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SFMOMA PRESENTS
Double Down: Two Visions of Vegas

From September 18, 2008 to January 4, 2009, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *Double Down: Two Visions of Vegas*. The exhibition offers a concise portrait of America's most spectacular fantasy environment—and fastest growing city—by juxtaposing two recent video works: Olivo Barbieri's *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05* (2005, 13 min.) and Stephen Dean's *No More Bets* (2003, 7 min.) The two works will be shown in sequence on facing walls.



Olivo Barbieri, *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05*,
2005; Courtesy of the artist and Yancey
Richardson Gallery

Las Vegas has reinvented itself many times—from desert outpost to Sin City, from family fun center to mega-resort—yet has managed through all of these incarnations to retain its uniquely ambivalent status in our cultural imagination. Part utopia and part dystopia, part dream and part nightmare, Las Vegas captures in its very structure the heady mix of optimism, gumption and foolhardiness that is uniquely American.

Barbieri films Las Vegas from a helicopter using a tilt-focus lens that renders objects out of scale and transforms the city's landmarks into toy-like simulacra. Emphasizing the city's isolation as well as its antipathy for empty spaces and blank surfaces, Barbieri's camera travels along the desert outskirts of the city before arriving at its nerve center, the Las Vegas Strip. The Hoover Dam, The Luxor Hotel, the skyscrapers of New York-New York Hotel: these monuments are shown as uncertain doubles of the icons we know them to be.

Barbieri (Italian, born 1954) is an artist and photographer of urban environments. He has been recognized internationally for his innovative use of tilt-shift lens photography, which allows him to simulate shallow depth-of-field from great distances. He has exhibited at the Venice Biennale (1993, 1995, 1997), among other international exhibitions, and in galleries and museums across Europe, North America, and China. In 1996, the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany, devoted a retrospective to his work. Barbieri has published several books, including *Notsofareast* (Rome, 2002), *Virtual Truths* (Milan, 2001), *Artificial Illuminations* (Washington, D.C., 1998), and *Paesaggi ibridi* (Milan, 1996). He lives and works in Milan.

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Stephen Dean (French, born 1968) pursues structures and patterns of color, as well as moments of chromatic intensity, in the everyday world. With *No More Bets* he focuses on the signs, screens and surfaces of Las Vegas. Dean's film, a more intimate portrait of the city than Barbieri's epic vision, reveals astonishingly beautiful patterns and colors within the city's semiotic jumble, bringing us toward a level of abstraction usually occluded by the visual excess of Vegas. During a single moment of darkness mid-film, 4,000 watts of red light will flash in the dark gallery, engulfing the viewer within the image.

Dean, who lives in New York and Paris, works in painting, sculpture, assemblage and video, often taking an alchemical approach to working with everyday objects. Newspaper clippings, ladders, shirts, cots and other objects are transformed into abstract studies of color, challenging viewers to see pattern and structure in the world around us. In his films, especially, Dean explores moments of intense chromatic experience; he has documented the Hindu festival of Holi (*Pulse*, 2001, presented at the 2002 Whitney Biennial), the movement of hundreds of Brazilian soccer fans (*Volta*, 2003), and the colors of the Las Vegas Strip.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a presentation of 15 photographs from Lewis Baltz's 1978 photographic series *Nevada*. The black-and-white photographs depict abandoned buildings, new construction, and a vast, nearly infinite expanse of desert.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our website at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is supported by a broad array of contributors who are committed to helping advance its mission as a dynamic center for modern and contemporary art. Major annual support is provided by the Koret Foundation Funds, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. Thursday evening half-price admission is sponsored by Banana Republic.

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