

Camera Austria  
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Jonathan Gitelson is one of those genuinely entertaining people who look at the world with a humorous, absurdist bent. Luckily for us, he also creates artworks that make us think by making us laugh. Like Tom Friedman and Vik Muniz, Gitelson transforms everyday objects and unconventional materials, asking viewers to reconsider not only the quirkiness and materiality of the ephemera in our world but also the nature and process of art itself.

Gitelson began his *Car Project* when he moved into an apartment across the street from one of Chicago's most popular nightclubs, the Funky Buddha Lounge. He noticed that every night his car and those surrounding it were plastered with photocopied fliers advertising various nightclubs around town. Within six months, Gitelson had collected over one thousand of these fliers; he later spent three months hand sewing them into a shroud big enough to cover his car. He then traveled around the city, parking in front of the establishments advertised in the fliers, covering his Honda Civic with the flier-shroud, and taking medium format photographs of the unpeopled scenes. The car appears as if it has been overtaken by a flier fungus of sorts, or has grown a covering that protects it like scaly armor or a raggedy fur coat. It also seems to have changed itself into a strange, itinerant creature that has perhaps swallowed its driver.

Gitelson photographs his comically transformed car in a deadpan, straightforward way, revealing his wry wit. The cover renders the vehicle mysterious and windowless—much like the clubs it simultaneously obscures and promotes. While a meditation on the unimaginativeness and futility of a particular advertising strategy, *Car Project* is also a more general invitation to consider the wastefulness of consumer culture and the media noise that constantly surrounds us. And importantly, it also provides the often too-serious art world with a refreshing dose of levity.