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Living History II: Asad Faulwell & Matt Lipps at Marc Selwyn Fine Art

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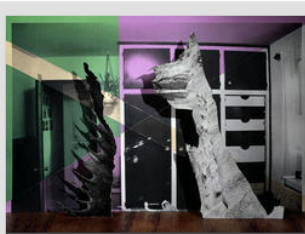
By Christopher Miles Thursday, May 7 2009

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In this odd pairing, one finds a lesson in how artists make use of the permissions and precedents opened up by prior groups or movements. Asad Faulwell's intricate mixed-media works, which intertwine digitally manipulated photographs of historical figures from the Middle East among floral and geometric patterning reminiscent of that found in the Islamic world, hearken also to the Pattern and Decoration (P&D) movement in American and European painting of the 1970s. But while P&D flaunted its indulgence in decorative codes and motifs from cultures far and wide chiefly as a designed affront to the dominance of masculinist and reductivist late-modern Western aesthetics, Faulwell goes a step further, making decorative objects for consumption in an internationalist context, but with focus on a canon of sociopolitical history that ranges from celebrating Algerian women freedom fighters to mapping the political histories of Iran and Afghanistan. Lipps meanwhile takes off from what is now a full-fledged tradition descended more distantly from the Dadaists, and more weightedly and recently from the "Pictures" generation that defined much of art production and theory at the turn from the '70s to the '80s — a push to use modes of representation,

particularly photography, as a means of re-examining the agendas and implications of representations themselves. But while the pictures moment, currently being rehashed in an exhibition at the [Met Museum](#) in New York, seems in its lesser instances to have been a phenomenon of artists bringing up the rear behind an advance of critics and academics checking club membership by measuring the politics worn on one's sleeve, Lipps represents a tide of younger artists who draw from the critique of representation a critical knowingness while nonetheless allowing themselves a suspension of disbelief that avails the romantic and the playful. Such is evident in Lipps' works, which appear at first glance to be photomontages of architectural interiors and exteriors with landscape elements, but turn out to be pictures of multiple photographs — toned, mounted and cut out — stood on edge and arranged like props and backdrops on a stage. These sets, however, are tabletop-size, as made evident by the actual tabletop visible within the frame. The preoccupation with representations as constructions that defined the pictures generation here becomes literalized in the free play of the next.

Marc Selwyn Fine Art, 6222 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 101, L.A.; Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; through May 23. (323) 933-9911 or www.marcselwynfineart.com.



Matt Lipps, Untitled (bedroom), 2008

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