wood, Mammin's exhibition "Zeal for the ordinary" seems to be a rather disparate assemblage of artistry and authority also invites the reader to explore the, collage, and video work as successful and provocative explorations of gaze, which hits all the right contemporary 1 of 1 ton: hence, with equal aplomb, a new American aesthetic. In 11, in a hanging tartan textile adornning a gold-plated brass napier from sailors to the floor. As this work cleverly explores the hybrid possibilities of painting, it is difficult to fathom why Mammin is also evoking the symbol of Scottish nationalism, if not steampunk sexual fetishism. Across the room, the eight ink drawings of Nadia Comaneci Generation, 2011, partially incorporate the color palette of the Romanian flag in lines resembling the nation's 1976 white and red. Yet yellow and pink elements, are joined by green rather than blue, and the exceptional gymnast named in the title—note for scoring the ever "perfect ten" in an Olympic event—are here apparent in a surrealist-fashion with arms resembling crucified claws. In a related work, Nadia Comaneci, 2011 (ink portrait of the gymnast in wild abandon), is punctuated by a newspaper image in which she appears an elegant waltz. In both tributes, Mammin has transformed perfection into the grotesque, a decaying and degrading gesture continued in Zeal for the Law, 2012, a hypnosis video showing the artist barefoot, repeating a sequence of ritualistic movements to a sound track of industrial bass and a backdrop of streaming dark clouds. Wearing fabric turtlenecks (matching the turtleneck painting), a sleeveless white shirt that barely covers his pectoral and the edges of his father's tan, a pair of spectacles and a rubber mask painted white around the nose and mouth, Mammin manipulates the same golden chain that he subsequently worked into The Law, repurposing the "empty copy" as flashtastic knobs in his rings. The artist whose corporeal body is a far cry from the fourteen-year-old Comaneci's lithe physique, follows the music's downbeat and, with each footfall, seems to make hand signs to the camera, alternatingly holding up one, two, three, or four fingers. In this performance, which scrambles codes of masculinity and femininity, Mammin animates the legend that inhabits the law, 5 Comaneci's inner drag queen if only she had been allowed to take a day off from training, go to art school, and wallow down a few hamburgers in the exhibit's cumulative effect suggests that there is only a tiny difference between a passion for the law and bondage to it, or between aesthetic adherence to the rules and their perversion thereof. From its origins as a call for the right of women, whether regarding the conventions of art or competitive sports, identity of the nation-state or constructs of gender, the law is fundamentally unalterable. Paradoxically, of course, both women and men are an arena of willful contemporary strategies to communicate these ideals of misbehaviour, as for example, by transforming the surface of painting into linking assemblage or using video as a space for the queering of identity. The frisson of transgression here feels directly along the peripheries of normativity, and the juxtaposition of referencing the, the rules. Given these limits, Mammin is most impressive in his video work, through which he embraces the simulacrum as the very condition of the creative act. In ways that recall the work of, for example, Tacita and Brian Eno, Mammin uses irrelevant palettes to repress the ephemera of contemporary experience and carve out an original image zones where new rules might be yet formulated. Yet he is also acutely aware that in an era when "acting out" is a democratic prerogative facilitated by such distribution platforms as YouTube and Tumblr, the gallery still functions as "the law" by sanctioning the name of art.

—Naët Ramai

NEW ORLEANS

"Spaces: Antenna, the Front, Good Children Gallery" CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

Here's an intriguing curatorial gambit: a museum exhibition venturing to manifest a palpable web of energy spun by a triad of emerging artists' collectives. The collectives are located in a working-class, historically black, increasingly multicultural enclave that is literally on the other side of the Contemporary Arts Center. The gallery is situated in a well-trafficked touristic business district. From the outset of this project, potential pitfalls for the museum abounded. On the one hand, ideological and class tensions would be there for the making; on the other (and maybe more disarmingly), were those frictions to be met and resolved, the institution would be guilty of swallowing from the various identities of the collectives only to spit them out as a homogenized, depoliticized group showcased out of context.

Indefatigable Jackie Amick (assistant by now former CAC visual arts coordinator Angela Berry) came up with a concept for following through with "Spaces," which presents the artists of Antenna, the Front, and Good Children Gallery, the three most prominent initiatives of a cluster of artists' collectives that sprouted after Hurricane Katrina on or near St. Claude Avenue in the Bywater Dis- trict, (three additional collectives contributed street level window installations.) Crucial to this narrative is gentri- fication's role as a key organizing concept. The activities say the collectives are not only gentrifying the area but also failing to rep- resent the district's historical textual composition. While this may be true, the young collectives in "Spaces" are far from "nostalgic" or "mournful" in the manner that the older Julia Street commercial galleries are. From one's own, this opening, as a counterpoint to the current crop of urban decay, leaving "fine art" photography to the likes of Ansel Adams. In more recent years, that polarity has largely been blunted. Thus in her 2007 book, Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art, Liz Kotz discerned the boundary between Fluxus and Conceptual art, not in terms of any distinct approach to language, the undeniable subject of her study, but in the Conceptualism"'s use of photography, evidence of the larger shift from the perception oriented and objective way of knowledge production, from the early 1960s to the overtly repre- sentational, synthetic, and self-reflective structures of Conceptual art." If anyone still questioned just how crucial photography—or perhaps it would be better to say "the photogra- phic"—really was to Conceptual art, Matthew S. Witkin's exhibi- tion "Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photographic, 1964–1977" showed that we have put all doubts to rest. Featuring 144 works by fifty-seven artists and groups, it ambitiously addresses the centrality of photography to Conceptual art, and as a result, Witkin's exhibition "Became a paradigmatically emblematic form of contemporary art." But as my tentative suggestion of the phrase "the photo- graphic" to replace "photography" might indicate, I'm still not sure that the photography-as-such is quite the

—Nick Stillman

CHICAGO

"Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photographic, 1964–1977 ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

For a time, the consensus on Conceptual art was that it had to do with "documentarization" or "idee," after a while, though, it began to seem better to read the specificity of Conceptualism through its emphasis on language. But in recent years, there has been a shift away from seeing Conceptual art as a disembodied attribute to which we might see a somewhat surprising element: photography. In the past, there was a tendency to strategically ignore photography as a medium, since Conceptualism often treated the camera as a simple artist's recording device, leaving "fine art" photography to the likes of Ansel Adams. In 2010, that polarity has largely been blunted. Thus in her 2007 book, Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art, Liz Kotz discerned the boundary between Fluxus and Conceptual art, not in terms of any distinct approach to language, the undeniable subject of her study, but in the Conceptualism' use of photography, evidence of the larger shift from the perception oriented and objective way of knowledge production, from the early 1960s to the overtly representation, synthetic, and self-reflective structures of Conceptual art. If anyone still questioned just how crucial photography—or perhaps it would be better to say "the photographic"—really was to Conceptual art, Matthew S. Witkin's exhibition "Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photographic, 1964–1977" showed that we have put all doubts to rest. Featuring 144 works by fifty-seven artists and groups, it ambitiously addresses the centrality of photography to Conceptual art, and as a result, Witkin's exhibition "Became a paradigmatically emblematic form of contemporary art." But as my tentative suggestion of the phrase "the photographic" to replace "photography" might indicate, I'm still not sure that the photography-as-such is quite the

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