

ARTURO HERRERA

BRENT SIKKEMA

This exhibition mines the nostalgia of childhood through low-tech means. Drawing from his past, Arturo Herrera transforms childhood images through additive and subtractive processes. Both techniques result in fractured abstractions, with the traces of altered imagery acting as memory triggers.

Large framed works and a highway of small collages wrap handsomely around the gallery. The effect is much like entering a candy shop with too many choices. Three large framed drawings titled *Night Before*

*Last* (2002) depict fragmented bits of Snow White and entourage. Each piece contains a drawn Ab-Ex drippy blob. The colors give graphic punch, but questions remain as to the necessity of the scale. One of the strongest works in this exhibition, a sinewy cutout titled *A Knock* (2002), is a composite of colorful Disney posters and coloring book covers. The main body of the piece, pouring in from the top of the frame, is a web of negative space, allowing the viewer to fill in the blanks. These empty spaces begin to form large-scale images of cartoon elements: a pickaxe, a jewel, a hand. This piece, with its shift in scale and echoing of elements, offers a more complex and layered reading.

The line of seventy uniformly framed collages show a prolific mind at work, skillfully employing a wide variety of methods. Culled from children's books, botanical prints, and historical illustrations, these collages call to mind the work of the Surrealists. In almost every collage, the centrally placed image is overlaid or obliterated with a varied array of cutouts, painting, or other images. Surprising juxtapositions abound; the sheer formal beauty of certain passages of paint is breathtaking.

With much to look at and moments of beauty, this exhibition often feels inscrutable and difficult to decipher. Like candy, it is filling but leaves a hunger for something more pointedly substantial.

Gregory Montreuil



ARTURO HERRERA, *Night Before Last*, 1 R, 2002. Graphite on paper, 187 x 144 cm.