

June 1-7, 2006



Installation view of
"Grey Flags" at
SculptureCenter

Occluded front

A smart group show employs evasive tactics.

By **Andrea K. Scott**

Warning: Visitors to SculptureCenter this Saturday afternoon won't see the show "Grey Flags." Works by 18 artists are installed in the Long Island City space, but the view will be obscured by *Sabotage*, artist Karin Schneider's one-afternoon-only installation of fog machines. This symbolic erasure holds obvious appeal for cocurator Paul Pfeiffer, an artist best known for digitally removing figures from found footage and photographs. (The show is the New York swan song for Pfeiffer's cohort Anthony Huberman, recently hired by Palais de Tokyo in Paris.)

The concept of elision crops up in the exhibition proper, in a fluorescent sculpture that lights up to spell the word STRIKE (think delete) by fictional artist Claire Fontaine. But just as the word has multiple meanings—harm, beguile, protest—there's more underlying "Grey Flags" than erasure alone. Another theme can be summed up in the title of Gabriel Orozco's life-size, altered photograph of a cricket player: *Evasive Action*.

Top honors for evasion go to Seth Price. Rather than exhibit an object or video (both of which he makes), the curators let Price replace the show's title with the phrase GREY FLAGS (blank symbols, an oxymoron) and its press

release with an eloquent, elliptical essay about image overload, utopia and death. Price is a beautiful writer, but his gesture would have a more subversive impact if this weren't the third NYC show in a year to repurpose this text. Still, the redundancy mirrors the way content is recycled ad absurdum, both in the culture at large and in the buy-and-sell (make that buy-and-tell) fishbowl of the art world. The latter is hilariously lampooned in Allen Ruppersberg's salon-style installation of silkscreens

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and Post-it notes from the ongoing series "Honey, I Rearranged the Collection." HONEY I REARRANGED THE COLLECTION WITH EXPENSIVE ON THE LEFT, CHEAP ON THE RIGHT reads one; another, ACCORDING TO THE NAMES OF THE DEALERS WE GOT THEM FROM, INSTEAD OF THE ARTISTS. We could use more of this flout-the-hand-that-feeds-you brand of Conceptualism in these market-driven days.

One shortcoming of "Grey Flags" is

how much of the work looks recycled from gallery storerooms, rather than directly engaged with, or conceived for, the site. One exception is Liam Gillick's *Dispersed Discussion Structure*, a floor-dusting of glitter and whiskey that spills down the stairs into the lower level—the morning-after grunge glamour and light touch are welcome from an artist whose work is often intellectually top-heavy. Another high point is Kelley Walker's pair of adjoining sheetrock walls. Covered in offset prints that reproduce the brick interior that surrounds it, the untitled piece is an uncanny echoic coup.

Three films occupy the cavernous lower level, including works by Wilhelm Sasnal (a tale of failed love and factories) and Tacita Dean (a setting sun). But the revelation is the 85-minute-long *Mysterious Object at Noon* by Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul. A hybrid of documentary and narrative, its structure was inspired by the Surrealist game of exquisite corpse: The director relinquished control to his subjects. Huberman and Pfeiffer adopt a similar strategy, forgoing curatorial grandstanding to let art speak for itself.

"Grey Flags" is at SculptureCenter through July 30 (see Museums). Karin Schneider's fog machine *Sabotage* begin at 4:30pm on Saturday 3 (see Events).