

CONNER CONTEMPORARY ART

JOHN KIRCHNER: Certain Distance

LEO VILLAREAL: Columns 2

June 18 - July 30, 2005

Conner Contemporary Art is pleased to present new work by installation artist John Kirchner. Certain Distance functions as a summa of the artist's complex language that deals with universal symbols of power. Kirchner creates work that is cool, austere and challenging to the viewer at once decrying and exalting conformity, decay and the artist's hand. Kirchner has recently exhibited this new work in New York and London. This will be the artist's third exhibition at the gallery.

Fifteen years ago Kirchner began to collect the data-less pages from the back of corporate reports after musing over the fear of legal liability that would lead a corporation to print the inane statement this page left intentionally blank. For Kirchner, the enforced blankness of paper is equivalent to the blank ubiquity of the white oxford shirt in the corporate world. It's about what is not there.

The artist also speaks to the theme of absence in his digital photography. Extensively photographing the architectural symbols of power in Washington and London, Kirchner has appropriated the power that the buildings represent. By then digitally manipulating the work - meticulously removing all traces of human existence within the images, the artist has re-painted the scene and makes evident his hand.

In Untitled I and Untitled II, Kirchner presents rent and discarded paintings with found shirts in uneasy relation to each work. These paintings with traditional subject matter, where the original artist's hand is very evident, have been cast aside by unknown persons. These paintings no longer conform to what is considered beautiful in contemporary culture, they are no longer valued. By imposing a white oxford shirt (representing corporate culture) and a designer shirt (representing consumer culture) Kirchner has structured a critique of contemporary material values.

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Leo Villareal creates digital sculpture that echoes organic and architectural forms. Utilizing the latest LED (light emitting diodes) technology, the artist creates a palette of millions of colors. This palette is then governed by the artist's digital sequencing and an exclusively written computer program that samples each of the artist's sequences randomly. Columns 2 (4) represents the artist's recent exploration of architectural environments.

Villareal's work may also be seen in Visual Music, a historic survey exhibition organized by curators Kerry Brouger and Judith Zilczer of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC and Jeremy Strick and Ari Wiseman of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA. Visual Music is on view June 23 - September 11, 2005 at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The artist will speak at the Hirshhorn Ring Auditorium Thursday, June 23rd at 7:30pm. For more information: www.hirshhorn.si.edu/.

There will be a reception for the artists Saturday, June 18th from 6-8pm.

For more information: www.connercontemporary.com
info@connercontemporary.com | 202-588-8750
Leigh Conner or Karyn Miller.