

## **SEAN RASPET: "Images Rendered Bare. Vacant. Recognizable"**

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As Facebook feeds and Tumblr streams send digital images further from their indexical referents with every passing "Post," the only image whose integrity cannot be eroded is the image that never laid claim to any: the stock photo. And while the strategic appropriation of stock images has become something of a generic plug-in itself, curator Karen Archey keeps the conversation critical with "Images Rendered Bare. Vacant. Recognizable." The title's punctuated rhythm echoes Rachel Reupke's *10 Seconds or Greater*, 2009, a fifteen-minute montage of staged, stilted interactions, all intentionally infomercial-ready. Her delightfully multicultural cast trade toothpaste-commercial smiles over vegetable-laden chopping blocks or wipe their brows as if after a hearty but sweat-free workout.

For the adjacent projection, *Frieze Stock Footage*, 2011, Oliver Laric took a slow-motion camera around the Frieze Art Fair, erasing the specific context of the fair with footage of overtly generic events such as "energy drink poured into cup," "cigarette falling," or "urinal," which features liquid shimmering like confetti over the porcelain surface. Yngve Holen splashes his neuro-themed mood boards with digital renderings of water, a substance fundamentally not able to be scanned. If these artists nod to the semantic disjuncture inherent in the digital image, Sean Raspet gives form to that frustration. Starting with photographs of police reports stuffed in manila envelopes, Raspet folds in neutral scenes, like the tiled floors of fast food restaurants. The resulting visual accumulations are printed on vinyl banners that hang in imperfect overlap, suggesting browser windows on a desktop screen. Selected excerpts reappear as icons on coffee mugs, ordered online through a photo-personalization service and then stacked on the floor in a pyramid of packaging material. Installation shots of these arrangements are then inserted back into the piece, in what Archey terms "a self-cannibalizing archive." This archive ultimately leaves no access; at its root, the documents remain sealed. The images of information are made as "happily vacant" as the staged stock photography of the surrounding works.