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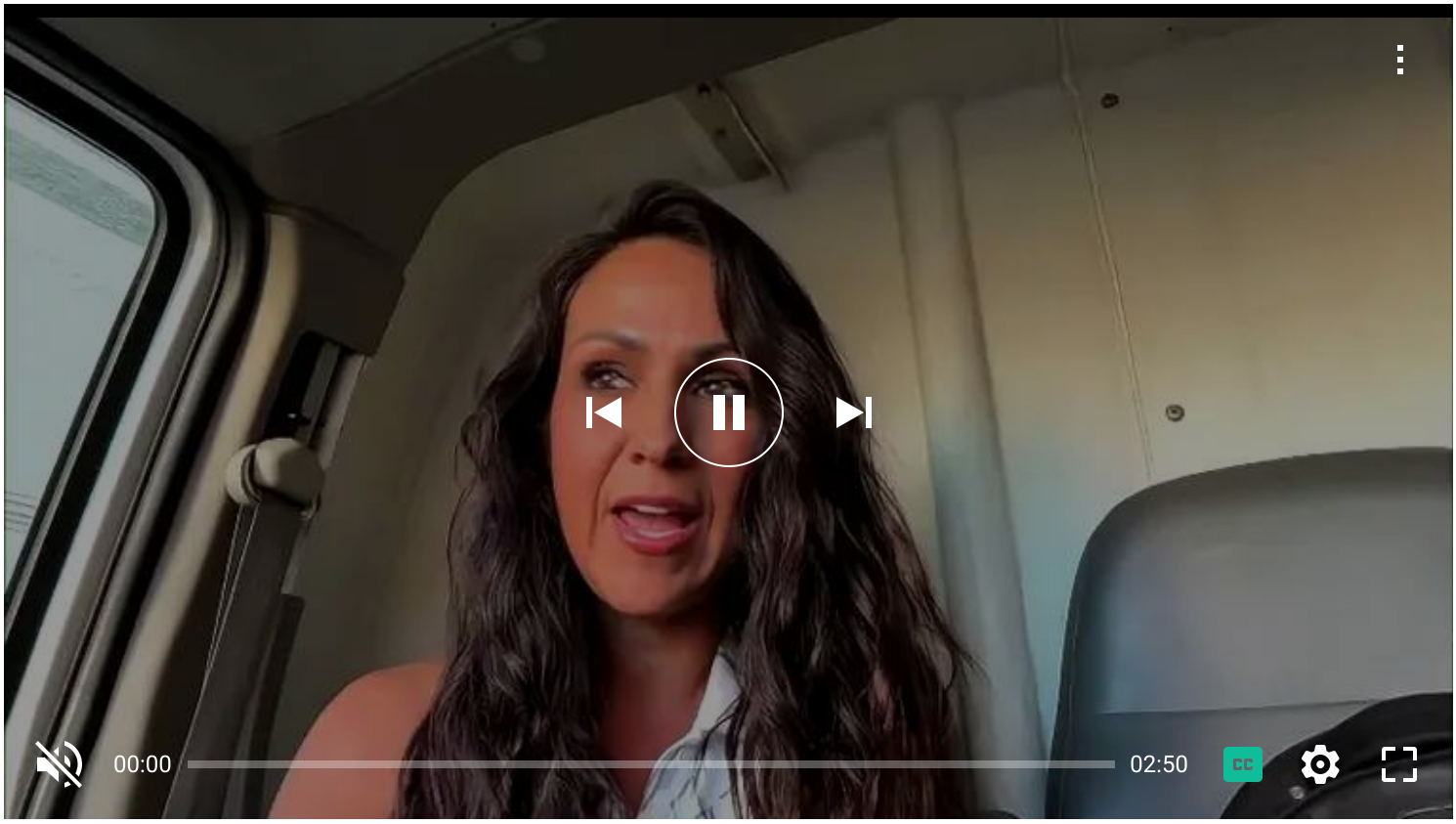
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n Prankster

By MutualArt, Contributor

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ed across artist Mark Jenkins,
e streets of Rome. Toast slices
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ve even been contacted on
ft, Malmo 2008 on right)

Jenkins' pieces are part of the series *Living Layers*, a long-term project begun in 2010 and curated by Wunderkammern, in collaboration with MACRO. The project stimulates interpretations of 'territory' and its cultural heritage, to "create a mature consciousness towards contemporary art and the capacity to interpret reality and the current world." Young artists are invited to conduct 'research', proposing previously unexhibited interactions in urban public space.

Jenkins' work definitely triggers a reaction, having even been called 'bewildering'. He challenges passersby as these surreal scenarios interrupt their everyday routines, altering their world into an "enigmatic landscape." So the next time you think you've stepped into the Twilight Zone, it may just be the work of this prankster. In our interview below, find out more about Jenkins' work and check out examples of his truly unique take on contemporary art. *(Right: from London 2010)*

Have you always created urban installations? Where did the idea of working in this medium come from?

I first made tape casts as a child, wrapping the tape over pencils in reverse and then back over to seal it. I made them for fun, but I was scolded by my teacher not to "waste tape." In 2003, I got interested
s and re-discovered
cts and on myself. But
elf but, rather,
t the space around it. I
e exhibit I'd seen in
, DC. For the
ediate location
available, the street in front of my apartment.

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What are some of the challenges you face, in terms of the piece's "survival" on the streets? Do you have to get clearance to do these kinds of things?

The outdoor works aren't really designed for permanence. I see them as short term events which disrupt the urban fabric to create a stage. Kids, police, firemen, bomb squads, and drunk people that "destroy" them are all actors and part of the theater. In my practice, I'm not sure what is illegal or not. There are a lot of fine lines that even a judge would have to think through carefully. But in the post 9/11 era, even a sculpture of a man in a polar bear suit can be deemed a suspicious package and attacked by a man in a blast suit. It's this new re-programming of the masses to "See something, say something" rather than "See something, enjoy something." It's all very Vonnegutesque but I don't mind it.

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Where do you get your ideas from? (For example, you see a trashcan and think: That would

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here it fits together

erything seems to

Do you have any favorite pieces?

I like the girl on the roof, maybe because I feel this way a lot; not like a girl, but pondering stuff from a different perspective. Being outside on a high ledge is a good place to do this.

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Dublin 2011; Washington, D.C. 2007

Your work has been called 'shocking' and even 'bewildering'. How do you expect the viewer to interact with your work?

Shock, bewilderment, mild amusement, disinterest. It depends on the individual. There are the deep thinkers, the curious kids, over-protective mothers, the camera phone paparazzi types. There are the dogs who sniff at them while others bark or even lunge on their leashes.But the most common reaction is not to see it at all unless sirens are blazing around it. There's so much visual stimuli out there in the city that most people choose to navigate public space like a

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gallery show? Which do you

the receptionist. I

ent way to understand

the the work. It's like looking at a pinned butterfly, but I feel bad for them sometimes. *(Left: 2011 Kicked Painting #6)*

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Check out more his indoor and outdoor works here. You can still catch Mark Jenkins' solo show at Wunderkammern until April 26, 2012.

Written by MutualArt writer Joanna Bledsoe

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