JENNIFER BOLANDE

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 was included in the exhibition *Drawing Down the Moon* at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, CA. Bolande was formerly Professor of New Genres in the Department of Art at UCLA. Bolande lives and works in Los Angeles and Joshua Tree, CA

Brooklyn Rail
June 7, 2023

THE BROOKLYN RAIL

By Tim Maul

"As audience to the world, the objective is to receive as many messages as possible: locating an appropriate rhythm, distance, and angle. Certain things only make sense at this moment, from this angle, others can only be addressed once they have acquired an ambiguous history." —Jennifer Bolande, 1986

1986! That year the high tide of postmodernism and a vibrant market floated many boats. Locally, the art world cast a decadent eye upon glamorized readymades and cringe-y appropriations of biker culture. Jennifer Bolande's eye, no less decadent, mediated the aftershock of the spectacle originating a complex body of work around, among many other things, splashes of milk, inert Marshall amps, and the neglected furniture in porn movies. The suggestion that a viewer "locate an appropriate rhythm" while an object acquires an "ambiguous history" still swims against today's current of one-look art in the streaming age.

Jennifer Bolande, *Mirror Topology*, 2023. Archival pigment print, 19 x 13 inches. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains, New York.

On Magenta Plains's ground floor twenty-eight photographs surround a single, centrally located blue steering wheel mounted on a no-nonsense pedestal of the same color. No junkyard trophy, this is a humble wheel that can be physically turned like in some panoptic arcade game situating you in a virtual "wheelhouse." The same object had been employed earlier in Bolande's *Steering Wheel* (1995) photograph where she compares her own knuckles along the ridged grip. The photographic print for Bolande previously served either as a physical material to manipulate or as a mnemonic site. Here each beautiful photograph is intentional, unpopulated and mostly context free except for the brilliant desert light. Immediate "Fine Art Photography" sources include off-center figures like early William Eggleston, Luigi Ghirri and the Kodachrome urban episodes of Saul Leiter. An upturned glass extends a vaulted dome over postcard *Tokyo Under Glass* (all works 2023); a trio of stones describes a single line of marble which travels across the picture and a nocturnal bird feeder substitutes for a newly discovered transparent deep-water species. Artists with cameras historically gravitate toward places and things that signal or resemble their own art, exemplified by young Robert Rauschenberg's photographs of Rome taken as he improvised his nascent assemblages there in 1953.

Installation view: *Jennifer Bolande: Persistence of Vision*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2023. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains, New York. Photo: Object Studies.

Upstairs seven images titled “Monoliths” attend four plaster sculptures, “Drifts,” presented atop highly determined solid pedestals. Each photo is of a single tissue/kleenex promoted to the perpetual “next,” a monolith certainly but also a cartoon ghost or witness to some occult ritual. Bolande’s art has always summoned the meta, so as portraiture a “facial” tissue may offer a surface receptive to a fleeting reproduction albeit in a Shroud of Turin sort of way. As “icebergs,” the handmade objects shift between the ominous and tragic, but I also recognize a Cubist citadel, Gibraltar (logo for Prudential) and cliffs of chalk, a sentimental sign of home for some crossing the channel. Like an object in a dream or a set in an amateur theater, these generalized formations have yet to acquire an ambiguous history.

Bolande’s oeuvre is singularly resistant to the art fair photogenic and, like Arte Povera (Marisa Merz especially), it requires the physical encounter. My own visit(s) involved taking iPhone images for reference which, I was startled to discover, transformed the four standing objects into blue elongated Pop-y tissue boxes with their contents ready and waiting. In other casual shots the “Monoliths” operate as mirrors, each playing reflective host to out-of-register “Drifts.”

The sequencing of the archival pigment prints allows for many inclusions of water in all its forms which I associate with the unconscious nostalgia for analog photography. Here are two captures of ice cubes (white cubes?), clouds, droplets, filled tubs and milky submerged forks. Iggy Pop made a mysterious claim about being an “ice machine” in the droning “Nightclubbing” and Bolande includes an unsettling image of one, a Judd-like configuration, prismatic visor and all. Nothing could be sunnier than the Magritte-ian *Window with Cloud* and more modernist than *Lines in the Sand* an observation of linear alignments temporarily linking parched earth to sky. Bolande’s attraction to maps as malleable pictorialized space continues in *Mirror Topology* where an angled bathroom mirror reflects a topological mountain range, our planet’s erupting “skin.”

Jennifer Bolande’s earliest assemblage and important photo objects anticipated the abject nineties and later tendencies including the “archival impulse” and “affect theory” et al. The exhibition’s title *Persistence of Vision* may be interpreted as either an attitude or a promise.

Jennifer Bolande, *Drift 3*, 2023. Plaster, wood, wire mesh on blue pigmented high-density composite plinth and base, overall: 56 1/2 x 20 x 20 inches, sculpture: 12 x 16 x 6 1/4 inches, plinth: 11/2 x 20 x 20 inches, base: 43 x 20 x 20 inches. Courtesy the artist and Magenta Plains, New York. Photo: Object Studies.

Collectors Daily
May 25, 2023

COLLECTOR DAILY

By Loring Knoblauch / In Galleries / May 25, 2023

JTF (just the facts): A total of 35 color photographs, framed in light wood/black, and hung against white walls in two separate gallery areas. (Installation shots below.)

The following works are included in the show:

First floor gallery

- 28 archival pigment prints, 2023, each printed on 19×13 inch paper, in editions of 3+1AP
- 1 steering wheel, blue pigmented high-density composite plinth and base, 2023, sized roughly 52x20x20 inches, unique

Second floor gallery

- 7 archival pigment prints, 2023, sized 17×13, 18×14 inches, in editions of 3+1AP
- 4 plaster, wood, wire mesh on blue pigmented high-density composite plinth and base, sized roughly 57x20x20, 59x20x20, 61x20x20, 63x20x20 inches, unique

Comments/Context: After nearly four busy decades of exploring the intersections of photography, sculpture, assemblage, and installation, and using her resulting image objects to interrogate both formal materiality and larger conceptual frameworks of mass media and perception, Jennifer Bolande has earned a moment or two of artistic consolidation and contemplative reflection. Having previously marked out a unique area of aesthetic interconnection and recombination for herself, Bolande's new works feel like a conscious return to first principles, almost like a deliberate personal effort to reconnect to the fundamental pathways of photographic seeing and three-dimensional material thinking that have provided the foundation of her work from the very start.

The color photographs that fill the walls of the gallery space on the first floor take us on an eclectic journey of patient photographic observation, where Bolande's mature understanding of how a camera sees turns modest found oddities into more resonant moments of visual discovery. Light is the activating agent in many of these images – interrupting domestic spaces, transforming simple objects and scenes, and adding unexpected washes of color. Bolande notices a shard of light illuminating the dust on a mirror, the saturated orange glow of the afternoon cast across a lamp, the sickly yellow light emanating from inside an ice machine, the seething red glow seeping through the cracks around a door, the light housed in a kick drum, and the parabola of light and shadow cast upward from corner lamp. Each scene seems to have been encouraged to linger and elongate, slowing us down so that its everyday magic can reveal itself more fully.

Bolande's photographic eye has a hint of cinematic drama to it, giving her finds more heft than a typical stream of quirky photographic revelations. She understands how the nuances of photographic flatness can be effectively deployed, creating a disorienting illusion out of the juxtaposition of a billboard and a building, seeing formal ellipses in a pot of green water and a fork submerged in a milky broth, and playing with the geometries of rooftop chimneys and a water glass overturned atop a postcard of Tokyo. Mirrors and reflected views offer Bolande additional compositional options for layering and disruption, doubling up in bathrooms, laying fluffy clouds atop a yellow framed window, and refracting light from a behind-the-door mirror onto a nearby wall.

With no people included to distract us with implied narratives (aside from one skeleton in a box), Bolande is free to delve deeply into textures and colors, reveling in details that become primary subjects of their own. Mounds of ice, oranges in a hanging basket, droplets of water or plastic sheeting, cracked glass, and tire tracks and a twist of hanging rope on sand don't tell us stories but instead set moods, each a meditative study of the subtleties of atmosphere. In the center of the gallery space, Bolande has installed a sculptural work featuring a steering wheel on a pedestal, and like a turning lighthouse, it seems to encourage a circling effect, the implied motion of our hands mimicking our eyes as they traverse the pictures on the walls.

One photograph from this larger series of observations offers us a textural view of a sheet of ordinary white facial tissue pulled upward from its paper box and set against a backdrop of blue bathroom tile; the cast light from the side creates shadows and hollows and the tiny details of folds and wrinkles in the tissue become a kind of topography. This picture seems to have provided a flash of inspiration for Bolande, who has then reimagined the tissue idea in a series of photographs and sculptures shown in the second floor gallery space.

Paper studies have a long and eventful photographic history, but I can't say that I remember too many that have featured Kleenex as their primary subject; perhaps Stephen Gill's inspired efforts with folded toilet paper and crumpled racetrack betting slips belong in the same general category, but Bolande has pushed hers further spatially, seeing the mountainous formal qualities (she has titled the series of images "Monolith") hiding in these fragile wisps of pulled up paper. The constraints of her setup are decently confining – aside from the serendipity of how the tissue is pulled up and how it folds on itself, the only other variables to be considered are the backdrop (blue, white, or left to dark shadow) and the angle of light illuminating the tissue. And yet, Bolande's images each feel almost effortlessly engaging, the sculptural qualities of the undulating and puckered forms seemingly infinitely complex. And given Bolande's consistent interest in the interplay of images and objects, it isn't entirely surprising that she then took this tissue idea one step further, constructing sculptural plaster casts that take inspiration from the tissue shapes and extend them into craggy faceted forms that seem to emerge from their blue pedestals like rock formations, creating a smart interplay of hard and soft, with a bit of ambiguity thrown in to keep the ideas open-ended.

While these new works may not be as conceptually complex or provocative as some of Bolande's earlier projects, their understated sophistication shouldn't be under appreciated – plenty of contemporary photographers head out to scavenge elegant visual oddities from the world around them and fail to come back with as much richness and depth as Bolande has shown us here. With both the tissue studies and the other found moments, Bolande has wrestled thoughtfully with how photography mediates the impermanence of what we experience. She's stopped the clock for just a moment to steep herself in these delicate fleeting details, knowing full well that these very moments will soon disappear.

Collector's POV: The photographs in this show are priced at $5500 each. Bolande's photographic work hasn't appeared at auction with much regularity in the past decade, so gallery retail likely remains the best option for those collectors interested in following up.

