



"How The West Was Won," 2007, Gavin Scott, TOYS, GAMES AND EPHEMERA, 36" x 48"

LOS ANGELES

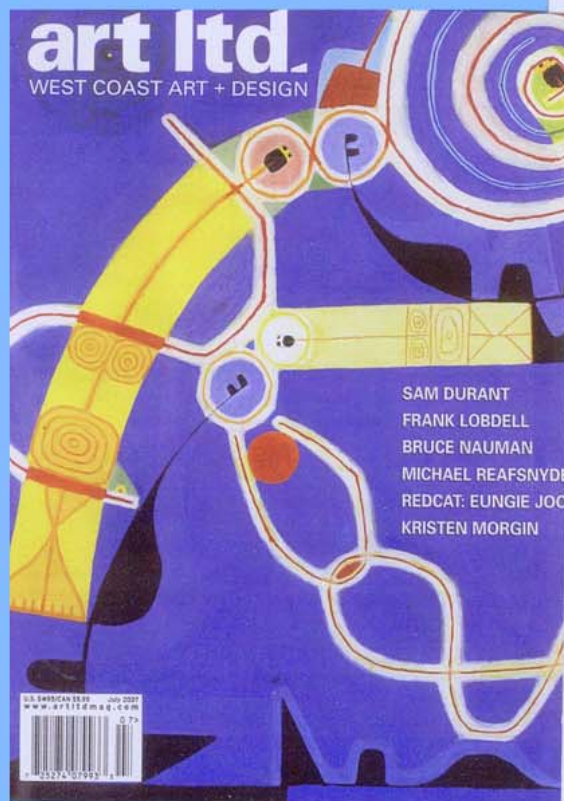
Gavin Scott: "Wonder Cabinets" at Schomberg Gallery

The extensive, elaborate collection of handcrafted "Wonder Cabinets" by L.A.-based writer and alt-folk assemblage artist Gavin Scott casts a wide net, implicating cultural idioms ranging from Victorian-era English anthropology to mid-century American pop culture. Unapologetically taking pleasure in a degree of nostalgia that flirts with kitsch, each one of the more than 30 large-scale shadow boxes contains dozens and hundreds of individual objects, mostly toys and games manufactured in the middle third of the 20th century. From cap guns to mystery novels, magic tricks to action figures, children's books to science experiment gear, the carefully preserved originals and their packaging is familiar to followers of high-end collectible toy culture as the mark of any serious connoisseur's holdings.

as prisms through which to reevaluate instants in American cultural development, possession of memories of being a child is sufficient to indulge in their offerings. *The Birth of Science* (5' x 2', mechanical tableau with vintage toys) sports a plaque reading, "Not for those of a nervous disposition," and indeed, it is not. Made in collaboration with electrical and mechanical engineer John Melzian, this tableau reenacts the moment at which Dr. Frankenstein's monster is jolted back to life by a lightning strike. Motorized rails move the doctor around the lab, a melodramatic sound track creates an emotional charge, a small globe makes white lightning, and the monster ghoulishly rises from the slab. In "Wonder Cabinets" more than modern science gets born—viewers can relive the birth of modern consumerism as well.

—SHANA NYS DAMBRO

Space Before We Went There (3' x 4', shadow box with found toys) features laser guns and super-sonic spacecrafts whose designs must have evoked wonder in thousands of pie-eyed would-be astronauts. Other works hint at sociopolitical commentary, such as *How the West Was Won* (3' x 4', shadow box with toys), a multivalent monument to the wholesale slaughter of Native Americans by the expanding forces of brave pioneers and cowboys. However, the fetishism here is apolitical; the affection lavished on these modern artifacts is divorced from their implicit messages. While a profound opportunity to use these thematic arrangements



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