



JENNIFER BOLANDE

MAGENTA PLAINS

Jennifer Bolande (b. 1957, Cleveland, OH) is a Los Angeles-based artist who came of age as part of New York's Pictures Generation. Rooted in conceptualism, her work employs various media – primarily sculpture, photography and film – to explore the quiet affinities between particular sets of objects and images, and the mercurial meanings they manufacture. Reviewing an exhibition of her work at Metro Pictures, The New York Times' critic Holland Cotter praised Bolande's art for its "low-key wit, lively inventiveness, and subtle eye for metaphor." Bolande was recently included in museum exhibitions such as *Golden Hour: California Photography from LACMA*, LACMA, Los Angeles, CA; *After the Plaster Foundation*, Queens Museum, New York, NY; *Celebration of Our Enemies*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; *Readymades Are For Everyone*, Swiss Institute, New York, NY; *Brand New: Art and Commodity in the 1980s*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC; *Mixed Use Manhattan*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, ES; and *This Will Have Been, Art Love and Politics in the 1980s*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, which travelled to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, and ICA, Boston, MA. In 2010, a thirty-year retrospective of her work was organized by INOVA in Milwaukee, WI and later travelled to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA and the Luckman Gallery at CSU, Los Angeles, CA. Her award-winning, site-specific project "Visible Distance/Second Sight" was featured in the inaugural Desert X in Coachella Valley, CA, in 2017. In 2022 Jennifer will be included in the exhibition *Drawing Down the Moon* at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, CA this summer. Bolande was formerly Professor of New Genres in the Department of Art at UCLA.

Born in 1957 in Cleveland, OH
Lives and works in Los Angeles and Joshua Tree, CA

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917-388-2464

The New York Times

April, 2020

The New York Times

Jennifer Bolande

Through May 31. Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, 917-388-2464; magentaplains.com.



Jennifer Bolande's "Image Tomb (with skeletons)," from 2014, in the exhibition "The Composition of Decomposition." Jennifer Bolande and Magenta Plains; Object Studies



In "Image Tomb," a stack of New York Times newspapers is "excavated" with a rectangular hole to reveal a photograph. Jennifer Bolande and Magenta Plains; Object Studies

Jennifer Bolande's "The Composition of Decomposition" at Magenta Plains is centered on an installation, "Image Tomb (with skeletons)," in which a stack of newspapers — issues of *The New York Times*, dating from 2013 to 2015 — is "excavated" with a rectangular hole to reveal a photograph about halfway down. This photo shows half a dozen exhumed skeletons, 14th-century victims of a London plague. It's a powerful idea: On the one hand, it's heady, almost exhilarating, to be reminded that the majestic procession of history comprises nothing but days like today. On the other hand, being part of history can also be horrifying, when it means that [medieval London](#) is still just down the block.

Of course, whether you're using the [virtual showroom](#) or just the gallery's [feed of still images](#), looking at this piece online is hardly the same as looking in real life. Without the physical presence of the yellowing newspapers, this insight into the nature of time and memory just looks facile. But in a way, that only makes the show even more suited to the moment.

Ms. Bolande's subject, generally speaking, is the way that the information we take in itself constitutes the world we inhabit. And right now, as we depend on the internet more than ever for our social and aesthetic needs, looking at her thoughtful, exactly rendered show through a flickering, four-color computer screen is positively chilling.

WILL HEINRICH

Brooklyn Rail

April, 2020

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

Installation view: Jennifer Bolande: *The Composition of Decomposition*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2020. Courtesy Magenta Plains.

James Baldwin often talked about the traps of history, writing in his 1962 *New Yorker* essay “Letter from a Region in My Mind,” “To accept one’s past— one’s history—is not the same thing as drowning in it; it is learning how to use it. An invented past can never be used; it cracks and crumbles under the pressures of life like clay in a season of drought.” These sentiments illustrate the malleable nature of history, the fact that not all stories are written, and that, as a result, we must be vigilantly conscious of the history we are inscribed with, and in being so inscribed, rewrite. This idea is evident in Jennifer Bolande’s *The Composition of Decomposition*, currently on view at Magenta Plains. The work assumes the position that, in order to accept one’s history, one has to learn how to use it. Here, “news becomes history,” as the press release describes: “Beneath the surface things assume a different kind of order.” Now more than ever, we are faced with news that rapidly turns into history, having to instantly make sense of and adapt to the current state with which we are presented. Bolande’s decades-long practice probes this process as we experience the proliferation of online news outlets. Her work is extremely timely: the artist considers present and past, stacking, archiving, and excavating through sculpture, photographs, and photo-reliefs—a practice that takes time and requires being static during turbulent moments.



Installation view: Jennifer Bolande: *The Composition of Decomposition*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2020. Courtesy Magenta Plains.

Newspapers are the physical materials that make up the bulk of Bolande's show. Upon entering the gallery, we confront *Image Tomb (with skeletons)* (2014), for which she cut through a two-year stack of *New York Times* periodicals, "excavating" both physically and metaphorically the printed page, and revealing along the way, much like excavation does, images and words hidden within the stack. This tomb buries a historical photograph of skeletal remains found in London. Bolande came across this photograph of a group of 14th-century plague victims whose remains had been unearthed from a cemetery in London. The image of decomposing bones gradually yellowed in the artist's archive until one day, when it was discovered again, it launched her on a six-year inquiry into newspapers as so-called "shapers of meaning." The use of dimensional space is perennial across the works in the exhibition: The body of work created for *The Composition of Decomposition* began with the *Image Tomb*, an actual physical tomb carved out for the image, the dimensionality of the stack put into effect immediately. But the artist doesn't stop there. In *Ghost Column* (2017 and 2019), two white polychrome resin sculptures embody towering stacks of stark white paper. These sculptures sit facing *Excavation Core* (2017), which is the emptied-out stack from *Image Tomb*. Both works take up space and seem to be in conversation. An emptied-out core is perhaps nothing more than a ghost column.



Installation view: Jennifer Bolande: *The Composition of Decomposition*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2020. Courtesy Magenta Plains.

Image Tomb lays near *Smoke and Snow* (2010), an archival pigment print displaying three sections of photographs, two of which document an avalanche sweeping through Switzerland. The two cut sections of the paper are displayed side by side, lending themselves to the excavation that keeps unfolding throughout the gallery. Bolande not only cut through the stack of newspapers to create a final resting place for the image of the skeletons, but she utilized the cut-out sections to continue exploring the transitory nature of images and of news. The lower level of the exhibition space showcases six of these pairings, framed side by side. *Composition of Decomposition No.39* (2016–2017) shows a cropping of ballet dancers from a performance at Lincoln Center, juxtaposed with a cropped image of a basketball player from the Brooklyn Nets team extending his hand towards another player; while *Composition of Decomposition No. 257* (2016–2017) displays a photo of a man on a motorcycle photographing a faraway cloud of smoke next to an unintelligible composition of black and orange. These image pairings came from the disinterment made for *Image Tomb* and were produced by chance: the artist retained the order of the original stack, and the removed section became the raw material for these pairs as well as for the 428 page hardcover artist's book *The Times* (2016). Bolande treated the extracted core like a book, opening its pages and photographing them together. The results were these accidental spreads, printed at actual size and on view here.

It is up to us to make sense of the pairings and the work. Bolande presents us with works so pregnant with meaning yet so open to interpretation: delineating between the flatness and transitory nature of images and the realness of dimensional spaces that we create.

