

Press for *With Me... You*

"Glen Fogel, *With Me... You*," by Holland Cotter. *The New York Times*, 2011

"Glen Fogel, *Participant Inc.*," by Lloyd Wise. *ArtForum*, 2011

"Glen Fogel, *With Me... You*," by David Everitt Howe. *ArtReview*, 2011

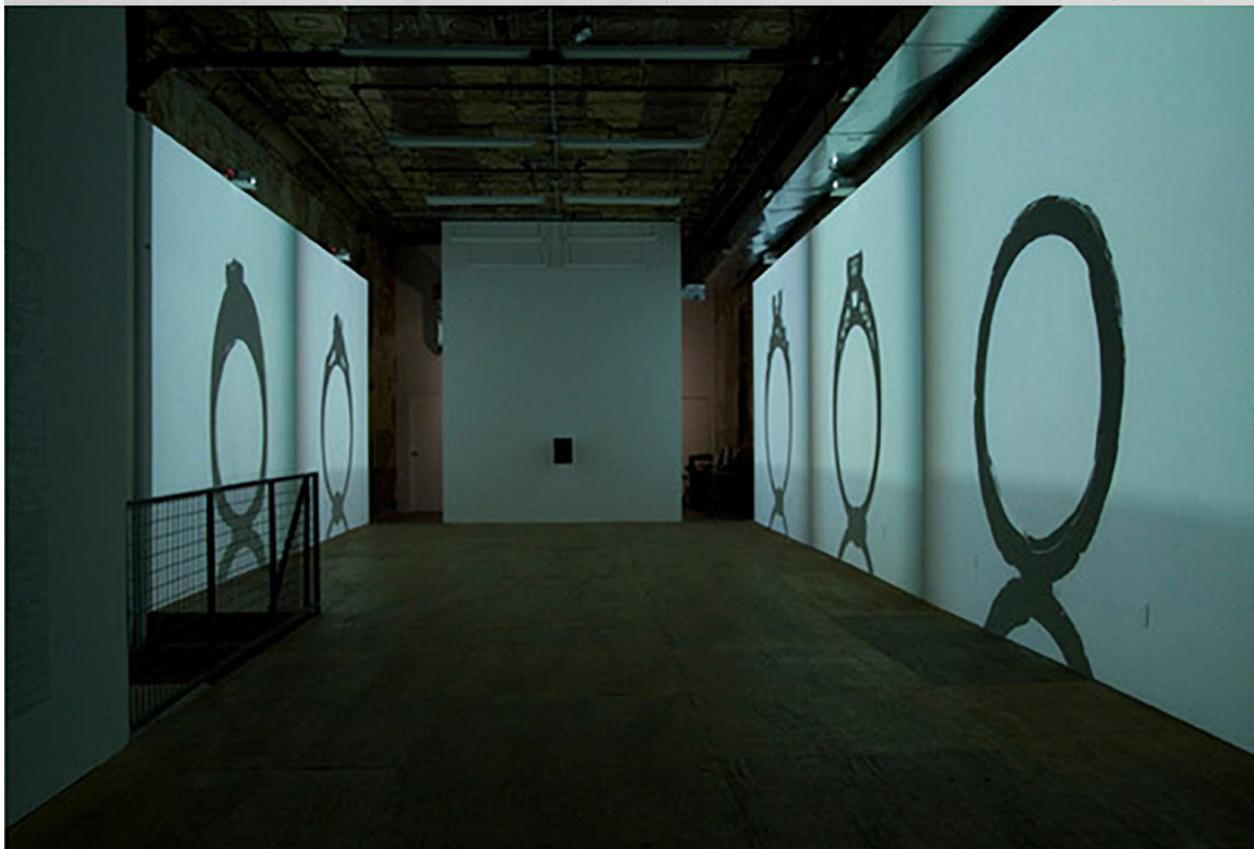
"Goings on About Town Art: Glen Fogel," *The New Yorker*, 2011

"Glen Fogel's *With Me...You*," by Lumi Tan. *kaleidoscope-press.com*, 2011

"Glen Fogel: My Apocalyptic Moment," by John Motley. *The Oregonian*, 2012

"Glen Fogel, SCAD Museum of Art," by Margaret Carrigan. *Modern Painters*, 2017

Art in Review



Silhouettes of wedding rings projected on the walls of Participant Inc. in Glen Fogel's installation "With Me . . . You."

