

# More equal than others



Annette Lemieux plays with Orwellian concepts in "Taking Stock" ("Pig With Lipstick" is above). (Barbara Krakow Gallery)

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## Annette Lemieux: Taking Stock

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery,  
10 Newbury St.,  
through Jan. 13th.  
617-262-4490t,  
barbarakrakowgallery.com

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By Cate McQuaid  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Annette Lemieux keeps things down on the farm for her terrific exhibit at Barbara Krakow Gallery, which plays off tropes that spring from agriculture. She makes George Orwell's "Animal Farm" a counterpoint to "lipstick on a pig." She deploys references to hay, gingham, and cows. She paints one piece, a barn-like doghouse, with milk paint, traditionally used to cover barns.

Lemieux excels at identifying patterns as straightforward as a paisley used in clothes sold at the Gap in the 1970s, or significantly subtler material - such as an image that arises again and again through history, each time loaded with meaning from the past but tweaked to fit the present.

Take the humble pig. The chilling and funny "Wanted" features a black-and-white silkscreen of a pig lumbering toward us. Text turns it into a wanted poster, seeking Snowball "for crimes against the farm." Snowball

was Orwell's porcine hero, a champion of all animals, overthrown by a despotic hog. "Act responsibly and contact the nearest doghouse," the poster advises.

The very same image, minus the text and plus a pink kiss plastered on its snout, hangs across the gallery as "Pig With Lipstick." What does our 2008 prettied-up pig have to do with Orwell's Snowball? Both conjure politics, leadership, and shaping a message to sway the masses. Throw in "For Sale By Owner," the milk-painted doghouse Lemieux made from a kit, and the associations run fast and thick. The doghouse recalls the overzealous canine security force in "Animal Farm," but here it's empty and for sale, which ties it into today's sliding real estate market.

Her installation "Got Plaid? Got Polka Dot? Got Paisley?" delves into sales and packaging strategies, nodding to Andy Warhol. Three patterned boxes sit in front of a wall covered with peeling red barn wood. The plaid box echoes a

tartan used by Amnesty International, according to gallery director Andrew Witkin. Lemieux borrows the red, yellow, and blue polka dot pattern from Wonder Bread, and the paisley from early clothes at the original Gap store in San Francisco. Is the barn wall behind them any less a brand, signifying an intrinsic piece of American history and culture?

Lemieux shows how images, patterns, and idioms metastasize through time, taking on bigger, sometimes more caricatured, meanings. Her materials - wood, ink, paint - are merely tools she uses to convey the far more slippery stuff she builds her work with: society's projections of who we are and what we want.

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