Sahar Khraibani

Sahar Khraibani is a writer, editor, and designer based in Brooklyn. She is interested in the intersection between language, visual production, and geopolitics. Her writing has appeared in the *Brooklyn Rail*, *Hyperallergic*, *TERSE Journal*, and *Bidayat Mag*, among others. She currently serves as faculty at Pratt Institute.

artnet news

March, 2020

artnet® news

Editors' Picks: 11 Things Not to Miss in New York's Art World This Week

Recovered from Armory Week? Here's what to do and see as you dive into a new week of art events.

Artnet News, March 9, 2020



Jennifer Bolande, *Image Tomb (with skeletons)* (2014). Courtesy of the artist

3. “Jennifer Bolande: The Composition of Decomposition” at Magenta Plains

The press release for Jennifer Bolande's upcoming show reads simply “News becomes history. Beneath the surface things assume a different kind of order.” These facts are taken literally in Bolande's work *The Composition of Decomposition* opening at Magenta Plains, marking her first solo show in New York since 2008. Newspapers are the physical material that make up the bulk of Bolande's show. In the work *Image Tomb*, for example, she cut through a two-year stack of *New York Times* newspapers, “excavating” the printed matter, and revealing hidden images and words beneath the front page—in this case, a historical photograph of skeletal remains found in London. Bolande's decades-long practice probes how news becomes history and the ever-increasing speed of that process with internet outlets proliferating.

Location: Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street

Price: Free

Time: Opening reception, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.; Wednesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. *UPDATE – Due to coronavirus, the gallery is open by appointment only as of March 13.*

Artforum

March, 2019

ARTFORUM



Jennifer Bolande, *Image Tomb (with skeletons)*, 2014, newspapers, Plexiglas, wood, 43 × 13 × 13".

The stack of newspapers at the corner stand was once replenished regularly. The local bulletin board has lately stood bereft of announcements. Neither one has quite disappeared, but neither one accumulates or announces with the same sense of urgency. Jennifer Bolande meditated with subtle conceptual rigor on these two aging formats of communication in her latest exhibition. She avoided a polemic against erosion and erasure, offering instead an elegy on diminishing material forms. In the nearly forty-nine-minute video from which the exhibition took its title, *The Composition of Decomposition*, 2018, Bolande juxtaposed equally sized slices of text and images from copies of the *New York Times* dating from 2013 to 2015. She selected the excerpts somewhat by chance, through a process of slicing a single rectangle through the entire stack of papers, and then placing facing slices side by side. Functioning as a slideshow, the piece shifts in eight-second intervals through more than three hundred combinations of the two-page tears while atmospheric synths dirge and percuss in the background. Auction-house announcements sit next to reports on natural disasters; op-eds rub against obits. Somehow, the extracting of content invites the viewer to find new meaning in the conceptual pairings. Yet the enigmatic visuals and information—of aspirational advertisements and heartbreaking tragedies, celebrity gossip and breaking news—are united only by their belonging to a distinct period of time. Bolande's cut is clean and surgical, but it still cuts.

Contemporary Art Review LA

February, 2019

Contemporary
Art Review .la

Jennifer Bolande, *The Composition of Decomposition* (installation view) (2018). Image courtesy of the artist and Pio Pico. Photo: Marten Elder.

In her newest solo exhibition, Jennifer Bolande's newsprint elegies quietly expand into a meditation on the porous boundaries of media, context, and perception. The wall-sized video work, *The Composition of Decomposition* (2018), opens with two adjacent black rectangles that form a single stereoscopic image. Over the next hour, dark ambient music plays as pairs of indiscriminate clippings from the *New York Times* slowly crossfade within the two frames. Because Bolande cuts and pairs these clippings without any reference to editorial layout, the text and image fracture into incoherent snippets of advertisements, sports, global politics, war, and fine art. While some fragments seem meaningfully paired—at one point a colonnade in a Louis Vuitton advertisement appears next to guarded Afghani ruins—Bolande's arbitrary frame destabilizes the viewer's desire to read between the lines. As the video continues, coherence decomposes, leaving viewers to confront the desire for meaning that news media both shapes and obscures.

Elsewhere, Bolande further curtails the meaning of the text and image, privileging and abstracting the materiality of papers. In her *Image Tomb* (2014) series, the artist cuts into small stacks of newspapers, revealing buried images that evoke an accumulating passage of time. *News Column* (2017), an 8-foot tall resin cast of stacked newspapers, recalls Brancusi's *Endless Column*, if it were flattened into an unreadable memorial.

In other works, Bolande grounds her concerns with media in natural light and landscape. Her *Bulletin Board* (2017) series, photographs of framed images of empty university porticos, draw attention to atmospheres captured in time. The slatted portico light within the framed photograph, the afternoon light washing over the glass surface of the bulletin board, and the diffused light of the gallery all blur into an indistinct wash of blue and green. In a way, this diffusion runs through the whole show, and viewers learn to see as Bolande does: the composing powers of media come to the foreground and dissolve, leaving behind the human desire for coherence, which the passage of time washes away.

Jennifer Bolande: The Composition of Decomposition runs from October 26–February 17, 2019 at Pio Pico (3311 E. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90023).



Jennifer Bolande, *Image Tomb* (with skeletons) (detail) (2014). Newspapers, pigment print, vitrine, wood, 43 x 13 x 13 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Pio Pico. Photo: Marten Elder.

Mousse Magazine

October , 2018

Marie de Bruggerolle talks to artist Jennifer Bolande about how thresholds, filming effects, and peripheral spaces shape her practice. Bolande's research engages the viewer in a "vision in motion," where the precarious borders of language, and strategies for transforming systems of relations, are repeatedly questioned and reframed. 82

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JENNIFER BOLANDE AND MARIE DE BRUGEROLLE
IN CONVERSATION

CUTTING EDGE

SCOPING THINGS ON THE CUTTING EDGE
M. DE BRUGEROLLE



JB
I want to articulate the travel between and through images, revealing the microlayers of meaning that exist between us and what we see and experience. As we've discussed, much of my work hovers between things, between media, but it also draws attention to what *else* is there—invisible things like expectations, memories, cultural codes, preconceptions, and projections. What's actually there? What is there in the margins that colors our understanding? It's not always clear what the main event is.

I think that's the job of artists, really: to study and articulate the embedded meanings carried by forms and materials we use to navigate the behaviors, narratives, models, technologies, and structures that condition human consciousness. I think art is ultimately a kind of medicine to produce cultural alchemy.