The Baer Faxt

May, 2022

Overlooked, but not underappreciated: a look into Jennifer Bolande

May 4, 2022 | Artists, In Brief

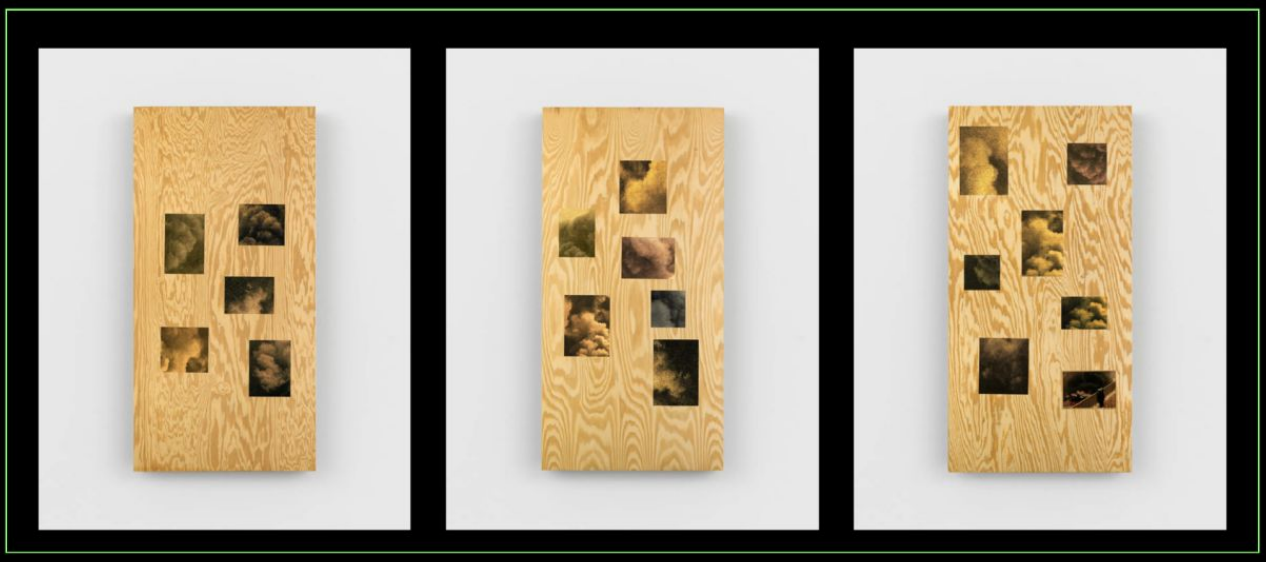
by Davina Bhandari

Jennifer Bolande has a proclivity for highlighting the quiet significance in the relatively unseen; this might be why, as we have forced slowdown and reflection to varying degrees, her relevance in today's art market is due for a reevaluation.

Since the early 1980s, Bolande has been gathering and examining already-discovered pieces of information. She's about a half-decade younger than the Pictures Generation, who influenced her work, just as Pop and Conceptualism has, but Bolande will say herself, "I am NOT a Pictures Generation artist, I'm related."

Through her early photography, and later assemblage and installation work, she has been piecing these found objects together in ways that, upon first glance, might bear an all-too-striking similarity to their original state or have the capacity to blend into viewer surroundings. For some of her works, the capacity for situational oversight is intentional. Viewers are required to recalibrate their perception to the space they share with the work in question. One of Bolande's talents is in revealing the complex connections that exist between commonplace ideas, objects, or concepts.

"I kept telling everyone," says her gallerist **Olivia Smith** of **Magenta Plains**, "this is a bigger artist under our noses. At this point, people need to see how her work has influenced the canon and how much she's a part of it. That's what we're setting off to do." So this week at the **Independent Art Fair**, the gallery is mounting a solo booth of Bolande's early works, particularly the "Porn" series from the early 1980s that show no bodies at all. Instead, the series is a conceptual reflection of how porn makes her feel and the creeping details in the background that inform those thoughts. Bolande's use and reuse of familiar sights, stories, and references invite us to find meaning at our own pace.



It would be fair to argue that our collective attention span is shortening; at the same time, and at a similar rate, the amount of information we are fed is growing. One reason why Smith adds that "Commercially, Jennifer is not as well known, so it takes as a young or energetic collector to bring this back to the forefront and remind people this is not sleepy artwork." In fact, Bolande is also in a sphere of artists who are institutionally loved, and in the private collections of major collectors (some even Baer Faxt subscribers!) and yet, in a commercial capacity are still relatively overlooked. "If you look at the fine print, there's a lot of institutional support and has been for Jennifer, but she hasn't exhibited in NY in a while," explains Smith, "we've been going back and seeing what inventory from past decades is available. She seems to have held back a lot for whatever reason, so there's a wealth of important and seminal pieces. That was the impetus for showing at Independent."

In Bolande's work, she encourages us to slow down and to reexamine what we already know or think we know. And now, to collect, as well.

Artforum
November 25, 2020

ARTFORUM

HOUSING WORKS

Andreas Petrossiants on "After the Plaster Foundation, or, 'Where can we live?'" at the Queens Museum

November 25, 2020

If you walk by the façade of the Queens Museum today, you'll see artworks masquerading as the luxury advertising ubiquitous to city life. In one, a tacky nouveau-riches chandelier foregrounds a glittering Manhattan skyline; in another, a carefully manicured public park is pictured as if it could be the prospective tenant's private garden. Even after many of these luxury apartments are built, they often remain empty, unhaunted but ghostly nonetheless. In 2017, there were three times as many vacant apartments in New York than unhoused people. Some remain empty because they are investment properties, others because the developers can't sell them; unlike genuinely affordable housing, there is no need for them. However, in these photographs, which belong to the 2018 "Arcadias" series by Peter Scott—the artist behind Chinatown's Carriage Trade, which puts on consistently thought-provoking shows about urbanism—the frame is expanded to include surrounding elements that disturb the picture-perfect shot. The chandelier kitchen is flattened in front of a young garden; the public park sits atop green plywood, inaccessible as most new parks are to residents that have been displaced by green gentrification. Inside the museum, he's contributed other pictures that instead capture the graffiti common to these ads. "NO ONE CAN AFFORD THIS, Go Away." "Fuck you." Both groups of photographs recycle the imagistic detritus of development. On the other side of the museum, Jennifer Bolande's voyeuristic *Globe Sightings*, 2000, features windows around the city with globes on their sills, a playful archiving parameter that reveals unexpected information about the sites. For example, the distances from which the photos are taken demonstrate the different levels of public accessibility to buildings—which areas are fenced off, and thus policed even more forcefully than what is ostensibly public space.

Left: **Jennifer Bolande, *Globe Sightings: West 37th Street, NYC, 2000***, C-print, 25 × 29.5". Right: **Jennifer Bolande, Globe Sightings: Ste. Catherine Street, Montreal, 2000**, C-print, 32.5 × 38.625" Photo: Hai Zhang.

Artforum
August 03, 2020
ARTFORUM

LOW RELIEF

Domenick Ammirati on “L.E.S. Summer Night”

August 03, 2020 • New York

Works by Gene Beery at Bodega. Photo: Domenick Ammirati.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, dear reader, but I really have not been getting out much. I hunkered down the second week in March, resurfaced briefly for some protests, and then resumed the shadowy, unproductive, vaguely counterfactual Covid-era life—a weird, slow-dripping speedball of paranoia and complacence topped off with knifing hangovers of despair. It's gotten a little old. Therefore, when asked by the editors to report back from Thursday's L.E.S. Summer Night —an evening of gently extended hours among some thirty-odd Lower East Side pandemic-parched galleries waiting open-mouthed for a quenching stream of pedestrians—reader, I said yes.

What kind of loons would go out to see art in a heat wave, during a pandemic and incipient economic collapse, with social ferment against white supremacy and police violence demanding one's attention? Low-end art advisers. Straight couples on weird dates. Gallerists' roommates and relatives. Fortunately, these groups constitute a high percentage of all gallerygoers, and so Delancey, Allen, and Grand Streets were relatively lively with people making the rounds. A line had formed outside Magenta Plains, showing a body of work by the oft-overlooked LA Photoconceptualist Jennifer Bolande based on stacking old newspapers and cutting into them to produce random juxtapositions from the excavated strata. Outside the building on Eldridge that houses Miguel Abreu, Company, and David Lewis, a queue had also formed for the elevator, limited to two people at a time, until Katherine Pickard, director of the Abreu affiliate Sequence Press, materialized to offer ingress via a back stairway accessible through a parking lot—the most VIP thing I've done in a long time. The haunted Rochelle Goldberg show at Abreu arrays fragmentary sculptures of a fifth-century Christian saint alongside formations of glass bowls and hunks of sourdough bread (an incidental blast from the distant past, circa early lockdown). I swung by David Lewis for a second look at the John Boskovich show, which re-creates the late Angeleno's low-key Des Esseintes–esque studio and living quarters, and moreover to see if the proprietor was wearing a mask, since he had let it all hang out on my visit a few days earlier. *As if he knew I was coming*, the gallery was completely empty when I entered. Someone or thing rustled behind a red curtain, but I did not wait for it to reveal itself and join me in Boskovich's sad and compelling reconstituted salon.

The New York Times Style Magazine
August 03, 2020

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

TRUE BELIEVERS

12 Artists On: The Financial Crisis

As the pandemic continues to derail the global economy, artists share works that reflect on uncertainty, capitalism and racial injustice.

Jennifer Bolande's "Blue Collapse/Yellow Held Aloft" (2020). Portrait courtesy of the artist and Catherine Opie. Artwork courtesy of the artist and Magenta Plains, N.Y.

Jennifer Bolande

Born in Cleveland in 1957.

I often take images from the media, altering and setting them into new relationships. In the blue image, a giant structure has collapsed — soldiers in blue camouflage stand by. In the yellow image, a moment of levity — something arises and takes shape, supported by unseen hands. I don't recall the recent New York Times stories that were attached to these two pictures, but I did keep the names of the press photographers, who I would like to acknowledge: Hassan Ammar of The Associated Press took the blue image and Rebecca Conway took the yellow image for The New York Times.

For me, these pictures, changed and brought together, hold something of the precarious dynamics and ethos of the current moment. We are besieged every day with images of collapse — of the economy, of the environment, of alliances, of physical, social and intellectual infrastructures and of democracy, to name but a few — and a blue dystopian future seems almost inevitable. What can be done in the face of such runaway greed and destruction? How do I travel between these two images? Will I be mesmerized by the spectacle of the blue collapse, or can I manage instead to keep things aloft and alive?

The New York Times Style Magazine
May 29, 2020

ARTnews

ARTnews in Brief: Night Gallery Now Represents Tomashi Jackson—and More from May 29, 2020

Jennifer Bolande.
CATHERINE OPIE/COURTESY MAGENTA PLAINS

Magenta Plains Now Represents Jennifer Bolande
The New York–based gallery **Magenta Plains** has added **Jennifer Bolande** to its roster. Bolande's practice spans photography, film, sculpture, and installation, and her work often explores the flexible meanings of objects and materials in various contexts. The artist's solo exhibition, "The Composition of Decomposition," will be on view at the gallery through August. Bolande's work has previously been shown at MoMA PS1 in New York, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Kunstraum in Munich, and other international venues.

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, exactingly 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.

