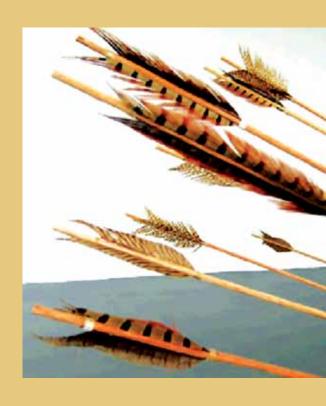
# Elaine Bradford, Nathan Danilowicz, Joe Deutch, and Patrick Jackson

# Quiver



# QUIVER

Elaine Bradford Nathan Danilowicz Joe Deutch Patrick Jackson

May 13 - June 30, 2006

Reception: May 13th, 5 - 7pm

# Quiver (2006) By Matt Zbrog

### Introduction

You are under attack.

When Quiver opened at CIRRUS Gallery, it showcased a group of four young artists — Joe Deutch, Nathan Danilowicz, Elaine Bradford, and Patrick Jackson.

It was 2006. The scene, hyperbolic: First signs of a mortgage crisis which would, in years to come, set fire to the global economy – A war against terror that frightened lawmakers into shifting the definitions of civil liberties – Titanic industries such as music, literature, and film crumbling under the pressure to find ways to preserve or re-invent themselves in a digital era.

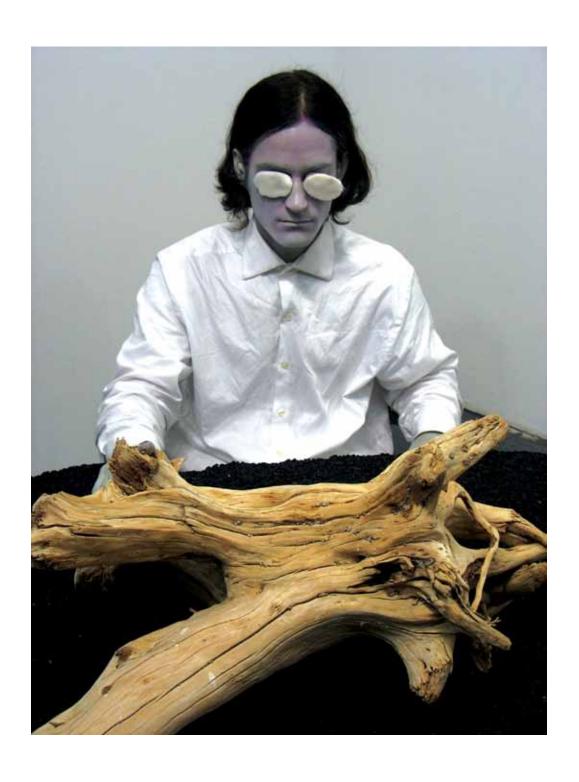
Perhaps most innocuous was the advent of social media, a then-new steroidal form of internet which even in its infancy had the capacity to either undermine the value of content through reproduction, or liberate the conceptual arts from galleries and curators.

Such an exaggerated exposition could be considered a sign of the times, but the landscape presented to the young artists in Quiver was unquestionably grim. The context could and has swallowed careers whole. And looming over all of it was the growing sensation that everything had been done before, done better, done more than once.

So what did the artists of Quiver have to say? Most importantly, how did they say it?

The first word in the conversation – 'quiver' – is as good a starting point as any. Indeed, a 'quiver' carries an array of weapons. Indeed, a 'quiver' can mean a certain human reaction in the face of a massive confrontation. And, indeed, Quiver could be considered a bouquet from the early 21st century, one full of multiplicitous objects we may use to inform ourselves, shield ourselves, or warn ourselves of our own capabilities.

What else does Quiver mean?



Joe Deutch Installation and Performance in Artist's Studio 2006

### JOE DEUTCH

# "The ideal had been an ephemeral and authented event that could not be repeated."

Performance art has a history of clashing with the gallery world, by way of conflicting ideals and offset structures. While galleries placed walls around a work of art in order to solidify context, performance art sought to tear down traditional barriers and 'liberate' the work. But the relationship has complicated further with the introduction of digital presentation, and both institutions find themselves under attack by the words 'redundant' and 'irrelevant'.

An artist's work is now exposed to a radical number of dynamic environments with an unprecedented immediacy. The walls around a gallery do not shelter art as they once did. A performance behind an LCD screen does not confront with the same potency.

