

## **ANNE CHAN**

### **ARTIST STATEMENT**

Staples are inherently utilitarian. They are made with a specific function and task at hand. Stiff, cold and metallic, staples are a common product of a corporate cubicle world. Symbolizing the human condition, I question whether we have become so regimented in our routine as to be lifeless. Are we on automatic? In the age of technology have we become inhuman? Experimenting with size and scale I create a representative world of my own. To alter and control the viewer's perspective of the object, I produce photographs almost cinema-graphically under controlled lighting. Would you want to live here? Are we currently living in such a confining society?

Working with business cards was a different execution of the cubicle farm theme. The corporate exchange of business cards is a well-known ritual to convey identity and self promotion. Buying business cards inevitably comes in boxes of 500 cards or more. Yet the identity this 2" x 3" card projects is a cursory distinctiveness tied to a collective larger personality. There is some loss of individual identity despite a different name and job title. With "One Among Many", I created a life-sized desk and chair made of interlocking business cards. Creating the piece as life-size formed a tangible relationship with the viewer. I wanted to create a piece that could be experienced more than simply viewing a photograph from an outsider's perspective. Positioned in front of the desk, was a Plexiglas "window" looking out to the remaining span of cubicle farm existence. Carrying this loss of identity theme further, the business cards facing the viewer were printed cards of my very own "Chan Enterprises" with pseudonyms of "Anne Chan" in various job titles. Continuing the idea, I then created "Private Conversation" where I wanted to encourage the viewer to be an eavesdropper of my fabricated cubicle world.

I began this series of photographs and installations as a social commentary on cubicle-farm life, highlighting a corporate culture that is monotonous, hierarchal, micromanaging, non-creative, inflexible, and even inhumane (the phrase "chained to a desk" comes to mind). I'm inspired by the work of photographers, Andreas Gursky, James Casebere, Thomas Demand and Edward Burtynsky, along with installation artists such as Do Ho Suh, whose work can be both subtle and powerful. As I continue to think about society as a whole, I'm also inspired by architecture and urban life. I continue to contemplate the idea of "work" and how one can be weighed down by the mundane tasks of their daily life.