Though a longtime resident of Los Angeles, Bolande emerged as an artist in late-1970s New York, having been deeply affected by Douglas Crimp's iconic "Pictures" exhibition at Artists Space in 1977. Perhaps also because of her background in dance, Bolande has long been interested in the choreography of viewing, those tensile movements between bodies, things, and pictures. There's a simple elegance and an unlikely pathos in her approaches to the news, in what she finds within its layered physicality. In *Image Tomb (with skeletons)*, 2014, Bolande displayed one of those stacks of papers from which the spreads in *The Composition of Decomposition* were cut. The gutted tower of daily newspapers is tucked snugly into a Plexiglas case. Looking through the central void, one discovers a single image remaining on an uncut paper at the bottom of the stack: a large picture of unburied skeletons. A similarly structured piece, *Image Tomb (with coliseum)*, 2017, exposes a picture of a coliseum. Both excavation and theater, Bolande's three-dimensional slices offer something more real than the flat image might have if beaming alone from the front page—spaces of anticipation that require the viewer to change position in order to see.

News Column (80 inch), 2017, tested the limits of the form. The resin cast of a newspaper stack stood alone as a solemn white column devoid of content: a monument to itself, a tombstone for a moribund medium. But journalism isn't dead just yet, even if its forms are shifting from the physical to the digital, even as revenue streams dry up and facts are regularly assaulted by trolls and politicians. Still, these increasingly pressing realities existed in the exhibition only as context. Bolande's confidence and clarity allowed us to develop our own emotional relationship to these objects and images, to fill in the meanings for ourselves.

The remaining aesthetic examinations in the show reflected on the bulletin board. Though somehow less fraught than newspapers, bulletins have certainly slipped in importance. Bolande photographed an altogether empty one and its reflective surface at different times of day (*Bulletin Board [L] at 1:44pm,* 2017) and hung its images alongside blue-pigmented fiberboard reliefs that consider, like the white-resin newspaper stack, its objectness more than its messages. Though these appeared to present melancholic absences, they also emphasized the lasting presence of their referents, if only as ruins of public discourse.

—*Andrew Berardini*

Los Angeles Times
December, 2018
Los Angeles Times

Jennifer Bolande: Cut up the newspaper, and random connections make for some unexpected depth

By LEAH OLLMAN DEC 15, 2018 | 7:00 AM

Jennifer Bolande's subtly provocative film "The Composition of Decomposition," projected on a wall at the gallery Pio Pico, presents like a 48-minute slide show: Every five seconds or so, the screen is refreshed, and one pair of side-by-side images is replaced by another.

Each image is of a partial page of the New York Times. We might see a fragment of an ad, a corner of a photograph or half of an article. The film, composed of about 400 such spreads, is a serial collage that unfurls against an instrumental score — a montage of percussive, found and synthesized sounds.

The format proposes a relationship between the paired images, and the mind scrambles for traction — responding, processing, categorizing, distilling, making sense and searching for meaning.

Truncated headlines read as found poetry. Page layouts resemble early modernist abstractions à la Mondrian. The subject of an image on one page involuntarily spars with the subject on the other. Opinion pieces level with obituaries. Editorial content and advertising become equalized as graphic elements, and their messages mix. A photograph of the aftermath of a natural disaster abuts a Christmas ad. Strollers on one page face coffins on the other. Need rubs up against glut.

The unintentional blend and rhyme recall Robert Heinecken's layered and rephotographed magazine pages of the 1960s and beyond, as well as the "House Beautiful" photomontages of Martha Rosler (1967-72). Both bodies of work exploit the proximity of ambition, devastation and desire on the mass printed page.

The succession of images is driven by chance, and that randomness makes the conceptual project all the more compelling.
Two vitrines in the show contain the raw material: stacks of the New York Times, each with a small rectangle bored through the center, to a depth of around five inches. One of them, "Image Tomb (with Skeletons)" neatly replicates an archaeological excavation: the complete page visible at the bottom of the opening shows the remains of plague victims dug up in a London cemetery.

Jennifer Bolande's "Image Tomb (with skeletons)," 2014 (detail) , newspapers, pigment print, vitrine, wood, 43 inches by 13 inches by 13 inches. (Pio Pico)

For the film, the L.A.-based Bolande has lifted the excised pages from these papers and coupled them in the order they appeared. She has obeyed their given sequencing yet stripped them of context, scrambled their syntax. She has reduced the Times to a confetti of elusive clues.

The drive to make meaning out them, in this new form, is irrepressible, and the experience a stirring adventure.

Jennifer Bolande's single-channel video "The Composition of Decomposition," 2018, on view at Pio Pico. (Pio Pico)

Pio Pico, 3311 E. Pico Blvd., L.A. Through Feb. 17; closed Sundays and Mondays. (917) 929-9304, www.piopico.us

Jennifer Bolande's "Image Tomb (with skeletons)." (Pio Pico)

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

Jennifer Bolande, *Image Tomb* (with skeletons) (detail) (2014). Newspapers, pigment print, vitrine, wood, 43 × 13 × 13 inches. 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).

Mousse Magazine

October , 2018

MOUSSE

SCOPING THINGS ON THE CUTTING EDGE

JENNIFER BOLANDE AND MARIE DE BRUGEROLLE IN CONVERSATION

Marie de Brugerolle 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.

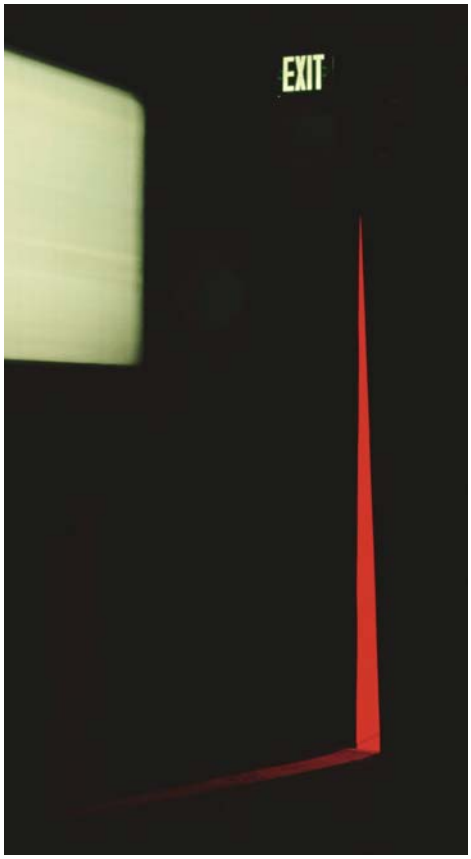
MARIE DE BRUGEROLLE
We met some years ago on the occasion of the exhibition *RIDEAUX/blinds* (2015), at Institut d'art contemporain (IAC) in Villeurbanne, France, where I presented your video piece *Pink Curtain*. Part of what I found fascinating about that piece was that it questioned the liminal and is situated on the threshold that exists between spaces and layers of times.

JENNIFER BOLANDE
Thresholds may be my main subject. I love things that exist in more than one realm or move in multiple directions. Often I become interested in things in the process of changing, becoming obsolete, or disappearing.

MDB
You've spoken about that special moment before a curtain goes up, and your video from 2014, *Pink Curtain*, definitely evokes thoughts about expectation and desire.

JB
Yes, I do love the very beginnings of movies—the opening curtain, the sudden field of color, the titles, the first hints of what is to come. There's a state of suspense and a heightened attention to detail that is lost once the narrative takes over. And curtains certainly fetishize that moment or space of expectation in a big way. In my first show at The Kitchen in 1982, I placed a theatrically lit green velvet curtain opposite a still of one taken from a Warner Brothers cartoon, called *Cartoon Curtain* (1982). The film *Pink Curtain* evokes the shallow space of a tableau. I would love to see it in a theater with an actual curtain opening before it is projected. Maybe we can do this somewhere!

MDB
There might be some confusion in understanding your work as linked to the second "Pictures Generations" and understanding it only through the lens of "rephotography."



Above - *Exit Triangle*, 2010. Courtesy: the artist
Opposite - *Pink Curtain* (still), 2014. Courtesy: the artist

JB When I was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, I was exposed to Yvonne Rainer and Simone Forti's work, and since I had a background in dance, following their example, I set out to integrate dance and art.

I left art school for New York City in 1976 to see if I wanted to pursue art or dance, which I'd practiced since childhood. While I was there, I studied dance at Merce Cunningham Studios, interned at Artists Space, and went to a lot of performances—art performance, dance, avant-garde theater, experimental music, and punk shows. This was also when I saw the *Pictures* exhibition at Artists Space, and I was influenced by Jack's Goldstein work in particular. At this point I made a sharp turn away from dance and began an inquiry into media culture, collecting and rephotographing images from books, magazines, and films. At the time, I prided myself on my extreme cropping and thought of myself as a kind of picture editor. I assembled pictures into sets, families, and sequences, interested in syntax and the movement between images almost as much as the images themselves. The pictures often featured a shallow theatrical space in which objects and backgrounds shifted roles from one image to the next; the "main character" in one became the background in the next. By reframing or displacing "the main event," I found ways of shifting the narrative and revealing latent meanings. Eventually these sequences of pictures grew so long that it seemed as though I'd better start making films or do something else. Around 1984 I began to use different strategies to bring pictures back into physical space to elicit an embodied understanding or response.

The move into three dimensions enabled me to bring back elements of dance that I still cared about—theatricality, gesture, kinesthetics, orientation in space. I also realized that photographs could be used not only as pictures but as sculptural material. I was interested in the choreography of viewing, and how we encounter and understand things. The gallery for me then became a kind of theater for sculptures that doubled as sets and as vaguely anthropomorphic characters.

MDB Your piece from 1987, *Milk Crown*, refers to a photograph by Harold Edgerton, *Milk Drop Coronet*, that was taken with a stroboscope in 1957. That photograph had links to the cinematic research conducted by people like Eadweard Muybridge, and, jumping forward, we can relate it to John Baldessari's attempts to catch specific moments in some of his work. Both of those connections beg the question: is this making an image or taking an image? I think that you make images and give shape to images in what could be described as a sculptural, mise-en-scène, postcinema process. You're setting a glance, literally giving a form to this process.

JB There is a kind of framing of gestures and movement in my work, which may have something to do with my roots in dance. My works are like frozen movies.

As in Edgerton's photographs, time is frozen or held open. The "held-open space," is a staked-out zone, where time is paused or extended. Although most of my works are static, there is always an event happening in proximity—something either just happened or is about to happen. That event could happen physically, perceptually, connotatively, or imaginatively. *Milk Crown* conjures an event and photography without showing either. There's an awareness that this form exists, even though most of us have never seen it and *could* never see it without strobe photography. Something happens between the mental image and the physical object that has relevance in space and in time. We understand the photograph as one moment in a progression, but the sculpture remains solidly in the present.

Milk Crown, 1987. Courtesy: the artist. Photo: Ellen Wilson

MDB About the recent "stack" sculptures: are they in plaster? Their white color and smooth texture, along with their uncommon height, give them a kind of ghost/human quality.

JB There have been so many works of mine with stacks: stacks of film frames, speaker cabinets, appliances, shims, and movie marquees, just to name a few. I am interested in the simple gesture of stacking and also in things that accumulate. I also really love lists.