Glen Fogel

'With Me . . . You'

Participant Inc.
253 East Houston Street
Lower East Side
Through Sunday

Hard to believe this is a first New York solo show for Glen

Fogel, whose hypnotic, often subtly topical videos have been appearing regularly in the city for more than a decade, including in the 2002 Whitney Biennial. Like much of what he does, the work at Participant Inc. is at once cool and intensely personal. It also takes him, not for the first time, beyond video into painting and installation.

The video component consists of several large projected images of individual pieces of jewelry, rings in different styles, shot in near-silhouette, and slowly revolving as if in a commercial display on a turntable. In addition, on the gallery walls hang what appear to be three letters addressed to the artist from people identified only by their first names. One of the names is a man's name, the other two gender-neutral.

The letters turn out to be meticulously painted facsimiles of mash notes Mr. Fogel received from classmates in high school. And read together they add up to a heated tangle of adolescent angst: infatuation, fear of rejection, rivalrous anger, weepy resignation. We all wrote and received such letters way back when. And we know that their do-or-die sentiments evaporate once school ends and life takes over. So much for love.

The video projection, by contrast, seems to offer emblems of lasting fidelity: the rings are all wedding rings, and they all belong to members of Mr. Fogel's family. Yet the images feel chilly. The rings don't look touchable and wearable: they're like monuments, not to ardor but to endurance. Plus, they're displayed as if for sale. Again, but differently, so much for love.

Up to this point the show feels intriguing rather than moving. Then something else — reality — is added in the form of a fourth letter, available in photocopy in the gallery. Dated last November, it's a to-whom-it-may-concern business letter from Mr. Fogel to "FedEx Claims." In it we learn that one of the rings in the video

was his mother's and was a treasured family heirloom. He had borrowed it to photograph it for the piece, then sent it back to her via FedEx.

When the package arrived, the ring was gone. "My family and I are devastated," he writes.

"The ring is irreplaceable — the stones and band can be replaced, but the history — cannot." And we sense the genuine, probably lasting anguish caused by the loss of that token of love in every word.

HOLLAND COTTER

ARTFORUM

April 2011

Glen Fogel

PARTICIPANT INC.

The two painted reproductions of love letters that introduce Glen Fogel's first solo show announce an exhibitionary poise and epistolary tack. Enlarged to six times their size (one is a diptych), the messages are both addressed to the artist, and, in their infatuated, unself-conscious zeal, strike a universal note of hormonal desperation. "You, both the ideal and the mortal, have taught me the meaning of Love and what it is to feel joy," one declares, later mentioning someone named Lucas. The other, from Lucas, smolders, "I'm amazed sometimes by the fire in your eye when you talk about things you *really* believe in," and so on.

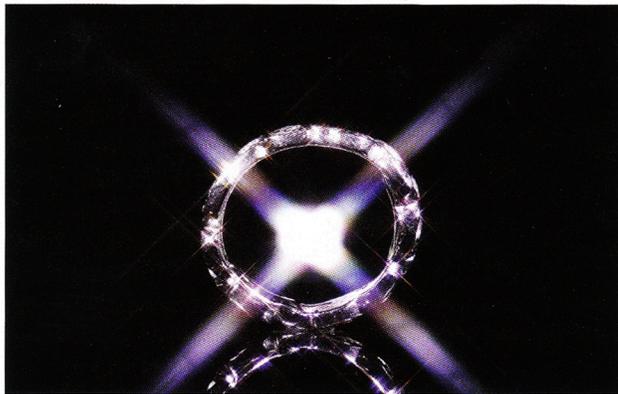
This ardency picks up again, and is ironized, in an installation of five videos. Indulging the tropes of televisual schmaltz on an epic scale, each depicts a ring, three of them studded with diamonds, and is projected onto facing walls. The gems are shot through with bright light that flares gaudily in the lens as they revolve slowly on mirrored surfaces, the effect invoking a hypnagogic stint on the Home Shopping Network. Consequently, there is satisfaction to be had: The rotation is mesmeric, and, in its scale and 360-degree immersiveness, feels nearly amniotic.

