

Art in America
 'Claire Barclay'
 December 2010
 Lee Trimming
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Micaela Amateu Amato:
Moroccan girl, 2004,
 cast glass, 12½ by 9 by
 9 inches; at Angles.



View of Claire Barclay's exhibition,
 showing *Flat Peach II* (left) and *Flat
 Peach I* (right), both 2010, aluminum,
 stained wood and mixed mediums;
 at Stephen Friedman.

as Camelot—and its traumatic end—lingers in collective memory.

Andolsek's paintings filled two galleries, while the adjacent project room held *Five Flags* (2003), a hodgepodge of found objects—a police siren, slick drag-racing tires stacked in a stunning minimalist column—along with several mixed-medium works by the artist, including (shades of Jasper Johns) a flag "painting" made of AstroTurf and cow's blood. The space brimmed with sounds recorded in a casino, and (lest we miss the anticapitalist point) an entire wall was papered with corporate logos. Titled after a 1993 David Bowie album that mixes references to weddings, racism and suicide, "Black Tie, White Noise" was both anachronistic and stridently contemporary.

—Kirsten Swenson

LOS ANGELES MICHAELA AMATEU AMATO ANGLES

The nine glazed ceramic figures and four colored cast-glass heads in Micaela Amateu Amato's recent exhibition constituted a village of sorts, a tribe of, as the exhibition title stated, "Exiles and Nomads." An art professor at Penn State, Amato has been exhibiting her work since the late 1970s.

Arranged in clusters around the gallery on simple waist-high pedestals, the ceramic pieces (each about a foot high) display brilliant hues and assume animated postures. They bend, lean, reach and fall; many are contorted or disfigured. In *Ecstatic meditation* (2010), a head on a neck of coiled clay wears an expression of

either pain or bliss, eyes rolled back and tongue lolling, suggestive of death or of transformation. A deep crimson stains the chest of *Mother of Mercy* (2008), a beseeching figure with outstretched arms and an open mouth.

By contrast, the heads (likewise about a foot high each) wear serene expressions; their rich but cool colors and impassive faces suggest stoicism or the calming passage of time. Also on pedestals, they were positioned among the fluid lines and loose, dripping glazes of the ceramic figures like cardinal points on a map, offering ballast among the turmoil. The heads are, according to the gallery, hybrid portraits that each fuse the features of the artist and members of her family. *Moroccan girl* (2004) is an intense orange with a ripple of pale pink across the broad nose like a vein of marble in stone, the skull covered in a cap with chunks of glass forming curls beneath it. In *Brazilian woman with yellow shoulders* (2009), a rich brown face gives way to a glowing yellow neck.

Throughout, Amato's approach to shape—a conical form stands in for a skirt, a loop of clay defines the contour of a neck—recalls the elegant simplicity of ancient Olmec sculptures or Japanese Noh masks. Meanwhile, her use of color and gesture is reminiscent of expressionist painting. But Amato also appears to be aiming at something deeper than art-historical references. From the personal perspective of her own ancestry (she comes from a line of Sephardic Jews), Amato seems to empathize with all exiles and nomads.

—Annie Buckley

INTERNATIONAL

LONDON CLAIRE BARCLAY STEPHEN FRIEDMAN

With her recent show, "Flat Peach," Claire Barclay engaged viewers in a teasing formal game before they had even entered the gallery. The Glasgow-based artist partially obscured the gallery's floor-to-ceiling front window with a gesturally applied coat of mirroring paint, which, seen from the street, immediately reasserted the easily forgotten physicality of the glass while its reflectiveness at the same time effectively evaporated it. The paint blocked much of the interior view, so that it was only upon entry that the solid structures of *Flat Peach I* and *Flat Peach II* (all works 2010) could be clearly seen.

These objects—darkly stained wood-and-aluminum structures with additional elements of fabric, leather and sinamay (a stiff cloth often used in millinery)—are domestically scaled, their simple armatures recalling ambiguous sections of furniture. Draped with quilted, pillowlike forms or adorned with sinamay hemispheres and leather sheaths that could refer equally to interior design or highly stylized prosthetic body parts, the sculptures were accompanied by a number of framed screenprints. Their simple forms, depicted in overlapping layers of ultra-flat black, pink and punning peach ink, echo shapes found in the sculptures, and evoke, among other things, windsocks, fingers, food packaging and genitalia.

