

Flash Art

HOUSTON

EMILY JOYCE

INMAN GALLERY

Emily Joyce is an omnivorous gleaner of images. Working in adhesive vinyl affixed directly to the wall, she binds together multitudes of organic and geometric shapes, drawn from diverse pop culture sources (cartoons and pre-teen novels, to name a few), to create exuberant, wall-filling abstractions. One of Joyce's current interests is street racing culture: both her Houston and New York shows (at Sara Meltzer Gallery) are inspired in part by the vinyl decals that racers use to adorn their cars, as well as the genre magazines they read. "Operation ERACER," the title of her Houston show, references a notorious 2002 mass arrest of street racers in Houston; "Four Deep," the title of her New York show, is a racer's pejorative for a car too heavily loaded with passengers to race.

For Joyce, lamination equals assimilation. She partially or completely disguises the individual specificity of her found images by overlaying them until they lose their autonomy. The end result of so much vinyl accumulation is a subtle, low-relief topography that, catching light and casting shadow, inflects and moderates Joyce's supercharged, relentlessly high-key color combinations.

The periphery-filling vistas of works like *Witch's Brew* and *The Break-up Painting* are composed of multicolored clusters that float like continents across a large wall. Close inspection reveals a fragmented world composed entirely of recombinant imagery: silhouettes (of people, machines) overlaid on free-floating geometric designs (rotospheres, honeycombs) and married to snatches of flora and fauna. References to mapping are apparent throughout Joyce's work, but the polyglot nature and fluidity of the way she conflates sign and signifier suggests that her real interest is in renaming the components of the visible world in order to read images like a personal language.

Christopher French



EMILY JOYCE, *Witch's Brew*, 2002.
Adhesive vinyl on paper 305 x 417 cm. Photo: Tom DuBrock.