

POSTMASTERS

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007

Art in Review

Eva and Franco Mattes

13 Most Beautiful Avatars

Postmasters
459 West 19th Street, Chelsea
Through March 17

Eva and Franco Mattes have gone relatively legitimate and, it should be added, salable. The duo, also known as 0100101110101101.org, is expert at various forms of duplicity and intervention. They have mounted an extensive ad campaign for a nonexistent movie, "United We Stand"; brief-

ly kidnapped the Nike logo for a public installation in Vienna; created a fictional artist with a real career; and executed various forms of media hacking and culture jamming.

Now they are making portraits, or, more accurately, digital prints on canvas of the avatars — digital surrogates — that people create to become part of the online virtual world called Second Life.

What's remarkable is the eerie effectiveness of these works as paintings in the nonvirtual world. With their flat colors, slightly blocky features and assertive hair, these images of men and women exude a sexy artifice that is both seductive and a parody of seductiveness. They also evoke Ann Lee, the manga character featured in videos by Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, and the portraits of Alex Katz and Richard Phillips.

It may be that the technical imperfections of the Second Life software make up for the lack of facture. Such kinks will eventually be ironed out, and the avatars will be completely

realistic, — at which point, these works could verge on unique.

ROBERTA SMITH

The New York Times

WEEKEND ARTS
FINE ARTS
LEISURE

PEATED:

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2007

Last Chance

EVA AND FRANCO MATTES: '13 MOST BEAUTIFUL AVATARS' This artistic duo, best known for media hacking and culture jamming, has turned to digital canvas portraits of avatars — digital surrogates — from the online virtual world Second Life. With their flat colors, slightly blocky features and assertive hair, these images have a jaded artifice worthy of "Blade Runner," but are also eerily effective as paintings. Postmasters, 459 West 19th Street, Chelsea, (212) 727-3323; closes tomorrow. (Smith)