

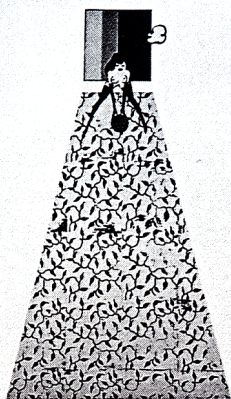
Time Out

New York

September 26–October 3, 1996

ART

Review



Alix Pearlstein, *Interior with Playboy Girl and Orange Ball*, 1996.

Alix Pearlstein, "Interiors" Postmasters, through Oct 12 (see Soho).

Along with Phyllis Baldino and Cheryl Donegan, Alix Pearlstein has invented a peculiarly late-'90s approach to making art—videos starring the artist are shown alongside objects or installations appearing on the same tape. In this work, art is played off its double on screen: The boundary between an object and its depiction gets blurred, while meaning circles back on itself in a never-ending Borgesian loop.

Here Pearlstein shows "Interiors," a six-part video. In the first segment, the artist, costumed as a kitten, playfully

bounces a fluffy ball around a spare, high-Modernist set—a classy living room with a single perfect minimalist painting of concentric circles (think Kenneth Noland) hovering midscreen. In the second segment, only the canvas remains, mysteriously missing one circle, which was painted pink. But now, the object is no longer a work of art. Instead, it's used by the artist—dressed as the *Playboy* party-joke girl—for a dartboard. We also watch as she rolls a pink ball (the missing color?) off-camera, only to see it reappear in a third segment, carried this time by the artist dressed as Madonna from her *Blonde Ambition* phase. Meanwhile, the viewer sits in the same set as the one on the video, melding with its strange and stylish vision.

Pearlstein has always defied easy interpretation. I first thought her progression of personae was some sort of chronology of the roles women assume at various points in their lives, but that didn't quite work; these images are too much like media hallucinations to be habitable as identities. One thing that does seem clear is the connection Pearlstein makes between redecorating and reinventing oneself. Who hasn't flipped through *Elle Decor* fantasizing about the person they'd be if only they had this house or that loft?

Also on view are collages that serve as storyboards for the videos. This show is a big change for Pearlstein. She's left behind the slacker characters of her early videos for more seductive fare—and it's an exciting development.—*Bill Arning*