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John Finneran
Bad Nights, Vandals
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The *Bad Nights, Vandals* project started in 2003. I had an idea of collecting graffiti, particularly political graffiti, and making a brick wall painting that would contain all of these slogans and also a selection of more common everyday graffiti. The spike of politics into the graffiti cycle was my way of describing the infiltration of the country's troubles into even the most oblivious mind-sets. At the time a lot of things started to get pushed pretty hard, cities overseas were being destroyed to turn them into something new, implausibly being crushed in order to bring them around. Then, and in the years since, its been easy to sense that a lot of things have been done under the cover of darkness. There's a feeling of immense frustration: with something so obviously misguided and with politicians so unwilling to acknowledge any objections. I wanted to discuss a parallel I saw between the small vandalism the powerless employed against the powerful, and the large-scale vandalism of powerful overseas.

Backgrounds

As a result of that sense of darkness -- the secrecy perceived and the impossibility of knowing firsthand the things that are happening so far away -- I developed the Backgrounds pieces. Each one operates like a fragment, or the tiniest bit of information available: the glimpse of a truck or a provisional building, imagined and interpreted, the details hazily fleshed out in the paint, the result not close to reality. Backgrounds 1, the dirt, marks and smoke stains on a wall. Backgrounds 2, the reflection of the sunset, or sunrise, or fire on the side of a truck. Backgrounds 3, the broken light of a shadow around a corner, and Backgrounds 4, the distant reflection of the *Bad Nights, Vandals* wall. Each of these surfaces are composed of aluminum sheet and rivets to mirror the makeshift architecture or construction of its surroundings.

The Destroyers, S.O.S., No Wonder

I looked at the gallery and I saw how the openings on either side of the column could be a set of eyes. All the fragment paintings in the first room could then exist in one 'brain space' and look out into the second room. I would try and paint the thoughts the brain space would be looking at: the big ideas and the projections it was making. Just past the fire and the smoke, those alarming and constant bits of reality that drift in through the tv news and the pictures on the cover of the newspaper. I wanted the first room to use its eyes to look into the night sky.

In the night sky there is a blankness that will receive. We don't have to do much more than connect the dots to make figures and forms exist there. But this isn't that night sky. This is the one that is too big to understand, where our concepts of distance and time are completely undone by their infinite quantities. This is what that brain space is looking at: the failure and impossibility of a projected ideology. -John Finneran, New York, 2006