Another letter, printed on the reverse side of the press release, gives the backstory. It is from the artist himself, addressed to FedEx's claims department to give a "personal account" of a claim. We learn that the rings in the video are in fact wedding and engagement rings, and belong to his family in Denver. He borrowed them, brought them to New York for the shoot, and sent his mother's back to her via FedEx; the FedEx package arrived, but the ring—presumably stolen—didn't, and the family was crushed. ("The diamond in the ring belonged to my father's

mother, and was given to him to use for my mother's engagement ring. My father clearly remembers the moment when his now deceased mother removed her earring with that diamond in it, and handed it to him.") After one learns the clear, very real personal significance of these jewels, their kitschy presentation seems perverse, though it aligns with the painted letters—tokens of love and affection blown up large and shown in an embarrassing light. The tone becomes odder still, even unsettling, when one considers the real loss beneath it.

That loss is incorporated into the work. Every three minutes, the gallery's fluorescent lights snap on and the projections go dark, evacuating the visual pleasure. But this is more than a game of *fort/da* rehearsing the absence of the purloined ring. With each switching-on of the lights, a solitary speaker emits an iPhone Tri-tone, and this aural bling has a pointed effect: It evokes the receipt of a text message, and, by extension, the fleetingness and immateriality of digital communication—which sits on a spectrum with the photocopied missive on the press release, the violated FedEx, and the type- and handwritten love letters and their painted reproductions. Indeed, in this treatise on desire and loss, Fogel proves that even the everlasting diamond—that most concretized emblem of affect—can only drift away in a mediated world.

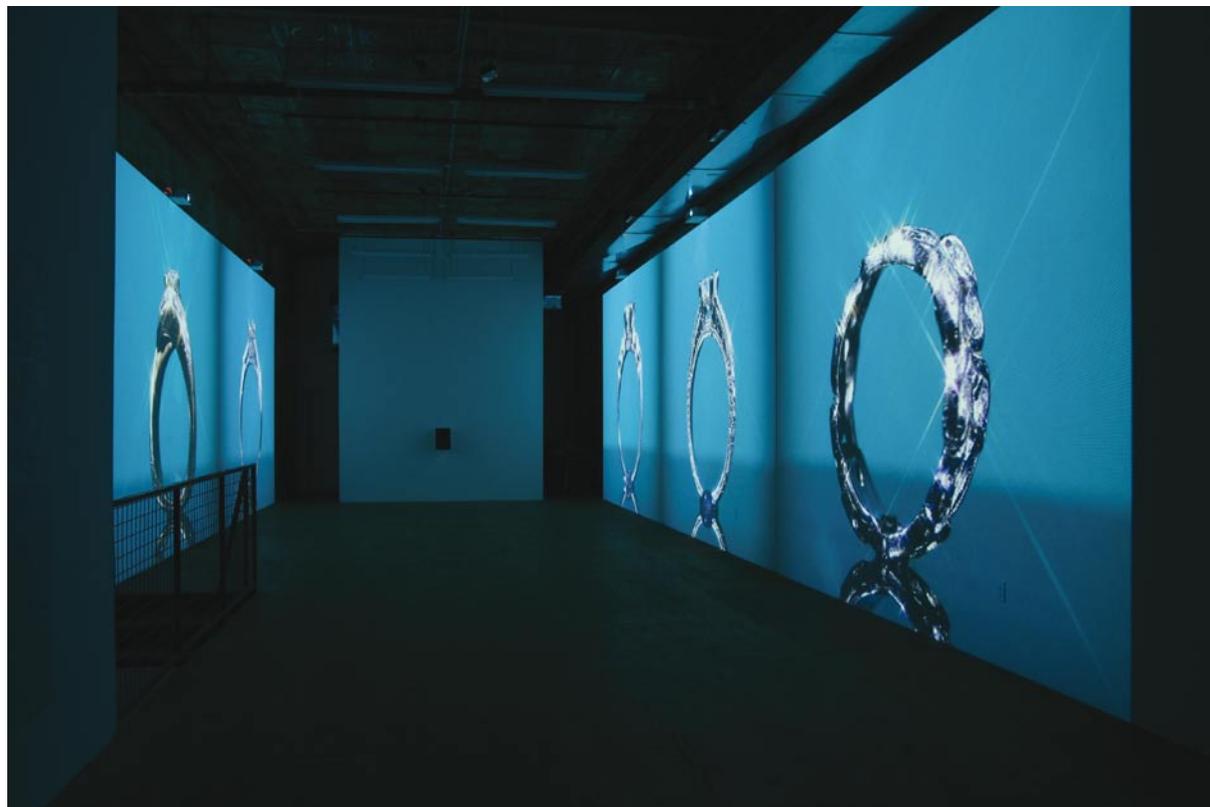
—Lloyd Wise



Glen Fogel, *With Me . . . You* (detail), 2011, still from a five-channel color video, 19 minutes 15 seconds.

