

Lisa Birke: "Rain 'n' heaps"

BAU-XI GALLERY, VANCOUVER, BC Sept 7-28 - "Heaps", "piles", "loads" and "masses" - however expressed, Lisa Birke's brilliantly-drawn, phantasmagorical images of objects and figures are simultaneously scary, provocative and hilarious. Her arrangements resemble traditional still life paintings that have been chunnelled through kaleidoscopes with a few odd umbrellas and insects thrown in for good measure. From this visual disarray and dishevelment, Birke fashions paintings



Lisa Birke, *Pile of Smokin' Portraits*, (2002),
oil on canvas [Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver BC,
Sept 7-28]

densely filled with hundreds of items, taken out of their natural context and scale, visually dissected and reconstructed. Birke is very clear about her intentions. She sees her work as cultural artifacts containing the detritus of art, figurative language and scientific categorization. As she describes them, "The works are like cars with all the features: traditional German dependability and engineering backed by racy new colours and a modern look, with as many gadgets crammed on as possible, including a pig on the hood and a mouse in the muffler".

The current exhibit includes a two-dimensional painting that appears to have burst its seams and spilled into the third dimension of the gallery. From the flat painted surface, a profusion of lively objects escapes into the viewer's own real space.

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