How to proceed in this frightening environment?

Enter Joe Deutch.



"As an artist I'd say galleries are a necessary evil. As a gallery I'd say artists are a necessary evil. The art world is a wheel with spokes, like any other industry. It rolls along and you can try to grab hold, push it, or stop it dead in its track. Either way, you're most likely going to get run over." (Joe Deutch)

Joe Deutch made a name for himself with performances that took 'art' and

shoved it into the realm of the real unapologetically. From simulating suicide at UCLA to vandalizing a police vehicle to goading a cobra into biting his Achilles heel, Deutch has delivered an assault by fear, of fear, and on fear – bending the line of art further and further towards a certain kind of freedom until it cannot be avoided.

It is not an exaggeration to suggest his work might be preferred if it carried a warning label of sorts — Chris Burden and Nancy Rubin resigned from their professorships at UCLA in protest of a 2005 Deutch performance, which they called "domestic terrorism").

But any warning or label would work against precisely what the work does best.

"Well, the question was, how much of an intrusion into the real can an artwork be. Or, more simply put, how much of an impact can it make. Can it be an undeniable experience, something the viewer can't leave behind on the way out the door." (Joe Deutch, in regards to his controversial UCLA performance and the resulting LA Times interview)

Questions with periods attached.

In 2006, Quiver put Joe Deutch – conceptual rulebook escape artist, confrontational performer – in a largely empty room, behind four walls of context, and dared both him and his art to break out.

Luckily, he's ready to have a conversation if we are.

# tic experience for performer and audience in an ted, captured, or purchased."

(Adrian Parr Becoming + Performance Art [Edinburgh University Press pg25])

# Installation

Installation is our introduction to Quiver and the beginning of a dialog between the viewer, the artist, and the work. Presented: A piece of driftwood. A table. A man.

driftwood there. and presumably does not understand endeavor or to know how it got there. The man is there, and presumably... what? If it weren't for the clay covering his eyes, he'd be staring directly at the driftwood that is, assuming the man's eyes are open, as the viewers' are.

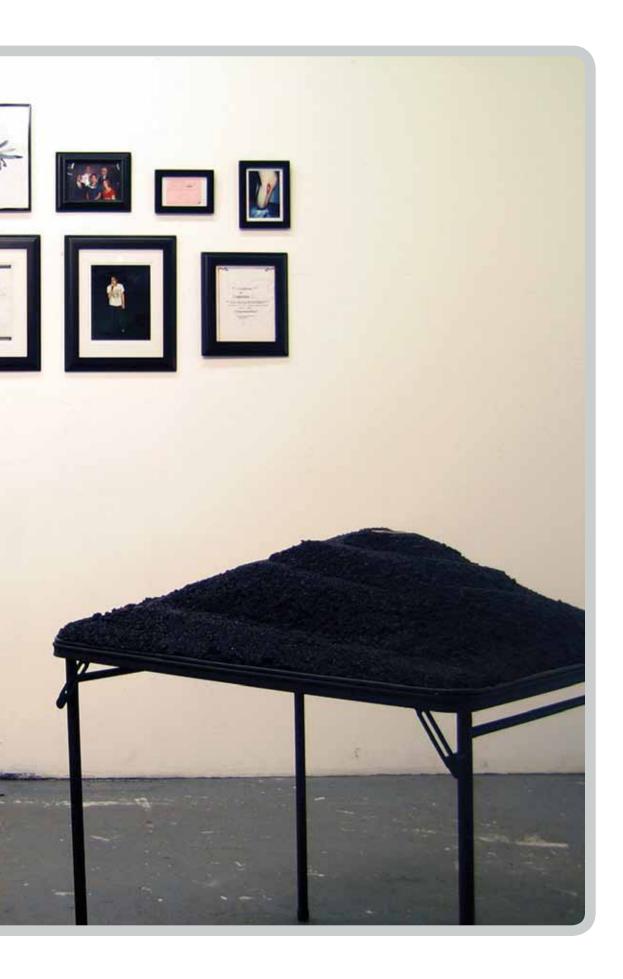
And already, despite only three objects being in the frame, the work could easily get lost in all sorts of assumptions, such as the relevance of the scars

on the wood, the wrinkles in the shirt, the texture of the table – as the viewer infers meanings for meaning's sake. Or perhaps that tendency to hunt for intention is as natural to us as is the wood's tendency to float. But looking further, what we 'see' are certain innate relationships that exist inside of and between the objects and the viewer.