The recent stack sculptures, called *News Columns*, (2016–18) were made from 3D scans of stacks of the *New York Times*, which were then made in different materials. They *are* kind of ghostly. Like ghosts, stacks of newspaper are the type of thing that you might overlook, lurking in the corner of a room! Their white surface likens them to architectural columns, plinths for classical sculpture, or perhaps tombstones. With these and other recent works, I've been investigating the newspaper physically, allegorically, and literally as a vertical accretion of history—as a physical form on the verge of extinction.

MDB In one of our conversations, you made the comment, "I'm interested in the mediating layers between what we see, what is behind what we see, and what is glimpsed from the corner of the eye." Can you develop this idea?

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.

JB Yes, that's one of my favorite pieces also. The confusion between what is the "set" and what is the "star," as you put it, was deliberate. It's not really clear how to orient oneself in relation to the piece. Is the chair merely a pedestal for the mountains, are both a small part of an overall mise-en-scène, or is it an ad hoc set for a photo shoot? *Movie Chair* is also a model and kind of compendium of the moviegoer's experience—the "movie mountains," among other things, are a diagram of the cone of vision intersecting with the cone of the projector beam.

MDB The cone shape comes back often: *Speaker II* (1986), *Times Square Cone* (1989)… We spoke about it when we met in January.

JB Cones are an analogue for vision, for focus or projection, and in the two works mentioned above, they have a bodily aspect as well. In other works, I've used them in relation to perspective, or [as] amplifiers of meaning or sound. There are a lot of geometric solids in my work! As Cézanne said, the world is made of cubes, spheres, and cones.

MDB It seems that the ideas of analogy and decoy are two main aspects of your work: I'm thinking specifically about the pieces *Plywood Curtains*, from 2008, and *Exit Triangle*, from 2010. A decoy traps the viewer in an experience of fakery at the same time that it makes the viewer conscious of this lie; for me, those two artworks left me thinking about trickery, traps, and the suspension of disbelief.

JB Analogy and decoy, absolutely! I don't know about trickery, but I do like surprises and double takes. It's maybe the opposite of expectation, presenting something you did *not* expect to see at the periphery of attention. The project *Plywood Curtains* also registered a particular moment in time—it was made in response to the economic downturn of 2008, when the numerous closed and vacated buildings and storefronts had visibly changed the face of Los Angeles. I photographed sheets of plywood and printed them to scale on fabric and installed the curtains in multiple storefront windows across the city. At a glance, while driving by, plywood in a window registers as a sign of construction or destruction, perhaps something to avoid looking at. The curtains invited a double take. It's something like a low-tech special effect: what you first thought was flat and solid changed into something dimensional and mobile, possibly signaling an opening rather than a closing.

MDB Your site-specific project of 2017, *Visible Distance/Second Sight*, was meant to be experienced from the window of a moving car, and it operated as both a landscape and an experience and ultimately ceased to be a still image. The piece consisted of six billboards in the Coachella Valley with photographic reproductions of the mountains that stand behind them; when the horizon line matches the reproduction perfectly, the billboard disappears.

JB *Visible Distance* had something to do with the desire to see what is just out of reach, or at a distance. It was both a road trip and a road movie! The idea came from noticing the rhythm of the evenly spaced billboards on that road and the anticipation it produced. I couldn't help but look at each of them, wondering what was coming next, even if the ad images were banal. My project was a way of erasing the billboards by replacing them with previews of the landscape beyond. Again there's a double take and also something seen from the corner of the eye. The choreography involved in photographing the mountains for this piece was actually quite challenging to figure out! I love the oscillation between the past and present, the pictured and the actual, that happened as you drove by.

MDB In watching your film of 2015, *Set { } Piece*, I found myself wondering if you regard pieces such as this as Structuralist films. *Set { } Piece* explores the phenomenon of recognition that's simultaneously contradicted as we watch women reading on different floors of a building. How did you create this piece?

JB In a sense, the recent films are variants of Structuralist film, as well as a return to choreography for me. The structure may be

Above · *News Column no.2*, 2017. Courtesy: the artist. Photo: Federico Spadoni
Below · *Movie Chair*, 1984. Courtesy: the artist. Photo: Charlie Deets

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.

Marie de Brugerolle is independent curator, writer, professor (France, Czech Republic, Los Angeles). She organized the first retrospectives of Allen Ruppersberg, CNAC, Magasin, Grenoble (1996), John Baldessari, Carrée d'art, Nîmes (2005) and Larry Bell, Carré d'art, Nîmes (2010). She rediscovered Guy de Cointet (1934–1983) and curated Guy de Cointet's first global exhibition *Who's That Guy?*, MAMCO, Geneva (2004) and *Faire des choses avec des mots/Making Words With Things*, CRAC Sète (2006). She co-curated with Dora Garcia *I was a Male Yvonne de Carlo*, MUSAC, Léon (2011–12), *LA EXISTANCIAL*, LACE, Los Angeles (2013), *ALL THAT FALLS*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014), *RIDEAUX/blinds*, IAC, Villeurbanne, (2015), *Le Petit A de O*, a tribute to a "A" by Olivier Mosset and Cody Choi, Culture Cuts, MAC, Marseille (2016), and *Le Salon Discret*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017).

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.

Visible Distance / Second Sight, 2017, installation views of a site-specific project, Palm Springs, CA, 2017. Courtesy: the artist and Desert X, Palm Springs, CA. Photo: Lance Gerber

Image Tomb (detail), 2014. Courtesy: the artist. Photo: Jennifer Bolande

Visible Distance / Second Sight, 2017, installation views of a site-specific project, Palm Springs, CA, 2017. Courtesy: the artist and Desert X, Palm Springs, CA. Photo: Lance Gerber

Above - *The Composition of Decomposition* (stills), 2018. Courtesy: the artist

Los Angeles Times
December, 2018
Los Angeles Times

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By LEAH OLLMAN DEC 15, 2018 | 7:00 AM

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Jennifer Bolande's "Image Tomb (with skeletons)," 2014 (detail) , newspapers, pigment print, vitrine, wood, 43 inches by 13 inches by 13 inches. (Pio Pico)

Jennifer Bolande's single-channel video "The Composition of Decomposition," 2018, on view at Pio Pico. (Pio Pico)

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

F L A U N T

Jennifer Bolande. Exhibition view, "Visable 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

Speeding 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.

Retroperspective (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, spotlit 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

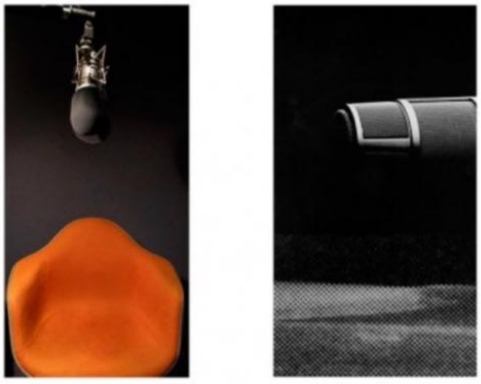
Jennifer Bolande. "Marshall Stack," 1987. Three handmade vinyl and wood speaker cabinets, color photos, Marshall speaker cloth, plastic Marshall logo. Photo by Eeva Inkeri.

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 priveleged 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.

Incite Journal
August 21, 2012

Interview with Jennifer Bolande

By J. Louise Makary

J. Louise Makary is a filmmaker and writer based in Philadelphia. She recently spent a year writing about the comic book version of the movie *Grease* (1978), and is now working on an experimental narrative film set at a Colonial tourist site.
www.jmakary.com

Image: *Movie Chair* (Jennifer Bolande, 1984). Courtesy of the artist.

Though predominantly active in photography and sculpture, the multimedia artist Jennifer Bolande has generated a substantial body of work that engages with the "objecthood" and cultural experience of cinema. Both funny and elegiac, Bolande's art explores how movies make us feel, and how the form and the phenomena of film work on us in ways that are altogether separate from film's narrative content. Bolande uses complex strategies of remediation and signification to comment on our changing relationship to popular media and its attendant technologies, many of which are on the verge of disappearance. I met Bolande in Philadelphia at the opening of her retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art (January 11 – March 11, 2012). The recurring tropes and the objects of her fascination – from stage curtains and marquees to projection screens and film stills – made me curious about the influence of cinema on her work. She met with me in her Los Angeles studio, where she was careful to point out that, for her, Hollywood feels as far away as New York.

Image: *Marshall Stack* (Jennifer Bolande, 1987). Photo credit: Eeva Inkeri.

Jennifer Bolande: I saw a short documentary made by NASA called *Planet Mars* (c. 1979), at an exhibition on space photography. During the screening I took photos of the film from my seat. I've done that with a number of works. Whether it's the end titles or opening credits, the main point of interest for me is often something peripheral to the body of the film. In this case, one of the things that appealed to me was how the beam of the projector focused on a circle (Mars), which filled the screen, forming a big, beautiful cone of orange light. I was very aware of my position in relationship to that cone, which *my* perceptual cone was intersecting with. The drawing *Vision Cones Diagram* illustrates this cinematic experience.

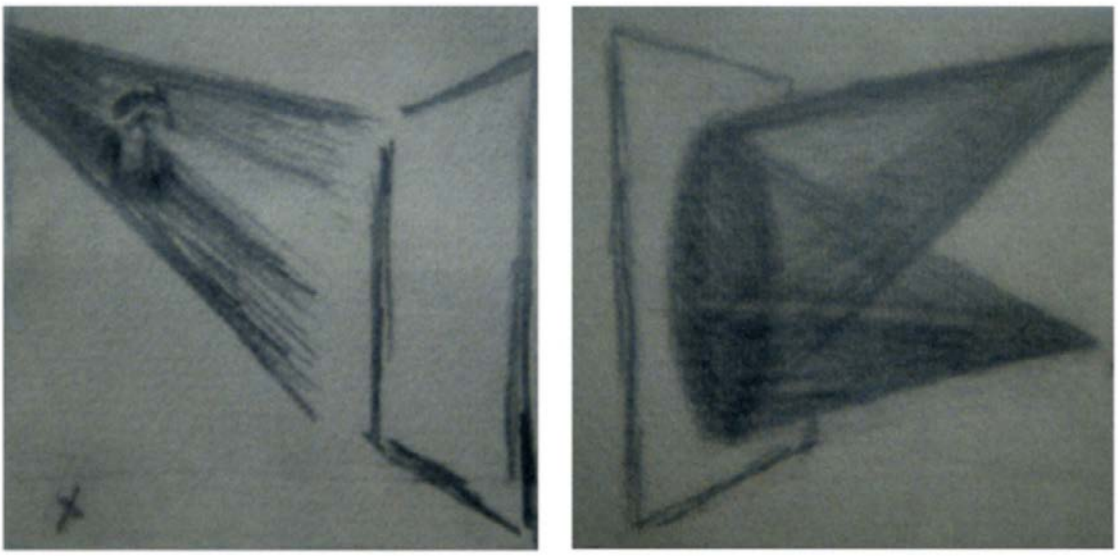


Image: *Vision Cones Diagram* (Jennifer Bolande, 1985). Courtesy of the artist.

