

arts

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RICK PROL

Rick Prol's imagination darts from salvage and scrap to animation. In this exhibit he continues to move horizontally across sources for scrap motifs (wood fences, window sills, broken glass, shutters) but also moves vertically into a higher realm of comprehension. *Morte Subite* has a frame of shutters, paint-peeled sill, and broken glass. Its street-walkin' shopping-cart pusher has the coiffure and fashion of her frame. The work is an appealing voodoo against the angst of broken glass. More importantly, Prol has acted on the metaphor of the window by opening his art to views of East River desolation. The results are full apocalyptic landscapes for his motifs to inhabit.

Each canvas hallucinates a lanky voodoo figure from a laundry line, subway tracks, or jagged piers at water's edge, personifying the fear that stalks where burned-out buildings meet decrepit piers. In *S.O.S.* a blue figure rides a bicycle: an East River poltergeist of Dürer's *Death* or *der Blaue Reiter* of a more recent-apocalyptic expressionism. The rather insipid and obvious spookiness of the figure is made believable by landscape passages; the Brooklyn Bridge, a charred piling, teeters a remnant of its road over the acid green river as a burning barge drifts by. The port of Brooklyn is a bombed-out smudge.

Some of these acrylic passages have all the lurid murkiness of the 17th-century mannerist Magnasco (which isn't strange). These effects mediate between Prol's material source of motifs and his animated voodoo in a way that suggests the promising consolidation of despair. (Hal Bromm, *December 3-24*)

