

To watch *7th November* (2001), viewers sat on benches arranged before a screen as if in a theater, but throughout the 25-minute piece they saw only a projected, still image. Viewers became listeners as they met the deeply sympathetic narrator, Marcus, through his recorded voice. The single image was of the top of his scarred head. He lay on his back as if on a slab. But he's not dead: rather, he relates the agonizing story of accidentally shooting his beloved brother in the head; his grief-stricken mother's subsequent suicide; and living with the consequences. Testifying that he has somehow managed to go on, he poignantly attests to growth through suffering and remarks that through these tragedies, others have seen his true character emerge.

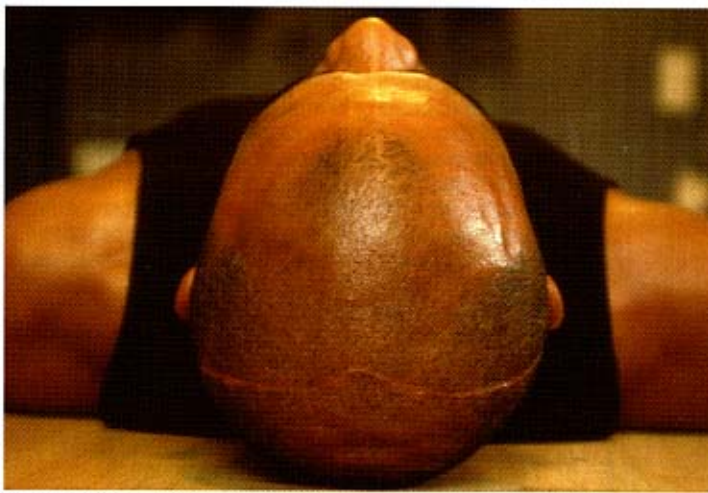
Grouped as they were, the latter three pieces seemed a deeply human riposte to NASA's utopian vision, but not simply a sarcastic one. *Charlotte* suggested an alternative sort of scientific study, while *Tricky's* creation of an art born of sorrow—along with Marcus's naked and moving tale—tell the darker side of the human story. Taken together, they acknowledge that an essential part of our humanity comes from adversity and imperfection.

—Brian Boucher

### Annika Larsson at Andrea Rosen

At the heart of Annika Larsson's artistic project is an obsession with masculinity or, more precisely, "homosexuality," an oft-cited term coined by literary scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to refer to the subtle erotic tension underlying social relations between men. In the videos she has produced since the late 1990s, Larsson has consistently sought to expose masculinity as a performance, and to explore male power plays of domination and submission. Her series of elegantly composed yet enigmatic mini-narratives, with no voiceover or audible dialogue, are made up of slow gestures, dramatic camera angles and extreme close-ups. All feature white Nordic men, often either performing banal activities or involved in implied or explicitly violent scenarios.

One of Larsson's recent videos, *New Gravity* (2003), is a



Steve McQueen: *7th November*, 2001, slide projection with sound, 25 minutes; at Marian Goodman.

slight departure from her earlier work. While previously she has filmed adult men, here she staged a rite of passage for four pimply-faced teenagers struggling to enter manhood. The nerdy boys move about in a dance club of pulsing lights and throbbing synth music (by the Swedish multimedia and performance artist Tobias Bernstrup and the Italian rock group Moravagine). Entranced at first by a transgender performer, they glance uncomfortably at one another, unsure of their bodies and sexuality. An animation of an oversize man enters and begins interacting with one of the boys, instructing him in a series of odd calisthenics that culminates in an ambiguous scene where we see the boy's feet dangling, with implications of either an ascension or a hanging. What begins, however, as a fascinating examination of the developmental stages of masculinity—a new, if related,

direction for Larsson—concludes badly, less perhaps due to the content than to the poor quality of the animation, which detracts greatly from the artist's sleek, polished style.

The other video, *Hockey* (2004), takes place at the Stockholm Globe Arena, where two unnamed hockey teams play in full gear before 13,000 empty seats in a slow-paced choreography, and in a game devoid of the violence generally associated with the sport. Players glide around the rink, accompanied by a soundtrack of synthesized hockey noises and music (also by Bernstrup), and are filmed at varying angles ranging from bird's- to worm's-eye views, in addition to close-ups. All constitute a style invoking that of the Russian Formalist Sergei Eisenstein, who believed in using tactical camera maneuvers to make the familiar strange. The brilliance of this piece lies not only in its sheer formal magnifi-

Annika Larsson: *Hockey*, 2004, DVD, 25 ½ minutes; at Andrea Rosen.



cence, but in its intertextual relation to Larsson's earlier work. For to tackle her subject at a sports event—the ultimate signifier of masculine hyperbole, not to mention homosociality—is to take on an interesting challenge. To do it so well, as she has, is a real coup.

—Maura Reilly

### Julio Larraz at Marlborough

A sardonic narrative threads through Julio Larraz's extravagant, light-filled paintings of life lived in a Valhalla reserved for the powerful and vicious. *The Casabianca Compact* (2004) introduces a white-gloved, white-jacketed white servant as he extends a parasol to shade a handsome, stout black woman on a walk along the water. Dressed in white, she carries a straw hat. Two lionesses are at her side, and two sinister human escorts trail the entourage. She embodies power, and the implicit narrative suggests expulsion or flight. In *Rehearsal for a Conflict* (2004), 5 by 6 feet, Larraz's preferred scale for this suite of paintings, the same woman stands on a yacht's sheltered deck, its aft mooring line and ensign pole visible to one side. She addresses the senatorial figure of a black man in the formal suiting of another era. He turns away. In the much smaller and ironically titled *Hasta la Vista* (2003), the yacht disappears into thin air just forward of its steam stack, as though entering the Bermuda Triangle.

Seated in a rich salon, the menacing subject of *For You, Anaxagoras* (2003) is a study in authority. He takes his ease in a campaign chair, features dissolved in shadow. He wears riding boots, white suit and a thin black tie, a hooded falcon menacing from his gauntleted wrist. A framed map of military positions dominates the wall. The dapper, aging man in white suit and shoes of *Coordinates* (2004) rests in a similar chair, a Panama hat in his hands, a wall of framed maps just beyond. The title of *Omerta* (2004) suggests an Italian setting. An aging, well-dressed don masked in dark glasses sits before a Tiepolo-like fresco of some celestial investiture involving putto and sword.

In much the same vein, *Official Portrait of Juana Campamento*