A cone is like a beam of attention. Often what is in the focal zone is not as interesting as what's going on at the edges – I am very attuned to the periphery. I am wary of goal-orientation – the ever-pointier cone that starts out broadly and gets smaller and more focused. I go in the opposite direction. I start at the periphery and see what I can bring into it. It's like the cone of a tornado, pulling more and more into its orbit. *Side Show* (1991) was the first staged photograph I made. Prior to that I had mostly worked with found images. The scene, a kind of micro-spectacle, alludes to something happening off-screen, which seems like a cinematic idea. You can almost hear the sounds of the circus at a distance. *Side Show* is from a body of work that was oriented around a circus-y theme. Another is *One Day* (1991),which features a Fotomat, a one-day photo processing drop-off location. This was before one-hour photos; one-day was the fastest processing you could get. It's hard to see, but there are arrows to drop your film off on one side of the Fotomat and arrows to go to the other side to pick it up. I was standing on the top of a hill and looking down on the Fotomat, which is very similar to the point of view of *Side Show*. You can see directional arrows on the pavement, and all of the little photographs inside. Like, if you were coming from another planet and wanted to know what humans thought was beautiful or worthy of documentation, it was all there in a condensed form, any day. I wanted to have that sense that you are coming from afar, looking down on it, a slight aerial view. Like a lot of my work, these pieces hover around things that are on the periphery of attention or on the brink of extinction.

Image:*Side Show* (Jennifer Bolande, 1991). Courtesy of the artist.

J. Louise Makary: I found *Side Show* to be oddly moving. Because you're using some cinematic devices – lighting, staging, off-screen space- – which produce a sense of heightened emotion. You're almost making a character out of that little stake. Your titles often add another layer to the work: "sideshow" is a circus term, but it also seems to refer to a little figure to the side that is holding the apparatus up.

JB: The stake is a small but crucial element supporting the entire tent — so this little "sideshow" is of central importance. It's not just an alternate

center though. The stake was hammered right at the place where the two cones of light intersect. I am really interested in where things meet, in seeing or articulating the precise point where one thing intersects with or turns into, another.

JLM: There's potential for something to happen, for you or the viewer to do something. It's a pregnant moment, but not a decisive moment — it's been staged, like in a narrative film.

JB: There's a kind of framing of gestures and movements in my work, which may have something to do with my roots in dance. My works are like frozen movies.

JLM: So much of your work deals with technologies or objects that are facing extinction, or that are in transition: the Fotomat, for instance, or certain filmic or photographic processes. I read that you spend a lot of time with these objects and technologies. What is important to you about them?

JB: I spend a lot of time with *everything*. I'm not always sure why I am attracted to things, but since I'm working from particular to general, I honor my attractions. But, I don't trust them entirely, so I have to wait for the newness to wear off. Sometimes you're attracted to something because of the zeitgeist, or its superficial allure. I have a pretty elaborate filing system. I revisit things in my archive; I study things over time. Certain images or objects that are in my collections stay in there for years before I figure out how I want to engage with them. Sometimes the fact that their meaning is changing in the course of the time that I'm looking at them is part of what precipitates my having to deal with them. Something really is about to turn, and you suddenly understand what it is before it disappears.

Image: *Runaway Train...* (Jennifer Bolande, 1988). Courtesy of the artist.

I wouldn't say I prescriptively go out looking for aging technologies, or certain cultural artifacts on the brink of extinction. It's more of an intuitive process. But when you look at my work over time, it's uncanny how many times it's come up. The movie *Runaway Train* (1985) figures in a number of works. I could feel that it was a metaphor. The train was a symbol of industrial progress – but what does it mean now? We weren't quite in the information age in the mid-80s, but we certainly weren't in the industrial age anymore. It was as if the train was going off the rails in another way – it had become separated from its cultural moorings.

JLM: Within the last 10 or 15 years that symbol of the train has lost its legibility – what it meant as a sign.

JB: It lost its currency; I think it's still legible through a reading of history or a historical period, but it was right on the cusp then. Trains have a particular relationship to cinema and also to perspective. I thought about them in relation to perspective – barreling along a perspectival cone from the past to the present. In the mid-80s, you still had to "catch" a movie – it was before VCRs were common. The advertisement said: "*Runaway Train*. Coming soon. Catch it at a theater near you!" I followed its trajectory, which is a bit of a pun, but that's what happened. First I cut out the ad from the *New York Times*. Then, I photographed the title on the marquee. The last part was going to see the movie. The train moves forward relentlessly, parallel to the narrative trajectory of the movie. You catch the train (and the movie) and ride it all the way through.

JLM: Your "travel" with the idea or the topic does approximate one typical, film-viewing path: you see an advertisement, you're introduced to a film, you see it up on a marquee – that whole act of being drawn to see the film, it being sold to you and you buying into everything from the spectacle of the marquee to the experience of watching it. So it's fitting that you say that watching the film was the last thing. I find that a lot of your work deals in that margin, using the *objects* associated with an experience to talk about the experience – the intuition or perception about an experience. You're moving away from the physical object to talk about how that object is experienced culturally, such as with your photograph *Movie Mountain* (2004).

Image: *Movie Mountain* (Jennifer Bolande, 2004). Courtesy of the artist.

JB: *Movie Mountain* is a kind of emblem – a distillation and combination of other works or elements in my vocabulary. I have done a number of works like this. They are like a cast of characters or a family portrait. *Movie Mountain* is a photograph of the multifaceted photo-sculpture *Mountain (2004),* positioned to cast a shadow onto a movie screen. I like recombining elements or actual works into new composites, in the process adding more layers of representation, complicating their meanings.

JLM: What interested me about *Movie Mountain* was the final presentation, like you said, the layers of representation and how they bring attention to the viewing process. It's fascinating to look at. This particular sculpture casts a completely idiosyncratic shadow that is itself very photographic, very cinematic. The shadow is not exactly an index, but it's a representation cast onto the screen and you're framing the composition in a very selective way. But you also have a second shadow of the screen itself.

JB: Yes, I love that part. There are quite a few layers to pass through, and no apparent hierarchy of importance.

JLM: The shadow calls attention to the screen. It's no longer something that just disappears when and because something is being projected onto it. So you become more aware that the image is mediated, that you are a viewer.

JB: I have used portable home movie screens in a number of works over the years. I always have a pile of them in my studio. The corners of the screen are often rounded, which mirrors the old format of a slide or film frame that is projected upon it. I'm not sure why the screen needs to have that format, too – why did they do that?

JLM: There's emotional content in those details. They are part of the seduction of the projection experience. They work on us on a deeper level.

JB: It's interesting to look at why that is. Our interfaces with things are always changing. Because of the particularities of those interfaces, our engagement changes. I'm interested in engaging with things in ways that make sense but aren't necessarily how you'd normally engage with them. Asking, how do we relate to this object, this technology? How *might* we relate to it?

JLM: The light in the photograph is great – is it only one source?

JB: It's the sun! I built this at my house in the desert. It was very early in the morning, and I just opened the garage door in the studio to light the photograph. For me, sculpture is really interesting in its relationship to photography. I haven't made many completely in-the-round sculptures; much of my work is wall-oriented and low-relief. The nature of sculpture is that you have multiple viewpoints. With photography, you're choosing a specific perspective on an object or a set of objects, or a place, or a person. When I make a sculpture I'm continually moving around it, looking at it from different angles and distances. In this photo-sculpture (*Mountain*) I wanted each photograph to be legible perspectivally. Each photograph in the sculpture is of a different globe, sitting in a window. So if I was looking up at a window when I photographed it, the viewer would be looking up that window in the sculpture. It followed that premise, and the piece determined its own shape. It's an example of going from particular to general, and not knowing what the outcome will be. I didn't make it make that shape. *It* made that shape. Even though it wasn't planned, from certain angles, its shape resembles the Matterhorn. In the photograph *Movie Mountain*, I oriented it to accentuate that shape. The shadow of the mountain also conjures up the Paramount logo.

JLM: Right, I can see that!

JB: I like the beginnings of movies. I get excited about the sudden field of color, the film company logos. To me, there's a relationship between mountains and movies – the spectacle and majesty of nature that's called up. In New York, I went to Times Square a lot to see movies. Being in the city, embedded in the urban, I just wanted to see a jungle, or some trees, a mountain. I remember going to *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (1972). The beginning of that film, with the trek down the mountain, is so amazing. I would also go see dumb movies like *Greystoke [The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes]* (1984), because I knew there would be a jungle in it. I loved that contrast, going to Times Square for a nature experience. I knew it was artificial but it was still good enough. So there's that going on in a lot of my work – the nature/artifice contrast.

JLM: There are two kinds of movie experiences that you seem drawn to in your work. One is the institutional or industry-oriented experience of going to the theater, sitting in the seat, the other being the more intimate home-movie or classroom viewing experience.

JB: It's all kind-of magic, isn't it? Either kind provides a threshold into a different world. Being in a dark room with other people, the projection light, the sound – imagination across a darkened space. I used to go to the ballet when I was in high school. I'd be excited for the first 10 minutes – the curtain going up, the lights, the stage set. But inevitably, once the story got onto its trajectory, I would get bored. The expectation and heightened awareness excited me more than the thing itself. This reminds me of Jack Goldstein's films and records, which made me more aware of that moment of expectation – the reduction of an experience to an image or a sound or a single gesture. It was as if he reduced these forms to their most basic elements and made you see things in a new way. You'd put the record on – I remember a green record, *Three Felled Trees* (1976). You'd hear "chop chop chop – crash," "chop chop chop – crash," "chop chop chop…" and you'd have to flip the record over to hear the last tree fall. His film *MGM* (1975) holds open for extended examination something familiar that usually flickers by unnoticed: the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion turning its head, roaring, and blinking. This gesture is simply repeated for two minutes, long enough to change your relationship to that logo forever.

JLM: Something you said earlier, about how fascinated you were and continue to be with this sense of expectation that films provide – it's interesting to me that this is a focus of your work because it is so important to the film-going experience. But it's not studied as much as the content of films and what they mean on a textual level. Your work seems to deal more with film spectatorship, how these peripheral aspects of cinema affect the viewer emotionally, the excitement of being at a threshold, and how excellent movies are at making that happen, although that may be changing. Fewer people are going to see films in the theater. And it's changing not so much people's engagement with movie *content*, but how audiences experience films in terms of those threshold moments.

