

THIS MAGAZINE

BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS POLITICAL

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SHOPDROP AND ROLL

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On a Saturday night, in a supermarket in Montreal, Natalie Reis picks up an 89-cent can of peas and carrots. She pulls one of her original drawings—a grey-and-red sketch of birds in flight—out of her purse and wraps it around the can. She secures the drawing with a single piece of transparent tape, places the can back on the shelf, steps back, snaps a photo with her digital camera and walks away.



Reis is part of a growing network of artists using stores as impromptu venues for their work. Shopdropping, shoplifting's iconoclastic cousin, can be as overtly political as placing T-shirts of Karl Marx in a Wal-Mart or as self-serving as slipping your band's CD into the rack at Starbucks. For Reis, it's about creating a visual surprise in an otherwise familiar commercial space. "In the supermarket we are often on cruise control," she says. "I want to disrupt the routine, give people an image that isn't selling anything—a mental break from the brands and the advertising."

Reis doesn't mind if shoppers want to take her art home with them. "But I don't want them to try to buy it," she says. "I hope they steal it off the shelves."