

Sam Taylor-Wood

MATTHEW MARKS

British artist Sam Taylor-Wood arrived in Chelsea with sleekness and style if not much more, but who wants more these days? Both Taylor-Wood's photographic venture (at the gallery's 24th Street space) and her video installation (at 22nd Street) seemed less about life, even young British life, and more about high-end production values.

The photo series "Soliloquies" empties out the most famous English soliloquy of all: "To be, or not to be," in this instance, narcissistic, self-absorbed, well-dressed—or undressed—with good hair, good lighting, and (mostly) good bodies? These lushly colored C-prints, which suggest English period movies, have a set format: an enlarged single figure, based on a well-known painting (Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus*, Mantegna's *Dead Christ*) paired with a predella, whose stretched, slightly askew, panoramic view of hip habitats revitalizes the notion of location, location, location. Together, the images form an altarpiece to the fashion world, the fashion shoot, and the fashion narrative, with their expensive glaze and sanitized decadence. It's la dolce vita London-style—posh, plush, plummy.

Third Party, Taylor-Wood's amusing, nonchalant, curiously nonaffective ten-minute video of people at a party accompanied by ambient sound, was filmed in real time using seven cameras. It was cleverly choreographed and projected onto seven screens of various sizes, surrounding the viewer in a simulation of interaction—or noninteraction. We are the third party, presumably, and we're being ignored as characters wander in and out of the screens; hands smoke, drink, put down wineglasses; a lean, long-tressed woman dances alone; people flirt; a man scowls. Or is it blues idol Marianne Faithfull, the star of the show—blonde, blue-eye-shadowed, and of a certain age—who is doing the watching? But oh, for a little real angst and alienation. —Lilly Wei

Robert Grosvenor

PAULA COOPER

Robert Grosvenor, a first-generation Minimalist who represents the eccentric faction of Minimal art, continues to surprise viewers with his whimsical material intelligence. And this latest exhibition proved that he is one of the most intriguing artists working today.

The new, untitled work consists of two distinct elements. The first is a central, 16-foot-long piece of sheet metal with some sharply cut edges that appears to float several inches above the floor. It is spray-



Sam Taylor-Wood, *Third Party* (film still), 1999, dimensions variable. Matthew Marks.



Robert Grosvenor, *Untitled*, 1999, mixed media, installation view. Paula Cooper.



Jeanne Dunning, *The Blob 2*, 1999, Ilfochrome mounted to Plexiglas and frame, 30 1/2" x 41 1/4". Feigen Contemporary.

painted with red, yellow, and orange enamel in the fashion of motorcycles and surfboards. Two silver plastic spheres sit symmetrically on top of the sheet metal, attached to thin, crisscrossed poles. The second element is composed of two stacks of fossil rocks, partially painted red placed at each side of the entrance to the main gallery.

Each Grosvenor sculpture/installation is in itself an autonomous creation, making little or no reference to the artist's previous work. This precludes considering his production in terms of a body of work. Grosvenor's work is his relentless pursuit of contradictions and paradoxes. In this installation he combines Minimal art with the materiality of theme parks and racetracks.

While the fossil rocks pay tribute to Robert Smithson's fascination with prehistoric geological formations, the central composition, with its glossy paint, affirms Grosvenor's kinship with John McCracken and John Chamberlain.

Grosvenor's early works dealt primarily with gravity and tension in given architectural structures. His newer installations—assimilating influences from art history, everyday life, and commercial design—bring his work closer to the Las Vegas-influenced Postmodernism of architect Robert Venturi.

Also displayed were several unrelated, superbly rendered drawings and collages. —Klaus Ottmann

Jeanne Dunning

FEIGEN CONTEMPORARY

In the 1958 monster movie *The Blob*, a bloodred, gelatinous mass from outer space moves through an American town, devouring its inhabitants and growing larger with each victim.

The "blob" referred to in several of Jeanne Dunning's engaging new works has a similar parasitic attachment to human flesh. In a photo titled *The Blob 2*, a young woman struggles to push away a beige, rubbery sac—resembling an over-size beanbag or limp water balloon wrapped in nylon—that engulfs her torso, pinning her to the kitchen floor. In another photo, the blob is a flabby protuberance that hangs out

from under a woman's shirt and onto a serving plate she holds before her. Fat and food are one.

Since the late 1980s, Dunning has created a warped and witty vision of the body. Shaped by a surreal sensibility, her blob could have descended from Dalí's nightmarish landscapes of transmogrifying figures and melting forms. Dunning's blob also points to con-