The simple layout provides room for the viewer to recognize the associations invisibly on the table – perhaps ideas about the numerous properties of wood or clay or man and how they interact – and it is in that non-visual space where a conversation begins.







# Conversation – Table #:

Now: Two tables.

Table #1 retains the driftwood from Installation, but now has something beside it. That something is a miniature manmade vehicle, fueled by a menacing looking substance — potentially explosive. Suddenly, both the vehicle and the conversation carry a latent threat as cargo, and the viewer faces dilemma here, a contrast, an acknowledgment.

The driftwood – natural – and the vehicle – artificial – both have the potential for utility and/or violence, but each requires a third party to unlock that capability.

We may rush to inquire as to the intention for the car – but did we point to the driftwood with the same question, the same urgency? Where does this latent threat really come from? Where is the man from Installation, and what is he really presenting to us? Answers with question marks?





# Conversation - Table #2

Table #2 is set several feet away.

Inside this table, a small cup. The cup houses a miniature gold statue – a fatted calf – and blood.

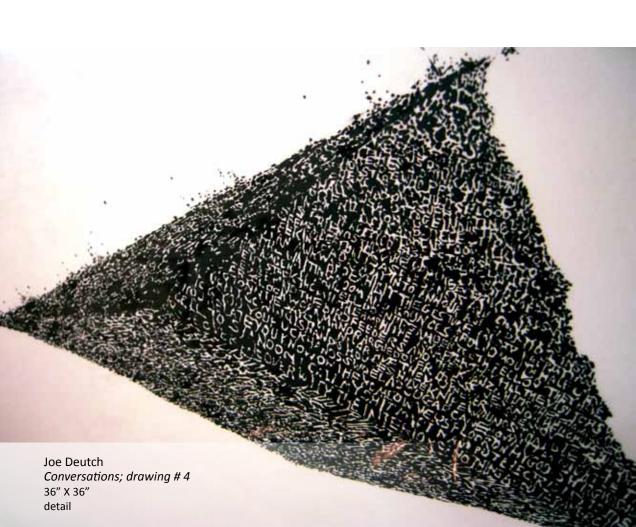
This symbolic sacrifice goes unseen by the elements on the other table, elements which, despite their capability, cannot traverse even this small distance. There in the gallery, it is a sacrifice without recognition or tangible benefit, which may be the most 'virtuous' kind of sacrifice – or at least one that is purely human in its intent.

Three stages. Two tables. One altar to capability.

Still, the driftwood is there, unchanged. The vehicle hasn't moved. The chemicals have not exploded. And with no words, we find ourselves in the thick of a conversation – one that started before we got there.

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# **Conversation #2 (drawings)**

Conceptual art can, on occasion, struggle in terms of accessibility. An already narrow audience for such work has narrowed further in a polluted media environment where there is more demand for immediacy and more competition for attention than ever.

The room is over capacity.
Everyone is talking loudly.
The music has tremendous bass.
Can we even hear ourselves speak anymore?

Conversation #2 takes spools of Deutch's own writing and warps them into prisms.

This method of communication may look vague or abstract – a common front-line criticism of contemporary or conceptual art -- but Deutch subverts our assumption that words brings clarity or depth.

An image and a word were a sort of 3rd dimension when Ruscha and Baldessari popularized them in LA, but Deutch follows through on this thought -- much as he did with the work of Burden et. al -- and puts his conclusion on display.

With the introduction of unlimited texting plans and smartphones with qwerty keyboards, everyone had suddenly started playing the schoolyard game of 'Telephone' – and what work could survive there?

And why cling to what has lost its efficacy.

Much as the toy car had more limitations than the driftwood, the words on the pyramid find themselves little besides texture to a larger, older shape.

What we see is a movement beyond old models of specificity.

And even the word 'old' is misleading.

The pyramids -- the simplest 3D object -- carry their own connotations, which are far older than Instagram, Facebook, Deutch, and Ruscha combined.

Deutch reminds us that the origin and future of conversation is wordless.

While that might have seemed an eye-rolling claim to the general public in 2006, it gained one billion votes of confidence in 2012 when Facebook purchased Instagram.

