

# GAYLEN GERBER



Gaylen Gerber's work addresses a seemingly simple ambition: to see clearly. In trying to see something, it is necessary to distinguish it from the things that surround it, and to perceive someone or something as separate or different is complicated by a viewer's subjectivity. Gerber's work frames this impulse to differentiate, and in doing so it often incorporates the work of other makers. For example, Gerber will often represent the work of others in front of his *Backdrops*, which in turn mimic the dimensions and colors of institutional exhibition walls.

Gerber's practice has long been characterized by his way of fusing his own work with that of another, making both inseparable but equally present. This match among authors, where viewers are confronted with such forms that carry immediate as well as existing meanings simultaneously, is palpable in the *Backdrops*. Gerber's intention with these works is to keep narrative in tension by constantly renewing the relation between what is presented and how it is presented; his method of inquiry is representative of an attentiveness to the things presented. Each work is titled "Backdrop" and undated, except when exhibited as a discrete expression in itself.

Gerber underscores the network of exchanges between artworks and their reception, which is as important to the work's understanding as individual definitions. While they are deliberately titled in a way that avoids providing individuating information in order to create a cohesive series, each representation is explicitly recognized by the title and the didactic text that describes the work.

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## BACKDROP

n. d.  
1993 to date  
background paper, aluminum pins  
dimensions vary with installation