Flash Art

SLATER BRADLEY, Installation view, 2002.

New York

Slater Bradley

Team Gallery

When we look in the mirror, the image seems reassuring but also unsettling because its actions reverse our own. Likewise, puppets, mannequins and clones hold a creepy fascination, because we project on the other all the unwanted fantasies that the self can't contain. A human double stands as the apex of such fears and desires, and forms the basis for Slater Bradley's new work. Bradley replicates a series of doppelgangers in the exhibition, from a real twin club-kid repeatedly mistaken for Bradley in New York, to pixilated video images of his imagined double, Joy Division's Ian Curtis.

Mysterious photos of Bradley's stand-in populate the main gallery, punctuated by a ghost portrait of the false twin in a Queens cemetary peering over a tombstone inscribed "Bradley" with the artist's face hovering in the sky above. A grainy video paean to Ian Curtis (starring the double) and an opulent brown and gold painting of the cover of Joy Division's video compilation "Here are the Young Men" frame the action. Six-foot sculptural casts of Bradley and his doppelganger as giant Druidic chess pawns complete the scene.

The double and Bradley seem involved in a delicate dance, a chess game so to speak. As in Fassbinder's film *Despair,* Bradley seems seduced by the mirror, but frightened that his rival might be more potent or ready to replace him; that's why Dirk Bogarde must kill his duplicate in *Despair.* The scratchy video of suicide-victim Ian Curtis betrays the displaced romantic wish fulfillment for Bradley, or the double, to die like Curtis and finish the game.

In the end, we gain insight into the construction of the bogeymen and phantoms who roam the interior of the young white male psyche. The current fashion for synth-bands in New York like Spandau Ballet may be tired, but Bradley's combination of Joy Division and his own occult-influenced streak of identity politics makes one interested to see his next move.
Michael Cohen

REVIEWS