

ARTFORUM

SUMMER 2006

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Chris Marker Portfolio
Allan Kaprow Remembered
Terry Eagleton on Slavoj Žižek
Paul Chan



\$10.00





Anthony Hernandez, *Beverly Hills #3, 1984*, color photograph, 27 x 27". From the series "Beverly Hills," 1984.

coat on a mannequin was already well out of fashion when the photograph was taken. The contrast between the two series is all too obvious, but the individual photos remain complex and affecting. In *Hollywood #1*, 1973, two grand dames, excessively made up and coiffed, with hemlines too high for their age, walk through a construction zone, with a young woman about to pass them by: Time rendered palpable.

—Michael Ned Holte

Dan Colen

PERES PROJECTS

Dan Colen's *Secrets and Cymbals, Smoke and Scissors (My Friend Dash's Wall in the Future)*, 2004–2006, is a life-size sculpture of a wall from a twentysomething's garage or studio. Based on a scene also pictured in a photograph by "Dash" (the artist Dash Snow) himself, the sculpture re-creates a visually chaotic surface plastered with posters and photographs, magazine covers and pornographic images, knives and rubber gloves. Colen has crafted all of these things, and many more, from Styrofoam, paint, paper, and metal, even reproducing the wall's infrastructure. But while many other contemporary artists also produce exacting renditions of photographic sources, *Secrets and Cymbals* fails to arouse the pathos at which it seems to aim. The point of his reproducing a Black Flag CD cover, say, remains obscure.

While Colen's process is as painstaking as Dave Muller's or Tim Gardener's, for instance, his work contains none of their oeuvres' longing or admiration. *Secrets and Cymbals* may be presented as a tribute of sorts, but the relics it immortalizes are neither unreconstructedly heroic nor provocatively antiheroic—they're simply ordinary. And while the notion of a conscientious documentation of a particular time and place has its validity, Colen's project stops well short of ruminating usefully on the presence or absence of nostalgia. The title's reference to the future is correspondingly confusing, since in no sense do these images constitute a meaningful speculation on the shape of things to come.

Rather clearer from the title is the fact that Colen has no qualms about making frequent reference to his pals, and having received an early boost from hipster journal *Vice*, both he and Snow share an edgy reputation. What *Secrets and Cymbals* pays homage to, at least initially, thus appears to be little more than the artist's social scene. Toward the center of the work, almost hidden by a model of an empty condom box, is a picture of a bear holding a tissue over its nose with the word *blow* written beneath—subtle!—while the show's invitation poster depicts Colen and Snow mid-pillow fight. The impression is of a conceptual circle jerk in which no one can quite get it up.

Dan Colen, *Secrets and Cymbals, Smoke and Scissors (My Friend Dash's Wall in the Future)* (detail), 2004–2006, styrofoam, oil paint, paper, and metal, 106 x 113 x 6".



Colen does have a real interest in both media and The Media, re-creating covers of the *New York Post*, for example, in order to underscore the level of abstraction in popular news coverage. But any more developed critique flounders in the general boys-gone-wild mayhem. Ultimately, he fails even as a straightforward collector, since the subcultural artifacts he fetishizes have already been repeatedly recycled and are now utterly devoid of significance. Studded bracelets, punk rock, and urban graffiti have all long since been divested of their original sociopolitical implications, and Colen's project is troubling in that the nature of this process is nowhere addressed: His painted Nikes, tags, and Bacardi bottle are as empty as we already assumed them to be.

—Amra Brooks

Daniel Joseph Martinez

LAXART

In new nonprofit gallery LAXART's inaugural show, Daniel Joseph Martinez revisited the straightforward presentation of text and image that defined his early practice, one which often addressed the subject of polarization but was itself polarizing. The artist's *I CAN'T IMAGINE EVER WANTING TO BE WHITE* badges, distributed to visitors at the 1993 Whitney Biennial, remain iconic of late-'80s/early-'90s work around the politics of racial identity. Yet while this selection of new works was characterized by a high-contrast mix of black and white, the result felt oddly indeterminate.

Words were everywhere here, painted and printed on surfaces ranging from banners to the gallery's exterior wall. Though sources are never cited, some texts are borrowed. From Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) comes THE FULLY ENLIGHTENED EARTH RADIATES DISASTER TRIUMPHANT, reproduced on a billboard near the gallery. From Hugo Ball we get I CAN IMAGINE A TIME WHEN I WILL SEEK OBEDIENCE AS MUCH AS I HAVE TASTED DISOBEDIENCE, and from Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos, MY PURPOSE IS TO MAKE WAR AND WRITE LETTERS, both block printed by hand on card stock.

These lines shared the show with texts of the artist's invention, generating a linguistic chaos that was nonetheless both poetic and insistent. One asks HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO THROW BOMBS while another proposes THIS WALK WOULD TAKE PLACE AS IF ON A BATTLEFIELD IN A WAR NO ONE ELSE UNDERSTOOD WAS BEING FOUGHT. Two photographs, *Black Power/Black September 1968 Mexico City Olympics* and *Black September/Black Power 1972 Munich Olympics* (all works 2006), offer views of, respectively, the winner's podium during Tommie Smith and John Carlos's famous civil rights protest and the dormitory where Israeli athletes were taken hostage.