

ARTFORUM

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Charlotte Prodger and Jason Loeb

ESSEX STREET

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Everywhere at Essex Street gallery, one sees objects depicted nearing the end of life. Faded signatures and waning pastel Visa logos are overlaid with sections of credit card information in Jason Loeb's five untitled vertical prints (all works 2012). The enlarged four-color images degrade this quotidian plastic object of symbolic exchange that characterizes an age of increasing immateriality. The murky printed figments are mounted to backbones of stiff wood panel, a material that associates with industrial labor and an age of production preceding the flexible credit economy. Appearing expended and worn, the images of the cards coincide historically with downgraded country credit ratings, saturated consumer debt, and the plastic card's own scheduled obsolescence in the face of more surreptitious payment methods via mobile phones.

The gallery is enlivened by a pristine boom box and two television monitors. They are part of Charlotte Prodger's installation, *:-**, which also includes printed transcripts and audiovisual paraphernalia. One monitor presents the surgical destruction of spotless Nike sneakers. With a pornographic intent, the camera records as the shoes are caressed and ultimately severed lengthwise, producing crisp, dulcet sounds of lacerated rubber and ripped synthetic leather. Another monitor shows two men's legs in a flirty dialogue, their feet trading shoes back and forth. Both sequences are taken from the same anonymous YouTube account. A voice recounting jaunts through ephemeral European discos emanates from the double-cassette boom box—as a collector's object now displaced from its original use, it's fit to project only memories of dance halls past, rather than blasting disco in situ. The sonorous reading, together with the documentation of a shoe dissection, color an environment of fetishizing nostalgia and plead to engage the scientifically elusive autonomous sensory meridian response, a blissful tingling calmness released from the brain to the limbs that is induced by soft voices and hushed sounds. Both artists in this two-person show take pause over objects or memories that have reached the end of their original intent, while assembling potential for an aesthetic reincarnation.

- Nicolas Linnert