Glen Fogel
With Me... You

Participant Inc, New York
 23 January – 27 February



Glen Fogel has proved particularly adept at interpolating personal narrative into the messy politics of media culture. For his 2009 installation *Art from Kansas City*, he appropriated male escort Mike Jones's memoir of his relationship with evangelical icon Ted Haggard. Blacking out the majority of the text, Fogel inserted his name in lieu of the author's, and left uncensored sentences containing the word 'Art' – Haggard's pseudonym – turning it into a tidy, efficient pun parodying an artist's inherently compromised political position. Such slippages of the self took another turn with *Glen from Colorado* (2009). Featuring the name 'Glen' spelled out Dan Flavin-like in bare white fluorescent lights, the work pulsed as text-to-speech software read out, in an alien computer voice, the contents of personal letters written to Fogel.

Similar convolutions return with his first solo exhibition in New York, *With Me... You*, at Participant Inc, where the artist's private correspondence makes another notable appearance. Written to him variously by friends and more-than-friends, the intimate letters are blown up as very large *trompe l'oeil* paintings, as if they were literally smoothed out... wrinkles, red stains and all. They read like a soap opera script, or perhaps something scribbled by hand in high school. *From Jamie, August 20* (2010) exclaims, 'Glen Fogel, what magic and enchantment that name is to me'. While from a slightly different angle, *From Jess, September 30, 1994* (2010) reads, 'You were just a heartless, selfish, immature wannabe'. And as if in some sort of awkward adolescent three-way, each letter's author refers to the others by name. Or at least, some kind of name; in another nice trick, Fogel supplants real names with fake doubles, to protect identities. Propriety is again obfuscated by its cliquey, coded other. Delightful as these are to read, though, the letters gain little when roped into a painterly discourse – unless, in their almost Duchampian absurdity, they're meant to challenge that dusty myth of the artist-as-genius.

Perhaps more nuanced, and less self-conscious, is Fogel's spectacular five-channel video installation *With Me... You* (2011), which features five slowly rotating wedding rings projected side-by-side. Nearly as tall as the ceiling and occupying almost all the wall space, the work's epic scale is both stunning and a bit frightening. Evoking the Home Shopping Network's rotating ring displays, the objects are washed now and then in pleasing monochromatic tones. Glistening as they turn, the rings shine in that familiar TV way: exaggerated, with hyperreal twinkles. Though they look brand new, they all come from Fogel's immediate family members: he spent several months gathering them from his sisters, mother and grandmother. Belonging to a sort of irreplaceable family history, value is thus displaced from something priced to something defiantly priceless. Nearly interchangeable as objects, the rings hover, like much of his work, between proper names – that is, between sign and symbol, object and metaphor – never fully possessed. *David Everitt Howe*

With Me... You, 2011,
 5-channel video, solid
 state relay, speaker,
 19 min 45 sec.
 Courtesy the artist and
 Participant Inc, New York



THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 28, 2011

GALLERIES— DOWNTOWN

GLEN FOGEL

In Fogel's promising solo debut, there are five wall-size projections of engagement and wedding rings, which belong to his female relatives. The diamond-studded rings rotate as if in a jewelry showroom (or on the Home Shopping Network) and every few minutes the lights go up, shaking viewers out of their reverie.

Also on view are paintings reproducing letters to the artist—soul-baring missives promising love or lamenting its loss. The fragility of romance is brought home in the press release, a formal complaint to Fed Ex from Fogel: his mother's ring was stolen en route when he shipped it back to her. Where love is concerned, Fogel seems to be saying, there are no guarantees. Through Feb. 27. (Participant, Inc., 253 E. Houston St. 212-254-4334.)

KALEIDOSCOPE blog!

GLEN FOGEL'S WITH ME...YOU

by Lumi Tan

(January 23- February 27, 2011 – PARTICIPANT, INC., New York)

The press release for Glen Fogel's *With Me...You*, a solo exhibition at New York's PARTICIPANT, INC., sets up the viewer for an exhibition about absence. In a letter to the FedEx claims department, he explains that he has gone through the heavy task of borrowing the wedding rings from women in his family in order to photograph and film them, and his mother's, sent via FedEx and insured for \$6000, had been stolen out of its box. Using the simple, yet sufficiently sentimental language needed to invoke sympathy in a large corporation, he asks for the economic reimbursement despite the knowledge that the personal history contained within it cannot be recuperated.

