

The OC Art Blog

Contemporary Art in Orange County

February 15, 2008

Artist Interviews - Finishing School



In this weeks episode of Artist Interviews I'm happy to introduce our friendly neighborhood instigators Finishing School. Enjoy:

Tell us about your work?

We are an artist collective based here in southern California.

Our work investigates the many intersections between art and the critical, covert, and common everyday things. Our projects span many topics, styles, points of view, and audience groups. All of our projects attempt to demystify aspects of cultural production and engage viewers into various participatory models. We started in 2001.

At the heart of of work is the desire to always implement the clearest and most appropriate media for each project and the issues it explores rather than establish and maintain a particular visual style and market position in the cultural landscape. Our work is tactical, mostly temporary and short-term, nomadic, sometimes guerrilla, performative, empathetic, evolving, DIY, playful, amateur, engaging, interdisciplinary, and most importantly an attempt to be relevant. Our projects have been presented in various media disciplines but in no way are we limited to these, including installation, sculpture, graphic design, interactive multimedia, web, video, garage tinkering, participatory theater, street-level performance, and audio work.

Where does the name Finishing School come from?

Finishing School's name is a playful reference to the private education catering to the affluent which specializes in cultural studies and prepares its students for social activities. The name suggests that it follows compulsory and higher education and is intended to complete the educational experience. We are not stating that our practice completes education but believes that current cultural models can be

problematic, incomplete, and should be reconsidered. Several of us are teachers and students in various capacities.

How does the collective work?

Our collective identity is defined by our members' desire to share and employ creative, political and social power and to make decisions on a consensus-driven and egalitarian basis. We prefer that the identity of the collective be the focus rather the individuals that compose the roster. The division of labor is predicated by specialized skills and availability that each member has to share in the collective practice. When applicable, we invite operatives representing a variety of disciplines to participate in projects.

Who has influenced your work?

Goya, Daumier, Brecht, The Situationist International, Allan Kaprow, The A-Team, and CAE, too many to really give justice.

What motivates you to make work and stay motivated in the studio?

We have the unquenchable desire to play, explore, and tinker mixed with a wicked streak of activism. It keeps many of us up late at night. We are happy that we have found each other and consolidated this effort. Depending on the day we are equally fueled by diet coke, sushi, coffee, beer, and in the old days, smokes.

Give us your thoughts about the benefits and challenges of being an artist in Orange County?

Some members of Finishing School live in Orange County and neither see it in terms of benefits or challenges because of the nature of our work and our agenda regarding "our" audience. We aren't necessarily interested in always positioning ourselves as artists indebted to a particular consumer group or region (i.e. the Los Angeles art scene). We have had a web presence since day one and we have thought globally ever since then. Although, being within the art world does provide certain exposure, funding, and credibility and or context....we wrestled with this one.

What Projects/Shows are up next for you?

We will be launching our book, *wwfsd?* locally with a party, lecturing at NYU and exhibiting in Brooklyn this spring . We also have several new projects that will be completed in the next few months including:

Little Pharma is an inter-disciplinary investigation of alternative medicine as a viable antidote to some of the Big Pharma pathologies. We will be presenting this at Fringe Exhibitions in Los Angeles this October.

Finding Joy is a site-specific workshop on a former military base in Holland this summer. Project participants build small DIY radios (aka foxhole radios) to locate and listen to recorded transmissions of veterans discussing their perceptions of joy. The strength of the transmission enlists the participants to explore the abandon base grounds to capture the best reception. "Finding joy" is a term used by the military to describe the securing of radio contact with one another.

Bio-alert imagines a world where simply technology can enable plant life to articulate their most basic needs. We are working with Peter Perez on this initiative



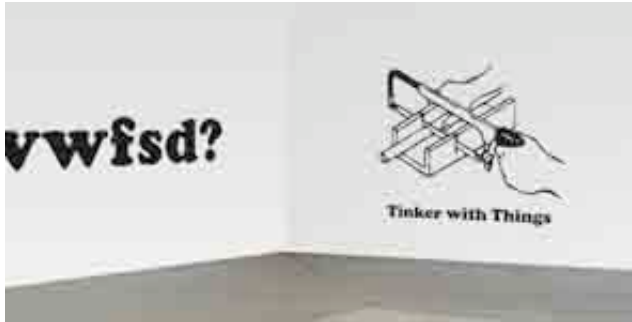


WWW.DELOCATOR.NET
 April 2-May 7, 2005 Opening Reception: Friday April 1, 5:30-7:30



The DeLocator website is a...
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