

Flash Art

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Jennifer Dalton: The Appraisal

Jennifer Dalton's project *The Appraisal* — an assessment and cataloguing of the contents of her dual-use apartment and art studio — engages far-reaching questions of perception, judgment, and representation.

Dalton's private property is electronically public at www.jenniferdalton.com, where an auction house's "fair market value appraisal" can be compared with the artist's personal evaluation. In addition, a fixed monetary value was temporarily established on representative lots by selling them to the highest bidder through the online auction house eBay.

The amusingly incongruous assessment of modest domestic possessions by an internationally known auction house turns tragicomical when Dalton's previous artistic productions of "fine art" are dispassionately evaluated. The artist's inclusion of "animals" within the inventory is reminiscent of the

often unspoken cultural agreements that thrust living creatures—including people—into the category of property.

This portrait of the artist as a young estate highlights the interlocking ironies of value and possession. While the snapshots and written inventories that comprise *The Appraisal* were displayed as

an installation at Steffany Martz Gallery in New York, their electronic representation seems to elude specific possession and valuation. At the same time, just as Dalton's ownership has become part of each object's provenance, her transformative — if unstable — authorship can now be considered when re-appraising their value. (R.T.)



JENNIFER DALTON, *The Appraisal*, 2000. Detail: Installation view.