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## Stealing the Show: A Roving U-Haul Is Exhibiting Stuff People Have Liberated From the Workplace

'What have you been stealing from work?' the show's tagline asks.



Jack Chase, James Sundquist, and Victoria Gill at U-Haul of Chelsea. Photo by Trevor Munch.

**Sarah Cascone** (<https://news.artnet.com/about/sarah-cascone-25>) October 10, 2024

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What do a tin of sardines, an overflowing box of black combs, and a pair of McDonald's-branded jeans and matching baseball cap have in common? They're all things people

have stolen from work that are going on view in “The Show of Stolen Goods,” a pop-up gallery show coming to New York City in a roving U-Haul truck.

It’s the second edition of the tongue-in-cheek exhibition, which performance artist and sculptor [Victoria Gill](https://www.instagram.com/victoriapgill) (<https://www.instagram.com/victoriapgill>) first staged in January at [Filet](https://www.filetfilet.uk/) (<https://www.filetfilet.uk/>), an experimental art space in London. This time around, she’s teamed up with curator Jack Chase and James Sundquist, the founder and director—and now getaway driver— of [Uhaul Gallery](https://www.instagram.com/uhaul_gallery/) ([https://www.instagram.com/uhaul\\_gallery/](https://www.instagram.com/uhaul_gallery/)), which has staged four other mobile gallery shows across the city since launching in May.

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“Stealing feels like something that is really human nature,” Chase told me. “I think we have an innate compulsion to collect things. And it happens subconsciously.”

And stealing from work might just be the most universal kind of theft. It doesn’t feel as subversive as stealing from a business as another individual. It is often bound up in resentment of one’s employer—if it isn’t out of absolute necessity. If you’re artist struggling to make ends meet by working as a restaurant server, for instance, why wouldn’t you furnish your silverware drawer with utensils from your day job? (There’s a trio of pilfered forks in the show.)







Black Combs, *Has Your Employee Been Stealing From Work?* (2024). Lifetouch, Philadelphia (2010) Kat Thek. Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

Presenting the project in a U-Haul truck moonlighting as a gallery appealed in part because of the low price point, with rentals at as low as \$19.99 a day, plus mileage. And then there's that old saying, about stolen goods that "fell off the back of a truck" (or, as Gill put it, a lorry).

Sundquist, who is also an artist, was inspired to start the mobile gallery when he was moving out of an expensive studio space, and was surprised to see how good his

paintings looked in the back of the moving truck.

“I was like, ‘Huh, this is like a little gallery space,’” he told me. “And then honestly, I was at an opening in the Henry Pike Street area. I realized the literal square footage of those spaces is not really much bigger than a U-haul.”



The objects in Uhaul Gallery's "Show of Stolen Goods." Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

Uhaul Gallery launched its first show in early May—during Frieze Week (<https://news.artnet.com/market/dealers-at-frieze-new-york-aim-to-capitalize-on-venice-biennale-momentum-2479561>), which Sundquist realized only when dealers from the Independent Art Fair suggested he set up shop outside for the rest of the weekend. The most recent show, during the Armory Show (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/armory-show-trends-2531028>), he parked outside the Javits Center. Uhaul Gallery has also posted up in Soho and outside Gagosian in Chelsea.

“It’s taking this really cheap square footage into much more prestigious real estate we could never afford even if we were doing a pop-up,” Sundquist said.



The gallery does have a budget for parking tickets—but so far, it has gotten lucky.



Uhaul Gallery at the Javits Center during the Armory Show. Photo by Norman Godinez.



“I think there’s a U-Haul effect where the traffic cops don’t even see it. They just think somebody’s moving. They’ll ticket the car in front, behind me, but they’ll just walk right by,” Sundquist said. He said the one time a police officer did stop, he was able to talk himself out of the ticket: “We showed him the show and he was just bamboozled. He said ‘This is crazy—I’m gonna give you guys a pass.’”

U-Haul hasn’t caught wind of the project yet, but the company did threaten legal action against a Brooklyn gallery (<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/uhaul-gallery-truck-company-name-change-11892/>) of the same name in 2019.

“If and when U-Haul comes after us, it will become part of the story and an opportunity to use our creativity to reinvent ourselves,” Sundquist said. “The whole project is about seeing what we can get away with.”







Jack Chase, James Sundquist, and Victoria Gill at U-Haul of Chelsea. Photo by Trevor Munch.

Outfitting a U-Haul to show art is surprisingly easy. Sundquist installs white gallery walls along the protective wooden railing that lines the truck's interior, and runs the lights off the power outlet/cigarette lighter in the dash. Atop the truck, he affixes a hand-stenciled plywood sign with the gallery's U-Haul themed logo that spins on an inverted disco ball motor.

Submissions for the "Stolen Goods" exhibition came via an open call on Instagram, as well as a few repeat objects from the London show. Anyone who contributed was allowed to remain anonymous, provided they give the name of their employer and the year of the theft.





