

Chicago

“The End of Analog”

ROOTS & CULTURE
1034 N Milwaukee Ave
February 20–March 21

Taking a cue from the federally imposed end date to analog TV broadcasts, this exhibition, curated by Eric Fleischauer, offers floor plans of sitcom living rooms, digital photographs of record-album covers, and a glowing, underlit, crystalline stack of jet-black CDs in transparent cases. It turns less to the issue of digital-versus-analog signals than to the interfaces required to translate these ethereal pulses into visible and audible forms. Electromagnetic waves hardly change, but how they are registered, transmitted, and consumed does.

Todd Simeone's *Record Cover in a Flash (Reason to Believe)*, 2007, imbricates photography with sculpture and analog with digital. A photograph of an enlarged album cover, it has a white aureole from the camera's flash in the center. The bright void created by the flash is ringed by a misty halo that nearly touches the edges. Melding a flat disk into a flat cover, the concentric rings formed by the flash and the halo echo the circular form of the record stored inside—the tightly wound vinyl groove suggested by the pristine, digitally produced photographic surface. At the same time, the extraordinary resolution of the image captures blunted edges, dirt, and tiny abrasions that cause the cover to jump off the photographic surface, as if it were an actual aged cardboard cover that might just be mounted behind the glass.

For the moment, the human genome lumbers along sleepily as technologies mutate and transform at a rate faster than we do; we are consigned to the analog of corporeality. Two works address the interface between technology and the body head-on. In George Monteleone and Alexander Stewart's *Coax*, 2009, one TV depicts a man wearing cable-lined pajamas while a facing monitor offers the snowy, flickering image generated by his stiff movements. Though a catalogue is available for download, it is exhibited as a clothbound book in the show, complete with gold-embossed lettering on its light gray cover designed by Susannah Kim. It must be picked up, flipped through, and set down again—handled rather than merely seen.

— James Glisson



Todd Simeone, *Record Cover in a Flash (Reason to Believe)*, 2007, color photograph, 42 x 42".

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Robert Mapplethorpe

MARY AND LEIGH BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART
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