

DEREK ELLER GALLERY

D-L Alvarez

Parents' Day

September 6 - October 6, 2007

Opening Reception: Thursday, Sept 6, 6-8 pm

Parents' Day

by D-L Alvarez

Jonhannes Malfatti Sound-Mix

Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay Voice

Regine Rack Costumes

Per Apel Story-Boarding

Parents' Day features five new works by Alvarez which center on themes found in the genre of slasher films. Starting with the show's title and the work, which hangs above everything else, *Occasion to Be Denounced* (2007), the tone of celebrating a special occasion is set. Made entirely of crepe paper, the work underlines the fragility of such occasions. This is a common theme in the genre featuring such films as *Happy Birthday to Me*, *Mother's Day*, and *Silent Night Deadly Night*. The later was controversial for depicting a killer in a Santa suit, which brings to light another common theme of the genre: that the killer's identity, including often his or her gender, is almost always disguised.

The costumes that Alvarez provides in *Something to Cry About* (2007) might well belong to the Mom and Dad of *Parents' Day*. They are cheery in appearance, but also completely concealing: each of the two uniforms having been sewn from several of children's clothes. In a series of drawings titled *The Closet* (2006-2007), Alvarez depicts a pivotal scene from John Carpenters' *Halloween*, a 1978 movie that, with all of its sequels and imitations, would come to be one of the defining films of the slasher genre. In this scene, a masked figure attempts to kill a young woman played by Jamie Lee Curtis (the daughter of Psycho's Janet Leigh), whose perceived safety of the closet is quickly shattered. The sound work, *Bird Call* (2007), was recorded in a midnight woods, and the folk song that weaves in and out of the forest pays a nod to a film famous for not using a written musical score to provoke scares: Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 film, *The Birds*, which Alvarez credits in the show's text based work, *eye caress; a filmography* (2007), as "the first film fright to stay with me." It is another Hitchcock film, his 1960 *Psycho*, which is considered the mother to the slasher genre. *Psycho* is based on the true story of Wisconsin serial killer Ed Gein, notorious for the grisly details of his crimes, which included sewing the skin of his victims into a "woman suit." Gein believed that by wearing such a suit he would be disguised as his mother. In all, Alvarez is less interested in the spectacle of crime as in the cultural history crime forges. A truly American genre, slasher films of the 70s and 80s connected to already existing cultural drifts. They reflect the violation of innocence exemplified by the transition that took place at the end of the sixties when paranoia replaced free love.

D-L Alvarez lives and works in Berlin and has exhibited widely throughout the United States and Europe, most recently in the 2006 exhibition *Drawing from the Modern 1975-2005* at the Museum of Modern Art. His work has been collected by numerous museums including the Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Weatherspoon Art Gallery. This will be his sixth solo show with the gallery.