



Kim Fisher: *First Quarter*, 2008, oil on linen, 72 by 63 inches; at John Connelly Presents.

of the model as well, with several collegial if irregular groups of women depicted in drawings titled with references to the Muses. The primal setting for Rego must be the studio, and her characters' display of various costumes and props suggests time passing, an actor in search of an audience, and the whole theatrical Human Comedy.

—Janet Koplos

Kim Fisher John Connelly Presents

A diamond the size of the moon: now that's high-end. Los Angeles-based Kim Fisher is celebrated for hard-edge, high-gloss, highly chromatic paintings that fuse the glamour and pizzazz of the fashion world and the asceticism of modernist abstraction. In a new body of work, seen in her second New York solo show, the artist dabbles in rendering, describing a huge, faceted gemstone that waxes and wanes in lunar phases. While narrative is not high on Fisher's agenda, this cycle of eight rigorously formal canvases posits a hybrid of science fiction and luxury goods, Jules Verne by way of Harry Winston.

The gallery's interior wall was removed for this show, allowing the viewer to understand the suite of paintings as an endless loop. Throughout, the artist relies on her trademark device of stretching the linen support on the bias (time-traveling to the 1920s Parisian couture House of Vionnet) and allowing extra untucked inches to remain visible. This ground is painted a velvety black, referring both to outer space and the jeweler's display case. In each canvas, the enormous gem—a beveled oval barely accommodated by the 6-foot-high stretchers—is seen in three-quarter view, its many facets leading the eye to a point left of center.

The spatial play within and among these facets is dazzling. The lustrous *Full Moon*

(all paintings oil on linen, 2008) is pieced together from flat areas in tints of pearly gray and steel blue and fleetingly glimpsed objects that are intriguingly difficult to identify but might include hair, clouds and flowers. The press release states that the paintings are developed from collage studies, unsurprising given the autonomy of each shape and the methodology's emphasis on masked edges. Vestiges remain of a numbering system presumably keyed to one such collage in the dark, brooding *New Moon*, alongside shadowy suggestions of TV-screen static, flattened grass and the jaws of a shark.

In intermediate phases, such as *First Quarter* and *Waning Crescent*, a curl of shadow falls across the face of this hybrid heavenly body, but even the unlit region shimmers with shards of imagery as if illuminated from within. Here and there, a smoothly blended range of values of a single hue suggests refracted light, but the paintings' crystalline clarity is riddled with "flaws," facets that are slathered with glossy impasto, dusted with spray enamel, built up with electrical tape or left unpainted.

Assembled from quotidian and somewhat arbitrary visual information, juiced by a dramatic contrast of scale, these paintings fall within the gravitational pull of Surrealism and bring to mind James Rosenquist's otherworldly fantasies. John Torreano's gem-studded panels and mega-carat sculptures by Jeff Koons figure here as well. Fisher's implicit equation of painting and jewelry, culturally very different sources of the hand-crafted status symbol, could be interpreted

as a critique (or a playful celebration) of an art market in which baubles are traded for astronomical sums. But more immediate pleasures are found in the fantastic retinal voyage into these alien worlds.

—Stephen Maine

Ryan Johnson Guild & Greyshkul

Befitting the paranoia endemic to our current reality, the title sculpture in Ryan Johnson's recent show, "Watchman," is decked out with the paraphernalia of surveillance and detention, including a jacket emblazoned "Security" and a heavily laden key chain; other figures are titled with some variant of "Sentinel." However, it is hard to tell whether they are the perpetrators of heightened control or simply further victims of today's version of Big Brother. As in certain of the Kienholzes' assemblages, numberless clock faces have replaced the heads of many of these figures. Their bodies, meanwhile, are hollow and composed of plaster and casting tape, as though, while they wield the authoritative tools of the security trade, they have been dehumanized by the experience.

Despite their large size—at heights exceeding 10 feet, many of the sculptures tower over viewers—these lumpy personages (all works 2008) are ultimately more comic than threatening. Their misshapen bodies have been subjected to a variety of indignities. To many of them, Magic Markers have been attached by strings, inviting visitors to cover them with graffiti. They



Ryan Johnson: *Sentinel (Dead Hand)*, 2008, mixed mediums, 116 by 112 by 70 inches; at Guild & Greyshkul.