Once you've entered the gallery, however, you are confronted, in a five channel, floor to ceiling video installation, of the absolute presence of five of these rings, which of course includes the aforementioned ring belonging to Fogel's mother, now acting as a type of memorial. Their monumental scale puts on view the flaws and miniscule details which have most likely remained unseen even to the wearer who has lived with it for decades. Removed from their owners, the rings are rotated on gyroscopes and at times shot with a star filter to create a set for display similar to those on the Home Shopping Network, reaching the ultimate level of objectification. Though their visual cues may be taken from low-brow retail, in their epic size they become hyper-real, depersonalized and thus corporate, a quality underscored by the incidental, disruptively loud (but easily identifiable) sound of a text message on an iPhone. The aesthetic appeal of these objects is undeniably powerful, with a long checklist of overt symbolism: love, devotion, tradition, institution, and so on and so on. Instead, here these rings exist as freestanding objects on these exaggerated pedestals, with a definitive lack of human presence. In future iterations of *With Me...You*, the video installation will be accompanied by documentation surrounding the procurement of the rings, such as videos of Fogel's trips to his family, phone calls and emails; but in this current version, the rings present themselves as anonymous, intimidating, yet still somehow desirable objects. This becomes especially clear with one ring which no longer holds any stones; it becomes a jarringly empty frame, which is still given the same idealized treatment as all the others.

For Fogel, taking personal ephemera or experience and creating objective, beautifully made representations of them, is what he excels at. Accompanying the video installation are two works from an ongoing series of paintings of love letters written to Fogel throughout his life, *From Jamie, August 20* and *From Lucas, date unknown* (both 2010). The letters are heartbreakingly authentic, complete with

scrawled handwriting, crumpled paper from years of reading and re-reading, and the awkward, dramatic language of emotional release. These too are obviously blown up from their original scale and made to be viewed with the utmost of clarity, but appear diminutive next to the video installation, meek and confused despite their flawless execution and immortalization by Fogel. After all, emotions are volatile, but diamonds are forever.

<http://kaleidoscopeoffice.wordpress.com/2011/02/21/glen-fogel's-with-me...you-by-lumi-tan-january-23-february-27-2011-participant-inc-new-york/>

Glen Fogel: My Apocalyptic Moment

By **John Motley**, Special to The Oregonian

on June 09, 2012 at 8:00 AM



[View full size](#)

Callicoon Fine Arts

Glen Fogel, "Call me and we can buy love together #101," 2012, vinyl banner installed at PICA. Courtesy of the artist and Callicoon Fine Arts, New York.

In "With Me ... You," 2011, an expansive video installation by Brooklyn-based artist Glen Fogel currently on display at the **Portland Institute for Contemporary Art**, five diamond rings are projected on five screens, which run the length of the dim gallery. The enormous synchronized rings, which represent four generations in the artist's family, spin weightlessly as their mounted gems spangle with exaggerated starbursts.

Stylistically, the videos conjure the showcase formats of the Home Shopping Network or QVC. As the rings rotate, dive and surface, their unerring choreography is designed to hypnotize us and prod us to foist our own unfulfilled longings on the symbolic objects. Such a treatment of the rings, fraught with personal meaning, would seem to cheapen the family's valuation of them or,

worse, reduce them to mass-produced, mass-marketed trinkets of love. This is precisely Fogel's point: When we project our desires onto another person or thing, it is a solitary and solipsistic process, not an exchange. Or, to put it in the clichéd parlance of breakups, "It's not you; it's me."

Throughout the exhibition "My Apocalyptic Moment," which continues upstairs in PICA's new permanent space, Fogel explores the ways we attach our desires to others. In four large-scale paintings, he re-creates love letters he received in his youth, faithfully representing the idiosyncratic penmanship, typos and the folds and creases of the originals. Without fail, the letters are full of the torrid intensity of young love -- "Please don't think I'm being overly dramatic," implores the author of "From Jamie (date unknown, cursive)," 2011. Reading through them -- and the stock sentiments reprised again and again-- is a slog. They are febrile, yet feeble, attempts to manifest an inner sensation as something transferable. Though that idea could just as easily be applied to the enterprise of art-making in general, Fogel leverages the fervor with which the letters' authors attempt to translate their emotions, mystified by how little is actually communicated. If the letters are ostensibly about the artist, they function more as portraits of their authors.

