

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Matt Gonzalez

Dérive: Situationist Encounter in San Francisco

March 5–28, 2015

Dolby Chadwick Gallery is excited to announce an exhibition of new work by Matt Gonzalez, scheduled to open on Thursday, March 5, 2014. Gonzalez's work is collage-based, utilizing bits of discarded paper products—from advertisements to cardboard containers—that he finds while walking around the city. Most of his compositions feature a highly layered, rectilinear aesthetic that recalls the gridded city streets he traverses and architectural matrixes he passes through. Recent works tend to focus on a single hue, such as red or blue, allowing Gonzalez to explore the nuances of a given color's range—which is amplified when a work draws on an extensive array of sources—and attend more closely to a work's sculptural and formal elements.

Gonzalez grew up in South Texas and was first introduced to abstract art when he moved to New York City to attend Columbia University. The conditions of his introduction were freeing, he explains, as they allowed him to explore abstraction without any preconceptions about its formal or institutional histories. The German artist Kurt Schwitters, with his iconic use of assemblage and found objects, exerts a primary influence on Gonzalez's practice. So too do the Situationists, an avant-garde, humanist art movement from the mid-twentieth century whose origins are partly rooted in Dadaism, a movement Schwitters is often associated with. Gonzalez explains that the Situationists "loved geography, they loved the accidental. They would play games, like walking out the door, looking for the color red, and letting that process unfold as a largely unplanned journey. These walks, or *dérives*, are not unlike what I'm doing, which is drifting in and out of encounters that wouldn't otherwise occur."

The Situationists were also a socially conscious, civic-minded group. Though Gonzalez's work is by no means purposively political—nor, for that matter, is it crafted with any kind of message in mind—by contextualizing it within a particular historical moment and analyzing its component parts, it is only human to try to read into its possible communicative angles. (Viewers, of course, bring this interpretative impulse to all abstract art, which by definition lacks an explicit message and thus resists assignments of intentionality.) In Gonzalez's case, the works may be seen to examine forces structuring city geography, since cities are political just in terms of how they are laid out, who lives where, and where the streets get cleaned and where they don't. The works also play around with consumerism, as the found materials were either used to promote or package products. "Ultimately, the economic relationships that are embedded in all these paper strips have an undeniable political component," Gonzalez notes.

Matt Gonzalez was born in 1965 in McAllen, Texas, and received his BA from Columbia University and JD from Stanford Law School. He is current Chief Attorney at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office and a practicing artist. Since 2006, he has exhibited across the Bay Area, including at Adobe Books, Johansson Projects, Meridian Gallery, Park Life, and Smith Anderson Editions among others. This will be his first solo show with the Dolby Chadwick Gallery.