JB: There seem to be fewer and fewer spaces where people congregate to share an experience. 3D seems to be a last-ditch effort to get people to the movies for an experience they can't have at home. It's similar in the art world. Viewership has fallen for regular gallery exhibitions. Art fairs have become increasingly dominant, which is upsetting to me, because I make exhibitions. We're tempted to look at jpegs of art and believe we've really seen it. I experienced this myself while working on the exhibition catalog, which required looking at my work as jpegs for some time. I was almost convinced it was better! You can move them around without the encumbrance of material objects. To then go back to installing the work at the ICA and to re-experience all the material aspects of the work was so different, so much richer. I fell in love with certain pieces all over again. How you encounter a work, whether you have to look down at it or up at it, the textures, proximities and conjunctions of materials, there may even be electromagnetic charges to things that you sense – all of that contributes to the way you experience or understand the work. This is obvious, of course, but also easy to overlook in favor of expediency. Another thing about the theater experience relates to what I mentioned earlier about going to the movies for a nature experience. In a true nature experience, you are made aware of your relatively small place in the universe. You are not in control. There's a giving up of control when you become a spectator – as a film viewer, you leave your body behind to a certain degree and you go for a ride. Before the narrative ride begins, there's such a sense of potential. I call it the "held-open space," and that's not only with respect to film or movies – it's in other experiences we have in life, when we don't know what's important, when we just have a heightened perception of what *could be*. With movies, I notice this particularly during title sequences. They start to drop clues about mood, place, and characters. As a viewer I'm alert, scanning the whole screen: *Where am I, what do I notice, is this going to be important later?* If we could only live in that space of heightened awareness and curiosity all of the time. Good art can bring you there. One of the other really great, influential experiences for me was Richard Foreman's Ontological Hysterical Theater. I love, love, love this work. Foreman barrages you with a thousand fragmentary things unhinged from traditional narrative. When you come out, you can't describe what just happened. I remember feeling really awake and alive and engaged. Foreman has talked about these "unbalancing acts," and employs all kinds of strategies to keep himself and the viewer from going to sleep. I believe that's what happens with traditional narrative- – you can come up with a name for it, summarize it, and you think you know what it's about, but you're really asleep.

JLM: There's so much emphasis on narrative logic in theatre and film. Instead, what Foreman's work is doing, what your work is doing, is disrupting that logic. What you're saying is that there is complete, utter enjoyment in having to be active, in being destabilized. It's more about that experience than "the answer is X."

JB: Exactly. It's such a reductive way of engaging with things, to just name them. Things can get really disembodied, reduced, stripped of all nutrients, so to speak. But, you know, this is what experimental filmmakers have been engaged in – creating experiences that interrupt our complacency as spectators. I had a somewhat spotty exposure to experimental film. There were a lot of films that I didn't manage to catch at Anthology Film Archives in the late-70s and 80s. [*Laughs.*] Through the increased access to that work that DVDs have made possible, I've been able to fill in the blanks in recent years. Also, now that I am teaching I have the opportunity to rent a lot of films for my classes. I have discovered what feel like missing links that have directly affected me. Over the past 10 years, exploring the work of Michael Snow has been a revelation, like discovering a new continent. I just read a great book by the film critic Scott MacDonald, *Adventures of Perception* (2009), which is a term he uses to describe the experimental films that have forced him to expand his own perception and sense of what cinema might be. That's what I want from cinema, and what I want from art, too.

JLM: I'm glad you brought up Michael Snow because I was thinking a lot about his art in relationship to yours. When were you first introduced to his work?

JB: I first encountered him while studying at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design because he visited while I was there. His book *Cover to Cover* (1975) was published at NSCAD the year I arrived. I adore this book – it's a sequence of photographs, a movie, a sculpture, it's a complete thing that must be experienced firsthand. Although it issues from a set of logical premises, it's utterly unpredictable. Every time I look at it, I think I understand the structure, but somewhere along the way I lose what it is and find myself wondering, what's going on? Now I have to turn the book over? Where am I? I show *Wavelength* (1967) every year in class. I must have seen it in college, but I only remembered the image of the waves at the end. Seeing it again has been so satisfying. There's a developing awareness of a shape – a cone – that emerges through the experience of the film. It's sensual and conceptual, dimensional, temporal, auditory, and visual.

JLM: The idea in *Wavelength* is of time being connected to space, not narrative. And, like you're saying, becoming aware of this tunnel of perspective, the cone.

JB: All of its mediating layers – the gels, the different film stocks -– enhance the sense of a cone that's being intersected by planes. I'm interested in the mediating layers between the cornea of the eye and what we see and also what is behind what we see. Then beyond that plane, things that might be in the imaginary space, or that are culturally influencing how we address something or see something. I feel that's going on so palpably in *Wavelength*.

JLM: You and Snow have a shared interest in framing – how things are presented to the viewer, and the prescribed conventions of how we interact with and perceive things. I see a lot of shared ground, despite the fact that your work is so radically different.

JB: Snow talks about making seeing palpable. This is something I can really relate to. He does this in his works in all media. Each medium is inflected by another – for instance, he makes what he calls "camera-influenced sculptures," a designation I really like. A lot of his works deal with the failures or limits of media. What I really love about his work is that the viewer is simultaneously in the work – rooted in the present moment over and over – and hovering outside of it. We are continually made aware of the mediating role of the medium, which prevents us from completely identifying with what we are looking at, but implicating us at the same time. *La Région Centrale* (1971) does this exquisitely – it's one of the most moving films I have ever seen.

JLM: Were you making work that dealt with theatrical or cinematic experience before you moved to Los Angeles?

JB: Oh, yeah.

JLM: Did the way you were working with it change after you moved to Hollywood?

Image: *Cartoon Curtain* (Jennifer Bolande, 1982). Courtesy of the artist.

JB: Ha! Funny question. I'd been working with those things from the very beginning. My early jobs in New York were all in the film industry, mostly in post-production. I worked at a film lab as an apprentice timer, the person who does color correcting. One of the things I had to do was examine release prints on a high-speed film viewer called a Vedette. I'd look at release prints hundreds of times faster than you would normally watch film, checking for what they call "mis-times," such as light leaks and flashes. Amazingly, you could detect these in a single frame even though it was going by so quickly. This particular lab was in Times Square; a lot of their bread-and-butter business at the time was soft-core porn, and cartoons for mail order. A lot of my early pieces, like *Cartoon Curtain* (1982), came out of that experience. Also *The Porn Series* (1982), which are cropped stills from 50s retro porn films by Irving Klaw. Watching them really fast, I noticed these moments of calm at the beginning or the end, with all of this "activity" in between. It was this kind of aporia, with just an empty set, before that particular kind of narrative ride takes place. [*Laughs.*]

JLM: These are displayed as photographs?

JB: Yes, they were photographed off of a screen. Mostly they were from the opening frames of films, which were cropped in a certain way to accent the area I was interested in, reducing each set to just a few elements. The cropping creates equivalence between set, character, and prop, and a kind of pregnant, ominous sense of expectation. The prints are very small and intimate.

JLM: These images seem to draw the eye toward details that are peripheral to the "main event." Those details might not seem crucial to the film-viewing experience, especially in this case, but they are deeply important. It's different to film a porn on this kind of a movie set, and to light it in a certain way, rather than in a blank white room. These details contribute to the viewing experience. I like that these images, like so much of the rest of your work, are dealing with things that are on the periphery and that go overlooked if we just focus on content. If you do that, you leave behind so much of what goes into our experience that makes it pleasurable.

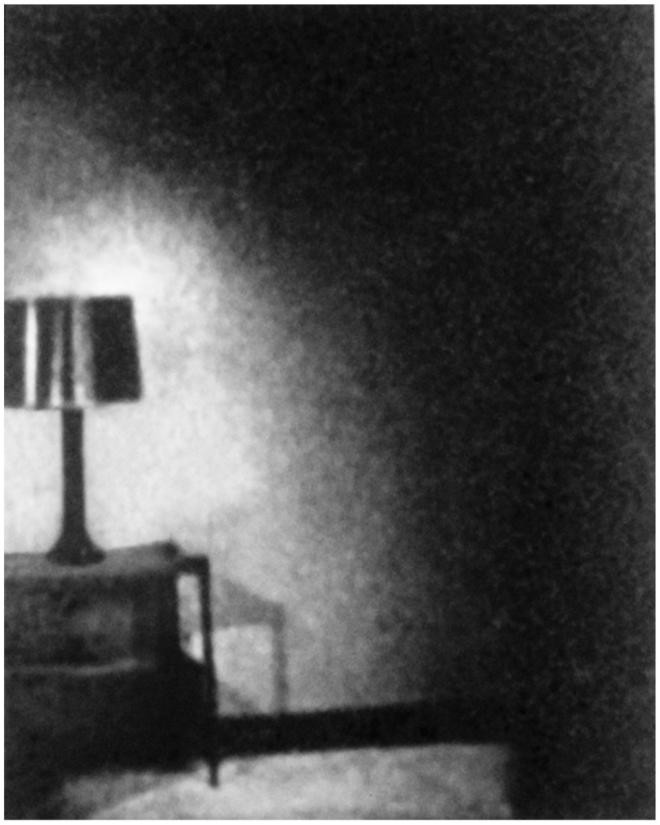


Image: *Porn Series* (Jennifer Bolande, 1982). Courtesy of the artist.

JB: Yeah, that's interesting. Porn films are updated all the time. They're expected to look current, so there's that element of fashion and interior décor. *The Porn Series* images are black and white and stripped of most of their identifying details.

JLM: What other jobs did you have in film?

JB: I worked for a few years as a negative cutter. I started to work as an apprentice editor, but they wanted me to work 60 hours a week for $8 an hour. I couldn't, because I still wanted to be an artist, but I loved doing it. I loved the materiality of film, the smell of it, the process. I loved wearing the little white gloves. But I just couldn't afford to go that route. I left it behind and found other ways of supporting myself. In my work, I start from wherever I am. Whatever jobs I have, there are things from those environments that go into the work. You were asking me about moving to California: I am so not interested in Hollywood movies, and I don't care about movie stars.

JLM: Looking through the survey of your work, there's a slightly analytical, slightly scientific way of looking at some of these technological devices or objects that are falling by the wayside, but it's not *entirely* intellectual or scientific. There's a very personal, experiential side to it, where your intuition leads you to things. The fact that you no longer go to the theater to engage with films in the way you used to, in the way we used to as a culture – brings up the question of nostalgia. Do you think nostalgia is a bad word when it comes to art?

JB: I kind-of do. I have to really distinguish what I do from nostalgia. It could look like nostalgia to the superficial eye, but I am in no way saying, "Things were better back then." Of course you do think about differences between the past and present, through the technologies that we are all engaged in and through the acceleration of information and how fast we feel we have to move to keep up. The way I work, which is very slow and involves really steeping myself in experiences, and things over time – it's hard to imagine someone developing a practice like this now. I wonder about the fullness and depth of engagement that people are encouraged to have, not just pedagogically, but because all of that's there to be moved through. I have concerns about that. [*Laughs.*] There is certainly an elegiac quality to what I do, but that's different from nostalgia. I read somewhere that the world can be divided into two kinds of experiences: things that are arising, and things that are passing away. I'm definitely oriented toward things that are passing away, but I try to attend to things that are arising too. The hardest part is being in the present moment, which is what I think I try to get to. I tend to be looking at what just passed, with the assumption that I probably didn't catch it very fully when it was first arising. Our whole culture is so oriented towards the next new thing. I like to counter that and exercise the freedom to place my attention elsewhere.

JLM: Being in the present is essentially being in a moment of transition. Sometimes the thing that's arising is forcing the other thing to fall away. In some religious philosophies, the idea of the present is supposed to be empowering. But in some of the ways that you're describing it, it's also scary.