MDB
Movie Chair (1984) remains a masterpiece to me. A wooden chair is installed on a white cube used as a pedestal, and the red velvet of the chair seat supports a bronze sculpture of two intersecting cones. The cones evoke the summits of the Paramount image. The two lamps placed on each side of the chair are attached to mike stands. Looking at it again and again, it fascinates me. I was thinking about the cones' intersection theory but also Donald Judd's essay "It's Hard to Find a Good Lamp" (1993). The object becomes the star, the icon.



simple and transparent, yet the experience is more than the sum of its parts. I love work that draws attention to the process of perceiving or reading, as much as whatever the “content” might be. *Set { } Piece* began when I noticed this odd building with curtains in a sequence of similar but subtly different windows. The windows were evocative of both stage sets and film frames, and I imagined placing characters into them. I positioned four women with similar hairstyles—parted in the middle, like curtains—in each of the window frames and had them holding books and occasionally turning pages. The piece consists of a number of vertical pans that begin at street level, then move up the facade of the building into the night sky. The gesture of page turning is both a marker of time and a rhythmic element that punctuates the continuously panning camera. The takes are similar yet subtly different, so it’s at once episodic, sequential, and cyclical. I showed *Set { } Piece* to James Benning, and he said it reminded him of Hollis Frampton’s *Zorn’s Lemma* (1970), which is a film that I love, so that was a great compliment. Like James Benning, Bill Leavitt has studied mathematics extensively, and a few years ago he asked me if I thought about set theory in mathematics; he saw a kind of mathematical quality in the way I was recombining sets of elements with overlapping members and creating correspondences between one set and another. I have a hazy and not altogether pleasant memory of being taught set theory in grade school, and I’ve always thought more in terms of grammar, syntax, and semiotics. But Bill’s question made me realize how much of my work is, in fact, engaged with math and geometry.

MDB

In recent years, film has become an increasingly prominent part of your work. Can you talk a bit about how you’ve moved from objects to film?

JB

I have used one-shot films and loops in installations over the years, but *Set { } Piece* was the first film I edited. I think that many of my ideas are filmic, but early on, I couldn’t imagine managing the costs, collaboration, and planning involved in filmmaking, so I channeled my ideas into other forms. The process has become much more accessible, so recently, I’ve been able to proceed in a more direct way. Movies have always been an inspiration, although I’m often interested in aspects of them that might be considered tangential—the procession of advertisements announcing their arrival, the movie marquees, the velvet seats, the curtains, the scale of the screen images, the light from the projector, the opening frames, the dissolve, the zoom, the cascading names at the end.

MDB

The more recent work *The Composition of Decomposition* (2018) was a very precise process. You started with an image from a newspaper, found more than ten years ago, that you kept in the back of your mind. Can you speak a bit about the genesis of the piece?

JB

Yes, it took me a really long time to determine the right setting for this image. It’s an image I clipped from the *New York Times* of a group of skeletons in a burial site from the plague years. The photograph was taken from above the grave, and the skeletons are looking up.

There was something about this point of view—looking up at and looking down into—that intrigued me. The newspaper clipping, which eventually yellowed in my archive, spoke of history in another way. The sculpture I ultimately made, *Image Tomb* (2014), moves in two directions at once—there’s a stacking up and a tunneling down. I cut a deep channel through a stack of newspapers, excavating down to the picture of the skeletons below. I was thinking about history as a vertical accumulation of layers, and also about the trajectories of images. I was imagining the possibility of an end in the life of an image.

That piece was the beginning of a large body of work that has moved through various forms and media over the past five years: sculptures, photographs, books, and finally the film, *The Composition of Decomposition*. The film is a journey through a stack of newspapers, a record of the near past, a form of media archaeology. As I excavated through the stack of the *New York Times* to make *Image Tomb*, I retained, in order, all of the removed sections, took that inner stack and opened it (as one would open a book), and photographed each spread. This process is what produced the juxtapositions of images that appear in the film. *The Composition of Decomposition* is made up of around 400 image pairs, which appear and fade in a rhythmic flow. The juxtapositions produced by this chance procedure are often quite startling, and the transitions and relationships between images, as well as their accumulated impact, were fascinating to me. The cut I made through the newspaper ignored the narrative and hierarchical structures that denote importance and harness attention, which put everything on equal footing. Inconsequential slivers of information are beside things of great consequence or supposed importance.

Weirdly, there are a lot of extreme croppings, which echo back to my early work, only here occurring by chance rather than by design.

MDB

I was wondering about the historical point of view and analysis of daily news. The amazing fact is that anything, information and commercials, images and text, creates a visual event. I was thinking about Roland Barthes’s analysis of *fait divers* and “daily mythology,” and I was thinking that your work reveals the process of the making of history.

JB

I am interested in that point when a thing loses its sociocultural moorings and acquires an ambiguous history, when vestiges of the meaning or import it once had are still present, but fading. The physical newspaper—and possibly news itself—is at such a moment in its history. It’s important to note that the stack of newspapers I used as source material dated from 2013 to 2015, just prior to the run-up to the US election of 2016, so the piece is also a record of a pivotal period in history.

One of the things I love about the film is that, watching it, I am given a slow, sustained ride through and look at changes taking place in the way I read and process information now. What happens when something passes from one form of media to another, from news to history? The film carries vestiges of the architecture of the newspaper, but it’s experienced on a screen and produces an experience distinct from both print and online news but reflective of both.

Jennifer Bolande emerged as an artist in the late 1970s, working in dance, choreography and drawing. In the early 1980s, she advanced the ideas and strategies proposed by the Pictures Generation Movement and began working with found images, re-photography, appropriation, film and installation, taking her place among those artists who have helped to redefine photography. She took an intuitive approach to creating conceptual works in the construction of a coherent visual language. A retrospective exhibition of her work was organized in 2010 by the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, then traveled to the ICA in Philadelphia, and the Luckman Gallery at California State University in Los Angeles. A monograph on her work was published by JRP|Ringier in conjunction with the show. Her award winning site-specific project *Visible Distance/Second Sight* was featured in the inaugural *Desert Exhibition of Art*, in 2017. An upcoming exhibition at Pio Pico Gallery, Los Angeles, titled *The Composition of Decomposition* will include a new body of works, films and sculptures.

Flaunt Magazine

April, 2017

FLAUNT



Jennifer Bolande. Exhibition view,
"Visible Distance" (2017). Courtesy Desert
X.



The first of its kind, *Desert X* was organized by Susan L. Davis, the current Editorial Director for The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands (a favorite of President Obama) – who conceived of the exhibition after visiting the Cartagena Biennial and witnessing how the art integrated with the architecture and culture of the city. Like his 2014 exhibition in Gstaad, *Elevation 1049*, for *Desert X* Wakefield secured an impressively diverse roster of 16 internationally respected contemporary artists who all created site-specific works which respond to the environment and culture of the Coachella Valley. Yes, the Doug Aitkens and Richard Princes of the art world are present, but also Lita Albuquerque – the California-based light and space artist – and Norma Jeane – the elusive Italian artist who lists his birthdate as the night Marilyn Monroe died.

Driving south on the Gene Autry Trail, Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Jennifer Bolande's "Visible Distance" comes into view. Taking the San Jacinto mountain range as literal inspiration, a billboard momentarily merges with the craggy peaks of the horizon, resulting in several "cinematic" moments of euphoria. Deriving from the Burma-Shave tradition in advertising – where billboards are placed sequentially to deliver their message in episodes to those in motion – Bolande's billboards celebrate that which they obscure.

Writing about Bolande in 1989 for *Artforum*, Paula Marincola said, "She is a connoisseur of unlikely but evocative details, of subliminally perceived, fragmentary images and events" This is as true of 2017's "Visible Distance" as it is of her 1987–88 work "Milk Crown," a porcelain version of Harold Edgerton's 1956 photo of what happens when a drop of milk meets its gravitational destiny. Like "Distance," "Milk Crown" mines a rich vein of cultural history, in this case, the advent of high-speed photography. Both works, as well, are differentiated by their static nature. Whereas the Edgerton photo is a work in the past progressive (we understand it in the context of what came before it and what will happen after) "Milk Crown" will never alter. In this context we understand that while the San Jacinto Mountains will eventually erode, and the Lamar Advertising Company will certainly change the billboards, the image itself will never change.

