ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Embracing the Imagery Of Childhood

A Show Plays on the Themes Of Innocence, and the Loss of It





First there was the simple collage. Ever since Patio Picasso thought it might be cost to stick a piece of newspaper code a pointing, artists have been appropriating all kinds of materials, ob-

ART REVIEW jects and mans-media imagery for their art-worlds, challenging in the process our ideas

and assumptions about art.

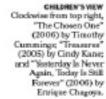
"Inner Child: Good and Evil in the Gardon of Momories" at the Hunturdon Nuseum of Art explores a more recent is related phenomenon—the enthusions for appropriated childhood inagery in contemporary art. To this end, Kristen Accold, the curator, has assembled nearly 58 pretty-colored, fantasy-oriented activeries incorporating tops, cartinose, comics, children's films and

The motivations for the current embrace of this imagery are not easy to plupoint. No doubt they include a reaction to calonities like wors, poverty and ratural disasters; perhaps they also reflect the loss of mystery and weader in everyday life, as science continnes to explain the inner workings of enstything.

book illustrations and other kids' stuff.

At the same time, this theme is not exactly new to art. In the 1966s, Andly Warhol made pointings using diagrams from children's point-by-numbers kits projected onto the canvas. Meanwhile, in the 1960s, Jeff Kome created at international semantion with a huge delilike scripture of a cuddy puppy made of invers. Though the work was semi-

"Inner Child: Good and Evil in the Garden of Monorine," Hunterdon Museum of Art, 7 Lower Center Street, Clinton, through Jan. 6; (108) 755-8115 or were hunterdonarimuseum.org.





mental and kitschy, the art world favored over the puppy as if it were a newborn baby.

Some artists selected for the show in Busterdon also play on sentimentally, using childhood imagery to express a loughty for a time of innocence, simplicity and purity. Work of this kind tends to dominate the first-floor gallery, where among other things you will find pointings of little girls by Seonne Hong; toy assemblages by Brace Wall; and an army of new like toys created by an artist known only as Savasio.

The same qualities pervide Circly Eure's painting "Treasures" (2005), depicting a collection of imaginary stuffed animals, toys and other things that are often a part of the faminary like of children. There is no sense of irony, conflict or anxiety here, only an expression of leve and admiration for purity and play.

Other artists work with decorative

motits — butterflies, birds, floral batiks and all kinds of ornamental imagery and patterning from the history of design. Still others, the Meissa Stern, have adopted a painting cyle that is somewhere between the deschainses of prehistoric art on cave walls and the roughungency of children's drawings.

Several artworks possess art historical and literary echoes that mage from Henry Burger to CS. Levis, Tikashi Marakami to J.S.R. Tolkien. The spirit of Matthew Barney also hovers over this slow, for more than anyone be to responsible for the functionistic with funtagery in concemporary art. In fact, Inagery in concemporary art. In fact, Inliteracy's "Crementer Cycle" of films might be described as one long fairly tale.

While some artists employ childhood imagery innocently, there is an air of danger and eroticism in other works Works ranging from the fantastic to the provocative.

that maken aspects of the exhibition feet, well, grown-up. This is especially apparent in the displays upstains, where you will find artists using childhood imagery to address serious themes, or at least combining adult titus and childhood imagery. You could say they depict a world of timocence lost.

Roy Caesar's "Sanctuary" (2005) is a computer-attered image of a girl with pink rabbit ears and an insertuable look on her face. She is seary, for in addition to her appearance she is helding a ginet fishhook and looking up at the sky wishfully. Has she just killed someone? It is more horror-movie still than art photograph.

The visual language of childwood is also appropriated and manipulated for dark purposes in paintings by Enrique Chagoya, Timothy Camunings, Tim Evans and Rene Lynch. For instance, Mr. Chagoya uses cartoon figures to criticize the current administration's policize on tilignal immigration, while Ms. Lynch rolles on symbolium to navigate the thorny, provocative subject of teenage sexuality.

Then there is Megan Marlan, who paints broken and docurried toys plied up as if on a glant rubbish heap. Her paintings embody some of the more actions issues raised by this show, the consumerium, wasterbilmess and a relative on cheap imports. They suggest that while we were off ploying with our new toys, our society was the wurse for