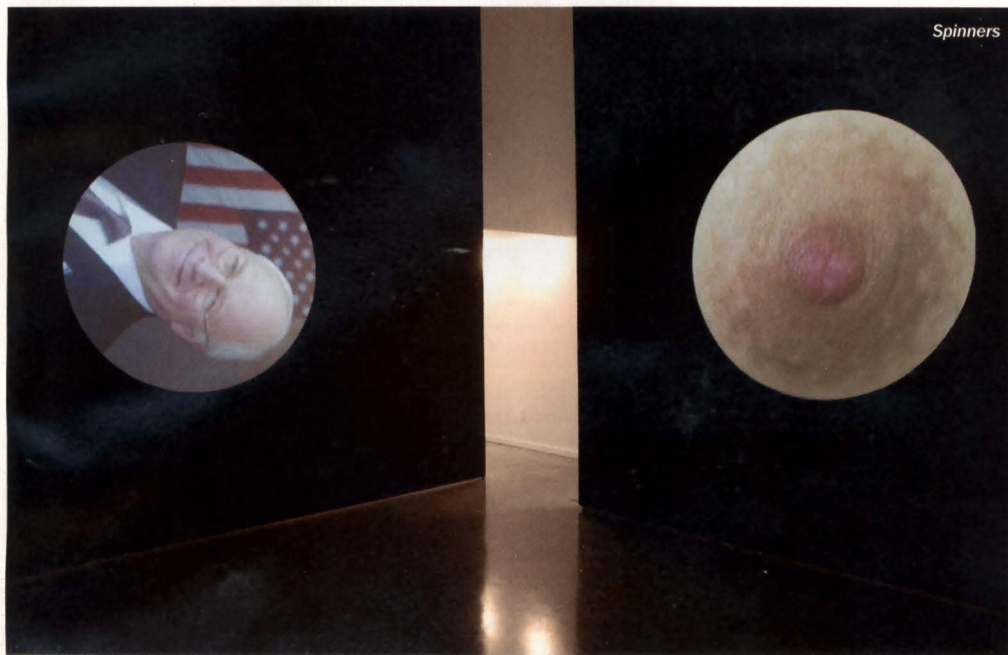


Reviews



Spinners

methods employed in transforming a kitty into Mozart: The old hold-the-paws-over-the-keyboard trick; using a cat toy on a string to get Precious to tickle the ivories; or, my favorite, wielding a laser pointer to do the same. But again, the aim isn't just to establish a familiar time-suck as the latest *Bicycle Wheel* or *Marilyn*—Arcangel edits the sounds of the piano so that they achieve a Cagian grandeur. And of course, he's drawing a parallel between himself as an artist "painting" with Photoshop and these felines being compelled to create by forces beyond their understanding.

Unfortunately, neither Pinard nor Rouston achieves the same balance between knowing and innocence, or displays the same grasp of the canon as Arcangel. Pinard offers three Flash animations, the strongest of which, *Provisional End*, suggests an unlikely synthesis of the Mario Brothers, *Tron*, *The Prisoner* and the films of David Cronenberg. The story line, which involves a fly and a stork,

"Arcangel, Pinard, Rouston"

★★★★★

Team Gallery, through July 31
(see Soho)

Team Gallery's trio updates the Pictures Generation with a techno twist. By **Howard Halle**

Summer for New York's gallery scene means lightly attended group exhibits, and this year is no exception, though the offerings are touched by a certain poignancy: According to rumors, many of these shows will represent the final hurrah for the spaces mounting them, especially in Chelsea.

The bad economy and the necessities of pushing unsold inventory may account for the relative dearth of young artists making their exhibition debuts. But if future trends aren't much in evidence, recent developments in the art world are enjoying a reprise—at least in this Team show featuring three gallery artists (Cory Arcangel, Guillaume Pinard, Jon Rouston) whose works reverberate with echoes of the "Younger than Jesus" show at the

New Museum. Arcangel, of course, was actually included in that survey, but Pinard and Rouston might as well have been.

Each member of the trio exudes the same millennial sensibility that the New Museum labored to define, but if you look at their stuff in a broader historical context, they're part of something like the sixth wave of artists since the late 1950s to base their work on popular culture motifs. However, by presenting contemporary pop culture as an existential crucible—a sort of I-play-Xbox-therefore-I-am proposition—Arcangel, Pinard and Rouston most closely resemble the artists in the Met's "The Pictures Generation" exhibition. You could even say that if Cindy Sherman et al. had grown up immersed in video games, YouTube and Facebook, instead of film noir, French New Wave and television, their output might have looked similar to the pieces here.

Arcangel was one of the standouts in "Younger than Jesus," and his contributions for this show include more of the trippy abstractions that caused such a stir at the New Museum. Actually large-scale digital C-prints, they're essentially paintings

without paint. The artist made them with Photoshop's color gradient tool, and the exact sequence of moves he used—mouse clicks, menu options—serve as titles. I noted in my review of "Younger than Jesus" that a viewer could repeat these instructions to replicate their own Arcangel. I also mentioned that while anyone could presumably do this, it's still unlikely that a curator would pay attention to their efforts. This wasn't meant as a criticism of Arcangel so much as a statement of fact.

I don't believe Arcangel is that interested in the ironies of the readymade strategy. Instead, he seems to be pursuing the sublime wrapped up in the attitude of post-ironic sincerity that characterizes so many of his thirtysomething cohorts. Slick and unnaturally colored as they are, Arcangel's "canvases" are, in their own way, representative of the play of light in nature, even if that nature exists only as ones and zeroes. Meanwhile, in a downstairs space, his video *Drei Klavierstücke* presents a spectacle that is as nutty as it is awe-inspiring, stringing together found YouTube clips of cats "playing" the piano. Watching closely, one can observe the various

"The trio presents contemporary pop culture as an existential crucible."

plays out as a series of video-game levels that unlock one after the other—a string of labyrinths, rooms, etc. through which fly chases stork and stork chases fly. One graphically murders the other, and vice versa, in a kind of Itchy and Scratchy cartoon playing in perpetuity (which, come to think of it, is a tautology). Rouston's pair of spinning projections looks like something that could have been cooked up at CalArts in the 1970s, aside from the Bush-era references (images of Dick Cheney and Sarah Palin; an unboxed iPhone). It's hypnotic, but ultimately not that interesting.

Nonetheless the work of all of three of these artists demonstrates the impact of new technologies on visual thinking for better or worse, whether as path to cultural revolution, or as a means to simply sell old wine in new bottles. In this summer of our art-world discontent, it's not yet clear which way we're headed. ■