



Allegra LaViola Gallery | 179 East Broadway | New York, NY 10002

T 917.463.3901 E galler@allegralaviola.com

www.allegralaviola.com

COLD SWEAT

Brian Montuori

September 10 – October 15, 2010

Opening reception: September 10, 2010, from 6-9PM

Allegra LaViola Gallery is pleased to present “Cold Sweat”, the first American solo exhibition of painting, works on paper and installation by Brian Montuori.

At home in both the stillness of a forbidding landscape and the macabre humor of an exploding animal, Montuori’s exhibit plucks us from ordinary surroundings and deposits us in a parallel world in which humanity is absent.

From the moment of entry we are launched into the bleakly beautiful surroundings of Montuori’s alarming environment, encircled by alternating visions of terror and calm. A coyote flashes before us in furious motion, partially caught in a trap and partially bursting out of the casing that contains it. Beyond the coyote lies an uninhabited terrain devoid of people. Small screens reveal a static view of empty rooms and abandoned structures as a water tower looms large as a Cathedral on the skyline. Pipelines cross empty horizons, siphoning something to someone – but who? The answer might be in the singular sign of humanity: a corporate logo. Ark:Tech is the only clue in the familiar, yet unsettling, landscape. Further inspection reveals a grim reality; what was once nature has before our eyes become machine.

It is not, indeed, impossible to imagine that Montuori’s disturbing vision could be reality. Certainly the surroundings are common enough: a range of mountains, a lake, and a glittering, snow-filled forest. But the inhabitants of this world are entirely alien, despite their seeming familiarity. The longer our gaze lingers, the less normal this world seems. A feeling persists that we are being watched – a sense of suspended animation. The abandoned region is not really as empty as it looks.

In the gallery’s lower level we are led deeper into the disquieting maze. Glimpses of animals are rendered in night vision, and we are transformed from a casual observer to an active participant, though if we are the hunter or the hunted is up for debate. Glowing eyes peer at us through the underbrush, and the neglected structures that appeared forlorn in the light are menacing in the darkness.

Our progression towards total and complete surveillance of society has had the effect of turning us into constant viewers who are constantly viewed. The endless stream of the news makes disasters into blips on the radar while catastrophes dance in an endless loop before us. Such limitless access to misery results in a dulled response: the appalling becomes ordinary when viewed in an infinite reel. Montuori’s skill in unfolding his world comes not only from his handling of the physical property of paint and canvas, but also from his ability to sharpen our senses by jostling our vision slightly out of focus. The ceaseless loop is interrupted and the world is suddenly just a little unstable, which is the deciding moment when we will catch ourselves, or fall.

“Cold Sweat” is the second part of a trilogy exploring the Ark:Tech Group, and follows Montuori’s January 2007 “Intruder” exhibit at the ZieherSmith project space. Montuori’s work has been shown internationally at Christian Ehrentraut, FRED London and the Essl Museum. He has been reviewed by Tokion Magazine, Whitehot Magazine and The New York Times.

Gallery hours

Wednesday – Saturday: 12-6PM

Sunday: 1-6PM

Upcoming

Casey Jex Smith

October 20 – November 19, 2010