

HUGH SCOTT-DOUGLAS: "Hugh Scott-Douglas" Takes on Amazon.com at Jessica Silverman Gallery

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An installation view of Hugh Scott-Douglas's "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance" at Jessica Silverman Gallery.
(Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery)

Jessica Silverman Gallery's location in the Tenderloin district, an area known for its resistance of gentrification and general seediness, provides a compelling backdrop for Hugh Scott-Douglas's "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance," open through November 1.

Outside, the neighborhood recalls a pre-technology boom San Francisco. Inside, viewers are ushered into the present via the artist's material exploration of modern economics and new technologies. Happily, Scott-Douglas forgoes multimedia apparatus, choosing instead to demonstrate the nuance of digital development through the analog. The series "Heavy Images" (all works 2014) displays hefty billboard prints rolled up on their plywood crates. No longer useful, these obscured advertisements are more representative of the costs or resources required to produce them than the products they initially marketed. Now extraneous, these oversize objects make a strong argument for digital marketing's renewable nature.

Maybe "Heavy Images" is a sophisticated endorsement for Internet marketing, but the show doesn't let the modality off so easily. *Amazon.com* presents snapshots of an Amazon distribution center's surfeit shipping materials. Cardboard boxes and more packing paraphernalia are seen spilling out into a communal hallway in Brooklyn. The commentary on Amazon's appreciable contribution to waste generation continues outside the photograph: wrapped in plastic, the photos wrapped in the same materials they capture. The resultant work cleverly amplifies society's continued dependence

on systems born of our capitalist tendencies. Even as we shop online to save gas, we send out a fleet of delivery trucks.

Works on wood panels from the "Screentones" and "The Economist" series similarly adopt a language of process in exploration of society's relationship to new media. Displayed in diptych formation, pictures appropriated from *The Economist* hang alongside images of debris from the artist's studio. Before being printed onto the panels, the dust bunnies and journalistic sources were scanned, mapping a circuitous route wherein the tangible begets the digital begets the tangible. And while the "tangibles" in "Promises to Pay in Solid Substance" border on the tedious at times, they certainly serve as a valuable reminder to a city hellbent on "innovation." Even with the considerable advancements of the past decade, our material world remains a concern.

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