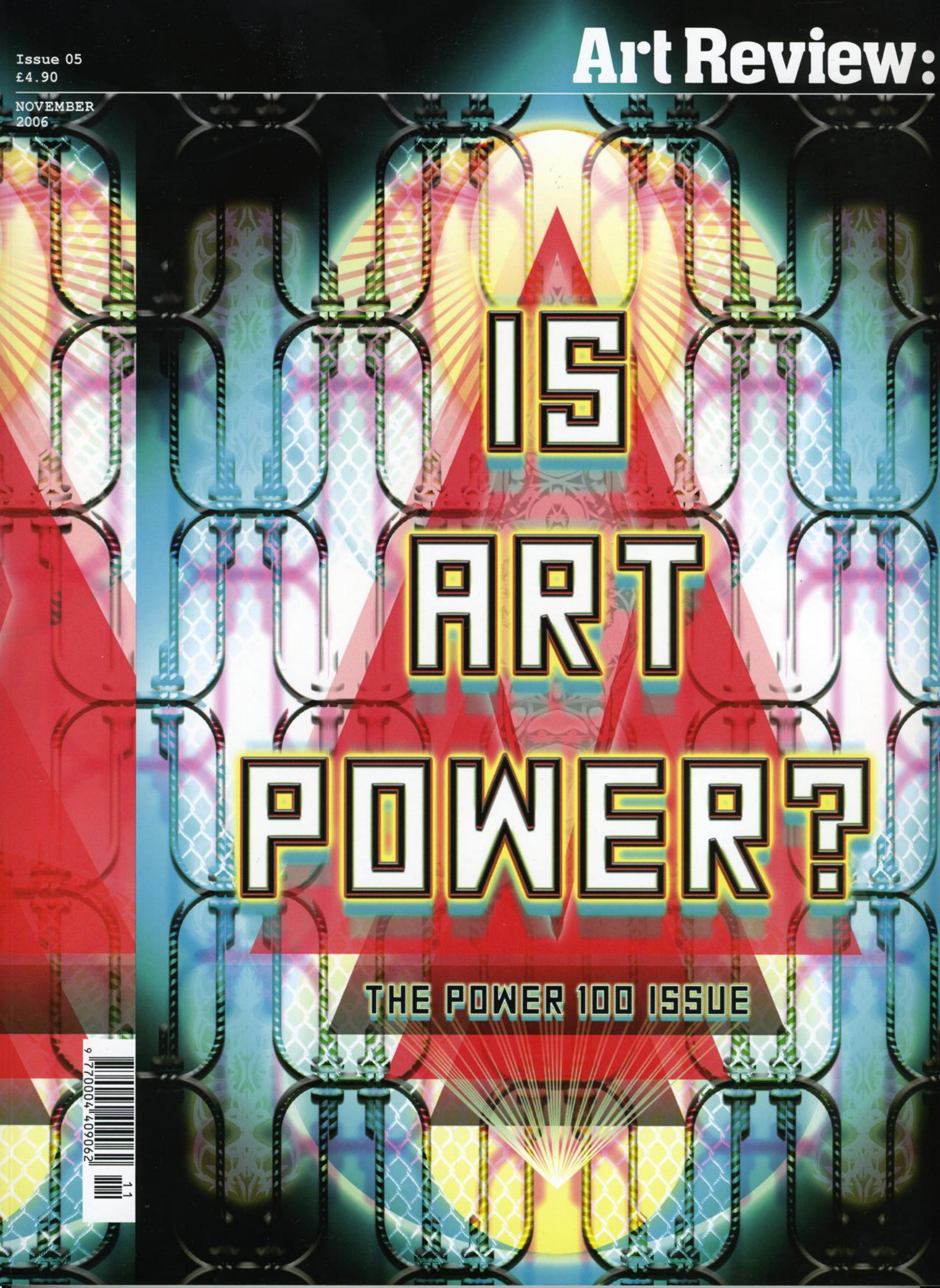


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# Art Review:

