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Bret Nicely: *Pass The Poverty Please*

June 21–July 19, 2008

Opening Reception: Saturday June 21, 2008

Circus Gallery is proud to present Bret Nicely's Los Angeles debut exhibition, *Pass the Poverty Please*. The atmosphere has definitely been 'circus', and after reading this rant, perhaps a circus setting is appropriate after all. For you readers thinking, "who will acquaint me with poverty," please stay with us.

Liberation? Nicely defers. When people are ready for a mass movement, they are usually ripe for any effective movement, and not solely for one with a coherent doctrine or program. However, it turns out that the appeal of mass movement is fundamentally different than the appeal of room-sized sculpture. Additionally, crumpling lustrous works on paper proves to be ameliorative in much the same manner as crafting a sturdy desk. Therefore, like wavy arms extending one hundred linear feet, from floor to mezzanine, the latter creates opportunities for self-advancement. Conversely, poverty, particularly while we are in this gaseous (daresay lathered?) phase, appeals not to those intent on bolstering and advancing a cherished self, but to those who crave to be rid of an unwanted self.

Hands are connected to arms, passing the poverty, and imitation is an essential unifying agent. The development of a milieu is inconceivable without uniformity. The

one-mindedness prized by every mass movement is achieved by imitation and by obedience, but obedience itself consists as much in the imitation of an example as in the following problem: The question is whether hands not only have a propensity for united action but are also equipped with a mechanism for their own realization. The answer is to copy the world until it's big enough to work in.



Heads are low-ranking officials whose photos could not be secured in time for the war effort. Now spelled "Hed", these heads are expanded, forming a camouflage called HEDUPAT. What is invisible resistance to tyranny? It is a coterie of amateurs, each evading the increasingly heavy hand of recognition, all taking a serious "time-out" to regroup, refocus, calmly evaluate the

situation, and knock options around. Invisible resisters (and implicitly, poverty passers) do not dumbly interrupt the landscape of expression. They are not big box retailers opening on tiny Main streets—but they may be that unwelcome.

Given the temper of the moment, an unreadable mentor may be just right: Bret Nicely is an artist living in Los Angeles. His animation *An Essay on Liberation* has been included in Projections on Lake, an ongoing public art project in Pasadena, CA. His audio work *Destination Back—And Beyond* was broadcast as part of *Radio Danièle*; a radio project curated by Christopher Williams and John Kelsey in conjunction with exhibitions at the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna and The Kunsthalle Zurich. In 2006 Nicely launched Artlthr.com, a web project that maps how the internet influences artistic practices. In 2004, Bret Nicely's monumental sculpture *Desk* was commissioned for *Stories from the Source: Design Excursions Out of the Ordinary*, the first biennial design conference at Art Center College of Design. Bret is currently Web Generalist at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. He has a BFA from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, and an MFA from Art Center College of Design.

Director: John Knuth

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