

Joshua Liner Gallery

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Kris Kuksi

Imminent Utopia

November 22–December 20, 2008

Opening reception, Gallery I: Saturday, November 22, 6–9 PM

For immediate release and listing:

New York, NY November 4, 2008 -- Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Imminent Utopia*, an exhibition of new mixed-media sculptural works by the Kansas-based artist Kris Kuksi.

Constructed from pop-culture effluvia—such as model kits, injection-molded toy soldiers and animals, plastic skulls, knick-knack figurines, and mechanical parts—these intricate assemblages combine mass-produced “junk” into rococo tableaux. At once grand and grotesque, these friezelike works register from a distance as architectural ornamentation from the Belle Époque. Up close, the agglomerations of macabre parts take on a Bosch-style chaos, with skulls, skeletons, and other gnarled forms compressed into a dark tangle.

The visual tension between ornate beauty and horrific excess has broad resonance for Kuksi, who strives to merge a nostalgia for “old world” aesthetics and a distaste for contemporary culture into his art. Greek gods mingle with monsters amid a miniature landscape of scaffolding, train tracks, refineries, and plumbing, all resembling decorative bric-a-brac in their combined, tiny form.

This strategy of combination and baroque display is the gesture that transforms the artist’s assemblages into elegant, even lyrical presentations. Among the twelve works on display, the centerpiece of the show is a 6-x-11-foot, wall-mounted sculpture entitled *Imminent Utopia*. This “Gesamtkunstwerk” depicts a two-sided universe, world and underworld, each balancing the other in a mirrored relationship of sculptural forms, the upper half crowned by a cathedrallike structure. Close in, one sees a plastic landscape populated by classical statuary, woolly mammoths, and construction cranes. It’s a universe of the mind, the existential toolbox from which civilizations both rise and collapse.

Born in Springfield, Missouri, Kris Kuksi grew up in Kansas, where he earned his BFA and MFA in Painting at Fort Hays State University. Solo exhibitions of his work include *Oblivion* (with Richard Kirk), Strychnin Gallery, Berlin (2007); *The Strange and The Fantastic*, Leedy-Voukos Art Center, Kansas City, MO, and *The Great Passage*, Optic Nerve Arts, Portland, OR (2004); and *The Within*, Fraser Gallery, Washington, DC (2003). Group exhibitions include *Paradise Lost*, Williamsburg Art and Historical Center, Brooklyn (2008); *Illusions of Reality*, Strecker-Nelson Gallery, Manhattan, KS, and *COLOGNE LISTE*, Cologne Art Fair, Germany (2007); *Be Angel, Strange*, Grand Palais, Paris, and *Flights of Imagination*, Museum HR Giger, Gruyères, Switzerland (2006), among others.

Joshua Liner established Joshua Liner Gallery in New York City’s Chelsea district in 2008. Building on the success of his former, Philadelphia-based Lineage Gallery, Joshua Liner’s Chelsea space introduces an exciting roster of young and emerging artists from the West and East coasts, Asia, and Europe.

Also on view, in Gallery II: Pat Rocha, *Departure*, November 11–December 20.

For more information, please visit www.joshualinergallery.com, or contact Tim Strazza at 212.244.7415 or tim@joshualinergallery.com.



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1. *Imminent Utopia* Mixed Media Assemblage 72 x 132 x 19 in. 2008
2. *Venus Admiring Mars' Gun* Mixed Media Assemblage 29 x 18 x 9 in. 2008
3. *The Guardian* Mixed Media Assemblage 33 x 33 x 9 in. 2008