



Seth Price
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Art in Review

Seth Price

*Friedrich Petzel Gallery and
Electronic Arts Intermix
535 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Reena Spaulings
165 East Broadway, Lower East Side
All through tomorrow*

Seth Price's dandyish form of Goth continues to zigzag between relatively rudimentary and advanced appropriation, recycling all manner of material, including his own work. With increasing clarity and assurance, he is defining an art in which the lack of originals rules out neither uniqueness nor originality. The best images are those that are in motion.

Mr. Price's second solo exhibition is divided among three locations but is pointedly modest. At Petzel a series of nine monoprints of Caravaggio's "David With the Head of Goliath" layered over bloodlike washes of color (also monoprints) are displayed behind a swath of clear mylar. It covers most of the gallery's walls, drastically reducing framing costs but making the gallery office a bit inaccessible.

Each print converts an image from the Internet into a nominally one-of-a-kind artwork, while echoing Mr. Price's earlier use of downloaded images of contemporary (jihadist) beheadings and further mechanizing Andy Warhol's layering of black silk-screened images over paint.

Warhol's formula of liquid color and defining black image is reiterated as nature in "Film, Right," an eerie 14-minute film of rolling ocean waves that cycles from shades of gray to high-keyed pastels and back again. (It uses a downloaded loop a few seconds in length.)

The projector is in the gallery, but the screen is in the office; a large hole crudely cut in the wall allows the image to pass between them. But the projector remains, with its nose figuratively pressed against the mylar, on the outside looking in. From certain angles it also resembles the prow of a swamped ship.

Upstairs from Petzel, Electronic Arts Intermix is showing Mr. Price's "Digital Video Effect: 'Editions,'" a 10-minute sampler of five editioned videos and a film. In other words, works not widely available now are, at least partly, in a new work that exists as an unlimited multiple. Appropriation achieves onionlike layers: the waves from "Film, Right"; old television commercials (borrowed from a 1985 video by Martha Rosler); photographs of Minimalist-style playgrounds (from a video titled "Modern Sweet"); news clips of the assassination attempt on President Reagan (from "Copyright 2006 Seth Price"); and a scene from a Joan Jonas video, altered by Mr. Price, in which Richard Serra, Robert Smithson and the dealer Joseph Helman argue about the corrupting effects of the art market.

These bits of American life, already used by Mr. Price, forge an unexpected wholeness here: a dour

portrait that connects the dots of a bleak past and a bleaker present. (Electronic Arts Intermix is not open on Saturdays, but Mr. Price's video is available for viewing, by request or appointment, indefinitely.)

Spaulings is showing an editioned film transfer of the sampler "Film, Left," which shifts from a DVD player to a projector and a portable screen. A vinyl wall piece includes a cast of a sheet of plywood that evokes the work of Sherrie Levine, an early appropriation artist, and silk-screened notes about the film. One reads, "Seemingly random violence is the great tool for undermining the values of the Enlightenment."

ROBERTA SMITH