



December 16 – December 29, 2010

Art

Adam Pendleton, “Band”

★★★★★

The Kitchen, through Thu 23 (see Chelsea)

Whatever one thinks of indie-rockers Deerhoof, they ain't the Rolling Stones, so it's initially jarring to find the band following in Mick & Co.'s footsteps. But Adam Pendleton is unabashed in reinterpreting Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil* with the San Francisco four-piece in starring roles.

In *Band*, the artist follows the group across three adjoining screens, showing the musicians at work on a new tune (the knowingly titled “I Did Crimes for You”). Intercut with Deerhoof's own exchanges are voice-overs from Richard Wells and Andrew Stein's *Teddy*, a documentary film that tracks the developing thoughts and deeds of a politically inquisitive African-American teen.

Conceived of in response to dumbed-down coverage of the 40th anniversary of May 1968's

revolutionary ructions in Paris, and in homage to Godard's pursuit of formal innovation as a radical political tool, *Band* aligns the complex processes of collaborative songwriting with one man's coming-of-age. And if the video doesn't quite achieve its goals—the audio extracts are infrequent and often indistinct, and Deerhoof's performance sometimes grates—the piece is an ambitious and stylish attempt at radical reinvention.

Also on display—in a refreshingly minimal hang for this venue—are five works from Pendleton's ongoing series “System of Display,” in which monochromatic images silk-screened onto mirrors are overlaid with fragments of text. The works reflect on the problematically intertwined histories of Africa and Europe, and their photographic representations in various common spheres—including the art world itself, via shots from the inaugural “Document”—and form an austerely effective counterpoint to *Band*'s noisier give-and-take.—*Michael Wilson*

