

Maine, Stephen, *Dateline Brooklyn*, [Artnet](#), April 14, 2004

Dateline Brooklyn
by Stephen Maine

Always prepared, **Maika Pollock** of **Southfirst** informs us that "Dwell Time," the title of recent Columbia grad **Sean Dack**'s second solo outing at the gallery, is the ad-business term for the length of time a viewer might be expected to look at a commercial graphic. Its understated application to the gallery business is inspired.

The show's installation is spare, consisting of just one video projection and three not-large photographs. This befits the work, which is very much about mood. The five-minute-long *Halfway Between West Egg and New York* (2003, edition of three, \$2,800), composed of jump-cuts between stationary camera angles, depicts life at night in an anonymous, desolate industrial zone (the title would put it somewhere in Queens) and features facades of warehouses and factories, barreling after-hours truck traffic, and an oddly flickering effect of light which is at least partly owing to the enormous video billboard that dominates the landscape. Though augmented by an electronica soundtrack, the piece would be mesmerizing without it.

Even more compelling are the three untitled production stills (2004, editions of three, \$1,300 and \$1,600) that are as crisp and detailed as the video is grainy. The billboard is seen from afar, harsh and malignant, looming like an alien spacecraft. For these photographs, Dack left his shutter open for a long exposure, and the billboard's screen is washed out, a haze of white light that suggests white noise, propaganda.

Unlike usual photographic practice, which freezes time and thus expands the significance of a single moment, Dack compresses an expanse of time into a single frame. Conceptually, the work recalls **Hiroshi Sugimoto**'s mid-1970s photographs of empty movie palaces with glowing white screens, made by leaving the shutter open for the duration of the film. Dack's critique of the relentless commercial assault on our lives is no homage, though. The exhibition is up through Apr. 18.