



Tony Labat  
Modern Painters  
March 2008

# MODERN PAINTERS

The International Contemporary Art Magazine

March 2008  
artinfo.com



## ROLL TAPE

**A HIGHLY SELECTIVE, PURELY SUBJECTIVE HISTORY OF VIDEO ART**

Back and More Real Than Ever: California Video Gets a Second Life

Hotshot Producer Recalls His Guerrilla Video Days

China's Early Avant-Garde Video Scene on Fast-Forward

USA \$9.95 CAN \$12.50 UK £5.99





# Tony Labat

## Modern Painters

### March 2008

---

#### SAN FRANCISCO

#### TONY LABAT

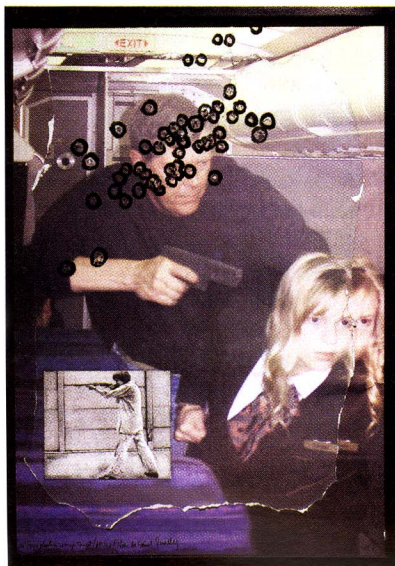
GALLERY PAULE ANGLIM

---

The work in Bay Area mainstay Tony Labat's new show explored the aestheticization of violence, but to varying effect. In the video loop *Mata Crush* (2006), a behemoth drop hammer slowly beats a black Lincoln Continental into a flat rectangle. While the destruction here makes for gorgeous footage, in other works it courts a rather facile Tarantinoesque cool. Case in point are the slashed red canvases of "Montana/Fontana" (2007), which reveal glimpses of Tony "Scarface" Montana. Equating the coked-up Hollywood street

thug to Lucio Fontana's violations of the picture plane makes for pointless hyperbole. The AK-47-sprayed collage *TIR (After Niki) AK47* (2007) duplicates Niki de Saint Phalle's own shooting-range critique of AbEx masculine bluster. One wonders how much the appropriation of this iconology of violence is a protest against the use of trite lyricisms to justify or disguise more pressing aggressions outside the gallery's walls, and how much of it is a desire to harness its sheer aesthetic power. This ambiguity is most effective in the unsettlingly exploitative yet thought-provoking video installation *Day Labor: Mapping the Outside (Fat Chance Bruce Nauman)* (2006). Relating Nauman's dead time—captured in the quotation of the artist's piece—to that of the day laborers lingering outside Labat's window lays bare art's unavoidable implication in global economics, and proposes appropriation as perhaps its most insidious form of violence.

—YASMINE VAN PEE



TONY LABAT, *TIR (AFTER NIKI) AK47*, 2007. SHOOTING-RANGE TARGET, PAINT, AND COLLAGE, 34 X 24 1/2 IN. COURTESY GALLERY PAULE ANGLIM, SAN FRANCISCO.