



DAN COLEN

THE COVER ARTIST DABBLES IN THE URBAN DECLARATIVE, WITH PAPIER-MÂCHE, SPRAYPAINT, AND, ON OCCASION, WADS OF CHEWING GUM.



From the Berlin show Wo Me.



an Colen very often considers "everything and nothing." Everything and nothing seem, to him, to say it all. Nothing is omitted, everything is obliquely included—it's altogether a big pile as threatening as it is beautiful. He once tried to self-administer a tattoo reading: "EVERYTHING AND NOTHING," but he ran out of ink after EVERYTHING, so he only has half of it, which is just as well.

Colen was born in 1979, in Leonia, New Jersey, just over the bridge from Manhattan. He's lived and worked in New York since graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2001 and, by and large, being a downtown New Yorker is his most widely publicized attribute. This is not unjustified (in his artwork, people recognize graffiti and wads of gum and years of accumulated bird shit as urban fodder), but it pays too much heed to things like market trends to suggest that New York is where the story ends up. Colen's work examines the sense and nonsense involved in trying to make sense, the jumble of which is readily apparent in a big city.

While the avenues are clogged with people making out and assholes fighting and people falling asleep, and on top of that the greater residue of mortality and even spirituality, Colen isolates insignificantly blatant moments of the declarative. Most of the time these moments are more stupid than sublime: "Get High," "Holy Shit," "This Sucks." Carefully committing these sentiments to the face of a papier-mache boulder, or onto a wooden panel that is part sign and part excavated architecture, or painting them into a found oil composition by somebody else, Colen's work proceeds as humanly as possible. He is represented by Peres Projects, whose Berlin gallery hosted the artist's most recent solo show, *No Me*, in September 2006. Colen was included in last year's Whitney Biennial, as well as in the recent group exhibition *USA Today*, at the Royal Academy in London.