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Politics is Like Trying to Screw a Cat in the Ass (Part 3)

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by Jeriah Hildwine

On Saturday, November 7, Sign of the Times opened at Monique Meloche in her new location on Division Street. More Economics than Poli Sci, the work in Sign of the Times is all about the money. The works address economic hardship and decline, unemployment, globalization, and recession, and features work by Kim Beck, Máximo González, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung, Michael Patterson-Carver, and Carrie Schneider.

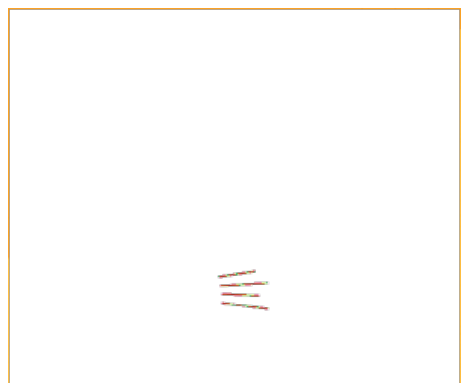


Máximo González "Las Fantasmas Que Producen La Guerra" (not from the current exhibition)

Máximo González collages out-of-circulation currency. The best of these is his Animal Freezing Machine, 2006. A giant machine like a prehistoric sea scorpion scoops up hapless wildlife and transforms them into ice cream. It's environmentalist about on the level of The Lorax, which is to say a bit simplistic but charming. The sweetness is cut by the machine's mechanical malice, and the easy-to-imagine grinding of fur and bone. The use of brightly

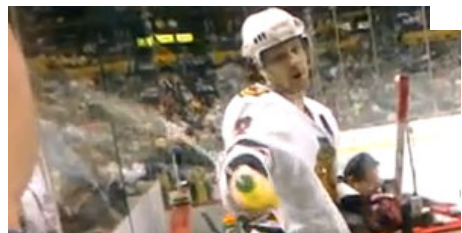
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colored foreign (to me) currency, with its tight engraving lines, gives the collage a steampunk feeling, of monstrous robots depicted in a Victorian engraving.



Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung "In G.O.D. We Trust"

Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung's *In G.O.D. We Trust*, 2009, shows Barack Obama as a sort of divine superhero who travels the world fixing everything...sort of. The video is so over-the-top with heavily-laden political imagery that it sort of shoots the moon in terms of ham-handedness. This oversaturation and horror vacui are trademarks of Hung's videos, and are appropriate for the treatment of politics in the media: it says, basically, "OH GOD OH GOD EVERYTHING IS BROKEN WE'RE ALL FUCKED," but the South Park grade animation and upbeat soundtrack make it absolutely hilarious as well, and the irreverent treatment of Obama is a breath of fresh air.



Carrie Schneider "Recession"

Carrie Schneider's *Recession* is a beautiful photograph. A woman leans forward against a vacant storefront, her pose awkward and her body supported only by the thin sheet of glass. The shopping bags and vacant storefront are clear signs that it is an economic recession that is meant, but the figure's posture implies another meaning as well: beyond its meaning in economics, the word "recession" can refer to the act of pulling away or withdrawing.

These artists use different solutions to making political art, some more direct, others oblique. What all successful political artists have in common is that they give us a new perspective on a hot issue, rather than simply reciting an opinion we've heard before. Political art is at its best when it's art first and foremost, and only incidentally a work of politics.

Published in [Art Criticism](#) and tagged [Carrie Schneider](#), [Jeriah Hildwine](#), [Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung](#), [Kim Beck](#), [Máximo González](#), [Michael Patterson-Carver](#), [Monique Meloche](#)

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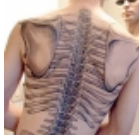
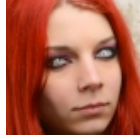
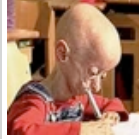
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