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Kunstverein Nürnberg Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft



Die Krieger
des Lichts

Jason Dodge

Opening: 23 November 2012, 6.30 pm

Exhibition: 24 November 2012 – 10. February 2013

The motivation that unites all of my films is to give back to reality its original sacred significance.
[Pasolini, Interview mit Guy Flatley, 1969]

For his solo exhibition at the Kunstverein Nürnberg – Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, Jason Dodge has combined new and older works that tell a new story rather like a recombining of given words.

For the most part, Jason Dodge's works comprise a title and a combination of a few or individual, familiar items from everyday life. Apart from the objects and their titles, the rooms are empty. Sometimes these objects are so banal and familiar, such as a flute, a light bulb or a blanket that you might stroll by completely unaware that there »is« anything there or that something is actually »taking place« – it's like a light waft of wind on the neck: Dodge's work requires a great deal of attentiveness and openness in order to notice its presence and perceive its aura at all.

The title is an important part of the work in this regard and can be compared to the way in which the material of a sculpture functions. With the brief description of the elements – sometimes the titles sound almost like haiku – which cannot be seen, or the action to be carried out or that can be carried out by the object, Dodge effectively renders something visible and tangible that in reality can only be felt. What happens when poison is hidden in a bass flute and what if a bell is mounted on the chimney sweep's broom and the sweep uses it to clean chimneys? Objects and words act as the stimulus for a sculptural idea here: the invisible element is supplemented in the thoughts of every viewer, thus completing the sculpture.

Jason Dodge's works play upon the absence of concept and material, as indeed they do in this exhibition at the Kunstverein Nürnberg. Absence can adopt a variety of forms. It becomes »visible« and tangible in footprints, tracks or odours of something or someone, by a missing element in the room, such as the light or heating, through the emptiness of a place or the invisibility of an object named in the title. At first glance, the exhibition rooms seem to be almost empty, but they slowly begin to fill up through the very consciousness of the presence of something absent – something that is mentally present: shapes, images, places, smells, feelings, people with whom we have a direct personal connection, arise in the mind – present absentees so to speak.

Jason Dodge's works do not attempt to represent anything or to convey a concept, or indeed, to evoke a fictional world, rather they present reality and, in a broader sense, they refer to the poetry of reality which is very personal to each and every one of us.

Artist's Lecture: 21 November, at 7 pm in the auditorium of the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg.

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<http://www.latriennale.org/en/artists/jason-dodge>

LA TRIENNALE
INTENSE PROXIMITY
DU 20 AVRIL AU 26 AOÛT 2012



Jason Dodge In Nova Scotia, Jan de Graaf chose wool yarn the color of night, and wove the distance from the earth to above the weather, 2011 Collection Cypanga, Paris Courtesy the artist. ©

Born in 1969, Newton, United States – Lives in Berlin, Germany

“Generally, it is the people, the subjects that are lacking in what I do. I’m talking to you about them, but they’re not there. It’s as if I were using the feeling of loss as material.” In the artistic process of Jason Dodge, viewing is inseparable from feeling. And it seems straightforward enough, even natural. The artist’s works constantly put forth the creative process, a story, an experience, and quite often discretely bear the marks of an invisible collaboration.

For *Intense Proximity*, Jason Dodge presents a collection of several works that attest to his penchant for hijacking objects from the everyday, evoking the domestic universe, displacements and sound: flutes, a scale, a pile of white sheets, a dark blue blanket, etc. But no description could capture the complete sense alive in the objects. For example, *Above the Water* is, at first glance, a blanket left on the ground—the work is, in fact, the result of the artist’s order to a weaver attempting represent the distance between the Earth and the sky and choosing a shade of blue that resembled the night sky. Anyone, a pile of sheets similarly left on the ground, is the most recent piece—replaced weekly by a hotel laundry service, these sheets that are, in theory, not interesting bear traces of hundreds of sleeping bodies, recorded in the invisible history of its presence. Intriguing, disturbing, elusive, Dodge’s creations often leave his public in a particular confusion. When asked about this, the artist affirmed: “You don’t generally know what things are by looking at them. Nor do you know what they were, what they have inside of them or what they’ve touched—just like you are ignorant to someone with a broken heart, someone carrying a gun, the amount of electricity circulating, who wore that, what country are residents connected to by this satellite. That’s how the world was made, I find that it’s an interesting way to approach a work of art.” Distance and proximity, indifference and intimacy, or how post-conceptual art undertakes a poetic revival.

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Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

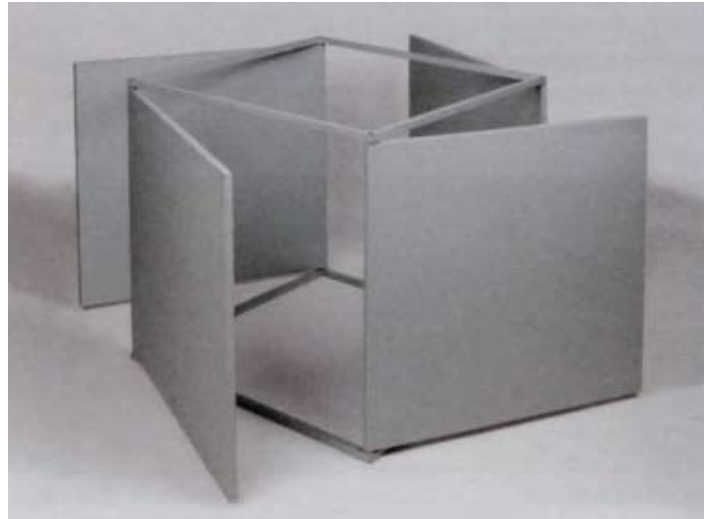
The Language of Less (Then and Now)

October 8, 2011- April 8, 2012
Preview October 6

Foregrounding MCA Chicago's belief that history is always under constant reappraisal, especially by artists, *The Language of Less (Then and Now)* will reintroduce now-classic Minimalist artworks to the public alongside work by artists who are reconfiguring this language for today-and deservedly gaining international attention.

Artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Richard Serra pioneered a stripped-down aesthetic that allowed audiences to focus on fundamental concepts that shape our world, such as solids and voids, repeating patterns, elemental structures, and ancient principles of proportion. From there, a clearer appreciation of the world was offered, perhaps as a way of establishing a firm footing in a period in the late 1960s and early 1970s characterized by social and political upheaval, war, and rapidly evolving technology. In many ways, our current situation can be similarly described, and many artists are again returning to a spare formal language to slow us down, clarify thinking, and inspire reflection.

However, where the 1960s generation largely sought to distance itself from the heroic, emotive gestures of the abstract expressionists by adopting a more impersonal and neutral tone through their use of industrial materials and repetitive patterns, current practitioners are imbuing their work with an increasing amount of poetic,



personal, and even romantic content. Across the work of Leonor Antunes (Berlin), Carol Bove (New York), Jason Dodge (Berlin), Gedi Sibony (New York), and Oscar Tuazon (Paris), visitors will recognize a shared aesthetic of restraint, but will also find a warmer, more obviously humane, even domestic quality to their efforts. Likewise, the established canon of historical Minimalism has been enriched in recent years by the rediscovery of pioneering talents that had slipped from view. The MCA has responded to these revisions with recent acquisitions by artists such as Tony Conrad, Charlotte Posenenske, and Franz Erhard Walther, all of which will debut in *The Language of Less*. The dual nature of the exhibition will provide a historical context for understanding the new developments among the younger generation of artists, while also offering a chance to reflect on the groundbreaking rigor and elegance of the earlier artists who made "Minimalism" part of our collective parlance.

Michael Darling
James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator

Above: **Charlotte Posenenske**,
Series E Kleiner Drehflügel
(*Small Revolving Vane*), 1967~.
Lacquered sheet aluminum.
Dimensions variable.

Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin by exchange, 2011. 12. ©1967-68 Charlotte Posenenske

Lead support for this exhibition is generously provided by Howard and Danna Stone.

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TERRA
Foundation for American Art

The Language of Less
(Then and Now) exhibition
catalogue, edited by Michael
Darling

SMC / CAC

JASON DODGE

Personaline paroda. 22 04 11/22 05 11

Kuratores: Gerda Paliušyte/Inesa Pavlovskaitė

G: What music are you listening to right now?

I: A Symphony in D major by William Herschel. I'm kind of in the mood for symphonies since last Tuesday.

G: What happened last Tuesday?

I: I finally went to the Palais de la Decouverte and went to the planetarium. I don't know if it's right to say it here. I think maybe it would be better to ask you the same question about music.

G: Please continue, I am interested in hearing how planetariums relate to Herschel.

I: At the planetarium someone was telling stories about the origins of planets and who discovered them. This was the moment I got to know Herschel as he discovered the planet Uranus. Then I started to listen to his symphonies. Maybe I shouldn't mention the planetarium yet.

G: No, I think it is a good moment to start revealing our daydreams of space travels. I feel that my dependence on a group called Lonely Galaxy is somehow related to this as well. I believe Herschel was dreaming about listening to his music in a spaceship heading to Uranus. Would his Symphony in D major sound the same there?

I: I guess it wouldn't. The density of air would definitely distort the sound.

I'm thinking that this situation we are in is extremely interesting: we are preparing a dialogue, i.e., we are intentionally ready for a dialogue. Though we don't have any script. There are just some rules and a method of this linguistic motion. It's like an exercise. I wonder if there are steady dialogue-practitioners. Like yoga or something.

G: I think Martin Buber was one of them. Presumably he was practising it at every moment of his day. And maybe in his dreams as well. I agree with you, this exercise we are doing at the moment is an example of the everyday language practises to reach a result of a dialogue beyond the words. You could tell your idea about bell's dialogue with its sound. I really like it.

I: It just popped up. I need to reflect on it a bit. By

the way, I heard a funny thing yesterday: a friend of mine who's a musician told me the instruments in the Soviet Union were of rather bad quality. They were produced in the furniture factories. This is why he plays a french sax made out of shell casings. The series was produced in 1965. One of the best saxophones ever made on earth.

When thinking about the dialogue between a bell and a sound I guess it's a rather complex dialogue because you are always there, your perception is what gives birth to the sound—you are the intruder and the possibility at the same time. So maybe it's more accurate to say that you and a bell have a conversation and if every dialogue produces a result, the sound belongs to you and is of your making.

G: Perfect. It is great how things get new productive functions. This saxophone is a sophisticated piece of equipment now. And if we are the ones who give birth to every conversation with objects around us, it is amazing how many various dialogues could happen with one thing. I wonder if a conversation could happen with a weather condition.

I: Let me see.

G: Did you go to the window?

I: I'm on my way. American scientists have invented a way to become invisible, they have made a cylinder. It can somehow gather a light back together that was dispersed and make you invisible. So I think it is quite possible that the air is full of people in the cylinders. Tricky part of talking to weather though. Do you want me to try?

G: Funny connection between talking to invisible people in cylinders in the air and the fact that Herschel was certain that the Sun was inhabited by creatures with enormous heads. He made this conclusion after exploring spots on the surface of the Sun. In a way that shows that sometimes you search for the creatures to talk to instead of speaking to the weather itself. Sure, try. I thought you have already opened the window.

I: It is part opened. Today it's +25 C in Paris.

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Jason Dodge. Solo show

2011 04 22 – 05 22

Opening on Friday 22 April at 6 pm

Artist's lecture at the CAC Reading Room on Thursday 21 April at 7 pm



Curators: Gerda Paliušytė and Inesa Pavlovskaitė

I: What do you think what sort of text we should write on this show?

G: Maybe like that conch you told me about.

I: Which one?

G: The one you were afraid to take from your grandmother's cupboard. What was so seductive about it?

I: I was so wonder-struck about the fact that a thing actually talks to you. You know when you put it to your ear it makes a sound of the sea. It was like the conch had its memory. In fact, I am not sure if I even had been to the sea before I heard the sound.

G: Actually I was captured by my grandparents' conches for the same trick of the sound, but at these days I never thought about the objects themselves. It was more about traveling. The conches were the gates to different places. They helped to appear on the shore of an island when standing in front of a glass shelf holding a conch near your ear your eyes closed. Why were you afraid to take your conch? Is it something about the fear of traveling?

I: The shelf was a sanctuary. I think your grandparents had the same one: wooden with two sections and big glass doors where all the crystal stuff was kept. So every object placed there invoked the respectful fear. As for traveling, I sure did that. It was not me traveling through the conch, but rather me as a conch. When was the last time you were on a journey?

G: Last summer. And actually I went to the Pacific Ocean for the first time. Once you stand in front of it, you somehow feel that the ocean doesn't care about you. You are the one who feel a necessity for it. I wonder how much space do things need.

I: Or rather how many things does space need?

G: As many as there can be the beginnings of the stories.

I: I believe sometimes the space can be self-sufficient. It has a mimetic character. It even can become a thing itself. I think we are ready to write a text now.

Jason Dodge (born in 1969) lives and works in Berlin.

Selected solo exhibitions:

Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE; VW, Berlin, DE; *When I woke up, there was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened*, Casey Kaplan, New York, US, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, DE, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, FR, Yvon Lambert, Paris, FR; *And for this I will call you the listener*, Schaufenster – Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE.

Selected group exhibitions:

The Bell Show, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE; *Woodman, Woodman, Spare That Tree*, Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, DE; The Berlin Box, CCA, Andratx, ES; *L'exposition lunatique*, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris; *Exhibition, Exhibition*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin; *Le Dernier Roman du Monde*, Supportico Lopez, Berlin, DE; *Objects are like they appear*, Meessen De Clercq, Brussels; *The Quick and the Dead*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, US, *The Happy Interval*, Tulips & Roses, Vilnius, LT.

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The Art of Tomorrow. Edited by Laura Hoptman, Yilmaz Dziewior, Uta Grosenick, Distanz, Verlag, Germany, 2010. 114-117

114

JASON DODGE



1969 geboren in Newton, PA, USA,
lebt und arbeitet in Berlin, Deutschland
**1969 born in Newton, PA, USA,
lives and works in Berlin, Germany**

www.luettenmeijer.com
www.massimodecarlo.it
www.yvon-lambert.com

Wenn man die sparsamen, scheinbar banalen und doch elegant komponierten Anordnungen von Objekten betrachtet - etwa eine Sammlung von Glühbirnen, Kerzen und Streichholzern, ein Paar Bratschensaiten oder eine einfache zusammengefaltete Decke, die mit einer weißen Schnur umwickelt ist -, wurde man kaum glauben, dass die Arbeiten von Jason Dodge zumeist eine fantastische Erzählung beinhalten. Doch sie schließen nicht nur Geschichten mit ein, sondern beruhen auch auf dem Glauben des Betrachters daran und - was vielleicht noch wichtiger ist - auf dem Vertrauen in sein eigenes Vorstellungsvermögen. So handelt es sich bei der erwähnten Sammlung von Glühbirnen, Kerzen und anderem um eine Arbeit mit dem Titel *Darkness falls on Wolkowyja 74,38-613 Polańczyk, Poland* (2005); sie besteht aus allen Arten von Leuchtmitteln, die sich in einem Haus an einem Waldrand in Polen befanden.

Die beiden Bratschensaiten in *The Viola of Béla Bartók* (2007) wurden von zwei Bratschen abgenommen, die nur ein einziges Mal benutzt wurden, um die namengebenden Bratschenduos von Bartók zu spielen. Die sorgsam zusammengelegte Decke ist eigentlich ein Wandteppich, der von der Algerierin Djidjiga Mefferer aus einem "nachtfarbenen" (wie der Künstler formuliert) Faden gewebt wurde, dessen Länge von der Erde bis über das Wetter reicht - daher der Werkstitel *Above the Weather* (2007).

In allen Fällen verlangt die Geschichte vom Betrachter einen beinahe wissenschaftlichen Optimismus, um in die narrative Sphäre vorzudringen, die jedem seiner Werke innewohnt, und es dadurch von seiner anfänglichen Unergründlichkeit zu erlösen. Zudem wird die Herstellung einer Arbeit, ganz im Geist von Alighiero Boetti, oft an einen Mitarbeiter delegiert - der immer namentlich genannt wird und daher für die Wahrhaftigkeit des Werkes ausdrücklich Mitverantwortung trägt - und an einen fernen Ort verlegt. Dadurch wird die Sinntrachtigkeit des ganzen unwahrscheinlichen Szenarios gesteigert. Dodges romantische und dichte Verschmelzungen von Objekten, Erzählungen, Zeiten und verschiedenen Orten, die an andere Welten denken lassen, umgibt eine treffsichere und starke Poesie.

You might never guess by looking at his spare, seemingly banal, and yet elegantly composed conjunctions of objects—from a collection of bulbs, candles, and matches to a pair of viola strings or a simple, folded-up blanket with a white string around it—that the work of Jason Dodge almost always contains a fantastical narrative. Not only does it contain a narrative, it depends on it as well as on the viewer's faith in narrative, and perhaps even more importantly, the viewer's faith in his or her own imagination. For instance, the above-mentioned collection of bulbs, candles, etc. is a work entitled *Darkness falls on Wotkowyja 74, 38-613 Polańczyk, Poland* (2005), and consists of every form of illumination taken from a house on the edge of a forest in Poland. The pair of viola strings in *The Viola of Béla Bartók* (2007) were taken off a pair of violas after they had been used only once to play the eponymous Bartók duos. The neatly folded blanket is actually a tapestry woven by a woman in Algeria named Djidjiga Mefferer from 'night-coloured' (artist's specification) string that equals the distance from the earth to above the weather—hence the title *Above the Weather* (2007).

In each case, the story requires that the viewer take an almost scientific leap of faith into the narrative ether that demurely lurks within each work, thus redeeming it from any initial inscrutability. What is more, in the spirit of Alighiero Boetti, the labour of each piece is often outsourced to a collaborator who is always named and therefore explicitly complicit in its veracity—and displaced to a distant location, which gives the whole, implausible scenario even more evocative teeth. Redolent of elsewhere, Dodge's romantic and compact confluences of objects, narratives, times, and disparate places deal in a deft and powerful poetry.

Chris Sharp

*Your death, sub
marine*
2009
Installation view, Kunstverein Hannover





In Lübeck, Germany, Marlies Scholz wove a piece of cloth. She was asked to choose yarn the color of night and equaling the distance (12km) from the earth to above the weather
2008

Darkness falls on Källhamra, 646 96, Stjärnhov. Everything that makes light, was taken from a house at the edge of a forest in Sweden
2008

In Algeria, Djidjiga Meffrer has woven a tapestry from string equaling the distance from the earth to above the weather; she was asked to choose string the color of night
2008



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ARTFORUM

JANUARY 2010 INTERNATIONAL

Jason Dodge CASEY KAPLAN GALLERY

From Trisha Donnelly to Jonathan Monk to Simon Starling, Casey Kaplan Gallery represents a number of artists whose conceptually inflected artwork constructs or relies upon narrative scaffolding. So, too, does Jason Dodge's slow-burn art. His sixth exhibition at this



gallery was visually unprepossessing but upon reflection revealed engaging emotional and psychological complexities. Take, for example, *in order of imagined altitude / an astronomer, a meteorologist, an ornithologist, a geologist, and a civil engineer, cut pockets from their trousers* (all works 2009). One would be hard-pressed to know, without the title, what to make of the small pile of pieces of fabric resting on a pedestal. The idiosyncratic professional hierarchy suggested by the arrangement, funny on its own, is buttressed by knowledge of *Above the Weather*, 2007, an earlier work (not in this show) for which Dodge commissioned a Polish woman to knit a length of yarn equivalent to the distance from the surface of the earth to the height at which one is "above the weather."

is written, that comes off as affected and twee. *A current (electric) / through / (A) tuning fork / and light* achieves a better balance. No more than a lightbulb whose long electrical cord has been sliced open to allow the copper wiring to be soldered to the ends of a tuning fork, the sculpture prompts koanlike questions such as, What is the sound of light? The strongest artwork in the exhibition alone proved the value of Dodge's explorations at the edge of sentimentality. (Its descriptive title is too long to reproduce here.) To make the work, Dodge typed a woman's full married name, divided into syllables, on narrow strips of paper that he affixed to the legs of homing pigeons, which returned to Berlin from Krakow, Poland. He did the same for the woman's maiden name, though this time the pigeons carried the paper slips from western Ohio to New York. Her Germanic maiden name, Eleanor M. Edelmann, hints at a personal history that might likewise have included an emigration from Krakow or Berlin to the United States. A missing syllable in her maiden name—what happened to that pigeon?—underscores the extreme uncertainty of any such flight. These conceptually linked journeys can also be tied to the risky, speculative process of artmaking itself. By installing the framed slips of paper on opposing walls, Dodge summoned a poignant affective charge that even the most detached viewer would have difficulty not feeling.

