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October 1, 2010

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Glenn Kaino: Safe / Vanish at LAXART Los Angeles

October 1, 2010

4:40 HD VernissageTV

This year, the independent nonprofit art space LAXART in Los Angeles celebrates its 5th Anniversary. In these five years, LAXART has produced and commissioned over 100 projects. One of them is the current show, a solo exhibition with works by Los Angeles-based artist Glenn Kaino. For the show, titled *Safe / Vanish*, Glenn Kaino produced new pieces that deal with art and magic. "Immersing himself in the study of magic over the past two years, Kaino's inquiry unveils the restructuring of the social contract between art and audience, generating new conceptual strategies that bridge contemporary systems of art production and exhibition with the mythical and mysterious dimensions of magic. For Kaino, this interdisciplinary process unveils new potentialities of conceptualism in contemporary art—providing new structures of analysis that function from the point of contact between criticality and wonder." (Excerpt from the press release).

According to the gallery, the exhibition Safe / Vanish marks a significant shift in the trajectory of Kaino's practice and encompasses a new dimension of his considerations of the role of the artist in our current landscape of contemporary art. This exhibition runs until the 30th October 2010 and is accompanied by an upcoming publication that will feature newly commissioned essays as well as documentation of this phase of Kaino's ongoing project.

Glenn Kaino received a BFA from UC Irvine and an MFA from UC San Diego; he currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Kaino's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at various institutions. He has had solo exhibitions at museums and galleries such as the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; ArtPace, San Antonio; REDCAT, Los Angeles, CA; the Whitney Museum of American Art, Altria, New York, NY; Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA; and The Project, New York, NY.

Glenn Kaino: Safe / Vanish at LAXART Los Angeles, September 23, 2010.

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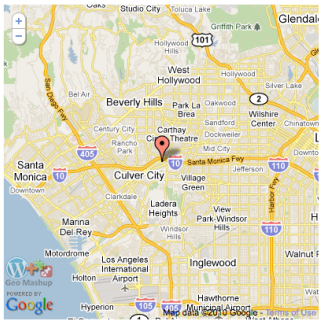
In Gallery One, Kaino presents a series of site-specific works that formally construct slippages between artistic practices and magic. A taxidermic goat, echoing Rauschenberg's seminal experimentations, is juxtaposed to a sculptural portrait of magician Ricky Jay made with playing cards. A series of wand sculptures that pay homage to important historical figures of conceptual art is brought into dialogue with an optical illusion installation that takes the form of a magician's table. A wall text piece assembled with newspapers that announce eccentric historical events responds to a new lightbox sculpture depicting Baldessarini the conceptual magician. Mobilizing formal tactics through the lexicons of magic, Kaino blurs both theoretical and methodological approaches to conceptual art—giving way to a complex and layered environment where the critical apparatus of art history is charged with multiple points of access for new audiences and for new compositions of meaning.

Extending from this series of works, Gallery 2 features a safe that houses secrets Kaino has been collecting over the past months. The secrets – ranging from the trite to the personal, from the corporate to the criminal, from the artistic to the magical, represent another facet of Kaino's project—his interest in the archiving of conceptual power; the brokering of and the power of secrets. The gesture of collecting recorded secrets in tapes and then archiving them in the safe furthers Kaino's deconstruction of the process through which the value of art is generated. In this work, mundane objects are fueled with value through ephemeral recordings—putting forth a poetic meditation of what art is in the context of a market-driven economy and what art has the potential to be.