



RENE BARGE MIAMI

Rene Barge was once archly described by a local arts writer as “the bespectacled screamer who can clear a room of the unadventurous in a New York minute.” *gifts*, his recent exhibition at The Dorsch Gallery (September 10–October 1, 2005), combined a sound installation, works on paper, and wood sculptures, showcasing Barge’s interest in aural perceptions of space and the idea of exchange.

Long associated with the “noise” scene at Churchill’s Pub through his participation in events such as *Beautiful Noise* and the *International Noise Conference*, Barge’s performances have, at times, proven difficult. Though many of the works produced before 2003 tended toward confrontational sonic challenges to the audience’s ability to be receptive, Barge’s work has since become more amicable, intimate, and enticing. Incorporating incidental and accidental sounds in all his performances, Barge now embraces happenstance sounds subtler than his earlier explosions, as he specifically explores sound’s subtle reverberations in its environment.

While *gifts* was not one of Barge’s inspired public performances, the exhibition combined sound and images based on his aural meditations in the gallery’s physical space as well as paper CD jackets and wooden cases made to house CDR copies of the sound work. Gallery visitors can listen to a version of the sound documentation, mixed specifically for an intimate headphone experience.

Ten unique paper CD jackets are displayed in *gifts*. It is no accident that this number corresponds to the number of walls in The Dorsch Gallery. Many of Barge’s most contemplative pieces have been performed and exhibited there, and Barge can use the space for aural experiments when he likes. Barge sets up modules to generate sound, and then moves throughout the gallery to experience it in different locations.

Barge created the works on paper and wood CD cases in direct response to his experience and memory of sound in the gallery space. Just as generations of visual artists have drawn landscapes based on perception, Barge’s works on paper are based on his perceptions of a sonic landscape. His delicate drawing-paintings are made with an eye toward material. They also echo the composer’s consideration of various instruments’ timbre and duration. The sensitivity of Barge’s response ensures that each image is rich and varied.

His images also function as both score and document, records of the actual auditory experience as imperfectly serendipitous as the CDs. Though identical in coding, the CDs will invariably produce different sonic experiences, if only for their playback space and equipment. The works’ intimacy was heightened by listening to the two tracks while looking at the images. Their combination gave the previously mute space a sense of sequence, resonance, and difference.

Conversant in Buddhism, philosophy, and the histories of art and music, Barge straddles fine art and punk “noise” aesthetics. This trade mimics his personal relationship with sound. Sound’s flexibility and its inflection by placement, perception, and mindfulness sustain Barge’s most essential performative dialogs.

The sound experiment recorded and featured in *gifts* was never intended to be part of an installation, but was created instead to give to other sound artists. Fortunately, Brook Dorsch convinced Barge to show the work; the resulting exhibition was an unexpected and worthwhile gift indeed.

—Kathleen Hudspeth

ANDREW KAUFMAN AND 3-WAY NASHVILLE

Two concurrent exhibitions in Nashville featured work of Andrew Kaufman. His solo exhibition, *(re) present* [Tennessee Arts Commission, August 1–September 23, 2005], featured two large installations and several other pieces. *3-Way: A Collaborative Exhibition by Michael Baggary, Thomas Thayer, Andrew Kaufman* [Ruby Green Foundation, August 1–September 24, 2005] juxtaposed Kaufman’s work with that of fellow MTSU art professors Michael Baggary and Thomas Thayer.

At the Tennessee Arts Commission, scrutiny was an overarching theme. The works prompted us to look, and look again. Comprised of ten pedestals bearing various filled glass sculptures, the installation *Kiss* occupied the gallery’s center. Close examination revealed each to be made of two vases, bowls, or glasses stacked rim to rim, leaving viewers to wonder how Kaufman could have accomplished the joining of two liquid-filled vessels. An installation of facsimile paintings was mounted in a gallery style on the longest wall. Its numbered diagram revealed these brown and beige cloud forms on fiberglass panels to be mute stand-ins for *The 10 Most Expensive Paintings Ever Sold*. While both installations seemed like closed sets, other works led to more open territory. The exhibition’s strongest work was the dialogue between three objects on three different walls. *Dethreaded Painting, 2005*, consisted of a stretched and prime canvas with exposed vertical warp threads and no horizontal wool threads. This defrocked-looking white object might have been intended as a tribute to Nashville-born painter Robert Ryman, whose white paintings are designed to call attention to paintings as objects. *Codification, 2005*, a wall-mounted shelf containing a random arrangement of same-sized balls made from primed canvas thread (the missing wool?) looked like a view under a microscope—tails searching blindly in vari-

above: Rene Barge, *September 2005 Box 1, 2005*, oil on wood box with CD, 39 minutes, approximately 6 x 6 inches (courtesy of The Dorsch Gallery); (opposite, left to right) Andrew Kaufman, detail of *Rehreaded Painting, 2005*, canvas, oil paint, c-clamps, lenses, 12 x 12 inches (courtesy of the artist and the Tennessee Arts Commission Gallery), Dennis Adams, still from *STAND DOWN: Take Two, 2005*, video installation with vitrine, unique single-channel video, 23 minutes, continuous loop, screen size: 8 x 10 feet, vitrine: aluminum, mirror, glass, and ninety-two thin-stick outtakes from *The Battle of Algiers*, 120 x 40 x 20 inches (courtesy of the artist and Kent Gallery, New York)