

Jeanne Gerrity, Artforum.com

San Francisco

Shana Moulton

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

701 Mission Street

April 16–August 2

A box containing a small Walkman-like plastic device emerges from a computer screen and into the hands of Shana Moulton's anxious alter ego, Cynthia, in the video *MindPlace ThoughtStream*, 2014. This machine is the central element in the artist's comical multipart exhibition "Picture Puzzle Pattern Door," which includes recurring images of Cynthia by the Pacific Ocean, audio clips from TED talks testifying to life-changing experiences, and videos of multiple Shakiras gyrating in an Activia yogurt commercial—symbols of Cynthia's quest for spiritual enlightenment and a flawless appearance. Outside the main gallery, collages of images advertising women's products hang above a display of gaudy props from the videos and other garish relaxation objects. Items such as battery-operated glow candles and neon plastic massage implements indicate a hapless embrace of consumer culture. Elsewhere, in a faux doctor's office waiting room, visitors are invited to try out the actual *MindPlace ThoughtStream* biofeedback machine, which claims proficiency at stress management through mind control.

Here, Moulton's ongoing engagement with superficial spirituality extends to include technology, a particularly apt angle for the California-raised, New York-based artist's first major exhibition on the West Coast. Unlikely as it may seem, the origins of cyber culture were closely aligned with the hippie ethos of the 1960s, yet both digital technology and the New Age movement have since mutated into capitalist industries. Cynthia's faith in kitschy purchases now expands to interactive electronic devices, yet despite its grandiose promise, even technology cannot help this satirized American suburbanite find the inner peace and outer beauty she so desperately seeks.



View of "Picture Puzzle Pattern Door," 2015.

— *Jeanne Gerrity*