
79 Walker Street
New York NY 10013
T_ 212 219 04 73
F_ 212 219 05 11
artingeneral.org



For Immediate Release

December 2008 – New York, NY

The Auto Industry Comes to Art in General with *Custom Car Commandos*

Contact

Claire Sexton
212.219.0473 x31
press@artingeneral.org



Custom Car Commandos

January 16 – March 7, 2009

Nancy Davenport, Liam Gillick, Lars Mathisen, Dexter Sinister, Alex Villar, and Angie Waller. Guest curated by Sandra Skurvida.

Opening reception Friday, January 16 from 6-8 pm.

Public program: Lecture by Liam Gillick on March 7, at 3 PM.

As chief executives of the Big Three auto manufacturers of Detroit plead for an emergency government bailout, *Custom Car Commandos*, an exhibition opening at Art in General on January 16, 2009 relates the auto industry and the image industry. The exhibition consists of video works by Nancy Davenport, Lars Mathisen, Alex Villar, and Angie Waller, as well as a lecture by Liam Gillick and a publication in collaboration with Dexter Sinister.

The artists included in *Custom Car Commandos* utilize the auto body as a vehicle for socioeconomic, political, environmental, and psychological phenomena brought about by the current crisis. Kenneth Anger's short film *Kustom Kar Kommandos* of 1965 provides an historical touchstone for the current exhibition, invoking relationships between cars, power, dominance, and desire.

Nancy Davenport engineers photo-video hybrids, cross-referencing artifacts and icons from the history of cinema in her videos *Final Inspection* and *Conversation*, two parts of her ongoing *Workers* project. In *Final Inspection*, Davenport filmed the assembly line at Jaguar's Halewood factory in England, which was owned by the Ford Motor Company until its recent sale to the Indian conglomerate Tata. As workers inspect new cars, touching up their shiny surfaces, the viewer's attention may shift from the car to image-making. In *Conversation*, Davenport presents a "human interest" story

Photos: Left, Alex Villar, *Crash Course*, 2008, digital rendering.
Right, Nancy Davenport, *Final Inspection*, 2008, video still.

in documentary mode—a video recording of an “exit interview” between the company’s public relations representative and factory workers who have just lost their jobs.

Misalignment between object and function, fact and fiction, is at the very core of **Alex Villar’s** practice. *Crash Course* is a series of attacks on a Hummer—whose design connotes war and luxury—that unfold against cityscapes of Beijing, Copenhagen, and New York. Modernist architectural backdrops emphasize the uniformity of these diverse locales, strung together by a drill of recurring attacks. Merging shapes, desaturated and solarized images, and the dialectics of collisions shatter a unilateral point of view.

Angie Waller counters Villar’s cinematic abstraction with a documentary project, *Armored Cars: Protect Yourself from Ballistic Attacks*. Composed of a video and a photo collage, the work is a compilation of online marketing materials obtained from manufacturers of customized armored cars. In addition to undercover ballistic tests, the video includes a melee of industry interviews, auto shows, and marketing propaganda in a style that presents a corporate trade video as an action thriller. The video is punctuated with humorous vignettes of evasive industry reps obsessed with corporate secrecy, in stark contrast to the copious online materials showcasing vehicular violence.

In a video installation entitled *Park Here*, **Lars Mathisen** explores the topology of the unseen. His “non-action film” is shot in familiar places at moments when these sites are devoid of action—in a parking garage, on a street, or in artist’s studio—when nothing seems to happen. The artist conveys estrangement by dividing viewpoints, blurring vision, and confusing narrative sequences. The images are projected onto a scale model of a house; the result is a form of autophobia—as in “fear of self”—rather than a fear of automobiles.

Liam Gillick’s body of work—comprised of texts, social interactions, as well as art and design objects—conveys his experience of the post-war production mode. In the lecture, Gillick will present his investigations into the notion of an experimental factory: a model for the research mode, but one that lacks actual experiments—the factory that exists but does not produce. His presentation negotiates cultural production methods and commodity values, while charting possibilities for future practices.

“The first rule is always production, never documentation. The second rule is there are no rules.” This contradiction in terms is the premise for the publication to be produced in collaboration with **Dexter Sinister**, the compound name of David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey. Their practice collapses distinctions of editing, design, production, and distribution into an efficient assembly-line activity, which is reinvented with every project in response to its specific goals and conditions. The publication will be released by the close of the exhibition.

Also Opening at Art in General

Reading Room

Elizabeth Felicella

January 16- March 7, 2009

Opening Reception January 16, 2009, 6-8 PM

Reading Room, an exhibition in the Project Space by artist **Elizabeth Felicella**, is a photographic installation excerpted from her ongoing photographic catalog of New York City's branch libraries. Working with a large format camera, Felicella will document the interior and exterior of each of the city's 189 neighborhood libraries over the next year. This is the first exhibit of the catalog and includes branches one through twenty-five, her work to date. Visitors are encouraged to use the Reading Room in the Project Space and browse the catalog at will.

Today's Face

Martin Murphy

January 16- March 7, 2009

Opening Reception January 16, 2009, 6-8 PM

Questioning common conceptions regarding the accuracy of time-based narrative and the authority of mass media culture, **Martin Murphy** presents the video installation, ***Today's Face*** in the Art in General Elevator. Over the course of the video, a nonsense progression of news imagery is poured like liquid over top of a man's face, slowly engulfing him in this liquid newscast.

Support

Custom Car Commandos is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; DaNY Arts; and The Danish Arts Council.

Reading Room is made possible by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and with administrative support from the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP).

Art in General's A/V Elevator Program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency.

General support of Art in General is provided by General Tools LLC; Abraham and Lillian Rosenberg Foundation; Starry Night Fund of Tides Foundation; New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; Carnegie Corporation of New York; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Jerome Foundation; Miller-Swezy Charitable Trust; Lily Auchincloss Foundation; Bloomberg; Cowles Charitable Trust; ConEdison; College Art Association; the NYU Community Fund; Foundation for Contemporary Arts; The Liman Foundation; and by individuals.



About Art in General

Founded in 1981 in Lower Manhattan, Art in General is a nonprofit organization that assists artists with the production and presentation of new work. It changes in response to the needs of artists and engages the public with their work. In 26 years the organization has emerged as one of New York City's leading nonprofits devoted to supporting and stimulating the creation of contemporary art, providing an environment in which artists may exhibit unconventional work and exchange ideas with their peers.

Art in General is located at 79 Walker Street, NYC, one block South of Canal Street between Lafayette and Broadway.

Subway directions: take the 6, A-C-E, N-Q-R-W, or J-M-Z subway to Canal Street.

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6 pm.