Los Angeles Times

March , 2017

Los Angeles Times

Arts Preview: International art invades the suburban Coachella Valley: The best of 'Desert X'



On Gene Autry Trail leading into Palm Springs, Jennifer Bolande posted billboards that picture the mountain view behind them. (Desert X)

Like rising waves of desert heat that lead one to delirium and back, the effect is surprisingly powerful. Sol LeWitt's rigor mixes with Bridget Riley's verve. Minimalist Op art is rarely this good.

Illusion is likewise key to Jennifer Bolande's head-turning set of three double-sided billboards along the west side of Gene Autry Trail, a road leading in and out of the valley from the freeway. Bolande photographed the distant San Jacinto, Santa Rosa and San Bernardino mountain ranges, then enlarged the images to billboard scale. For one fleeting, disconcerting moment as you drive by, the wordless pictures line up exactly with the approaching view.

While the mountain contours match up precisely, the clarity, color and light inevitably do not. The quick drive-by sequence of three billboard moments is so brief that you can't quite be certain of what you have just witnessed.

It's like a flash-cut in a motion picture, subliminal in effect. A disjunction between image and reality is lodged in a path named for a half-forgotten cowboy star of movies and TV. The seamless fabric of experience gets torn.

The Guardian

March, 2017

**The
Guardian**



Desert X: the arid exhibition that's bringing land art to Coachella

S peeding down the Gene Autry Trail, a Palm Springs desert road named after the singing cowboy, there are mountains to the north and south, and billboards on each side. Somewhere between the ads for milkshakes and legal counsel, there are large-scale images of mountains, and from three exacting positions on the road, they suddenly snap into place; for a few brief moments, they perfectly align with the jagged scenery. And just as quickly, they're behind you. Perhaps you had imagined it, or perhaps you didn't notice them at all.

This fleeting mirage is LA-based artist Jennifer Bolande's new work, *Visible Distance/Second Sight*, a site-specific homage to the landscape. She and 15 other artists have come to Palm Springs and the surrounding area as part of Desert X, a new exhibition of large-scale installations that stretches across 45 miles until 30 April. (Not coincidentally, they're sited along the path leading from Los Angeles to behemoth music festival Coachella, which also takes place in April).

Artpapers

May, 2015

JENNIFER BOLANDE

LOS ANGELES

At the Luckman Fine Arts Complex at California State University, Los Angeles, the 46 pieces of Jennifer Bolande's *Landmarks* unfolded into a theater of correspondences [September 22–December 15, 2012]. Bolande's knack for closing the circuits of her own work lent this retrospective a remarkable coherence. Simple, but not obvious, connections between circular, square, and conical shapes arced across artworks made as many as three decades apart. In the photographic diptychs selected from *Space Photography* (2009–2010), formal and functional reverberations between, for example, the mesh of a microphone and the halftone pattern of a print traversed the grid of black frames, ricocheted through the exhibition, and reflected the built environment. Yet in the metered limits of the icons shown here, from amplifiers to washing machines to terrestrial globes, an inherent compartmentalization tempered the artist's associative play.

Retrospective (1988), a pencil sketch depicting several of Bolande's other artworks in a perspectival hallway, hung in a long row of smaller framed pieces. Architectural experiments in a second gallery included a sculpture made of photos of globes framed by schoolhouse windows and a diminutive concrete slab that is UN headquarters on one side, an amplifier on the other. The first room highlighted Bolande's interest in the periphery of familiar spectacles. *Green Curtain* (1982), a genuine vintage theater curtain, was draped near *Movie Chair* (1984), where two lumpy sculpted mountains sat in a canvas director's seat, spotlighted by two work lights—cones lit by cones. *Earthquake* (2004), Bolande's only sound piece and a rare temporal work, punctuated the exhibition. A backroom appointed with rumpled institutional carpet contained huddled washer/dryer stacks ("Frigidaire Gallery" brand) and speaker cabinets, paired objects of equal height, and a digitized 16mm film of a creamy green towel tumbling in a front-loading dryer. The video rolls and hovers between frames, recalling the juncture of a washer and dryer or the break

between fridge and freezer doors. The round windows of the clothes machines look like the image of "Planet Mars" centered on a screen in the sculpture *Marshall Stack* (1987) or resemble speakers (and, cycling on every several minutes, function this way too). A recording of a ticking, spooling, and unspooling projector simulates the video's original format—a technical stunt, but one consistent with this show's flinty air of nostalgia.

Landmarks demonstrates the range of Bolande's congruent reasoning. Yet the form in her vocabulary adjacent to all others remains the filmstrip: rectangles pierced by a cone of light—or, further, the sprocket hole: the rigid geometry that gives the image traction. Cinema's root compartmentalization of apparent motion becomes visible in the still; and from here Bolande extends the directedness or geometric containment of perception—aural and visual—into a rich shorthand for art in general. An absurd sense of humor lies in her associative swapping—for example, in how much conceptual weight a film of a towel can be made to bear. But the poetic relief provided by spotlighting peripheral images or unassuming products is cut by Bolande's cold appraisal of modern domestic technology. A Duratrans light box framed with brushed steel, standing slightly taller than a human, *Appliance House* (1998–1999) is a scale model of the Lever House—the first tower in New York with a glass "curtain" wall. The gridded façade of Bolande's sculpture is skinned with scaled-up contact sheets: strips of 35mm photos of a laundromat and the actual building's office windows, complete with tiny washers and cleaning supplies. Playful but regimented, the image is a structural model for living; the Lever light box's top floors are rows of pale sprocket holes, and here the washing machine with its little circular window echoes the camera's formatting—of offices, of image making, of our lives at strange scales, down to how we wash our clothes.

—Travis Diehl

Jennifer Bolande

Earthquake, 2004, washers, dryers, speakers, 16mm film converted to video [courtesy of the artist; photo: Michael Underwood]

art 21 magazine

September, 2012

art21 magazine

Looking at Los Angeles | Landmarks

by Lily Simonson | Sep 27, 2012

Jennifer Bolande. "Marshall Stack," 1987. Three handmade vinyl and wood speaker cabinets, color photos, Marshall speaker cloth, plastic Marshall logo. Photo by Eeva Inkeri.

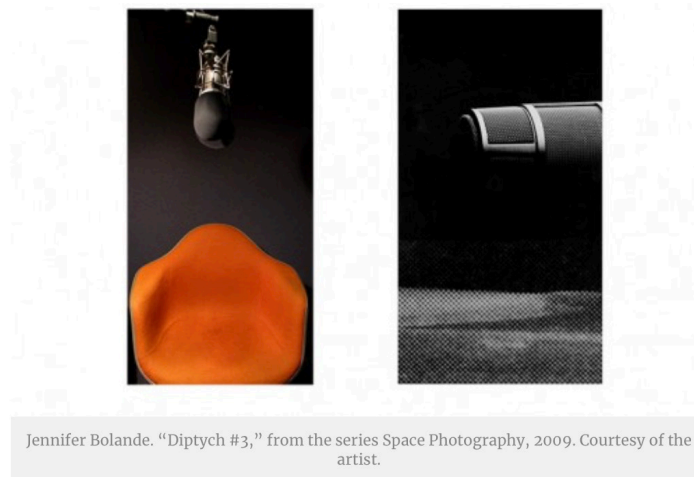
Last Friday, Los Angeles enthusiastically welcomed the space shuttle *Endeavour* as it made its final journey through the sky on the back of a Boeing Jet, after showing off on a cross-country journey and finally landing at LAX. But the patriotism and cheers meeting *Endeavour* as it made its way toward its new home at the California Science Center—in a city starved for monuments—seemed to mask the melancholy surrounding the waning of NASA. The space shuttle, which was supposed to be the final mission in the NASA space shuttle program (though *Atlantis* ultimately took that title) simultaneously embodies triumph and defeat. Our space program developed as a means to flex the muscles of capitalism and American might against communism and the iron curtain. Now, decades later, in the face of economic catastrophe, we see laissez-faire capitalism failing nearly as dramatically as communism did, and our privileged place in the international pecking order slipping away.



