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Reality Tunnel Vision

Alex Bag Alex Bag

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September 17 - October 24, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 17, 6-8 pm

Elizabeth Dee is pleased to present an installation of new drawings and video by Alex Bag. This will be her second solo show at the gallery, her first since 2004, and her seventh New York solo exhibition.

In *Reality Tunnel Vision*, Bag continues to work with the evolving mode of television genres, focusing here on our contemporary fascination with reality television. Drawing upon the versatility of her practice, which, in addition to video, includes writing, performance and drawing, Bag explores analytical concepts sourced from disciplines of psychology, philosophy and physics and in so doing questions the notion of reality in reality television.

In this exhibition Bag fills the front gallery with drawings culled from competition and elimination based reality shows, prominent on VH1 and Bravo, including *Daisy of Love*, *Charm School*, *Tool Academy*, *NYC Prep*, *Rock of Love 2*, *Real Housewives of New York City* (and also *New Jersey*), *Celebrity Rehab* and *The Pick-Up Artist*. In making these gestural and briefly noted drawings, Bag has employed images found either on the internet or through a process of taping the television episodes, playing them back and pausing them, in order to better isolate specific moments of 'reality.' However, these drawings are also filtered through Bag's reading of Robert Anton Wilson, the late American agnostic mythic, "Saint of Discordianism," and writer of the *Illuminatus! Trilogy* and are set opposite a wall mural depicting an enchanted forest, out of which additional figures will lurk.

The newest video, presented in a chroma-key green room with an Astroturf carpet, that both continues Bag's interest in a kind of simulated nature and also refers back to the conditions of the video's production, where the very background locations are not from the same reality as that inhabited by the characters portrayed, takes the form of an episode from an alternate reality television show. The video features Bag performing the roles of a number of contestants, focusing on their humiliation, and the ultimate failure of their campaign to be the lone survivor, and is combined with a voiceover narration in which Bag's interpretations and inner ideas about the façade of the format.

Alex Bag emerged in the 1990's as a pioneer of performance based video that engaged commentary and critique of contemporary media culture, specifically the genre of television. She has shown her work internationally in solo and group contexts, which include: The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; The Tate, London; The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Kunsthalle Basel; Musée d'Art Modern de la Ville de Paris; MoMA, New York; ICA, Philadelphia; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Art Pace, San Antonio. In 2010, Hatje Cantz will publish the first monograph on her work.

For more information, please contact the gallery at +1.212.924.7545.