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AES+F, Panorama #2, Lambda print on paper, 2006, 33 x 94 inches (84 x 239 cm)

## The Rise and Fall of Excess Culture

Curated by Jovana Stokic

*Opening Reception: Thursday, January 14, 2010*

*January 14 – February 6, 2010*

**Aaron Johnson**  
**Patricia Iglesias**

**AES+F**  
**Shimon Okshteyn**  
**Zhou Tao**

**Hilary Harkness**  
**Jelena Tomasevic**

The current economic crisis, its consequences and the mediation for the salvation of capitalism is giving a “fake feeling that capitalism has failed and that it will be replaced by a new social form more concerned with justice.” Behind this false hope, capitalism is just changing its face, masking its exploitative nature and inventing new forms of oppression, updating itself for the 21st century. This is the point of departure of the show that brings together disparate art practices by artists in different media who thematize the short-circuiting flow of capital. To organize this show in the site of a commercial gallery is to emphasize the importance of the status of politics of aesthetics today. The question can be raised as following: is art capable to intercept this closed circle or not? The idea is not to simply chart the rise and fall of excess culture but to address the modes of production in late capitalism in relation to artistic production and consumption that brings to the series of busts and booms in the art markets.

Acknowledging radical critical thinking today that researches and addresses the contemporary role of capital in (de)regulating all social processes, this exhibition has a goal to provide a (partial) insight into critical interventions in the structure of contemporary capitalist societies, aiming at shedding light to commodification of art. Art in this show does not only depict excess but points to paths away from the spectacular to the realm of “slight offense,” or “minimal radicality.” This is where, at the beginning of a new decade, the place of subversion lies.

*Continued on reverse...*



Patricia Iglesias,



Aaron Johnson



Shimon Okshteyn



Zhou Tao



Hilary Harkness



Jelena Tomasevic

**Aaron Johnson's** painting *Now We Hunt Hippopotamus* (2009) addresses the general feeling of all-pervasive doom with dark humor. The artist's use of grotesque implies that "animal savagery and beastly vitality rule the world," but he has the last laugh.

**Shimon Okshteyn's** painting installation *Reflection #9* (2008) evokes a paradigmatic shiny surface of consumerist fetish that pervaded art in the boom years. Although masterly executed, it subverts the expectations from a fetish by juxtaposing finished and unfinished, highly polished and mundane, cheap-looking elements

With *On the Absent* (2008) paintings, **Patricia Iglesias'** free-form abstraction confronts the rationality of the architectural grid by its abstract characters who seem to inhabit the physical space, creating a tension between soft and hard, ethereal and monumental.

In the photographic panoramas titled *Last Riot* by **AES+F** group, (2005-2007) reality is replaced by the virtual world in which "technologies and materials transform the artificial environment and techniques into a fantasy landscape of the new epos." This world is synonymous with excess of late capitalism itself -- the famous late 20<sup>th</sup> century concept of "the end of history" -- where protagonists fight between each others where no difference exists any more between victim and aggressor, male and female.

**Hilary Harkness's** exquisite paintings represent only female characters excessively depicting their kinky behavior -- only to point to the persistent problem of sexism in the sphere of representation.

**Jelena Tomasevic's** paintings and installations, which appropriate visual language from the luxury worlds of fashion, film, and modernist architecture, show the ominous self-sufficiency and existential depravity of modern man, the dullness that draws people into strange indifference.

In **Zhou Tao's** video installation *Power Here* (2009), the artist connects household appliances, such as fan, loudspeaker and floor lamp, to the electricity of public spaces in the city, so that they are operating properly as usual – symbolically short-circuiting the flow of capital in contemporary China.

For further information please contact the gallery at [Andrea@stuxgallery.com](mailto:Andrea@stuxgallery.com)