

TimeOut

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ART

Reviews

Lucy McKenzie, “SMERSH”

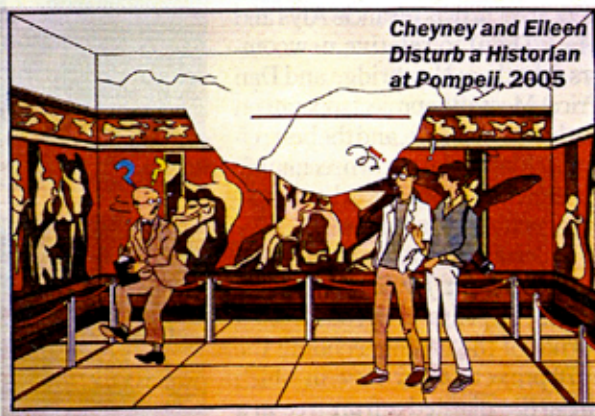
Metro Pictures, through Oct 8
(see Chelsea).

The heyday of modernism found many artists obsessing on personal style, working like scientists to develop a secret formula that, once successful, they'd spend the rest of their careers refining. Contemporary (read: postmodern) artists seem so bent on breaking this mold that their exhibitions can sometimes look more like group shows than solo ones.

So it is with Lucy McKenzie, a Glaswegian making her New York debut. But the paradox is that, while her work may be hyper eclectic, her mind is still very much on the modern era. Among the five groups of work at Metro Pictures are a series of charcoal rubbings that look like blown-up black-and-white Mondrians; traditional figurative drawings in the vein of Fairfield Porter; broadsheets with printed text and

ink drawings that recall manifestos and artists' publications; works inspired by cartoon murals; and, finally, paintings inspired by Tintin, a character created in 1929 by the father of European comic realism, the Belgian Hergé.

The trick, of course, is to make all of this hang together (even good group shows, after all, have some kind of thematic connective tissue). And in McKenzie's case, it does. As viewers move through the disparate rooms, the specter of modern history hovers over the exhibition—from *De Stijl* to SMERSH, the show's title, borrowed from a Russian acronym used by Soviet counterintelligence. Style works here, not as an easy way of identifying or even entering the work, but as a diversionary tactic, a series of codes for viewers to crack. Assuming, of course, that they want to play along.—*Martha Schwendener*



COURTESY METRO PICTURES

Listings

Galleries

Chelsea & vicinity

Metro Pictures

519 W 24th St between Tenth and Eleventh Aves (212-206-7100). Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. **Lucy McKenzie**, “Smersh.” Five distinct groups of works on paper draw influence from European cartoon illustration. On view are the artist's own illustrations for a Glasgow magazine, imagery influenced by Belgian illustrator Hergé (creator of Tintin) and more (see Reviews). Through Oct 8.