In a foreboding statement of purpose about the piece, Deutch goes further and reminds us that the image, too, is imaginary.

The future is coming, and there will be pink slips handed out.

# **Recent Work**

In answering his own question from the LA Times, now 6 years later, the artist says:

"We learned something...an acknowledgement that art is, must be, inherently artificial. It is reconsidered, taken away, and reconstructed. Must be reconstructed. Even when the viewer first encounters it. This re-re-re-ness has to begin with the artist."

And even if one finds themselves at odds with what they believe Deutch's work represents, they implicitly agree with his statement above.

And it must be acknowledged that in a very crowded, very lazy room, Deutch has repeatedly found ways to engage with his audience both with and without their consent.

When we look to his work post-Quiver, we see him utilizing social media (YouTube) to deliver his performances. We see him pushing boundaries of free speech through textual art as in the piece *Fuck Iraq Save Yourself* (2007). We see him continue to reach his audience in less-saleable, more-direct ways, continuing his progression (some would say terrorization) of established LA Art.

It's easy to call his work an exploration of fear. But that's a disservice in more ways than one.

If we think
If we wait
If we stand back
And pause
We see
Deutch is an artist chasing freedom
Maybe just because
That should be reason enough.

Now, in 2012, we find the Installation has left the building and the Conversation has drifted elsewhere, waiting for us in some places, jumping in front of us in others – and rarely stopping to explain itself.

Without any explosions, Joe Deutch and his art have escaped the gallery.

But the offer is on the table.

Do we want to go with?





Joe Deutch Conversations; drawing #1 enamel on paper 2006 30" X 65"

Joe Deutch Conversations; drawing #2 enamel on paper 2006 22" X 30"





Joe Deutch Conversations; drawing #3 enamel on paper 2006 22" x 30"



### NATHAN DANILOWICZ

# "Parasitical: the motto

Danilowicz's work resists introduction.

Where to begin?

His consummate body of work is jaw dropping,

Installations, performances, paintings, sculptures, and books... One feels, when viewing his output as a whole, exhausted by imagining how much time, energy, and bodily fluid went into it.

Zoomed in, we find reverence to a mushroom trip fascination with a Sparks can and a candle. We see personal works for specific people. We see a man cleaning something up and calling it art. From afar, zoomed out, taken as a whole, his collected works might resemble one of the multi-dimensional star shapes he's drawn.

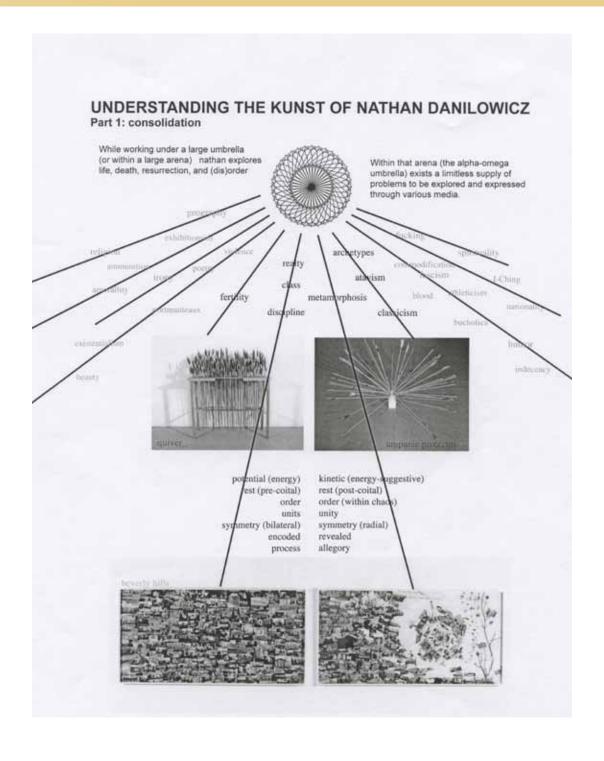
From that perspective, we begin to see implicit statements (questions?) about identity.

