

ON SURFACE

DELIO DELGADO

WORDS, DISGUISES AND OTHER THINGS

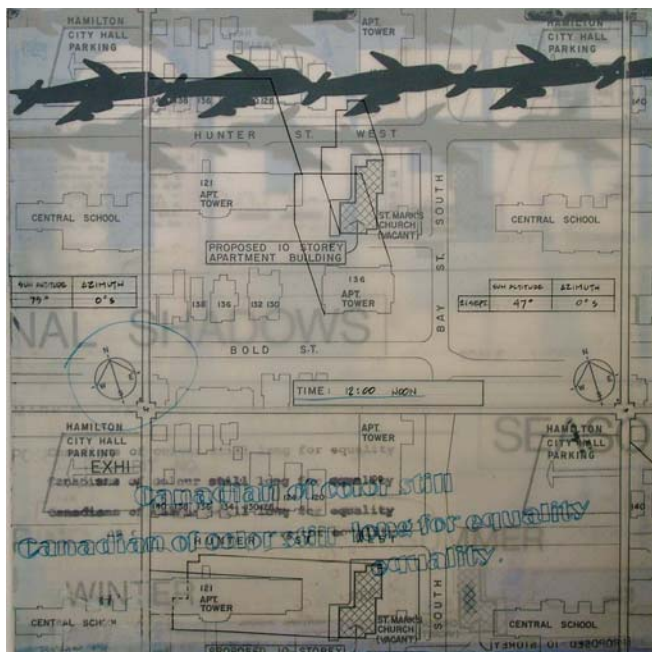
SEPTEMBER 11 - OCTOBER 24, 2009

OPENING FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 7 - 10 PM

Hamilton artist **Delio Delgado's** *Words, Disguises and Other Things* is the third in a series of four exhibitions taking place at The Print Studio in 2009. Under the title *On Surface*, the series features print-based works that explore the connection between the print/image and the meaning underlying its surface.

Delgado reworks the context of the cultural, historical and geographic location of images created and then discarded by others. A hint of utopia surfaces in maps and blueprint fragments as they realize their potential as parts of a larger plan.

-Curated by Ingrid Mayrhofer



A Common Year Starting on Tuesday¹

Randomness and chance

Happening upon discarded architectural drawings, artist Delio Delgado found the impetus for his most recent body of work *Words, Disguises and Other Things*. The drafts, which the artist has incorporated into a series of silkscreen and dry point etchings, contain the plans for a church which was, to Delgado's knowledge, never constructed. On their own the blueprints map out what was intended to be hallowed space. Looking at the delicately rendered lines of the plans, one can almost imagine the floating, ethereal light-filled space of the building that never was. Yet, an overlay of heavy black carborundum letters and numbers undercut the preciousness of the drawings. One print is marked by the numbers 1957; another contains a snippet of an interview with a man claiming to have lived hundreds of lifetimes. The text shifts our understanding of the imagery before us and moves our reading of the images away from the realm of pure architecture into other territory.

Cosmos

A related work in another series features geometric forms. A cluster of overlapping circles is featured in the lower left quadrant of the work. A triangular configuration hovers near the top. The cluster of circles is, in actuality, a representation of Mickey Mouse, which the artist has rendered over and over until the figure becomes pure abstraction. The triangular form is a representation of a plane. Both forms are anchored in a black field that is dotted with white markings, intended to embody the universe. Both forms are references to surveillance and terrorism.²

Randomness

In yet another grouping in the series of works the artist has hollowed out the insides of books and placed objects inside, the residue of the carved out books making a frame around them. In the case of each 'sculpture' there is no obvious reason as to why these two things should be placed together. And yet they are, and their placement together makes formal sense. One of the pieces contains a part of a car engine, deconstructed it appears as some sort of weaponry. The piece bears text that denotes that it was made by Bethlehem Steel (a manufacturer who also produced large-calibre guns.)

