

January, 2004 - “Suggestive Persuasion”

On January 2, 2004 and continuing until the end of the month, artist David E. Stone’s first exhibition from his year-long project, **one year in LA** will be shown in thirty five movie theaters (the Laemmle Theater chain) in the Los Angeles area. This exhibition entitled “Suggestive Persuasion” is an allusion to both the film industry & Hollywood and the subliminal experiments James Vicary, a marketing specialist, allegedly conducted in a movie theater in New Jersey in the mid-1950s.

Vicary’s experiment, which he later revealed to be a hoax, was to rapidly flash the words, “Eat Popcorn” and “Drink Coke” during the showing of a film and subsequently would increase the sales of those refreshments at the theater. He proclaimed that the sales had drastically increased as a result of this subliminal persuasion. The idea that one could be manipulated without one’s knowledge struck fear into the American public and to the extent that as late as 1974 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) banned subliminal advertising from radio and television.

Fifty years later, Stone, too, is projecting the persuasive suggestion, “Eat Popcorn” and “Drink Coke” onto movie screens but for this art exhibition the phrases are depicted slowly during the intermission slides in between the film showings along with other advertisement and trivia question slides. Although not intended to convey a subliminal message, the presentation of the text and obviousness of the suggestion will appear strangely out of place even though the message is in the perfect context for it to make sense.

During January, the **one year in LA** gallery at 2121 N. San Fernando Road will feature related works inspired by Stone’s projected pieces from the theaters including works from the subscription “Patron” and “Souvenir” editions (which will be issued each month) . **An opening reception will be held at the gallery on Saturday, January 10, 2004 from 6pm – 10pm.**

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