



Heimir Björgúlfsson
Stories of Events
or Arctic Tropic Trash Soundtracks

(project space: Jake Jones – audio/video installation)

April 24 – June 13, 2009

Opening Reception Friday, April 24, 2009; 6-8pm

During the course of the past year Heimir Björgúlfsson rediscovered a ‘lost’ compilation recording he’d made in 2003, originally meant for release on a Japanese label. As he listened to the album he looked through piles of photographs from his past travels. The resulting work is a series of 33 photo collages (perhaps alluding to an LP’s rotational speed) whose title, *Arctic Tropic Trash Soundtracks*, is also the album title and the surname of the current exhibition.

Björgúlfsson was born and raised on an island of tundra, glaciers, geysers and volcanoes. In his early 20’s he left Iceland to study art and music in the Netherlands (a country that should’ve been underwater). After his studies he attended a studio residency in Los Angeles (a city that should’ve been a desert) where he still resides today. Always sensitive to his surroundings, Björgúlfsson’s artistic output comprises a sort of experimental ecosystem, poised between the real and the invented, the natural and the artificial. In his sculptures, taxidermied birds, beer bottles, butterflies and razor blades press up against each other in agitated harmony. The carefully drawn varietal birds that populate his collages might be threatened or they could be invasive. The concrete edifices they share space with could be new exurban outposts or they could be dilapidated urban ruins.

Although Björgúlfsson’s interests draw from current societal and ecological concerns, the environment he charts is more personal. His sources and inspirations are always closely linked to his own experiences, some more extreme than others. Last April, while changing a tire on an LA freeway, a car hit Björgúlfsson, crushing both of his legs. In the sculpture *Tropics Are Not For Everyone*, a stuffed and bloodied bird, bound in pink twine juts from the underside of a vinyl record. The wrapped bird extends through the hole of the record and is counterbalanced from above by a dense flock of butterflies. At the very top, an ostrich egg perches precariously on the mouth of a glass bottle. Given Björgúlfsson’s musicianship and his long, painful recovery from the accident, it’s tempting to read this sculpture solely as an autobiographical allegory in sculptural form. But his inventive sourcing of materials and effective pursuit of formal equilibrium transform this self-revelation into an emotionally universal totem.

No matter how specific or universal, Björgúlfsson’s work mirrors the complexity inherent in any community or environment. Every high-school biology class studies the peppered moth, the light-speckled species that gradually developed a darker camouflage pattern during the English Industrial Revolution. As the trees on which they lived grew darker with soot, the lighter moths were picked off, leaving their darker siblings to reproduce. This easy to grasp case study of natural selection provides a nice doorway into the convoluted world of adaptation and survival in nature and society, a world which Björgúlfsson explores with the scrutiny of an ornithologist and the imagination of, well, a great artist.

Heimir Björgúlfsson was born in Reykjavík, Iceland, and lives and works in Los Angeles. He attended the Gerrit Rietveld Academy of Fine Arts, Amsterdam (BFA) and the Sandberg Institute, Amsterdam (MFA) and received a degree in Sonology from The Royal Conservatory, Den Haag. He has exhibited internationally in galleries and museums. Björgúlfsson is represented by CTRL, Houston and Western Project, LA.

Project space

Houston artist Jake Jones collects and transforms what most everyone else throws out and forgets. Weathered slats, outdated speaker-boxes and discarded water-skis form the patchwork walls of his sculptural video

installation on view at CTRL entitled *Cinema Zero / reeducation chamber for the consistently comatose*. Through a tightening hallway, down some steps and around the corner, a bank of rehabilitated televisions pulses with Jones' skillfully edited assemblage of forgotten or obscure videos and films. The video is the cinematic equivalent of his carpentry. Cobbled together from discarded entertainment, the mesmerizing 30-minute audio/video loop is at once familiar and disorienting. Jones' installation, part secret club house, part surveillance van, crouches in the gallery like a apparition constructed from our abandoned past and overlooked present.

Jake Jones is an BFA candidate at the University of Houston. He has exhibited throughout the Houston area, including a recent solo presentation at Project Row Houses.

CTRL is located at 3907 Main Street in Midtown Houston
Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm
For more info: 713-523-2875 -or- www.ctrlgallery.com