-Brian Sholis

Jason Dodge, *Your moveable and un-moveable parts / a broken furnace removed from house, and a box / that carried a new furnace*, 2009, mixed media dimensions variable.

Together, these sculptures manifest Dodge's sky-gazing Romantic conflation of science and poetry, perhaps akin to that of the enthusiastic amateurs Richard Holmes describes in his appropriately titled recent book *Age of Wonder* (2008).

As evidenced in the rest of this exhibition, for Dodge, poetry most often takes precedence. That was the show's chief strength and its primary liability. As flat-footed works such as *light and glove* or *sleeping bag / air / a tenor recorder* suggest, it can be exceedingly difficult to communicate to viewers the ineffable meanings that cling to demure arrangements of everyday object. *Your moveable and un-moveable parts / a broken furnace removed from house, and a box / that carried a new furnace* demonstrates the limit of this methodology at its other extreme. The objects Dodge selected—a broken furnace and the box of its replacement—suggest rich connection to both a city's arterial infrastructure systems and to the lives once and soon to be literally warmed by the furnace. It is his self-conscious intervention into this arrangement, two small pieces of pink paper on which the word VIOLINS

Jason Dodge

Kunstverein Hannover, Germany

Visiting a Jason Dodge exhibition is like a journey in which imagination is your compass and the limits of time and space expand. If this is true of presentations that take place in small galleries, it was even more so in the spacious rooms of the Kunstverein Hannover, where Dodge presented his most comprehensive show to date. In an almost circular path that led through five rooms, a selection of works from 2004 to 2010 seemed to be floating in the institution's immaculate white space under only natural light. Grouped together following more or less close associations, or left alone in rather mysterious isolation, these works revealed themselves as fragments of a larger plot as elusive as the exhibition's title: 'I Woke up. There Was a Note in My Pocket Explaining What Had Happened'.

Dodge's works usually consist of objects or groups of objects that have undergone different stages of manipulation or transformation. Some have been slightly altered: emeralds inserted into the body of an owl (*Emeralds Inside an Owl*, 2009); undeveloped photographic paper exposed at sunrise on the vernal equinox in eight different places around the world (*Into Black*, 2006); flutes stuffed with poison hemlock (one of them titled *Poison Hemlock in an Alto Flute*, 2009). Others have been fabricated under the artist's instructions as described by the work's title: *In Lübeck, Germany, Mariele Scholtz Wove a Piece of Cloth. She Was Asked to Choose Yarn the Color of Night and Equalling the Distance (12 km) From the Earth to Above the Weather* (2008). Works also originate as elements removed from domestic spaces: different devices that produce light were taken from a house at the edge of a forest in Sweden and strewn across the floor (*Darkness Falls on Källhamra, 646 96, Stjärnhov*, 2009); a long copper pipe traversed the exhibition space to be connected with the water system on the roof (*Your Death, Submarine, Copper Pipes Connected to Water*, 2009). Only recently has Dodge presented objects in the form of pure ready-mades, as in the case of pillows that have only been slept on by doctors (*The Doctors Are Sleeping*, 2010).

In Dodge's work, objects act like carriers or relics of actions that took place elsewhere, in a distant time and place. Often the artist acts as a kind of transmitter of a signal that takes the form of instructions or requests to perform a certain action or manufacture a particular material. The action produces an object - a work. The work embodies an elusive and often poetic narrative, the veracity of which viewers aren't quite assured. Evoking an action that took place somewhere far beyond our gaze, the evanescence of a natural phenomenon or a mental image, these objects reverberate with an absence that produces a sense of permanent longing. Dodge's work is imbued with constant references to the world of natural phenomena, alchemical

processes and the way materials, actions and stories are possibly interconnected. Many of his works represent a world sustained by an infinite web of associations: materials that transmit energy, animals that transmit messages, objects that transmit images, musical instruments in a state of potentiality, and soon. Seen together, his works reveal a coherent formal sensibility that combines an almost decadent elegance with an attention for materials and objects revealed in their own bare or raw states.

Dodge's practice straddles two distinct sensibilities: on one side, pre-Romantic and Romantic thinking, from Friedrich Schelling to Novalis; on the other side, the legacy of Conceptual art, embodied especially in its most poetic representatives (Robert Barry and Lawrence Weiner come to mind). The two movements seem occasionally to merge in Dodge's practice, if we think about the important role that *poiesis* plays for both of them. The creative instant, the indeterminate level of artistry, *poiesis* must be provoked or evoked by very synthetic means. If Conceptual art removed or distanced the object or the event to an unreachable 'elsewhere', alluding to it solely with texts, maps, schemes and instructions, Dodge makes the object the emotional conductor that unfolds a narrative or activates an image. It is surprising and compelling to see how the allusive fragility of the stories and the objects Dodge uses in his practice don't lose any of their imaginative power or intensity in a large-scale exhibition such as this one.

Luca Cerizza



Jason Dodge
Your Death, Submarine,
Copper Pipes Connected
to Water
2009
Copper piping, cardboard
and a tap
Dimensions variable

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frieze

September 2009

The Quick and the Dead



Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA

At the entrance to 'The Quick and the Dead' is a sort of overture - an eclectic cluster of works brought together in a small anteroom. It includes a 1969 text by Robert Barry from his series 'Leverkusen Pieces' ('Something that is taking shape in my mind and will sometime come to consciousness') and an On Kawara date painting. Another Kawara piece is depicted in a photograph by Louise Lawler, its time-stopping melancholy intensified by its domestic setting. A speaker in a corner plays a composition by Arthur Russell, as it was initially released in 1984: accidentally mastered at half-speed, a foggy, lugubrious drift. At the other end of the gallery space, another niche acts as a mirror image coda: the corrected version of the Russell piece, another Kawara, another Lawler, and another Barry text from the same series ('Something I was once conscious of, but have now forgotten'). This book-ending imparts a through-the-looking-glass quality to the entire show, suggesting some kind of hiccup in the space-time continuum, an alternate world somehow spliced into the museum space.

At the most basic level, 'The Quick and the Dead', which includes 53 artists, is a show about Conceptual art, but it doesn't feel much like a Conceptual art show. Willfully eclectic, gorgeously eerie and unabashedly theatrical, its perspective and tone seems more indebted to science fiction than to art history. At the core

of the exhibition is an idiosyncratic selection of work by first-generation conceptualists: Barry, Douglas Huebler, and Adrian Piper among them, as well as less celebrated figures like David Lamelas and Stephen Kaltenbach. But curator Peter Eleey is, as he notes in the catalogue, 'more concerned with affect than representation'. So the show also ranges through an assortment of viscerally and visually engaging work, of various periods and '-isms', including film, video, music, scientific photography and mathematical proofs.

Underlying this expansive curatorial mode is a notion of Conceptual art as a strategy of expansion itself. While the show's mise-en-scene works primarily to create a mood, there is also an argument being pressed: a compelling push-back against a reductive 'art-about art' reading of the Conceptual turn. In the familiar art historical story, idea-based work is essentially the culmination of a successive 20th-century dematerialization of the objector 'some end game of modernism', as Eleey writes in the catalogue. 'The Quick and the Dead' reconceives this retreat from form as, paradoxically, a kind of enlargement of scope, reaching beyond the merely physical world to travel in an expanded realm.

Barry's *Electromagnetic Energy Field* (1968), perhaps the show's emblematic centerpiece, serves as a powerful illustration of this argument. Displayed in avitrine, a battery-powered transmitter encased in a nondescript metal box sends out waves of energy, filling the gallery space with an invisible, immeasurable, but nonetheless real force. Perched between spiritualism and physics, the device is intended to create a literally charged atmosphere. Something similar is at work in Kris Martin's *Anonymous II* (2009). The artist had a human skeleton (originally

intended for medical research, then passed from David Wojnarowicz to Kiki Smith to Martin) permanently interred below an unmarked patch of the Walker's lawn. An official-looking document provides GPS coordinates to the nearby site: it functions as a kind of textual transmitter, transforming the gallery space with an uncanny bit of information.

'The Quick and the Dead' is, appropriately enough, a death-haunted show. Taxidermy by Maurizio Cattelan (a small dog curled in a corner) and Jason Dodge (an owl, supposedly containing precious gems inside its chest) offer unsettlingly life-like versions of death, as does Steve McQueen's *Running Thunder* (2007), a silent film loop of a horse carcass lying in a field. Death-like versions of life are suggested by a number of premature post-mortem works: sealed time-capsules by Kaltenbach; Martin's *Still Alive* (2005), a full-size silver-plated model of his skull; and Piper's *What Will Become of Me* (1985-ongoing), a collection of the artist's hair and nail clippings, which will eventually include her cremated remains.

Filled with canny visual rhymes and recurrences, the show often functions as a lexicon of mysteriously resonant - almost totemic - objects. Clocks, watches and calendars suggest time gone strange, shot through with subjectivity. Mirrors used in works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Marcel Duchamp - play analogous headgames in the realm of the spatial.

The automobile is proposed as a surprisingly numinous object. Michael Sailstorfer's *Zeit ist keine Autobahn* (*Time is not a motorway*, 2009) features a tyre grinding itself unceasingly down against a wall; in a sculpture by Roger Hiorns, an engine block crusted over with bright blue copper-sulfate crystals conjures up another worldly, IG. Ballard-esque aura. Paul Ramirez Jonas' lovely video *Longer Day* (1997) presents the artist driving west towards the sunset, trying futilely to extend his hours of daylight. Like all the work in 'The Quick and the Dead', it is a moving and melancholy attempt to journey beyond the here and now.

Steven Stern



Jason Dodge
FOUR CARAT BLACK
TOURMALINE AND
HALF CARAT RUBY
INSIDE AN OWL
During the process of
embalment, precious
gems have been placed
inside of an owl
2007
Mixed media
5 x 18 x 13 cm

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JASON DODGE

When I woke up, there was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened

EXHIBITION DATES: SEPTEMBER 10 – OCTOBER 24, 2009
OPENING: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 6 – 8 PM
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY – SATURDAY, 10 AM – 6 PM

“There is only this world, and this world.” – Michael Dickman

Things can have a history that we can’t see. In these physical things, we exercise our imagination and forensics to understand their history. A name of one woman is printed on paper, divided into syllables, and carried by teams of homing pigeons over hundreds of miles, her maiden name from western Ohio to New York and her married name from Krakow to Berlin. Her name, temporarily cut into parts, each syllable connected to a pair of wings and one beating heart.

An astronomer, a meteorologist, an ornithologist, a geologist, and a civil engineer cut pockets from their trousers. In a stack, they lay in order of the altitude imagined of each profession, from the stars through clouds and birds, mountains and bridges.

Looking at these things (a name or trouser pockets) is the starting point in discovering the work and ideas of Jason Dodge. He displays an element before us that becomes a key to something else, enabling a connection for the viewer to envision on their own. These things are presented much like words in a piece of writing, like when we read the word forest, we might think of trees, birds, or insects. But unlike words, what we are presented with is actual, without metaphor – they have force and weight that can only be completed by our projection of the humanness of these things. Ultimately, Dodge relies on the viewer to complete the work and that can be the only way for the work to exist.

The physical material in Jason Dodge’s work is often ordinary. Dodge’s interests lie in the potential narratives that are formed from what we can project on these things. These things are ways of connecting us to people, to lives, to the natural world, and scientific phenomena. A furnace, for example, is connected to gas, water and electricity in the basement and from this fixed point touches the people who live in the building. Attached to the furnace is a complex network of pipes, and wires flowing water, electricity, and gas, connecting us from our homes, and filtering outward to power generators and storage facilities, gas manes and valves, reservoirs and the Hudson River, aquifers and dams, rainwater and oceans. From these far away places the water eventually finds its way back to us, to our bodies and to our skin. When the furnace breaks there comes a moment of disconnect. The electricity and water cease, the gas is disconnected and cold comes throughout the building. The removable parts are then replaced, a new furnace is installed, and ultimately the old furnace becomes fractured like lost things.

As the title of the exhibition suggests, we are left with a note that possibly explains a series of events, but do we really know what happened? We are faced with a broken fragmented furnace and are left to wonder where it came from and who the people were that were affected by its removal. We read the name of a person. Who is this person, where does she live? Her location could be no more to us than an address on an envelope or a pinprick on a map. We could know her, have walked on the same street, or shared the same air. We use our knowledge and experiences of these things to understand them and we use our imagination to see them.

Jason Dodge, the first major monograph of Dodge’s work will accompany a survey exhibition at the Kunstverein Hannover in February, 2010 and at La Galerie in Noisy le Sec, France. He recently had a solo project at the Kunstverein Düsseldorf, Germany. Current group exhibitions include “Plus Général En Particular,” Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France, “The Quick and the Dead,” Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, and “Scorpios Garden,” at Temporäre Kunsthalle in Berlin where the artist lives and works.

For further exhibition information please contact Meaghan Kent meaghan@caseykaplangallery.com

Next Gallery Exhibition: Simon Starling, October 29 – December 19, 2009

GALLERY ARTISTS: HENNING BOHL, JEFF BURTON, NATHAN CARTER, MILES COOLIDGE, JASON DODGE, TRISHA DONNELLY, PA-MELA FRASER, LIAM GILLICK, ANNIKA VON HAUSSWOLFF, CARSTEN HÖLLER, BRIAN JUNGEN, JONATHAN MONK, DIEGO PERRONE, JULIA SCHMIDT, SIMON STARLING, GABRIEL VORMSTEIN, GARTH WEISER, JOHANNES WOHNSEIFER

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REVIEWS:USA

Window Hook, Quail, 2009. Photo: Cary Whittier. Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York



When I woke up, there was a note in my pocket explaining what had happened, the full title of Jason Dodge's latest show at Casey Kaplan, introduces the elliptical structure that stitches the handful of exhibited works to their titles. For example, a stack of cut pockets is paired with two statements attributing their respective positions to the imagined altitudes of the astronomer, meteorologist, ornithologist, geologist and civil engineer to whom they supposedly belonged. Characteristic of the artist's recent output, the viewer is asked to step into the roles of detective, literary critic and spiritualist alike, reading the titles' explanatory claims against the material evidence on display, triangulating players and back stories from glancing allusions, and even weighing Dodge's tacit invitation to suspend disbelief, so that the small moments he has carefully assembled in the gallery space may adequately evoke the wonderment and loneliness and mystery of life. If these strategies feel rather commonplace in an era of barely-there poetical postconceptualism, it merits reminding that Dodge is no latecomer to the field, and while some of his works lean so heavily upon their elisions as to risk preciousness and sham nostalgia, he more often than not proves an empathetic and inspired storyteller.

An oversize cardboard box and old furnace obstruct the threshold of Casey Kaplan's entry gallery, where Dodge presents a deliberately cramped constellation of works, including a quail recipe affixed to the wall by a window hook; the pockets; a tenor recorder covered by a folded sleeping bag; and a leather glove, unbuttoned to accommodate a metal light fixture. These juxtapositions carry a low-grade surrealist quality, their constituent parts looking too banal to accommodate much additional psychosexual frisson - which may very well be to Dodge's liking. In their seeming resilience to transmuting into anything more sculptural than the empirical givens, they incite a similar discomfiture as a certain famous sardine can floating on the sea. 'You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!' a local fisherman noted once to a young Jacques Lacan, though to the psychoanalyst the can did seem to stare back, its gaze potentiating a field of visibility and identity exceeding conventional anthropocentric delineations. Dodge has mentioned his interest in the poems of Dan Chiasson written from the point of view of objects. His sculptural combines arrive in the gallery through a similar conceit, with the excision of previous owners, histories and uses inducing phantasmagoric auras that only accentuate their ontic presence.

Even a detective meets his maker. In the main gallery, a long copper pipe runs through a square hole in the gallery wall and (allegedly) into the gallery's main water supply. A metal lever, at pipe's end, issues a provocation, redoubled by an attached note that entreats the viewer to 'build a great aquarium.' The projective fatalism of the aforementioned works is here compressed into a straightforward, causal chain, sensationalist in its restraint, awe-striking in its watery promise: a fast idea, fading just as quickly. *Tyler Coburn*

Jason Dodge

When I Woke Up...

Casey Kaplan, New York
10 September - 24 October

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Carr, Adam. "Jason Dodge". *Spike Art Quarterly*, Issue 16, 2008.

Jason Dodge

Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin 02/05—07/06/2008

Massimo De Carlo, Milan 08/05—28/06/2008

Those who are fairly familiar with the work of Jason Dodge will be accustomed to the very few pieces he produces per year. Although this might suggest a minimal, almost scarce, and more to the point, empty output, nothing else could be far from the truth when looking at the artist's work, which could be described as a dense, strikingly rich oeuvre, comprised of pieces that are marvellously considered, wondrously conceptually and beautifully executed.

Dodge's work, in essence, directs an audience's attention to their own impulses of thought, imbuing the creation of personal narratives, but avoids the clichés that one might consider when reading this particular description. His works almost always result from a sequence of personally assigned actions, carried out by individuals of whom had been chosen for their very particular occupations or location (a weaver, an air pilot, or those in dispersed parts of the world during the equinox). Focusing on the role of interpretation and perception, and placing the poetic into the foreground, they harness the ability to imaginatively engage viewers with situations, of objects that perform mutely—all a trace of an event but seemingly devoid of their subject. Pivotal, the title of each work—and the artist's pervasive focus on, and use of, descriptive language contained in each—functions as a key intermediary between the objects and the viewer, thus unfolding the pieces' meaning, history and ultimately enabling their uniqueness.

Despite the artist's refusal to deal in over production, two recent solo exhibitions—of which ran almost concurrently—presented 10 new pieces, while revealing a point of departure to the approaches undertaken, and the ideas underpinning, the aforementioned. At Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin and Galleria Massimo De Carlo, Milan, the style of presentation suggested a transportation of objects from the eras of land art or art povera (a constant in his exhibitions), also notably having the titles of work printed over 3 to 4 pieces of paper, pinned to the wall, and positioned in the same way as that of the pieces. In Lubeck, Germany Mariele Schultz wove a piece of cloth. She was asked to chose yarn the colour of night and equalling the distance (12km) from the earth to above the weather (2008) demonstrates Dodge's approach perfectly, leaving us to consider the position of the piece—and subsequently our own—in relation to the world around us. Another work, They are waiting for you at the monument they (the brass band is) are waiting for you at the monument (2008), consisted of brass band instruments, but unlike his previous work where we try to reverse the process of each (like a detective with the title evidencing the objects historical trajectory), intentionally it remained unclear what the precise origins of these objects are: are they the possessions of a previous band or one in current existence? Who are the people waiting exactly? This piece is part of a new body that the artist describes as "diagrams". Another comprised a tube filled with poisoned hemlocks, versions of which were each present at both exhibitions, with the largest at Lüttgenmeijer traversing an entire section of the gallery wall. Also present at Lüttgenmeijer were further diagrammatic works: one consisting of an electrical current running through a tuning fork to a lamp; another, combining a gold ring and an egg of a homing pigeon; and batteries from a radio positioned on the gallery floor to point north. With what seems to place focus on an impression or literal observation via a combination of objects, rather than metaphor or allusion—or elevating the performance and history involved in each as seen in his older pieces—these works add a newly compelling dimension to an already impressive oeuvre.

