

Maysey Craddock: Rooted
Faith Gay: Triple Rainbow Strength

By Manny Mendoza



PanAmerican is loosely calling this exhibition its “green show,” but the artists couldn’t have a more opposite approach to recycling. Maysey Craddock, using her canvas wrinkled and torn paper bags sewn back together with silk thread, finds the beauty in natural destruction. Faith Gay, building stacked floor sculptures and relief paintings from manufactured low-culture materials, suggests the indestructible nature of artifice.

Wreckage of the Mississippi Delta by Hurricane Katrina lingers in Ms. Craddock's work alongside landscapes from her travels in Germany and Italy. She first shoots photographs before transferring the images as line drawings onto her refurbished grocery bags. The paintings are completed with gouache in two basic color schemes for *Rooted*. In lower-key pieces like *Rack and Ruin, 2009*, and *Somewhere South of Violet, 2008*, warm greens, blues, and browns make for lovely scenes of fallen structures that appear to be working their way back into the soil, the backgrounds a diffuse wash of brushstrokes and drips. In contrast, *mothertree, Hunter and storm (Chestnut Grove)*, and *in the palm of the river, all 2009*, silhouette spiky, leafless trees against electric blue or red backgrounds until they crackle like a lightning storm. The exhibit also includes sixteen vintage German postcards depicting people-in-nature that Ms. Craddock has either painted with bright, solid background or dotted with bits of color.

While Ms. Craddock's work explores the tension between nature and man, Ms. Gay declares victory for the human race with sickly sweet refuse from a Pop landfill. Floor pieces like *Rose of Quarium* and *Missalagic Trifle*, both 2008, stuff assemblages of shredded paper, dot stickers, ribbons—anything cotton-candy colored from the clip-art trash of an '80s teenage girl's bedroom—with baby clothes and other throwaways. The resulting round blobs are wrapped in clear tape and haphazardly stacked into ersatz landscapes. Ms. Gay also makes subtler sculptures like *Taryn Power, 2008*, which resembles an archeological find. Six "packages" of white paper strips are built with recessed tops to hold small plastic toys. Ms. Gay's ideas also explode onto the walls with heart-shaped reliefs (*Vashti10CC*), flowers suggesting musical instruments (*Sabuludakhan* and *Elooizonico*). And rainbow arches and other cartoon building (the *Perpetual Distraction* series), all 2009. Her piece de resistance is the *Mondegreen* series, 2008, four square canvases each divided into nine sections that use album covers, vinyl, and repeated images of a man with colored yarn for hair to create the Warholian evocation of an era.