Dani beautifully (in the Revolutions"), the urgent and vital th time indeed.

9 Johnny Cash Romanek) I could outpouring of div in 2003: The art d or Erase Errata; th Clayton; and the L and Spark. But it's to the Man in Blac so because Mark I an improbably me Nails song—was s by-way-of-Nether MTV of me, perh of 2003 had the st last frames, when with a quiet and fa

10 Burning M Nevada) Because 3 weekend and you