

Michael A. Salter

too much

6 November – 14 December 2008

too much is a wry examination of what Michael Salter calls “the tidal wave of imagery which our culture crashes down on us everyday.” His larger-than-life graphics cover the gallery’s walls and surround a 16-foot tall seated robot, or Styrobot, made of Styrofoam.

Salter finds meaning and beauty in the logos, pictograms, and imagery he observes every day at dollar stores, flea markets, second-hand stores, fast food outlets, Wal-Marts, and countless other empires of corporate branding. Images which strike him as particularly poignant, absurd, or baffling are the inspiration for his ongoing drawing project, *Visual Function*, a collection of 300 graphic icons he created over the past eight years.

By using molded Styrofoam, the environmentally unfriendly product used to pack electronics and other fragile items for shipping as the building blocks for his monumental Styrobots, Salter incorporates another aspect of consumerism into his artwork. For **too much**, more than 3,000 cubic feet of Styrofoam were collected over a two month period, and Salter surrounded his seated Styrobot with almost every graphic icon in his *Visual Function* series, including 100 new icons he drew during the past four months. Says Salter:

The scale and volume of the Rice Gallery space are unique. I see the walls as being about the same size as giant roadside billboards. Covering the walls with an absurd number of images, and never repeating an image will make for an overwhelming experience. This sensation of “too much” is quite like the reaction I have to the media messages dripping off our visual culture. The giant, overwhelmed robot in the corner is temporarily exhausted, just plain worn out from it all.

Michael Salter was born in Bristol, Connecticut in 1967. He is an Associate Professor of Digital Arts at the University of Oregon, Eugene.

Rice Gallery exhibitions and programs receive major support from Rice Gallery Patrons and Members, The Brown Foundation, Inc., The Louisa Stude Sarofim 1995 Charitable Trust, and the Kilgore Endowment. Exhibition catalogues are funded in part by the Robert J. Card, M.D. and Karol Kreymer Catalogue Endowment. The gallery receives partial operating support from the City of Houston, and Agnes Gund. KUHF-FM and Saint Arnold Brewing Company provide in-kind support.

Front: Michael A. Salter, **too much** t-shirt design, 2008

HOURS

Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00 - 5:00

Thursday, 11:00 - 7:00

Sunday, Noon - 5:00

Closed Mondays and university holidays.

Rice Gallery will close for the Thanksgiving holiday from 27 November – 1 December.

Rice Gallery

www.ricegallery.org
713.348.6069

