

THE INTERZINE

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[On Nathaniel Stern & Jessica Meuninck-Ganger's "Passing Between" at AOP Gallery](#)

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38_5_4_30_20_AM_008171.jpg

Nathaniel Stern and Jessica Meuninck-Ganger, *The Gallerist*, 2009

This past month, Johannesburg's [AOP Gallery](#), a space devoted to works on paper, hosted the exhibition "[Passing Between](#)" which showcased the collaborative output between digital artist [Nathaniel Stern](#) and printmaker [Jessica Meuninck-Ganger](#). At the outset, Stern and Meuninck-Ganger approached the collaboration as a chance to learn each other's techniques. But they quickly chose to focus on their own strengths in a process they call, "passing between", hence the title of the exhibition. For Stern, the move toward printmaking comes from a long interest in the technique. In recent work, he has engaged with an expanded form of digital print making, using a hacked portable scanner to produce densely patterned sequences of natural images, in a project called *Compressionism*. For "Passing Between," Stern concentrated on using digital photo frames as a medium for displaying loops of video obtained through live filming, and sampled machinima taken from *Second Life*. Meuninck-Ganger responded to the framed video loops with an encyclopedic range of printmaking techniques from wood block to mono print, silkscreen, etching, and photogravure. In some cases, she printed or etched directly on the screens of the digital photo frames; in other cases, the prints were layered over the screens creating a delicate conjunction between the fibers of the paper medium and the illumination of the underlying video. In *The Gallerist*, a prominent New York art dealer is portrayed anxiously perched on a chair in middle of a lithograph while below the surface of the paper machinima sharks circle him endlessly.

38_15_6_09_59_AM_008176.jpg

Nathaniel Stern and Jessica Meuninck-Ganger, *Twin Cities*, 2009

The effect is both magical and subtle. Jessica's images often capture a static moment from the subject matter of the video in etching or ink. The pleasure offered by the composite images comes from the interplay between the stasis of the printed image and the temporal flow of the video, producing witty and sometimes fascinating results. In the diptych *Twin Cities* the 2009 tornado is represented with an animated twister from *Second Life*. Jessica's lithograph shows a flying pig coming to rest momentarily in alignment with its outline before whirling back to the beginning of the looped tornado. In general, the artist's subject matter is deliberately low-key and it presents samples from their lives as artists and young parents in Milwaukee and Johannesburg exploring moments of fun, awkwardness and good humor. However, the rich range of techniques and visual allusions layered over the works also references an entire history of contemporary art and print making, ranging from Hokusai to Velazquez.

Christo Doherty is head of the department of Digital Arts at Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg. He is a photographer, video artist, and VJ. His most recent solo exhibition – [SMALL WORLDS](#) – was a visual study of miniature railway technology, nostalgia and the South African landscape.

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