



View of Máximo González's exhibition, showing (left) *Decorative* and (right) *Aluminum*, both 2010; at the Hyde Park Art Center.

the historical landscape and decaying corpses in a forensic body farm—all speaking to the determined provincialism of her life in Virginia.

Having always remained peripheral in her work, she becomes the central subject in the recent self-portraits. These haunting and haunted images evidence an exploration of the self. Within the frames and through her shifting and fragmented glances, an interior life is revealed. Sometimes appearing psychologically distant, Mann is encountered as a mother, wife, artist, daughter of the South and, most of all, a fading body and soul.

Although the seven intermediate galleries featured a variety of photographic mediums, including Polaroids, Cibachrome prints and digital prints, the majority of the works were made using the same 19th-century method as the self-portraits. Characterized by intractable chemistry and an urgency of timing, collodion wet plates provide a fertile ground for the creative evolution of photographic imagery. The medium captures residues of its liquid interaction and is sensitive to the artist's gestures in the processes of exposure and developing, so that chance plays a key role in the pictorial effects of the images. Mann permits accidental droplets and streaks to remain on the plates, and the ensuing abstraction both transforms and, paradoxically, magnifies her subjects, offering new views and conceptions of the body and the self. Through the liquidness of the collodion process, her picture planes become rectangular petri dishes breeding enigmatic

cultures of the sensorial and the spiritual worlds. In her intuitive union of process and subject, Mann stirs together elements of chemistry, biology and metaphysics, producing curious images of persistent melancholy and ambiguity.

—Paul Ryan

CHICAGO MÁXIMO GONZÁLEZ HYDE PARK ART CENTER

Máximo González, an Argentinian who lives and works in Mexico City, is best known for intricate murals and collages created with paper money. Lately he has changed materials, if not his general focus. In 2010, González won the Premio Tequila Centenario at the Zona Maco art fair in Mexico City for *Warning Monument*, a large-scale installation incorporating dozens of shiny new red plastic household items. For the five works in "Material Poems," his exhibition at Hyde Park Art Center (where he was in residence during the summer of 2010), González combed flea markets around Chicago for domestic goods. Here we see him widening his often playful investigation into notions of value, with an emphasis on home economics.

In *Insomnia Victims' Favorite Wallpaper*, González drew on a found wallpaper-printing cylinder. Among the mainly damaged or broken-off parts of its raised metal design is one intact element: a cooking pot. In graphite, González added vessels, clock faces, burners and swirling steam, creating a kitchen scene in which one can imagine sleep potions or hot toddlers being concocted.

The installation *Decorative* took its cue from a splotchy red and white enamelware cup that was hung high on the left-hand corner of a wall. From it tumbled glossy red and white strands of flowers, and silhouettes of words from peeled-off red vinyl lettering. Completing the ensemble were four framed abstract paintings on paper informed by the cup's suggestive patterns, in which the viewer can't help but seek hidden imagery.

There were also two videos. *We Recycle* is an animation projected onto the blade of a handsaw painted by a previous owner with a pastoral scene, including a barn. In the 30-second loop, a man emerges from the barn and saws down a tree, which pops back up the minute he returns to the barn. In the video *Straight Jacket*, screened on a monitor, González stands in an unfurnished high-rise apartment, furiously removing a series of white shirts. These have been buttoned together at the sleeves or collars, forming a continuous, chainlike cloth cocoon around his body.

Aluminum 1886 is a large installation of more than 100 vintage serving platters, trays and vessels that the artist borrowed from a local collector and arranged on the wall in a neat rectangle. According to the gallery statement, the objects were hung precariously so as to indicate the fluctuating nature of the value of aluminum. (The title references the year that an affordable process for extracting aluminum was patented.) That connection does not translate at all, but the piece was visually commanding.

—Ruth Lopez