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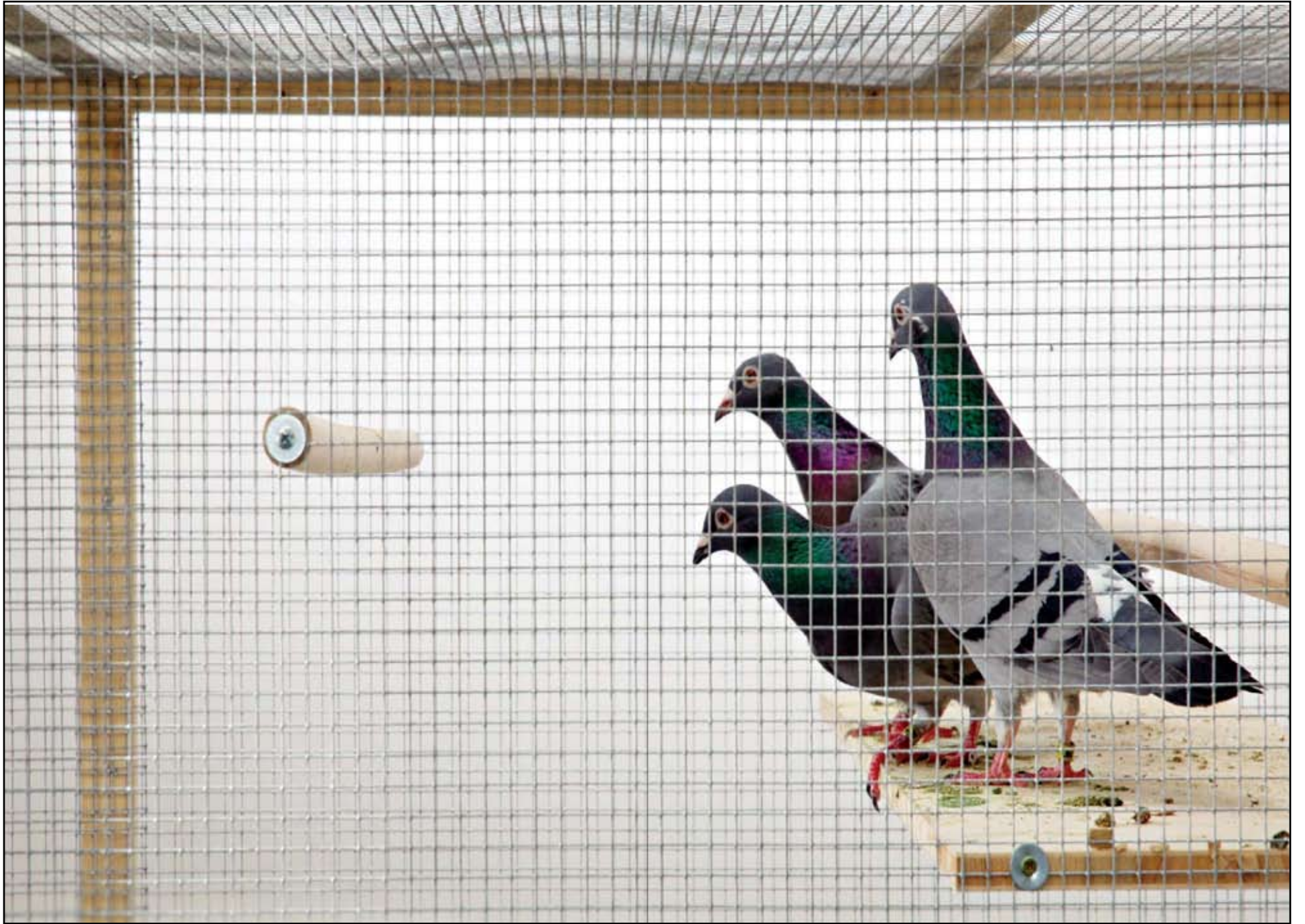
YOU ALWAYS
MOVE
IN REVERSE

AN INTERVIEW
WITH JASON DODGE
BY ADAM CARR





RUBIES INSIDE OF AN OWL, 2006
During the embalming process, precious
gems have been placed inside of an owl





DARKNESS FALLS ON BEROLDINGERSTRABE 7, 79224 UMKIRCH
all of the light bulbs, candles, matches and anything that makes light
is taken from a house in a forest in Germany



VI 162 GROUP EXHIBITION, MASSIMO DE CARLO, CURATED BY JASON DODGE

***IF when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees,-
if I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
“I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely,
I am best so!”
If I admire my arms, my face,
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades, -
Who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?***

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Adam Carr: Let's start by discussing your most recent activities and work backwards through time, in a similar frame of mind that an individual work of yours poses to viewers. Could you tell a little about the exhibition you recently curated at Massimo De Carlo?

Jason Dodge: The exhibition at Massimo De Carlo is about reading - the notion that the act of reading is a creative act. Something private is made by reading and in a sense the exhibition is juggling the idea that a willing suspension of disbelief can go both ways. And perhaps the artist, writer or designer is also engaged in a willing suspension of disbelief while they make what they make, a suspended belief in themselves and their thoughts. I wanted to make an exhibition that had as many different configurations of the spectrum of this idea as I could think of. The show is mostly of poets and designers. And the title of the show is a complete poem by William Carlos Williams. I like the idea of a title as distribution of an idea. And in this case, I wanted to use a poem so that every time the show was mentioned one would have to print the entire poem.

AC: Did you include your own work, or was it more a case of exploring central aspects of your practice without actually showing any of your work?

JD: Truthfully, it was important that the exhibition did not include my own work - I also did not want the show to be a direct lens into my own practice. However, with that said, the show is about the possible transformative nature of experiencing something someone else has made, or something that already exists. This transformation is the opposite of referencing or appropriating historical artwork. The exhibition, quite simply, is about creativity, causing something to exist, bringing something into being, internally and externally. This idea is one of the most important things for me in making my own work, but that is hardly a declaration, because I think creativity is the basis for all good work.

AC: Your work seems to have a strong focus on the “activity” of the viewer, positioning the audience in such a way that the role of a spectator becomes intrinsic in its making, or rather, its undoing. Often, a paradox is at play privileging the viewer while at once challenging the capabilities of their imagination. One of your most recent pieces *Rubies Inside Of An Owl* (2006) appears more direct than others, posing the question of whether the piece lives up to the reality that the title suggests. Is the blurring of the boundaries between true and false interesting for you?

JD: No. I don't think proof is an interesting way to look at things; it takes away the possibility that there could be more than what you see.

AC: There is a certain faith structure, however, drawn between the viewer and yourself - in other words, it is belief that plays a significant role in the reading of *Rubies Inside Of An Owl* within which the limits of the work are always controlled by the limits of the viewer's imagination.

JD: I think of it in relation to the idea of willing suspension of disbelief. I try to approach my work in relation to writing, but by using a visual language.

AC: This very much exemplifies the charged atmosphere contained within your works - a strong performative element often resulting in work appearing to be on the brink of becoming something else. Consequently, the viewer not only speculates over the potentialities of the piece, but also attempts to retrace the narrative associated with it's making. But the works appear more than just relics of a particular sequence of actions though - they suggest a part of a much larger narrative. A recent series of pieces, entitled *Darkness Falls*, involves the participation of others in its formulation. It is interesting that you yourself didn't travel to these remote and somewhat far-flung destinations, but rather, you asked others to play a role in the construction of the work. This seems to foster an extension of the work's possible narrative, making it more densely layered - both in terms of a potential retracing of the previous actions that the materials in the work belie, as well as the projection of our thoughts into scenarios for what could occur next. I'm curious to know more about your idea of using the contribution of others, and whether this is something you are currently still employing in the development of your work.

JD: To make the work *Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7*, I had a friend who was looking after her uncle's cottage in the Black Forest. I simply asked her to take everything in the house that makes light and left it at that. Meanwhile she took every match, candle, illuminated clock face, LED light from the coffee maker, everything, not the TV, though. When the owners returned to the house a week later, they slowly realized, as the sun set, that there was no light. First they thought the power was out, and then upon realizing that all the lights were gone, they started looking for candles, which they found were also not there. What they didn't notice until it was completely dark in the house was that there was a box filled with all of the replacement lamps, and clocks, and candles still inside the house. In making this work I realized something - the more I didn't try to control the outcome, by giving only the basic instructions, the more alive the work becomes for the person making it for me. And in essence they become the true primary viewer of the work - it is a very special relationship. Currently I am making works with a weaver in Algeria, my neighborhood chimney sweep in Berlin, two violists, a pigeon racer and a botanist. They are all such different people, and are all doing something new with something they know so intimately.

AC: It seems intimacy is something always underpinning your work acting as a form of bait that draws in the viewer momentarily to then only disrupt and unsettle their familiarity with such materials. I see your approach quite similar to a director, presenting a story to a larger audience, where lies a possible collision between the real, the elusive and the fictitious...

JD: What I do is never false, what I say has taken place. There are gems inside of the owl. the lights are from the house I say they are from. The relationship I have to the work. and in some cases with the people involved, is a private one, and in that sense the work is intimate. The events that take place in the making of the work are stories that are mine, or rather, between me and the people it involves. The work is meant to be literal. I think this is why poetry is interesting to me. I don't care about the notion of the poetic, just the possibility that a simplified language of comparison and economy is something that I can relate to. While I say my work is true, simply the notion that you have to take my word for it leaves doubt. And intimacy in a sense could be the creation of trust and the suspension of doubt. It could be confusing. We all know that if a character in a novel does something, he actually did it. But translated into the language of an artwork, that very same act of the character in a novel is different.

AC: Just going back to the idea of your work increasingly using participants in its material gathering - I know that you once collaborated with the artist Maria Nordman, although initially it didn't intend to be a form of collaboration,

JD: Maria Nordman made a work in 1972 that I really love. She built a wall around the shaft of light that came through the loading dock door of the Newport Harbor Art Museum. When I was asked to make an exhibition in the same space 30 years later, one of the works was to replace the wall bell from the original work. The title of my work was The Return. During the exhibition I got a mysterious call from Maria Nordman full of questions, She proposed that in the exhibition she would put two music stands, one with her notebooks about the original work, and the other for people who had seen the original work to reflect upon seeing it. I love this idea of calling the work The Return, and then having her return!

AC: You mentioned earlier some of works that are currently in process and I'd be interested in knowing more, particularly about the work involving the chimney sweeper.

JD: One of the works currently being made is called Ringing Through Chimneys. I have asked the apprentice chimney sweep in my neighborhood in Berlin to attach a small brass bell to the brush he uses to clean chimneys. The bell will be there for a few months until it is time for me to take it to Paris.

AC: Your earlier work, particularly within solo exhibitions, consisted of various objects related to one over-arching theme - often remnants of a bourgeois lifestyle. You also did one show that took as its starting point the winter Olympic sport, the Biathlon. Could you expand on some of your early work? As there seems to be a departure from this approach, I'm interested in finding out the reasons behind this deviation.

JD: Looking back, the earlier work that you are referring to is quite similar to the recent work. The subject was always missing, like the chimney sweep is missing and the person that threw the silver through the window. In the older work there was always the detritus left behind, I have always been interested in the idea of writing that I spoke of before. In the past I was more interested in the idea of building a character or a theme. I used the notion of decadence for the sole purpose of creating time, I always imagined the idle rich had tremendous amounts of time. I liked the idea of this burden of idleness as a narrative device - after all, the work was about anxiety, not the rich. The exhibition about the Biathlon was based on the idea that to shoot a rifle after skiing long distances, the athletes have to learn to slow their hearts down in a matter of seconds when they had to stop to shoot. Truthfully, I was quite heartbroken at that time, and for a long time, and I felt that learning the skill of slowing my heart down could help me. The change in my work came mostly from moving to Europe, needing to find new ways of navigating the act of making work without a studio and living in sublets. There is a distance created by being an outsider that I love so much. I am also older now, I am married and have a child, I care about different things, and both my life and the way I work have become more simple.

JASON DODGE was born in Newtown, Pennsylvania, USA, in 1969. Lives and works in New York and Berlin. In 2006 won the Ars Viva awards, and his work has been shown in several museums as KW Institute of the Arts, Berlin, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

ADAM CARR is an independent curator and writer based in Paris and London.

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Hopelessness Doesn't Come In Silver

Ronald Jones

*Success has always been the greatest liar. 'Great men' as they are
venerated become subsequent pieces of wretched minor fiction.*

FREDERICK NIETZSHE

WIn mid-retreat between Potsdam and Paris, his relationship to Frederick the Great of Prussia soured, Voltaire received unexpected news from his friend and champion Mme. Pompadour, Louis XV's influential mistress: he was no longer welcome in France. That Mme. Pompadour mistakenly overdrew the king's feelings towards Voltaire matters little now. As it was, the latter collected himself, chose Geneva for his exile, took an estate, renamed it Les Délices and moved in with his lover Mme. Denis. Banishment became an indulgence in domestic bliss and entertaining; as Voltaire described it, a life of "affable manners, simple living, and the culture of the mind." Without a trace of over-stuffed Parisian society, he furnished and decorated Les Délices in assiduous elegance. "We have finally come to enjoy luxury only in taste and convenience," he wrote in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*. And when he became melancholic at never having become a father, he legally adopted a teen-age girl and began to take pleasure in family life at Les Délices. The writer and philosopher also devoted considerable energy to perfecting the grounds surrounding his villa, planting 4,000 trees, beneath whose boughs sprawled untold gardens, flower beds and neat gravel paths, all tended by two master gardeners. His kitchen garden was sumptuous by today's standards, boasting basil, tarragon, strawberries, rosemary, thyme, mint, sage and a dozen other herbs and spices surrounded by green trellises that he had a hand in designing. After just five months at Les Délices, he wrote to his friend Nicolas-Claude Thieriot after just five months at Les Délices: "I do not know anything to compare with my situation. I did not know this new pleasure, nor that of sowing, planting and building. I would like to have you in this little corner of the earth, where I am very happy." And indeed, as soon as the last touches to the villa and grounds were made, Voltaire's celebrity and reputation for hospitality drew luminaries from across Europe to his "little corner of the earth" at Les Délices. As Voltaire wrote to a friend in Paris, "The best society, of wise and enlightened people, come here almost every day."



"When the Courts of Europe shut their doors, Voltaire embraced exile as his own Horatian ideal of an uncorrupted life, while simultaneously stepping back onto the world's stage to advocate civil liberties and human rights in the face of Christian cruelty on a standard to which we may still aspire 250 years later. While in residence at Les Délices, he completed *L'Histoire du Docteur Akakia et du Natif de Saint-Malo* (1753), *La Pucelle* (1755) *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), *Essai sur L'Histoire Générale et sur les Moeurs et L'Esprit des Nations* (1756) *Candide* (1759), *Traité sur la Tolérance* (1763), *Traité sur la Tolérance* (1763) and *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764) From his paradise in exile, Voltaire took revenge, vandalizing European culture using these seminal works as precious stones hurled through the windows of those sacrosanct institutions Court and Catholic Church. His motivation is best expressed by his own notorious motto: *écrasez l'infâme*..

It is not enough to conquer; one must learn to seduce.

VOLTAIRE

The focal point of YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE, Jason Dodge's spare and beautifully-designed installation, could have been inspired by Voltaire's life and accomplishments at Les Délices. A shattered plate-glass window at the museum has been given a provisional repair

using sticky brown box tape, the standard urban operating procedure for mending a store window smashed in during the course of nocturnal mischief by a thief or the tomfoolery of some drunken delinquents. This breach of a ward of culture is cast as a crime scene, acknowledged by the temporary fix-it, but otherwise undisturbed. Flakes of plate-glass lie spewed across the floor, and two meters from the fractured window rests the blunt instrument used to carry off the raid: a one-kilo Credit Suisse bar of silver bunion, number 137198. The ingot is genuine and hefty enough to have done the job.

YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE comes off with theatrical pacing: first, a series of short declarative sentences - the silver bar, the glass shards, the mended window - then, an evaporation into prolonged silence.. Silence on the stage is as important as spoken dialogue, and it is equally weighted in Jason's work. His tempo, leading to a hushed crescendo, inevitably leaves you wondering about what's not being seen. When the brisk visual rhythm drops off, it is as if the installation pulls back to allow you to slare through the broken window. Mapping a trajectory backwards from where the silver bar landed, you can estimate the direction from which it must have come. Normally, visitors to exhibitions narrow their focus to what's inside; that is, after all, the point, but in the case of YOU ALWAYS MOVE REVERSE, things move in reverse. Your concentration inside the museum is released, and the mystery is all out there; who could be behind this? And what drove him to sneer in such an audacious way, with only arrogance (hopelessness doesn't come in silver) on his side?

Breaking windows with rocks or Molotov cocktails is a bit of rough trade, by now a signature expression of contempt or even revolt. But hurling scorn with silver bullion registers something effete or self-indulgent, over-refined and snobbish or even sterile. How can such a decadent gesture uphold passion or fanaticism, senselessness or outrage? One answer is that Jason has altered the idea of revolt at something like a genetic level, turning the throwing of an ingot in rage into an astonishingly enlightened gesture. This was the act of a gentleman revolutionary hurling his silver towards humankind's institutions, his contempt for civilization rivaled only by his respect for what civilization could become. In serene confidence, the silver bar seems to echo with Voltaire's voice: "Écrasez l'infime," and do it with what matters.

Paradise is where I am.
VOLTAIRE

Voltaire wrote the celebrated satire *Candide* from his villa outside Geneva, Les Délices; it became one of the most precious ingots ever aimed at the establishment. The book was a response to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, tsunami and fire, which, within six minutes, left a third of Lisbon's population dead and 85 percent of its buildings - palaces, libraries and every cathedral - in ruins. The catastrophe occurred on a Catholic holiday in the capital of a devout Catholic country, leaving theologians and philosophers with little justification for so arbitrary a demonstration of God's wrath. The destruction thus initiated a fundamental transormation of European culture and philosophy, including a revision of the meaning of evil that we still recognize as commonplacc ill our own time. Even 200 years later, the scope or the reform demanded by the disaster resonated with philosopher Theodor Adorno, who comment.ed in *Negative Dialectics* (1966) that "the earthquake of Lisbon sufficed to

cure Voltaire of the theodicy of Leibniz." Lisbon gave Voltaire the traction and the incentive to lash out against Leibniz, who had famously reasoned that while not everyuling in the world was good, ours was nonetheless the best of all possible worlds because God had created this one rather than its lesser version. Leibniz reconciled his belief in a good and loving God with his awareness of the great evils of the world based on the optimistic assumption that our suffering has some greater purposc, at least in the eyes of God. But to Voltaire's mind, survival in Lisbon was totally arbitrary, not the result of divine will intervening. This belief inspired the satiric teeth he gave *Candide* to saw away at "the best of all possible worlds."

This self-love is the instrument of our preservation; it resembles the provision for the perpetuity of mankind: it is necessary, it is dear to us, it gives us pleasure, and we must conceal it.

VOLTAIRE, *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764)

The violent reproach of YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE is exceptional in Jason's oeuvre; on the whole, his work is reliably placid. He is capable of Monty-Python-like scenarios, but his sceneography is best when he understates it. In an art world longing to reward the vividly juicy, Jason has made a virtue of being polished and dernure. In his choice of subject matter, he is unscribed to arching themes and allergic to verbatim exposition. Kenneth Tynan, the heart and soul of London's National Theatre, could have been thinking of Jason when he wrote: "Art is a private thing, the artist makes it for himself; a comprehensible work is the product of a journalist. We need works that are strong, straight, precise, and forever beyond understanding." Jason's approach is discriminating, but undeniably flirtatious; you can usually feel his art sweeping over you, gently breathing down your neck. And in the face of work so unaccountably stong and intuitive, you are lucky just to give in.

