

CHICAGO

## MÁXIMO GONZÁLEZ HYDE PARK ART CENTER

Máximo González, an Argentinian who lives and works in Mexico City, is best known for intricate murals and collages created with paper money. Lately he has changed materials, if not his general focus. In 2010, González won the Premio Tequila Centenario at the Zona Maco art fair in Mexico City for *Warning Monument*, a large-scale installation incorporating dozens of shiny new red plastic household items. For the five works in "Material Poems," his exhibition at Hyde Park Art Center (where he was in residence during the summer of 2010), González combed flea markets around Chicago for domestic goods. Here we see him widening his often playful investigation into notions of value, with an emphasis on home economics.

In *Insomnia Victims' Favorite Wallpaper*, González drew on a found wallpaper-printing cylinder. Among the mainly damaged or broken-off parts of its raised metal design is one intact element: a cooking pot. In graphite, González added vessels, clock faces, burners and swirling steam, creating a kitchen scene in which one can imagine sleep potions or hot toddies being concocted.

The installation *Decorative* took its cue from a splotchy red and white enamelware cup that was hung high on the left-hand corner of a wall. From it tumbled glossy red and white strands of flowers, and silhouettes of words from peeled-off red vinyl lettering. Completing the ensemble were four framed abstract paintings on paper informed by the cup's suggestive patterns, in which the viewer can't help but seek hidden imagery.

There were also two videos. *We Recycle* is an animation projected onto the blade of a handsaw painted by a previous owner with a pastoral scene, including a barn. In the 30-second loop, a man emerges from the barn and saws down a tree, which pops back up the minute he returns to the barn. In the video *Straight Jacket*, screened on a monitor, González stands in an unfurnished high-rise apartment, furiously removing a series of white shirts. These have been buttoned together at the sleeves or collars, forming a continuous, chainlike cloth cocoon around his body.

*Aluminum 1886* is a large installation of more than 100 vintage serving platters, trays and vessels that the artist borrowed from a local collector and arranged on the wall in a neat rectangle. According to the gallery statement, the objects were hung precariously so as to indicate the fluctuating nature of the value of aluminum. (The title references the year that an affordable process for extracting aluminum was patented.) That connection does not translate at all, but the piece was visually commanding.

—Ruth Lopez