

# Flash Art

NEW YORK

REVIEWS

GERT & UWE TOBIAS

MOMA

Twin brothers Gert & Uwe Tobias specifically created the majority of the works in this small museum show to be exhibited in the one, custom designed gallery. The room was painted dark blue and white with sharply ruled linear accents. Hung in a quadrate, four letter-sized, framed works on paper were made by swiveling the paper around in an old typewriter, thus producing self-styled futurist 'drawings.' This technique — along with paint and collage — was also used in several other small works on paper to limn ghoulish figures in abstracted landscapes that hearken to their Transylvanian heritage. Three grisly little ceramic figures displayed atop prosaic crockery on pedestals echoed the theme.

The salient works in the exhibition were three large (one mural scaled) woodcut prints. Their work stretches the term "prints" because, even in edition, the pieces are inherently one-of-a-kind.

Rather than cutting a pattern into planks of flat wood as in a traditional woodcut, they apply ink to jigsawed wooden shapes and press layers of color freehand over previous layers to create grainy images. The results are sometimes cartoony figuration and other times wholly abstract. The intrinsically hard-edged style of the prints resembles at turns Richard Pousette-Dart's abstract expressionism in a composition of geometric shapes and lines; a lean, expansive, mural-scaled figurative piece that lands somewhere between Arshile Gorky, Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso; and the Russian Constructivist style they employed for a poster they made for the exhibition. Novel and interesting techniques aside, the Tobias brothers have come up with an appealing and credible next step in the historic chain of picture making. The work is current because no one has done quite this before, yet it has a timeless quality which means it won't be out of style by next Tuesday.

**Christopher Chambers**



GERT & UWE TOBIAS, *Untitled (Figure)*, 2005. Woodcut, 200 x 164 cm. Fund for the Twenty-First Century. © 2007 Gert & Uwe Tobias.