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“Vantage”

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01.12.09-02.06.10 Archer Gallery at Clark College

The best works in “Vantage” urge viewers to rethink how perspective is visually and conceptually constructed, and how each artist’s simple yet clever manipulations confound how an object is viewed and made. Isaac Layman’s “Drawers,” 2008, for instance, consists of photographs of the interior of kitchen drawers. Ziploc bags, Saran Wrap, and aluminum foil appear as straight documents until the viewer slowly notices the impossible depths of field and color shifts in his remarkably saturated and high-resolution composites. However technically impressive, Layman’s work leaves one with the banal conclusion that through the lens of an expensive camera, domesticity can be surreal.

Stephen Slappe’s video projection *Bear Witness*, 2010, is compiled from two experiments in which he mounted his video camera to a rotating device. (One offers a panoramic view of a tranquil graveyard; the other captures a man making faces while yawning, screaming, or grimacing against a green screen.) In the resultant video, the man is inserted into the graveyard, creating a disjointed scene in which neither the landscape nor the figure coalesces, yet they connect through the viewer’s ability to unravel their parallel positions.

Greg Pond and Golan Levin each contribute impressive works utilizing custom software for sound and imaging, while Avantika Bawa’s deceptively simple *Points (For Brunelleschi)*, 2010, balances the exhibition by utilizing the decidedly humble materials of latex paint and a wooden sawhorse. However, it is Victoria Haven’s “Oracle,” 2009, that possesses the more subtle poetry in approach to the subject. To create this photographic series, Haven tied string to the ends of pins and stuck them into a wall, creating a web of polygons and triangles. Shadows from the string echo the shapes on the wall, making them appear as geometric drawings of volume. That these simple experiments with light and string are captured with a camera—a tool that flattens space—further teases out the subtle distinctions that occur between two and three dimensions.

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