Jason is anything but anachronistic, though I rarely think of him in relation to his contemporaries; little is gained, I find, on either side of the comparison. This is indeed rare when the history of art isn't the greatest, or even a germane filter to distill the substance of contemporary art. In Jason's case, it is the history of theater, literature and language that has been his greatest ally in locating his place within the creative disciplines. As improbable as it may seem, I have begun thinking of Jason as a distant heir to Voltaire's taste for a life of "affable manners, simple living, and the culture



of the mind,” but you would have to know him to know why. Artistically, Jason shares with Voltaire an astonishing gift for pairing idiosyncratic expression with hardboiled parody, and he is especially masterful when employing irony, hyperbole, understatement and especially flawed logic in an intuitive fashion. Like Voltaire, Jason is consummate with theatrics, but his gift is for underplayed pageants staged with the bravura accoutrement peculiar to late modern lives consumed by exclusivity, privilege, wealth and, most enviable of all, eccentricity. One of his accomplishments is that he never forces conflict- say, between inequity and righteousness - in his work. Rather, with the subtlety of a sensitive stage director, he coaxes satire out of each *mise en scène*, but never spares us the attendant cruelties.

We cannot wish for that we know not.
VOLTAIRE

The University of Coimbra had pronounced that the sight of a few people ceremoniously burned alive in a slow fire was an infallible prescription for preventing earthquakes. So when a 1755 earthquake subsided after destroying three quarters of Lisbon, the authorities of that country could find no sillier means of avoiding total ruin than by giving the people a magnificent *auto-da-fé*.



Extra City, Antwerpen 2006



In a cruel twist of fate, Candide and his tutor Pangloss survived the earthquake but were subsequently arrested, Candide flogged and Pangloss hanged. Afterwards, “The terrified Candide stood weltering in blood and trembling in fear and confusion. ‘If this is the best of all possible worlds,’ he said to himself, ‘what can the rest be like?’”

If Voltaire was convinced of the absurdity of theodicy, Jason Dodge is convinced of the hypocrisy of vindicating the museum’s utopian ideal - or, for that matter, any ideal- simply for having called an end to elitism, racism and commercialism. Jason has retreated from that fool’s errand and like Voltaire, chosen his own exile from where to hurl his precious stones.

“Let us work without theorizing,” said Martin; “tis the only way to make life endurable.”

VOLTAIRE, *Candide* (1759)

YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE
1kg silver bullion thrown through a window into an exhibition space; the silver and glass are left as they land, and the window is repaired with tape. 2004

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My Home has Directions and a Weight

Catrin Lorch

NORTH

A gilded lightning rod for a tower pointing north. 2006

NI have never met him, but I am to write a short text on Jason Dodge for a catalogue and would like to see more of his works. "My studio, that's our apartment," the artist tells me on the phone. When I arrive at the little house at the back of a Berlin courtyard, I am greeted and promptly measured in the hall. I do not like being put up next to a measuring stick. For me, centimeters are evidence: they give others an image of me that I do not readily share. (the year Jason was born, 1968, has a special meaning in Frankfurt, where I was born; it is the numbers that mean something). I leave behind a little pencil mark on the wall; with the sun shining on it, it looks like a tiny hair lost by my shadow. The text grows over several weeks. Among the reasons it takes so long is that Jason has much to tell, and I want to wrap his sparse and fragile works into favorite passages of his. No art history, just German Romanticism. Romanticism is less emotional than it sounds, having more to do with idealism and distance than sentimental feeling. There are Romantic stories in which approaching and distancing can be bent both convexly and concavely. Like an image in a distorting mirror, what is desired appears unattainably close or almost tangibly shifted out of reach. Jason is in Denmark when I call him. During the equinox, he will marry Christine at the most northern point of her homeland. The longest day of the year is a little longer there than in Berlin or the Siebengebirge, where I live.

I write the words in English and send them to him as an email so that he can look them over. Jason promised me that no one would ever be given these pages to read, especially not the roughly translated quotations of E.T.A. Hoffman. Jason Dodge, according to my thesis, is some kind of a reverse Sandman: he disembowels apparatuses, takes them apart, puts them back together, spreading out machinery like in a diagram, but much more knotty. There is always a warp or twist to it, a deliberate disorder that keeps the parts from ever finding their way back together again. Jason Dodge is a dissector, I allege, and in that, he is equally as ingenious as Drosselmeyer, who makes nutcrackers parade, or the puppet maker Spalanzani, who sands delusions into spectacles as if they had been prescribed.

Jason is completely honest. He says that in the USA, few generally know about all this dark Romanticism. They are not aware of the Sandman figure, not even as it appears in Freud, especially not because of Freud. I do not doubt him; Jason has read every book I bring up in conversation. When he travels, he usually has no camera with him. Christine has it; he has a book of poetry instead. I complained that I had found a song and immediately lost it again. In 1962, the Afro-English singer Cab Kaye gave the astronaut John Glenn a few lines from "Everything Is Go" to take with him when he went up into space: "The rocket is ready to roar/Glenn is in

his place/get set/start off/this smile is heading to space." I subtitled a friend's painting with that refrain because I had no other words at hand, and now those words have been used and are gone. Jason has more of them. He just read a similar such text, a poem by William Carlos Williams written when the Soviet Union sent up Sputnik in 1957. That was exactly fifty years ago today, as I finish this catalogue essay, and one year after the birth of Jason's daughter Cecil. I call Jason, and he has the poem with him. "Did you know that William Carlos Williams' birthday is September 17th, just like mine?" I ask. "And he delivered Robert Smithson into this world," he answers.

In the preface to the book of poetry, I discover a quotation about walking and running, characteristic motifs in Williams' work. It seems to echo a workshop in Antwerp I recently attended, a tribute to the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. Workshop speakers Suely Rolnik and Hubert Godard however didn't say much about art. Instead, they talked about our image of the human body and how it is both reflected and blurred by the media, even wholly contorted. This eventually led to a discussion of Heinrich von Kleist's "On the Marionette Theater" and the bear that no one could hit with a dagger because it steadily watched all the fumbling and awkward maneuvering that preceded the throws and could thus recognize a carefully aimed drive, parrying it with his paw. The bear's is a countenance of awareness that comes from the spine, Godard explained. There were many dancers at the workshop waiting for the practical part of Godard's speech. It never came. They asked how they were supposed to put his words into practice. Godard answered that there is not much to do but raise your focus, look at the space and see yourself in space. "outside - outside myself - there is a world," wrote William Carlos Williams. "And since then, the world is no longer around me, but I am in it," I tell Jason. But Jason has already arrived there long ago, has measured the weather (with a few kilometers of yarn - knotted together or added up - reaching to the clouds). He has multiplied the innumerable facets of a diamond (he taped it to a mirror) and has thrown a solar eclipse like a ball into the wrong part of the calendar - because it is all about keeping the storyline taut, even cutting it off if necessary. As a child, he cut all of the Christmas lights at a mall; the stores went dead, and the season was nothing without its luminous rigging. When Jason breaks something, he destroys it thoroughly. But it does not hurt. Sometimes it gives one the feeling of being snowed into a dead-end street and wanting to be exposed to its unexpected stillness a little longer.

An interruption: there are networks of pathways consisting of duty and responsibility, of work and commitment. One can describe biographies, date books and family trees as routes, but one cannot live in a sociogram instead of a chronicle. We are held down by gravity to the earth and move in cardinal directions. It has been said that Gerhard Richter especially loves his third wife because of her accent. They are both from Dresden, but he has lived and worked as a professor in western Germany for a long time, and it was not until the wall fell that he began hearing young women speaking with a Saxon accent in the Rhineland.

Dresden. For me it is a place under a bridge. My boyfriend left me in order to live with a man. I waited for his call for five days. My sister advised me "throwaway the cell phone; then the waiting will stop". "Toss it into the river", she said, the Elbe perhaps. I calmed down eventually, but the synagogue behind me was still closed, the museum not yet open. A gray-white poster announced the coming exhibition:

paintings by Gerhard Richter. Dresden was only 300 meters long, and all of its doors are closed.

When Christine was not sure whether to be with Jason, he traveled alone to Japan, where a long-planned stay awaited him. Japan was a dismal street that one strolled along alone in the afternoon. A cafe owner took pity on Jason and put his photo album down next to the tea - unsolicited, every day. His family had traveled throughout Europe, America, Asia. There were thousands of photos, all showing the same five people lined up in front of mountains and buildings, bridges and churches.

Japan is not Dresden, but Jason has an expression for the impressions we leave in the world, the dents we inflict on it whether we measure or travel, suffer or read. And I am so fond of listening to his accent. When Jason put a group show together, he titled it with a William Carlos Williams poem. Whoever mentions the exhibition must recite

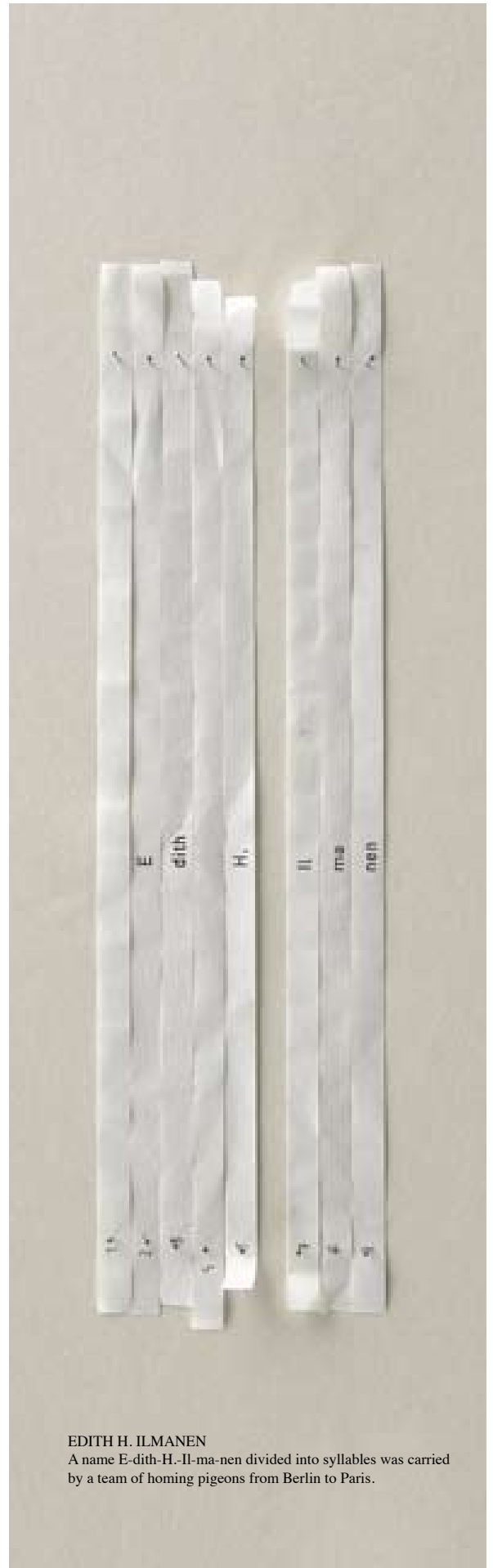
If I when my wife is sleeping
and the baby and Kathleen
are sleeping
and the sun is a flame-white disc
in silken mists
above shining trees,-
if I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely
before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head
and singing softly to myself:
"I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely,
I am best so!"
If I admire my arms, my face,
my shoulders, flanks, buttocks
against the yellow drawn shades,-

Who shall say I am not
the happy genius of my household?

The man's limbs dance in the rise and fall of the seven vowels of "household genius." He's in the north room. He has a wife and baby. My home has directions and a weight ever since I have come to know Jason.

THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS

A two-carat diamond attached to a wall of mirrors
with transparent tape 2005



EDITH H. ILMANEN

A name E-dith-H.-Il-ma-nen divided into syllables was carried
by a team of homing pigeons from Berlin to Paris.

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E Various items measured; attached end to end, their length would reach the troposphere. A gold-plated lightning rod pointing north. A deserted badminton court; at the edge, a room where someone's clothes strewn about imply a rendezvous. Not ices in front of a museum announce that Dr. Franz Josef Lubken, a meteorological physicist, has seen the night-glowing clouds of the Arctic and Antarctic circles. A collection of light sources ranging from light bulbs to matches that once illuminated a holiday home in Poland. A bell that has rung in the chimneys of the Kreuzberg district of Berlin.

The works of Jason Dodge reference events that lie in the past or at an unreachable distance, events that occurred in discrete privacy or were so transient that they could not be captured. And yet they are precisely described by the objects left behind after their completion and by Dodge's clearly-formulated titles. Dodge's installations give rise to a feeling of longing; when viewing them, one must always consider what they lack. In no time at all, the viewer's thoughts will lead to a distant place - a sunrise in Helsinki, for example, or Kerkenstraat in Merkelbeek or a Polish holiday home. As relics, the objects of his installations seem to yearn for the completion that only the viewer can accomplish in his own thoughts.

RINGING IN CHIMNEYS

A bell attached to the brush of chimney sweep Jorg Hauseler during the spring chimney cleaning in a neighborhood in Berlin. 2007

But since the places, people and events required for that completion must ultimately remain foreign to the viewer, his very participation also remains an unfulfilled wish.

In an interview, the artist admits that literature is an important stimulus for his work. But rather than specific novels or poems, it is the act of writing itself - the application of ink to paper - that sparks certain ideas. In a similar process, the objects in Jason Dodge's works present themselves to the viewer as words of a story. Yet the story is never linear; it opens up different spaces of association for different people. The objects function as finely thought-out stimuli that trigger the imagination as if through electricity and convert it to a state of desire. Due to the often exotic objects and circumstances of the works, the viewer's desire to have witnessed the story alluded to, once aroused, results in a strong longing for the un-lived life that each of our decisions brings with it. Who hasn't at one point imagined something as unusual as traveling to the North or South Pole, reaching the place where the weather is made, or having a message delivered by homing pigeon? Who wouldn't like the film of

In This Way Everything In The Distance Becomes Poetry

Friederike Schonhuth



life to be played backwards just once, like Jason Dodge does when he throws a bar of silver through a window back into an exhibition space instead of stealing it?

These are often fantasies from childhood, wishes and dreams that every one has pictured and later forgotten. Not Jason Dodge. Even if he sets off on actual journeys as in frequently as we do, he seems to have been to all the places where we, when looking at his work, would also like to have been. Rather than give up wishing, Dodge has turned it in to his art. For him, unfulfilled longing has become a romantic mission, the impulses of which he follows time and time again.

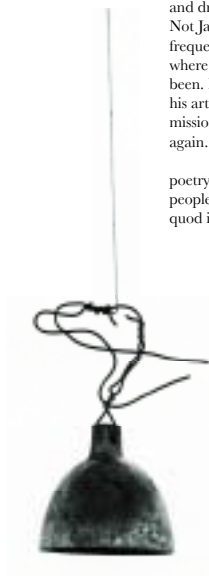
"In this way everything in the distance becomes poetry - poem. Actio in Distans. Distant mountains, distant people, distant events, etc., everything becomes romantic, quod idem est." This fragment of Novalis, whose Blue

Flower became the symbol of longing for an entire epoch, all but nestles up to the work of the contemporary artist. Like Novalis, Dodge maintains a broken relationship with the rationalized world and expands its horizon through emotionalized fabrications. He can thus be understood as standing in the tradition of Fichte's concept of longing, in which it is the "desire for the completely unknown" that lends the creative power to connect the inner world to the outer world, that provides the epistemological possibility to establish contact with one's surroundings.

It is not only the central motif of longing that characterizes Dodge's work as romantic, but also its narrative for m. For Friedrich Schlegel, "the history of modern poetry is a perpetual commentary on this philosophical axiom: all art must become science, all science, art; poetry and philosophy must unite." Precisely in this sense, Jason Dodge links scientific phenomena such as the solstice or the solar eclipse to human events, thus making them tangible and intensifying them as points of longing. He strips his objects of their rationality and provides them with sensorial traces of human action, thereby arousing the viewer's thirst for adventure and the exploratory spirit. Like Kristin Larson or Lorie Karnath, he, too, would like to have traveled to the North or South Pole or been with the Berlin chimney sweep, Jürgen Hauseler when he attached a small bell to the tool he worked with, filling all of his chimneys with sound.

Those objects presented as "remains" and pieces of evidence are always subject of the careful aesthetic selection of the artist, who with each story he tells, simultaneously creates an aural artwork. This connection of concept to tactility establishes the poetic field of tension between the structural demands of narrative and the aesthetic possibility of the perfect artwork in which Dodge's works are always situated.

And even if, in past years, the type of installations he creates have changed from stage-like settings to presentations of discrete, separate objects, longing remains a key to our understanding of them. In this context, the title of a



YOUR DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPOSSIBLE SCENARIO OF HOW WE COULD BE TOGETHER IS WHAT MADE ME LOVE YOU AND BROKE BOTH OF OUR HEARTS
Badminton court. 1999

work from 1999 can almost be read as a motto: "Your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both our hearts." Only the state of unfulfilled longing amounts to happiness.

In Dodge's latest works, a single object often suffices to evoke a particular story. Even if these works at first appear rudimentary - less complete than the earlier works - they are in fact, a second look makes clear, much more complex: the viewer is no longer asked to put himself in the position of another person's relationship, but is now himself placed at the center of a narrative and thus challenged to establish links with other, parallel stories in the exhibition.

What always remains uncertain is how plausible these stories really are. Dodge says he is not interested in proof because it limits rather than expands the possibilities of viewing. And just as he is disinterested in truth, so too is longing itself, for constant wishing is fearful of being fulfilled and thus allows us to indulge in our eternally sweet ache.

JASON DODGE



PROJECT

Street: behind the cliché

Jason Dodge, *Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch*, 2006
All of the light bulbs, candles, matches and anything that makes light is taken from a house in a forest in Germany
Courtesy of Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York

Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch 2006

Jason Dodge's installations, sculptures and photographs are the result of situations that he creates in connection with everyday life and his personal experience. The objects that he displays often function as traces of earlier actions, in the exhibition space or elsewhere, and instil a paradoxical feeling of presence and absence:

For *Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch*, Jason Dodge asked a friend to remove all the objects that emit light including bulbs, candles, matches, etc. from a house located at the edge of the Black Forest in Germany. The objects are loosely laid out on the floor of the gallery, formally evoking art movements such as Land Art or Arte Povera. The work allows us to create our own stories, especially when we consider that it involves a house plunged into darkness and located close to a forest, a situation favourable for intrigues and mysterious stories.

Biography Jason Dodge (Newton, United States, 1969)

Lives and works in New York City and Berlin

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Jason Dodge

Installationsansicht von / Installation view of *ars viva 05/06: Identität/Identity*
KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 25.06. - 20.08.2006

Photo: Uwe Walter

ars viva 05/06 - Identität/Identity Exhibition of the award winners of the Cultural Committee of German Business within the BDI e.V.

Jason Dodge, Takehito Koganezawa, Michaela Meise, Robin Rhode

June 25 - August 20, 2006, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 1st and 2nd Floor

In spring 2005 Jason Dodge, Takehito Koganezawa, Michaela Meise and Robin Rhode were awarded the *ars viva 05/06* prize for art, dealing with the question of "Identity". After exhibitions in Rostock and Antwerp, KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin shows works by the four artists that have partly been conceptualized for this show.

During the past few years all four artists have moved their life and work to Berlin; the show in their new hometown will focus on the impact that Berlin and its artistic and social contexts have on the creative process. How are personal experiences mixed up with conditions one comes across in the new environment and what impact does the city's specific historical situation have on the artistic work? The exhibition highlights works addressing issues related to cultural and Social background, exploring how to define an identity suspended between the Here and the Elsewhere.

Jason Dodge (born 1969 in Newtown, USA)

Jason Dodge's installations often reference other, far-away places, people or events. Some few clues - a title, some scattered objects - is all he needs to evoke an image of distant places and people.

At the centre of Jason Dodge's work for KW is a cage housing five homing pigeons. The pigeons originally belonged to the late Joh de Vries, a pigeon breeder who trained them to find their way back to his home in Merkelbeek from distances of up to two thousand kilometres. After Joh de Vries died, his house and loft were sold. The pigeons were given to a friend. Since homing pigeons can only be trained to home once in their lives, the birds would still, if let out of their cage, find their way back to Merkelbeek, to exact the same location where their home once was.

