

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

Art Review:

TOPIC: ABOUT RANCOURT/YATSUK'S BLACK DIAMOND AT KATE WERBLE

GUY FORGET

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Ugh to be aware of things I'd normally overlook. We were watching satellite TV in a friend's apartment. A lot was the same, Russian Wheel has the same basic format; a few minor differences, the production values might've been lower, but the basics were there. I have no understanding of Russian so it was a matter of experiencing it on a different level, beyond language; watching the wheel spin and the host smile and the audience clapping as letters were turned. The studio was darker than the California version. You're experiencing two things simultaneously; a doubling. Part of it is this artificial, meaningless pitch, that despite itself is affecting; indeed, you leave there energized, jazzed up, inspired. You come to it understanding its artificiality and yet it wins you over. The machinations are available for inspection; the performance is transparent, so much so that you can't see it. Two-for-one, like pizza. You are so immersed in your own culture that its behaviors and expectations are part of your behaviors and expectations. It's very difficult to objectify your culture, to assess its absurdities; to assess its tenuous relationship to necessity. This, too, is too transparent to make sense of; too much a part of everything to comprehend. Even if you are in the know, that is, you know that you are constantly being manipulated, that so much of what we are exposed to is formulaic; cheap, with both eyes towards efficacy; that so much that we engage has been systematically developed by people and entities with a vested interest, probably financial or, at least, ideological; to then see the stock video, ubiquitous imagery; the stock music; the language, understandable only in waves and feelings; the video effects, the swirls of color and light. That this is done so well, so perfectly as to seem real, competing with and winning over skepticism. An aporia: so much like reality, each component our reality; everything is transparently false. Umberto Eco is not American so maybe he can understand what happens here. He was writing about Disneyland. The difference is that people go there to continue their uncritical engagement, maybe it's disengagement; it's an artificial world, a gestalt for fantasy, escape; he calls it hyperreality. Here also a gestalt, one for pleasure, but also an opportunity to reevaluate a few things. Then you step out into the sunshine of the Pacific beach, nature dazzles you, Coca-Cola invites you, the freeway awaits you with its five lanes, on the car radio Olivia Newton-John is singing Please, Mister, Please.... It's like reality. It's unequivocally real but it's dishonest, unreal, superficial. Operates to learned cultural and microcultural norms and expectations and rules etc. that are not authentic. They are pervasive; it's what we know and we get it. It's like Koons in that it's respectful, if not reverential of the source material. Satire is not what is happening, the gesture is genuine. It's a critique but also a celebration. It's authentic, it's sympathetic; of course, it's done with a wink, as almost everything.

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