

TimeOut

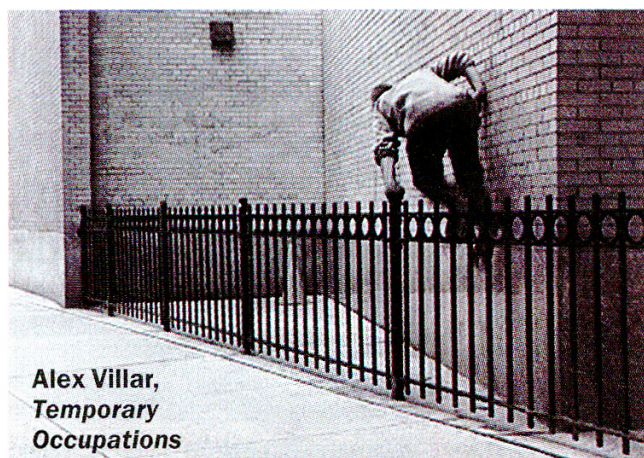
New York

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Art and Town Museum

Reviews



Alex Villar,
*Temporary
Occupations*

“Mind the Gap”

Smack Mellon, through Apr 30
(see Brooklyn)

There's a growing disconnect between how urban planners (not to mention real-estate developers) envision life in the big city and the day to day reality for most folks—hence the “gap” in the title of this savvy, social-

ly conscious group show curated by Eva Diaz and Beth Stryker. Just look outside Smack Mellon's picture windows at Dumbo's beautifully renovated waterfront park. Multimillion-dollar residences on former artists' turf never looked better.

Taking a conceptual approach, most

of the artists here convey a sense of humanity lost. Michael Rakowitz proposes novel means for claiming urban space: a car (or at least a car-shaped cover) made from fabric and PVC poles. Park it in a legal spot and you've got yourself a place for the night. For the 2003 Istanbul Biennial, Colombian artist Doris Salcedo

built a huge stack of homey wooden chairs in the space between two impersonal, modernist-style buildings (the project is represented here by two fine etchings). Even more poetic are Elizabeth Felicella's black-and-white photographs of Queens. These vistas of open water and urban sprawl have just one thing in common: They're all located directly in the path of the runways at JFK. Felicella calls attention to urban space that is, literally, passed over.

The most inspiring piece in “Mind the Gap” is Alex Villar's projection, *Temporary Occupations*. In it, a man traverses a series of urban no-man's-lands; he scales fences, shoves himself into narrow crevices between buildings, never for a moment stopping—or even breaking his stride. The feeling of displacement may be everywhere these days, but if you're fast, it might not catch up to you.

—Sarah Schmerler