

Bill Walton: *Complex Roads*, n.d., lead, silver, 6¼ by 4¼ inches; at JTT.



residing in Paris and Mexico City for a time, she now spends most of the year in New York. But her core endeavor stems from her youthful experiences in Peru, which have global relevance today.

De la Torre shifted toward a highly aestheticized, quasi-documentary style in series such as “The Lost Steps” (1996). This engaging group of black-and-white still lifes depicts crime evidence from Lima’s Palace of Justice archives. Grotesque objects, like a bloodied shirt or a belt used by police to strangle a rape suspect during a police investigation (according to the label) belie the atmospheric sumptuousness of the images. Another series explores the subtle changes in armored vehicle designs in Mexico (“Armored,” 2000), and “Bulletproof” (2008) examines trends in bullet-proof clothing. Consistent throughout her work is de la Torre’s intense scrutiny of the mechanics of violence, its accoutrements and residual effects.

—David Ebony

BILL WALTON JAMES FUENTES AND JTT

Bringing venerable artists such as Jonas Mekas and Alison Knowles to a younger audience has become something of a modus operandi for the Lower East Side gallery James Fuentes. Continuing in this vein, Fuentes recently presented an arresting exhibition of sculpture by Bill Walton (1931-2010), concurrent with a second Walton show at JTT, a new gallery in the same neighborhood.

The artist gained acclaim in Philadelphia, where he lived and worked, but was

little known outside of the area. A printmaker by trade, he began making sculptures in 1964. Though he was working during the height of Minimalism and, like artists of that movement, used industrial materials—steel, copper, lead, concrete, etc.—he didn’t subscribe to their matter-of-fact approach or large scale. Instead, he coaxed poetry out of intimate combinations of rough-hewn objects.

As seen in these two shows, Walton’s sculptures gently meld opposites—determined and elusive, rugged and delicate, static and mercurial. His hand-size wall assemblages and slightly larger floor works often involve paired objects. Walton wanted his sculptures to be in constant evolution, and thus never dated them. The consistency of that evolution was deftly captured by JTT’s Jasmine Tsou, who curated both exhibitions and created resonances between them.

The wall-hung *Complex Roads*, shown at JTT, features a rectangle of thin lead folded once over a silver wire, which peeks out from the side and top. Meanwhile, *Complex Roads (wood/lead)*, at Fuentes, consists of two small sections of tree branches, one dark brown (as if burnt) and the other light, that intertwine at the top. A lead band softly wraps around the bottom of the dark wood and then stiffly extends on the wall in a straight line, at once echoing and contrasting the lyricism of the branches’ embrace. The simple grace of these works belies the complexity of the artist’s decision-making and craftsmanship. The materials used in *Concrete/Tin*, at JTT, a tin can and a concrete



Melanie Willhide: *T and V, Mesa Elks*, 2008, 2011, inkjet print, 30 by 28 inches; at Von Lintel.

cast of a can sitting on a chunk of wood against the wall, appeared again at Fuentes in *Spring Crate*. There, a gray wooden box on the floor held eight cans—four tin, four concrete. The density of the concrete and lightness of the tin come together in an engaging interplay of weight, texture and form.

Unexpected moments gratify, such as Walton’s ingenious use of baking powder as a pigment or of a paper towel as a sculptural element. The artist’s 20 works in these shows are strikingly of the moment, and Tsou plans to show more of his oeuvre soon. Whatever that may bring, this introduction revealed Walton’s ability to achieve profound elegance with the most unlikely materials.

—Nana Asfour

MELANIE WILLHIDE VON LINTEL

When photographer Melanie Willhide’s home was burglarized in the spring of 2010, the artist assumed that many years’ worth of her work, stored on her computer, was lost for good. Police did eventually apprehend the burglar, but not before he had wiped the computer’s hard drive clean. Recovery attempts yielded only corrupt files: images with digital interference in the form of odd colorations, stuttered imagery and pixel-thin lines banding the surface. But rather than scrap the files, Willhide decided to build on them, using the degradation as a visual vocabulary. The resulting body of work, whose formal strength hinges on its violation of pictorial cohesion, is dedicated to the intruder: Willhide titled