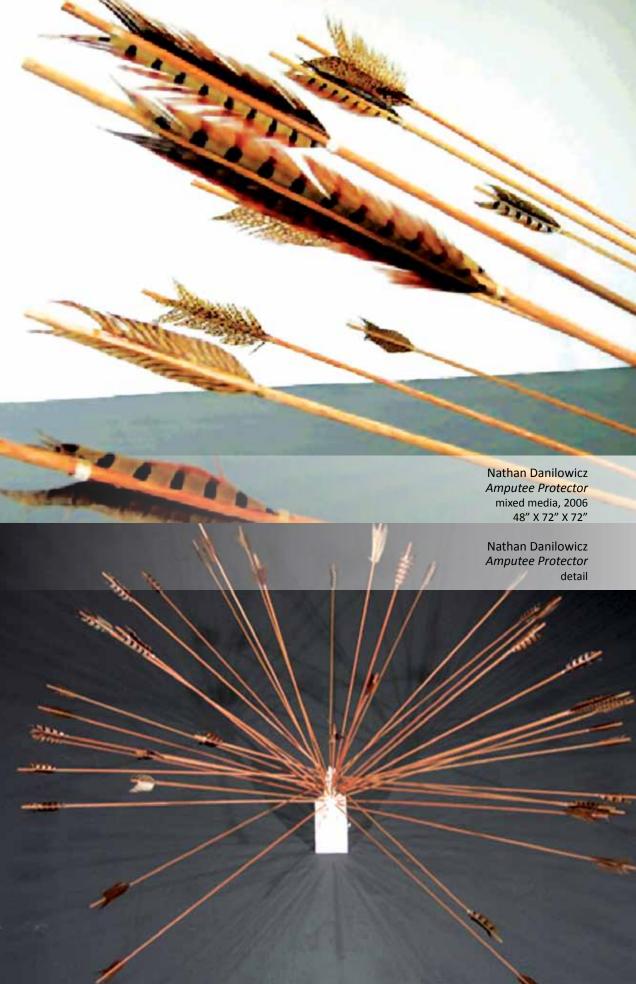
And an example of the information overload experienced in 21st century culture.

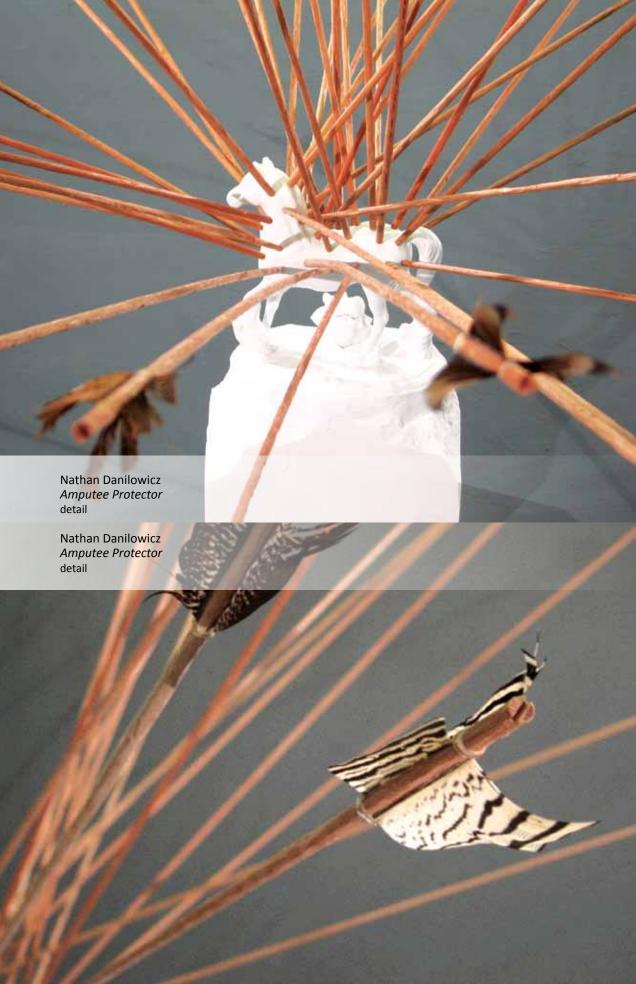


# of the 21st century."

(Danilowicz, The Fourth)









# [Nathan Thomas Wilson]

In his work before Quiver, we see a host of voices working through one body.

But the art is still very much his.

And, fittingly, we are provided by "A Brief Biography of Nathan Danilowicsz by Nathan Thomas Wilson", which muddles as much as it explains.

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Faced with the same problems of irrelevance as all the other artists in Quiver, ND ignores his critics and aims where he pleases. He shoots anyway. And he hits.

