

Jennie Ottinger: *Public Pool*, 2009, oil on canvas, 16 by 24 inches; at Johansson Projects.



or the Baltic News Service, has been translated into English, not—as a harsh assessment might support—to assert the authority of a Western point of view, but rather to make accessible multiple and opposing viewpoints from around the world.

In a smaller space downstairs was *cave model* (2009), a plaster of paris sculpture stretching to about 6 feet in each dimension. Those familiar with Khedoori's work will recognize the sinuous curves of the white sculpture, snaking around itself like a caduceus. According to press materials, it represents the form of an imagined cave. In the context of this exhibition, the work accrued added meaning. Its open spaces provided breathing room to reflect on the nearly incomprehensible march of information on the floor above.

—Annie Buckley

OAKLAND

JENNIE OTTINGER JOHANSSON PROJECTS

Jennie Ottinger's exhibition "Ibid" reminded me of a Gahan Wilson cartoon in which a painter, busy representing two bare trees as if they were crawling with monstrous bugs and snakes, explains with a devilish grin to an onlooking child, "I paint what I see." Using a wide variety of found photographs as source material for her sketchy watercolors on paper and oils on board or canvas, Ottinger paints crude figures that appear to have been captured at the precise instant between their materialization and disappearance.

Frequently, the figures' occupations are what register first; often, that's all the viewer has to go on. Ottinger has a thing for uniforms—the antiseptic white ones of doctors and nurses; the pale pink ones of ballet dancers. There are jockeys in silks, men in gray flannel suits and schoolchildren dressed like penguins. Even Superman's primary-colored suit pops up, albeit forlornly, on a hanger. The nearly 100 rough likenesses filled Johansson Projects' airy space like some massive portrait collection that had just been brought out from the vaults to be deaccessioned. The framed pieces were hung salon style and spilled over onto the floor, where works were stacked in a pile that visitors were welcome to look through, which only added to the impression of an urgent sale.

Ottinger is light on fuss and has a gift for economic gestures: she knows how to work a smudge into something horrifically mouthlike, and that a single streak of blue can be enough to intimate the dimensions of a room. Willem de Kooning's and Francis Bacon's turns at exploding the human form flash by as precedents, as do Richard Prince's palimpsestlike nurse paintings, but Ottinger's work is far more intimate in scale and touch, and far less brutal. Certainly, though, it is no less unsettling.

Take one largish (16-by-24-inch) painting of schoolboys piling into a pool. The children farthest out splash their way past the water toward the empty white space of the rest of the



Beth Van Hoesen: *Boris*, 1977, color aquatint, etching, drypoint and mixed mediums, 20½ by 22½ inches; at the Portland Art Museum.

sheet. There is an almost comic existential horror to this image—it evokes the moment when Wile E. Coyote stops running in midair and looks down. As if to underscore this association, the schoolboy painting was hung next to a smaller watercolor of a drained lap pool.

There might be viewers who find Ottinger's fixation on ordinary moments lost in time somehow quaint. Rather, her focus on uniformed professionals and her repeated return to certain scenes (some images are painted multiple times) suggest a morbid view of the quotidian. Her paintings seem to caution that in life as in death, we risk becoming metonymically condensed into the personal effects—the pictures and documents—that offer only limited proof of our existence.

—Matt Sussman

PORTLAND, ORE.

BETH VAN HOESEN PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

The Portland Art Museum, repository of the complete archive of Beth Van Hoesen's prints, recently honored the San Francisco artist with a retrospective spanning four decades. In the 1950s, Van Hoesen (b. 1926) began to participate in both Bay Area figuration and a regional efflorescence of intaglio printmaking. When Kathan Brown opened Crown Point Press in Berkeley in 1962, Van Hoesen's editions were among the workshop's first projects. In those days, Brown provided models to