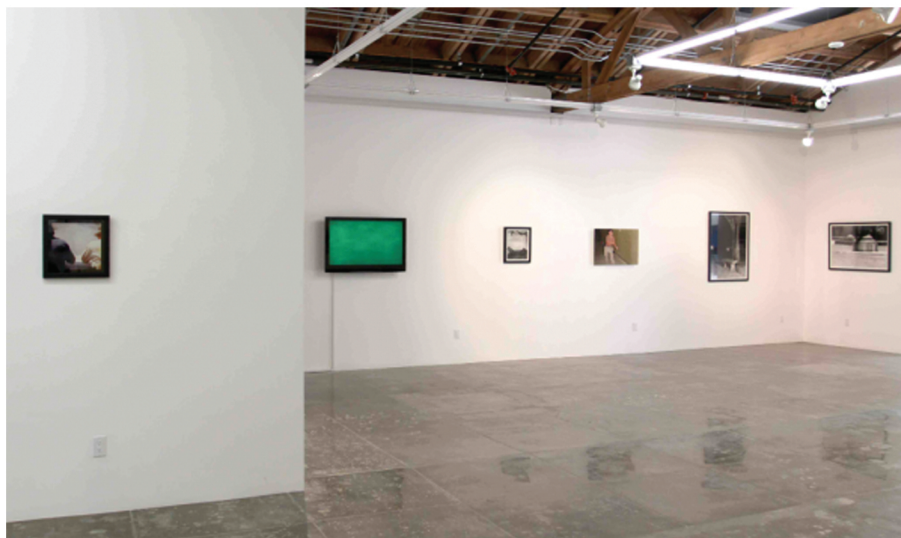


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By Sasha Lee

Mark Moore Gallery Wraps up Josh Azzarella: Works 2004-2011



Mark Moore Gallery will wrap up their current exhibition *Josh Azzarella: Works 2004-2011* next week on May 14. The show, as the title implies, presents a comprehensive “career-to-date” survey of both Josh Azzarella’s photographic and video works. This approach seems like a particularly apt curatorial strategy on the part of Mark More Gallery, as Azzarella’s underlying conceptual framework spans both media and unites the works on view by reflecting developments in practice.

“I initially started with photography. I decided I would stay with photography for quite some time....in terms of modification and removal, I felt I needed to get handle on that before moving to video,” says Azzarella.

“I approach video as I do photography, which is to tear it apart into 24, 30 frames a second and approach each frame as an individual photograph. The complication becomes matching things that have moved and making sure they don’t jump....but really its the same process between the same mediums.”



Untitled #23 ("Lynndied"), 2006

Azzarella’s early works focus on appropriating and modifying widely recognizable, or even iconic images from both historical photographs and current news media. *Untitled #23 ("Lynndied")*, from 2006, removes one of the subjects from the darkly controversial Abu Graib photos—leaving in its place a haunting absence.



Untitled #100 (Fantasia)

More recent works in Azzarella's oeuvre favor pop culture and commercial iconography. In the video *Untitled #100, (Fantasia)*, Azzarella took two years to meticulously remove all but the murky rolling fog of a smoke machine and ominously ambient noises from Michael Jackson's seminal *Thriller* music video. The result is a seeming post-apocalyptic landscape; robbed of its ghoulish face paint and kitsch, the video is both a humorous and frightening look at what is left behind- imbued with new symbolic meaning now that the prince of pop himself "left the building", so to speak, in 2009, oddly enough the same year the piece was created.



Untitled #105 (SFDF)

The show culminates with the debut of Azzarella's multi-channel video installation, *Untitled #105 (SFDF)*, another major 2 year project, which suspends three pivotal moments of "anticipation" from the iconic 1933 version of *King Kong* and combines them with newly captured footage by Azzarella himself. Continuing his practice of modification and removal, the piece marks Azzarella's first time behind the camera, reflecting a new directorial direction perhaps. Collapsing fact and fiction, the piece questions notions of authenticity and fantasy.

The exhibition itself was held in Mark Moore Gallery's new space in Culver City, CA (after twelve successful years in their Santa Monica, CA, Bergamot Station locale). Featuring the designs of renowned architect Peter Zellner, the "new" space is actually a Historic Building (according to Culver City's preservation program), built originally in 1925.

Upcoming exhibitions (opening May 21) include new works from Belgian artist Cindy Wright and a new installation by emerging artist Mark Fox in the project room.