JB: It is scary. It's scary for all of us. I think that's why every chance we have, we're jumping into planning or imagining the future or we're remembering the past, because we don't really know how to deal with the present. The present is the only place where you can actually do anything. Or have an actual experience or perception. Maybe it's scary because the present moment is always disappearing; it has to do with death. Having something be open – that's the unknown. People want to foreclose that.

JLM: And that would give rise to the idea of nostalgia, the comfort of thinking that this thing, this object or technology, is comfortable and we can know it.

JB: Right.

JLM: I want to ask you about one more piece that fits in here, a piece I really love, the *Tower of Movie Marquees* (2010). What was the genesis of that?

JB: This ties in with the *Runaway Train* story and photographing the title on the marquee in Times Square. I noticed an aging movie marquee in Times Square that had all these gnarled pieces of metal coming off of it. This was at a time when Times Square was really decaying, in the 80s. I had a fantasy about the marquee falling and crashing to the ground – a pretty powerful metaphor. That fantasy generated the piece *and the* (1987). The marquee had the title for *Harry and the Hendersons* (1987) on it. I fantasized that if it did fall to Earth, that fragment – "and the" – is what I would want.

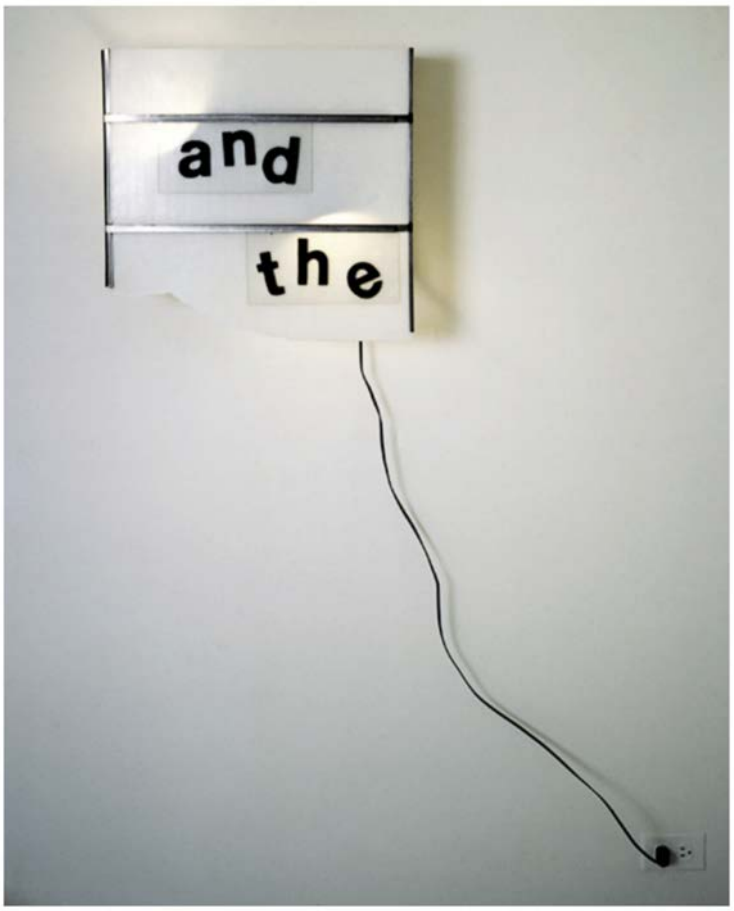


Image: *and the* (Jennifer Bolande, 1987). Photo credit: Eeva Inkeri.

I'm interested in certain kinds of things that you have a bodily orientation to. We look up at movie marquees with a sense of expectation about what's to come. They hold promises, in a sense. The *Tower of Movie Marquees* is a promise of – I had a phrase for this: "empty containers of yesterday's promises." So the marquees come "down to earth," and then by stacking one on top of the other I can begin the process of climbing back up to the sky. There was another movie marquee that I fell in love with. It was on 42nd Street. When I heard about the Times Square redevelopment plan, I tried valiantly to try to get it, seeing it as a rescue mission. I didn't really know structurally how it worked. I just pictured that it would come off of the building, like a big found object. Of course, it doesn't work that way; they're integrated into the building. I was very much attached to the idea of using that particular marquee, and when I couldn't get it, I gave up. Then, one day I read in the paper that they had removed all of the marquees in Times Square; they put them in one building and then the floor collapsed and destroyed all of them.

Image: *Tower of Movie Marquees* (Jennifer Bolande, 2010). Photo credit: Maegan Hill-Carroll.

JLM: So your prophecy came true.

JB: Yes, but it was liberating. Now that it was gone, I was set free to recreate it. I had taken enough photographs of it that it was easy to follow. I went to Artkraft Strauss, the company that has made most of the signage for Times Square for the last hundred years, and they had stacks of movie marquee panels and parts, which I used to build the prototype. At first I constructed a two-stack, but I always imagined it being taller. In 2010, I made a four-stack. But I still want to go higher. I am searching for a home for this tower in public space. I do love Times Square, and there is a traffic island there that's perfect – almost the exact same shape. But I think the piece would make just as much sense in L.A.

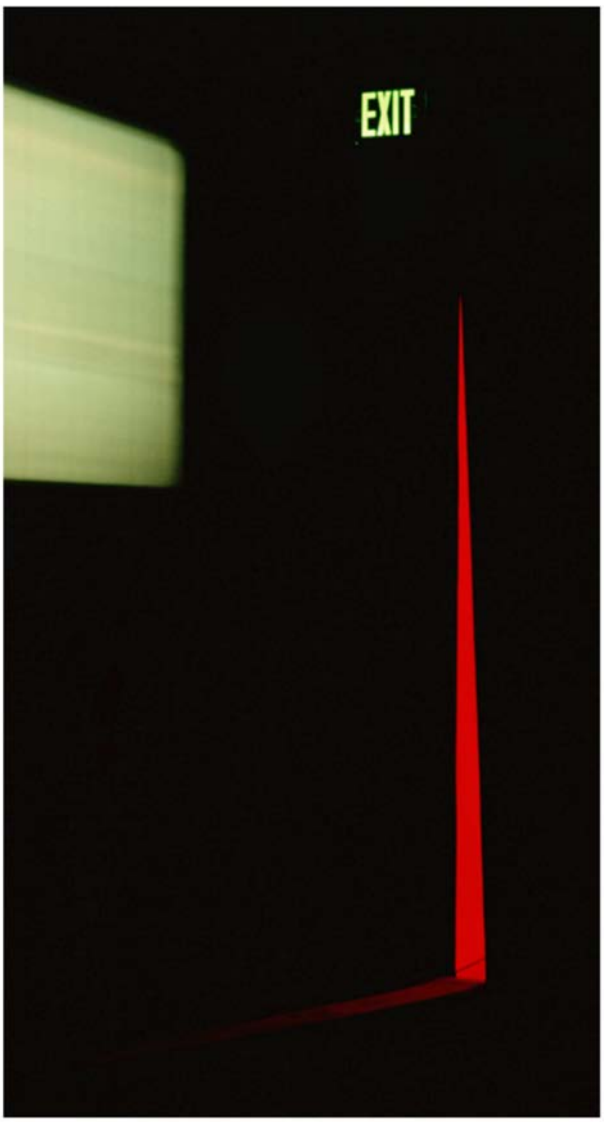


Image: *Exit Triangle* (Jennifer Bolande, 2010). Courtesy of the artist.

Published August 21, 2012

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.

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

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.

— James Nisbet

Artforum

September, 2010

MILWAUKEE

Jennifer Bolande

INSTITUTE OF VISUAL ARTS

Talent, David Robbins's 1986 photographic work assembling eighteen black-and-white headshots of precocious peers then orbiting the neo-Conceptual East Village gallery Nature Morte and the fledgling Metro Pictures, includes a portrait of artist Jennifer Bolande. Smiling out

from a field of now-illustrious figures such as Cindy Sherman, Jenny Holzer, Ashley Bickerton, and Jeff Koons is the young hopeful, finally getting her art-historical due at Milwaukee's Institute of Visual Arts, with a full-blown survey aptly titled "Landmarks." Known for simple poetic gestures and innovative photo objects, Bolande, a champion of plucky appropriation strategies, has a keen eye for identifying the allegorical and contingent meaning attending everyday objects and vernacular imagery. And, as this retrospective featuring more than fifty well-chosen works attests, she has remained remarkably consistent in her ontological investigations, despite the enormous variety of material and media that she has negotiated over the past three decades.

While *Talent* may be Robbins's most memorable artistic contribution to date, *Milk Crown*, 1987, is Bolande's. In this cast-porcelain rendering of Harold Edgerton's famous 1956 image of a gracefully splashing milk drop, Bolande has physicalized the resultant form into a precious object that lends the subject of the iconic image an objecthood it never had, complicating our memory of the original photograph while contradicting our understanding of fluid dynamics. As is evident here, Bolande is at her best when directly confronting the critical subtexts inherent in her favored methods of appropriation and duplication. *Milk Crown* is far from a verisimilitudinous one-liner: Interconnected questions of authorship, memory, and perception spring forth from this undeniably beautiful object. Similarly, *Composition with Speaker Cone*, 1990, a deeply sepia-toned photographic still life depicting a dramatically lit conical form lying in a nondescript space, romanticizes sound transmission by delivering an atmospheric image of an old-fashioned electromagnetic speaker. As though preserved in amber, this image, akin to the white coronet of the porcelain splash, offers up an ironic simulacrum, perpetually frozen in time, motion, and space.

In a published conversation with Robbins on the occasion of this show—her first retrospective—Bolande explained that the "artifacts and fragments that I select from the cultural landscape tend to be things that have somehow lost the significance that they once had and are becoming obsolete or forgotten. I identify objects and images that are on the brink of extinction, archive and study them, then bring them back into circulation, reanimating them and giving them new lives, new locations, new meanings." Another example of this regenerative tendency is her work with globes. *Globe Sighting: Stonehouse Road, Bloomfield NJ*, 2000, consists of a melancholic depiction of a lone orb peeking out from under a window blind in a massive redbrick school building. Like the birds in Jean-Luc Mylayne's photographs, say, Bolande's globes are simply a joy to behold. Sounding a more humorous note, *The Rounding of Corners*, 1991/2010, takes as its subject matter the outmoded fashion of shoulder pads. Here, the *retardataire* sartorial prosthetic is employed as a pictorial and decorative device, rounding out an image of a woman's torso while augmenting the photograph's frame, softening the contours of both image and object.

Twenty-eight years of photo-based objects and images impressively installed, activate INOVA's vast space with carefully placed rimshots, conceptual echoes, and thematic parallels. The recurrence of the stereo speaker secures it as Bolande's favorite trope: "You look at it," she remarked to Robbins, "waiting for something, whether vibration or information, to emerge from it." Analogously, the exhibition pulses with an unforeseen eloquence arising from a deft blending of past and present, obsolete and living, memory and expectation.

