

# ARTFORUM

## LOS ANGELES Tom LaDuke

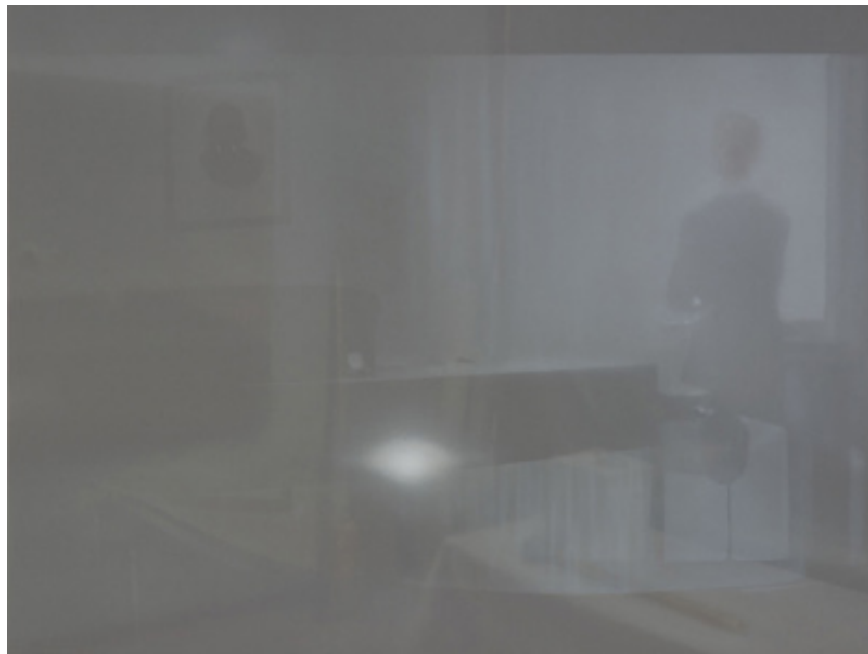
ANGLES GALLERY  
2754 S. La Cienega Blvd.

May 19–June 16, 2007

By Micol Hebron | June 2007

Art and movies have long been associated with magic; both present wondrous illusions that titillate the eyes and the mind. Tom LaDuke's exhibition of paintings and sculptures is a powerhouse of illusive—and elusive—imagery

that is thoroughly seductive and magical in its technical virtuosity. He reminds us that the simultaneous luxury and agony of being an artist stem from the tautologous compulsion to make work about what it means to be an artist making work. LaDuke uses acrylic and airbrush on canvas (a new technique for him) to make monochromatic paintings that depict his studio as reflected on the screen of a television that is playing a pivotal scene of a cult movie (*Aliens*, *Donnie Darko*, *The Shining*, *The Elephant Man*). In some paintings, the artist also adds in the lens flare or camera flash of a photograph taken of this scene. Some of the paintings bear subtle evidence of other works in the show as they lie in wait in the artist's studio. Light and surface have been classic subjects of inquiry for photographers and painters alike, but this treatment of surface is so oneiric and elegant that it speaks to the mysticism of television (think *Poltergeist* or *Videodrome*) and of the multivalent site of the studio itself as a place of contemplation, entertainment, production, melancholy, and mystery. LaDuke's uncannily realistic sculptures are equally as stunning as his paintings. Each is made of colored, oil-based clay and rendered from the artist's imagination to reference ancillary objects from classical paintings. The poetic juxtaposition in one room of a heavy sledgehammer with an ineffably delicate dead sparrow is emblematic of the rich complexity that characterizes the whole show.



Volti, 2007, acrylic on canvas over panel, 14 1/2 x 19 1/2".