HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS

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Jordan Seiler
Civilian

11.16 - 12.16.2017

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November 16th - December 16th, 2017

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46 Rue Jean d'Ardennestraat, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
www.hl-projects.com

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Unauthorized Installation, *Stavanger*, Norway 2012

Jordan Seiler

Civilian

Jordan Seiler operates around the premise that advertising pollutes and demeans our public spaces, by propagating a consumerist ideology that is harmful to individuals and our environment, while simultaneously eradicating the democratic conversations of civilians in favor of a homogenous corpo-political voice. The regime of order produced in the process fails to live up to our cities radical potential. His research, activism and artistic production go beyond aesthetics, exploring the infrastructures and mechanisms of advertising in the city. These strategies, street level interventions and the works he produces in the studio, are poetic forms of critical and at times reckless resistance.

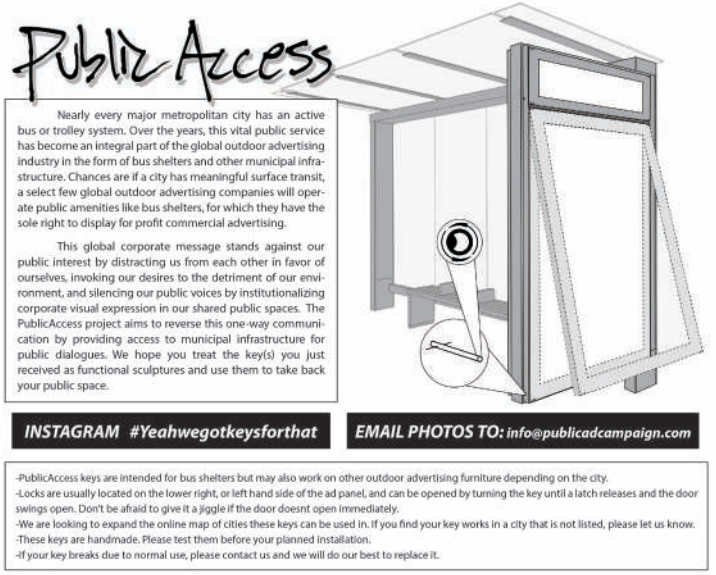
NYSAT: (New York Street Advertising Takeover) large scale participatory civil disobedience project, New York, 2009

NOAD mobile app: Berlin, Germany. 2016 (augmented artwork by John Fekner)

Download the PublicAdCampaign app on Android or iOS to demo the NOAD mobile app on this image.

PublicAccess: Functional key sculptures, 2015-ongoing (metal, rubber, dimensions variable)

Over more than 15 years, clear motivation has matured into an extremely social and often participatory form of practice. Part of this practice involves the production of resources, tools and the initiation of large-scale collaborations such as “NOAD” or “NYSAT”. The other, focuses on the creation of personal bodies of work, which explore the locations, materials and messages involved in the reclaiming of physical public space and the potential revealed by an absence of advertising. This duality is perhaps best articulated in his ongoing series of “PublicAccess” sculptures, which incidentally act as skeleton keys for most public advertising frames. While these are art objects and not intended for use, following their purchase, hundreds of buyers around the world have sent the artist images of their ad takeovers.



Republika: Warsaw, Poland. 2017
(27”x40” Edition of 5+2AP, 40”x60” Edition of 5+2AP. Giclee print with digital augmentation)

Suited: London, England. 2016
(27"x40" Edition of 5+2AP, Giclee print with digital augmentation)

(L)***Tunnel***: Warsaw, Poland. 2017
(27”x40” Edition of 15+2AP, Giclee print with digital augmentation)

(R) ***Bullseye:*** New York, United States. 2015
(27”x40” Edition of 5+2AP, 40”x60” Edition of 5+2AP. Giclee print with digital augmentation)

His first solo exhibition at Harlan Levey Projects begins with images from Seiler’s “Collisions” series, which was previously shown in “The Poster Remediated,” curated by David Crowley (Head of Critical Writing in Art & Design at the Royal College of Art in London). In “Collisions,” Seiler uses his own sculptures to replace advertisements with black and white posters reminiscent of op-art aesthetics, remaining at the scene of the crime to document his ephemeral interventions. The graphic images he places inside the frame demonstrate a desire to avoid exchanging one operative image with another, choosing instead for visually engaging signifiers that can be read by form, but not content. It is a style of work he began developing at the Rhode Island School of Design at the turn of the century.

Water Tower
26”x50”, Stolen advertising frame, Giclee print. 2015

Titan Smash
5x-12”x48” Stolen advertising materials, wood, paint, epoxy, 2017

The collage “Titan Smash” shows the side of his practice that not only replaces advertisements (or assists others in doing so), but also removes the entire infrastructure of advertising. Made with plexiglass and stolen advertising signage, this work is reminiscent of his show “Removal Satisfies the Condition” (2006) where the artist showed contempt for public advertising by exhibiting a series of stolen telephone booths, billboards and other backdrops for urban ads; the beginning of a large salvaged archive of public artifacts. In the same straightforward manner as “Collisions,” “Titan Smash” literally refer to Seiler’s ongoing ad-busting performance and blatant disregard for corporate authority as remnants of advertisements are smashed to pieces over and over again.

Insecure 26”x48.25” 2017 (stolen advertising, stolen plexi-glass, paint)

The works from his newest series “Labor,” are equally direct. In the back of the gallery, the noise of the city is replaced by the silence of the white cube as these works blend into the walls. Context, environment and the need for attention are stripped away in reductive illustrations that remove advertising first from public space and then of its own image. The result is minimal, and the effort to remove the advertisement immense. These are subtle works that are simultaneously obscure and heavy like the sense of civic duty Seiler employs in a generous approach to making art. The labor pieces are made by dressing up as a worker and driving around the city stealing advertising and the plexiglass that normally sits behind the ads to diffuse the backlighting that illuminates them at night. The advertisements are then taken into the studio where the text is painted out leaving only image. The plexi is then sanded down until it is cleaned of any blemishes and feels as close to a marble surface as possible. Each sanded piece is then layered on top of the ad until it is obscured to a point of satisfaction. Sometimes this makes it difficult to tell what you are looking at. The ghost ad images are tangible representations of the labor we all put in on a daily basis in the service of advertising and commercial media, consciously, but more often subconsciously.

A RISD graduate, Jordan Seiler is a New York-based artist and activist working with issues of advertising and collective agency in public space. Since the early 2000s, Seiler has coopted billboards and advertising spaces to display his own work, and has notoriously orchestrated large-scale 'takeovers' to draw attention to the overwhelming amount of advertising in public space as well as bring into question the ownership of that space. His work has been an inspiration for global activist projects like Art in Ad Places, Brandalism, No Ad Day, and included in exhibitions around the world such as the U.S. pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, Austin Museum of Digital Art and International Poster Biennale in Warsaw.

www.publicadcampaign.com

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