



Freedom Tower, center, rising at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan, September 2011



Gregg Brown, [Iron workers cut the remaining structure of the North Tower, 12/16/2001], from "Above Ground Zero," in "Remembering 9/11" at the International Center of Photography, © Gregg Brown



Peter Sekaer, *Nashville, 7th Ave., 1939*, High Museum of Art, in "Signs of Life: Photographs by Peter Sekaer" at the International Center of Photography, © Peter Sekaer Estate



Weekend Update COLD HEARTED by Walter Robinson

Share |

0

Hot air spreads through Manhattan like a cloud of dust as the 10th anniversary of 9/11 approaches, with maudlin sincerity crowding out any mention of 9/11 politics, economics or its negligible effect on U.S. trash culture. Our Artnet Worldwide offices in Lower Manhattan are but steps away from the awful Freedom Tower, architect David Childs' armored and truncated obelisk that promises to be a massively overpowering icon of the Ugly American.

Before buying or selling,
consult the **artnet** Price
Database. Subscribe now

artnet[®]

Admission to the elaborate National September 11 Memorial and Museum, freshly unveiled, so far on TV only, should be \$20 per head or more. "It's important to our future," Mayor Mike proclaims on the news, regarding the price for entry into his town's landmark edifice of fee-based tragedy tourism.

Meanwhile, in the art world, 9/11 memorials have clearly become what one curator called "an institutional imperative." Up in midtown, the International Center of Photography has mounted "Remembering 9/11," a fascinating installation that seems to feature images of artfully sculptural wreckage. When it comes to Abstract Expressionism, disaster has clearly succeeded the painters of the 1950s.

Many of us will have little patience with this material, which we lived through and know better than any document. One aerial photo of tiny workers like ants on a vast pile of World Trade Center wreckage, shot by Gregg Brown, working for FEMA, captures the awesome scale of the event, and remains powerful. So are others, if viewers, for reasons of their own, devote to them the time to look.

The always multivalent ICP holds as well two additional shows. One is a survey of sober black-



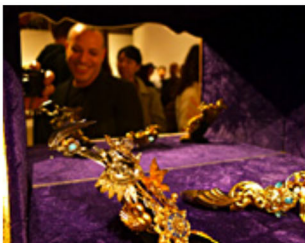
Ralph Gibson, Caroline Winberg (Harper's Bazaar, May 2005), in "Harper's Bazaar: A Decade of Style" at the International Center of Photography



Karl Lagerfeld for Impulse, only at Macy's, in the Times Square subway station



Aida Ruilova's *Goner* (2010), unspooling at Salon 94 Bowery



Dzine reflected in a display case for his custom nail designs at Salon 94 Freemans



Dzine's "Imperial Nail Salon" at Salon 94 Freemans



Dzine's "Imperial Nail Salon" at

white Depression-era images by the forgotten documentary photographer Peter Sekaer. And the other is "A Decade of Style," a gallery filled with elaborately styled and wholly content-free fashion shots from *Harper's Bazaar*. The contrast is incongruous, to say the least.

My vague animus to fashion photography was further provoked on the way back downtown via the Times Square subway station, where the walls, columns and even the stair risers are plastered with promos for Karl Lagerfeld's new line for Macy's. The clothes are tight, the model's moue a commonplace. Lagerfeld, whose over-the-top fashion setups star in the *Harper's Bazaar* ICP show, may be a genius of clothes design, but in terms of actual thinking, it all seems like one big accident to me.

People can look at 9/11 imagery all day and it's like going to church, but the prevailing reaction to Aida Ruilova's recent 12-minute-long movie, *Goner* (2010), by a good percentage of the audience, was to turn around and leave after only a few moments. Now that's an emotional response. Unspooling in the basement gallery of Salon 94 Bowery, one of the premiere openings of the new art season, the film is a "thriller" starring the comely Sonja Kinski, daughter of Nastassja (and Vincent Spano) and granddaughter of Klaus.

Gothic in the extreme, the action, complete with horrific soundtrack, shows the actress bloodily murdering herself with a carving knife on a pink heart-shaped bed. Why does the avant-garde love to subject itself to such negative stylistics? It is fantastic. A slasher flick without suspense or comedy, a method-acting exercise of the first order, an allegory of such possibility that nothing really satisfies, *Goner* defies anything but the most subjective, and accidental, readings.

"There's just something about a woman and a knife," said artist Mike Cockrill when I mentioned the film to him, quoting Brian De Palma. A show of Cockrill's paintings is currently inaugurating the new space for Doug Walla's Kent Fine Art, now located in the gallery building at 211 Eleventh Avenue, second floor.

At Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn's other downtown gallery, Salon 94 Freemans, was the simultaneous opening of Dzine's custom nail salon, which featured jewel-studded enamel paintings that put Damien Hirst to shame, as well as an esthetician at work in one corner, applying Dzine's custom 3D nails to all comers. The artist's mom once operated an unlicensed nail salon out of their Chicago apartment, and Dzine -- who used to show with Deitch Projects -- said he reproduced that feeling as an homage to her.

Me, I like to imagine my sparklies all piled together in a treasure chest. But the artist and his friends were clearly tickled by the outrageousness of his own enterprise, which is billed as a "Kustom Kulture tableau" that cites Claes Oldenburg's 1961 store. "What do you think of the show," he asked me, after our mutual friend Carlo McCormick had introduced us, putting me on the spot. "Very blinged out," I stuttered, though I paused a moment too long to convince Dzine of my pure art-critic love.

"Remembering 9/11," "Harper's Bazaar: A Decade of Style" and "Signs of Life: Photographs by Peter Sekaer," all Sept. 9, 2011-Jan. 8, 2012, at the International Center for Photography, 1114 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Aida Ruilova, "Goner," Sept. 7-Oct. 23, 2011, at Salon 94 Bowery, 234 Bowery, New York, N.Y. 10002.

Dzine, "Imperial Nail Salon," Sept. 7-Oct. 23, 2011, at Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley, New York, N.Y. 10002