—*Michelle Grabner*

ARTFORUM
SEPTEMBER 2010 INTERNATIONAL

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.

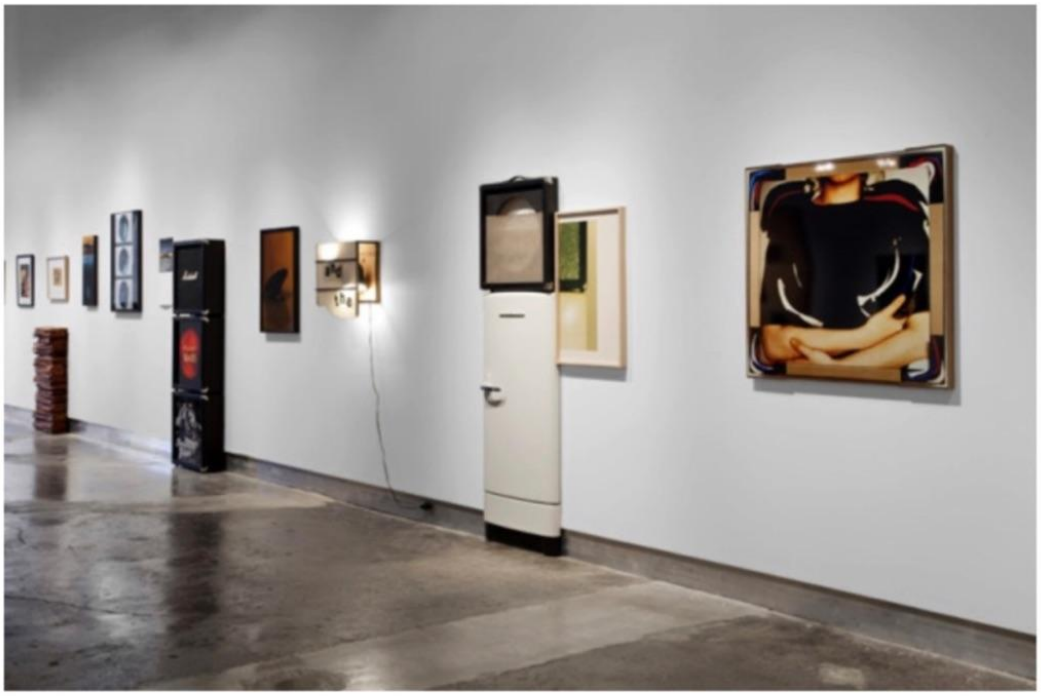
Much already has been written about Bolande, a New York-based and Ohio-born artist, but save that heavy reading for after the show, or ignore it altogether. It's my intention to give you enough of an introduction to pique your interest, and no more.

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.

Art in America
May 2008

Art in America
May 2008

Jennifer Bolande at Alexander and Bonin

The clouds on the horizon in Jennifer Bolande's fourth exhibition at Alexander and Bonin were made of smoke, and signaled not the gathering storm of Alfred Stieglitz's modernism (as represented in his iconic images of the sky) but a refined sensibility that resituates the peripheral, in both materials and visual incident, to the central. Bolande's recent photographs, objects and plywood "screens" advance a body of work that requires investment from its audience, eludes easy categorization and deserves greater attention.

It is frequently noted that Bolande emerged from the "Pictures" generation of the late '70s—artist whose interrogation of both the still and moving image only gains in relevance. Bolande should be counted among the least cynical of that group, opting for the subjective pleasures of the scrapbook over the engineered glamour of the billboard. Much of her art originates with her own photography, though she also engages in forensic scrutiny of the print media.

The works in her "Smoke Screen" series each comprise a handful of tinted prints of smoke mounted on large (96-by-48-inch) sheets of ordinary plywood. Bolande's choice of this material recalls the use of wood-grain-patterned Formica by Richard Artschwager, whose Pop surrealism, like Ed Ruscha's, is relevant to any appreciation of Bolande's art. Formica offered Artschwager a mutable "picture" of wood; similarly, the sinuous grain of Bolande's plywood has a Rorschach-like suggestiveness that competes with the pictures themselves, culled from newspapers with the loving care devoted to high-school science projects. *Smoke Screen #4* (2007), for example, includes an image of two bystanders on a highway overpass, observing a burning car with the nonchalance of 18th-century courtiers.

Depending on perspective, the plaster tabletop object *Plume* (2007), while identifiable as a rising cloud of smoke, can morph into a grotesque face or a Bronze-age Venus. The vaguely conical shape reappears in Bolande's prints and constructions with some regularity. I interpret these forms as tornados; they stand not for deadly meteorological events, but as logos of psychic displacement and supernatural transport—to Oz, for instance. Bolande employs a displaced chain of reasoning in her assemblage of individual pieces, a thought process resembling autism in its refusal to assign conventional meaning to places or things, and in the deliberate misreading of the physical for the pictorial. This logic, when applied to photography-based sculptures like *Plume*, often reverses the camera's magic, transforming pictures into reconfigured versions of their subjects.

Little Dead Tree (2007) is a bronze cast of, well, a little dead tree, placed atop a handsome dark wood beam (88½ inches high). In lifting one's head to acknowledge this sad totem—a charred finger or arrowhead pointing straight up—something in us stirs. Somewhat unexpectedly, spiritual interpretations of Bolande's increasingly transcendental art seem to be encouraged. Ethereal phenomena signify ecstasy in the imagery of worship associated with numerous world religions. In 1923, Stieglitz proposed that his cloud photographs, titled "Equivalents," were reflections of states of mind—as radical an idea then as Bolande's stairways to heaven may be now.

—Tim Maul

Detail of Jennifer Bolande's *Little Dead Tree* (center) with two plywood panels from the "Smoke Screen" series, all 2007; at Alexander and Bonin.

Frieze
March, 2005

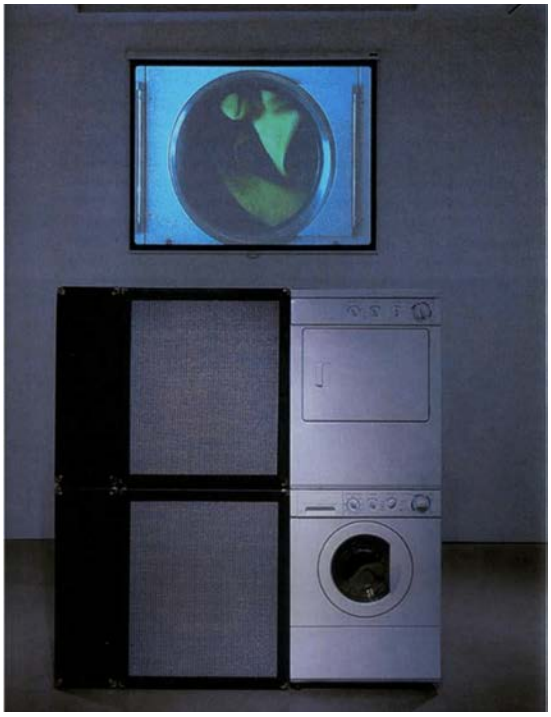
FRIEZE

Jennifer Bolande

Alexander & Bonin Gallery, New York, USA

When Jennifer Bolande graduated from art school in 1979, the field of photography was in the midst of a dramatic transformation. Its appropriation by Pop, Conceptual and Performance art had expanded the medium's boundaries, as had the shift towards colour processing ,which moved the medium into the realm of high-art production and challenged the status of painting. For female photographers the camera became a tool to critique modes of feminine representation and renounce the premise of photographic objectivity. Artists such as Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman used photomontage, staged tableaux and performances to explore the artifice of the 'real' and to demonstrate how a picture could create meaning (in particularly in relation to feminine norms). For Bolande, a contemporary of these artists, the critique of photography came via an examination of its material form and the impulse to resolve the distance between image and object.

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.



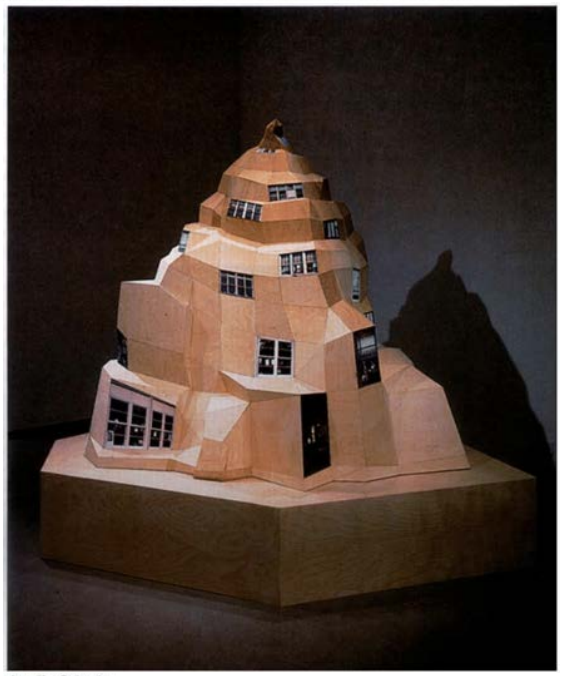
Jennifer Bolande
Earthquake
2004 Mixed media 328x173x307cm

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.

Bolande's journey to her sculptures is elliptical, and the interpretation of the work follows suit. Unlikely bedfellows, her pairings have a clarity that emerges slowly, and it is useful to follow the cues of the materials themselves. *Earthquake* (2004), the other major piece in the exhibition, hummed, throbbed and glimmered at the rear of the gallery, beckoning the visitor to come and explore. It comprises a large, neatly quartered cube made of alternating sets of stacked washer/dryers and loudspeakers, and a film projected above the stack showing a green towel spinning round and round inside a similar front-loading dryer. Minimal in composition, the work displays a series of dualities that operate at a formal level: wood versus metal, fabric versus glass, light versus dark, real spinning towel versus its projected representation.

The experience of waiting expectantly for the laundry cycle to finish adds to the hypnotic and soothing thrumming that accompanies this mechanical dance. The hum of the spinning dryer, amplified by the speakers, is echoed aurally and visually by the sound of the film projector and the occasional stuttering vertical roll of the image. (I was reminded of some of Joan Jonas' early introspective video work.) I found myself swaying to the beat in a concert of automated acoustics for an audience of one. (There may be a reason so many frenzied love scenes end up in the laundry room, and Bolande's sculpture discreetly taps into the erotic sensation and sensual rhythms.) Moreover, its anonymous, utterly familiar forms capture the strange and undefined character of the launderette itself, one of the few zones where public activity meets the most private of domestic routines.

Bolande's art has always referenced cinema, but *Earthquake* is the first film she has shown in a gallery, apart from an animated short. The work as a whole is intensely spare and focused, and her projects suggest an inner clarity, a curious nature and a slow and methodical process of consideration toward a subject. Its lucid and declarative stance could serve as a useful model for contemporary artists exploring accumulated and post-photographic sculpture, as a way to investigate issues of representation and place. **Katie Stone**



Jennifer Bolande
Mountain
2004 Plywood, photographs 182x192x153cm

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

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.