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I got my name written on my shirt
I ain't no ordinary dude I don't have to work
I don't have to work...

That's Waylon Jennings, talking about being an artist. Throughout his years at the top of the country charts in the mid 70s, Jennings kept coming back to the question of what kind of work it was he was doing. This kind of critique of the conditions of production was really the signature of what came to be known as 'outlaw country'. Jennings was a trained entertainer who had come up through the Nashville music industry, and it's funny to listen to the early albums, where you can really sense the dichotomy that existed between songwriters and entertainers. Guys like Jennings would just sing whatever it was the label asked them to, I guess. But it was Jennings who finally insisted on recording *Honky Tonk Heros*, with his own band rather than session musicians, and who fired Chet Atkins as producer when Atkins tried to stop him. The questions of what actually constituted artistic labor, and what kind of work an artist does, were really being played out at the time—not just in the music, but in the studio. Part of Jennings' genius as an entertainer was to embody the act of artistic creation as a kind of manual labor.

The power of Jennings' performance on *Honky Tonk Heros* isn't diminished by the fact that this intensely personal, declarative album is in fact an album of cover songs. Every song on the album from start to finish had been written by Billy Joe Shaver. The famous story is that Shaver threatened Jennings until he listened to Shaver sing a few songs. Finally Jennings just became a cover version of Billy Joe Shaver.

There's a huge freedom in doing a cover version, inhabiting someone else's speech—it's a sensual experience, leaving your own body. I wanted to do a cover version of Glen Seator's *Approach*, a project he did for Capp Street Project in 1996. *Approach* is a work which perfectly replicates the sidewalk outside the gallery inside the space of the exhibition. Seator was an artist who specialized in doing cover versions of reality. In the art world people call this 'appropriation' but I don't think it's the same thing. Appropriation implies a bit of distance, it's a way of objectifying something; but a cover version is almost the opposite, a way of getting close to something you love. Seator's work, even the massive sculptural projects, was more performance than sculpture-- replicas of spaces that don't exist anymore, mirrored spaces, this devastating idea that the surface of reality is replicable, just pure surface anyway. Dependent objects. It's impossible to replicate Glen Seator's work without him, he took it all with him.

Billy Joe Shaver eventually ended up recording his own version of *Honky Tonk Heros*. I don't know whether it matters if he's covering Waylon Jennings or himself, but it's worth listening to.

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Oscar Tuazon (b. 1975, Tacoma, Washington) lives and works in California. He received his education from Cooper Union School of Art and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include "Scott Burton", Fondazione Giuliani, Rome (2012) "ILLUMInations – the 54th International Art Exhibition" in Venice, "The Language of Less (Then and Now)" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, The Power Station, Dallas (2011); ICA, London; Kunsthalle Bern (2010); Kunstlerhaus Stuttgart (2010); Maccarone (2008); Seattle Art Museum (2008); and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2007). Recent group exhibitions include: Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zürich (2011); Wiels Center for Contemporary Art, Brussels (2010); Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris; and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Vigo (Marco), Vigo (2009). This is the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery.