

Chris Collins

Shelter Skelter



untitled 2009 zinc pennies, concrete detail

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Reception: Saturday, February 12, 6 – 9 pm

At this time of shifting financial structures worldwide, one cannot escape the long arm of debt. As consumers we borrow from a banking system which borrows from another banking system which borrows from borrowing, throwing everyone involved into a spiral of unsustainable debt. The collapse which grows larger daily is due to the foundations of the structures giving way, or in many cases, not existing in the first place. This abstracted system of debt and money represents real assets, such as homes, which in this case were seized by financial institutions by the millions throughout the last 4 years. As of January of 2011, 1 in 45 houses was in foreclosure, numbering 2,183,056 homes.

This body of work examines the current economic fallout relating to the debt and housing crisis. This ranges from small blocks of houses upon a foundation of debt, represented as the iconic credit card, to houses created entirely out of debt only standing as houses of cards in await of collapse. Small neighborhood structures, such as 89119, consist of Monopoly game houses cast from recycled zinc pennies, as since 1982 pennies consist primarily of zinc rather than copper. The zinc penny, which costs 1.4 cents to produce, is in reality worth 6/10 of a cent in raw material value. The Monopoly house itself brings to mind the winner takes all board game and its relationship to our current condition. The structure of the neighborhoods, which are noted by numeric title, or zip code in this case, mimic satellite images of the heaviest affected zip codes within the US. All of which rests upon a concrete foundation suspended from the ceiling, thus literally nothing underneath these structures and hanging from a string.

An image that has recently invaded our consciousness are streets lined with foreclosure signs. Thus what is to be done with such images? In this instance I have decided to create shelter out of them. In doing so, the energy and resources used for production of the marketing of property is redirected towards that of building shelter, a necessity for survival.

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