

# press release

Contact: Donna Meeks  
925-3615

## THE KITCHEN

video • music • dance • performance

## PERSUASION(S)

October 15-November 5, 1983

Opening reception: Friday, October 14, 5-7pm

The Kitchen Gallery

Enter 59 Wooster Street

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 1-6pm

Information: 925-3615

**GALLERY** - Opening Friday, October 14 and running through Saturday, November 5, The Kitchen will present PERSUASION(S), a group exhibition of works by Dennis Adams, Doug Ashford, Joseph Beirne, Jenny Holzer, Greg Sholette and Anthony Silvestrini in the gallery at 59 Wooster Street.

PERSUASION(S) focuses on the appropriation and re-contextualization of the conventions of public display and advertising. While such appropriation has long been a staple of Modernist and contemporary art production, the six artists presented here use this contextual shift as a point of departure. Their aim is to project beyond the surface of appropriation per se in order to embrace the viewer, to address him or her within (or as if within) the public space.

At the same time, there is another, perhaps more important, "space" the artists of PERSUASION(S) seek to engage. That space represents the distance separating producer and consumer, authority and representation. It is within this territory that they divert the forms and methodology of public address for their own purposes, revealing a wide spectrum of attitudes towards the viability of a sign's power to convince.

DENNIS ADAMS' most recent works have been publically-installed pieces, including a bus shelter at Broadway & 66th Street in Manhattan. Combining large-format photography and text in the manner of a typical kiosk, Adams describes his shelter as "an attempt to undermine the link between manipulation (advertising) and passivity (waiting), subverting the network of ideological representations." He is currently working on another bus shelter on a commission by the city of Baltimore.

DOUG ASHFORD's enamel on metal paintings combine imagery from a number of disparate photographic sources (including, most recently, Japanese cartoons) with statements aimed at the loci of power (the banks, real estate interests, the military, etc.). Ashford underscores the relationship of art to these centers of authority, evoking at once the powerlessness of art in the face of such authority and a determination to struggle against that lack of power.

JOSEPH BEIRNE re-locates everyday objects into narrative (over)

**484 Broome Street (between West Broadway and Wooster) New York City**  
**mail: 59 Wooster Street, New York, New York 10012 (212) 925-3615**

(PERSUASION(S) cont.)

constructs along with prepared objects, texts (some also culled from found sources), and imagery. Beirne deliberately forces contradictions in that he rebus-like works are made up of highly-charged political images and statements but, in fact, yield no specific political message upon decoding. Instead he sees his work as a "metaphysical investigation, questioning the ontic underlayment of political art."

In JENNY HOLZER's texts, the banality of everyday language (in both its visual - i.e., topographic - and ideational forms) is set against the evil of extremist discourse in a process both subversive of and subverted by the mechanisms of meaning. The blatantly authoritarian tone of her opinions, statements and demands in such work as the Truisms, Essays and Living series would seem to evidence an attempt to subjugate the viewer. In fact it is this blatancy which reveals the true nature of the viewer's relationship to authoritarian designs, robbing those designs of their power over the viewer.

GREG SHOLETTE's work pits text, photo or other public sources of information against a new context. This displacement provides for ironic readings and political ruptures to be discovered in the original meaning of the text or picture. Elements taken from museum display, scientific or archaeological diaramas, window signs and the conventions of painting and sculpture are all used to create this antagonism. Sholette seeks to "reach a fairly wide audience by being accessible on a few levels of interpretation."

ANTHONY SILVESTRINI uses set phtography focusing in part on figures posed like those in advertising and political art of the 40's, 50's and 60's. By drawing parallels between physiological and ideological attitudes, Silvestrini deconstructs the latter; in doing so, he reminds the viewer of similarities in the strategies of any campaign seeking subscribers.