

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MICHAEL ARCEGA**

*Misusefulness*

November 20 – December 21, 2008



Nicelle Beauchene Gallery is pleased to present *Misusefulness*, the first New York solo exhibition by San Francisco based artist Michael Arcega.

*Misusefulness* investigates asymmetric relationships between the values placed upon ordinary objects and their futility when pushed beyond their parameters of everyday use. Repudiating convention and pushing the mechanics of function, utility and purpose, these objects are designed to occupy a liminal space, where identities become distorted and disorienting. Arcega employs humor and parody to rip into current social and political issues, satirizing heavy-handed concerns through a twist of linguistics and puns.

Arcega's *Diversion-Safe-Cams* are designed to investigate the use of military tactics and espionage in the domestic sphere. Constructed from diversion safes that mimic mundane household goods (shaving cream, canned goods, hairspray etc), these objects are converted into yet another concealment device: pinhole spy cameras. The duality of these pieces reference the improbable nature of such cameras operating as high-tech spy gear leading to an indeterminacy that Arcega assigns to the work. However implausible these cameras may be, Arcega activates them through a series of photographs that are staged around locations of 'interest' throughout the Bay Area. Inspired by diversion safes, *Concealarium* acts as a hiding place for people, referencing events and concerns related to illegal border crossing, undocumented labor, and people in 'hiding'. The complete set of 'his and hers,' units lends an unyielding sense of humor to the social issues he is addressing.

Michael Arcega was born in the Philippines and currently lives and works in San Francisco. He received his BFA at the SF Art Institute and is currently working towards his MFA at Stanford University. He recently has had solo exhibitions at the deYoung Museum (San Francisco), Marx & Zavattero (San Francisco) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego. He is currently participating in the California Biennial and the 'One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now' exhibition, which has traveled from the Asia Society and Museum (New York) to The Blaffner Gallery (Houston), The Berkeley Art Museum, The Japanese American National Museum, and the Honolulu Academy of Art.



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