

ISE CULTURAL FOUNDATION

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A Conflicted State

January 22–February 20, 2009

Opening reception on Thursday, January 22, 2009

Performance: Friday, January 30, 2009

Artists: Ernest Concepcion, Mike Estabrook, Susan Graham, Sarah Hardesty, Jeff Kao, Beth Krebs, and Stephen B. Nguyen

Curated by Lauren Schell Dickens



Stephen B. Nguyen, *Glass House*, 2008, Oil paint and gloss varnish on interior wall

ISE Cultural Foundation is pleased to present “A Conflicted State”, a group exhibition curated by Lauren Schell Dickens, and featuring work by Ernest Concepcion, Mike Estabrook, Susan Graham, Sarah Hardesty, Jeff Kao, Beth Krebs, and Stephen B. Nguyen.

“A successful work of art is not one which resolves contradictions in a spurious harmony, but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure.”

– Theodor Adorno

Contemporary life is defined by conflict, and to a large extent, our identities are shaped by these pressures. In and of itself, conflict is neither negative nor positive; warring ideas divide and destroy as much as they force self-reflection and creative resolution. The artists in this exhibition each address a unique set of contradictory impulses in their work. Driven by the medium, inquiries into visual perception, collaboration propelled by antagonistic interaction, memories of a personal past, and fears for the future, these artists don’t present solutions, but grapple from within the suspended moment of conflict, to reach a path of self-discovery. Several pieces in the exhibition hint at a desire for escape—from reality, the past, or ourselves—and a frustrated inability to do so. As humans, we yearn for resolution. Instead, we are caught in a perpetual state of contradiction from which, as these seven artists show us, the creative act emerges.