

VOX

H A M P T O N S



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BOLD STROKES

BY ALISON BEVILACQUA

Welcome to the gallery.

The East End has long been known for its attractiveness to plein air painters, as the special light of the area has been hailed for generations.

However, the East End has another reason to appeal to artists. It is home to some of the most discriminating gallery owners and intelligent patrons.

This all attracts a different type of artist—the avant garde, the unafraid, and the extremely talented have changed the landscape of the East End art scene and are being met with resounding applause. *VOX Hamptons* chose to take a fresh look at two artists being featured at some of the East End's most contemporary galleries. We spoke to the gallery owners and the artists, and did some analysis of our own to get a better understanding of their sometimes enigmatic work.

MATTHEW CUSICK AT GLENN HOROWITZ BOOKSELLER

Matthew Cusick has long received critical praise for his work. He is well known for taking on major social issues with finesse and an appealing aesthetic. Born in New York City, Cusick attended (and was subsequently expelled from) Catholic school. He later received his BFA from Cooper Union, and now lives and works in Texas.

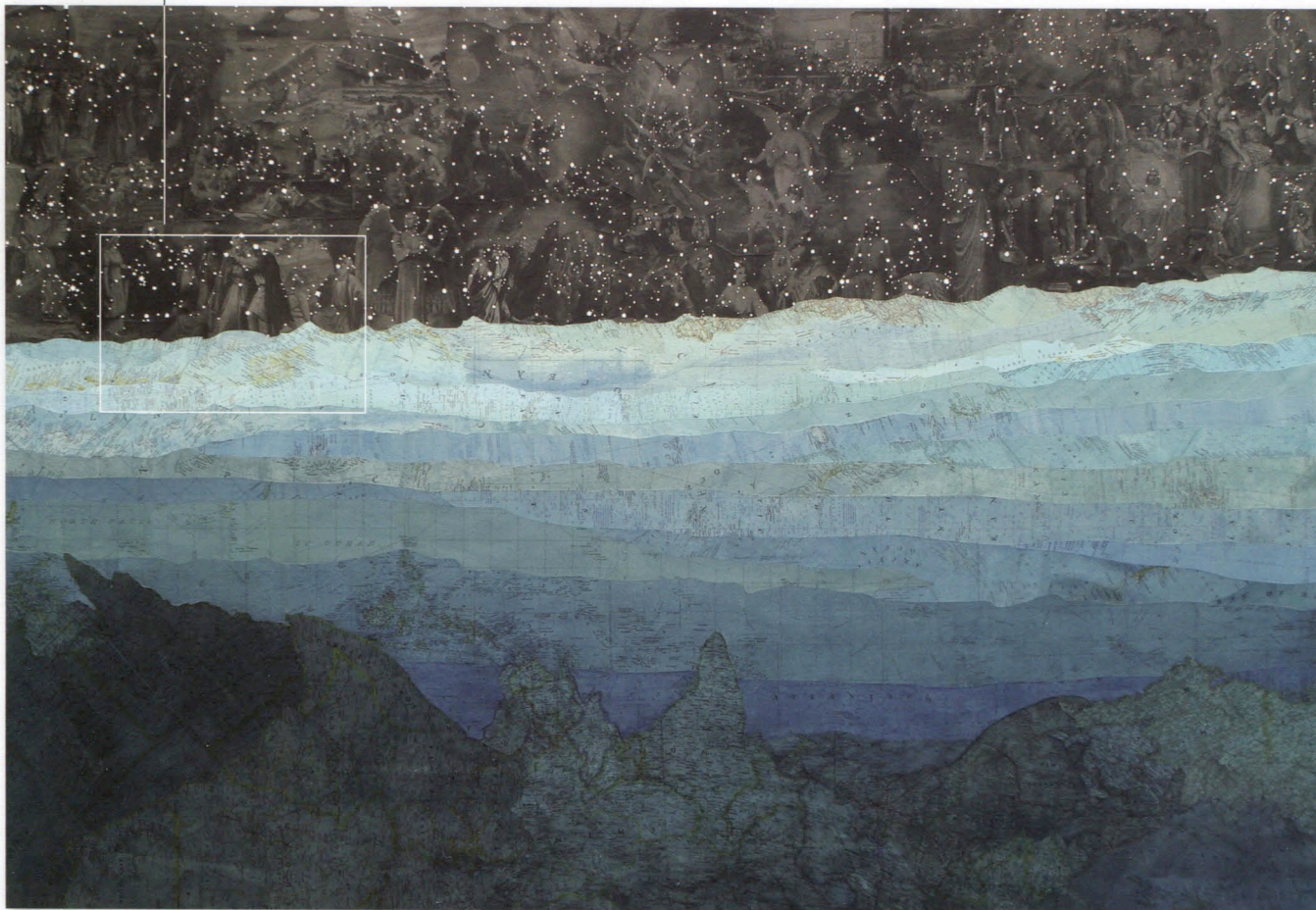
Cusick begins by cutting and tearing up books, maps and atlases. He organizes his materials into multiple piles, creating a veritable "painter's palette" of scraps, then mixes and masters them, creating ephemeral landscapes, seascapes and abstractions. His early pieces are precise collages of road maps, perfectly arranged to create

