

## TIM JAG: CAKE IN YO' FACE

HIGH MAYHEM  
22 SILER ROAD, SANTA FE

**Like a real-time, inside out** Wayne Thiebaud on NoDoz, Tim Jag totally, maniacally messed everything up at High Mayhem the other night. His sticky icky performance piled high and toppled a confectionery column of craziness, and there were those who got their faces caked or at least their shoes sugared. In this sense it paid off to slip in the side door and stay in the back until it was all mopped up.

One part manic Marie Antoinette and another part Paul McCarthy (minus anything strapped to his twanger) Jag's signature art worker hit the creamy center of the target when the tower of sweetness toppled in a grandly explosive gesture of total collapse. One imagined by analogy that this could be the economy or the environment in our world gone wildly wrong.

Current estimates say the big time banksters will have taken the tax payers to the tune of about \$42,000 for every man, woman, and child in America once all the bailout *frijoles* are figured. But what the hell, we've always got cake while we neo-serfs weather the next tsunami. Can anyone say, "Off with their proverbial heads"?

The icing here was the wall-hung and floor-strung exhibition of cake paintings that Jag had also created for the show. Treading on Jasper Johns's flags, these pieces posed questions like, "Is it a painting or a pineapple upside-down cake?" Pound-for-pound the best slice, *Break-up Cake*, sold quickly, and all the works were admirably available at day-old prices that poised Jag as neo-commie cook for our local contemporary art commune. Spread thick with artificially colored impasto, these fatm, flat panels and layered tondos almost looked good enough to eat. Their loopy messages of world peace and sickly sweet, tongue-in-cheek aphorism were easily digested by all.

While we wondered what Jag would cook up next, Max Friedenberg, High Mayhem's head-baker, invited our participation in the fun-raising raffle of a real sheet cake topped elegantly with a detailed digital print on a wafer thin layer of sugar in edible ink of a Photoshopped painting by the neo-classicist (read art-fascist) Poussin. Before his deeply conservative landscape grazed a cartoon cow with her eyes exed out. Our blind idiocy in the face of the hostile corporate takeover of the cultural scene couldn't find a more fitting mascot. Moo.

JON CARVER



Performance view, *Orangeman—Lost in a Cakehole*

## SUSAN CHRISTIE: FORCE OF NATURE

RIO BRAVO FINE ART  
110 NORTH BROADWAY, TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

**After thirty-five years of study** with Chinese and Japanese masters working in the Sumi-e tradition, Susan Christie has gone beyond their reach. Pine and plum branches and other vocabulary-building brush marks are repeated again and again in order to access the unconscious. Like a samurai gone rogue, but still observing bushido, Christie's brush serves a higher order, but its subject is far from traditional. The part that remains is the meditative practice that circumvents the mind to express a human/nature interface. Man, the Buddhists bemoan, has to work to join nature. All other beings, such as the butterfly, just are.

Having traveled the world, Christie eventually landed in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. She did not take up painting right away—instead she waited. The hot springs of the region and their complex formations became her geologic doppelganger—perennially renewed by rains flowing down mountains, then soaking through gravel terraces and meeting limestone, and eventually heated by a caldrion of magma that shoots the water up through fissures and through a convoluted escape hatch, a folded limestone bed, into the tiny half-mile round that is the Hot Springs District. This became her painting subject. When it came time to paint these geologic forces with ink and gouache on paper, they reenacted their parts. Christie says, "Something strikingly new entered the equation—peace, total peace. No frustrations, no blocks. Just a steady progression of unequivocal paintings painted from the beginner's mind, which takes forgetting what you know." She calls this "becoming inhabited."

Her painting *Fire Meets Water* contains I Ching hexagrams. The hexagram number 49, Ko—Revolution (Molting), is the perfect analogue to the beginner's mind. The two major trigrams are fire and water. The image is fire in a lake. Here, certainly, synchronicity is at play. The changing lines—based on small breaks in firm lines—turned the figure into hexagram number 2, The Receptive, or the Yin principle, subservient to that which gives the creative Yang principle material form. What better definition for art or for this painting in particular?

KATHLEEN SLOAN



Susan Christie, *Fire Meets Water*, ink and water on Chinese paper. 27" x 54", 2009