

blyTHE PROJECTS

Michael Salvatore Tierney

Aerospace

January 8, 2011 – February 12, 2011

Opening Reception Saturday, January 8, 6 – 8 p.m.



Command, 2010 pigment print 40 x 60 inches

After Military Police confiscated his film while taking photographs on a bombing range in the Mojave Desert, LA-based artist, Michael Salvatore Tierney's *Aerospace* series formally and conceptually took form. His new body of work explores the Futurist promise held by the aerospace industries of southern California. Blythe Projects is pleased to present *Aerospace* alongside formative images from Tierney's preceding body of work, *Incidence and Reflection*.

Only fifty years ago, the word 'California' carried an inherent connotation of the aerospace industry. Fifteen of the twenty-five largest American aerospace companies were based in southern California. The once powerful aerospace industry, now fallen

prey to devastating budget cuts, closures and layoffs, haunts both our physical landscape and our memories and dreams.

Aerospace reflects a journey—our country’s journey in the ‘Race for Space’ and a deeply personal journey for the artist. As a child, Tierney’s family made the life-altering journey from New York to California in order for his father to pursue a promising career in the secretive aerospace industry. “Our move came during a great time of optimism and hope within the [aerospace] industry in southern California,” said Tierney. “Decades later, finally moving beyond the gates and guard stations...I was able to explore the past and present of this close, but elusive industry and its once deeply held promise.” After 11 months of patience and persistent solicitations, Tierney was granted access to NASA’s Dryden Research Center, JPL, Edward’s Air Force Base and the Graduate Aerospace Laboratories at CalTech based upon the historical importance of the aerospace industry in southern California. Over the course of this two-year project, Tierney was allowed unprecedented access to photograph high security government facilities for purely creative purposes. “*Aerospace* reveals some of man’s most intriguing technical achievements...man’s desire to control the physical world, harness its forces and transcend the limits we have known. This is a power so awesome it elicits conflicting emotions,” Tierney said.

The images captured by Tierney—unoccupied space suits, empty cockpits, vacant chairs in the NASA control room and sterile, post-space flight medical and biological facilities—conjure fantastical, futuristic visions. Devoid of life, these images are conversely charged with memory and can lead us into the deep recesses of our emotional and psychological ‘high security’ areas. Tierney’s sublime aesthetic creates an unmistakable dialogue questioning our subconscious perception of reality and memory.

Blythe Projects is located at 5797 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, California 90232. For further information please contact **Hillary Metz** at 323.272.3642 hillary@blytheprojects.net.