

## **PENELOPE GOTTLIEB**

### **Artist's Statement**

#### **"No \$ Down"**

Where we live is sold to us in the form of a cultural rhetoric of desire. The generic deadpan quality of real estate photo advertisements invites the viewer/buyer to project their own fantasies onto the property. The end result is that the hype of realty sales language is often in direct opposition to the actual nature of the thing itself. Our collective dream-wish for a utopian domesticity breaks with our past and returns to an even more distant past. Rich with cultural memory, myth and symbol, these wish-images penetrate our unconscious, leaving us with a fetish dream-symbol of the happy home within a class society. We can read the surface of domestic architecture as fossils of a living history, a kind of social hieroglyph.

In these works, the banal quality of the newspaper sources are contrasted with the preciousness and ethereality of the hand made originals. By appropriating mass reproduced photographs and recreating them by hand, I have translated the pictures to manual reproduction, thus removing the availability of plurality and returning the image to the tradition of "aura" and singularity. The images float in space, making reference to early daguerreotype photography, further emphasizing the dated relic quality of the drawings. This invites the viewer to a new condensed authenticity, enhancing the uniqueness of everyday reality. Thrift store frames evoke interior design colors and an aesthetic of desperation.

Prospects and the promise of wish-fulfillment through real estate take on a yet darker turn with the recent subprime mortgage crisis. In this stressed environment, real estate itself a specter of doom and paranoia, in some way threatening to bringing the world economy to its knees.