

ARTFORUM

Anna Ostoya

BORTOLAMI

520 West 20th Street

March 1, 2011–April 2, 2011

“Exposures,” 2011, a collage-on-canvas series by Polish artist Anna Ostoya, is a meditation on the complexities of marking time. Following a self-prescribed regimen of one work per day, the artist produced the suite this past February for her first solo show in New York. The twenty-eight collages chronicle temporality via multiple registers: in the hours of a day’s work spent cutting, pulping, and pasting together the papier-mâché, gold foil, and newsprint; in the rhythms of daily financial graphs; and in the events that beget history—front-page images of revolution in 2011. Here the constraints of time and format (all of the works employ twenty-by-twenty-four-inch canvases) function as a pragmatic and elegant antidote to the prevailing conditions of cultural production—namely, there are not enough hours in the day and everything has already been done.

The series was conceived as a wry send-up of the concept of the *udarnik*, a superproductive communist worker. Although Soviet photomontage clearly informs the compositions, and references to Aleksandr Rodchenko and Gustav Klutss are transparent, the “Exposures” also manifest the aesthetic of desktop publishing and digital media platforms with image-text overlays, pop-up boxes, and ample use of color. This link to recent and pervasive changes in the condition of contemporary mainstream news media is reinforced by the title. Today the word *exposure* refers less frequently to chemical photographic processes than it does to the circulation and dissemination of information. Ostoya’s “Exposures” ask the viewer to take respite from the numbers, facts, and photos that are ubiquitous and to observe a wavering boundary between figuration and abstraction—that is, to gain a different kind of knowledge.

— Jess Wilcox



Anna Ostoya, *Exposures: 3.02.2011, 2011*, papier-mâché, acrylic, and newspaper on canvas, 24 x 20". From the series “Exposures,” 2011.