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Nicole Belle, *Untitled* (left), 2010

B-SIDES

A Dialogue with Contemporary U.S. Photography

October 21 – December 11, 2010

FotoFest Headquarters Gallery
1113 Vine Street, Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 21, 2010 6-9pm

HOUSTON, TEXAS - SEPTEMBER 28, 2010 - *B-Sides: A Dialogue with Contemporary U.S. Photography*, is a group exhibition of contemporary photography at FotoFest **October 21 – December 11, 2010**. The **Public Reception is Thursday, October 21, 2010, 6-9pm**. *B-Sides* is the second exhibition of FotoFest's 2010-2011 Exhibition Season.

The eight artists exhibited in *B-Sides* explore themes fundamentally tied to the current state of affairs in the U.S. They each bring to the exhibit vastly different ways of working with conceptual photography, from staged and conceptual still imagery to animation, performative and appropriated video. They address technology, the American political process, grief and loss, identity, growth and youth culture. Six of the artists are based in the United States: **Nicole Belle** (Los Angeles); **Tim Davis** (New York); **Richard Mosse** (New York); **Nic Nicosia** (Santa Fe); **David Oresick** (Chicago) and **RJ Shaughnessy** (Los Angeles). The other two artists are based outside of the U.S.: **Emilio Chapela** (Mexico) and **Susi Jirkuff** (Austria).

“The works in this exhibition are new or have not been widely seen,” says curator Jennifer Ward, FotoFest Exhibitions Coordinator. “The exhibition’s title refers to the reverse, or ‘B-Side’ of a vinyl record – the side that typically contained additional, often complementary music tracks. *B-Sides* was envisioned as a way to show other, interesting bodies of work that inform, complement or contrast with what audiences may have previously seen from of these artists’ work.”

Nicole Belle’s photography, staged in the confines of her small apartment, appears to be improvised dance performances. The images are physical and full of movement. A dense netting of thread hangs from the ceiling of the small room where the images are made. It drapes over her body and that of her newborn infant, alternately a threatening trap and a tender swaddling cloth.

Tim Davis’ series *My Life in Politics*, is photographic exploration of the American political landscape from proverbial “sea to shining sea” and all points in-between. Participants from all areas of the system are represented in the project: far right-wing religious activists, anarchists, lobbyists from both sides of the aisle, national and state-wide legislators and small town candidates.

Irish-born **Richard Mosse** is best known for the photographs and video he has made in the aftermath of conflict in locations like Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon and Congo. His video *Fraternity* is a staged piece presenting the college-aged members of the DKE fraternity at Yale University screaming until exhaustion for free beer. One of the university's most prestigious groups, DKE counts five former presidents as past members.

Nic Nicosia's large, panoramic photographic series *Space Time Light* references both performance and installation work. Carefully constructed rooms are filled with deliberately arranged elemental elements like light, dirt, snow and sand. The walls are covered in modest and grand landscapes that reference the rooms' contents.

David Oresick is a young, recent graduate of the MFA program at Columbia College, Chicago. He scours the online video site YouTube for the source material for his montages. His newest work, *The Dream Songs*, sensitively stitches together clips of people talking about death, despair and loss with poetic scenes of nature and animals. The pacing of the video is meditative and somber – a collective eulogy for the unknown departed.

RJ Shaughnessy is a successful fashion and celebrity photographer. His series and book *Deathcamp* are based on his art school years in Pasadena, California at the artist collective of the same name. The series is a slick and stylish Larry Clark-like documentary of those years.

Mexican artist **Emilio Chapela** has several series exploring online and digital technologies. Google, and its quest to classify and catalogue everything, everywhere, is a frequent subject. One such series is *Ask Google...* Google has a process for suggesting or completing searches for their users as they type in the search window. Mr. Chapela began typing questions about various nationalities, ethnic and religious groups. Suggested searches include “Why are Mexicans short?”; “Why are Americans so fat?”; “Why are Arabs so violent?” and “Why are Jews hated?” The suggested searches, based on popular past queries, are effectively a barometer of the web's collective unconsciousness.

Austrian video artist **Susi Jirkuff** puts globalized stereotypes on display, mixing pop-culture and political icons like rapper 50 Cent, former president George W. Bush and cartoon dog Gromit. Her videos are humorous and often astute commentaries on modern media and contemporary identity.

B-Sides continues through December 11, 2010 at **FotoFest Headquarters Gallery, 1113 Vine Street in Downtown Houston**. A free, public, **curator-led tour of the exhibit takes place Saturday, October 23, 2010 at 2pm**. FotoFest will participate in the annual **ARTCRAWL Houston, Saturday, November 20, 2010, 10am-9pm** and will stage a **Bike Scramble** that day. Additional curator-led tours are planned and will be announced on the FotoFest website at www.fotofest.org.

FotoFest Galleries are open late on Thursday evenings until 7pm. FotoFest Headquarters Gallery will be closed Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26 for the Thanksgiving Holiday. The gallery will be open Saturday, November 27. **Admission to FotoFest exhibits is free.**

On view at FotoFest Headquarters through December 11 is ***The Collector's Eye: Peers***, works from the collection of artist, curator and critic Fernando Castro. For more information on *The Collector's Eye* or *B-Sides* exhibitions and all FotoFest programs, please contact FotoFest, 713.223.5522 ext 19 or info@fotofest.org; or visit the FotoFest website at www.fotofest.org.

FOTOFEST 2010-2011 EXHIBITION SPONSORS

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