

Art in America



BRICE DELLSPERGER

Team

French artist Brice Dellsperger's exhibition offered a single body of work shown in two ways: at Team Gallery's Wooster Street space, the 30 videos comprising the artist's "Body Double" series played on five monitors; at the gallery's Grand Street location, a selection of videos from the series were projected one at a time on a large screen in a black-box setting. Since 1995, Dellsperger has used green-screen technology, lip-synched audio, costumes and heavy makeup to craft low-budget re-creations of scenes from art-house cinema. He sources material from directors like Stanley Kubrick, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, David Lynch, Kenneth Anger and, most frequently, Brian De Palma. De Palma directed the 1984 psychosexual thriller that gives Dellsperger's series its title, and perhaps features so prominently here because he was something of a remake artist himself, borrowing heavily from the films of Alfred Hitchcock. In the spirit of De Palma's self-conscious works, Dellsperger's videos, which range from 36 seconds to 2 hours in length, go beyond simple parody by reflexively emphasizing their own allusions.

Dellsperger draws from genres that rely on stock characters—noir, horror and psychological thrillers. In many of his remakes, all of a scene's characters are played by a single actor—frequently Dellsperger himself—and interact through

Regina Bogat:
Coble, 1968, acrylic
and wood on
canvas, 60 by 48
inches; at Zürcher.

Brice Dellsperger:
Body Double 22,
2007-10, single-
channel video, 37
minutes; at Team.



Walter Robinson:
*Lands' End Friends
and Family*, 2014,
acrylic on canvas,
30 by 40 inches; at
Lynch Tham.

digital superimposition. *Body Double 22* (2010), for instance, features heavily tattooed actor Jean-Luc Verna playing every character in scenes from Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*. Not only do male actors frequently play female characters, but they also occasionally switch back to male characters while still wearing the wigs and fake breasts they donned for the female roles. In some instances, multiple male and female actors play the same character in succession. By seeking, through inversions of gender, to undermine the resemblance of these characters to their sources, Dellsperger decodifies the scenes and takes away the viewer's ability to observe passively. In *Body Double 5* (1996), for example, which is based on the famous museum scene from De Palma's thriller *Dressed to Kill* (1980), the seductive glances shared between the film's female protagonist and a handsome stranger are neutered through Dellsperger's performance of both roles in half-drag.

In addition to his primary technique of gender reversal, Dellsperger sometimes presents characters in doubled or tripled form. In a group of three-channel videos that were shown at the Wooster Street gallery, three sets of actors (each on a separate screen) simultaneously reenact the same scenes from *Star Wars*, *Mulholland Drive* and De Palma's *Blow Out*, the multiplicity serving to complicate the linear narratives and to make it still more difficult for the viewers to suspend their disbelief.

The exhibition's French subtitle was "Vous n'en croirez pas vos yeux," which translates to "You don't believe your eyes." When we say that we don't believe our eyes, we mean that we know we really should. With the "Body Double" videos, we want to believe what we see but are reminded that, despite our efforts, we can't.

—Ian Edward Wallace