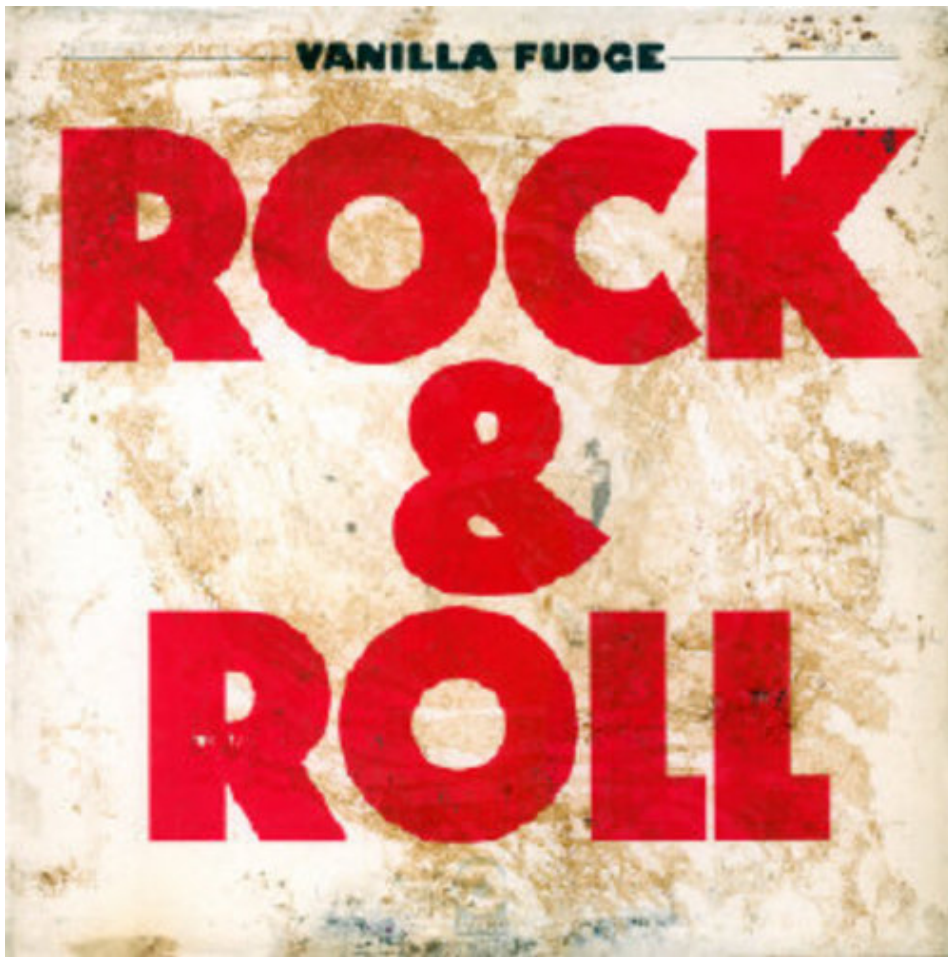


# ARTslant



## *Christoph Draeger and Reuben Lorch-Miller*

Christoph Draeger, Reuben Lorch-Miller

Catharine Clark Gallery

248 Utah Street, Ground Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103

April 26, 2008 - June 7, 2008

## Difference of the Same

by Monique Willms

Albeit separate shows and forms of expression, Christoph Draeger and Reuben Lorch-Miller's art, displayed together at the Catharine Clark Gallery, successfully occupy the same space, and though different in approach and intention are intrinsically connected.

In Draeger's show there is an abundant use of images from popular Western culture, especially from the 1960s. Whether it is vinyl records recorded by dead singers or hippie youth culture, Draeger's work relies upon automatic popular response to these objects. He plays with these responses' intricacies and nuances. Images once set in place by years of history and use by popular culture are represented in the gallery like microscope slides. The object is presented in symbolic and literal fragments for the audience to examine.



Draeger's use of objects are similar in intention to methods of appropriation common in post-modern art, where the audience sees the images reused and are more aware of the age that is now gone and the values it once represented. It creates a strange but brilliant visual paradox of both its timelessness and age. Some fine examples from the show include the Led Zeppelin cover on their self-titled album from 1969, a photograph of the Hindenberg explosion in 1937, but in Draeger's representation now an 8,000 piece jigsaw puzzle, a great artistic metaphor: the puzzle looks unfinished, but the image is already clear.



Reuben Lorch-Miller's show in the same gallery creates works of a similar theme, but Lorch-Miller's tools are primary colors, elemental shapes and basic geometry. From this opaque beginning, these implements are presented to the audience in a universal manner that invites philosophical contemplation with no intended direction, or "lesson."



In *Trinity* (*United Action is Necessary for the Sustenance of Life*), three colored circles merge together in the center to create one great white space, as would be created in basic color light mixing. The scientifically literal creation of one white radiant

light from three colors in tandem with the more idealistic title, Lorch-Miller applies universal realities to common tribulations. The same applies for another piece, *Something is Always Happening*. In this work colored paper circles arranged in a collage on a piece of paper create movement--this pattern could continue forever. The title, intentionally opaque, along with the abstract tessellation is purposefully left ambiguous. What is "always happening" the audience does not know, but the resigned feeling of the piece is not one of flatness, but of awareness and acceptance that his works cannot entirely visually relate all the issues he engages with. This powerlessness in effort to answer the pervading larger questions of the universe is not a pervading impotence, but delving into a greater and more thoughtfully constructive discussion.



Both these artists have engaged with essentially the same pressing issues. Lorch-Miller's geometric designs and bright, fundamental colors is quiet contemplation of universality and Christoph Draeger's works employ more aggressive, bold images and subject matter from a past many of us still remember, and whose effects we still live in. Draeger's use of fierce, forthright images of popular culture relate to issues of mortality and cultural paradoxes, while Reuben Lorch-Miller's abstract designs aim to take the audience into a contemplative mood to search for their own answers, or at least provide meditative visual pieces along with a time and a place to contemplate them. His abstract images are a paradox of themselves: so simple in design yet challenging to understand. In a struggle to put visual representation to such big ideas the more simple answer, or no definitive answer at all, may invariably be the right one.

-- Monique Willms

(\*Images, from top to bottom: Christoph Draeger, April 26 - June 7, 2008; Catharine Clark Gallery, *Rock & Roll*, 2008, archival inkjet and paint on canvas, 40 x 40", courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. Christoph Draeger, April 26 - June 7, 2008; Catharine Clark Gallery, *Ying to Them, Yang to Us*, 2008, Egyptian cotton quilt, courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. Christoph Draeger, April 26 - June 7, 2008; Catharine Clark Gallery, *Led Zeppelin*, 2008, archival inkjet on 800 piece puzzle, 52 x 72", courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. Reuben Lorch-Miller,

April 26 - June 7, 2008; Catharine Clark Gallery, *Memory Eternal*, 2008, wood, metal, courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco. Reuben Lorch-Miller, April 26 - June 7, 2008; Catharine Clark Gallery, *Wonderful Wonderful*, 2008, mixed media, courtesy of Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco.)

Posted by [Monique Willms](#) on 5/1/08

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