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EXHIBITION: *Naughty Teens / Garbanzo Beans*

A solo exhibit by Los Angeles based artist Eric Yahnker

6.06.09 – 8.09.09

Opening Reception 6.06.09 (7-9 p.m.)

AMBACH & RICE is pleased to present *Naughty Teens/Garbanzo Beans*, a solo exhibit of new drawings and sculpture by Los Angeles based artist Eric Yahnker.

Through drawing and sculpture Yahnker constructs an absurd web of politics, history, pop culture, literature, and philosophy. Pervasive humor functions as glue between both the taboo and banal. Yahnker describes his work as “intended to function like a dramatic actor cast to ‘play it straight’ in a slapstick comedy” rewarding those in on the joke. In *Naughty Teens/Garbanzo Beans* one finds a partial cast of military personnel, alarmed fruit, a colossal four-eyed dog, and scrambled fantasy art, coexisting in a sort of comedic loop that resembles a cat chasing its own tail.

Naughty Teens/Garbanzo Beans is predominated by Yahnker's heroic graphite and colored pencil drawings. A self-proclaimed purist at heart, Yahnker's sweeping photorealistic renderings are a testament to his passion for drawing. His compositions contrast conceptual poignancy and arduous labor, as if running a marathon to tell a joke. Yet Yahnker's works represent more than epic one-liners. A tension between surface and subtext is achieved through the artist's interventions and appropriations. In the drawing *Selected Reading (Nausea)* Yahnker amalgamates a film still of Dorothy from *The Wizard Of Oz* reading a copy of Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, presumably shocked by the French philosopher's brand of existentialism.

Yahnker asserts that he prefers his works to be “read” rather than simply “viewed.” He originally pursued a degree in journalism “ultimately discovering that although the journalist and the comedian share the same job description: to seek truth, only one has the license to stretch it.” This fondness for the malleability of language is most clearly evinced in his on going series of text pieces in which a selection of letters are replaced by pop culture imagery. Yahnker refers to these works as a “a guessing game, not unlike playing Hangman, or TV's *Wheel of Fortune*. ” In *We ARE THE WORLD/WE ARE THE CHILDREN* twenty-five iconic eighties pop stars act as placeholders for the hit record's title.

In addition to drawings Yahnker will exhibit a selection of sculptures, two of which he describes as ‘process’ or ‘endurance’ works. In *Analogous To The Fall of That One Empire (Moby Dick)* Yahnker presents a literal dissemination of language by individually cutting out and alphabetizing every letter, number, and punctuation in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, arranging the letters in small Robert Smithson-esque mounds atop mirrored tiles. In *Analogous To The Fall of That One Empire (Gap Shirt)* every thread of a men's button up shirt is painstakingly removed, excluding the pin stripe pattern, resulting in a apparition defined

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by a seemingly tenuous circulatory system. Both works were produced between 2004 and 2005 and serve as a reflection of the artist's mental state amidst the previous Bush administration. The works recall Andy Kaufman's stand up performances in which he read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* aloud until the audience was emptied. Both 'endurance' pieces combine alienation and absurdity, and as Yahnker remarks, "can be equated to the bad joke that lasts so long, it becomes hilarious."

Eric Yahnker was born in Torrance, California. He received his B.F.A. in animation from the California Institute Of Arts and studied journalism at University of Southern California. Recent exhibitions include *Dolly Parton Behind A Tree*, Kim Light Gallery, Los Angeles, *L.A. Potential*, HangART-7, Salzburg, Austria, curated by Hubert Schmalix, Roger Herman, and *Found/Gevonden/Trouve*, Voorkamer, Lier, Belgium. He currently works and resides in Los Angeles, California.

To request additional information or images contact info@ambachandrice.com