

# N·O·A·R

THE NEW ORLEANS ART REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF ANALYSIS

SPRING - SUMMER 2007



Spring - Summer 2007



Diego Larguia. Courtesy d.o.c.s. gallery.

## Gallery Walk II

BY SASKIA OZOLS

### DIEGO LARGUIA at d.o.c.s Gallery

DIEGO LARGUIA PAINTS *en plein air*, on site, always from life. His works strongly reflect the aesthetic of our contemporary New Orleans Realist tradition, whose roots may be easily traced from teacher to student, from a number of our current day leaders of the circles, directly through important American art communities such as New York and Philadelphia, back to the Academie Julien, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 19th century France. This artistic lineage is a proud one for our city, and demonstrates yet another cultural bond with our French heritage.

Larguia removes himself decisively from cliché, by combining a particularly unique vision with an *al la prima*

manner of paint application, and a *Plein Air* approach to landscape. What makes this practice constantly relevant and contemporary is that the artist must work from direct observation, recording what happens to be in front of him at any given time. This does not only require discipline and patience, it documents the changing environment of a particular time and place.

In "Street Car Tracks," the viewer is set in a particularly alarming vantage point. The linear perspective of the tracks suggest that the picture was painted sitting near the middle of the railway. As a picture takes longer to paint than ten minutes, (the once regular duration between familiar streetcar rumblings), this picture could never have been done in any other time or place. In "Half Raised House," one is reminded of rebuilding efforts. In works such as "Pink Houses on Camp Street," rich impasto



Lory Lockwood: *Hittr vs Hittr*, 2006. Courtesy Soren Christensen Gallery

in the brushwork sculpts the forms he is depicting, which are punctuated further with accurately drawn architecture and successfully implied atmosphere, stated with masterfully varied paint quality. In a number of his works, cast shadows are long and become dynamic compositional elements in their own rite. His perception of color in shadow finely honed, full of life, reflects the sky, and changes appropriately according to the local color of the object on which it is falling. Dynamic contrasts in value are created with his use of an *imprimatura*, or toned ground, which deepens shadows and allows for a higher contrast with the areas of light. This separates him from impressionist landscape, as their paintings were done on white, foregoing the neutral ground, and with it contrasts in value. Largaia picks and chooses techniques from art history, and combines them in a way which suits his vision. The exhibition also includes one work from his 9<sup>th</sup> ward series, which sets off the sunlit new growth in many of the other paintings nicely. The entire show comprises a well done and historically significant visual chronology of

the epic rebirth of our city, done with a poetic and painterly perception.

#### **LORY LOCKWOOD at Soren Christensen Gallery**

Lory Lockwood's current show entitled "Cultural Icons," presents multiple aspects of our diverse and collective experience in today's world. Her subjects include football players, motorcycles, and a brief interlude referencing successful gimmicks in the world of visual art. Her paintings attach cultural significance to subject matter which traditionally would not have suggested the search for meaning that once elevated the artist above a certain mainstream norm. These are not, however, traditional paintings, and as such, a new norm in the search for meaning could be explored. Dangerous questions regarding taste, education, and history are undeniable while viewing this exhibition. Is a football game appropriate subject matter for an icon? Through the combination of her historical medium with her subject matter, there is a sardonic manipulation of forced intellectual discourse