Nexus

In the fourth series of works, Delgado has incorporated maps into multi-layered squares. The grids of city streets from an area that stretches from Toronto, Ontario to Buffalo, New York form the supports of these pieces. To them the artist has added overlays of bits of blue and white. Bits of sky. To Delgado, these works are landscapes which map out the area surrounding the city in southern Ontario that the artist now calls home.

The groups of works that comprise *Words, Disguises and Other Things* bear no obvious threads that would link one of them to the other. Each visual trope that Delgado has employed carries a very specific connotation. For example, the church is seen as signifying spirituality and morality; maps (and, by extension, the act of mapping) suggest order and location; books signify language, knowledge and learning; and the universe, in its infinity, is seen as signifying both the unknown and endless possibility. The contexts into which the artist places signs and symbols, whilst simultaneously drawing out their usual associations, disrupts the ways in which they are habitually read and understood. Thus, the authority of the church is undermined by the addition of the overlay of text. The exact locations of the maps are displaced by the inclusion of arbitrary bits of blue paint. The book as a tool of communication and knowledge, and to a degree agency, becomes a repository of objects. The existence of surveillance equipment in outer space challenges the notion of the universe as unknowable. However, there are connections that can be drawn between the maps and the architectural drawings, the book sculptures and the satellite images. Once the elements of displacement and disruption are identified, the seemingly random groupings of works begin to make sense. The tracking and ordering of mapping systems is referenced in the architectural drawings and by the act of surveillance. The inherent violence of the 'Bethlehem' piece implicates religious

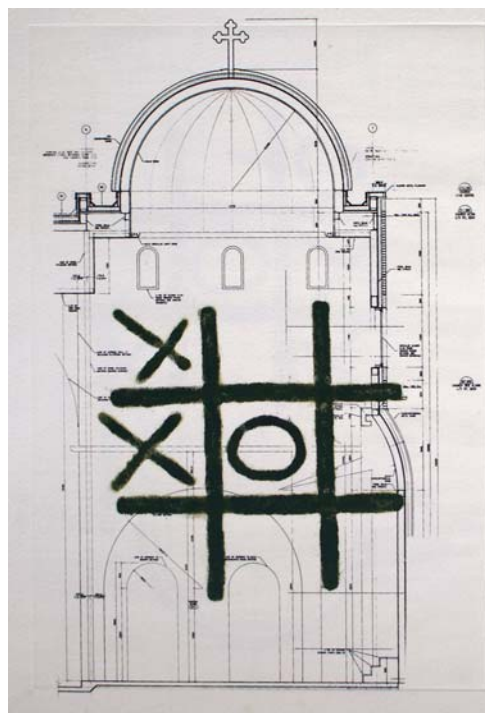
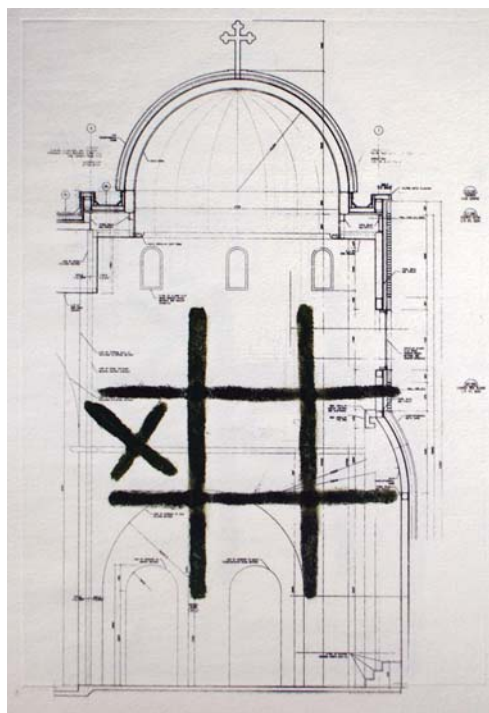
violence and the inherent violence of surveillance as well as the violence of forcing natural landscapes into sculpted grids.