Original *Pink Panther* Animation Cel, *Why Can't Humans Behave More Like Animals?* (2024) Framestore, London U.K. 2018. Anonymous. Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

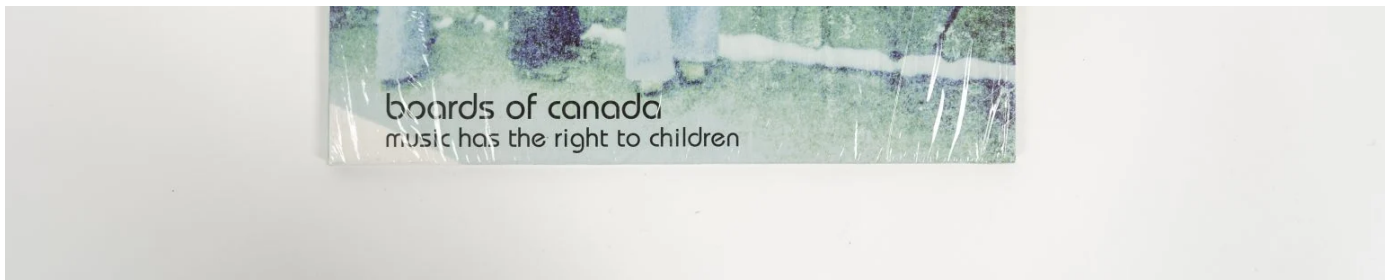
None of the stolen objects are for sale, but Chase has published an exhibition catalogue, priced at \$28 in a run of 300. There will also be t-shirts available featuring the Uhaul Gallery logo and the phrase “steal from work” on the reverse. (Previous exhibitions have had prices ranging from \$5 for zines up to \$7,000 for large paintings.)

Each stolen object has a title. Some of the names allude to the circumstances surrounding the theft. The sardine tin, from trendy Dimes Square restaurant Cervo's, was stolen by a staffer who often took whole roast chickens home after a shift—hence the name *Couldn't Include the Chicken*.

Chase's contribution, the Boards of Canada record *Music Has the Right to Children* (1998), stolen earlier this year his last day working at Eavesdrop bar in Brooklyn, has been christened *I Was The Only One Who Would Play This Record Anyway*.







music has the right to children. *I Was The Only One Who Would Play This Record Anyway* (2024). Eavesdrop, Brooklyn NY. 2024. Jack Chase. Photo courtesy Uhaul Gallery.

“I don’t think there was anything more [to the theft] than the fact that I have a record player at home and I wanted to keep listening to it,” he said.

Some of the loot seems as though they would be fairly valuable, like Dior heels from the designer’s New York store, an original *Pink Panther* animation cel from Framestore in London, or a deflated silver Andy Warhol balloon from the Pop artist’s 2022 retrospective at the Tate Modern. With others, like the combs, it’s hard to imagine the motivations for the thefts.

“There are daily objects that are useful and that you could slip in your bag easily. But then also there’s a theme of taking something a little bit scandalous and a little bit silly, almost like as a token,” Gill said. “I don’t know if it’s element of ‘This will be a good talking piece from the dead-end job that I’m doing at the moment.’”





Silver Balloon, *Andy's Balloon* (2022), Tate Modern, London. Anonymous. Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

She got the idea for the project while working at a high-end fashion magazine in London. Gill already felt conspicuously out of place with her northern accent—a distinct class marker in the U.K. Then she unthinkingly grabbed a tube of lotion from the office bathroom to help out a friend she was meeting after work.

“The next time I was in the office, there was a sticker that was put up on the mirror. ‘This is communal. Please do not take.’ It just it really stuck with me because I was the only new hire, I was northern and already stuck out like a sore thumb,” she recalled. “I took something from the communal basket, and now there was this sticker in the toilets and everyone would know it was me.”



Apples *False Fruit* (2023) New York Studio School, New York. Anonymous. Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

It only took a few weeks for her to collect the objects for the first edition of “Stolen



Goods.” Though Gill envisioned the project as a conceptual art piece, it blurs the boundaries of a traditional group show, the stolen goods becoming readymade art objects.

“I see the whole piece as a sculptural piece,” Gill said.



Heels *J'adore* (2024) Dior, New York. Anonymous. Photo courtesy of Uhaul Gallery.

She hopes the project has a bit of moral ambiguity to it, a provocative yet cheeky way to get viewers to think about what they may have stolen from work over the years.

“When I tell people about the show, the reaction I usually get is a story of something they’ve stolen from work,” Gill added. “And it’s kind of like a joyous, ‘Oh, my God, yes, I stole this.’ It’s almost like feeling seen.”

*“The Show of Stolen Goods” will be on view at Uhaul Gallery, a U-Haul truck parked at Hauser & Wirth, 542 West 22nd Street, October 10; on Broadway, somewhere between Walker and Leonard, October 11; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 12:, and on Bedford Avenue, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, October 13, 2024.*



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