

can best be described as gestural abstractions, already by the next year his practice had shifted to become more conceptually engaged—as evidenced by the markedly Johnsian *Standards 24*, 1962, in which numbered “qualities” of contemporary art are listed alongside painted forms. Around this time, he also began documenting (via photographs of camping sites, athletic clubs, and telephone wires) human encroachment upon the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. His subsequent series of vacuum-formed plastic molds and landscapes, including *Landscape with 1 Tree and 3 Clouds*, 1965, similarly depict such incidences of culture’s contamination of nature. They also serve as creepy antecedents to the de-skilled landscape photography NETCO would use (as would a corporate real estate developer) to illustrate its “claims” on various vernacular things, places, and preexisting artworks. NETCO categorized these acquisitions as either “Aesthetically Rejected Things” (“ART,” another possible connotation of the ART IS ALL OVER button) or “Aesthetically Claimed Things” (“ACT”). In the myriad examples included in this show, the explanatory information scrawled in ink atop these images—accompanied by a red sticker (ART), a gold sticker (ACT), or both—can be read as an assertion of the hand against the forces of administration. But to accept this interpretation alone would be to ignore NETCO’s own unabashedly administrative activities and the ways in which 1960s “dematerialization” anticipated the nascent service economy.

The exhibition followed twin self-reflexive threads in the work of BAXTER&: on the one hand, an awareness of how artistic production engages or alters the art history by which it is contextualized, and on the other, how humanity at large impacts the natural world in which it exists. The former impulse is emblemized by art-world riffs such as *Extended Noland*, 1966, which turns abstract lines into ribbons that drift onto the gallery walls, while the latter is well represented by NETCO’s *1/4 Mile Landscape*, 1968, a stretch of road identified as a landscape for drivers’ pleasure. In the artist’s more recent, solo efforts, the ecological message has grown heavy-handed: Landscapes are painted onto old televisions (*Television Works*, 1999–2006), and, in a piece titled *Zero Emissions*, 2008, taxidermied animals protrude from upturned tailpipes.

In 2005, Iain Baxter legally modified his name to IAIN BAXTER& (all caps) to make explicit how central the act of collaboration is to his practice. After viewing the range of works in this survey, however, one is left feeling that his attempts to cybernetically commune with everything else were most effective when he opted not for mediagenic self-branding but simply to share authorial credit.

—Daniel Quiles

## SAN FRANCISCO

### Rebecca Lowry

CAIN SCHULTE CONTEMPORARY ART

Los Angeles–based artist Rebecca Lowry champions an openness, even a generosity, of interpretation. In the artist’s statement that accompanied this exhibition, she writes, “The goal is simply to stimulate thought and provoke new understanding,” identifying one of her intentions as to render “meaning wholly inaccessible while leaving suggestions of its presence.” From such hermeneutic elasticity emerge accordingly motley works. Described as “object poems,” the dozen on view here were made of materials ranging from the customary (graphite, ink, and glue) to the arcane (magnetic videotape, eighteen-karat gold, and kumkum powder) and assumed a range of forms—some were flat and petite, while other, more sculptural pieces hung variously from the wall or ceiling or were displayed on a low pedestal.

Lowry’s approach is to take what one might call, with the full theoretical connotations of the term intact, a text—a poem, a piece of music, a legal document—and transmute it from one form to another, often in conjunction with other sources and modes of representation. In *L’Étoile*, 2009, for example, a map of Paris is embossed, in Braille, with the words of an anonymous French nursery rhyme that, in turn, has been set to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”; pinprick holes, charting the night sky above the city, filter thin daggers of light, while penned in a margin is an equation used to measure solar wind. Lowry’s sources, heavy with allusive freight and cross-referential spirals, seem to be as exactly selected as her works are fastidiously made. Yet this very specificity and, in many cases, the curiosity factor that follows from it (that sculpture is actually three sweaters! fashioned from shredded mortgage documents!) make it paradoxically more difficult to discern the works’ conceptual, and contextual, allegiances.

The possibility, and more often the impossibility, of traversing disparate forms, genres, places, and time periods—for all our quixotic desires that such moves become ever easier—may well be Lowry’s point, in addition to her method. With this exhibition, she is attempting to show “hours measured in grams,” to quote one of her analogies, but the combination of, say, a map of the night sky above Calcutta with verse by the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), translated into bar code (in *Port Trust*, 2010), while unquestionably prepossessing, illustrates rather than effects convergence. A second (and more compelling and timely) tension in the work is one between lo- and hi-fi, specifically the tenacity of craft in the face of technological cooption. A haiku embroidered in Braille, a Japanese death poem expressed as bar code, a cassette tape of a Brandenburg Concerto unspooled and rearranged in a linear configuration: Conversion to code is not, in Lowry’s hands, a means of efficiency, but instead a recasting of utility as abstraction, one consistently undertaken with an insistence on the lingering physical residue of the digital.

The abiding interest of this work may lie in the way it navigates another, public/private dynamic, staging the clashes between individual needs and broader economic or cultural imperatives. Several selections—*Single Family Dwelling*, 2011, those paper sweaters “knit” from scrapped financial contracts; *30 Year Fixed*, 2010, a cascade of personal checks payable to “BANK” and draped over a suspended wooden bar; and *Dreamweave*, 2009, a child-size blanket woven of videotape—make poignantly literal the institutional obstacles to everyday desiderata. Another project (two representative samples of which were included here) offered an inverse incursion: The artist had installed aluminum panels, similar in appearance to traffic signs but inscribed with multilingual haiku-like statements, throughout West Hollywood, inflecting municipal regulations with snippets of poetry. Lowry comes to visual art from architecture (trained as an architect, she once worked for Herzog & de Meuron), which may in part account for the discursivity of what she now makes. This quality is an occasional liability, but with time and a harnessing of focus, the show suggests, it will become an ever greater source of strength.

—Lisa Turvey



Rebecca Lowry, *Rouged Water (Regard)*, 2010, installed on Larrabee Street, West Hollywood, CA.