Fogel's critique of outward desires is a slow-reveal in the painted love letters, but it's comically pronounced in "With Me ... You." The mesmerizing videos of the floating rings are intermittently interrupted by dozens of white fluorescent lights installed along the walls on either side of the central screens. Like house lights in a movie theater, they signal

a sobering end to the fantasy.

Fogel punctuates this moment with a piece of familiar audio -- the three-note phrase iTunes plays when a file import or download completes -- which is broadcast from a suspended speaker cone, like a computer's volume icon brought to life. The bright lights and iTunes alert indelicately undo the moody spectacle of the rings twisting in space, revealing how "With Me .. You" enchants viewers in order to break the very spell it casts.

For Fogel, the moment we begin to interpret the rings through the filter of our own lives, considering our own relationships or experiences of love, is also the moment love becomes a kind of window shopping in which our reflections mingle inextricably with the objects of our desires.

-- **John Motley**

Glen Fogel: "My Apocalyptic Moment"

Where: Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, 415 S.W. 10th Ave., Suite 300, 503-242-1419

Hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays

Closes: June 30

Admission: Free

Website: pica.org

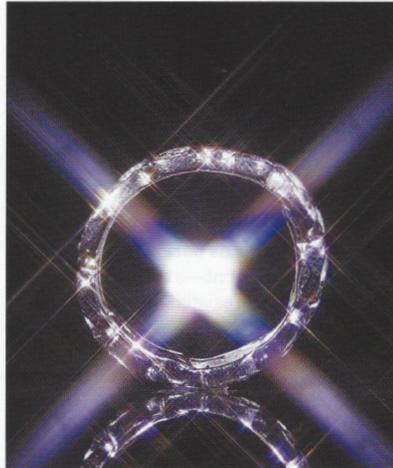
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ART / ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN / PERFORMANCE / FILM

MAY 2017

REVIEWS

TWO IMAGES:
Glen Fogel
Video stills
from *With
Me... You,*
2011.



SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Glen Fogel

SCAD Museum of Art // February 21–May 28

GLEN FOGEL'S "WITH YOU... US" opens with a stack of letters, all the same. They are duplications of a claim written to FedEx requesting reimbursement for the loss of his mother's engagement ring, which went missing when he sent it back to her via the international courier service. Visitors are invited to take a copy with them while they wander through the adjoining two rooms, wherein a five-channel video installation and several five-foot-high painted reproductions of break-up notes seem saturated with sadness.

Fogel's break-up letter paintings are aching to read, not just because of their words but also for their engulfing, confrontational size. Gleaned from the fallout of various personal relationships in the artist's past, they all address friendship but ultimately feel much more intimate, blurring the lines between romantic and platonic expressions of care. The first, *From Lucas (Date Unknown)*, looks written by hand on ruled notebook paper, and affirms to Glen that he is loved and that his friendship is valued. The second, *From Jess (September 30, 1994)*, is typed in a cool sans serif font and boasts a red wine stain across it; the author angrily expresses a desire to loosen the bonds of their "friendship" for good. Bearing perfectly folded crease marks, the final letter—*From Jamie (August 20)*—begs for Fogel's love; however, its writer acknowledges that he may not receive the affection he seeks

because he is, sadly, not Lucas.

Fogel outsources the production of his letter paintings to a studio in China rather than attempting to paint them himself. According to the artist, his intention is to instill a mass-manufactured quality in these highly personal works, yet this is largely lost on the viewer if they don't already know his process. In truth, it seems like subcontracting the letter transcription serves more to protect the artist from agonizing over these words brush stroke by brush stroke.

The same superfluous degree of removal is evident in Fogel's dual video installation but is more successfully deployed. Five screens alternate between two sequences: the first, *With You... Me*, a dizzying view of the artist's empty childhood home in Denver as seen by a gyroscopic camera; the second, *With Me... You*, a Home Shopping Network-like macro view of five engagement rings, all of which are Fogel family heirlooms, slowly turning 360 degrees, as if on display. Both the house and the rings ultimately symbolize the same things: intimacy and security. Yet, when emptied of furniture or commoditized as consumer goods, they offer neither. Still holding the FedEx letter facsimile for Fogel's mother's lost engagement ring—which he was trying to return to her after having borrowed it to produce *With Me... You*—one realizes the only sure thing in life is loss.

—Margaret Carrigan