

## Art

## Reviews

## Alex Bag

Elizabeth Dee Gallery, through Mar 27 (see Chelsea).

**A**lex Bag has shifted the target of her satirical critique from the art world to the media in her current exhibition, "The Coven Services for Consumer Mesmerism, Product Sorcery and the Necromantic Reimagination of Consumption." She has set up a fictitious ad agency in the main gallery at Elizabeth Dee and turned the back space into a screening room where commercials (many starring the artist herself) interrupt the main program, excerpts from the notorious Paris Hilton sex videos.

Signs of witchcraft abound in the front "office"—mood-boards with incantations, an image of Rush Limbaugh metamorphosing into a donkey, a mural inspired by antique sorcery books. Hocus-pocus recurs in the video as Bag plays a character named for the pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, costumed as the Wicked Witch of the West in a lab coat, whispering plans for targeting children as the next big Prozac market. Bag also assumes the character of Iraqi war hero Jessica Lynch as a spokesperson for Halliburton in Iraq, making a peace sign while delivering the slogan "Halliburton—making bad things good."

By far the best commercial features Bag consuming Procter & Gamble



Alex Bag, detail of *Demo Reel/Coven Series*, 2004.

products—slathering on "anti-odorant," eating "lard rounds" (a.k.a. chips), a hilarious riff on how products infiltrate every aspect of our waking moments. Because the commercials are cleverly conceived to seem as flat-footed as any White House PR, viewers may long for the kind of polish mimicked by *Adbusters* magazine spoofs or *Saturday Night Live*. Still, the show raises powerful questions about the mechanics of advertising, and viewers may leave wondering why they buy anything they see on television, from reported weapons of mass destruction to minipads.—Bridget L. Goodbody