Three smaller-scale sculptures, also in stained wood and aluminium, and addi-

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tionally accoutred with fabric, glass and foil elements, could be found riffing on similar concerns in the rear gallery. *Soft Group*, *Clean Lean* and *No Place for Blush* sat in close relation to the floor, emphasizing not only the reference to furniture but also an engagement with the work of 1960s British "New Generation" sculptors like William Tucker and David Annesley. More screenprints lined three of the four walls, again playing a back-and-forth game with the sculptures where referents mixed and blurred. (What one moment recalls a cigar suddenly looks like a rubber club or an unrolled condom.) Crucially, the overlapping layers of ink in the prints echo a process of covering that also occurs in a variety of guises throughout the sculptures. From the clothing of machined metal in snugly tailored sheaths to the staining of wood to match that found in the gallery, Barclay displays an inventive repertoire of gestures where to cover or coat is to simultaneously mimic, mirror or repeat.

Take the wooden parquet blocks found in *Flat Peach I*, *Soft Group* and *No Place For Blush*, which are exact copies of those in the gallery's existing floor, and tessellated to marry perfectly with its patterns: a meta-flooring which, like the mirrored front window, both highlights and masks its original. Revelation and disguise collapse in on each other nowhere more perfectly, however, than in the small aluminum units that dot *Soft Group's* wooden structure. These pieces of machined metal—which resemble chocolate owls and bunnies as much as engine parts—find themselves in various states

of undress, in the process of being unwrapped/wrapped up in sheets of aluminum foil screenprinted with their own likenesses. These foil husks accompany the objects like shed skins, warped casts, crumpled silhouettes; simple items that fray into complexity under the close scrutiny into which Barclay seduces her viewers.

—Lee Trimming

PARIS
MOHAMED BOUROUISSA
 KAMEL MENNOUR

Algerian-born Mohamed Bourouissa is known for his arresting, unsentimental color photographs portraying the everyday lives of youths from working-class and African immigrant backgrounds in Paris's rough-and-tumble suburbs. While seemingly off the cuff, these racially pointed pictures are elaborately choreographed by the artist with the participation of the young people they feature. Indebted to such precedents as the works of Jeff Wall and Gregory Crewdson, the photos also deliberately mimic gestures and groupings found in paintings by Caravaggio, Delacroix and Géricault. Teaming up with two prison inmates for his recent exhibition "Temps Mort" (Dead Time), Bourouissa reiterated the centrality of collaboration to his project, though with radically different means.

Comprising two parts, "Temps Mort" explored the hard-knocks reality of the French penal system. The first part consisted of eight untitled C-prints (all 2008-09, from approximately 18 by 22 to 43 by 53 inches) that document prison

life. Bourouissa persuaded a male friend, incarcerated for a minor offense, to photograph his surroundings using a cell phone. The artist stipulated the types of scenes he desired via telephone conversations or e-mailed drawings. Since French prison authorities consider cell phones contraband, the inmate executed Bourouissa's wishes surreptitiously. The artist rephotographed the low-resolution images he received and made prints in which the objects and individuals are presented at life size. Despite banal subject matter (a weathered pot on a table, a slumbering man, prisoners loafing around), the hazy, pixelated images exude grace and beauty.

Bourouissa displayed each photograph at a height that reflects the subject's location in space. An image of barbed wire along the top of a fence hung flush with the gallery's ceiling. Another, depicting a buff, shirtless prisoner head-on as he does push-ups, was positioned low on the wall near the floor, while a third showing two detainees from behind in a doorway was placed at eye level. This literal spatial presentation transformed the gallery into a virtual prison, casting the viewer as an inmate in an attempt, perhaps, to confound the seemingly categorical distinction between the guilty and the innocent.

The second part of "Temps Mort" featured the title work, an 18-minute video from 2009 that was the result of a yearlong dialogue between Bourouissa and a second convict. In numerous telephone exchanges as well as over 300 text and video messages, Bourouissa