

SEAN RASPET

Untitled (Registration/PIN: G0009296/78GY76DM;
G0009297/99ER43TB;G0009298/39ZL54SJ)

NEW GALERIE, NYC
630 9th Avenue Suite 308
New York, NY 10036
www.newgalerie.us

April 19 – May 9, 2014

Opening Reception: April 19th, 6 – 8pm

The interior surfaces of the gallery have been covered with a transparent layer of synthetic DNA in a petroleum gel medium, manufactured in a commercial lab¹ (US PATENT#20120135413). The substance, which also contains a tracer (T-900) that causes it to fluoresce blue under UV light, has been designed for various anti-theft and security applications².

Upon contact, the gel adheres to any surface, leaving a traceable residue that can be communicated to other surfaces and may last for up to several weeks. Since each package of the gel contains a unique DNA sequence, the residue left on an individual or object can be analyzed to determine its origin or reconstruct its path. Customers register their individual gels with a company database that can be accessed by law enforcement for forensic purposes:

1. Both a residue and an encoded text, the substance functions as a physical analog for data tracking—transposing the concept of the browser cookie or GPS tracker from a frictionless virtual space to one bound by chemistry and surface mechanics. The administrative role of the gallery is conflated with the latest (already banal) developments in security technology/theater, engendering a paranoid or obsessive awareness of surfaces in the visitor: “What surface/object have I touched, what has touched the surface/object that I have touched?” (and so on, ad infinitum). This forensic preoccupation with the logistics of surfaces and contact being isomorphic to certain modes of traditional aesthetic contemplation.
2. As an inversion of the contemporary mode of spectatorship where an event/exhibition is realized through the digital circulation of its images, here the viewer becomes the vector of the exhibition’s content; its circulation arising from the unpredictable combination of the viewer’s physical contact within the space and their movement beyond it.

¹ Selectamark Security Systems, PLC

² e.g. buildings and construction sites use it to mark materials against theft; secure doors within corporate offices are covered with the gel to trace an intruder in the event of a security breach; an aerosol form of the substance has been widely implemented to deter armed robbery at McDonald’s restaurants in Rotterdam.