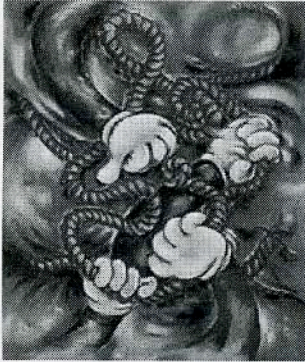


Train in Vain

by Eve Wood

Megan Williams, Sept. 6-Oct. 4, 2003, at Carl Berg Gallery, 6018 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, Ca. 90036



Megan Williams
Untitled/Hands with Rope
2003
at Carl Berg Gallery

Megan Williams' oil and charcoal paintings, currently on view at Carl Berg Gallery in Los Angeles, confound with movement, the paint seeming nearly to careen off the canvas itself with the sheer force of will and imagination. This is the first show in five years for Williams, a contemporary of Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw who was included in the provocative "Helter Skelter" exhibition of Los Angeles art at the Museum of Contemporary Art here in 1992.

Though the show includes only four works, each serves not only to disseminate a strange and oddly sexualized narrative that may or may not involve Mickey Mouse and his cohorts. In *Untitled/Hands With Hose*, for example, five brightly colored, gloved hands (Mickey's trademark, if you remember) are shown grabbing the "spurting" nozzle of a hose. The image is menacingly dazzling, and only serves to ground the viewer in Williams' bizarre dystopia.

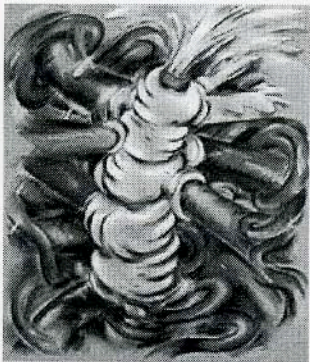


Toy Train Wreck
2003

In another image, *Small Explosion*, the so-called gaseous emanation could be the soot from a locomotive, or more precisely, a child's dream of dragon fire, a boy's irrepressible imagination.

The strongest image in the show involves a train wreck of epic proportions; giraffes and elephants seem to fall from the sky, but the true power of this image lies in the fact that as the wreck progresses, the painting itself deconstructs, until all we are left with are small pieces of painted canvas at our feet. Again, Williams' story is told through an amazingly explosive use of shape and movement.

Adults and children alike will undoubtedly cozen to these strange and wondrous images, but when we're done looking, we come away that much older, that much closer to something dark and unpronounceable.



Untitled/Hands with Hose
2003

EVE WOOD's new book of poetry, *Love's Funeral*, is published by Cherry Grove Collections at the University of Cincinnati.