

another. The latter panel is enclosed between a pair of three-dimensional parentheses—Fisher is rather fond of these absurd bits of materialized punctuation, and they figured in several of the works in this show.

Just what the various components of *Death of Marat* add up to, however, or what the title has to do with it, is unclear. The work is a picture puzzle, and so was the exhibition as a whole. Marat, as we know, died in his bath, and death—either actual or threatened and alluded to in all seriousness or as an aside—is a recurrent theme. Water is too—in *Hope & Glory* (2003), for example, an image of a parachute landing at sea is superimposed on a larger picture of a hand plunged into a washbasin. The works echoed one another in all kinds of ways, and the show and its parts seemed to constitute a loose and partially legible narrative, complete with wordplay and punctuation. Intelligent and playful, it was perhaps a little cerebral for some tastes. —Robert Ayers

## El Anatsui

### Skoto

Straddling sculpture, painting, architecture, and design, Nigerian sculptor El Anatsui's luminous wall hangings defy categorization. Each is made from hundreds of aluminum caps and seals from liquor bottles, which the artist flattens, shapes, and joins together with copper wire to form loosely rectangular constructions. It takes two days to put together one square foot of bottle caps, so assistants are necessary. Like a composer notating a score for an orchestra, Anatsui sets up propositions for his helpers—rectangular units attached in rows, for example, or triangular units attached in a spiral pattern—and each person's method of folding results in a specific texture. From a distance, glittering gold, silver, and red predominate, capturing light and reflecting it back at the viewer. Up close the myriad colors, patterns, and names that identify the various brands can be seen.

The artist's father and brother are weavers of kente cloth, an African traditional fabric woven in small sections on narrow looms, and there is a kinship between the syncopated designs of kente

and the patterns of these bottle-cap pieces. In both, narrow strips of material are combined into larger compositions, each strip slightly off-register from the strips above and below it. The seemingly



El Anatsui, *Many Came Back*, 2005, aluminum bottle tops and copper wire, 84" x 109". Skoto.

random results are satisfying abstractions that take on coherent and highly individual visual personalities.

Some of the works were draped over centrally placed nails, creating mountainous folds. Others were hung straight down. The fact that Anatsui doesn't insist on any particular configuration invites further speculation on how the pieces might be used—imagine a sparkling house with permeable bottle-cap walls hung over a wooden framework and rustling in the breeze. Undeniably compelling inside a gallery, as architecture they would dazzle even more.

—Elisabeth Kley

## 'Happenstance'

### Harris Lieberman

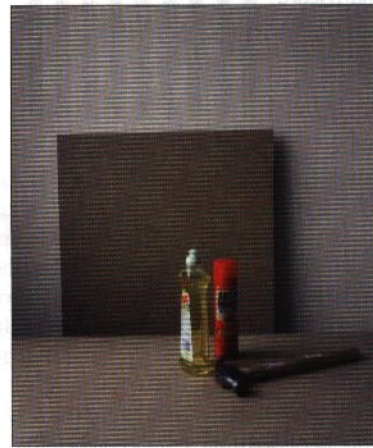
This elliptically themed but provocative group show provided evidence that giving up control has its advantages. Each of the 30 photographs and sculptures in the exhibition relied, to some degree or another, on chance events.

Michael Queenland contributed two of the most compelling works. The hardware-store purchases of a stranger—a bottle of Ajax, a hammer, and some insecticide—are the subject of his photograph *Untitled (Killer)*, 2005, a modern-day, low-rent still life as ominous as it is forlorn and just a little ridiculous. Queenland also perched 12 brooms on their bristles, allowing them

to fall randomly throughout the show's duration. Although nothing was keeping them up, two miraculously remained standing for most of the show, like stubborn endurance athletes.

Unforeseen disaster showed up in Amir Zaki's *Despallo* (2005), three photographs of a Los Angeles house destroyed by a mudslide after heavy rains. Two are straight photojournalism, so one almost misses the strange fissures in the digitally altered third, in which the artist has inserted a chain-link fence in the middle of green hills. Zaki's work shares an understated surrealism with Shana Lutker's series of photographs of sculptures, *Art That I Dreamt That I Made* (2005), for which the artist built objects from her dreams: a yellow paper ball, a tiny bus with flying buttresses of paper, a bench. Mediated by the camera, they remain ghostly and inaccessible.

Conceived by independent curator Lauri Firstenberg, the show—as tidy, leached of color, and full of potential as an empty apartment—emphasized an overall look and feel rather than any common subject matter. The objects and



Michael Queenland, *Untitled (Killer)*, 2005, color print, 24" x 20". Harris Lieberman.

images spoke to one another like 30 strangers in a bar who are all friends with the bartender. This discovery of consensus among apparently random objects felt unlikely, serendipitous, and sweetly optimistic. —Carly Berwick

## Felix Schramm

### Grimm/Rosenfeld

This small gallery space looked as if a boat had tried to dock at its back wall and missed its target horribly. German artist Felix Schramm's carefully planned scene of destruction slammed Sheetrock boards