

BRINGING CURIOSITY & HUMOUR TO **DARK SUBJECT MATTER**, THESE FOUR UP & COMERS ARE ARTISTS THAT **COOL HUNTING'S** WATCHING IN 2006.



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1. CINDY WRIGHT

Sometimes described as 'Chuck Close meets Thomas Ruff', on first take the Belgian painter Cindy Wright's work appears to be polished photorealism. Glistening raw meat neatly stacked in a cube and an extreme close-up detailing a day-growth beard that surrounds slightly parted lips and crooked teeth are hyper-real, large-format canvasses representing visceral imagery. On closer inspection, figures and still-lives — like portraits of Playmates in the Prado Museum and the mottled patterns of rotten meat — reveal brushstrokes and other techniques that call attention to her painterly process. The prize-winning artist's solo show (her first in the US) is on at the Mark Moore Gallery in Los Angeles until March 25th. [www.cindywright.org](http://www.cindywright.org)

2. RUTH MARSHALL

Australian-born artist Ruth Marshall's knitted animal hides play on domesticity and trophy hunting. Meticulously woven pieces depict the skins of creatures often kept as pets — like cats and snakes. The faux pelts succeed by pairing traditional craftiness with violent subject matter, a contrast that belies her love and fascination for animals. As an exhibit sculptor and fabricator at the Bronx Zoo for over a decade, Marshall's qualified to comment on ways contemporary life is disconnected from the natural world. Her goal is to bridge some of that distance. 'I want the objects to transfix people, to seduce them away from the mundane nature of the everyday world for a moment and captivate them', she says. Look out for a solo show at Brooklyn's Dam Stuhltrager Gallery this autumn.

[www.ruthmarshall.com](http://www.ruthmarshall.com)

3. AFKE GOLSTEIJN

Dutch artist Afke Golsteijn calls her work 'Contemporary Fairytales' — equal parts Edgar Allan Poe, Brothers Grimm, and a less fragmented version of David Altmejd's fantastical arrangements. At times her sculptures read like literalized metaphors, such as in 'Lost Love', a collection of preserved blue butterflies encased in a stomach made from mirrored glass, or in the humorous 'Sleeping Hare', which wears a racing jersey. Others, like a mounted bunny head with delicate pastel beadwork tucked in its floppy ears, are less pointed but suggest the same morbidly obsessive Victorian detailing and domesticity gone awry. Check her out in shows in Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, and Antwerp in 2006 or to see more of her work, go to [www.idiots.nl](http://www.idiots.nl)

4. ARNE SVENSON

During a stint working in the archives of Philadelphia's home to scientific oddities, the Mütter Museum, Los Angeles-born photographer Arne Svenson discovered unsettling forensic sculptures of murder victims' reconstructed heads made from fiberglass. For Svenson, a New York-based artist whose conceptual approach has been compared to that of a curator, the figures from crime scenes in the US and Mexico became the macabre subjects of a series he worked on for over three years. The upshot — haunting, large-format portraits — explores notions of identity, art, and death.

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