



Alex Blas, "Dan," 2009, oil on canvas, 40 x 30", is currently on view at George Billis.

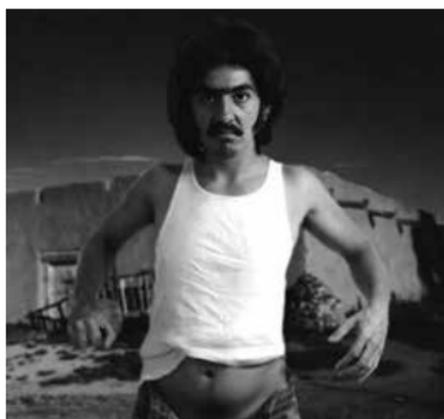
moving effect. A video embedded in a wall-mounted piano ("Gee It's Nice to be Alone") provides a subtly sad soundtrack to the multi-roomed affair, which includes carpeting in two of the larger spaces, all the better to host the assortment of artfully scattered dyed cotton socks (also featured in two sculptures), a skinny ladder with oil-painted rungs, a painting mounted behind a windowed façade, and an ottoman upholstered with the waist-and-butt end of a pair of jeans. As opposed to other "painter-and..." exhibitions, in which a painter includes sculptures and mixed-media installation as if to prove that can do more than just paint, with Kunath it's still about painting, albeit evolving it and expanding the context of its viewing that adds to the fun, if that's not too anti-serious a word. Indeed, there's great pleasure to be taken from his (mostly) brightly colored, Friedrich-ian (as in his namesake of sorts, Caspar David Friedrich) landscapes and interiors which proffer complex imagery from up close and from afar. With the South Gallery hung salon-style (the spinning landscape "I Need Someone Like Me" is the clear favorite here), and Gallery Three a rainbow spectrum of seven paintings reflecting off a mirrored floor, it's easy to make the case that there's just too much. But it's not too much to keep you from feeling that, by the time you depart, you've achieved a melancholy high (Blum & Poe Gallery, Culver City).

Michael Shaw

The richly detailed figurative oil paintings of **Alex Blas'** exhibition, titled "In Your Room," capture contemporary subjects rendered in lovely, detailed, traditional portraiture. Blas asked his friends to pose, placing them in everyday settings. "I asked them not to change anything, not to clean up, dress up, or pose," the artist relates. The results are startlingly beautiful and possess a universal appeal that reveals youthful subjects, primarily men, in easily identifiable circumstances. Blas' friends sprawl on a sofa, study a laptop in bed, towel themselves dry after a shower, and are caught in the moment of getting dressed. These intimate and graceful images are filled with light and life, with even the smallest detail — a record album, empty beer bottles, tangerines in a bowl or the fabric on a faded arm chair — rendered with full attention to detail. We are able to experience intensely personal and private moments that are shared with grace (George Billis Gallery, Culver City).

Genie Davis

Ken Gonzalez-Day's graduate thesis project was titled "Bone-Grass Boy: The Secret Banks of the Conejos River." First created in 1996, it was not exhibited in a gallery space until now. The work holds up, and it is interesting to see how these photographs fit within the trajectory of Gonzalez-Day's current practice. The work was made as a response to the AIDS crisis, and explores issues of mixed race identity and gender. The work features images of Gonzalez-



Ken Gonzalez-Day, "Untitled (Bone-Grass Boy #15)," 1993-96, C-print, 10 x 10", is currently on view at Luis De Jesus.