

# Sanibel-captiva-islander

## Individuality in a media-based culture

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**Captiva, FL, October 27, 2006** - Like it or not, our lives are inundated by images that tell us what to buy, where to shop, who to trust and how to look. Through magazines, newspapers, billboards, internet, television, radio and movies our identities are shaped by what we see.

Atlanta-based artist Christopher Hauck's series "Identity Crisis" strips down the individual and explores the mass media definition of what it is to be human.

On the surface, Hauck's pieces are simplistic- — bold red backdrops and barcoded figures. But the simplicity goes in-hand with the meaning. Could human experience so easily be reduced, packaged and sold?



*Believers* – Christopher Hauck

Each of Hauck's pieces are accompanied with sales pitches that get down to the root of the series. The piece "Weed Warrior," for example, is explained with the following pitch:

"It is the construct of identity through the idealized American dream. The nearly obsessive occupation of constructing and maintaining the perfect lawn, the facade, the external. We are constantly reminded of where we rank in the landscape committee file of acceptable lawn presentation."

While the show is a visually arresting statement on the formation of identity today, perhaps it can be viewed as liberating. Does buying into what we see allow us the freedom to not have to decide who we are?

Either way, Hauck has tapped into the thought-provoking concept of identity versus advertising, our individuality up against our media-obsessed culture. His work can both alarm and humor those who see it. Somewhere, in at least one of his pieces and descriptions is some idea that you have bought into because no matter how we may try to avoid it, we are affected by the media blitz that surrounds us.

"Identity Crisis" is on display through Nov. 1 at the Arts for Act Galley located in downtown Fort Myers at 2265 First Street. Check out next week's issue for an interview with the artist.