Endeavour flying over the Hollywood Sign. Courtesy Reuters.

On the same day as Endeavor's arrival, [Jennifer Bolande](#)'s survey exhibition *Landmarks* opened at Cal State Los Angeles' Luckman Gallery, having previously traveled from Milwaukee to Philadelphia. Employing the same title as her debut exhibition, the idea of landmarks pervades Bolande's photographs and sculptural installations. Long before settling in Los Angeles, Bolande began engaging with physical manifestations of cinema, mass media and technology.

Her engagement with specific kinds of machines—big speakers, old-fashioned microphones, spotlights, and even printed photographs themselves—tend to point to bygone eras, while resisting nostalgia. Rather than idealizing, celebrating, or mourning the past, Bolande's works displace the objects depicted, destabilizing their relationship to time and place. In part, she transcends this trite reading by pairing these man-made machines with (equally dated) didactic emblems of nature and scientific exploration—globes, mountains, and photos of distant planets repeat throughout many works. Thus, Bolande's work seems to point not to isolated eras of the past, but to our ongoing struggle to understand our place in the natural world through the constantly evolving technology of representation.



Jennifer Bolande. "Diptych #3," from the series *Space Photography*, 2009. Courtesy of the artist.

I misread the announcement for *Landmarks*; as I was rushing through the empty Cal State LA I discovered that I had missed the opening reception by 24 hours. The gallery happened to be unlocked at 9 pm on a Saturday night because of a performance in the adjacent theater, which made for a wholly uncanny experience. Scurrying into a space expecting it to be full of bodies and finding it completely empty felt like wandering into the twilight zone—but it also seemed like the perfect way to experience Bolande's work. From the bodiless chairs in *Space Photography*, to the headless bust in *The Rounding of Corners*, to the empty laundry rooms in *Appliance Contact*, each of Bolande's objects swell with a pregnant lack of the human body.



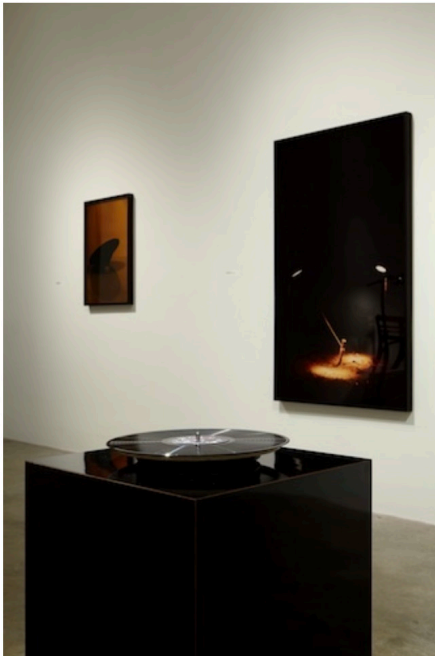
Jennifer Bolande. "Movie Chair," 1984. Wooden chair, velvet, bronze, enamel paint, light stands, lights, gaffer's tape. Courtesy of the artist.

Though this emptiness references isolation, the sense of a void implicates the viewer in each work, rather than pushes the viewer away. *Landmarks* positions its mechanical elements as fertile emblems of transition and liminality instead of nostalgic shells of historical moments. Thus, Bolande manages to bring dynamism and warmth where one might expect to find melancholy and coldness. Next month, *Endeavour* will travel across the streets of Los Angeles to its final home at the California Science Center. As a city conspicuously devoid of grand landmarks, having favored cultural production over public space, Los Angeles seems thrilled with its new monument to space travel. Like *Endeavour*, the iconic machines explored by Bolande embody not just a historical moment, but remain animated as representations of transition and transformation.

Artforum

January, 2012

ARTFORUM



View of "Jennifer Bolande Landmarks," 2012. From left: *Side Show*, 1991, cibachrome, frame, 55 x 32"; *Aerial Phonograph*, 1991/2010, cibachrome on record album, formica base, turntable with motor, 28 x 16 x 16".

Jennifer Bolande

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART,
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
University of Pennsylvania 118 South 36th
Street
January 11–March 11, 2012

Working between photography and sculpture, Jennifer Bolande collapses objects into images and creates photographs that resist the medium's flatness. Bolande, now based in Los Angeles, came of age in New York during the late 1970s. With an emphasis on the artist's relatively lo-fi aesthetic and funky material choices, "Landmarks" celebrates Bolande's absurd humor, an aspect that can often be overshadowed in the historicization of her Pictures generation peers.

Bolande's found-object sculptures that hug the walls in bas-relief—incorporating photographic details of her compositions among assemblages of materials such as Marshall amps and vintage refrigerator doors—become an exercise in looking. This play between image and object extends to upending the hierarchy between content and form in *Cascade*, 1987, where a clichéd image of a cliff at sunset is pinned vertically to the wall from which it "cascades" into a crumpled mess on the floor. *Rounding of Corners*, 1991/2010, a standout work, exemplifies this punny logic on the photographic plane. Utilizing the compositional logic of the nesting doll, a picture of a woman's headless torso framed by shoulder pads is photographed within a cardboard frame physically buttressed by shoulder pads; the resulting photograph is then shown in the same frame, a metaphor for levels of institutional framing and scrutiny of the feminine image.

— Wendy Vogel

Artforum

October, 2010

ARTFORUM

Jennifer Bolande

THOMAS SOLOMON GALLERY
427 Bernard Street
October 16–November 13

For nearly three decades, critics have talked about Jennifer Bolande's deft blending of photography and sculpture; the slippages enacted by her repetitions of objects and motifs; and, almost always, a certain *je ne sais quoi* of unnamed potentiality to her assemblages. Since her emergence in the 1980s, Bolande's techniques of employing found photographs and fashioning object/image amalgams have become increasingly familiar across contemporary art practices, while the inner logic of her own work has remained appreciably elusive. Finally, a welcome and comprehensive look at the artist's practice is on view in two concurrent shows that mark her first solo outing in Los Angeles since the mid-'90s. Thomas Solomon Gallery displays a "mini-survey" with works made between the mid-'80s and the present, while, around the corner, the gallery presents a grouping of new output developed along the themes of lunar imagery and movies at Cottage Home.

