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GALLERY

FEB 12, 2007

End of a New Dawn *Andre von Morisse*

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42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches

Interview by Rosecrans Baldwin



Above the City, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



Breakfast, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



Plug, 2004

Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



At the Station, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



End of a New Dawn, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



Olympia, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



Trams, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches



Reflection in Pond, 2004
Selenium toned silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum
42 1/4 x 41 1/4 inches

Life would be dull, all greasy dishes, Dixie Chicks, and junk mail, were it not for the giant tuna balloons moored outside the house, waiting to fly us to excitements somewhere else. In Andre von Morisse's "End of a New Dawn" series of photographed paintings, a different world emerges out of focus, resembling some lost civilization paused in development between the rotary phone and the fax machine.

Andre von Morisse was born in Norway and has lived in the United

States since the mid-1980s. He lives and works in New York. All images are copyright © Andre von Morisse, all rights reserved.

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Where do these paintings begin for you? How does this world begin to take shape?

I like to comment on the human condition and our perception of the world. In most of my work I approach the theme in a surreal and oblique way. I make tons of sketches and some of these will gravitate into a theme I then elaborate on. Then it is like making a movie or writing a story, I try to keep it open-ended, to pose questions but not provide answers.

This last show, “End of a New Dawn,” grew out of a show I had in 2003, where the theme was the industrial exploitation of natural resources and where are we trying to go? In that show we killed tuna fish, inflated them to blimps and used them to travel. This inspired me to want to do some work looking nostalgically back at the immense technological promise from the industrial era of my childhood in the '60s and '70s, before it dissipated into the ambiguities of the information age. Hence the title, “End of a New Dawn,” and as a symbol of industry I appropriated the tuna airships from the show before.

Why show photographs of paintings rather than the paintings themselves?

As I was sketching my ideas, I thought about how we perceive a painted image as opposed to a photographed image. When photography first appeared, it seemed to eclipse painting as the privileged medium for the documentation of the real. Painting, by comparison, was viewed as subjective—its depicted reality mediated

by personal vision and artistic skill. Photography became the truthful reference for subjective painting.

In this show I reverse the traditional roles of the two mediums using paintings as the starting point for an elaborate and intricate photographic process. The paintings become conceptual “negatives”. The resulting soft-focus black-and-white silver gelatin prints recontextualize the painted images into the often unquestioned realm of photographic truth.

“End of a New Dawn” is also a reflection of the end of classical photography as digital is taking over.

There’s a great sense of humdrum in the works—like “Breakfast” and “At The Station,” where life seems pretty dull except for the giant inflated fish-balloons moored outside. What’s more important to you in this series, the ordinary or the strange?

Both. I wanted the images to be a mix of retro-futuristic surrealism and the banality of everyday universal memories. The boundary between the recognizable and the invented is blurred; scenes of travel, industry, and recreation are apprehensible but not quiet understood.

Without the familiar there would be no way into the image for the viewer.

There seems to be a lot of film inspiration here: the narrative elements, the blocking, the grandeur. Is that right?

Yes. I am a big fan of film noir, and *Citizen Kane* and *Last Year at Marienbad* are some of my favorite films. Since “End of a New Dawn” is in black and white it lent itself to the cinematic staging and feeling that you don’t get with color. I tried to have enough cohesive narrative to give the show a feeling of seeing stills from a movie.

How much room is there in today’s art world for non-ironic

humor?

I think there is a lot of room—there is more to life than irony. But like everything else it just has to be done well.

Your “Pink Freud” painting is all over the place for **the Chelsea Art Museum’s “Hungry Eye”** show. Will we be seeing more Freuds With Frankfurters?

Yes. **The “Pink Freud” painting** is part of a body of paintings called “Pink Freud and The Pleasant Horizon.” Which is a playful, funny look at psychology, symbols of sexuality, the suburban utopia, the distraction of trains and tunnels, and the mystery of electricity at night. All set in a fictitious town in northern Europe.

Your wife is an artist as well, a photographer. Is the dual-artist relationship a boon or drag at home? Do you find yourselves competing?

I am very lucky, my wife, Silas Shabelewska is a contemporary artist working in photography. She is also a babe.

It is great to have someone to bounce ideas of, and to have another talented artist around to take an objective, critical look at what at what you are obsessing about is invaluable. We are extremely supportive of each other, so when one of us has a big sale, is in a great show, or gets a good review, we both win. We are much stronger as a team. “End of a New Dawn” would not have happened without her insight and support.



Rosecrans Baldwin co-founded TMN with publisher Andrew Womack in 1999. His latest book is *Everything Now: Lessons From the City-State of Los Angeles*. More information can be found at rosecransbaldwin.com. **More by Rosecrans Baldwin**

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