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## Blue Tale of Black Silhouettes by John Everett Daquino

**Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi's Blue Tale**  
Kara Walker  
Lehmann Maupin - Chrystie St.  
201 Chrystie Street, New York, NY 10002  
April 21, 2011 - June 25, 2011



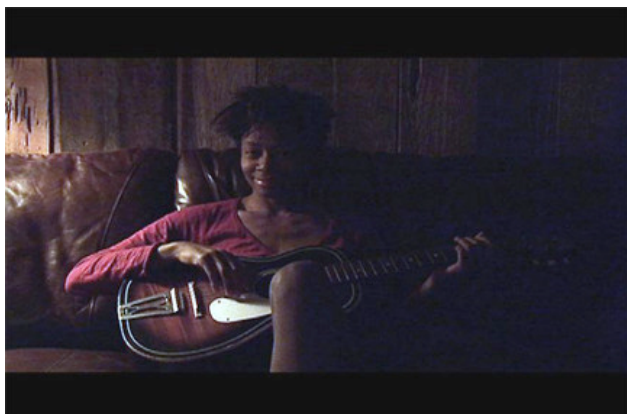
Ever since her New York debut at the Drawing Center in 1994, Kara Walker has been able to successfully turn silhouettes into a provocative art form. In wall murals, paintings, drawings, mixed media installations and films, Walker, who was born in California and moved to Georgia with her family at the age of 13, has used the decorative craft popularized in the 18th century technique to illustrate racially charged narratives set in the antebellum and post Civil War South.

In her latest exhibition at the Lehmann Maupin Gallery, concurrent with works at Sikkema Jenkins & Co, Walker proves to be no one-trick pony. *Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi's Blue Tale*, a seventeen-minute film featuring crudely hand-animated cut-paper silhouettes, tackles the myth of the white southern woman at "risk" from the aggressor, hyper-sexualized black male. It's a graphic, deep south tragedy played to the tune of a delta blues soundtrack. Miss Pipi is the heroine and her blue tale involves a triadic quarrel that ends with her white male lover killing and setting fire to the body of a black man who cuckolded him. Though fictional, the portrayal invokes real accounts of similarly accused black men who were brutalized by angry white mobs.

Most interestingly, Walker is not the only storyteller in the room. Rather, through the ambiguity of the silhouette, viewers project their own sense of southern mythology and history onto the blank shadowy figures, thus creating and building on artist's narrative. The same sense of projection is at work in Walker's video, *Bad Blues*, tucked away in a dark room on the second floor of the gallery. It's a short piece depicting the artist sitting on a couch, half dressed, attempting to play a country blues song, failing to do so over and over as the video loops continuously. Not all that black folk can play or sing the blues. It is her usual fare of critiquing stereotypes and cultural identity, imposed by one's self or another.

While the work on view may not be groundbreaking, it fits nicely into Walker's oeuvre, which continues to expand despite the limitations of her choice materials.

~John Everett Daquino



Images: Still from *Fall Frum Grace, Miss Pipi's Blue Tale*; Still from *Bad Blues*. Courtesy Lehmann Maupin.

Posted by [John Everett Daquino](#) on 6/19 | tags: [video-art](#)

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## In the Still of the Night by Yaelle Amir

**FALLING PETALS**  
Ori Gersht



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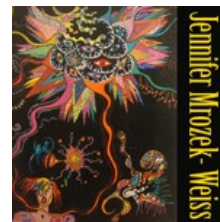
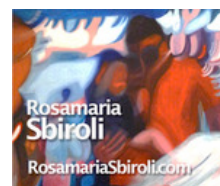
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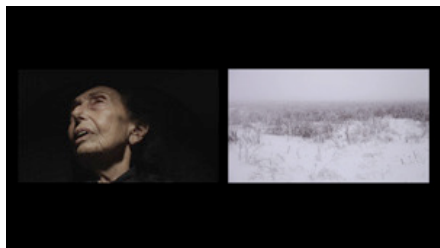
### CRG Gallery

May 6, 2011 - June 24, 2011

In keeping with his previous photographic explorations, Ori Gersht's new series imbues a particular landscape with symbolic meaning through references to local history and beliefs. *Falling Petals* took him to Japan in springtime of 2010 to capture the short-lived bloom of cherry blossoms, and their symbolic usage in the country. He visited both ancient regions of western Japan and urban cities affected by nuclear wars, including Hiroshima and Tokyo.



Cherry blossoms are a well-known cultural symbol in Japan – appearing in paintings and prints from centuries ago to the present in order to indicate renewal and good luck. Traditionally, they have been planted around Buddhist temples as a reminder of the transient nature of life due to the trees' vibrant bloom and rapid demise. In the twentieth-century, it took on a patriotic tone as it was used for propaganda to raise morale and support for Japan's colonialist efforts. It later became a term that referenced kamikaze pilots in World War II – young soldiers who would embark on suicide missions – much like the quick death and falling of cherry blossom petals. In response to this dual symbolism of youthfulness and death, Gersht documented trees blooming on grounds unaffected by the wars, as well as those growing out of nuclear soil. In accordance with his series *Evaders*, *The Forest*, and *Time After Time*, this new body of work poetically explores the dichotomy between violence and beauty.



As customary with Gersht's photographs and films, the works do not disclose any information about the history of the documented location. A majority of the images were created at nighttime using a highly light-sensitive digital camera. As a result, the photographs have a grainy, pixilated, and often blurry texture. *Against the Tide: Isolated*, (2010) is a large photograph that captures a single, vast cherry blossom tree flourishing in full glory, as well as its mirror reflection in an adjacent lake. Shot at night, this habitually colorful and vibrant tree takes on a solemn and ominous perspective that hints at its alternative symbolism. Images like *Against the Tide: Melting Down 01* (2010) and *Against the Tide: Diptych Monks* (2010) take on a ghostly quality with various color and light manipulations, thus pointing to the weight of history embedded among their branches.

Also on view is the video *Will You Dance For Me* (2011)—a quiet and earnest juxtaposition of a snowy landscape with the story of 85-year-old Yehudit Arnon. While watching her silently rock on a chair surrounded by complete darkness, we learn of the story that shaped the course of her life. At nineteen, while at the Auschwitz concentration camp, an SS officer ordered her to dance for him at his Christmas party. When she refused, she was sent to stand barefoot in the snow all night. During her punishment she vowed that if she were to survive this experience, she would dedicate her life to dance. Keeping this promise, she founded the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company (KCDC) in Israel, which she directed and choreographed until she no longer could dance. Slowly rocking back and forth – a form of dancing at her age – Arnon occasionally looks up to the sky, as snow begins falling on an adjacent screen—a reminder of what brought her to this moment. As with the cherry blossom photographs, our eyes wanders from darkness to stunning and mute landscapes—alluding to the ruthless history that is often embedded in our surroundings, entirely out of plain view.

~Yaelle Amir



Images: *Against the Tide: Isolated*, 2010, Archival pigment prints mounted on dibond, 47 1/4 X 70 7/8 inches; *Will You Dance For Me*, 2011, Dual channel HD video projection with sound, 13 minutes 45 seconds duration; *Against the Tide: Diptych Monks*, 2010, C-Type mounted in dibond, in two parts, 61 x 97 inches overall. Courtesy of the artist and CRG Gallery, NY.

Posted by Yaelle Amir on 6/19 | tags: photography video-art

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