Dodge's works invariably focus the absent. A small label on the wall, for instance, announces the occasional presence among the gallery viewers of a woman who has participated in expeditions to the North and South Pole. However, since she never lifts her incognito, viewers might be standing next to her at any time without ever knowing. In Dodges works tiny clues open up references to remote locations and give them a presence in the exhibition on a par with the thin scattering of exhibits.

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ARTFORUM

APRIL 2006

New York

CRITICS' PICKS

Jason Dodge

CASEY KAPLAN

525 West 21st Street

April 21 · May 20

For all that modern amenities such as telephones and airplanes mitigate the difficulties of maintaining long-distance relationships, the miles that separate us from our loved ones can still feel bitterly vast. Leaning on little more than a few rich details and the viewer's imagination, Jason Dodge's latest work deals with this very topic and conjures a Chekhovian sense of drama and narrative besides. "Into Black" (all works 2006), a series of eight monochromatic grayscale photographs, turns out to be the results of "undeveloped photo paper that was exposed for the first time at sunrise on the vernal equinox" in such far-flung locations as Kenya and Greenland. *Darkness Falls on Beroldingerstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch* is made up of lightbulbs, candles, and other lighting implements, all loosely arranged in a circle on the floor, which were removed from a house in the Black Forest. Apparently even the refrigerator lamp was taken, and, as with the photographs, the weird story imbues the piece with emotion and intrigue, stirring the imagination. But not every work depends upon background information to prompt a romantic reverie. *Bird* is a simple device requiring that the viewer rotate a key (one side of which is embellished with the words AUDUBON BIRD CALL) that spins a wheel whose spokes are made of the fingers from a woman's leather glove. Another glove, this one intact, is placed so that the fingers flick it as the wheel turns. The resulting fluttering sound resembles that of a startled bird taking flight, and this sensation acts a connective thread between the works, triggering memories of sudden departures and fantasies of unlikely returns.

—*Claire Barliant*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JASON DODGE:

Opening: FRIDAY, APRIL 21 ST, 6-8 PM
EXHIBITION DATES: APRIL 21 - MAY 20, 2006
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY 10 - 6 PM

Franz Kafka once wrote that one could think about people who were far away and touch those who were near, but anything else is beyond human ability. To him, writing letters meant laying himself bare to his ghosts because humanity fights for peace in its souls through trains, cars, and planes. "But that doesn't help," Kafka said, "the other side is so much stronger and more peaceful--mail ... telegraph ... telephone. "

The light for "Into Black" is captured at the sunrise of the vernal equinox. For this piece, the artist placed eight friends between the world's meridians. They each held a shield made of photo paper against the disc of the sun while the rectangle cast a brief shadow above their heads - taking in the light in China, Africa, Greenland, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Minnesota, and Monaco. Like lightning rods evenly distributed on a roof, "Into Black" connects eight different places to the sky.

Another friend of Jason's was sent into the Black Forest, where she collected all the light bulbs, matches, and candles at Beroldingenstrasse 7 in Umkirch. Nothing was to be forgotten-- not fluorescent bulbs, illuminated switches, nor the refrigerator light-- until darkness reigned in the house. What she found and took has traveled to New York in a package, and is lying spread out on the gallery floor like the entrails of a unique mechanical system. "Darkness falls on Beroldingenstrasse 7, 79224 Umkirch" gives eternal night an address. The large house is now a lifeless hull, it appears not only dark, but dead, where time stands still like a cuckoo clock that has stopped ticking.

When Vladimir Nabokov tried to de-witch Franz Kafka's spell, he gave a long lecture on Gregor Samsa the protagonist of Kafka's Metamorphosis. Nabokov, a well-versed entomologist, came to the conclusion that the unfortunate fellow who lay there paralyzed in his insect shell could have flown if he had only known that he could. Because The Metamorphosis never suggests that there is the possibility of flight, we do not necessarily have to believe Nabokov's interpretation. The good news about flying will not reach those to whom it is addressed or, more precisely, to either of the two people involved. And we, the readers, will not give up the story.

-Catrin Lorch

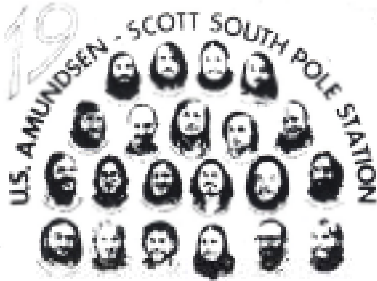
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From: Irene Hoffman & Laurence Gateau, eds., Jason Dodge. Newport Beach, CA & Nice, France: Orange County Museum of Art & Villa Arson, 2005. P. 49-53.



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WHY ARE YOU AFRAID OF DISTANCES

12 handmade nonfunctional microphones hanging in each gallery of the Frankfurt Kunstverein for the exhibition ADORNO 2003

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the crew stationed at the U.S. Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in 1977

photographs of Ilulissat, Greenland, taken at night by Klaus Poulsen

JASON DODGE INTERVIEWED BY KRISTEN CHAMBERS

KC: At its core your work really seems to be about how we know-how we know truths, how we know what is real, how we gather and process information. I was thinking about phenomenology, or experiential knowledge, versus a more Kantian notion of truth being an abstract, ultimately unattainable notion. On the one hand, the viewer sees what is in front of her, and that is a certain kind of truth, but, on the other hand, what she perceives may not really exist. Do you see your work as putting a premium on knowledge as a construct of experience or as something abstract and unattainable?

JD: I think that for me there has to be a tension between the two. How a viewer reads the work is completely dependent on how that person approaches something unfamiliar. With the piece LLOYD ANDERSON HAS BEEN TO THE SOUTH POLE (2005), for example, someone who has been to the South Pole will have a totally different relationship to the work than someone who has never been, or met someone who has been, to the South Pole. I There is a character in one of Don DeLillo's books who realizes that he has never been to Greenland and has never known anyone who has been to Greenland. He begins to wonder whether or not it actually exists. I like the idea that the potential reading of the work can shift based on what somebody's personal experience has been and what knowledge or information they have held onto. There is always this aspect of uncertainty that forces you to figure out what something is, or means, and to question whether "this" is an accurate representation of "that."

KC: I know that BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND (2005) was inspired by a work from the history of the Orange County Museum of Art created by Maria Nordman. How did you come to know about the Nordman piece, and what was it that interested you about it?

JD: I really liked the balance between something precise and something ephemeral and a poetic description of how our primary source of illumination is 100 percent predictable. We already know what the sun will do tomorrow.

KC: When you are conceiving a project, and the works suggest a larger story, how much of that narrative have you built for yourself?

JD: Almost none of it, because I am interested not so much in making a narrative that is pieced together from A to B to C to D but, rather, in the potential of it being pieced together using whatever framework someone would bring to it. Imagine that somebody is working on the water line under the street and that there is a pipe that comes out of the sidewalk with a spigot attached. One person may walk up the street and know, "That is how they are testing the water lines," and someone else might walk up and think, "Why the fuck is there a spigot coming out of the sidewalk?" The person who has no idea what it is might be more likely to come up with some really farfetched story to help make sense of it. I think we have all had the experience of finding something we consider totally exceptional and mentioning it to someone else, who finds it completely ordinary.

KC: Are you influenced at all by film, literature, or other forms of narrative?

JD: One of the early and most important influences for me was the structure that Nabokov uses in his stories. Especially something like *PALE FIRE*, where you have the introduction that is about the analysis of the epic poem and then you read the epic poem and then you read the analysis of the epic poem where the guy starts to think that it's about him, and they are all written by the same person. There is this idea of the untrustworthy narrator: the story evolves, and then you realize that the person telling the story is completely dubious, and then you have to go back and reevaluate all the information that you already read. I really love this idea. In a way it is an attempt at a nonlinear narrative structure, although a book is linear you go from the beginning to the end-but you are constantly forcing the reader to evaluate what it was that they read before.

KC: Oftentimes your objects-your "signifiers," so to speak-don't really signify anything, yet in your older work there is this whole aspect of the simulacrum. You created objects-expedition artifacts, hotel accoutrements, biathlon props-that were "hyperreal." These objects were used to signify not only a thing but also a place, a time, and an aesthetic. It seems as if the more recent work relies less on objects, and as a result the referent or narrative is more elusive or enigmatic.





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page 50
 detail AS YOU UNDERSTAND I WILL NO LONGER WRITE YOU
 1999

page 51
 a photograph taken through a telescope of diamond traders
 in Antwerp, Belgium

detail YOUR DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPOSSIBLE SCENARIO
 OF HOW WE COULD BE TOGETHER IS WHAT MADE ME LOVE
 YOU AND BROKE BOTH OF OUR HEARTS 1999

JD: I have always been interested in the idea of a literary narrative, the way that a writer goes about constructing characters in a story. I have also been interested in the idea that design fundamentally has to relate to form. It does not have the choice that art does of being absent or nonvisual. In many of those early works I was interested in using different design iconographies as a way of constructing a historical narrative that visually references a very precise period of history.

I found that viewers' perceptions of these works were so fundamentally different. One person would be moved by the work because they related to the experience of it, while others found it difficult to accept the idea of this decadent lifestyle as something that would represent anyone's emotional reality, because there is a kind of distance there. For me my work has never been about luxury, but perhaps about the complex problem of empathy in relation to privilege-mental illness, substance abuse, unrequited love are all a sort of stylization of human behavior and in the lives of the bourgeoisie these emotional features can take on a sort of extreme, look at Tennessee Williams, GREY GARDENS, SUNSET BOULEVARD, or most of the genre of melodrama. In my earlier work I was trying to position myself as the outsider, the narrator, and I am not sure if it really worked.

KC: Many of your works reference exotic locales or connections among various parts of the world. I wonder if this comes from a peripatetic lifestyle and a desire to really be a citizen of the world.

JD: I went to Africa for about six months when I was twenty, and before leaving, I had a fully formed vision of what this experience was going to be. The reality was such confusion because, on the one hand, I wanted to satisfy this narrative that I had made up in my head, but on the other hand, I also wanted to have an experience based on what was actually happening. For me, this became truthful experience—a compromise between all these different facets of your imagination.

The reason I wanted to make THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ (2005) is that, while the envelope travels through the hands of the postal system, Wickerfinn lutz exists until someone determines that he doesn't and sends it back.² In this brief moment in which one person takes a letter with the intention of delivering it to somebody and discovers that the person does not exist—there is a moment of reality. The envelope, marked by the postal service, almost becomes a portrait of that moment and that place. If the letter is processed in a country that has a different alphabet, that is going to be reflected in what is written on it before it is returned to me. I really like that idea because it starts to stimulate and also deflate certain anticipations and expectations about what these places are. I am also literally interested in distances. I did an exhibition in 2000 that referenced the biathlon that included a work that measured

out the distance between the shooter and the target in string with flags. Another group of works, called WHY ARE YOU AFRAID OF DISTANCES? (20024), has to do with the displacement that comes from living abroad and trying to come to terms with my connection with home and with my family and friends. I wanted to make things that would try to replace distance: a microphone to record the sound of somebody who isn't there, a mobile that is really a spool that winds a piece of thread that could stretch across the ocean. There is also a piece called ABOVE THE WEATHER (2005). It consists of pieces of string, ribbon, wire, and other things that come measured in an exact length, which if tied together would equal the distance from the earth to above the weather, above the troposphere. You see a pile of things on the floor and are told that their combined lengths would reach above the weather. You fundamentally have to connect it in your head, to do something that there would be no conceivable way to do in reality.



KC: What really strikes me about POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT is that same impossibility. The only chance of realising the rose-colored light is in one's mind. Can you talk more about that dichotomy?

JD: It is like THE SECRET GARDEN-if you can picture it and in your mind make rose color light that experience completely belongs to you, you then own the rose-colored light, in precisely your color with precisely your vision. Some people see that piece as being cruel because there actually is no possibility of rose-colored light. It is also interesting to choose to be on the outside, the doubting of the dreamer is a common literary theme. Think of how many children's stories revolve around the child's expanding imaginary universe and the parents' lack of understanding.

In BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND there is only a single element to declare the state of the sun's rising and setting somewhere far away. It is simply meant to be a kind of telepathic empathy, a vehicle to imagine somewhere else. We use the same sun.



KC: This kind of work is very fascinating to me because, on the one hand, it does privilege the viewer, however, on the other hand, the work is often very difficult for the viewer; to "read" or engage with.

JD: There has to be room for multiple perspectives. I think that looking at something is a creative act. There are plenty of places in the world to find prescribed meaning; my work is just not one of them.

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*From: Irene Hoffman & Laurence Gateau, eds., Jason Dodge. Newport Beach, Ca & Nice, France:
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WAITING FOR THE SUN TO SET IN GREENLAND

On February 26, 1973, at 11:30 a.m., artist Maria Nordman created a work at the Newport Harbor Art Museum in Newport Beach, California. This work, titled *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS; OR, THERE ARE NO OCEAN STREETS,* was a built room that opened up to the museum's back alley through the loading dock door. This room was determined by the sun's position at the exact moment of the opening of the show at 11:30 a.m. Using the earth's rotation and the movement of sunlight through the door, Nordman's work created an unexpected and transformative perceptual and social experience accessible to museum visitors who walked out of the building and to those who happened down the alley during the duration of this work. As a "timespecific" work, as the artist calls it, *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* produces an environment in which the observer's experience is part of the artwork. Preparatory drawings and a few photographs of the installation (which Nordman has stamped "FRAGMENT") remain as documents of this virtually unrecordable work. Now, more than three decades later, Nordman's work has inspired another examination of sunlight and experience in Newport Beach. This new work, an installation by Jason Dodge, serves as the centerpiece of his exhibition at the Orange County Museum of Art, the successor to the Newport Harbor Art Museum.

In conceiving his show for the Orange County Museum of Art, Dodge came across a reference to Nordman's *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* as he looked back at the museum's early exhibition history. The process of researching this artwork and attempting to locate the few existing details about it was initially frustrating but became increasingly intriguing as each new piece of information and documentation revealed further uncertainties. Not only did Dodge find inspiration in the perceptual disruptions created by *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS*, but in Nordman herself he also found a compelling conceptual ally, an artist who shared his interest in creating works that develop meaning in the experience and imagination of the viewer.

Dodge's *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* (2005) delivers an ever-changing experience of light and perception while also revealing his talent as a storyteller and choreographer of objects. With rows of hanging fluorescent lights, *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* evokes the patterns of daylight on the western coast of Greenland. As is typical of Dodge's works, we are given very few pieces of information—an enigmatic title that suggests a measure of time and light, reference to a distant location that we've heard of yet have probably never seen, and rows of lights hanging in a gallery that are either on or off depending on the time of day. Meticulously composed details, these elements are just enough to suggest the setting for a larger yet elusive story line, ultimately leading to a narrative of our own invention.

BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND references the disorienting period of the year in Greenland when the sun rarely sets. With fluorescent lights hanging from the ceiling and wired to a timer, Dodge's light grid turned on only at the time of sunset in Greenland, presumably the moment when its residents turned on their own lights. Since this work was installed during summer and early fall, at the beginning of the exhibition the light grid was turned off for much of each day, corresponding to some of the longest periods of daylight in Greenland. As the run of the exhibition extended into the fall, Greenland moved into longer periods of nightfall, resulting in longer periods of light in the gallery. With an ever-changing schedule of light and dark periods in the gallery, this work would be different depending on when a visitor experienced it. At times visitors would see a dark room, at other times they would see a fully lit room, and then there would be those potentially startling moments when a visitor would be standing in the gallery at the moment of sunrise or sunset in Greenland, causing the lights in the gallery to turn off or on accordingly. In both dark and light conditions, an homage to Nordman's *NEGATIVE LIGHT EXTENSIONS* is visible in the room. With a work titled *THE RETURN* (2005), Dodge acknowledges the conceptual and theoretical lineage of his own experiential light installation by presenting the original label for Nordman's installation on the wall in large vinyl text.

The remote geographical references of *BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND* are further developed in an altered world map hanging near Dodge's light grid. This companion work of the same name visually connects the western coast of Greenland and the western coast of the United States in a curious geographic "switch." While at first glance Dodge's intervention is hardly discernible, further examination of the map reveals a careful and subtle alteration that underscores the dramatically differing topographies of these regions. By aligning the vastly different regions of Greenland and Orange County—with their dissimilar populations, climates, and lifestyles—*BETWEEN SUNSET*

AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND's light grid and altered world map propose reflection on the small details of parallel lives, lived half a world away.

While BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND produced an experience impacted by the presence of functioning lights, in a companion exhibition of Dodge's works held at Villa Arson in Nice, France, the presence of light is only suggested, and its effect on the gallery is only hypothetical. In the multiroom exhibition spaces of Villa Arson, Dodge installed POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT (2004), a work featuring seventy empty fluorescent light fixtures hung from the ceiling in precise rows. The light tubes for these fixtures could be found in different corners of the galleries, some leaning against the walls in groups, others laying on the floor, still in the manufacturer's boxes. Each tube has been covered in a sleeve of dark pink cellophane. Should these tubes be installed in the fixtures, we presume, the room would be cast in a pleasing rose-colored light, the kind of light, as the idiom goes, that can create a deceptively positive view of the world. Unlike the standard commercially produced fixtures used in BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND, these fixtures were carefully fabricated from brass and powder-coated steel. Closer inspection of the fixtures, however, reveals that they are not connected to any source of electricity and, in fact, are not even functional but are seductive stand-ins for the real thing. Installed at the time of the 2004 presidential campaign and election in the United States, POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT was Dodge's seemingly hopeful reflection on the potential for a better outlook on life. And yet, with the light tubes on the floor and simulated fixtures hanging above, it would seem that the possibility for rose-colored light in these rooms is quite remote and can exist only in our imaginations.

These two recent light installations certainly owe much of their conceptual roots to the ephemeral and experiential work of artists such as Maria Nordman, yet with rooms articulated by fluorescent tubes and light fixtures, formally these works are also descendants of Dan Flavin's bold fluorescent light tube installations. Although Dodge's works acknowledge the Minimalist icon, they do so while infusing Flavin's commercially produced materials and straightforward simplicity with enigmatic narrative content, fragments of irony, and elements of fiction and artifice. BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND and POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT reveal Dodge's expert manipulation of objects and spaces, in which every detail is considered and the viewer's imagination is privileged. Each of these large-scale installations is experienced as part of a larger grouping of works that introduce small narrative details such as a character, a condition, an incident, or a location.

As in many of his previous exhibitions, Dodge's Orange County Museum of Art and Villa Arson installations each reference distant and

even remote corners of the world, places that we know exist yet probably have never seen. In addition to the western coast of Greenland, other evocative locations include the war-torn country of Sierra Leone and the Gothic city of Antwerp, each suggesting exotic plots and reflection on places and events outside our everyday experience.

A work entitled THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ invites the possibility for endless story lines played out in many corners of the globe. The postal system and mailroom clerks in cities all over the world were unwitting collaborators in the creation of this work. The piece began when Dodge mailed out nearly one hundred envelopes addressed to a man named Wickerfinn Lutz. Although the address on each envelope is real (they were sent to consulates or embassy offices in dozens of countries), the intended recipient is not. A number of the mailed letters therefore were eventually rerouted and returned to the sender. THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ is about a search of sorts. This work exists as much in our imaginations-as we envision the vain attempts to locate the elusive Mr. Lutz that took place at each address-as it does in the physical documentation of the search embodied in the returned, undeliverable letters, each one bearing the traces of its futile global journey.