colorful scenes. With the most unbelievable degree of precision, Cusick creates elaborate scenes of intertwining freeways, portraits, and wildlife. His critique of American consumerism and social politics has been as sharp as his X-ACTO knife. And he has been hailed for it.

Chasing the Dragon is a perfect example of Cusick's early work. He sharply criticizes the never-ending desire for goods and material that is American consumerism. The twisting and intertwining roadways of detail melt into a menacing dragon. The dragon that can never be caught is Cusick's interpretation of the socially reinforced American ideal that you can never have enough.

EXHIBITION: *Matthew Cusick: From What I've Read*. June 28–August 3. Reception June 28, from 6–8 PM. Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, 87 Newtown Lane, East Hampton. (631) 324-5511, ghbookseller.com.

DETAIL ON NEXT SPREAD



LEVIATHAN



TOP: CHASING THE DRAGON. BOTTOM: ETHER

DETAIL OPPOSITE



DETAIL OF LEVIATHAN, (PREVIOUS SPREAD)

elves the tabernacle.
12 Then Moses said to me, "Bring up this sun shall be turned into darkness." And the moon into blood. Before the coming of the great and awesome day of wrath. And it shall come because You have taken Your great name in vain, that whoever sins against me, and the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come. And the time of the dead, that they should be judged. And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints. And those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."
19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail.
20 Now with a woman, the Child, and the Dragon
17 Now with a woman, the Child, and the Dragon corpses fell in the way. And the dragon was seen to enter His rest, but to be caught in a net.
18 And to whom did he give the sign, that he might be seen by all?
19 So we see that they could not, she cried out in labor cause of unbelief.
20 Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his head a diadem, and seven diadems on his head. And the dragon stood before the throne of the Lamb. And he sought to devour the Child as soon as it was born. But the Lamb caught the Child between His feet, and hid Him in His breast. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God. And there she is nourished a time, and times, and half a time. And the dragon was angry against the woman, and he went to make war against her, and against her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus the Son of Mary. And he stood on the sea, and said to all that dwell on the earth, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and they shall enter in by the gates. Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and they who love and do lies. I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you these things, and I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And hear ye who hear, and say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, and take the free water of life without charge. And the voice that I heard from heaven said, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his work. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and they shall enter in by the gates. Outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and they who love and do lies. I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you these things, and I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And hear ye who hear, and say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, and take the free water of life without charge.

Leviathan. This collage began with a children's Bible and the images of saints and symbols from the stories. He was intrigued by how the stories of the Bible had been interpreted in order to be taught to children. The waterscapes were made from maps, provoking a critique on the subject of cartology and the idea of a one-dimensional world view. A map shows the outlines of countries as simple lines and color delineations, rather than the years of turmoil, war, and struggle which drew those lines.

The great hulking beast rising from below is the Leviathan, a term frequently referenced in the Bible as the embodiment of evil, darkness and hell. Even in Moby Dick, often hailed as "the great American novel," the white whale is often referred to as the Leviathan, and as the embodiment of evil.

This is meditation on childhood and adult perceptions of heaven and hell, the saints and the constellations above, and the darkness and mystery below. The simplified saints indicate a youthful and naive belief in heaven, and are juxtaposed with the very real and very solid darkness below. Determining whether that Leviathan is an actual hell or the depths of human nature is up to the viewer.

