

**MUSEUMS/GALLERIES**

# "new. (now). 2013" at Hamiltonian Gallery, Reviewed

*Hamiltonian's newest fellows aren't all satisfied with just "good."*



by **KRISTON CAPPS**  
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Larry Cook, "Maria" (2010)

Through its Hamiltonian Fellows program, Hamiltonian Gallery has a decent track record of predicting new talent. Jonathan Monaghan, a 2009 fellow (and a former student of mine) has gone on to show with Curator's Office; 2010 fellows Jessica Van Brakle and Elena Volkova have both enjoyed well-received shows at Hamiltonian and elsewhere. Annette Isham and Billy Friebele, two of last year's fellows, are some of my favorite new artists in years. In the show "new. (now). 2013," the current crop promises to carry the baton: Most of the five new fellows are doing good work—and some of them won't settle for just that.

Larry Cook, a recent MFA graduate from George Washington University, offers two portrait pieces: "M.L.," a silent edited loop of archival press footage featuring a stony-faced Martin Luther King, Jr., who doesn't speak or otherwise acknowledge the camera; and "All American," a photographic triptych for which Cook shot portraits of three friends to represent American archetypes. There's a young black man dressed as a Blood gang member (in red); another is dressed as a Crip (in blue); and between the stands a Ku Klux Klan wizard (in white, to complete the trifecta). It would take more than two portraits to get a sense of what Cook wants to say about our allegedly post-racial America. But by pulling MLK footage from the archives, to say nothing of custom-ordering Klan robes, Cook means to make a statement that is anything but subtle.

Will Schneider-White aims for the highest rung with paintings that draw plainly from Bay Area Figurative Movement artists Elmer Bischoff and David Park. Schneider-White's paintings largely lack the great tension between foreground and background that make those 1950–60s paintings work so well; the background in Schneider-White's "Dead Ethiopian (2)" seems like an afterthought. But there's great narrative interplay between palette and composition, in that painting and also in "Purple Book"—one in which the composition is comic but the palette is brooding.

Joshua Haycraft brings a staggering amount of talent to the show, but his work also needs the most editing. "BHBITB Meditations 3: Invocations," a computer-generated video work, pairs *Gattaca*-style corporate-dystopian imagery with a Tool album's worth of mystic symbols. The best part is the

depiction of a PlayStation-style interface: The video starts when an unseen user selects one of the four fundamental “elements” from Haycraft’s universe, which kicks off “Meditations 3” but also suggests there could be three other videos, or three other ways of being. The risk in Haycraft’s work is that it wants to just be an animated narrative feature—a sci-fi flick. Haycraft may not care much that his work might be cinema instead of video art; but to join the ranks of other successful D.C. computer-video artists like Monaghan or Brandon Morse, he will need to think about form and format.

Lisa Dillin’s “Tiger Tiles (Survivor),” a floor piece that looks like linoleum, is another excellent piece of craftsmanship. While it’s hard to tell from the vinyl depiction of a tiger-skin rug whether she has decorative instincts, she successfully balances masculine and feminine in this product. Eric Gottesman’s portraits from a decade of work and advocacy in Ethiopia don’t strike the right tenor in this show, but his photojournalistic pieces could work exceptionally well in a different kind of presentation. What kind, I don’t know, but the “how” seems clear—through the type of nurturing that Hamiltonian aims to provide.