While it is understood (through its label) that THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ is part fact and part fiction, other works are more ambiguous. With COMPLETE SOLAR ECLIPSE SIERRA LEONE. OCTOBER 10, 1982 (2004), the boundaries between the real and the unreal are indeterminable. This work features the handwritten itineraries of seventeen people who seem to have traveled to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1982 to view a solar eclipse. The journeys of these seventeen intrepid travelers originated in such cities as Paris, Geneva, Minsk, Perth, Liverpool, and New York. Their travel plans are written on fax paper, pieces of mail, pages of calendars, and personal stationery. As their itineraries reveal, many of them traveled more than twenty-four hours to reach Freetown, with several travelers passing through Lagos, Nigeria, to catch their final connection. One assumes that Sierra Leone was the location that would have provided the optimum or most dramatic view of the October 10 solar eclipse; after all, a grueling pilgrimage to a country plagued by civil war and the dangers of a treacherous diamond trade would not have been without its risks.

A potentially dangerous destination, exotic international itineraries, and a celestial experience shared by converging strangers lend rich narrative possibilities to this work, and yet this collection of otherwise banal travel documents begs the question: what exactly are we looking at? Are these in fact the carefully saved notes of global travelers who made a journey to the same distant destination more than twenty years ago? And, if so, how did Dodge possibly assemble them?

These uncertainties lead to questions not only about the work's "authenticity" but also, more importantly, about Dodge's position in this piece. Was the artist the collector of these itineraries, seeking them out through unknown means for their ultimate inclusion in this work? Or, in the more likely scenario, was he the maker of these itineraries, a skillful forger of handwriting and manipulator of materials? Both possibilities seem equally absorbing. As in many of Dodge's works, his position relative to this work remains wonderfully unresolved. Ultimately we are left considering whether, if these itineraries were in fact "faked," as logic might dictate, the very event necessitating these supposed travels was even real.

A similar line of questioning is elicited by the materials and implied actions in *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE* (2004) and *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* (2005). A one-kilo silver bar issued by Credit Suisse lying on the floor of a gallery at Villa Arson is the surprising antagonist in *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*. Shards of glass on the floor and a nearby broken window, haphazardly repaired with brown packaging tape, suggested how the suspicious bar might have gotten there. A two-carat diamond taped to a mirrored wall in a gallery at the Orange County Museum of Art becomes the curious focal point of *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS*. A small piece of paper on the floor provides the details of its purchase months earlier in Antwerp's diamond market. Captivating objects, a bar of silver bullion and a round-cut diamond become alluring agents of intrigue, catalysts in interrupted narratives that seem yet to be fully played out. As these works articulate, what is absent in Dodge's works often carries as much weight as what he has so carefully made present.

Evidence of a curious act of vandalism and a mysterious foreign shopping trip, these engaging tableaux combine the fictive and the real, bearing enigmatic traces of human presence and past events. Questions and intriguing incongruities dominate our reading of these works. In *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*, a window has been broken and provisionally repaired, yet evidence of its destruction still remains on the gallery floor. Who are we to believe carried out this prank, and what was the intent? This strange tableau and its enigmatic title both direct our imagination to the circumstances and events that led up to this scene. With a mirror, a diamond, and some tape, *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* sets up an arrangement that elicits any number of questions about where the diamond came from, its authenticity, and the story behind its purchase. The mirrored surface and clear tape highlight the diamond's form on the wall while underscoring the peculiarity of its very presence and its seemingly haphazard placement. With three very different materials that each function very differently in the world, *THE INESCAPABLE WEIGHT OF REFLECTIONS* presents an evocative merging of incongruous materials and economies.

Ambiguities continue to surface in *ABOVE THE WEATHER* (2005). Spools of wire, string, cable, clothesline, and other materials that are measured in lengths lie in a colorful pile on the floor of the gallery. As Dodge's label proposes, if each of these lengths were to be tied together, it would equal thirteen kilometers, the height of the troposphere, an elevation "above the weather." The potential yet improbable task inherent in this accumulation underscores Dodge's interest in manipulating logic and his delight in leading the imagination toward the impossible or the unexpected. Perhaps these triggers to the imagination are the magic of Dodge's work. Like Maria Nordman's installation photos stamped *FRA MENT* or the sun's faint halo during a solar eclipse, Dodge's works give us only parts of a larger picture. The conclusions to the narratives activated by his compelling scenarios are ours to devise and are bounded only by the limits of our imaginations.

IRENE HOFMANN

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UN-BUILT CITIES
09.12.2003 · 08.02.2004
im Bonner Kunstverein

Jason Dodge

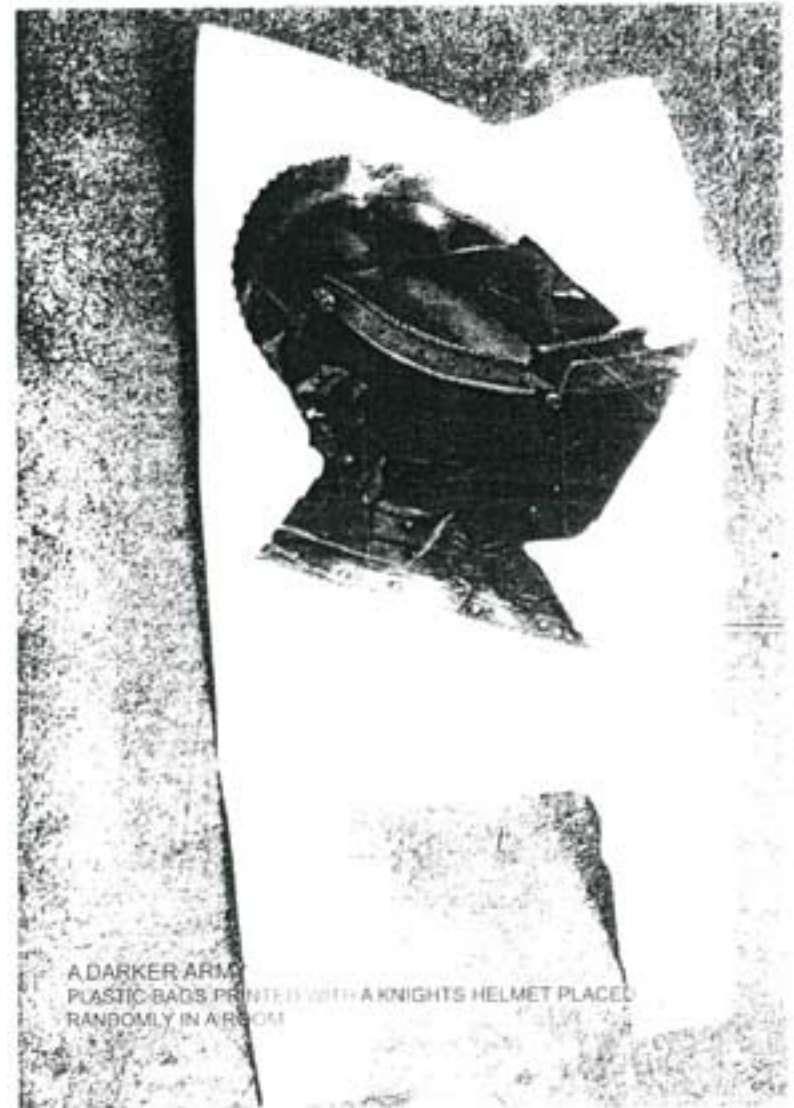
Dear Annelie.

Please excuse the unevenness of my correspondences -- speaking of cities I have been in many lately. New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia over the past six weeks in America. The weeks before that I moved from Antwerp to Berlin and went to Copenhagen to visit my wife's family --

Last week I flew from New York to Frankfurt to install my contribution to "Adorno" at the Kunstverein and yesterday I arrived in Berlin figuring out how to get my things out of storage and into my new apartment -- it has been "wonderful, but a bit hectic."

As for the pages I sent to you for the catalog -- First, the text on the top of the pages are the names of international companies and dates that correspond to each company and a specific point in their development. As for the images, they are images of four pieces that are part of an idea I have been developing lately. They have to do with dispersing things from one location to many, both literally and figuratively. They are multiples that are one piece, they are meant to be installed in many locations simultaneously, like mirrors, parallel lives or films that have a multi-national release -- I love the idea of many people experiencing similar things in many different places at the same time, and in particular, things that most often go unnoticed.

What draws me to the narrative of cities is the repetition in some common elements » building lobbies, trash, ideas of safety, public sculptures, drugs, music, the presence of international business and banks, historical celebrations, and diversity of social class« these pieces that I describe as dispersion pieces are meant to resemble such scenarios » a standing ashtray, a plastic bag, a microphone hanging in many rooms of a house or a public space, a shattered piece of black glass, and a public sculpture are all things that depend on context to be given meaning (perhaps this is true of all things), a plastic bag, although possibly interesting on its own becomes more interesting in relation to the context in which it is seen. In the case of "un-built cities", I have chosen to show "a darker army" (printed plastic bags) I have no idea what the space looks like, and I have no idea how the other art in the exhibition will look, although I am familiar with many of the artists, I know that the work I will contribute will be effected by the entire exhibition (perhaps this is true of all things) -- When I come to Bonn to install I will decide if it is best to have 2 bags or many, (I asked my gallery to ship several thousand) actually on second thought it may be best to only install 2 and to have the people guarding the exhibition encourage viewers to steal the bags, and then like magic they could reappear. I hope this letter finds you well. Best wishes, Jason



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WHERE IS WICKERFINN LUTZ?

Gallagher
McCarthy
Sala

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ANGELA ROSENBURG

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WICKERFINN LUTZ (2004), by Jason Dodge, takes a disarmingly simple approach. The artist sent letters to Wickerfinn Lutz, a person of his own invention, to a number of addresses in various countries. Since this person does not exist, neither there nor here, many letters were returned to the artist and their contents remain a mystery. However, for as long as there is a mailman out there looking for such a person, he may exist after all, even if only in the mailman's imagination. And what about the letters that were not returned to the sender? Did they actually reach an addressee of the same name or did they get lost in a game that was doomed from the start? And when will the story end, what is the ultimate goal?

For the presentation of this piece at Villa Arson in Nice, Dodge made a tableau of selected letters that had been returned to their sender. The envelopes show traces of the journeys they have been through, illustrating the distance between sender and fictive addressee, which corresponds, in turn, to the real distance between the artist and the fictive viewer.

The futility of corresponding with an imaginary person in a venture that undergoes varying degrees of concreteness recalls the adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha. In Cervantes' satire on the romances of his time, the hero, blinded by the very literature the writer parodies, believes that he is engaging in extraordinary adventures with dark powers in his dealings

with the mundane paraphernalia of everyday life, such as windmills, to name the most famous example.

The "Knight of the Sad Face," as Don Quixote calls himself, lives entirely in a fiction of his own making, in a parallel literary world of heroic epics and amorous adventures, a world that has now sunk into almost complete oblivion. But Don Quixote succumbs to that world heart and soul; he is prepared to suffer all for the sake of honoring his great love Dulcinea, whom he has never seen face to face-for she, too, is of his own invention.

The seemingly haphazard search for Wickerfinn Lutz proves to symbolize the search for a protagonist per se, but this protagonist is no longer a fiction of the viewer's imagination. He exists, if at all, in the imagination of an emissary, an agent of both artist and viewer, namely, the mailman. The artist keeps receiving letters from all corners of the world, from China, Israel, U.S.A., France ... The possibilities are legion; every country is open to the escapee protagonist and, as an escapee, he is related to-although entirely different from-figures, like Anders Contrave, that crop up in Dodge's earlier work.

How concrete can parallel universes be? The visual fragments that Dodge lays out in exhibition spaces, where they are loosely interrelated, yield scenarios of a casual, and yet disturbing, artificiality. We are familiar with the objects of use that communicate the presence of human beings and offer clues to a narrative. Dodge's double exhibition, "Anders Contrave: Part I" (Basel, 1999) and "Anders Contrave: Part 2, Your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both our hearts" (Stockholm, 1999), is based on ideas that can not be read as linear developments but as accumulations. Dilapidated, aloof



JASON DODGE, "ANDERS CONTRAVE: PART 2," 1999
*exhibition view, Moderna Museet Projekt, Stockholm /
 Ausstellungsansicht.*

PHOTOS: ANNA KLEBERG / CASEY KAPLAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

tableaus exert a fascination, allowing viewers to take up the thread of the story and elaborate on it wherever they please. The portrait of Anders Contrave is hanging on an abandoned, semi-trashed Basel trade fair stand. The tennis clothes of a mysterious woman with the monogram SQ lie scattered about in the old rectory of the Moderna Museet, which has been converted into an exclusive tennis court. The exclusive ambiance, in which elements of luxury living and corporate design blend into a referential fabric of style and culture, does not provide the backdrop but rather a situation in which all of the details can be read as indexical signs: a narrative arranged and produced only for the sake of the viewer.

Taking a conceptual approach, these props speak of consumption, of products and their design. But as an ensemble, they speak of passion and unrequited love, hence conveying the image of an enigmatic pro-

tagonist. Polish and emotions mingle; we enter a moral maelstrom. The air is filled with inconsequential, everything is accidental, as if casually cast about. Can a story even exist within an object? Or conversely, aren't the traces of a story attached to things? And don't plots develop by the way in which things relate to each other? The levels of these stories overlap and mutually determine each other. Within the glamorous framework of invented labels, Dodge plays out his precise sense of design on the semantic level of language in stories that he stages, with great devotion to detail, using exquisitely faked found objects. All of the familiar items of daily life (including bed linens) every important aspect of these narratives is constructed, from monogram to furniture. Dodge invests his world with life and logic, all his invented details walking the fine line between reality and satire. His objects are aesthetically charged items of use that mirror cultural contexts. Under the surface, notions of value come to play: aesthetic values with moral implications are pitted against status symbols, flaunting top-of-the-line materials and manufacturing excellence. Juxtaposed with a contrasting scenario of cheap, flimsy disposables, the protagonists reside in a social limbo of conspicuously exclusive luxury. The viewers have come too late and They don't belong there anyway. As uninvited guests, all they can do is rummage through the remains looking for the ruins of the moment.

The charming distraction of these works is buoyed by the emotional state of their absent actors and invites viewers to attempt a "forensic" reconstruction as Nancy Spector remarks in her catalogue essay on the exhibition, "Anders Contrave: Part 2." But now the viewer has to endure definitions. The stage has become a dictionary, an encyclopedia, to which Dodge plans to add new components with every successive exhibition. Fictional logic is just as good as any other. The use of dialogue makes especially conspicuous the potential and the friction that mark the relationship between supposedly objective connotation and subjective associations. Direct sensual experience, subjective perception, and the reality of social intercourse and aesthetic discourse provide the wherewithal for an exciting exchange,

comparable to the conflict between Don Quixote, blinded by literature, and the unfortunate Sancho Pan-
sa, who tries in vain to communicate his reality.

In this respect, Dodge's works can be interpreted as reflections on the negotiability of art and reality. By activating the imagination, he generates a simultaneous existence somewhere else in the world and invites viewers to unite incompatibles inasmuch as every narrative rests on one essential prerequisite: the purposeful waiver of possible doubts.

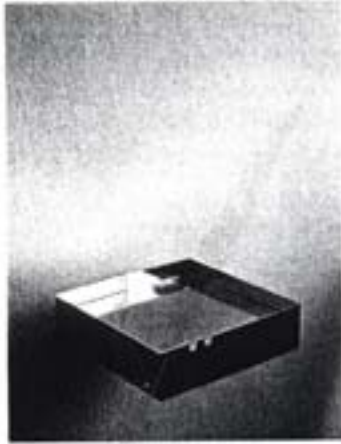
How convincing does an object have to be, how authentic does it have to look, to make us believe in the mock up-andjoin Don Quixote in chasing after windmills? For the exhibition "Formalismus. Moderne Kunst, heute" (2004) at the Hamburger Kunstverein, Jason Dodge created an installation cryptically entitled 12. OCT. 1982. It consisted of a number of brass ash tray objects placed around the venue (memories of sixties corporate design), as if he had simply lifted and recycled elements from Donald Judd's stack sculptures. Obviously they could not be used as ashtrays despite their provocatively convenient placement.

The installation POSSIBILITY OF ROSE COLORED LIGHT (2004) in the Villa Arson, Nice, consists of seventy brass lamps for fluorescent lighting evenly distributed on the ceiling of the gallery, in addition to the regular lighting. The lamps look perfectly functional although they are not wired. Two stacks of neon tubes are propped against the wall next to cardboard boxes; they are wrapped in pink film, ready to bathe the gallery in "rose colored light." But only the viewer's inner eye can peer through the proverbial rose-colored glasses; it takes individual effort, to imagine this white room suffused with a pink glow. One senses a certain melancholy and possibly even resignation, which might be interpreted as sarcastic, given a political reading of the work. The exhibition opened on November 1, 2004, the day that George W. Bush was reelected, and a time when the United States viewed France as the spearhead of "old Europe," as the representative of a decadent system attempting to obstruct irrepressible progress. The potential of rose colored illumination might then be read as a pun, an ironic critique of oversimplification and repressive black-and-white thinking.

COMPLETE SOLAR ECUPSE SIERRA LEONE 1982 (2004) lists the traveling day of fictional, but unnamed, people who set out from different places to watch the eclipse of the sun that took place in Sierra Leone in 1982. This natural event, which occurs with no ulterior motive, is the point of departure for a collective experience.. against the background of a particularly horrific civil war, which made the African country extremely unsafe at the time. The arduous journey to this exotic and dangerous place in order to witness a natural event indicates that the ignorant enthusiasts were only interested in the shared experience, in a natural spectacle that lies beyond moral categories, beyond cruelty, brutality, and murder. But the eclipse is not entirely without dangers of its own: if you look at it directly, your eyesight will be permanently damaged. The eclipse can therefore be seen only through a filter, a blackened pane of glass, or a special film. In this exotic and especial context, the question arises as to where the artist's invention actually begins and where it ends, if it ends at all-and does it necessarily have to end in the reality in which we happen to be? Couldn't the artist have equipped his invented viewers with abilities that

JASON DODGE, *YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE*, 2004,
1 kilo silver bullion, window, Villa Arson, Nice, France.

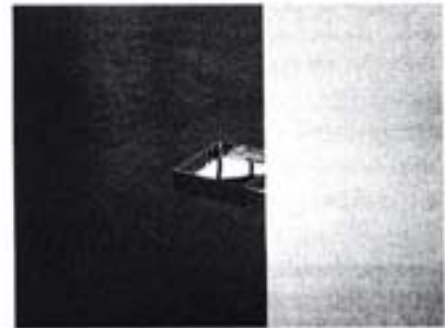




would allow them to gaze directly at the sun? Or could his fiction have quietly coped with a country crippled by civil war? Dodge's piece is a puzzle, a convoluted, impenetrable allegory of art and society.

PERPETUAL LIGHT (BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE IN GREENLAND) (2005) might be seen as a counterpoint to these two works; it establishes an exchange between sunlight and artificial light in two different geographical locations. Standard commercial neon lights have been mounted in rows at the Orange County Museum as if in an ordinary factory. When the sun sets in Nuuk, Greenland, the lights come on in the Orange County Museum, and they go out again at sunrise. Since Nuuk is so close to the Arctic circle, the light changes dramatically in the course of the exhibition so that viewers who see the exhibition at different times will have entirely different memories of it. The work can therefore be extended into an imaginary dialogue between two visitors who saw the piece at different times.

The idea of different worlds and their parallel existence resembles the attempt to understand things that go beyond logical explanation. Regardless of where we happen to be at the moment, somewhere else in the world masses of people are jumping out of bed and hurrying off to work while, somewhere else,



the lights are going out. In the installation YOU ALWAYS MOVE IN REVERSE (2004), a one-kilogram bar of silver is lying on the floor in a pool of splintered glass; the broken pane through which it was thrown is still in its frame. Dodge has reversed the concept of theft, in general, and art theft, in particular: instead of violently removing something of value, he has added something in an act of inverted vandalism. That could almost be a viable definition of art. But who would do something like that? It was probably Wickerfinn Lutz, and the artist is trying to give the bar of silver back to him. But that's only conjecture; I wasn't there.

