

Glass Gas Mask
David Yow
FUSE gallery
93 2nd Avenue
New York, NY 10003
August 24, 2011 - September 21,
2011

Music Man Makes Art
by Noah Dillon



I like David Yow and I like his bands: Scratch Acid and The Jesus Lizard. They always had great cover art, particularly those with paintings by Malcolm Bucknall. Yow's solo show at Fuse proves he not only had a good eye for art, but is quite adept at making it too.

Yow has been professionally retouching photos at least since the end of The Jesus Lizard and his skill is evident. Using a combination of photography, drawing, and digital alteration he has produced a series of creepy, cartoonish portraits. Distended anatomies and horrific textures blend together, forming graveled tongues and puffy, painted faces. *Pick Me! Pick Me!* (2011) is emblematic of the visceral portraits Yow can craft. A young man turns up his nose to the viewer, tensely biting his lower lip. His pale skin is composited from slabs of bacon, exaggerating the piggish pose. The fleshy, horrific visage contrasts the baroque wallpaper behind him.

The zenith of this show is a series of six paintings, executed on large wood sheets whose surfaces have been worn with pits and scars. Worked with acrylic, collage, detritus, and loose graphite marks, their strange, abstract figuration squirms as amorphous bodies swell or tense, trying to extrude themselves from the inside out. *Go Figure* (2011) features a vague interior space in beige, charcoal, crimson, and yellow. A pasted-on diagram of hand signs and an erect penis look like something from Georges Bataille's Surrealist review, *Acéphale*.

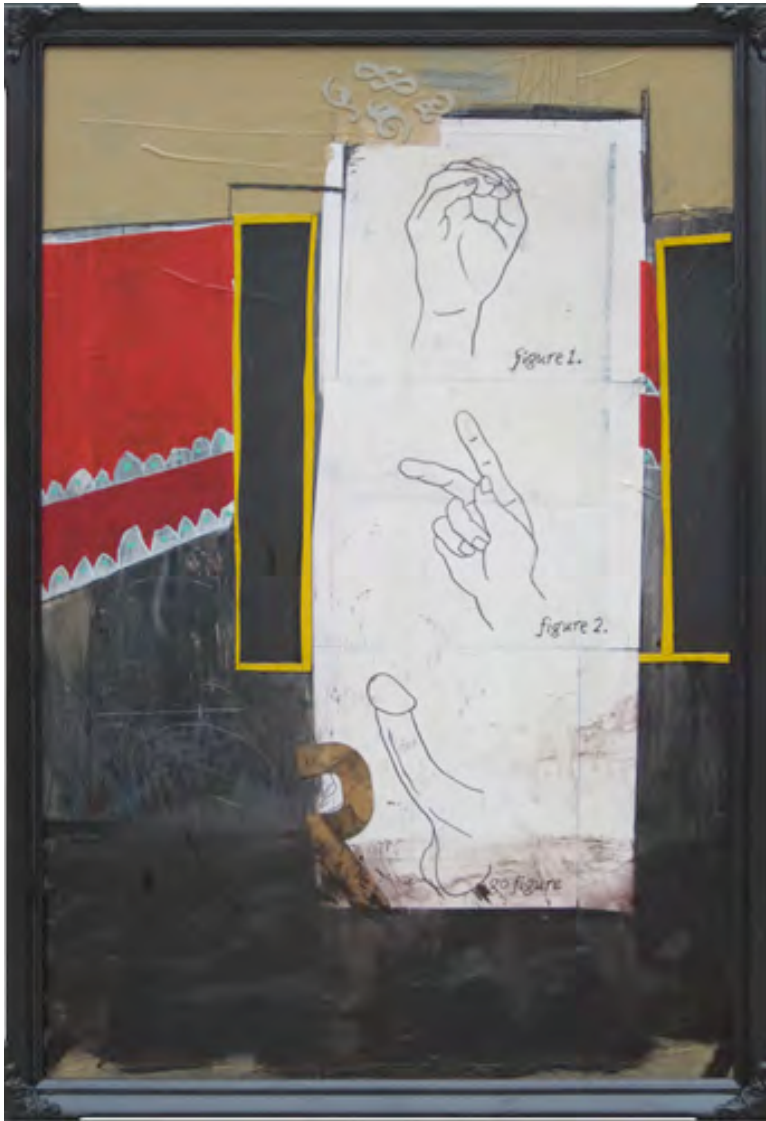
In *Next Time? There Will Be No Next Time* (2011) wild pencil lines nuzzle an engraved wooden plank and cardboard strips. The mostly monochromatic work is lent surprising weight and skeletal structure by a bright blue spot and striking vertical red stripes. As a bulbous, fleshy lump hangs from the ceiling and the carved plank expands out of the image, the gallery becomes a decaying mutant bedroom.

Yow's photos lean toward the illustrative and could benefit from a reconsideration of scale and materials. The paintings are where he shines and even the weakest one has

<http://www.artslant.com/ny/articles/show/24779>

presence. Overall the show excites not only because a music icon has re-invented himself as a painter, but because he rocks it, too.

~Noah Dillon



Images: Pick Me! Pick Me!, 2011, Digital Drawing and Photography - 11 x 14 inches; Go Figure, 2011, Acrylic, Collage and Mixed Media on Wood, 22 x 28 inches. Courtesy the artist and Fuse Gallery.