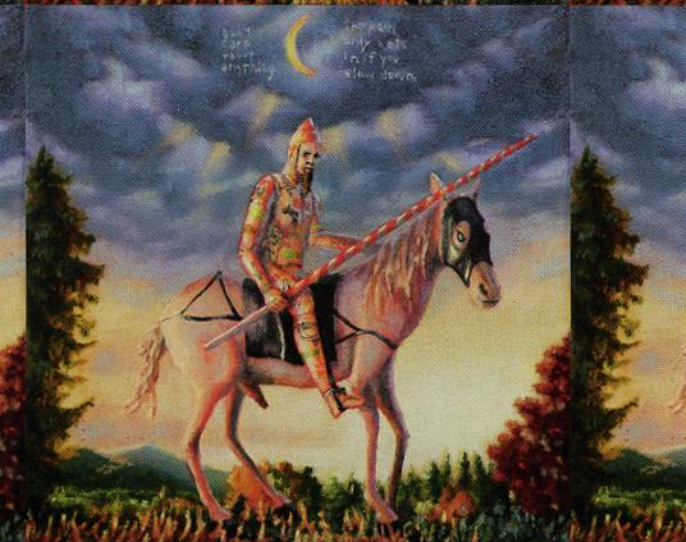
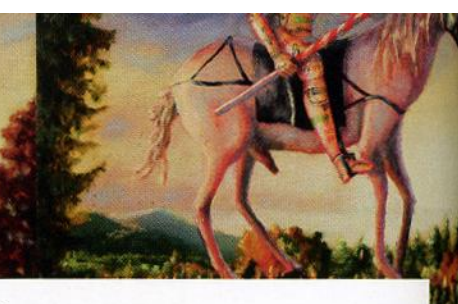
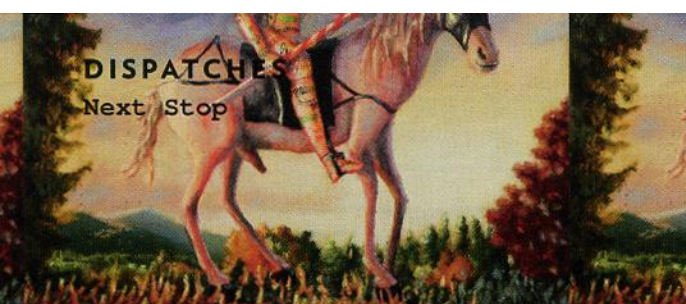


# IS ART POWER?

THE POWER 100 ISSUE







## KNIGHT RIDER: DAN ATTOE

In Dan Attoe's 2006 painting *The Knight of Death Metal*, a knight, who, bar the beard, bears an uncanny resemblance to the artist, wears a white unitard and wields a red-and-white striped jousting stick as he sits astride his faithful steed beneath a crescent moon. After encountering Attoe as he ceremoniously roars up outside LA Chinatown's Peres Projects gallery astride his custom-built three-wheeled mega-chopper, it is hard not to draw comparisons between knight and artist.

Attoe, a classically trained painter, heavy-metal fan and son of ex-forestry worker parents embodies a particularly unique strain of creative sensibility not often found on American shores - let alone in this century. It is somewhere between the archetypal 'initiate' from Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949) and a skateboarding, tree-hugging Don Quixote, who lives in the wilderness befriending beavers and otters, all the while dreaming up daring new projects.

Attoe describes the Chopper as the latest in a long trail of pursuits indicative of a freeheeling autodidactic impulse. "The bike is a mad professor thing - it's become central to my persona in the last few months. Every now and again I go and teach myself something entirely new - the last thing I did was learning how to rock climb. And now I can ride motorcycles." Though the bike may or may not be in the artist's November exhibition, bikes and metal are thematically central: he plans to recreate the ambience of a smoky Washington bikers' bar replete with neon signs, site-specific wall drawings and paintings displayed in light boxes.

Also on view will be the artist's famed *Accretion* paintings, where his beautifully painted forest scenes often serve as a backdrop to the whacky antics of various characters, narrated by phrases and add-ons. One such recent work, the painting *Accretion #35, This World is Dirty Just do Your Thing*, shows a vast mountain forest in which a naked woman is seen running in the tree branches, with mouth agape. She's as gothic a figure as appears in any Hieronymus Bosch, yet cast your eye upward and a smaller painting of cars on freeway is attached, snapping the viewer back to the twenty-first century.

The *Accretion* series - large canvases with smaller paintings randomly affixed to their surfaces - abound with doodles and philosophical phrases, combining Attoe's classical painting skills with his youthful predilection for graffiti-like scrawling and rank among Attoe's most fully realised works. Think of the series as a fitting realisation of his early artistic stirrings: at age fourteen, Attoe's painterly impulses led him to customise his school uniform. "My art instructor told my parents to buy me some acrylics," Attoe says. "I was painting on my clothes!"  
*Emma Gray*

DAN ATTOE, 18 OCTOBER  
- 16 DECEMBER, PERES  
PROJECTS, LOS ANGELES  
WWW.PERESPROJECTS.COM

Dan Attoe, *The Knight of Death Metal*, 2006,  
oil on MDF panel, 13 x 13 cm.  
Courtesy Peres Projects, Los Angeles