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Regier's NuPenny hits Portland

Roving installations

By ANNIE LARMON | June 16, 2010

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OUT OF REACH Randy Regier's toys.

The latest incarnation of Randy Regier's NuPenny Toy Store installation is sequestered in Portland's Bayside neighborhood, tucked under an overhang behind the white-washed New System Laundry building on Parris Street. The project is a spark in the dark amid concrete and parking lots, its most exciting aspect the prospect of stumbling upon it, bewildered. While discreetly advertised in the perfectly appropriated font of the New Systems signage, the installation stands as an intervention in shifty Bayside, its potential energy abounds. After garnering attention from renowned tech/culture blog Boing Boing last week, Parris Street should be getting some extra foot traffic, and it's well deserved.

The toy store is rendered completely in grayscale, with zippy toy robots, **NuPenny Toy Store** | 82 Parris St, Portland | nupennytoystore.com

spacecrafts, and automobiles fabricated by Regier in his trademark vintage aesthetic lining the walls and seemingly launching into space from the countertops. Complete with register and office supplies, the store appears ready for sales, but as we learned from First Friday's "Grand Not Opening," the shop will remain closed. The offerings are only visible through the front doors and a small side window, aided by a convex mirror that reflects the un-seeable interior.

In his artist statement Regier writes: "[P]erhaps most compelling for me was to attempt to create a physical place and occurrence that appears as if in a dream — familiar and believable yet somehow out of our grasp — in the physical sense but also slightly out of reach of our collective memory. Because of this the door of the NuPenny store is always locked and all text has been rendered in Teletype punch-tape code." This code, elusive as

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Two recent groups of Karen Gelardi's studies of nature



text always seems to be in dreams, can be translated using a code card found on the store's Web site. A penny left on the floor 10 inches from the front door more immediately breaks the divisions of dream and reality, grayscale and color, and memory and present, taunting the viewer with its access — an ambassador to Regier's multi-dimensional dreamscape.

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(she calls it "botanical propaganda") harness a bold and painterly craft aesthetic among the rough wood benches and baskets of lush melons and gourds in the open industrial space that also serves as a popular restaurant and farmers' market in downtown Belfast.

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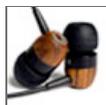
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