

M A R Y B O O N E G A L L E R Y
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LUIS GISPERT

On 8 September 2011, Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Fifth Avenue location *decepción*, an exhibition of a new series of large-scale photographs by LUIS GISPERT.

Begun as an anthropological investigation, Gispert sought out individuals in the United States collecting or crafting unique vehicles in their backyards or garages — individuals living out a fantasy through custom vehicles they had themselves created. Representing the most personalized aspects of their remodeling, the vehicles' interiors were the project's initial focus. The windshields afforded a frame for sublime landscape photographs Gispert had shot separately. Their union created a tense dialectic between the neo-romantic landscapes and the vehicles' contemporary urban aesthetics.

As he grazed the United States in search of these vehicles, Gispert discovered a subculture within a subculture. Another stratum emerged, embedded within the world of car enthusiasts customizing vehicle interiors with designer themes: a satellite world of designer imitations in service to those in need of color coordinated designer brand fabric and logos. A micro-economy consisting of dresses, shoes, and bedrooms designed and customized to personal taste and aesthetics. Women running underground counterfeit designer dress shops out of their garages. Men outfitting anything from Timberland boots and backpacks with designer accents to custom leather apparel. In a dizzying conflation of class, aspiration, and travesty, these anonymous creators appeared to relish the bastardization of cultural symbols of wealth. Gispert proceeded to document what could be understood as a covert, aggressive appropriation and re-contextualization of luxury signs. To mediate the political and complicated nature of the subjects, Gispert chose to formally consider and highly stylize the images.

Gispert's subjects are end products of a cultural history. The counterfeit designer reinterpretations of automobiles, furniture and custom garments began in Harlem, New York City in the early 1980s. At the height of the cocaine and crack epidemic, drug dealers arrived at innovative ways to conspicuously display their wealth. It started with the purchasing of Veblen goods that at the time were predominately consumed by solely a leisure class. Luxury signs associated with the upper classes were for the first time publicly appropriated and hybridized by a new class of narco-wealth. Drug dealers had their cars and clothes custom made with designer patterns, logos and colors. Ground zero for this customization was Harlem's Dapper Dan boutique where drug dealers were the main

clientele. Eventually hip hop stars and athletes like Mike Tyson adopted the style and became regular Dapper Dan customers. These high profile individuals spread the desire for luxury brands to a broader public. This in turn exacerbated class-consciousness amongst lower classes, which fed a hunger for designer goods. This appetite led to the creation of a designer counterfeit industry which thrives today.

Decepción is the Spanish word for disappointment or disillusionment. It also echoes the English word "deception." Both meanings are pertinent to Gispert's new photographs, as they ultimately reveal capitalistic fantasies that may never be attained.

The exhibition, at 745 Fifth Avenue, will run through 22 October 2011. For further information, please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery, or visit our website www.maryboonegallery.com.