While Bolande's diptychs in the 2009–10 series "Space Photography" contribute to her long-standing interests in light patterns, globes, and sound equipment, there is a continuity to these works that carries across the street to her survey as well. Through juxtapositions of sound transmission and reception, light sources and reflections, automated and haptic scenes, Bolande's diptychs present a richly differentiated and mediated sensorium. Rather than collapsing into the unified body of the spectator or deferring to that of the artist, these works demonstrate a distributed corporeality carried out through a multimedia network of production and consumption. What is more, the artist layers this model of a virtual body-in-formation still further by casting her photographs in the (quite literally) warm red and yellow light of her four-tier *Tower of Movie Marquees*, 2010, itself displayed within a former movie theater turned art gallery. In its range and import, Bolande's will be a defining exhibition of this fall season.

This exhibition is also on view at Thomas Solomon Gallery at Cottage Home, 410 Cottage Home Street, until November 13.



Jennifer Bolande, *Tower of Movie Marquees*, 2010, mixed media, 15 1/2 x 9 x 5'.

— James Nisbet

milwaukee journal sentinel

July, 2010

milwaukee **journal sentinel**

REVIEW: Jennifer Bolande at Inova



(Special note: Inova will be closed on Gallery Night & Day due to flood-related issues on campus).

Though Jennifer Bolande's conceptual work has spanned more than two decades, it has remained remarkably consistent in its themes of transience, obsolescence, discovery and landscape.

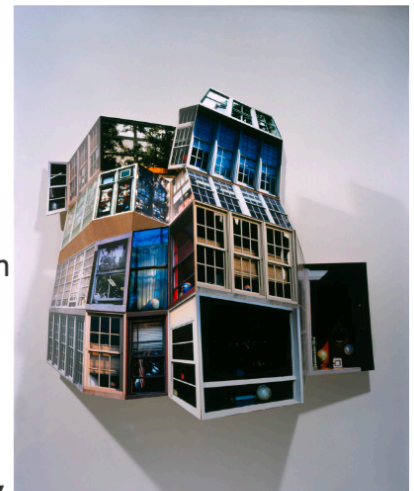
We are truly fortunate to have [a show](#) of this internationally recognized artist's work here in Milwaukee and so tenderly curated by Nicholas Frank and his team at Inova, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Much already has been written about Bolande, a New York-based and Ohio-born artist, but save that heavy reading for after the show, or ignore it altogether. It's my intention to give you enough of an introduction to pique your interest, and no more.

Have you seen Harold Edgerton's 1957 photograph of a splash of milk that looks like a coronet? If so, then you might get a deeper meaning of temporality and artistic parallels than the rest of us when you see Bolande's porcelain sculpture "Milk Crown," from 1987. If not, I believe you may still find a lovely, delicate statement on the beauty of a frozen moment in time. In other words, give it a chance and take from it what you will.

Because Bolande's themes are so universal, so simple and accessible, most of us can bring our own experiences to the discussion. Although she experiments with all sorts of media, including photography, drawing, sculpture and assemblage, the threads of ideas remain on target no matter what the year.

Globes, for example. Bolande hunts for globes in strangers' windows and then photographs them in order to incorporate them into her works. A fun and natural question for a visitor to the show is: What do the globes mean? In the sculpture "Topology House," from 2002, Bolande has assembled many images of globes peeking from people's windows and built an unlikely plywood house of them, mesmerizing the viewer (this one, anyway) with ideas of capturing the whole world in one's window, or even better, in somebody else's.



Bolande is a master of rhythm and repetition for poetic effect, and one should consider how the works have been arranged in this show as well. Themes and imagery repeat in a kind of visual rhyming verse. Globe, globe, globe. Flag, flag, drum, drum. Map, map. Mountains.



One poignant example of this visual strumming is found in three works that feature the image of the Lever House, a glassy, modernist skyscraper in New York: "Appliance House" a lightbox sculpture of the building, "Trailer for Appliance House," a video work and "Landmark Acquisition," a drawing on a newspaper ad for the structure, all from between 1998 to 2000. There is a spot in this exhibit where you can stand and see all three of these works and compare them for the sake of visual punning — a very thoughtful arrangement.

The artist Constantin Brancusi famously quipped, "What is real is not the external form, but the essence of things." Submit yourself to the work of Bolande while you have the opportunity, and you will be invited to catch those glimpses with her.

"Landmarks" a show of work by Jennifer Bolande remains on view through Aug. 8 at Inova, 2155 N. Prospect Ave.

Stacey Williams-Ng is an artist, the arts writer for Milwaukee Home & Fine Living magazine and a regular Art City contributor.



Note from Mary Louise: This is the first major survey of the work of Jennifer Bolande, a professor of art at UCLA and a Guggenheim Fellowship winner. When in town for the opening of the show, she sat down for a conversation with artist and writer David Robbins, whom she met when the two were young artists together in 1980s New York. That exchange was [published at Art City](#) and in the Journal Sentinel.

Images (from top): "Milk Crown" and "Topology House" by Jennifer Bolande; installation views of "Landmarks." Images courtesy the artist and Inova.

Frieze

March, 2005

Frieze

Jennifer Bolande



In this recent exhibition Bolande again pursued the question of photography as a sculptural entity, and re-used themes and motifs from earlier works. Re-adaptation, reconfiguration and regeneration are telling strategies for an artist who came of age in the 1980s, and Bolande relies on a lexicon of banal subjects to probe notions of public and private space. In the first gallery were two sculptures made from an earlier photography series, 'Globe Sightings' (begun 2001), which documented common globes spotted in windows. While each image functioned as the proof of Bolande's obsessive cataloguing, it was also part of a chronicle of her own journey – both perspective and circumstantial details such as building types, window treatments and her own proximity offered clues to locate the artist in relationship to her subject. The hunt for the desk globes became a literal map from which Bolande could explore, in a larger sense, the earth. In her sculpture *Mountain* (2004) Bolande pulled from her archive of 'Globe Sightings' specific images to use as the foundation for a three-dimensional craggy topography. She first cut out the contours of the windows from each photograph, to make an oblique geometric shape defined by her original relationship to the subject (often at an angle from the street below). Each irregular quadrilateral was then mounted on plywood and used as a pictorial facet to form part of a spiralling Babel-like pyramid. *Mountain*, the crystalline mound, is a strange and awkward amalgam of natural and artificial constructions; removed from its original context, each window, sequestered on its own ledge, assumes a liminal and abstract character. Paradoxically, the differences between the windows are magnified, even though they have become physically and conceptually united by the artist. Through the sculpture Bolande seems to return her viewer to the reality of the world: we may live on the same planet and use the same globe, but we still look at it from different vantage points.

The New York Times

March, 1995

The New York Times

Art in Review

By Holland Cotter

March 17, 1995

Jennifer Bolande John Gibson Gallery 568 Broadway (at Prince Street) SoHo Through March 25

In the past Jennifer Bolande called upon references to film and film technique in her work, and she does so again here with an odd sequence of photographs that might be read as an emblematic narrative.

A set of contact sheets introduces a cast of characters in the form of huge, colorfully painted transport trucks. In a larger photo they are shown parked, noses together, in a radiating pattern, like a cumbersome Busby Berkeley chorus line, their rear doors open as if waiting to be loaded. This is followed by a closeup of a hand with each finger thrust into the back of a toy truck.

Ms. Bolande's road picture does have a logic, however oblique: the jump-cut images together suggest both the total control of a film director (bossing all those trucks around) with the total control of child's play. A similar dynamic is implicit in two earlier works in the show. The installation of immense stereo speakers above and below a fireplace mantle in "There, There" (1990) has a lot to say about dominating one's environment and retreating into it, and the image of a circle of dropping sky divers spinning on an LP record label in "Aerial Phonograph" (1991) is about endless falling and endless suspension.

