

April 21, 2008

GOTHAM ART & THEATER

by Elisabeth Kley



The installation by New York artist Mika Tajima (b. 1975) at the Kitchen, "The Double," is part of a two-person show with Glen Fogel (b. 1977), organized by Matthew Lyons. Combining interior architecture with formal geometric abstraction, Tajima's row of movable panels framed in birch divides the gallery in half, forming a barrier made up of subtly-colored silkscreen paintings. Colored with grays, browns and purples embellished with gold leaf, they look like elaborations of three dimensional diagrams. Two of the panels are vertically rotating mirrors.

The photocopies pinned to four of the panels bring Tajima's conceptual concerns to the fore. One is a press release introducing architect Robert Probst's 1968 design for Herman Miller's "Action Office," and another is a copy of a poster from Cammel and Roeg's 1968 film Performance, featuring gender shifting photos of stars Mick Jagger and James Fox.



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The photocopies also include a hazy picture of two people separated by the walls of an unfinished building, and a snapshot of someone painting a wall mural of a low modernist

building. Together, these images suggest that the flexible architecture designed to facilitate communication ultimately wound up fostering loss of identity, isolation, confusion, and violence.

A hanging lamp copied from a scene in *Performance* swings menacingly back and forth behind the row of panels, casting shadows and reflections from two more mirrors with cutouts shaped like splashes of blood. Along with Howie Chen, Tajima has a band called New Humans and often activates her exhibitions with sonic art events featuring noise and music. Band members describe their work as "destabilizing into undulating segments and then finally shattering into a series of interlocking parts" -- also an apt description of Tajima's installation.

The eerie stuttering soundtrack and the flashing images of Quarry, Glen Fogel's video reenactment of a scene from TV's "Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit" could also be described as a "shattered series of interlocking parts." Seen in extreme close-up, a convicted pedophile, alternatingly played by the original television actor and Fogel himself, identifies his victims by sniffing a series of tagged baseball caps.

This monumental projection fills the entire wall, generating a sense of claustrophobia as it forces the viewer to identify with the pedophile. An NBC logo is visible in the lower left corner of the screen, but Fogel's structure of simple repetition communicates the pedophile's disturbing emotion more clearly than it could ever be conveyed on prime-time TV. Part of an edition of three, the video is a 2:30 loop with 18 variations for a total time of 41:50. The price is \$10,000, not including equipment.