

L Rex: Art

by Paul D'Agostino | 06/02/2015 12:23 PM |



Installation shot of Deborah Kass's show at Sargent's Daughters. Image courtesy Sargent's Daughters.

DEBORAH KASS: AMERICA'S MOST WANTED, 1998-99

Sargent's Daughters, 179 East Broadway, through June 28th

The higher Kass has ascended into the loftier echelons of recognition and success as a visual artist—a shorter list than one featuring the major museums that hold her work, for instance, might be a list of those that don't—the more intriguingly prophetic, self-reflexively percipient, and interpretatively loaded this particular series of her Warhol appropriations has become. In *America's Most Wanted*, Kass portrays important curators as criminals, a gesture which has a rather immediate hook of witty sharpness, to be sure, but which is also—and indeed more importantly, as it renders the project more curiously timeless—so full of art-world and art-historical commentary, not to mention institutional and gender-related cross-referentiality, that the embedded questions the series poses seem all but limitless. What's more, such queries have not only accrued over time, but they've also become—for better or worse, for all interested parties—even more germane. And then there's the extended commentary implied by certain aspects of this show's setting, i.e. Sargent's Daughters, and timing, i.e. right now: These 'institutionally' critical works, by an artist who has since entered into the institutions themselves, are on view at a young, smallish gallery on the Lower East Side; this is the first time the series has ever been shown in NYC in its entirety; it is coincident with a new Warhol show at MoMA, in which his early-career *Campbell's Soup Cans* are finally being shown as they were for the first time many decades ago, when they were first exhibited at Ferus, then a young, smallish gallery in Los Angeles. And how about this: It is sometimes said that curators have become almost unreasonably enamored of process. In this series, then—via the mugshots and their material execution—the curators themselves are the ones being processed! Well, anyway, go see the show. It's open to all kinds of interpretation, and splendidly so.

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