As usual, Ms. Bolande's touch is light almost to the point of invisibility -- there seems to be hardly an artist around who gives less start-up material to go on -- but the connections in her witty, low-key images grow more subtle and more personal the longer one thinks about them. HOLLAND COTTER

Artforum

January, 1989

ARTFORUM**SOMETHING TO DO WITH
JENNIFER BOLANDE**

JENNIFER BOLANDE'S HIGHLY individualized amalgam of sculpture and photography proceeds obliquely but precisely toward an accumulation of possible meanings. She is a connoisseur of unlikely but evocative details, of subliminally perceived, fragmentary images and events of a kind that would loiter on the periphery of vision had she not delivered them to the ring of attention. Much has been made of the idiosyncratic iconography of Bolande's objects, but though her works may be initially reticent, and thwart conclusive explanation, they are far from incommunicative, resonating amply in the connotative realm.

Bolande's production emerges from the Conceptualist tradition as filtered through the ironies of Pop and the media consciousness of early-'80s picture artists. Although two-dimensional photographic work gave way in 1983 to assemblage, with the creation of *Hotel* (a windowlike frame covered by a battered sheet of aluminum, to which a small drawing is affixed), her art has not otherwise progressed in strictly linear fashion: she recycles, resizes, and recontextualizes motifs and compositions as necessary, returning repeatedly to the primary themes of fear (a portentous urban dread, epitomized by the runaway-train image in *Marshall's Stack*, 1987); desire (stimulated and thwarted); and humor (ironic, intellectualized, quirky). Bolande speaks of being interested in things "once they have acquired an ambiguous history,"¹ and her works generate interpretive approaches from a variety of angles. They are screens onto which artist and viewer may project many stories, many condensed narratives.

A favorite strategy of Bolande's is to catalogue ideas and make connections between them within a structure that must accommodate as much information as possible until, like a house of cards, it is on the point of collapse. Approaching her work analogously, we might say that it has something to with:

A Lexicon of Materials, Forms, and Imagery Bolande methodically works the opposite side of the street from many of the commodity-conscious artists of her generation: instead of chic, big, and slick, her sculptures are dense, modestly scaled, and slightly shabby. They are constructed from found photographs (ads, movie posters, giant outdoor murals), bought or cast-off objects (refrigerator doors, amplifiers, fake ceramic logs, an old drum), and scraps of funky materials (carpeting, bubble wrap, wooden shims). Any of these items may be conjoined in one work, along with a photograph or doodled drawing made by the artist herself. She shows an almost parodically maternal tenderness for what she considers “families” of images and objects: an arrangement of PA speakers, for example, or the group of trees she draws in *Sandwich Board*, 1984. There is also a penchant for theatrical apparatuses, particularly lights and curtains. In effect, Bolande’s works are tableaux in which objects assume the roles of “characters” in the story being suggested.

Language is a constant performer in Bolande’s art, both in the tropes of visual representation and in actual words, but its syntax is eccentric. Text functions as image—the block of names in *Stunt Artists*, 1985, for example; and images are analogues for text—the speakers piled up on each other like so many paragraphs, or also stacked like the empty frames of the film leader in *Flagship Episode*, 1985. Several pieces described in their titles as “stacks” are exactly that, in a material, literal version of a linguistic list. Moreover, Bolande has isolated and commandeered a repertory company of notational marks akin to the highly codified shorthand of commercial illustration, visual correlatives for verbal phrases such as the “twinkle” of light (like the star in a cartoon character’s eye), or “land and sea slivers” (a ragged line indicating the zigzag of surf meeting shore).

A number of rhyming forms likewise make regular appearances. Bolande is fond of the cone shape, which upright she may use as a spotlight and turned sideways becomes the beam of light from a movie projector, or a symbol for the viewer’s “cone of vision” trained on the art object. Similarly, the runaway train in *Marshall’s Stack* is both an image of advancing danger and another version of the cone, a perspectival device emanating from back to front of the picture plane. Since the image is contained in a reproduction of an old movie ad, perspective here may be seen as an aspect of time as well as of space; it implies a progression from past to present as well as from depth to surface. It outlines a corridor of memory. Another recurring form is the circle: the round ball of the planet Mars in *Marshall’s Stack*; the red plastic roundel (the O from a Texaco sign) in *A Salient Point*, 1987; the ghostly apertures in the center of the speaker faces. This O suggests itself as eye, mouth, lens, target, frame within a frame, and as a symbol for the originary voice of the artist, now available only through layers of mediating convention.

Bolande is acutely aware of the symbolic connotations of structures and materials. Flaglike configurations recur constantly in her oeuvre: *Chalkboard*, 1984, *Rain, Steam, and Speed*, 1985, and *Flagship Episode*, among others, are all species of pennants. More than just indirect homages to Jasper Johns, these flags signal an attempt to draw our attention to the territory of the marginal, the periphery of culture in which her work has planted itself and which it reclaims and makes visible. Look *here*. She also likes flat-footed visual puns. In *Carpet Piece*, 1983, a small window cut out of a trapezoid of woolly green rug reveals a photo of walls of the Wimbledon tennis courts, London, overgrown with green ivy; the leaning *Coda Stack*, 1988, literally “lists,” and the gesture toward circularity made by the speakers’ arcing tilt plays upon Bolande’s interpretation of a coda as a prompt to completion through repetition.

While the assemblages retain the perishable, ephemeral air of *arte povera*, they can also possess a certain mock sumptuosity: *Movie Chair*, 1984, juxtaposes a plush red velvet seat with bronze mountain forms (again conical) and gold-leaf lettering, then leavens them with inexpensive standing lamps. A humorous element of *faux* nostalgia may sometimes appear—the yellowing bundle of aging newspapers in *Stack of Shims*, 1988, becomes the artist’s version of sepia toning. These esthetic “special effects” are deliberately low-tech. Flashier techniques are actually parodied, in fact, in *Stunt Artists II*, 1986. A dark rectangle (a photograph laminated and mounted on Masonite) leans on a Masonite foot containing a list of names; in their blue lettering and the way they seem to recede into the black rectangle, these names are Bolande’s home-made counterpart to the spectacular opening-credit sequences of the movie *Star Wars*.

Dysfunctions and Linkages

BOLANDE OFTEN USES the phrase “stacks of binary relationships” to describe her assemblages. The pairings can seem simple: the textural opposition of mat to shiny, or wood to plastic; the color contrasts of black and white, or of not-quite-complementaries like orange and green. Sometimes, too, a very straightforward kind of separation may be employed as a means of examining dualities: the recto and verso sides of *Sandwich Board*, for example, are used to sever figure from ground, black and white line from color field, structure from atmosphere, photography from drawing. But the binary relationships in Bolande’s work can also be ideationally complex, as in the prototypical *Conjunction Sculpture*, 1988. This vaguely figural Magrittean presence—a speaker-cabinet frame sits headlike on a body suggested by an upright refrigerator door—incarnates an entire range of oppositions: masculine/feminine, intellectual/emotional, projection/reception, revelation/concealment, closure/continuation.

