

# San Francisco Chronicle

## HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS: "Scott-Douglas Mourns the Image"

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Jessica Silverman samples four strains of work by New Yorker Hugh Scott-Douglas, an artist whose work can bear a heavy load of theoretical reflection, with little sacrifice of aesthetic impact.

In each series, Scott-Douglas stages strange adventures of dematerialization and rematerialization made possible by digital technology. The work on view concerns divergences between the circulation of images and of the stuff they depict.

In the most eye-catching series, he skimmed information from uncredited images in the Economist, such as that of copper production factory floor in "Untitled" (2014), and reprocessed it digitally and photographically, preserving and enlarging the raster pattern of the half-tone "original," incidentally activating visual references to Sigmar Polke (1941-2010) and Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997).

Almost every move Scott-Douglas makes strikes sparks in the allusive field that conceptual art internationally has generated since its inception half a century ago or more. When he makes big photographic enlargements of dust patterns collected in his studio with an obsolete graphic design tool called Letratone, one immediately thinks of "Dust Breeding" (1920), Man Ray's famous photo of Marcel Duchamp's dust-clotted "Large Glass," and of John Cage's liking for phenomena generative of uncomposed pitch patterns.

But Scott-Douglas' most striking work here is a series of expired and dismantled billboards, one bearing the words "limited time only." Each billboard probably began life as a huge digital file, but has ended it folded and wrapped and stuffed into a coffin-like shipping box.

The "de-collage" tendency of artists such as Jacques Villeglé and Mimmo Rotella (1918-2006) gave defunct billboards and postings an artistic afterlife, as has contemporary artist Mark Bradford. Scott-Douglas treats them like corpses, but not without a certain tenderness.