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Big bang, small bang at Gallery Joe

By [Libby](#) February 25, 2010

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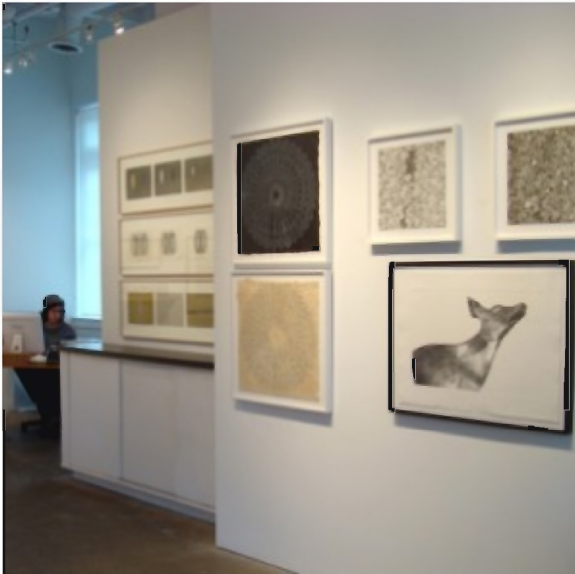
The big shock in [Gallery Joe's](#) current show is what has happened to the space. The usual Joe m.o. is to hang the work in calmest presentation possible, neatly arrayed around the small gallery's spaces.



Charles Ritchie, Night II, 1997-1010, printed by Jim Stroud, Center Street Studio, Milton, MA, published by Center Street Studio, One of 10 artist's proofs, ed. of 50, 2007.2.1, soapground aquatint and mezzotint with handworking including scraped highlights and painted gouache and watercolor additions on Somerset paper, image 11 7/8 x 15 3/4 inches on sheet 17 7/8 x 22 7/8 inches

Imagine my shock walking into Gallery Joe and seeing all the works hung salon style in the front gallery—a small explosion of art—and then seeing a color-rich cosmic explosion of a sound-and-video installation with lots of plexiglas, in the vault.

The exhibits Prints by Gallery Artists and big bang are certainly atypical of this gallery, which generally does not show prints or video and which usually limits the size of the shows to allow for eye-level hangings around the spaces, the better to show off the meticulous drawings that are the gallery's bread and butter.



Installation shot at Gallery Joe, with prints by Astrid Bowlby (two on top right), by Jeanne Jaffe (below) and two by Mary Judge (to the left).

Owner Becky Kerlin asked her gallery artists to contribute prints, if they had any, and they did. The resulting exhibit, while surprisingly populous, is consistent and excellent.

The big surprise for me seeing a Charles Ritchie print with lots of red in it. The Ritchies I have seen at Gallery Joe have been wonderful black and white suburban noir drawings filled with portents. The red suggests infrared night-scope goggles and surveillance. Now that is triple-portentious!

Among other work I was especially taken with was an early Lynne Clibanoff print. Although it precedes in date her constructions, it looks a lot like them. The off-square perspectives have a hint of Constructivism.



Martin Wilner, Journal of Evidence Weekly Vol. 138, 2008, printed by Amber McMillan, Post Editions, Brooklyn, NY, edition of 100, book closed 6 x 3 3/4 x 3/4 inches, opened: 112 inches

I also want to give shout outs to a print version of a Martin Wilner fold-out journal (OK, so it looks exactly like the hand-done versions and I do like the hand ones better) and an early Stephen Robin series of autobiographical cartoons of himself as Every Shlub facing the ladies (OK, so I think I saw this before somewhere, but I still liked it, maybe because it's so Stephen). Marilyn Holsing's feminist versions of a young Marie Antoinette, with their tongue-in-cheek reference to kitsch illustrations, are also pretty terrific!



Marilyn Holsing, Young Marie Casts a Shadow, 2007, edition of 10, commissioned by Philagrafika, printed at Silicon, Philadelphia, digital print on archival 100% rag paper, image 16 x 13 inches, sheet 18 x 15 inches

The show is filled—literally—with works that look a lot like the drawings and other non-print work the same artists show at the gallery. The hanging has an ebullience plus some savvy pairings that make everything look great. Hey, I even admired a Christine Hiebert, whose work is a taste I haven't quite acquired yet. Others in the exhibit are Emily Brown, Sharon Loudon, Winifred Lutz, Rob Matthews, Linn Meyers, Kate Moran, Samantha Simpson and Mark Sheinkman.



Adam Carlton Carrigan, bang, in the big bang installation, .5 x 7 feet, wood w/ etched hexagonal plexi

The cheek-by-jowl display almost prepared me for the ambitious big bang installation by Adam Carlton Carrigan in the vault. The video, with an original—terrific—musical score by Thomas Roland, is movie-theatrical. Carrigan projects it through a plexiglas-paned geodesic dome that reminds me of the panoramic windows of an air-traffic control tower, and the view to outer space from the captain's chair on the Starship Enterprise.

The windows and their '50s vision of man looking out into the beginnings of the cosmos elevate the video, which seems pretty standard-issue big bang, or maybe the video is just overwhelmed by the marvelousness of the dome. Carrigan, who studied multimedia at UArts, has made music videos for a number of bands including Man Man, and that experience of music and performance is embedded in this installation. He also has shot and written for films in collaboration with Philly's Liberian community, for screening in Africa.



Adam Carlton Carrigan, big bang installation, detail of the seven phases telling the story of the rise and fall of planet earth and man, .5 x 7 feet, wood w/ etched hexagonal plexi

Around the other walls of the room, seven small (13 x 13 inch) etched drawings on plexiglas that suggest philosophical, scientific, mathematical and cabalistic systems. Maybe they are charts for mapping humankind's great escape. But the narrative seems to be about the failure of humankind, the failure of communication, and the failure of science. For all the beauty in the etched panels, they seem subdued in the light-show environment, which is unfortunate, because their content—a cosmology of sorts—suggests there's something more going on here than just another light show.

I liked the daring here and the sound-and-light immersion experience. Although the elements here don't quite gel, I'm looking forward to seeing more work from Carrigan, seeing where he takes this. This big bang was guest-curated by Marianne Bernstein, who brought the Welcome House to LOVE Park.

The print show is one of the independent projects of [Philagrafika](#), and both exhibits run through this Saturday, Feb. 27.



TAGS

ADAM CARLTON CARRIGAN, ASTRID BOWLBY, BIG BANG, CHARLES RITCHIE, INSTALLATION, JEANNE JAFFE, MARIANNE BERNSTEIN, MARILYN HOLSING, MARTIN WILNER, MARY JUDGE, PHILAGRAFIKA, PHILAGRAFIKA 2010, PRINTS