

**Art Interactive Gallery**  
130 Bishop Allen Dr. Central Sq.  
Cambridge 617.498.0100  
artinteractive.org  
■ Boston Cyberarts Festival presents:  
Art Interactive's *Shadow Play*  
4.23-8.31

**Art Works Gallery**  
84 Fairmount Ave, Hyde Park  
617.833.6009  
artworksgalleryboston.com  
■ Nancy Sableski, *Landscape Paintings of the Arnold Arboretum*  
7.7-8.2

**artSPACE @ 16**  
16 Princeton Road, Malden  
artspaceat16.com  
■ *Impersonature* feat. works by Leigh Hall, Kim Salerno, Marcella Anna Stasa, Dustin Tracy, and Jamie Vasta  
6.18-7.16

**Charlestown Navy Yard**  
55 Constitution Rd., Charlestown  
617.242.5601

► **dig this** Jerry Beck, *The Secret Ark of Icon Park*  
7.2-10.10

**Davis Square**  
Somerville 617.625.6600  
somervilleartscouncil.org

► **dig this** Somerville ArtBeat  
7.14-7.16

**DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park**  
51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln  
781.259.8355 decordova.org  
■ The 2005 DeCordova Annual Exhibition  
4.30-7.31

**Forest Hills Cemetery**  
95 Forest Hills Ave., Boston  
617.524.0218 foresthillstrust.org

► **dig this** 7th Annual Lantern Festival  
7.14 [6pm-9pm/\$10 per lantern]

**Fort Point Arts Community Gallery**  
300 Summer St., Boston  
617.423.4299 fortpointarts.org  
■ *Séance* feat. works by Holly Coulis, Sheila Gallagher, Kenneth Linehan, Marsching and Wheeler, Anne Walsh  
6.17-7.30

**Gallery Naga**  
67 Newbury St., Boston 617.267.9060  
gallerynaga.com  
■ *The Repetitive Mark*, feat. works by John Eric Byers, Elizabeth Cheek, Janice Handleman, Reese Inman, Masako Kamiya, and Jessie Morgan  
6.24-7.29

**Griffin Museum of Photography**  
67 Shore Rd., Winchester  
781.729.1158 griffinmuseum.org  
► **dig this** John Chervinsky, *CaCO<sub>3</sub>*  
7.12-9.10

**Institute Of Contemporary Art (ICA)**  
955 Boylston St, Boston  
617.266.5152 icaboston.org  
■ *Getting Emotional*  
5.18-9.5 [\$7, \$5 seniors and students, members and children free]  
■ *Momentum 4: Roe Ethridge*  
5.18-9.5 [\$7, \$5 seniors and students, members and children free]

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# arts

SCREAMING FROM THE GALLERY BY KATE LEDOGAR | SCREAMING@WEEKLYDIG.COM

## S'xls



The rest of the world laughs at us for our Victorian attitudes. They think we're childish, squeamish and silly. And, of course, adolescently distracted with sex to the point that we are powerless against it as an advertising tool. I can imagine a meeting in a French boardroom: (in French) "Just throw some sex in the ad and you'll get those assholes' attention. It doesn't have to be overt—they think everything is dirty over there." American companies, as well, thrive on puritanical American attitudes. Just look at the old Coppertone ad, "Flash 'em a Coppertone Tan!," with the little dog pulling down the little girl's bathing suit to reveal a lilywhite butt. In which cultures of the world do you think that would be perceived as racy? Maybe in America (where this ad gave rise to a debate about whether the 3-year-old bathing beauty is being eroticized) and, say, all the countries that still think stoning is a good punishment for women who've been raped. The only difference is the latter countries wouldn't print such an ad in the first place.

Sydney P. Hardin's show at June Bug Café in JP deals with these issues in advertising. America, as a collective consciousness, has a 12-year-old's capacity to awe and titter at such unnatural things as naked breasts and crotch bulges, and advertisers use this to great advantage. Hardin's paintings riff on and replicate the imagery of advertising, focusing on the sexualization of youth as an aid to consumerism. His enamel and paint marker portraits are done in a flat, heavily outlined and unblended style that mimics animation and airbrushing, and has more than a little resemblance to paint-by-number. Candy-colored borders and backgrounds further drive the series toward the depths of Americana kitsch. His subjects are such challenging individuals as a big-eyed waif in platform heels with a silly dog pendant around her neck; a toddler girl with a boo-boo on her knee and a dress that doesn't quite cover her undies; a pre-pubescent Polynesian trio thrusting their flat chests forward; and a teenager rubbing her crotch against the plastic mane of a carnival pony. Hardin also includes a series of face portraits of female children and teenagers (including the coy Coppertone girl) mugging suggestively



for the camera: sucking thumb, pulling lip, staring with lips slightly parted while holding apple, brushing cheek against soft teddy ... that sort of thing.

Many (perhaps all, though I'm not certain) of Hardin's subjects are culled from advertisements. These are the so-called sex kittens that sell so well to the American market. I'm not sure if I would have gotten the advertising connection if I hadn't read the theory-rich artist's statement, though. Without it, I think I would have seen most of his images as good-old glossy American kitsch—which is basically the same as advertising: non-threatening sentimentality, appealing to the worst in all of us.

Hardin makes a nice point with his slickly rendered paintings, but I think he could go further with the visuals—perhaps by incorporating the products (which are, after all, the bait that these children are posing with) or using a greater number of recognizable ads, such as the Coppertone one. The line between innocence and sexuality is interesting in American culture, because our reverence for innocence is exactly reflected in our fascination with the dirtying of innocence—and there's room for all sorts of creative visual reinterpretation. ☒

SYDNEY P. HARDIN AT JUNE BUG CAFÉ.

403A CENTRE STREET, JP. 617.522.2393. THROUGH 7.31.05

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