

**Exhibition Upcoming**

**NEWS**



*Pep Boys 3* by Brian Ulrich

**Brian Ulrich *Copia*—Retail, Thrift, and Dark Stores, 2001–2011**

January 22 - May 18, 2014

This insightful, decade-long, three-phase investigation of the American consumer psyche traces a route from exuberant excess to the bleak architectural landscapes of closed malls and empty parking lots. For his first chapter, *Retail*, photographer Brian Ulrich traveled extensively across the United States to document shoppers in vast and ubiquitous enclosed malls and big-box stores. He relied on a hand-held camera with the viewfinder at waist level to create candid images of people

engrossed in navigating an abundance of goods. Ulrich then turned his attention to thrift stores, which became a primary destination for a growing segment of the country's population in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. The *Thrift* chapter focuses on workers attempting to bring order to the mountains of donated, discarded, and unwanted consumer products. Lastly, in *Dark Stores, Ghostboxes, and Dark Malls*, Ulrich utilized a large-format view camera to produce richly detailed photographs that explore the lasting impact of the economic recession. This chapter contains haunting landscapes of the interiors and exteriors of abandoned buildings.

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Still from *Mall of America* video by Josephine Meckseper

### **Between Critique and Absorption** Contemporary Art and Consumer Culture

January 22 - May 18, 2014

The six contemporary artists included in this exhibition—Kota Ezawa, Gabriel Kuri, Josephine Meckseper, Kaz Oshiro, Dan Peterman, and Shinique Smith—employ a range of visual and conceptual strategies to interrogate consumerism. The works on display explore various facets of commerce and exchange: they draw attention to the labor that generates goods for sale and the global networks created for commodity distribution; examine the social systems constructed to support consumer behaviors; address notions of value, specifically the disconnect between our inflated desire to own things and the ease and frequency of product disposal; and highlight the myriad ways the public is seduced by an economic structure that begets insatiable buying. As the title *Between Critique and Absorption* suggests, these artists offer nuanced commentary on the subject matter. Rather than criticizing the compulsion to consume on a superficial level, they dismantle this insistent cultural phenomenon from the inside out. This approach requires direct appropriation of the vocabularies and methodologies of the market forces they target, hence the use of source material like post-consumer plastic waste, discarded clothing, receipts, advertising and

marketing campaigns, window displays, and common household goods. The resulting artworks expose consumption as a flawed but enduring societal impulse.



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