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Review of Paul Pfeiffer at MC Kunst

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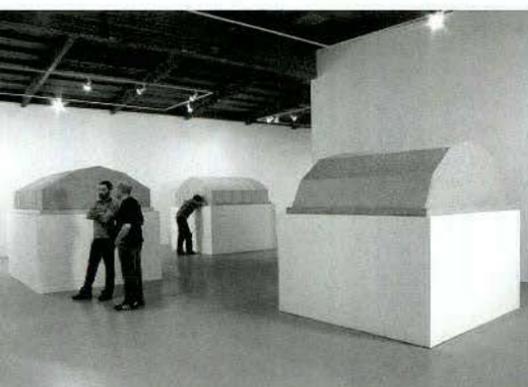
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R E V I E W S



PAUL PFEIFFER, *Study for Jerusalem* (1), (2) and (3), 2006. Installation view. Photo: Joshua White.



YIN XIUZHEN, *Restroom W*, 2006. Photo: Scott Groller. From the exhibition, "Restroom M: Song Dong, Restroom W: Yin Xiuzhen," Gallery at RED-CAT.

his accompanying text that, "A work will never grant anyone, ever, full possession of its particulars," but having possession of a work of art is not what brings people to galleries and museums. It's the experience of the artwork and how one can appropriate it that brings one back. Echoing Whistler saying "Art happens," Paolini leaves enough space for the viewer to have the opportunity to make art happen.

Andrzej Lawn

LOS ANGELES

PAUL PFEIFFER

MC KUNST

The photographs and video installations in this show continue themes from Pfeiffer's "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" series as they explore notions of spectacle and spectatorship. Pfeiffer positions the celebrity athlete or the fallen rock star as the archetypal subjects of modern day idol worship in photographs that speak eloquently to the cultish quality of athletic fanaticism and to the relationship between the masses and singular cultural icons. He configures the sports spectacle as a religious experience, followed en masse, with each constituent yearning to have his or her own moment of revelation. In *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (24), 2006, a venerated basketball player is isolated and suspended above the court, caught in mid-jump, as if ascending to heaven, his head thrown back in ecstasy. In each of Pfeiffer's photos the subject's face is turned away from the viewer or blocked by the sacred glow of the omnipresent paparazzo's flash. Without recognizable identities, the figures in the photos become more like ersatz gods and less like branded celebrities.

In contrast to the photographs, the videos that we see projected on the inside wall of the three plywood Quonset hut sculptures of *Study for Jerusalem*, 2006, show only faces, as crowds of spectators robotically engage in a hypnotic call-and-response chant. These sculptures address the sports arena as a churchlike structure, the site of ritual and indoctrination.

Flagpole, 2006, sits quietly in a corner, and provides a poetic summation of the concepts in the show. On a tiny monitor mounted to a flagpole, a video of a setting sun is manipulated to appear as though the celestial orb is bouncing around the confines of the video frame, like a ball on a court. The flagpole symbolizes both conquest and patriotism, and structurally echoes the post of the basketball hoop. Perhaps Pfeiffer is warning us, like a Horseman of the Apocalypse, of a world in which athletes are deified and spectators are followers in blind faith.

Micol Hebron