



MEMORIES ARE A GREAT TRAP. ONE MUST BE ABLE TO FORGET THEM WHEN THEY ARE TOO MANY AND ONE MUST HAVE THE PATIENCE TO WAIT UNTIL THEY COME AGAIN.

STRIKE A POSE: MUNTEAN/ROSENBLUM

Markus Muntean and Adi Rosenblum have come a long way since first collaborating, in 1992. After a spate of gory, rough-and-ready early projects (one of which, 1997's *Slaymobil*, involved fashionably slender youths, skin apparently slashed, sitting in the awkward manner of Playmobil toys), they hit their stride with comparatively understated large-scale drawings of teenagers and twentysomethings. Captioned with phrases that feel existentialist and sincere but are actually lifted from lowbrow fiction, and featuring their logo-festooned subjects adopting a repertoire of poses that bridged fashion ads and Old Master paintings, these works seemingly walked a fine line between elevation and denigration of a branded demographic.

But as they said recently, the Vienna- and London-based duo are "interested in the archetypes of figuration", and one might accordingly read their paintings as swirling, disjunctive compendiums of how people are represented, past and present, and the

Untitled (Memories are a great trap...),
2007, oil on canvas, 220 x 260 cm.
Courtesy Maureen Paley, London, and
Team Gallery, New York

politics underlying those decisions. Baroque conventions are currently occupying the pair's minds: newly painterly works such as 2007's *Untitled (Memories are a great trap...)*, with its assortment of swooning and posing youngsters (and one worried-looking oldster) in a wrecker's yard, employ exaggerated spatial dynamics straight from a seventeenth-century textbook. Such works are also heavy with insinuations of oncoming redundancy, but perhaps deceptively so. You can still view Muntean/Rosenblum as cynics or as elegists for their consumerist generation and the ones below it; but these paintings (and videos such as the 2006 *Shroud*, with its approximately Christlike image of a pulchritudinous youth, lying half-naked and apparently dead between a vehicle's big wheels) also remind one of how easy it is to influence opinion, and how necessary - whether you're a priest, a fashion marketer or an artist. *Martin Herbert*

MUNTEAN/ROSENBLUM
26 MAY - 15 JULY
MAUREEN PALEY, LONDON
WWW.MAUREENPALEY.COM

Art Review:

Issue 12 • June 2007