Something.

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# **AMPUTEE PROTECTOR**

And the problem can only be restated so many ways because once you shoot a horse once, twice, three times, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty times it runs the risk of making arrow number twenty one look redundant.

How many Blog-hits does it take before the audience – or the archer – loses interest?

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# **QUAVER**

Too many weapons.
Not enough targets.
The exhibition QUIVER takes its name here
And those sharpened branches
Were probably crafted before the term un-deremployed was invented
Because a person makes an arrow to shoot it.
What else could it be for?

Note: Quaver means to oscillate, almost to waver. And that is ND all over. His work quavers. He dances on both sides of the crack in the cement. He bounces like a particle at the Large Haldron Collider.

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# **Nathan Danilowicz**

Quaver mixed media 2006 56" X 47" X 17"

# [KUNTZ]

By acknowledging contrasting ends of the spectrum,

Danilowicz places himself in the middle as the catalyst An arrow

He represents the human element Embracing the capability Deutch placed on the altar

Danilowicz takes the idea of image based conversation and bombards us with it.

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Nathan Danilowicz Beverly Hills photographs, inkjet prints, laser prints, yes glue 2006 Frames by Art Services Melose: Wood frame, UV Plexi 48" X 92"

In the contrasting collages BEVERLY HILLS 1 and 2.

One: An altar to the perfectly reproduced – in the dozens of high quality images of homes together, we find nothing but more clutter.

Two: The images are manipulated, reduced, and rearranged by a human hand.

And turned into something other than what they were.

While the first collage is closer to reality, the second is more alluring to the human eye.

Sometimes we need to read a sentence more than once.

While the first collage is closer to reality, the second is more alluring to the human eye.

And sometimes we need to read a sentence more than once in order to find a grander truth.

Because would we be able to appreciate Beverly Hills 2 without Beverly Hills 1?

\*\*

Nathan's work is the sum of several pieces. Each one informs the others, intentionally or otherwise.

While other contemporaries have used the act of indulging in fantasy ironically / pejoratively / humorously (and previous critics have assumed ND to do so) – ND does not. He believes in the holiness of any moment, like Bazin or Hegel, and makes few apologies.

There's a sense of zealotry behind each work – and that should stand out in contrast to his generation losing its faith in one institution after another.

Whether working with materials like his own blood, or images from his youth, or Sparks energy drinks and Christ figurines... there is no realm out of bounds to ND, no branding, no stereotyping – and, he suggests, neither should there be for us.



In 2012, the catalog of work that Nate Danilowicz has expanded further.

Reproducing images from videogames of the 20th century on acrylic and wood.

Giant geometric shapes.

Alumnium Sculpture.

Speeches in the desert.

Danilowicz continues to surprise himself.

Stretch himself.

Without determining the end point in advance

Because there will never be a problem

Of having nothing to shoot.
If one has the confidence to fire.
And just as an introduction is difficult, so is a conclusion.

"Nathan, himself, is a living art project, and not finished yet."

There's an isolation there, being removed by way of an artist having too many conversations with his art. And when we look to one of his earliest pieces, The

Candle and the Can, we find an earnest statement that Danilowicz refused to run from. A calling to the potential love for anything – love in the agape sense. But at the same time, on the same canvas – he asks if he can ever truly find someone to love.

And for a bunch of kids who grew up with Gameboys

And are now grown men talking to their female-voiced phones more than their wives

We are either living in the dystopian techno-isolation our science fiction movies sold us Or we are living in total fucking paradise.

Or maybe, as Danilowicz offers, it's all about landing somewhere different than last time.

Oscillating, quavering between the two.

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# **ELAINE BRADFORD**

Hold on. Just hold on.

# **ENDURANCE**

Elaine Bradford's piece Endurance arrives from 2004. In a marked contrast to Danilowicz, who indulges his artistic blah into seemingly anything, Elaine focuses on one method of practice – one – and asks if it can be preserved.

Bradford approaches her 'incomplete' materials, wood stumps, by comforting them.

