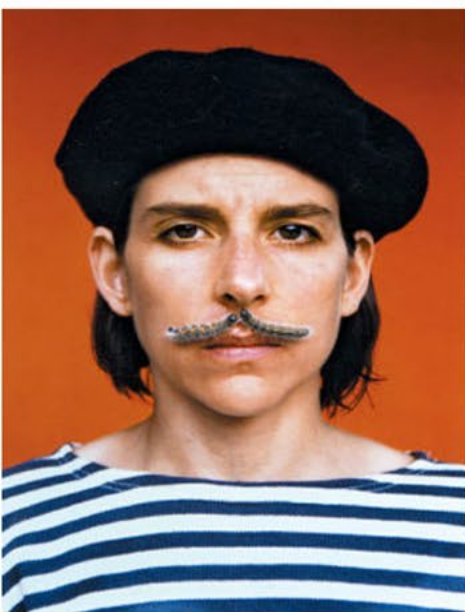


What: Things to do or see in New York | When: All dates | Where: All areas

# "Ceci n'est pas..."

By Nuit Banal | Wed Aug 8 2007



Nina Katchadourian, Self-portrait of the artist as an artist Courtesy the artist and Sara Meltzer Gallery

### Time Out Ratings :



The 22 artists featured in "Ceci n'est pas..." chronicle every tawdry aspect of the gallery scene with wit, irony and—occasionally—sycophantic adoration. Laura Parnes's videos reenact the discomforts of a first studio visit, for instance, while Jude Tallichet's heart-shaped homages to male art stars like Jeff Koons and John Currin reinforce the objectification success can bring.

What happens when art and money meet? Alejandro Diaz addresses the marketing of all this work with advertisements for naked artist inside (in marker on cardboard) and unknown artists at unheard-of prices (in glowing red neon). Christopher Ho and Troy Richards establish a fictitious travel agency to offer their colleagues luxury vacations: "Parisian and Provençal gastronomic adventure for Rirkrit Tiravanija"; "Dubai million-dollar shopping spree for Barbara Kruger." No one offers an easy fix.

Humor helps to mediate their uncomfortable closeness to their topic, although—both intentionally and not—many jokes fall flat. Pablo Helguera's *Artist Tip #7* offers advice on the proper response to a friend's exhibition. The lightness of his approach can't temper the anxiety he's addressing; it only highlights the difficulties of criticizing an institution to which one wants desperately to belong.

"Ceci n'est pas..." may not have all the answers, but it is an ambitious strike at a difficult question: How is contemporary art practice influenced by its shifting socioeconomic milieu? The show's achievement lies in exploring that puzzle without resorting to institutional critique or falling back on pure cynicism.

**Sara Meltzer Gallery**, through Aug 17

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