

Artweek

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Pack-ratism afflicts—or blesses—both genders equally, but women seem to deal with the stuff they hoard differently than men do. While men tend to amass and sort, working bibliographically or numismatically towards a complete collection of something, women are apt to cull and transform, changing things into other things. This is not, of course, to say that men aren't bricoleurs as well, but the collecting impulse doesn't inspire us to transformative magic as it seems to women. Certainly, the *Hysterical Paradise* with which Jennifer Vanderpool filled Bandini Art (in what turned out to have been the gallery's swan song) evinced her conjuror's streak even as it manifested her hoarding instinct. Indeed, despite Vanderpool's testimony, her solo exhibition seemed less a symptom of obsessive-compulsive tendencies than it did of bricolagic gifts.

The title betrays much of the works' source. *Hysterical Paradise* proposed itself as a garden of delights grounded in the female experience. Vanderpool meant it to be less a return to Eden than to childhood (although, arguably that's one and the same thing), and, to infer from her account of the exhibition's generation, it paid homage to Vanderpool's mother (from whom she inherited the amassing bug and whom she describes as "a Master Gardner and environmentalist"). It was certainly a dramatic exercise in reuse; despite the personal spin Vanderpool kept on it, the resulting exhibition was a delirious, not quite practical, but altogether enchanting magnum opus of recycling—Almost.

Not everything in *Hysterical Paradise* had been fashioned from found objects and materials. Most notably, several video monitors and projectors situated at strategic sites within Vanderpool's exuberant forest played back her similarly boisterous animations, serving to extend the texture and spirit of the installation into time, but spoiling its recycled purity. Thinking about it, though, the monitors and projectors provided the exception that proved the rule, pulling the overall installation away from the mere virtuosity of material purity. By sullyng her collected stuff with such a deliberate, "clean" intervention, disrupting space and substance with time and image, Vanderpool kept our attention on the garden itself and not on her ability to craft a garden out of myriad whatever's.

In *Hysterical Paradise* Vanderpool demonstrated her artistic bona fides, not by flaunting her manual skill or formal cleverness, but by harnessing those evident abilities entirely to a broader vision. She clearly wanted us not just to admire the garden, but to be a part of it. Instead of demonstrating what she could do, she drew us into what she did.

Peter Frank