



Time and Change

by Charlie Finch – April 5, 2005



Beth Campbell - *Never Ending Continuity Error*, 2004

Nostalgia is death. – Bob Dylan

Few installations are as perfectly realized as the Robert Gober cathedral currently on view at Matthew Marks' 22nd Street manse. Various commercially viable reliquaries serve as Stations of the Cross, culminating in a headless Christ amusingly gushing water from its nipples and two peekaboo bathrooms, which gaze back at Jasper Johns' nostalgic bathtub series and forward to Jasper's solo effort in the same space next month.

The Good Friday audience worshipping in Mr. Gober's neighborhood included 2007 Venice Biennale chief Rob Storr, artist Abby Leigh and Arthur Solway, director of James Cohan Gallery.

Amidst all of our "oohs" and "ahs," we asked Storr if he'd seen **Beth Campbell's** bathroom piece at Art Basel Miami Beach, entitled *Never Ending Continuity Error*, in which one stares through a mirror (actually an empty frame) at the slowly disintegrating repeated utilitarian objects in a series of bathroom sinks. You can try this at home by simply getting up each morning and, as the Brits say, doing your toilet.

For an added frisson, lounge in the bathtub until a mystery man sneaks through the crack. That's how Jasper Johns does it. Gober, too.

Kevin Landers, that puckish re-assembler of memory, evokes Johns' sorcery over things past in his new show at Elizabeth Dee Gallery. As the saucy Ms. Dee told us, "Kevin builds cherished objects from his past out of common materials."

These include an old bicycle wrapped around a street sign and various boom boxes, clocks, toasters and other past crapola dear to the artist's sly heart. All artists apparently cherish their totems: Landers' potato chips, Gober's newspaper, Johns' George Orr ceramic vases.

For Wayne Adams, totems are people – his father died suddenly when Wayne was a baby, and the vaguely Richteresque paintings we enjoyed at Adams' Bushwick studio invoke a past he was too young to remember consciously, in blue collar Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Here are his father holding baby Wayne, his mother and his brothers, a shambling slightly sinister family friend, evanescent in by-bye land. There's nothing like melancholy disguised as esthetic anesthetic. If that's what you want, Wayne delivers.

When the collectors divide the works above, taking a piece of sadness home from the famous and the obscure, let these artists open up their tired eyes.

It's springtime! Time for life!