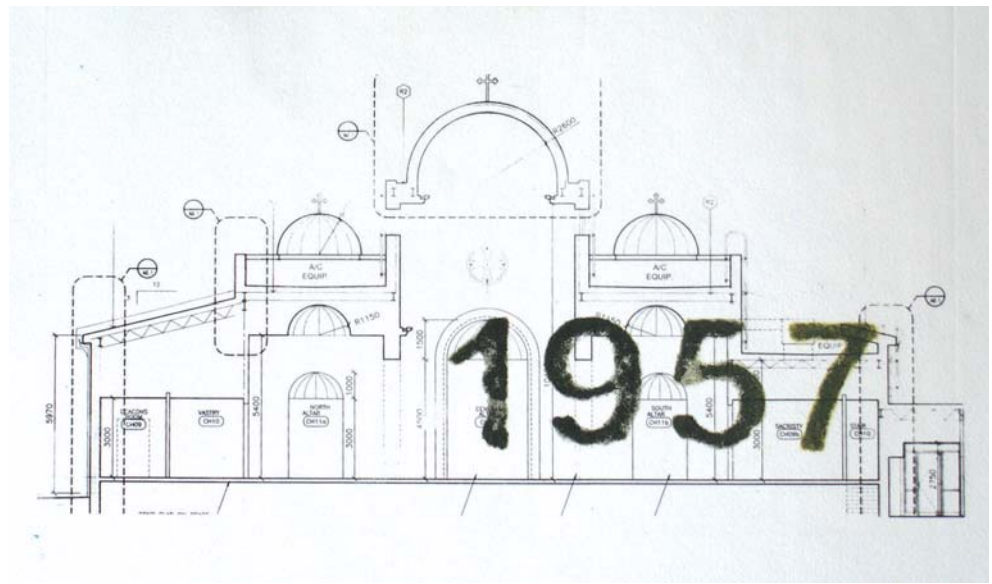
Throughout the installation, the artist inserts a personal narrative. Numbers reference his legal identity. The character of Mickey Mouse marks a figure of resonance for Delgado. The church references an educational upbringing that was infused with Roman Catholicism. The inclusion of various forms of self-portraiture marks Delgado's existence, and where he is positioned in relation to religion, violence, architecture, the landscape and the cosmos. Locating himself in the imagery, he brings forth personal subjective experience and the universal, that which is both near and far away. The artistic couplings in this series shift our perceptions of the images before us and the limitless pairings of materials and subjects to be found within them continually regroup to offer new readings of the works.

- Sally Frater, 2009

¹ According to Wikipedia the year 1957 was 'a common year starting on a Tuesday.' <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1957>. 08/04/2009.

² The artist had been on a trip to Disneyland and was struck by the number of surveillance cameras which dotted the theme park.





Delio Delgado is a Hamilton-based artist who graduated from the National School of Fine Art in Santo Domingo, D.R. in 1997, and holds BFAs from the Printmaking Studio and the Altos de Chavon School of Design.

Delgado is currently showing at the IDB Cultural Centre in Washington, D.C.

Solo exhibitions include The Print Studio, Conservatory for the Arts, Ground Up Gallery – in Hamilton, El Reino de los Ettes in D.R. and Nos Mes in Curacao. As part of an exchange with Cuban artists, he recently participated in group shows at the Centro Provincial de Arte in Cienfuegos and La Casa in Havana, parallel to the Xth Bienale de La Habana. His site-specific installation at Griffin House, titled The Poetry of Travel was created for the Hamilton phase of the exchange, ReMix Institute.

the Print Studio Hamilton Printmakers Arts Association

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Gallery hours
Wed—Fri: 10 am – 6 pm ; Sat: noon – 4 pm

Artist: Delio Delgado
Guest Writer: Sally Frater
Guest Curator: Ingrid Mayrhofer

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