



*For Immediate Release*

**Antler Necklace**

Antoine Catala, Christine Gray, Valerie Hegarty, Jessica Labatte, Nichole van Beek, and Erika Somogyi

Curated by Amber Vilas

November 5 – 28, 2009

Opening Reception November 5th, 5pm-9pm

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*"Nature, then, in this its simplest acceptance, is a collective name for all facts, actual and possible, ... a collective name for everything which is."*

–John Stuart Mill

**Portland, OR** - Half/Dozen is pleased to present Antler Necklace, a group exhibition organized by New York writer and curator Amber Vilas. The exhibition explores the intersection of nature with culture and a synthetic representation of the natural world. The show's title is meant to light-heartedly prod at popular consumable hybrids of modern material culture with natural images. The exhibition brings together six artists hailing from New York, Chicago, and Richmond, Va. whose artwork adds to a discussion of a mediated experience of nature through society and a produced cultural object.

America has a cultural iconography tied to the idea of a sublime connection to an all-encompassing untamed wildness. Romantic painters of the early nineteenth century produced images of steep cliffs, vast forests, and horizon lines untouched by remnants of an industrialized modern world. This wildness that they depicted has long since been tamed and repackaged in the form of natural signifiers such as charm necklaces with antler and leaf pendants, faux wood wallpaper, Fiji water bottles with a vignette of a tropical beach, and fake rocks for hiding house keys.

In our "post-post" society we have become detached from feelings of awe and wonder generated by immersion in the natural world and as a response have hybridized natural images into our everyday lives. Yet, connection is still possible. Although we may be surrounded by concrete and roads, one billboard of an island getaway can serve as a window through which an intuitive and pure connection with the self can be achieved. The trend of representing artwork and consumable objects referencing the natural world through synthetic means has two sources: a loss of connection to nature in an increasingly industrialized modern world and the search for a sublime experience through artwork representing nature.

The art world has continued to offer examples of works that present a beautiful image, just as romantic painters presented a wild, "pure" nature that the viewer could visually enter to have a sublime experience. At the same time, the art world today uses many mixed cultural and natural references. If nature holds to qualities of transcendence and an innate gravity towards the sublime, then the synthetic, although it can be made to be aesthetically pleasing, will always be soulless and create a barrier of connection to the sublime not present in beauty or nature. This exhibition explores the creative and destructive capabilities inherent in the relationship between the synthetic and the sublime.

Half/Dozen is located in the Everett Station Galleries at 625 NW Everett St, #111, Portland, OR 97209.

**Half/DOZEN**

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