

defining new form.

AARON FLINT JAMISON

Pied-à-Terre (San Francisco) Poet and artist McIntyre Parker's gallery Pied-à-Terre is located in the tediously quiet Inner Richmond neighborhood of San Francisco. Its program, throughout its four years of operation, hasn't lacked consistency, and this year has been particularly special. Pied currently inhabits the garage underneath Parker's apartment, which is treated with as much respect and reverence as any museum or gallery space I've seen. The resulting exhibitions are dependably homespun yet refined—a true rarity.

DAN FINSEL

Patricia Fernández (Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles) You might assume that nostalgia coupled with formal romanticism would spell lock-and-key familial faithfulness. Blood is thicker than water; it's unlawful to report on your family's "dirty" deeds. In Patricia Fernández's work, this is exactly the risk. How do you remain quiet when you discover your parents have politically "radical" pasts? Or, conversely, how do you remain quiet when you discover that they didn't? In Fernández's two concurrent shows at Commonwealth and Council this spring, one could easily be drawn into her delicate painterly aesthetic, enough even to overlook a paper-covered book containing correspondences with her parents—which hint at, but never reveal, the nature of their activities in the late 1960s.

LUCIE STAHL

Mary Ann Aitken, "Black Abstract 1983–2011" (What Pipeline and Trinosophes, Detroit) Mary Ann Aitken never had a solo exhibition in her lifetime. Born in Detroit in 1960, she lived for many years in Brooklyn, where she had a job as an art therapist working with drug addicts. She died last year at fifty-two. I managed to see this two-part exhibition this past summer. The gallery What Pipeline was exhibiting pieces she made earlier on (between 1983 and '89),



Patricia Fernández, *Box (a proposition for ten years)*, 2012–22, mixed media, 41 ¼ x 24 ¼ x 14 ¼".



Melissa Appleton and Matthew Butcher, "Writtle Calling/2 Emma Toc," 2012, Writtle, UK. Photo: Tim Brotherton.



including works on newsprint, mixed-media collage, and various kinds of painting, while Trinosophes featured her later, more abstract objects made between 2006 and 2011. What Pipeline also produced a beautiful catalogue. Aitken's work is not only exceptionally current and humble, it also demonstrates her total dedication as much as her badassness.

BETYE SAAR

"In Extremis: Death and Life in 21st Century Haitian Art" (Fowler Museum at UCLA) Materials are a dominant inspiration for my assemblages, and I source them from flea markets and garage sales. I was overwhelmed and shocked by the materials used by the artists in the exhibition "In Extremis." After the earthquake in 2010 left Haiti buried in debris, artists gathered mangled objects from their former lives. These remnants of lost souls—bicycles, toys, furniture, and instruments—were combined and embellished with human skulls and bones to create assemblages of grief and power. The works focused on vodun tricksters known as the Gede, embracing their aspects of death, rebirth, and sex. The materials became homages—scabs to heal the painful wounds of devastated Haiti.

PHYLLIDA BARLOW

Melissa Appleton and Matthew Butcher, "Writtle Calling/2 Emma Toc" (Writtle, UK) In September 2012, artists Melissa Appleton and Matthew Butcher built a radio mast in a field outside the small town of Writtle, where the first radio station in the UK was based in the 1920s. Every night for a week, Appleton and Butcher curated events that were locally broadcast, and my husband, Fabian Peake, was one of five performers on the second night. As the audience—all eight of us—sat on hay bales in the early-evening twilight, the radio station squeaked and moaned to life, with an eerie sound of the wind blowing through the transmitters. This performance, delivered by the radio station itself, was