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CRITICS' PICKS

CURRENT | PAST

New York

- Cindy Sherman
- Jennifer Cohen and Vlatka Horvat
- Carol Rama
- Sue Coe
- Aleksandra Mir
- "Looking at Music"
- "Street Art, Street Life: From the 1950s to Now"
- "Alfred Kubin: Drawings, 1897-1909"

Los Angeles

- Richard Turner
- Jim Shaw
- Marina Kappos
- Kathleen Henderson
- Tom Wesselmann
- Peter Sudar
- Yishai Jusidman
- Morgan Fisher

San Francisco

- Wolfgang Ganter
- Todd Hido

Austin

- "The Mystique of the Archive" and "A Cabinet of Drawings"

Boston

- "Invisible Rays: The Surrealist Legacy"
- Tara Donovan
- Rachel Whiteread
- Nick Lawrence

Fort Worth

- "Hubbard/Birchler: No Room to Answer"

Houston

Brussels

"Power to the People"

AEROPLASTICS
Rue Blanche 32
November 21-January 17

Perhaps best known outside its borders as the capital of the European Union, Brussels is ironically also the site of a heated national identity crisis, as the Walloons and the Flemish spar for control over the country's direction and resources. "Power to the People," curated by Pierre-Yves Desaiwe, brilliantly presents forty-eight artists who parse the country's character, history, and self-image. Flemish-Belgian cartoonist Kamagurka, who paints friendly abstract portraits of imaginary faces and then invites television viewers to nominate people who best resemble his images, puckishly plays with the foundations of identity.

In contrast, many of the works here address the identity-destroying cancer of colonialism. Congolese artist Bodys Isek Kingelez's *Hôtel de ville de Kinshasa*, 1994, is a bright and cheerful diorama of the titular establishment, sprinkled with reminders of its colonialist heritage. And while Delphine Boël's rainbow neon sculpture, which reads THIS SYSTEM IS CORRUPT BE HAPPY, appears at first blush a cynic's generic mantra, the inchoate despair it articulates emerges from its context. Visitors to Brussels could conclude from the chipper colors, signature medium, bitter bite, and scorn for punctuation that Boël is the city's homespun Tracey Emin. But locals know that Boël's highly personal statements are not the cries of a woman who has lived hard and was treated roughly, in tragically common ways. Instead, the expressions come from a unique outcast: Boël is the highly popular but officially unacknowledged illegitimate daughter of Belgium's king. Instead of maintaining a parlor-proper silence about her scandalous origins, she chooses to step forward and present her identity as one element in Belgium's surprisingly complicated internal cultural mix.

— Ana Finel Honigman

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Copenhagen

"Reality Check"

STATENS MUSEUM FOR KUNST
The Danish National Gallery, Sølvgade 48-50
September 6-January 4



Delphine Boël, *This System Is Corrupt Be Happy*, 2007, neon and argon light fixture mounted on aluminum frame with dimmable light settings, 9 1/8 x 98 1/8".

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