



The art of culture jamming

The recent craze for modern Chinese art shows no signs of slowing, fetching records at auctions from eager Western collectors — last March, Zhang Xiaogang's 1994 piece *Bloodline: Three Comrades* went for 2.1 million at a Sotheby's New York auction. This month, San Francisco gets a taste of the action as Zhong Biao, a star in China, arrives here for his first solo exhibition in America. Similar to many of his peers, Biao captures the spirit of his country's wild-ride history using iconography from different eras, from communist propaganda to religious symbols to the Golden Arches, mixed together in surreal compositions. His realistic, often large-scale paintings also juxtapose sharp colors with grayscale, further enhancing the battling ideologies. His aptly titled show, "**American Debut**," circles around a network of competing images, but even some of the paintings themselves are juxtaposed. *Midday Sun* features a military helicopter, a smiling group of complacent citizens, and a languid woman showing a lot of leg indiscreetly lounging on a mattress. *What a Great Country: You Can Do Anything* is identical in composition, but here the helicopter is a passenger jet, the group has swelled into a mass of people, and the come-hither look of the woman is replaced by the piercing gaze of a lady wearing glasses. Although Biao's meaning

Geary (at Taylor), S.F. Admission is free; call 346-7812 or visit www.freynorris.com.

— MICHAEL LEAVERTON

This Is Not What Democracy Looks Like

It must have been quite a shock: Sometime after 9/11, Taraneh Hemami found a Web site describing the most wanted terrorists in the country. But the people pictured had no faces: The images were so badly pixilated that only the most rudimentary details could be made out. The only visible characteristics of these suspects were the ones they shared with millions of Muslims and Arabs around the world: dark hair and beards for men, headscarves for women. Hemami made art from the experience, in an uncommonly graceful response to a horrible injustice. At "**Most Wanted**," her installations, sculptures, and other works investigate "Who are our enemies? And what do they look like?" The results are chilling, but gorgeous, as her hand-manipulated photos and artifacts reveal half-tones and abstract shapes.

An opening reception for "Most Wanted" starts at 6 p.m. (and the exhibit continues through June 30) at Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia (at 15th St.), S.F. Admission is free; call 626-2787 or visit www.theintersection.org.

— HIYA SWANHUYSER