Coincident with Bolande's conscious deployment of dichotomies is an intense concentration on the meeting places between objects, the points where two differences border and thus define themselves. Bolande pays an almost surrealist attention to loci of simultaneous meeting and division as sites for potential transformation. In the photograph *Conjunction*, 1987, the intersection of speaker corner with refrigerator-door edge is set at eye level. In *The Glimpse Becomes a Stare*, 1988, an arced opening in an otherwise solid black ground reveals the abutment of two photographs: a blue-green landscape seen through a chair back adjoins an orange NASA photo of the Viking landing on Mars, in a paradigmatic conjunction of the everyday and the alien. This alignment of unlikely pairs provokes a whole range of associations that again find expression as dualities: the relationship of seen to unseen, known to unknown, nature to culture, self to Other. In occupying the same field, such concepts are made to suggest possible interchange or transposition as well as separate coexistence. A line is there to be crossed.

Activity in Bolande's objects often takes place above the head or at the feet. One "enters" *Stunt Artists II* at its bottom, along the slide of names, and emerges from an imaginary journey through its central void via the enlarged, slightly lighter dot-screen pattern at the leaning rectangle's top. In pulling our focus out to the edges or perimeters of things, Bolande's glance purposefully avoids the center, or leaves it empty. In the elegiac *Resting Place*, 1987, the middle of an appropriated Kodak poster is actually obscured by a black-painted Plexiglas panel. Decentering the subject, the artist pulls apart the seams of cultural discourse, clearing a space so that the marginal, or normally invisible, may come into unhindered view. Room is made for difference. A lot can be lost by keeping our eyes only on the ball.

The refocusing of perspective implicit in *Resting Place* gains another dimension through the work's melancholy status as a true "*nature morte*." On the floor in front of the photograph sits a stack of ceramic logs; against the black ground, they suggest a strange sort of hearth before a chimney, or a machine-made burnt offering before an altar. The photograph had shown a happy couple out biking in the country, but the central black rectangle now obscures their figures completely, leaving only the slightly out-of-focus pastoral frame. A top corner is folded over in trompe l'oeil to reveal the process-yellow Kodak logo. Thus nature is cast here as an artificial presence, to be known through photographic reproduction, through simulation. The natural, even in an incarnation as remote as the planet Mars (which, in the photograph in *Marshall's Stack*, is prominently labeled "Planet Mars" across its surface), has been lost to and replaced by its conventionalized representation. Bolande's work everywhere acknowledges this loss.

Bolande's process is quintessentially additive as well as inductive, proceeding always from particular to particular until they evolve into a constellation. Assiduously stacking and joining disparate elements within structures created to amplify their interrelated meanings, the artist privileges listmaking as an essential form of artistic activity. If she functions as a librarian, sorting and collating information, she also works like a poet, constructing metaphors for the dislocated experience of late-20th-century culture through proximity, juxtaposition, and intersection. Her ongoing predilection for discovering linkages that suggest a context, however temporary, in which meaning may cohere is embodied in *and the*, 1987, a refugee scrap of movie marquee with the typographical legend of the title spelled out on it in idiosyncratically configured black letters. Here the idea of conjunction as a hypothetically infinite enterprise is objectified in a sculpture that is neither stack nor list. *and the* is a primary exemplar of Bolande's continuing proffering of the art object as a site for the realization of unexpected connections, a carefully orchestrated chance encounter.

Frozen Moments, Instants of Recognition

BOLANDE'S ART REVEALS an effort to retard the process of examination and consumption, to forestall closure. The "slowed reception" on which one critic has commented in discussing her work is in part the result of an effort to draw out a process of examination and suggestion as long as possible. Just as scientific methodology subjects the most fleeting, imperceptible phenomena to the most exacting possible scrutiny, so for Bolande, as one of her titles indicates, the glimpse becomes a stare. This endeavor can take the form of a concentrated look at the very beginning of things. (Bolande has cited Jack Goldstein's *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, a 1976 film of the lion who appears at the start of the MGM movies, as a precedent here.) An early photographic series, for example, consists of film stills of the initial frames from a series of low-budget porn flicks—often a rudimentary room with an empty chair and curtained windows. The implicit voyeurism of the genre is simultaneously focused upon and thwarted; desire is arrested at its inception, gratification indefinitely delayed. In denying further entry into these narratives, Bolande calls a halt to this particular kind of sexual discourse, but leaves the viewer in a state of aroused expectation. Fantasy is invited but not possession. This refusal of ownership, a refusal to be pinned down, applies across the spectrum of Bolande's work in both esthetic and sociosexual terms.

Other works present a moment of finality, as in *Stunt Artists'* angled, stop-action focus on a film's closing credits (another list) rolling by like a requiem. The sense of exaggerated stillness produced by these immobilized instances of anticipation or aftermath suffuses Bolande's art with the sense that it is holding its breath on either edge of revelation: something is about to happen, or just has, but it is invisible, offscreen. Lodged within these frozen moments are further temporal displacements and inversions. In *Marshall's Stack*, for example, the train signals itself as an anachronism—a past harbinger of future technological progress checked within a present that is constant yet paradoxically aged, completed and over yet eternal in the space of the poster.

Bolande's objects and assemblages are freighted with references to speech and sound, but again congealed in a state of potentiality. The PA speakers are either deprived of their inner workings or muffled by an overlay of images or fabric. (It's difficult to resist reading them as stand-ins for the predicament of artists in this age.) A photograph in *Caruso Group*, 1985, permanently immobilizes a clown in mournful ferocity as he is about to bang a drum; the actual drum of *Central and Mountain*, 1985, sits dumbly on the floor, its mallet tucked uselessly in its top. Bolande has quoted the artist Alan McCollum's reference to an artwork as an object in a room "mutely signaling"; with her work, it remains finally for the viewer to get the message, to strike the note of meaning in the imagination.

Bolande may go to considerable technical lengths to recreate and transfix a simple gesture—*Chalkboard's* clouds of eraser dust are really permanent halos of paint—or to render evanescent moments both corporeal and static. The dainty porcelain *Milk Crown*, 1988, transposes Harold Edgerton's famous stop-action photograph *Milk Drops*, 1957, into three dimensions, another instance of arrested excitation, and another deadpan pun. This kind of transformation also recalls Richard Artschwager: think of the solid black-Formica shadows in *Table with Pink Tablecloth*, 1964, and other works. Both artists make a specialty of converting the ephemeral and intangible into the permanent and solid, and vice versa, in a matter-of-fact reversal of natural laws and effects. Sun and shadow can be objectified in Formica; gravity can be frozen in porcelain.

More than just a witty means of metamorphosing a fugitive trace into a permanent object, *Milk Crown* comments on the artifice by which we come to know natural phenomena, and that replaces our direct experience of them. At the same time, attempting to hold fast an invisible (because exceedingly transient) event, it betokens Bolande's persistent effort to concentrate and prolong the duration of a momentary comprehension. Like some generous but exacting Pierrot, she juggles the spheres of meaning for us so that we may more closely attend to the flashing gleams on their surfaces as they hang suspended in the spotlight of vision.

Paula Marincola is the Gallery Director at Beaver College, Glenside, Pennsylvania, where she organized an exhibition of Bolande's work in October 1988. She contributes regularly to Artforum.

NOTE

1. Jennifer Bolande, artist's statement, *Journal of Contemporary Art* 1 no. 2, Fall/Winter 1988, p. 56. All other quotations of Bolande are from the author's conversations with her, in September and October 1988, or from an unpublished lecture at Beaver College in November 1988.