

the village

VOICE

DARA FRIEDMAN
Sunset Island
The Kitchen
512 West 19th Street
Through October 22

A Miami-based artist's island of lost souls

Some make art to explore the unknown; others to remind themselves of home. *Sunset Island*, a film installation by Miami-based artist Dara Friedman (selected by Ali Subotnik), will bring back memories for those of us who've experienced the ruins of contemporary private life firsthand. Close-up, fast-cut images of two remarkably fetching individuals—a man and a woman, both young but old enough to have been around the block, romantically—are projected on separate screens, so that one's gaze flickers back and forth between them.



Photograph by Dara Friedman

Island life: Dara Friedman's protagonists

In potently seductive Latin accents—his Italianate, hers closer to that of a *telenovela* vixen—they muse about a relationship's imponderables while moving through the rooms of what appears to be an art-cluttered mansion.

With staggered delays, they repeat each other's questions, which range from the mundane to the hilariously narcissistic, as they trace a downward spiral of eroding intimacy. "Have you put gas in the car?" "Who are my scumbag friends?"

"Should I really not say anything if I have nothing nice to say?" And my personal favorite—"On a scale of one to 10, how insecure am I, really?"

Like much of Friedman's art, it's easy on the eye if a bit harder on the ear. (For an earlier work, she filmed windblown models ripping their shirts open to the rat-a-tat of gunfire.)

Miami is, after all, the land of beautiful people; *Sunset Island*, just off its coast, is a man-made mass of prime real estate. Yet there's something both maddening and utterly engrossing about the echo chamber Friedman creates here, where desires and fears ricochet off each other and no one seems to hear anything but the sound of his or her own voice. Are these actors going over the same lines, which they're continually flubbing? And isn't that what we all do, anyway? **LESLIE CAMHI**