

WE'RE ON A MISSION
TO EXPOSE THE MISSION SCHOOL'S
TRUE MISSION:

A PLAYSPACE Proposal

San Francisco's much-celebrated "Mission School" of art is a fraud. Emerging from the city's historic Mission District in the 1990's, this ensemble of artists working outside of (at least in the beginning) "traditional" gallery and museum channels, and drawing inspiration from such "non-art," "outsider" sources as graffiti, the worlds of advertising and graphic design, comic books, pop music, and anything even remotely resembling the vaguely-categorized denomination of consumer life known as "street culture" has, in a few short decades, managed to almost completely sever San Francisco's ties with art history. Lauded as an "alternative" to the rigidity, conformism and false values of mainstream culture, it instead has become an entity bloated to epic proportions which has, in the end, come to embody everything it purports to rebel against, the very tendencies in society it professes to reject. It is an alternative worse than the alternative. While proponents of the Mission School see its "appropriation" of the language of consumer culture as a kind of subversive act, it is, in actuality, nothing more than a pathetic plea for acknowledgment, all the while waiting, "biding its time," to sign the big marketing contract no one cares to offer.

If San Francisco ever hopes to secure its rightful place as the third most relevant art market in the United States, it should seriously consider shipping this ragtag bunch of "folkies" to Madison Avenue where they can begin work on projects to which they are better suited, such as designing the next "cutting edge" marketing campaigns for such diverse and prestigious companies as the Gap, Apple, American Apparel, and Whole Foods Markets. I propose that the PLAYSPACE Gallery host a workshop, with experts on hand, in which artists are assisted in writing and polishing their resumes, so that these relocations can be better facilitated. Furthermore, I propose an opening event in which live resume graffiti writing be staged and executed on the gallery walls. Writing a resume can be intimidating for everyone, and I would like the Mission School to know that in this, it is not alone. Thank you for your time and energy in the consideration of a project that will be, I hope, an enlightening experience for all involved.

James Bradley

MFA Painting & Drawing