



PACKARD JENNINGS, *Business Reply Pamphlet* (Panel Two), 2006. Pigment print, 18 x 27 cm. Courtesy Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco.

enchantment — which is absent. One is left to ponder whether the “magic” alludes to the disappearance of the belongings, previous moments of liveliness, or if it is missing altogether.

The unidentified scene references the looming unknown qualities of life and death with its unexplained narrative. Questions mount as the video reaches its end, but none are answered as the apartment becomes hollow and its contents mysteriously disappear. The video thus values displacement through the constant activity of the movers, the unidentified final destination of the items, and the endless waiting that transfixes the viewer.

The durational moments of this unexplained sequence of events leave the viewer in constant anticipation and literally suspended in self-reflection. Billing also had her participants unnecessarily sit and ponder something mysterious. These moments are didactic and superfluous, but *Magic & Loss* still creates an acute awareness of the states of human indeterminacy. John McKinnon

SAN FRANCISCO

PACKARD JENNINGS AND FELIPE DULZAIDES

CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY

Can you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar? The astringent, witty artifacts of public intervention projects by two social activist artists, Packard Jennings and Felipe Dulzaides, offer a marinade of both ingredients to capture the attention of an unsuspecting audience. While Jennings’ preference for guerilla stealth contrasts strategically with Dulzaides’ collaborations with the prevailing system, both artists use humor, charm and smart appropriation of graphic communication tactics to disarm the viewer, rendering him or her receptive to the underlying implications of the work.

Jennings’ *Business Reply Pamphlet* co-opts the bland generic imagery of airline safety cards in a wordless comic strip scenario instructing corporate employees on step-by-step procedures for workplace revolution: how to trash their work spaces and engineer a hippie-ish utopian society inside their office buildings. Sales of Jennings’ drawings and prints for this project finance his larger enterprise: he is collecting postage-prepaid business reply envelopes and will circulate his pamphlet to office workers on the receiving end.

Dulzaides, a Cuban émigré, talked Clear Channel into donating billboards around San Francisco for *Double Take*: photo-murals that magnify a feature of the billboards’ immediate surroundings: a surveillance camera, a basketball hoop, an empty parking place in a normally packed lot. Using advertising space to intensify passersby’s awareness of their environment rather than distract them with consumer blandishments is a more radical gesture than it first appears. More compelling

than the documentary images of *Double Take* are Dulzaides’ “One-Minute Installation in Havana” series: a sly, incisive parody of his billboard project and an obvious allusion to Erwin Wurm’s “One Minute Sculptures.” Here, the digital images — enlarged snapshots of the artist’s hand holding up a small rudimentary line drawing to the city view it echoes — function as covert ephemeral billboards in a city famous for recycling and making do, while offering a subtle yet powerful metaphor for the potential impact of the smallest subversive human gesture in an oppressive state.

Marcia Tanner

LOS ANGELES

DANIEL J. MARTINEZ

LAXART

Daniel Martinez can best be described as “artist as infiltrator,” one who possesses distinct knowledge of the persecutor, which is most often, in his eyes, the political system we live under. Armed with this knowledge, he casts himself as a sort of maverick prophet, an artist whose social awareness trumps compositional and artistic concerns. Martinez works in a variety of media including video, paintings, photography and sculpture. The combination of these elements serve the single purpose of elucidating a greater understanding of personal identity as it degenerates in the face of governmental structure.

Martinez’ most recent work reflects these same concerns, negotiating a political and poetic discourse simultaneously through the lens of minimalism. The main work in the show involves a site-specific text-based work painted on the façade of a building with an accompanying neighboring billboard. The text is deliberately arcane, yet strangely provocative: “beauty... it rubs against one’s tongue it hangs there hurting one insisting on its own existence finally it gets so one cannot stand the pain then one must have beauty extracted.” The text becomes its own fetishized object, though its meaning is purposefully and seductively illogical. Ultimately, Martinez’ truest objective is lost, obfuscated by the vagueness of language. The billboard, which reads, “the fully thinned earth radiates disaster until hant,” is also vaguely disassociative, given the context of the other piece, intimates that the earth will indeed recover from the follies of man.

Martinez also presented a fascinating video, which featured “the repetitious gesture of the artist’s own hands flipping the pages of a monochromatic picture book imaging a police raid.” This work, unlike the billboards, does not deliberately confound the viewer, but opens out from repetition into a more complicated universal dialogue wherein the gesture becomes its own strange kind of annihilation. Eve Wood



DANIEL J. MARTINEZ, *Beauty... it rubs against one’s tongue it hangs there hurting one insisting on its own existence finally it gets so one cannot stand the pain then one must have beauty extracted*, 2006. Wall painting, 3 x 11 m. Courtesy LAXART, Los Angeles. Photo: Joshua White.