

WONDER BOYS

PRECOCIOUS ART-PHOTOGRAPHY STARS THE SANCHEZ BROTHERS
SHOOT FROM THE HIP

Publication: Montreal Hour
Date: December 4, 2003

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I realize I'm sounding more and more like a grandma with every passing day, don't think I don't know it. But shit, I can't help it. People are just so damn *young*. Andrew WK is barely 24. Zadie Smith? 27. And the Sanchez brothers, well the Sanchez brothers are the youngest of them all.

Okay, so Carlos Sanchez is 28, that's not so bad. But his brother Jason is 22 – "just a punk," says the elder Sanchez. Digits aside, what they've done in the last couple years has put them in a position most mid-career artists would give their right arm for. They are precocious wunderkinds no matter how you cut it.

"What really got it started was the first grant we got from DuMaurier Arts," says Carlos Sanchez from his home in suburban Montreal. In 2001, while he was still studying at Concordia, the grant gave him and his brother the financial opportunity to

make their grandest ideas reality. "All our dreams basically came true," he says. "We were given the liberty to do what we wanted, to not have a day job, and to do this seven days a week, which we've done ever since. It's the only way we could have done this sort of photography. It's just so expensive."

The underwater shoot for *Descent*, for example, cost \$5,000. They closed the Université de Montréal pool for four hours, hired underwater film experts and rented a 30-foot camera crane to get exactly the drowning shot they wanted.

The bros have a solo exhibition on at Dazibao at the moment titled *The Young* (see what I'm saying?), where they're showing a group of works you may have seen parts of in the last year or so, either at Concordia's VA building or at Art Mûr. Some of the works were also featured in Strasbourg last month, at the Inter-Urbains multidisciplinary art



(arts)

event. The bros are represented in Toronto, by the way, by Christopher Cutts Gallery.

Their ambitious brand of photography has been called cinematic for good reason, because they imply complex narratives with their eerie time-capsule shots as well as working with film budgets and techniques. "Our uncle has a warehouse in Lachine and he lets us use a room in the back," says Carlos, about where they build their sets. "We just generally find that it's easier to build them than to find them like we want them."

Think of what this means for a shot like *Easter Party* (2003), which reproduces an entire intricately decorated living room, complete with extended family members. They build the walls, rent furniture in prop stores, buy knickknacks, and cast friends and family members in appropriate roles. They might as well be making a film. Which is why, for the first time, they did. A six-minute video work with the same title accompanies the *Easter Party* still.

"The pictures are pretty cinematic, so we figured it was the next obvious step to explore. Since we were already building the set for the piñata shot we thought up a story around it and shot it in 16mm." The story in question is as haunting as the rest of their art: Surrounded by pink and blue Easter balloons, happy aunts and uncles and cousins galore, a young boy



EASTER PARTY (2003), BY CARLOS AND JASON SANCHEZ: STUFFED SACRIFICE

imagines bashing through a lamb-shaped piñata to expose its dripping, bleeding guts. It accompanies the bloody baptism and dead cat shots perfectly – the bros are developing a particular brand of horror.

Most interesting about the recent pieces, though, is their emphasis on youth. While in their first years (um –

year?) the Sanchez bros represented the underworld of mob deals and drugs, implying the narratives specific to those contexts, now it's the tainted psyches of children that captivate them. In a way, it feels truer. (-)

THE YOUNG

DAZIBAO, TO DEC. 20