

# DEREK ELLER GALLERY

**D-L Alvarez**

*Beausoleil*

February 12 - March 13, 2004

**Opening Reception: Thursday, February 12, 6 - 8 pm**

*Many people I know in Los Angeles believe that the Sixties ended abruptly on August 9, 1969, ended at the exact moment when word of the murders on Cielo Drive traveled like brushfire through the community, and in a sense this is true. The tension broke that day. The paranoia was fulfilled.*

-Joan Didion from,

*The White Album: A Chronicle of Survival in the Sixties*

This is a voice of hindsight. Didion looks back and pins the exact date when a decade folded its hand. From the other side of that boarder in time however, we can only assume that those actively involved in the various Sixties movements must have held strong believes that they were headed towards some logical next step: a direction that would have been a positive progression and not the sort of sharp reactionary turn of events that would give the Seventies such a different color and focus.

Tensions come from not knowing what will happen, and while the anticipation of a backlash hung heavy in the air by the end of the Sixties, it was mixed with the last strands of hope. "Hope" as a concept is often depicted as light both in visual and literal tropes (the light at the end of the tunnel). This exhibition's title, *Beausoleil* refers to that stance of optimism, looking towards the light in hopes of changing the world for the better. It also refers to Bobby Beausoleil, whose murder of a man over a drug burn can be seen as the beginning of the end in the grim legacy that would soon surround the Manson Family.

Beautiful sunlight.

In each of Alvarez' new works the sun is mimicked or referenced, the play of light and shadow is ever present. His pixilated graphite drawings depict images such as fanned out logs of a campfire, the shimmery legs of a spider, and artificial light spilling down on artificial foliage.

In a doll house like sculpture, *i* (2004), the home is shown as an open cross-shaped frame work, letting light and elements in through the rafters. The home itself is a composite structure based on various transient camps. It is basically a shelter, charming in appearance and yet decidedly unfriendly; there is no easy path to the entrances, and the trap door in the floor could be used to dispose of unwanted guests or as a hideout. The spotlight trained on the structure suggests theater, which is echoed by the fact that the home gives out only facades. There is no backside, but rather four "front doors" keeping watch out over each of the compass directions.

The works which give a bar-code simplicity to beams of light are actually the tracery marks of words, words which are abbreviated even in the titles, as if their shimmer had won out over language. For example, in the piece entitled *LA* (2004), we see the grid made when city names, HOLLYWOOD and BABYLON, cross one over another. The lines converge on a horizon and the classic image of tinsel town, gazing down from the hills, is echoed in this logo-like representation.

## DEREK ELLER GALLERY

The most representational drawing in the exhibition, *\\* (2003), shows a young girl gazing slightly upwards, her expression is a mix of hope and doubt. The girl herself was one of those Sixties runaways who left two-parent households in search of the sort of spiritual ideals that they believed could be found in communal living. She is positioned looking back at the exhibit's title piece. The sunlight graphic of *sol* (2004) beams down and a California hippy-Christian tableaux starts to take form, but the elements of the tableaux are tainted. The campfire, *0 0* (2003), which should warm us, is dying. In *K.Joy* (2004), the word JOY is preceded by a word negating it: KILL. It is idealism moments away from a head-on collision. Utopia seems within reach ... or is that hell?

Let the sun shine in.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 526 West 25th Street, 2nd floor. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com).