

GLADSTONE GALLERY

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Jim Hodges at CRG

Nature was a quiet but ubiquitous presence that ran like a refrain throughout "this and this," Jim Hodges's recent solo exhibition. Hodges is known for transforming ordinary materials into poetic works that invoke life's preciousness and evanescence. Time and again, he has ventured beyond what he knows and is known for—opting, instead, to investigate new materials and forms of expression that expand his and the viewer's mental and physical perspectives.

Fourteen photographs comprising a single work titled *Endlessly* were interspersed among two sheet-music collage-drawings, a mirror wall sculpture, a wall drawing, a mirror-mosaic and a photo collage. With the kind of matter-of-fact photographic presentation Hodges used for describing middle-class homes in *Our Simple Selves* (1995), *Endlessly* elicited a powerful sense of physical and emotional place through natural and man-made landscapes. The work seemed to celebrate the acts of seeing and living. Water, sky, desert, trees, lace, a skyscraper and a backyard sandbox were some of the images in this work; they produced a visual and psychological cadence that was further reinforced by the rhythms of color bars scattered like notes over a large two-part sheet of

song music called *Picturing That Day*. Combining the abstract languages of color and music, Hodges created a drawing in which layered sensory experience echoed the breadth of the world's bounty as depicted in *Endlessly's* photographs.

Where the Sky Fills In is a 76-by-50-inch photograph featuring a statuesque image of a tree whose leaves Hodges partially cut out, so that they peeled forward as if to expose a deeper insight into nature—as well as into the artifice behind its depiction. *Oh Great Terrain* was an immense wall mural painted in a black, white and gray camouflage pattern. It revealed the artist's fascination with the potency and contradictions underlying this stylized rendition of nature that is superimposed on clothes and machinery as a device intended to blend and conceal. In *Unravelling*, Hodges shattered, cut and disassembled fragments of mirrored glass before reassembling them on canvas in a swirling vortex that broke, refracted and transformed the viewer's image. Fusing together, as in a Cubist painting, shards of the viewer's reflection, the gallery architecture and the nearby camouflage painting, *Unravelling* questioned identity, boundaries, art and nature. Recalling the reverence with which 19th-century Romantic painters approached the depiction of man in the landscape, "this and this" conveyed Hodges's complex personal perspective on one's sense of self in relation to the natural world. —Susan Harris

Jim Hodges: *Where the Sky Fills In*, 2002, C-print, 76 by 50 inches; at CRG.



Peter Blake at Paul Morris

Although his paintings and collages are essential to the history of British Pop, Peter Blake is more often celebrated for his cover of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's* album, a kind of professional albatross that obscures a lifetime of engagement with popular culture. Last year, at the age of 70, Blake retired from the Royal Academy, completed a sizable painting begun 25 years before, appeared in a cameo role as a wizard in the new Harry Potter film, was awarded a knighthood and agreed to his first solo exhibition in New York.

The most surprising