She coddles the natural, and the atrocities committed against it, with no eye towards repair. The hand knit sweaters show love for the wood's capability (fire, structure, home, heat).

century – a cynicism where any new creation is forced to come to terms with vitriolic critique, acknowledged dismissal, or, at best, a She caricatures our love for own apathies in a self-indemnifying critique of a new hyper-cynicism, which had taken root in the early 21st stepping stone for someone else's artistic improvement and adulation. The parody of dressing a severed limb for warmth provides an equally smug, equally earnest coping response, an attempt to preserve what has already been lost or was never there in the first place – There are buttons on the sweaters, as if she wanted them to have the option to take them off if they got too warm. Despite the logs being of differing sizes and dimensions, they all have practically the same utility and oroperties – Elaine's knitting is what differentiate them.



Elaine Bradford

Endurance
Firewood, yarn, buttons 2004
dim. variable





# **LOCKED ANTLERS**

And her knitting can also unify, as it does when it softens the antlers of taxidermied deer, and binds them together. There's comfort here, togetherness – consolation in their covered eyes and a sentiment expressed after the fact. The antlers probably weren't going to hurt anyone anyway.

It's the thought that counts, right?
Two follow up questions:
Counts to who?

And how long can that sentiment last?

### **RECENT WORK**

Elaine kept knitting for years, and in 2009, she opened the Museum of Unnatural History, an exhibit filled with "new" animals culled from childhood books and her own imagination. She knit sweaters for them, too. She claimed it would be her last work clothing or mutating any taxidermied animals – forever.

Not so.
She's still knitting.
She's fallen in love with her comforts, which should speak to their strength.
Much as her massive volume of knitted yarn should speak to the time and physical effort she has expended. If it's important to her it gains importance to us. Almost a decade of knitting – arthritis by 30? Carpal tunnel?
Endurance indeed.

One has to wonder if she doesn't want to stop, or if she is incapable of stopping, or if she simply doesn't know what else to do?
When she worked with Seth Wittag in a joint show Fictitious Realities/Realistic Fictions 2008 (ArtPalace, Houston), working with a partner, the result was met with critical shrugs. But once a context is established, it becomes difficult to escape. One can almost hear the non-existent crowd chanting, "Play knitting clothes for dead things again!"

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In 2012 [Houston Star] writer railed angrily against the nauseating trend "overused trope" of knitting clothes for dead animals... and only later did the STAR run an update apologizing to Elaine, once learning of her existence. Elaine's thing has become 'A Thing'. And that sort of viral success (often uncredited) crashes an idea, fucks it to death. And in an institution – art – which is supposed to outlast trends, nations, and even languages where is there to go?

Keep going.

Forward.

Endurance finds connection through imitation, and ultimately a sad humor. Elaine took this sense of humor alongside her, knowingly, into the grave that is 'last year's art', because 8 years later, the deer are still bound together. Eight years later, the logs are still cozy. Eight years later, art schools across the country are incorporating the 'trope', harvesting it for its demonstrated and tested meaning.

How long can that sentiment last?

Eight years, and counting.

Cover your eyes and keep going.

Patrick Jackson, sculptor, asks Elaine's question from a different angle -

He takes "How long can we go on?" and adds the auxillary, "How long must we go on?" And the answer is in the title of his first piece inside Quiver.

# Till I Can't Tell You From Me

This is not a problem that must be tackled alone. Shared pain is still shared, and the hands in Till I can't Tell You From Me find camaraderie as well as elevation in their Hofstatder circle of crucifixion. They add to each other's pain, pressing down on one another, but also prevent the circle from crashing down.

Fragility is a theme throughout Jackson's work.





### TCHOCHKE TOWER

His Tchochke Towers evoke a sense of caution in the viewer — even looking at them through a screen — as if they could be broken simply by being looked at too hard.

He claims the first two levels can support his body weight.

'Tchochkes' are "small toys, knickknacks, baubles,... the term has a connotation of worthlessness or disposability, as well as tackiness."

Still, viewers could get lost in the meaning of each tchochke's symbolism, its innate meaning or relevance to the previous owner. But claims he chooses each tchochtke first and foremost for how it would function in a tower. Sturdiness. Size. Measurable qualities.

And If Jackson heaped any more symbolism onto the items in his towers, they could destabilize entirely.

His first instinct was to pick them up when purchasing, to feel their weight, to touch — he said that's what you do when you shop — it's an American desire. Well, touching any of these feels like it would cause

a very noisy reaction with some permanent results, and yet if we trust the tower's creator, we may find that is not the case.

"The first two levels can support my body weight," he says.