(Translation: Catherine Schelbert)

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November 6 - 13, 2003
Issue 423

**Jason Dodge, "Mercury Vapor
Lamp & a Month of Sundays"**

Casey Kaplan, through Sat 8
(see Chelsea)

An instance of "inevitable monotonous repetition": That is the official explanation for the inclusion of "a Month of Sundays" in the title of Jason Dodge's new show. (Note to dealers: Don't leave yourselves open to easy derision by including phrases in your press release whose hyperseriousness borders on the absurd.)

Lovers of contemporary art have all experienced the repetition to which this gallery statement refers—first in the guise of Minimalism, and then Postminimalism. Dodge colors his reiterative enterprise (a combination send-up of and homage to both movements) in the wan browns, blues and off-whites of 1970s polyester leisure suits and modular furniture. A facsimile of a late-1960s Braun radio sets the tone of a nascent high-tech culture, the object's literal emptiness a nod to the vacuity of the era that gave rise to Minimalism and its offshoots.

More than anything else, Dodge's I works resemble three-dimensional versions of the margin drawings of a disaffected design student in a required art history course. Donald Judd's precision box sculptures become ashtrays and umbrella stands; metal poles seemingly wedged between floor and ceiling recall the sublime tension of Fred Sandback's yarn, here rendered in an atrophied state. A Dan Flavin tribute, however, lays bare the queasy relationship between Dodge and his forefathers with such visual and verbal acuity that one can only tip one's hat in appreciation. On the floor lies a box containing two fluorescent tubes, a pair of sun goggles and a printed message that reads "Complete Solar Eclipse Siera [sic] Leone 1992," cloaking the show's oedipal complex in a brilliantly sardonic metaphor of blindness. Humor-intended or not-saves the day.—Noah Chasin



Jason Dodge, "Mercury Vapor Lamp & a Month of Sundays," installation view, 2003

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JASON DODGE: "MERCURY VAPOR LAMP & A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

EXHIBITION DATES: OCTOBER 10 - NOVEMBER 8, 2003

OPENING: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10TH, 6 - 8 PM

GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY 10 - 6 PM

Casey Kaplan is pleased to present the fourth one-person exhibition of the artist Jason Dodge. Over the past year, Dodge has been exploring issues of construction, transition, design and the latent melancholia of cities with his contribution titled "Banko Popular de Carakas" to the exhibition "Nation," Frankfurt Kunstverein; and in one-person exhibitions both entitled "Milton Keynes New City" in Berlin and Milan.

Dodge is known for installations that embrace specific moments in the history of modern design and architecture that are then reconfigured as narrative devices. In the past, Dodge's projects have visited various fictions that have involved an ornithologist travelling to Finland; a fictional palace hotel in France; and the winter Olympic sporting event, Biathlon. This exhibition is in part a response to the time Dodge recently spent living in Antwerp. Antwerp is a gothic city of diamond trading, harbour exploits, Albanian drug mafias, and fashion. The name of the city alone has a sinister undertone as it derives from a legend of a severed hand thrown into the harbour, thus the name translates from Flemish; hand (hand) -werpen (to throw).

For his exhibition, Dodge will present a body of new sculptures with references as disparate as international style building lobbies, minimalist sculpture, paranormal disappearances, and the recording of ghost voices. The title of the exhibition "Mercury Vapor Lamp & a Month of Sundays" refers to a type of lamp installed in public spaces such as club bathrooms, parking lots and dark corners in order to prevent heroin users from seeing their veins. A month of Sundays describes inevitable monotonous repetition.

As in earlier projects such as "Helsinki," 1998, Dodge references Dieter Rams, the creative director of "braun" from 1961-1997. The influence of Rams re-appears in a new sculpture entitled "electronics." This piece derives from the dual inspiration of Rams' design for a kit radio and from the simple radio receiver used by Raymond Cass, an Englishman involved in EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomena) a method of receiving and recording ghost voices.

The recognition of a particular element from this project could be that it evokes a time period, an attitude, or a mood. Each element dislocated from its original context, can generate many meanings. Dodge continues to explore context, utilizing the variable that takes place between recontextualization of a specific object or design and the temperament of the viewer who ultimately determines what it means to them.

Jason Dodge is currently participating in the group exhibition "160 Meisterzeichnungen," Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg, Germany. Later this year, the artist will partake in the exhibitions "Adorno," Frankfurt Kunstverein, Frankfurt and "Unbuilt Cities," Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany. Dodge will begin residency at Villa Arson, Nice in January 2004. The work of the artist is currently in the permanent collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden.

FOR FURTHER EXHIBITION INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE GALLERY AT:

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NEXT EXHIBITION: JONATHAN MONK NOVEMBER 14 - DECEMBER 20, 2003

AMY ADLER, JEFF BURTON, NATHAN CARTER, MILES COOLIDGE, JASON DODGE, TRISHA DONNELLY, CEAL FLOYER, PAMELA FRASER, ANNA GASKELL, LIAM GILICK, ANNIKA VON HAUSSWOLFF, CARSTEN HOLLER, JONATHAN MONK, DIEGO PERRONE, SIMON STARLING, ANNIKA STROM

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Jason Dodge

c/o - Atle Gerhardsen, Berlin

Jason Dodge's recent solo exhibition demonstrated again that he is a clever imitator, an expert illusionist with the sharp eye and deft hands common to conjurers. If he wanted to make a forgery of a Duchamp ready-made he could, although he prefers to make his own sculptural inquiries into the quotidian and the phantasmagorical. Strung out from one side of the gallery to the other and carefully plugged in at both ends, *Microphone 2 and 3* (all works 2002) is an elegant web of simulated directional microphones which insinuate that everything that takes place beneath them could be on public record. It's uncomfortable to look at an artwork that expects a verbal reaction while someone could be listening in on the other end of the wire. The fact that on closer scrutiny the mikes are just

good dummies made of, among other things, alloy thimbles, puts a smile on your face. Nearby a room-dividing screen of cord and white tape, *String Wall*, and a large black *Mobile*, part chocolate grinder and part Alexander Calder, evoke the spirit and style of a public venue where good citizens might congregate and where the spot-lit presence of things that vaguely resemble High Modern international art are intended to convey an impression of worldliness.

The unifying idea of Dodge's exhibition 'Milton Keynes New City' was to turn the gallery into a generic regional cultural centre in no particular place some time after the 1970s. The real Milton Keynes - incidentally the backdrop to Cliff Richard's music video *Wired for Sound* (19B1) is the largest of a number of Britain's designated 'new towns' with its own 'master plan'; a development with a grid of streets and a shopping centre heart. It wasn't so much based on a

radical utopian vision -like Le Corbusier's 50-year-old vertical village La Cite Radieuse, Marseille - as a pragmatic, horizontal and well-meant solution to overwhelming public housing lists. Exhibitions, like planned communities, generally aim to be well laid out, clean and orderly. Dodge's Broken Window, a piece of wilful vandalism patched up with orange tape, ruined the view of the river as a reminder that one model will never fit all, and that in self-policing environments a bit of smartarsed random action is rarely out of place.

Dodge's plain but curious objects and installations often flirt with combinations of the familiar and uncanny. Robbed or stripped of origin, function and purpose, his assortments of replicas are reduced in a gesture of subtle irony to the sum total of their material qualities, their styling, a summation of details and the interplay of surfaces and textures. But his project doesn't stop with post-Pop commodity critique or arguments about style versus function and the attendant value judgements. His works also delve into the realm of fiction. In this show, tucked around a corner was *Vodka and*

Grass (Fluxus Picnic), which consists of plastic lawn clippings sandwiched between transparent plastic sheets on which could be found a Buenos Aires peace dove, Moscow Olympic coasters, empty glasses and an almost empty bottle of vodka beneath another pile of mikes. The question 'Who could have done this and why?' lingers, while the work resists any clear-cut narrative or the possibility of an answer.

It's as if Dodge sits on a fence and looks across on one side to the surplus produced by the world of commerce and on the other to a similar surplus produced within the niche market based on the exchange of intangibles and constantly renegotiated values called art. His work suggests that over time both these surpluses sediment in the same way and same place in the collective mind. A series of post-sized black and white images including *Time Capsule Image - Block Building* and *Time Capsule Image - Jai-alai* shows how he extracts meaning from this sediment and, much like a recycling plant, uses our communal rubbish as inspirational raw ingredients for his beguiling-materializations

Dominic Eichler

Jason Dodge's plain but curious objects and installations flirt with combinations of the familiar and the uncanny.



Jason Dodge
'Milton Keynes
New City'
2002
Installation View

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: JASON DODGE

“WINTER GAMES, BIATHLON”

EXHIBITION DATES: APRIL 27, 2001 – MAY 26, 2001
OPENING: FRIDAY APRIL 27TH 6 – 8 PM
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY – SATURDAY 10 – 6 PM

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION:

Jason Dodge’s third solo exhibition in New York continues to develop ideas related to re-design, style, and emotional narrative. “Winter Games, Biathlon” follows a series of exhibitions and projects over the past year in Sweden, Japan, Germany, and New York that use sports and sporting as an accidental metaphor or parallel to emotional narrative. This exhibition focuses on the biathlon – a winter sporting event of cross-country skiing and target shooting. Although the combination of endurance and accuracy are seemingly in conflict with each other, it is the requirement of the biathlete. The athlete must ski a distance of 20 km, stopping five times to shoot a rifle at targets placed 150 meters away. To have the required marksmanship, the trigger needs to be pulled in a moment between heartbeats. The true skill of a biathlete is the ability to control their own pulse, by slowing down their heartbeat dramatically over only a few seconds while the event clock ticks away - missing the targets is penalized by adding distance to the course.

This exhibition consists of seven new artworks including: posters, targets, a speaker, and other elements related to the biathlon directly and peripherally. The form of the works are in part inspired by such disparate sources as Marcel Duchamp, 1970’s textile print design, 1960’s European suburban architecture, and the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games.

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NEXT EXHIBITION: THE WEDDING SHOW JUNE 1 – JULY 27, 2001

AMY ADLER, JEFF BURTON, NATHAN CARTER, MILES COOLIDGE, JASON DODGE,
TRISHA DONNELLY, CEAL FLOYER, PAMELA FRASER, ANNA GASKELL, LIAM GILICK,
ANNIKA VON HAUSSWOLFF, CARSTEN HÖLLER, JONATHAN MONK, SIMON STARLING, ANNIKA
STRÖM, JAMES WHITE & TIM SHEWARD, KAREN YASINSKY

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for immediate release

exhibition: Jason Dodge January 14 – February 11, 2000

exhibition description:

This exhibition is the second solo show in New York for the artist Jason Dodge. The exhibition is entitled with a telegram ambiguous as to whether it has been sent or received – “It did not seem impossible stop It was as if we could lose ourselves forever stop I hate the desperation of always trying to picture you stop How long should I wait here stop How long can we do this” stop

Dodge’s previous one-person shows in Basel, Switzerland at ART/30/Basel and Stockholm, Sweden at the Moderna Museet Projekt, are connected to this exhibition’s central themes of international travel, luxury, decadence, and heartbreak.

This exhibition consists of five sculptural works that incorporate accoutrements from a fictional palace hotel in rural France. Elements contained in the sculptures range from something casually thrown away or overlooked, such as: match books, reservation cards, the wrapping dry cleaning is returned in, to more luxurious items that reflect a lifestyle like specially designed mats for couples to sunbathe within the confines of the hotel’s gardens, and silk covered folding chairs adorned with the hotel’s logo.

A palace hotel would not seem to change at the whim of fashion. Change trickles in slowly. Designed elements within a hotel could evoke nostalgia for an aristocratic past, while each redesign brings a more contemporary esthetic. The conventions of aristocratic life can be manipulated by the addition of someone beautiful who does not belong – white Prada Sport shoes replacing Tretorns – style allowing women to wear white after Labor Day – Hermes’ Belgian designer, Martin Magiella, making a coat from a duvet – a merger of Mercedes and Chrysler – all of which subtly shift a lifestyle never meant to change.

The artwork in this exhibition was in part produced during a residency at IASPIS in Stockholm, Sweden, and the chairs included in this show were produced in conjunction with Krabbesholm Højskole in Skive, Denmark.

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The New York Times

ART IN REVIEW

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2000

Jason Dodge

*Casey Kaplan Gallery
48 Greene Street
SoHo
Through Feb. 11*

Here's a worthwhile goal for the young, Conceptually inclined artist who is as taken with materials as ideas: Make objects that don't have to be explained by your art dealer. The art dealer in this case did an admirable job with Mr. Dodge's second solo show and its scatterings of familiar objects in unusual combinations and materials, the most engaging of which is an Artschwagerian Ping-Pong table made of real tigerwood. But the gap between seeing and hearing, between what comes from the work directly and what is attributed to it, remains. In fact, it may have widened since Mr. Dodge's debut two years ago.

The theme here is the good life and its vacuousness as reflected in the accouterments of a fictional palace hotel in France, arranged in five tableaux. Each signals a kind of absence, and there is the intimation of a failed romance in the show's long, wistful telegram-like title. A group of unblemished folding chairs adorned with impeccably monogrammed silk cushions conjures underattended symposiums

in the hotel ballroom. Nearby a pair of sunbathing pads with pillows covered in Burberry plaid are reserved for the absent lovers. A lion skin scattered with candies and cigarettes, a custom-made garment bag and a down comforter spilling out of its monogrammed paper wrapper, suggests a hurried dressing for dinner. Trees, wrapped and unwrapped, fake and real, lurk in corners. And finally, the exotic Ping-Pong table is littered with half-full glasses floating with cigarette stubs, as if whoever-they-are have finally arrived, partied and moved on.

One needs to be told that Mr. Dodge has made or had made nearly all of these objects, which intensifies the aura of commodity fetishization with something more personal. They reflect an artist who is moral, exorbitantly skilled and very smart, but who needs to move beyond his understated fusion of Robert Gober and Neo Geo. It's fine to cast the viewer as a detective, but the clues should be more fun to look at.

ROBERTA SMITH

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THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 7, 2000

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

JASON DODGE –Walking into this show, you may feel as though you’ve stumbled into a scene from “Last Year at Marienbad.” Five sculptural installations, all set in a fictional palace hotel in France, present traces of recent activity—a zebra wood Ping-Pong table strewn with abandoned glasses, a lion’s skin littered with mints, receipts, and Hope cigarettes. But the object of desire, presumably a woman, is conspicuously absent. There’s a seductive elegance to the objects, but the obsession with life style (Burberry plaid on su bathing cushions) smacks of art for the Wallpaper generation. Through Feb. 12. (Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131.)

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For Immediate Release

Exhibition: Jason Dodge



Dates: PART 1 Art 30 Basel Switzerland June 16 - 21
PART 2 Modema Museet Projekt Stockholm Sweden August 26 - October 24

Jason Dodge will present two one man exhibitions entitled Anders Contrave. Part one with Casey Kaplan as a part of "Art Statements" at Art 30 Basel June 16-21. The sculptural installation consists of three Roor works and one wall piece that combined take the form of a partially installed trade show booth - as if left from a previous fair. Anders Contrave Part two will be at the Modema Museet in Stockholm as a part of the Modema Museet Projekt 1999 from August 26 October 24 which will be a full room installation that converts the 18th century Vicerie building adjacent to the Museum into a badminton court - evoking something possibly found in an old world luxury hotel. Although very different, both exhibitions have the same title "Anders Contrave" a fictitious corporate identity.

While the subject of both installations is easily identified, the subject matter becomes elusive. Tapping into the mind set of a techno DJ combining samples and original music that reference varying genres to create something new, Jason Dodge's installation(s) dwell on relationships that shift between the familiar and the unfamiliar. An appropriated logo next to an imagined one can create a friction between stylistic familiarity and alienated detachment. The recognition of a particular element could be that it evokes a time period, an attitude, or a mood while each element dislocated from its original context can generate a multiplicity of meanings that utilize the variability that takes place between recontextualization of specific iconographies, and the temperament of the viewer who ultimately determines what that iconography means to them.

Jason Dodge is an artist based in New York who had his first exhibition with the gallery in April 1998

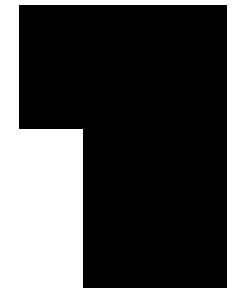
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Installation i Prästgården med modell/Installation in Prästgården including model, 1999,
blandteknik/mixed media

MODERNA MUSEET PROJEKT

26.8 – 24.10 1999



JASON DODGE

Installation i Prästgården med modell/Installation in Prästgården including model, 1999, blandteknik/mixed media





Installation i Prästgården med modell/Installation in Prästgården including model, 1999, blandteknik/mixed media



Introduction

For Moderna Museet Projekt the artist Jason Dodge transformed the former assembly room in Prästgården (the old vicarage), adjacent to Moderna Museet, into a court for a luxurious variation of badminton. More visual than functional, it provided a space for a narrative where both beginning and end are not only unknown but also uncertain, and where alienation and elegance are being combined to shape a beautiful union. The title of the installation is Anders Contrave, part 2, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both of our hearts. In addition to the court, it included chairs and other props as well as live elements on the opening-day, such as a photo-model wearing the same sport ensemble as that in the installation. Anders Contrave, part 1, which was shown in June 1999 at Art 30 Basel, was reminiscent of a fair booth in which various practical and decadent objects had been left behind from the previous fair.

Jason Dodge's beautifully executed sculptural installations oscillate between the known and the unknown. He may combine borrowed logotypes with invented ones, much like a techno DJ mixes appropriated music with original versions. The signs Jason Dodge uses are mostly from 20th century design history, for example, Karel Marten's telephone card and the logotype for the Swiss Expo of 1964, and they often allude to these seductive qualities of design, contrasted with the kind of design that appears on tickets, in grocery stores and other places where carefully considered design is less expected. He has even made his own design for the 500 Euro note. His designs can recall memories of a specific event or evoke the mood or atmosphere of a particular period of time. In this way the familiar is given a new context, which in its turn lead to many new meanings where both a collective memory and the viewer's personality play important roles.

Anders Contrave is the name of the fictive enterprise Jason Dodge uses as a model for how exoticism can function. In a previous exhibition in the gallery Casey Kaplan in New York in May 1998, journeys of discovery composed the model for exoticism. In both cases our expectations of a certain culture or subject area are focused upon - how these expectations are satisfied or contradicted. In Anders Contrave, parts 1 and 2, even Europe and the European cultural heritage, including aristocracy and royalty, can be seen as exotic. And as so often in this artist's work, here too we find absurd and cruel elements, and a high emotional temperature in the set tableaux.

Maria Lind



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you and broke both our hearts, blandteknik/mixed media, Moderna Museet Projekt, Prästgården 1999



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2

Jason Dodge: Exquisite Acts of Cruelty

Scenario 1: Basel

Weeks have passed since the end of the fair. Since it was now the off-season for trade shows, there was no immediate imperative to remove the left-over display items, the residual effects of yet another commercial exposition. Yet, it was odd that no one had returned to retrieve the slick merchandising system used to promote Anders Contrave, the multi-national, neo-European corporation that so dominated its competitors at the fair. Its white and yellow display barrier of molded plastic, graced with strips of netting, remains in place - only now delineating an empty space. Vinyl sheeting and other elements from the information kiosk lie folded in a heap on the floor. The company logo - a silhouette of a swan inscribed within an attenuated oval - still hangs on the wall accompanied by a portrait of Mr. Contrave himself, sporting his signature bow tie, trim moustache, and frameless glasses: his benevolent smile assuring prospective customers of product excellence and quality control. But stranger still are the remnants from some seemingly after-hours tryst: bedding from the Continental Savoy Hotel discarded lingerie and plumed silk wrap, half-drunk morning orange juice, and a half-smoked pack of cigarettes. The pillowcase and shawl - both monogrammed with the initials "SO" in a luxuriously curving script- suggest that their owner resides at the Savoy - one of her many homes away from home. The pieces of crumpled hotel stationery littering the bed represent her rejected attempts to pen an afterthought, a coldly polite but emphatic adieu. It remains a mystery whether the completed letter was ever sent.

