

POSTMASTERS GALLERY

459 West 19th Street, NYC 10011

tel: 212-727 3323, fax: 212-229 2829

e-mail: postmasters @ thing.net

For immediate release:

ALIX PEARLSTEIN "Partners"

january 9 - february 6, 1999

"Partners" 16 min. 40 sec. Color 1998

"Parallel Play" (x5) C Prints. 45"x50" 1998 Mounted on sintra "Parallel Play (dancing)", (looking), (reaching), (loving), (sparring)

Alix Pearlstein continues to investigate the relationship between still imagery and time based media in her latest work, "Partners", a single channel videotape, and "Parallel Play", a related group of five large scale color photographs. The videotape is presented as a continuous loop, shown concurrently on two monitors, which run asynchronously

"Partners" literally juxtaposes a live action figure (the artist herself) with a series of paper cutouts, which act as surrogate performance partners or foils. The parade of flat characters, both recognizable and unknown, run the gamut from baby to athlete to friend, in a flow more evocative of free association than conventional narrative structure. They present a wide range of identities, with whom Pearlstein interacts, reacts to and mirrors in a series of attempts to 'connect' with an 'other' physically, psycho-logically, and emotionally

This actual, as opposed to virtual, 'video collage', demonstrates a resolutely low-tech approach, in which perspective play creates spatial illusion. The magazine size figures hang on a piece of monofilament placed directly in front of the video camera, while the live performer is 20 feet back. This technique exploits video's capacity to flatten space and compress depth of field, causing the figures to 'appear' to be together.

However, this device places the live performer very much alone in the blank space, dependent on the video monitor as a mirror, by which to gage her 'relationships'. The construct presents an opportunity to act out, project, and role play a succession of encounters which can only approximate bona-fide interaction. The closed circuit nature of these partnerships is underscored by the soundtrack, in which the voice over posits a mediation between an internal monologue or spoken thought, and a 'real', albeit one way conversation

"Parallel Play", a series of five large scale C prints, borrows it's title from developmental psychology, where it has long been observed that young children do not play with one another, they play next to one another. The photographs depict several pairings taken off the blank page of the video, and placed into a neutral interior space, returning the cutouts to the context and conditions of a still picture. The blurred foreground figure, through it's suggestion of motion, appears more three dimensional and lifelike, causing an illusion which operates inversely to that in the video.

Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon with any questions that you might have.