

Clarissa N. Terranova, *Nintendo Wizards*
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Nintendo Wizards

Senses are overloaded

at And/Or, the new gallery

on the block

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Back in 1969, The Who sang plaudits to Tommy, the Helen Keller of ur-gaming. Deaf, dumb and blind, the miraculous Tommy "plays by sense of smell," letting lie follow his senses of sight and sound until he snaps out of temporary sensual oblivion and leads the caul-k-clad, eye-shaded and ear-plugged members of his pinball cult to enlightenment, or so the rock opera goes. Just as Tommy emerged as the messiah of the arcade, analog technology was giving way to digital, making quaint his penchant for the pinball machine. From Magnavox's Odyssey to Atari's Pong, digital technology forever changed the landscape of gaming, transforming the roving balls and ting-a-lings of an upright box on four legs to the back-and-forth "palk" of a zigzagging square ball on a screen wired to a console and handheld controls.



Chad Hopper's "1,000 Candles"

Details:
will be on display through
April 23 at And/Or
Gallery, 214-824-2442.

Oh, how we await their treatment of smell, that bastard sense of the art world. For what they miss with respect to the olfactory, the owner-artists of **And/Or** gallery, Paul Slocum and Lauren Grey, and the artists now showing—**Paper Rad**, **Cory Arcangel** and **Chad Hopper**—easily surpass in sight and sound. There's even an invitation to touch, as Hopper's "Arby Dolls" invoke bizarro-shopper desire. Housing a motley array of stuff, from hyped-up tweaked-out videos to neo-Joseph Cornell assemblages and punk collages, the show at And/Or gallery is hip in a deliciously nerdy way. Monitors show moving images that are at once surreal and dumb, perverse yet fluorescent and 1980s. Collages, found-object assemblages, doodly drawings and Arby Dolls line the walls as though the work of an extremely precocious 3-year-old or a disturbed 40-year-old.

The genius of this show is the way it profits from just-past styles. There is a sly current of obsolescence running through Hopper's objects and Paper Rad and Arcangel's moving images. They rework the contemporary fashions of suburban America, pushing their collectively passive and passé essence to heights of irony and innovative form. This work reveals the yesterday-ness of North Dallas' today.

The Austin-based Hopper—a Dallas native—makes comic mayhem with his wall-work, zines and anti-commodities. "Diet Blue" is a collage of a pretty Princess Di-esque mother, babe in hands. A thought bubble emerges overhead with "You are not a sandwich" scrawled in the bad handwriting of a deviant third-grader. "Poverty Dance" is a small diorama with the word "Poverty" subtly extolled in the backdrop in a mix of Playskool magnet-letters. Two blue Playskool elephants bob paw-upon-paw, and a small red bird perches in a brown nest made from audiotape atop a stack of red, white and blue Lego blocks. "Cowboy Cobwebs" shows a beefy and smiling Sylvester Stallone look-alike. Hopper has mottled the face of the cutout with makeup and collaged underneath, "You are looking at hamburger." Ensconced in a hodge-podge of cheap faux-wood frames, the images combine garage-sale pragmatism with the erstwhile formal antics of the pan-European avant-garde of the 1960s, the Situationists. Hopper's work might at first seem politically tepid in comparison to the work of bad-boy Situationists such as Guy Debord and Asger Jorn. His "Big Store on the Prairie," however, pointedly plays on a politics of urban sprawl and the new American anti-city that may not be too far from the politics of mendacity currently playing out in Washington, D.C.

Hopper's salon-hung found-object images face two flat monitors with earphones showing videos by the Massachusetts-based artists' collective Paper Rad (PR) and Brooklynite Cory Arcangel. Though radically distinct in terms of technology, the videos share with Hopper's work a brash Snuffleupagus-on-crack ethos. Of the two videos, "Facemaker" by PR and "Ever Danced With Garf?" by PR and Arcangel, the latter is more persuasive, that is, if we consider keen humor to be the goal. In "Facemaker," colorful pixels coalesce and deliquesce in an evolution of cartoon Hasbro-toy faces. At its best this video offers an overview of the vocabulary of bright colors and animated form central to PR's work. At its worst, it brings to mind the mutating and eliding faces of Michael Jackson's "Black and White" video. That's not so bad when we realize that the cranial cavities and visages of the Mario Brothers family are a marked improvement on Jackson's we-are-the-world universalism. "Ever Danced With Garf?" is an electronic overlay of dancing cartoony creatures and sundry human performers who, as passersby on the streets of New York, stopped at PR and Arcangel's Make Your Own Video booth. Groups of girls don masks, rap karaoke-style, pound the keys of small Casio keyboards and jiggle and swing in synchronized movements. PR and Arcangel combine performance and video in a tour de force of public art.

Projected onto the adjacent wall by way of an old Nintendo console, there is "Super Mario Movie," another collaborative effort by PR and Arcangel. This moving-image work dominates the front room of the gallery not so much because of the scale of its image projection but the tunes and hoots that permeate the space from the electronica created by the reprogramming of old videogame sounds. In order to create this tale of a peripatetic Mario, Arcangel removed the chip inside the game cartridge that held the game program and manipulated the remaining chip with graphic data. Behind the wall, leading to the hallway in the back of the gallery, there is a stacked six-monitor installation by PR, "Video Comic." A robot poops an electronic brown flow of fragments, including bits of Red-Green-Blue, the color language of computers, and other blasted and lost icons of our shared videodrome past. Though these artists cull their influences from sources beyond the thunderdome of art history's hallowed past, the work brings to mind the TV-sculpture and video projects of the late Nam June Paik and his avowed follower the Swiss-German artist Pipilotti Rist.

If you like the cool tunes emanating from "Super Mario Movie" then you'll wiggle well to the music of Treewave, the band led by Slocum and Grey, the owners of the gallery. That this duo grew up in North Dallas might explain their gift for recognizing the potential of the just-out-of-date. Such obsolescence, however, is nowhere present in the forever-future quality of their music.

The work at And/Or gallery might be made by New Yorkers, New Englanders and Texans, but its combination of futures-past technology and kid play makes it altogether Tokyo-esque in flair.