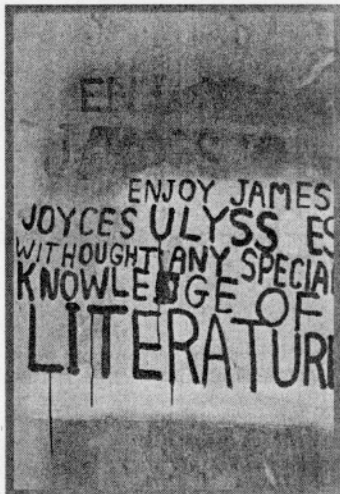


Graham Gillmore, *James Joyce*, 2004, ink on paper, 30" x 22", at POST, Los Angeles.



## 'Hero-Glyph' and Mike Dee at POST

A loosely organized set of ideas forms the nucleus of *Hero-Glyph*, organized by Alexandra Fouladi and Hope Bryson of San Francisco's Lincart, having to do with language and symbols in art that over time have been lost, found and hybridized. The archetypal human experience in the modern world

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not primarily political, it is the physical and personal discomfort of being fed contradictory versions of the same idea, of anxiety produced by sensory overload, and of our own complicity in sustaining the broader lie. The viewer's experience is made corporeal as well as intellectual, and relates to the neighboring exhibition by explicitly using evidence of cultural movement to demonstrate the attenuation of language and what remain of the possibilities for fully comprehending its meaning.

—Shana Nys Dambrot

*Hero-Glyph* and Mike Dee closed in December at POST, Los Angeles.

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## Reviews

is one of bombardment and contradiction on every conceivable level. Like the contrarian anti-hero of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, we inhabit an untenably fractious psychological structure seemingly of our own volition, despite being aware of its shortcomings. From commerce to politics, gender roles to technology, religion to science, we are constantly being asked to redefine our existences through external means and to identify ourselves by adherence to messages. And, still, we persist in an elusive quest to quantify it.

Each of the artists assembled for *Hero-Glyph* can be said to use found materials in a variety of literal and metaphoric ways; and, overall, the conceptual foundation of the found object contributes a great deal to the exhibition's power. The found object's creation predates the artist's interaction with it; all that is required of it is to consent to being manipulated, recontextualized and thought about—external processes that owe everything to operations of words and meaning. Almost every one of the artists also uses language as a tool of representation, giving text primary roles in compositional structures that expand the activity of the words outside the realm of message content and into that of symbol-glyphs, mark-making and drawing.

Graham Gillmore's mixed-media works on paper and canvas makes salient connections between language and symbol plainly visible. Executed in a shaky, painterly hand, often made directly on found paper that may or may not then be mounted on canvas, Gillmore manages to hold several contradictory ideas together at once. He both writes and draws—the viewer both sees and reads—and these processes, despite being remarkably different, take place simultaneously. His text is fragmented and a bit obscure, and encompasses lyrical description (blazing suns seen from below), plaintive narration ("I will you won't I lose you win") and directives to phantom audiences ("enjoy James Joyce's *Ulysses* without any special knowledge of literature"). The thick impasto of both background and markings, the sensual messiness of dripping surfaces, the uneven ersatz penmanship and the off-beat voice of the writings all contribute to the paradoxical ambiguity of Gillmore's work, which is neither beautiful nor difficult, but is hyp-



Nils Nova, *Vanessa's Secret*, 2004, watercolor, ink on paper, 30" x 20", at POST, Los Angeles.

notice in its promise of profundity to any who would take the time to decode it.

Charles Linder's *Table with Cans* uses found objects as visual elements divorced from their origins, in an idiom explicitly characterized by a strict word-and-image functionality—traffic signs—and a familiar formal exercise—the displacement of lowly things. Standing amid an installation of found street signs peppered with shrapnel like William S. Burrough's buckshot

paintings is a wooden table with traditionally curved legs supporting a glass museum case. Inside are displayed a pair of rusted out and badly misshapen industrial cans, one of which has been painted high gloss red. Laid end-to-end, their shapes elicit a compelling, nearly scientific curiosity not unlike a natural history exhibition. The overall effect of the installation is strange and mysterious, despite the transparency of its strategy. Other works in the show benefit from the dynamics at which Gillmore and Linder are each so accomplished: using familiar methods of appropriation and juxtaposition to create new avenues for perceiving commonplace objects and images. Jose Sarinana's immense drawing is executed on a collage of hundreds of pages of found paper, pinned to the wall and covered in a frenzy of angular lines that branch off from one another like a root system and whose crisply and confidently rendered nodes sprawl across multiple pages. An antique typewriter glyph appears here and there, making more explicit the relationship between drawing and the act of writing, its manual and automated facets and the time it takes to unfold, like a complicated story. The drawing's dizzyingly labor-intensiveness gives way unexpectedly to the element of chance by allowing the shape of the found paper in which it is executed to dictate something of its form. Its scale and delicacy invite a reconsideration of the genre's intimacy and immediacy, and the potential meanings embedded in an artist's choice of materials.

Tucker Nichols's work involves dia-

gramming directly onto the gallery wall a chart of his experiences and impressions of Los Angeles. It is also text-based, communicating in snippets and phrases, using single words and crudely drawn glyphs to build a testament to an individual's existence. The site specificity of the works and the non-traditional media (Sharpie, duct tape, thumbtacks) employed to construct it give it an ad hoc quality and a sense of urgency and psychological catharsis. And, as with Sarinana's work, its unexpected scale makes it impossible to take in at once and compels the viewer to devote time to exploring it, subverting the efficiency of its communication strategy and blurring the distinction between word and image.

Nils Nova's sassy painting of red floral panties initially seems anomalous in the grouping, but elements of the picture's composition make the case. The picture is cropped so that the panties take up nearly the entire frame, with only a bit of the seated model's crotch visible around the edges, focusing on the panties at the expense of the readily available nude they conceal, inverting the conventions of tra-



Anthony Hernandez, *Everything #12*, 2003-04, chromogenic print, 27" x 27", at Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica.

ditional figure drawing while creating a lush, romantic pattern from an unexpected source.

In the upstairs gallery, a one-person exhibition by Mike Dee tackles many of the same issues using related strategies in the format of video installation. Though more political and aggressive than the work in *Hero-Glyph*, Dee's art shares with it an interest in the ways in which perception is manipulated and icons created and eventually subverted by collective interpretation. Superimposing both image and sound, Dee's projections conflate videotape from the 1950s and 1960s depicting black and white performers each doing renditions of the same song. Implicitly, the work is as much about the inequality and hypocrisy of the entertainment media. But its formal character is