

"Greater New York 2005" at P.S. 1

Ann Pibal, *Slick* (2004), acrylic on panel, 14" x 19-1/2"

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"You just don't get it dad, so fuck off."

That comment comes courtesy of Gardar Eide Einarsson, one of over 150 artists featured in *Greater New York 2005*, an exhibition at P.S.1 in Long Island City. Mr. Einarsson's maxim, rendered in faux graffiti on a stairway wall, could be the motto for this showcase of "new artistic directions" organized by curators from the Museum of Modern Art and its outer-borough affiliate. By pairing it with another of Mr. Einarsson's artworks—"Total Revolution", it reads—you'll have an idea of the delusions under which the exhibition operates.

If stories of avaricious dealers on the prowl for young artists are true (they must be: I read about it in *The New York Times*), then *Greater New York* is less a showcase than a showroom. Mr. Einarsson and his friends at MoMA

and P.S.1 might not like to hear it, but the fact is that “dad” does get it, and he’s buying it by the truckload. “Total Revolution” and “fuck off” aren’t declarations of political or artistic intent. They’re bearers of a supremely marketable pose geared toward an audience who believes that art is all about antagonism and the artist, a rebel above reproach. The main complaint about Greater New York has, in fact, been its unapologetic courting of filthy lucre. When making a buck becomes the lone incentive for creating art, you know the artist has relinquished the better part of his soul.

All you can really say about *Greater New York* is that it’s typical of the museum-as-funhouse aesthetic: temporarily exasperating and quickly forgotten. Four talented artists do warrant notice: the draftsman Benjamin Degen, the painter Ann Pibal, the sculptor Tobias Putrih and Rico Gatson, whose video *Go Play* makes something sexy, spooky and funny from the kaleidoscopic distortion of an old Pam Grier flick. Each of them deserves more respect than they receive from the not-so-hallowed halls of P.S.1.

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