Decisions made as a sculptor / architect—the tchochke's placement is determined by their weight. Jackson focuses on what he knows, and in the process, preys upon the implicit meanings of recycled objects, the value (which we feel) 'belongs' to someone else.

Which could lead to an insightful exploration of content – a discussion worth having in 2006, or at least acknowledging in 2012.

When the emphasis on content Is placed on the first syllable Instead of the second

And yet the fact remains that Jackson has given these 'meaningless baubles' function for the first time in their non-lives.





### Untitled

Untitled puts a mirror between 6 concrete pillars of questionable construction, and gives the illusion, temporarily, that there are only three instead of six. The price of this illusionary reduction, this faux-simplicity, is a system fragile to the point of physical danger to the viewer. To breathe on it, speak too loud around it, and it may cause something very heavy to quiver – and fall.

The threats here are not as assaultive as Deutch's. But the concepts are as real as the mirror. We are coming to terms with our own fragility. With our own illusions.

The lack of a title doesn't feel based in fear. It shows restraint. It shows awareness of a lack of awareness.

When we look at the piece where do we find ourselves?

Careful.

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Patrick Jackson Blown Away Column 2006 C-Print 13.5" X 10.5" Ed.5

In the final piece in Quiver – we see an illusion.

Jackson tries to erase a supporting column.

Undo it.

Even though it's impossible,

he demonstrates that we can make it look possible for a second –

And on a long enough timeline, the future may believe our illusions for better or worse,

just like we believed in the past.

We can revel in that, or quiver in front of it.

But perhaps care should be exercised in what we preserve, what we use to build our towers.

Not upon personal meaning alone.

And perhaps JD's enamel pyramids, EB's sweatered stumps, and Patrick's ceramic hands and are waiting to be built into a Tchochke Tower which could reach higher than

one man's wood and bone or an arrow's clipped wings –

And be pulled together into something load bearing, given purpose and placement in a tower to something at a greater height, capable of supporting other tchotchkes, building upon a conversation that has and will continue to outlive the people in it —

To present an idea

Where words and definitions and assumptions and our solipstic fantasies

disintegrate like blown apart

c o l u m n s ...

and no one is under attack.

CIRRUS GALLERY

542 S. Alameda Street Los Angeles, CA 90013 t. 213.680.3473 f. 213.680.0930 cirrus@cirrusgallery.com www.cirrusgallery.com

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EXHIBITION:

Ouiver

DATES:

May 13 - June 30, 2006

RECEPTION:

Saturday, May 13th, 2006, 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Opening on May 13, 2006, Cirrus Gallery is pleased to present Quiver, a group exhibition of sculpture and works on paper from Elaine Bradford, Nathan Danilowicz, Joe Deutch, and Patrick Jackson.

Employing everyday materials towards uncanny effect, the sculptural work included in Quiver assess the mundane and transfigure objects and materials into intellectual and spatial anomalies. Investigating issues of fragility, mortality, fear, and violence, the exhibition draws its title most obviously from Nathan Danilowicz's "Quiver", a sculptural work consisting of a wooden stand suspending a group of hand-made arrows. A collection or store, or perhaps more specifically: an arsenal, the 'quiver' functions as a ready response, an outpost of items awaiting undecided intention.

The word 'quiver' can also describe a physical response (ex. a trembling, or violent shaking) or an emotional response (ex. an uncontrollable sensation of fright or fear). Patrick Jackson's fragile and meticulously balanced works play upon the tenuous nature of material and symbolic relationships. Six cement pillars suspend and maintain equilibrium on a large circular piece of mitror, creating the illusion of solidity and stability. However, a quick shake would bring Jackson's carefully balanced works crashing down.

A sense of foreboding and mysticism encapsulate the symbolic and performative work of Joe Deutch. Pyramids of asphalt, blood, a figurine, and driftwood combine in an altar of mysterious intention. Also on view are Elaine Bradfords cory and seemingly cheery crochet cover-ups which seemingly mask a darker element of disguise and entanglement. Two mounted deer trophy busts lock antlers in an endless and futile battle while multi-colored yarn sweaters snuggle chopped and discarded sections of tree trunks.

Quiver will be on view at Cirrus Gallery (542 S. Alameda Street, Los Angeles) May 13 - June 30, 2006. Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am - 5 pm.

For further information or reproductions please contact Cirrus at tel. +1 213.680.3473 or cirrus@cirrusgallery.com



Cirrus 2006

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