



OR

103.480 Smithe Street, Vancouver BC V6B 5E4
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**Juan Céspedes. "Love your Neighbor."
January 21- February 18, 2006**

Opening: Friday, January 20, 8pm

The Or Gallery launches its 2006 exhibition schedule with a solo exhibition by Juan Céspedes.

The work of Juan Céspedes is reflective of the experience of growing up surrounded by media codes and popular references—predominantly U.S. and Asian—detached from their original referents. In his video work and handmade objects made from discarded packaging Céspedes employs the saturated visual vocabulary of mass produced consumer items—video games, Japanese animation and toys—that are at once loaded with meaning and yet at the same time utterly flat given their circulation on a global level.

Céspedes' practice is based on the idea of material resourcefulness (derived from economic necessity) coupled with a sophisticated conceptual narrative that links his diverse production of works together through a series of different readings and interpretations. He utilizes precarious materials to produce work that is conceptually and aesthetically elegant. Céspedes creates Lo-fi versions of the Hi-fi.

Juan Céspedes is a Chilean artist based in Santiago Chile. He shows with Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Latin America, Europe, and the U.S. He will exhibit recent sculptural, photographic, painting, and video work in the Or Gallery.

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The Or Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the BC Gaming Commission, the Province of BC through the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, and all our members and volunteers.

For more information please contact Michèle Faguet at 604.683.7395 or michele@orgallery.org.



Juan Céspedes: Under Construction

January 21- February 18
tuesday to saturday 12-5pm

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Conceptual art in Chile arose in direct response to a repressive political apparatus and sought to complicate dominant visual and semantic codes by producing works resistant to manipulation, censure, or the imposition of a transparent meaning. Such practices are then historically bound to a specific tradition of political resistance and concomitantly a localist paradigm that utilizes references not easily comprehensible to anything outside of its own hermetic system of meaning.

Juan Céspedes was perhaps the first artist of his generation to significantly break with the austere, dogmatic conceptualism of his mentors and his work, while highly respected in his hometown of Santiago, has repeatedly defied those rigid lines of influence and reference that create political rivalries out of distinct sets of ideologies or formal tendencies. Perhaps the only identifiably local aspect of his work is a reliance on slippery narratives and readings based on an extensive set of formal and conceptual elements that interact with one another in a constant dialectic that resists closure or complete readings.

The current exhibition consists of Céspedes' most recent production and spans photography, video, painting, and low-fi constructions in a body of work uninterested in the autonomy of distinct media but rather obsessed with their limitations. One single channel video piece appears to record the falling of a drop of milk—an action that exceeds the technological capabilities of a video camera and is actually an animation constructed from still images, the gaps between them resembling dropped frames. Acrylic paintings seem to want to tamper with the idea of the distracted and short attention span of contemporary spectatorship while continuing to employ the saturated visual vocabulary of mass culture that is at once loaded with meaning and yet utterly flat given its global circulation. To the video games, Japanese animation and toys that inhabit previous work, he now adds an interest in fractal geometry and the repetitive, autistic, and almost erotic nature of extreme sports that mimics his own practice.

Geography is also present in this exhibition: the Santiago-Vancouver trajectory of geographical extremity is obvious and relevant. Many of the formal and conceptual references utilized by Céspedes are second-hand, downloaded off the internet and seem to make reference to the sort of belated and detached reception of cultural artifacts specific to peripheral sites: like the intervened photographs shot on a hill near the artist's studio that so closely reproduce the Hollywood Hill backdrop of a publicity still for *Ellie Parker*. And yet, the manner in which information is disseminated on the web might make such geographical hierarchies increasingly irrelevant.

Juan Céspedes has exhibited his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions including: "I See Dead People," Galería Die Ecke, Santiago (2005); "Intuitive Imagery," Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York (2004); "Allegro ma non troppo," Galleria Maze, Turin (2004) "La Nube Loca," Espacio La Rebeca, Bogotá, (2004); "Marraqueta," La Panadería, Mexico City (2001); and "Casino 2001," Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent, (2001).

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