Scenario 1/: Stockholm

The games must have just ended. The badminton court - sized for singles only - is empty, but the changing area is strewn with a woman's regulation white clothing, Adidas sneakers, and worn panties, along with her racket and shuttlecock. Once again, the monogram "SO" appears; here it is inscribed, white on white, on the badminton skirt. An empty Parmalat orange juice container, cigarettes, and extra towels lie among a few, casually placed, potted plants. Folding wooden chairs, with white slip covers embroidered with white shuttlecocks, lie in disarray in both the lady's changing room and on the court. The event - whether a tournament or an informal competition - seems to have been left in haste. It is unclear if the recreation site was so hastily abandoned because something unpleasant occurred or because the female player - whose forsaken belongings bespeak a swift departure - had some place far more enticing to go after the game.

Scene of the Crime. A Fiction of Style

These two tableaux - each 'alluding to some oddly familiar state of mind through an ever elusive narrative - constitute Jason Dodge's recent Anders Contrave project. Spread over two solo exhibitions, a presentation at the Basel Art Fair and a site-specific installation created for Prastgarden (the old vicarage) used by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Anders Contrave tells a story of exoticism, nostalgia, and desire. Unlike conventional narrative, which relies on linear development to communicate a plot line, Dodge constructs his sculptural fictions through assemblages of quo



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2

tidian objects, fabricated situations, and recognizable elements of design. His installations function like stage sets, empty, save for props and the abbreviated architectural codes that signify specific lifestyles, geographic locations, and historical periods. Whilst the actors are absent, their presence is intimated through an assortment of accouterments that begins to describe who they might be and what they have done. Dodge's aesthetic is a forensic one. His tableaux are composed of clues and traces of past events; they invite the inquisitive mind, the voyeuristic sleuth, to reconstruct what might have happened and to whom. Casting his viewer in the role of detective, Dodge creates beautifully crafted and seductive crime scenes that inhabit the past tense. What this viewer encounters are relics from a history of previous occurrences, emotional acts, and impassioned misdeeds.

As is the case with forensic evidence, separate items, no matter how insignificant, only take on meaning through their relationship with and proximity to other such objects. A lipstick-stained cigarette, a crumpled letter, a half-consumed container of orange juice, worn and discarded underwear, and a tumbled chair become the narrative components of a story waiting to be told. Making an analogy between the composite nature of his work and "sampling" - the DJ art of mixing disparate music sources into a mosaic of sound - Dodge explains that the "relationship between elements is where the meaning lies." Until the pieces of the puzzle are brought together into a coherent image, the signifying faculty of each component lies dormant. Nevertheless, every aspect of the artist's installations radiates with potential, with content waiting to be deciphered. But Dodge complicates the situation beyond the already enticingly cryptic nature of his enterprise by deliberately introducing a layer of subterfuge. Extending the metaphorical and tactical references to the scene of the crime here, it can be said that the artist perpetrates his work through deception and visual betrayal.

An astute student of the history of design, Dodge invents and fabricates his own products, logos, and fashion items by freely mixing well-known and, in some cases, classic designs. A brochure he issued at the premiere of Anders Contrave, for instance, inventories concepts behind the work, many of which are simply corporations recognized for their design achievements: Gucci, Citroen, IBM, Louis Vuitton, Braun, Knoll International, Ericsson, and Olivetti, among others. Having once fashioned his own version of the new EEC currency for an earlier exhibition, Dodge appropriates and reconstitutes society's most choice commercial forms. Nothing is sacred under his discerning eye. In this exhibition project, the fabricated items - such as the Parmalat orange juice, the Continental Savoy of New Delhi, Innsbruck stationery and linens, and the packs of Shepherd cigarettes - are all vaguely recognizable. In fact, there is an uncanny quality in their familiarity. But since they are total inventions, they oscillate provocatively between reality and fiction. To further obscure the matter, Dodge also includes already existing objects. In an earlier work, a Nokia cell phone made an appearance; here real Adidas sneakers share the space with fantasy commodities in a hybridized environment of readymades and fabrications. Parmalat, while being a packager of milk products and tomato sauce, does not, in fact, distribute orange juice. And Anders Contrave, the corporate umbrella under which the two-part project situates itself, is a complete fantasy (granted, Dodge borrowed the name from Oerlikon Contraves, a multinational Zurich-based corporation specializing in the development, production, sale, and technical support of weapon systems for gun and missile-based air defense).



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2

But in its incarnation as the binding element of the artwork, Anders Contrave - its profile, identity, and function - remains a mystery. The name and logo, which Dodge has insidiously crafted and even woven into the plastic packing materials used in Basel, conjure up well-known international corporate identities: Merrill Lynch, Hewlett Packard, Daimler Benz, Conde Nast. One feels in the presence of a powerful, blue-chip, financial entity whose brand - whatever that may be - plays a homogenizing role in global economies. Wherever you are in the world, Anders Contrave, will serve you.

Dodge has always been interested in how the fictions of style can dictate meaning. As he 'explains it, his entire praxis has involved "creating a narrative just through style." Mining the worlds of fashion, film, popular music, industrial design, graphic design, and architecture, Dodge emulates stylistic icons that signify aspects of our cultural value system. What does it mean for instance, that all over the world, women of means are carrying Fendi baguettes or wearing Gucci boots) What did Raymond Lowey's streamlined designs for everything from telephones to ocean liners say about modernism's utopian vision? How will Microsoft's Windows icons affect the way future generations comprehend visual data? By confiscating and blending diverse styles - the Mercedes Benz font for the Anders Contrave logo, for instance, Dodge is not staging a critique of corporate culture. Rather, he is embracing the way brand identities or stylistic trends function as contemporary mythologies in the sense put forward by Roland Barthes, who analyzes "collective representations as sign systems" in order to "account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature." The universalizing phenomenon of style fascinates Dodge and the idea of it permeates his work. In describing this social and cultural reality, he pondered the fact that just about anyone could smoke the same brand of cigarettes as Gwyneth Paltrow, thus sharing in or, at least, approximating the glamour associated with her.

Exoticism of the Other

In this exhibition project, Dodge alludes to the homogenizing trends engulfing the European Union since its official inauguration in Maastricht in 1992. The presence of Anders Contrave in both Basel and Stockholm as a uniform corporate entity, despite the innate cultural and social differences between the two cities, betokens the inevitable outcome of centralization. Although the two shows took place sequentially, Dodge imagined them occurring simultaneously, which would only have underscored the equivalency of experience that he was orchestrating. When encountered from within, a trend or lifestyle is seductive and all-encompassing (hence its mythic capabilities), but when witnessed from afar, it appears foreign, exotic, and Other. According to Dodge, even Europe, the very locus of Western civilization, can be exoticized when examined from a distance. And in Anders Contrave, he turns his telescopic lens on the new European Union just to prove his point.

In his exhibition brochure text, Dodge proposes a metaphor for the exotic situation of exoticism that he is exploring in the two installations, which involves Josephine Baker, the African-American vaudeville performer who became the toast of 1920s Paris, and Adolf Loos, the Austrian architect whom she commissioned to design her home. This portion of his conceptual inventory reads: "Adolf Loos in conversation with Josephine Baker - Josephine Baker reclines in a day bed - Adolf Loos sits in a small wooden chair of his design." A study in opposites - the outrageous Baker

who danced nude at the Folies-Bergere and owned her own nightclub, which she supervised with a pet leopard, and the prim Loos, who specialized in cloistered interior spaces - provides the perfect scenario for the exoticizing gaze. Baker played this gaze as her trump card, and the new house would reflect the voyeurism at the heart of her professional success. Loos's design for her includes a grand, double-height, indoor swimming pool with entry on the second story. The first level contains a glass-paneled walkway that would provide windows onto the depths of the pool so that visitors could observe Baker frolicking underwater. According to architectural theorist Beatriz Colomina, the house is premised on the act of looking. "But between this gaze and its object," she explains, "... is a screen of glass and water, which renders the body inaccessible. The swimming pool is lit from above, by a skylight, so that inside it the windows would reappear as reflective surfaces, impeding the swimmer's view of the visitors standing in the passages. This view is the opposite of the panoptic view of a theater box, corresponding, instead, to that of a peephole, where subject and object cannot simply exchange glances." For Dodge, this architectural embodiment of voyeurism - a classic example of 20th-century European design - is the perfect analogue to his current study of Europe as exoticized Other.

A Tale of Unrequited Love

But this is only half the story. Dodge's art unfolds to reveal different but related layers of meaning. His sculptural mis-en-scenes in both Basel and Stockholm are narrative structures waiting to be decoded. Though elusive, each staged scenario suggests a very specific ambience of old-world decadence and faded elegance. The monogrammed hotel linens and plumed stole invoke an era of steamer trunks, transatlantic cruise ships, and prohibition night clubs. Badminton itself was once an upper-class activity, introduced to England around 1873 through its colonial outposts in India. During its heyday in the 1930s, the game was embraced by Hollywood celebrities such as Ginger Rogers, Claudette Colbert and Bette Davis. Joan Crawford was supposedly so enamored of badminton that she would play on rainy days wearing only a bathing suit. In 1934, the International Badminton Federation was established, and national championships were held in nine countries including Sweden. Perhaps Dodge's installation in Stockholm intentionally references this period, evoking nostalgia as yet another stylistic ploy. The subtitles he assigns to works within the Anders Contrave installations hint at possible plot developments and provide evidence for character motivation. The Basel piece composed of bedding and a woman's intimate belongings is titled, she wanted to convince him not to love her, and the entire Stockholm installation bears the subtitle, your description of an impossible scenario of how we could be together is what made me love you C}nd broke both our hearts.

As impossible as it is to determine who the mysterious "SO" might be - or whether, in fact, it is even one person - the female character is clearly in the business of breaking hearts. One can imagine an unrivaled beauty who goes to exquisite lengths to torture her various lovers, who all return for more emotional abuse. Her cruelty and indifference are part of the attraction. Dodge offers this glimpse of unrequited love less for narrative effect than as yet another example of universal experience - hence his proposal that the Basel and Stockholm installations be construed as simultaneous events. "SO," therefore, becomes an idea, an emblem for the melancholy of unfulfilled desire. In this light, Anders Contrave emerges as a landscape of emotional desolation,



Anders Contrave, del 2/part 2



Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media



She is kissing just for practice, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media



Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1 she wanted to convince her not to love her, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media



Anders Contrave, del 1/part 1 Information Stand, 1999, blandteknik/ mixed media



a terrain across which every person at one point in his or her life will travel. By articulating the sadness of style, Dodge has achieved one of his primary aesthetic and conceptual goals: to be able, at the end of the century, to create a work of art that can make someone cry.

Nancy Spector



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The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1998

ART IN REVIEW

Jason Dodge

Casey Kaplan
48 Greene Street
SoHo
Through May 23

Jason Dodge offers a fresh combination of sly conceptualism and sleek design in his first New York solo show. Predecessors like Haim Steinbach, Ashley Bickerton and Andrea Zittel come to mind, but Mr. Dodge has his own humorously oblique vision.

An implied story of Far North exploration connects Mr. Dodge's disparate assemblages. Each piece represents a highly stylized expedition element. A supply sled consists of a piece of furniture-grade plywood with upturned ends bearing a stack of perfect bright yellow boxes, each neatly labeled with its supposed contents: "Fox furs, heater" or "Telescope, trap, nets."

"Tent (Cut-Away View)" presents a miniaturized camp interior equipped with luxury commodities, including a polar bear rug, a leather map portfolio and a cell phone, all basking in the light of an ultramodern stainless steel lamp.

Of course these things have nothing to do with real arctic exploration. Rather, they simulate high-end catalogue images or window displays in which yearning for adventure outside the soul-pinching constraints of bourgeois civilization is deflected into consumerist desire.

KEN JOHNSON

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For Immediate Release

Exhibition:

Jason Dodge “Helsinki”

Dates:

April 17 - May 23, 1998

opening: Friday April 17th, 6-8 pm

gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10-6 pm

Exhibition Description:

Isolation, exoticism, luxury and style are at the forefront of Jason Dodge's first solo exhibition, "Helsinki". "Helsinki" consists of eight autonomous sculptures that rely on each other to construct an esoteric narrative about an excursion of a misguided ornithologist who has traveled to Finland. Individually each object dwells on the stylistic signifiers that evoke cultural narratives associated with different modes of twentieth century design. With references from Adolf Laos to Helmut Lang, the sculptures appear simultaneously nostalgic and contemporary calling on the lens current design has provided in looking at disparate decades and historical moments in a way that is unmistakably rooted in late 1990's sensibility.

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Gregory Williams on a misguided ornithologist

Jason Dodge, Helsinki, Casey Kaplan Gallery, **New York**

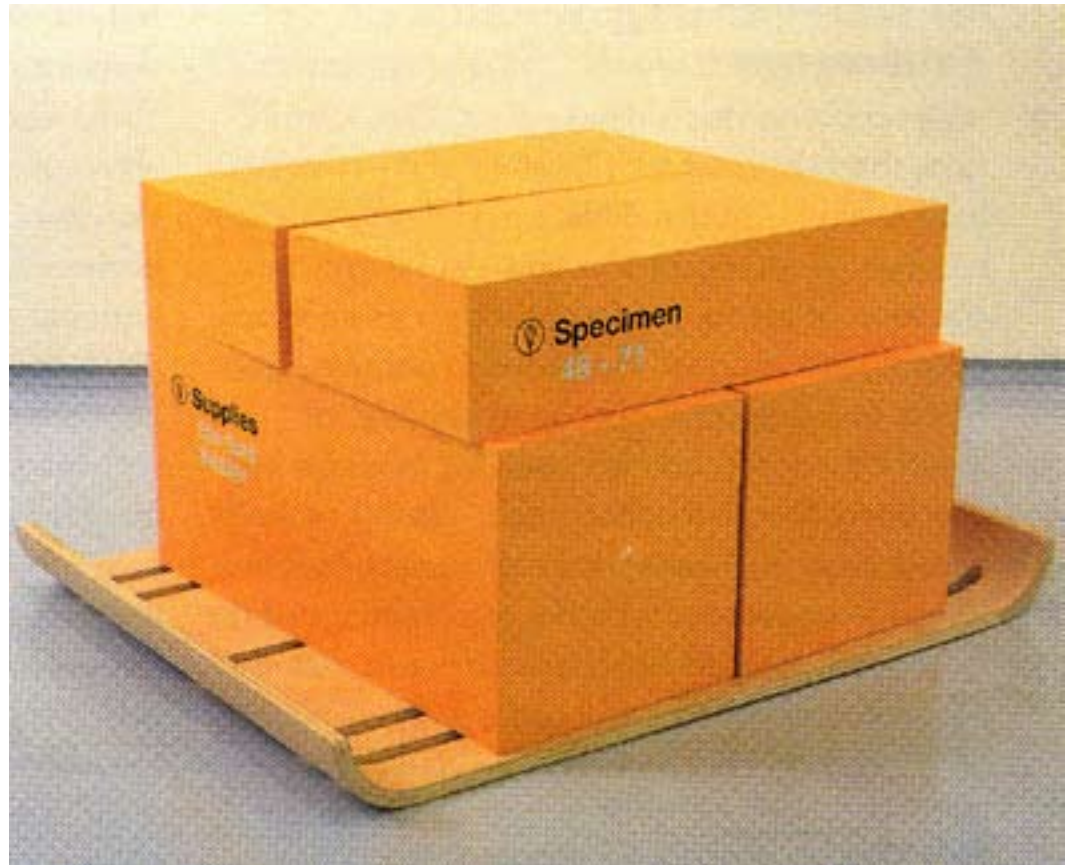
If Modernism's legendary tug-of-war between form and function were to be re-enacted according to the rules of Jason Dodge's recent sculptural project, Helsinki, form would have its day of triumph. Though, at first glance, these works possess a distinct air of purpose, it quickly becomes clear that any relation they may have to objects we live and work with is tentative at best.

Taken as a group, the eight works that make up Helsinki interact with one another to tell a story about a "misguided ornithologist who has traveled to Finland," according to the press release. Without this information, a vague understanding of the fictitious character's profession and interests might be acquired by a very open-minded and inquisitive viewer. A reference to birds, for instance, can be found in a logo on the satellite dish of the Bird Tracking System. Also, in order to give a loose indication of setting, two of the pieces are partially covered in fake snow who hasn't heard of the harsh Nordic climate while "Helsinki" is stenciled on the wooden case of the Parachute.

In general, the theme of a scientific expedition suggests itself. Cargo boxes, a tent, a portable bed and various gadgets and accessories are strewn about as if they were part of a base camp.

Yet any story that can be cobbled together from these individual pieces is buried under the visual confusion of competing stylistic signifiers. After trying to construct an image of the ornithologist by naming the task performed by each apparatus, the viewer's attention is drawn from the objects' perceived use value toward a wide range of fleeting allusions to twentieth-century design. A degree of familiarity with the styles of specific designers and architects is called for in order to detect the references more subtle than others—to the corporate logo of Lufthansa, the fabrics preferred by Helmut Lang and the structural sensibility of Adolf Loos, among others.

These brief epiphanies of product



Jason Dodge, *Storage*, 1997-98, mixed media.

identification lead us to the crux of Dodge's investigation: how the outline of a narrative provides the platform upon which the seductive power of style is demonstrated. And it is through the mechanics of display that Helsinki communicates an obsession with form as the primary stylistic indicator. The Bird Tracking System, for instance, does not simply rest on the ground; it is given its own elegant base and fluorescent lamp, which, along with the synthetic snow, lend the ensemble the look of a tradeshow exhibit. Each element of the grouping plays off the other to enhance the feeling of lavish presentation.

This highly refined and rather misplaced taste for luxury-work in the field typically requires a more Spartan existence—diminishes the role of the fictitious ornithologist and highlights that of the objects' producer. In *Tent* (cut-away view), a number of small items—a leather folder containing maps, some sort of syringe, a scale and a Nokia cell phone, the only 'found'

object included—recline on a bed of fur, seemingly waiting to be picked up, touched, handled. Their sensuousness reveals that Dodge's knowledge of style is gleaned through his own process of fabrication. In order to produce these embodiments of desire, he must spend hours lovingly finding the right proportions, polishing the contours, painting the surfaces and stitching the fabric. All of which speaks to a deep-seated longing to surround oneself with attractive, well-made things that one knows inside and out. How better to comprehend your world than to build it yourself? For Dodge, the compulsion to create his own environment results in objects that move fluidly in and out of the categories of sculpture and design. Part of the *Weather Station*, for example, recalls Alexander Calder's mobiles while another of its components resembles a trash container or a mailbox. Similarly, the *Storage* boxes conjure up visions of Minimalism while referring to Ikea style, stackable crate systems. Since

the works are not dependent on any single, previously articulated style, the artist is able to simultaneously assert his own presence and become more intimate with the objects of his desire.

There is clearly a current of fetishism running through this project, expressed in the terms of a shameless materiality. Consider the group's most 'useless' piece: titled *Snow*, it is a sled-like form covered in artificial white flakes. It consists simply of a sheet of high-grade plywood bent upwards at either end and slit down its length in five places. Whether or not this shape is meant to indicate a sliding or dragging function is, in the end, beside the point. In marveling at its gentle curves and admiring the patterns made by the thin layers of wood, we recognize it as a beautifully crafted, but thoroughly ineffectual, tool. As a manifestation of sheer formal fantasy, it makes the claim that this is a worthy function in itself.

Gregory Williams

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ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 1998

The Best of 1998

Ronald Jones

8 **Jason Dodge, "Helsinki"** (*Casey Kaplan, New York*) Jason Dodge possesses an extremely light touch considering the stately and sterile effects of his raw, exaggerated iconography. *In Storage*, 1997-98, for example, pure, uncut style becomes content. Lufthansa orange, Alvar Aalto's bent-birch style, and reference to the new Finnish design collective, Snowcrash are all brought int'o the 'mix, producing something that lends new meaning to "saturation overdose." Art history and the history of design will of course be helpful as one wade into Dodge's work, but don't miss his npds to "Kubrick, Nabokov, and Vonnegut.

