



'Practice, Practice, Practice' at Lora Reynolds Gallery

The curatorial concept is loose, but there's plenty good to see

By [Jeanne Claire van Ryzin](#)
AMERICAN-STATESMAN ARTS CRITIC
Thursday, May 14, 2009

'Practice, Practice, Practice,' the new exhibit at Lora Reynolds Gallery curated by artist Michael Smith and New York curator Jay Sanders, purports to riff on notions of three. Specifically, Smith and Sanders say their starting points were ideas such as the comedic adage that things are funnier in three and also pop artist Jasper John's oft-related recipe for art: take an object, do something to it, do something else to it. It's a bit of thin curatorial conceit, and it's not expressly developed. And their curators' statement alludes to other rather disconnected ideas. Really, the exhibit could have been called 'Stuff Michael Smith and Jay Sanders Like' and that would have been just fine.

After all, there's plenty of compelling art to see in this exhibit — with 26 artists represented — whether there's an overall intellectual organization to it. All told, there are probably several hours of video viewing in 'Practice, Practice, Practice,' including one that's offered free for the taking: Sharon Hayes' 'Symbionese Liberation Army Screeds #13, 16, 20 & 29' is 200 dubbed VHS tapes stacked against the wall. You can take one home and see Hayes reciting the speeches kidnapped heiress Patty Hearst made to her parents via television in the 1970s after she willingly took up with the SLA, an urban revolutionary gang.

Smith, who last year wowed Austin with 'Mike's World,' his sprawling, wonderfully noisy, busy, solo retrospective at the Blanton that charted his three decades of performance-based art, has a good eye for the absurd. So does Sanders. Especially, the duo has mined some sublimely absurd yet trenchant video art. Joanna Malinowska's 'Oranges/Vodka/Bunny/Autograph' is a compressed eight minutes showing four witty vignettes that reveal the thin edge between what's random and what's not. Malinowska documents her obsession with the pianist Piotr Anderszewski and her attempts to meet him through four carefully staged and quite funny encounters. Unwittingly, Anderszewski becomes a participant in Malinowska's vignettes. Reality, and its illusion of haphazardness, unwind charmingly through Malinowska's lens.

Jim O'Rourke — Grammy-winning longtime music producer (Sonic Youth, Wilco) who has in the past few years spent more time making art videos — captures the urgency, frustration yet never-ending fascination of creative work in his 18-minute 'Not Yet.' We see a silent 360-degree continuously spinning shot of a film or music production studio. A man rushes hurriedly into the studio. Then in the next spin he grabs a giant reel of tape and rushes out. Then perhaps in three spins we seem him rush out again. As the camera spins, the action and sequence seem more disconnected. Then the film's lighting begins to morph so we see everything through an increasingly hazier reddish-orange filter. Throughout 'Not Yet' we're rushing and we're almost there again, and then again, and then again.

Ah, the furies of art making.

'Practice, Practice, Practice'
When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays through June 27
Where: Lora Reynolds Gallery, 360 Nueces St.