

HALL

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REVIEW: *Vermont*

HOPE AND HAZARD: A COMEDY OF EROS

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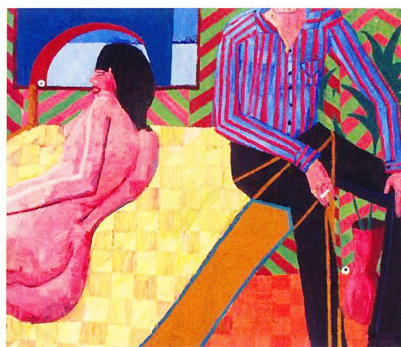
This is the fifth season for the Hall Art Foundation in Vermont and the second of its exhibitions to be curated by an artist. Eric Fischl, known for his large-scale paintings that explore contemporary psychosexual relationships, curated *Hope and Hazard: A Comedy of Eros*. Fischl was given free access to the collection from which he assembled an exhibition that explores love and sex in all its permutations.

Fischl selected over 80 sculptures, paintings, photographs and works on paper by 66 artists to illustrate "the absurd extremes associated with romantic and sexual love." Probably no work better expresses these extremes than Chantal Joffe's *Dusk*. The setting refers to areas of London where gay men are known to cruise and furtive assignations take place behind the shrubbery. Here, it is women who stand out like colorful flowers against a dark landscape. The foreground figure is dressed in sunshine-yellow, schoolgirl clothes yet she leers as she solicits the viewer. She is joined at the edge of the wood by

other figures who represent the intricacies of female sexuality.

In contrast, Judith Eislser's *Liz and Rock* offers a poignant vision of romantic love. In her large-scale painting based on a film still that she captured from the 1956 film *Giant*, Elizabeth Taylor and Rock Hudson are caught in a moment fraught with romantic tension, and the blue space between them pulsates with longing and sadness.

Our Conversation, a large oil painting by Ryan Schneider, depicts the tension between partners in a domestic setting. A large, spare bed dominates the composition. A nude woman lies on it



Ryan Schneider, *Our Conversation*, 2006, oil on canvas, 60 x 72". Hall Collection. © Ryan Schneider.

with her back to her partner who is fully clothed with the obligatory post-coital cigarette between his fingers. His position on the edge of the bed belies his eagerness to depart; yet edges of the mattress turn into ropes that bind him to her.

The work in *Hope and Hazard* runs the gamut of explicit sexual situations and forces the viewer to confront publicly what is usually kept private. It is not a show for children or the prudish, however if you're willing to open yourself up to the experience, there is much to learn from this challenging exhibition.

—Sheryl Trainor