

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

November 12, 2006

W vs VF

Filed under: [media](#) — alecsothblog @ 11:46 am



Two major national magazines have 'Art Issues' this month. VF was nearly disqualified in round one for punching below the belt by using a Brad Pitt cover image [without Pitt's permission](#). While VF tried to put up a good fight with [Todd Eberle's](#) portraits of artists, W won in a landslide. The contemporary art world is so closely tied to the fashion world that a more general magazine like VF really doesn't have a fighting chance.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading this quote by [Jeffrey Deitch](#) in VF. I think it pertains to my recent post on '[perv humor](#).'

Great things get lost through the cycles of the art market. Take Anselm Kiefer, who in the late 80's was probably the most desired artist of that generation in the art market. Nowadays, one is even cautious about putting up a major Kiefer at auction because you don't know if there will be enough people there to buy it. So a major, major Kiefer might be well sold at a million dollars, whereas Lisa Yuskavage [a 44-year-old painter whose provocative works toy with soft-core porn] might get the same price.

Sex sells. People want sexy images. This goes back to the old masters, to French 19th-century academic painting. You know, Cabanel, or 18th-century painters like Fragonard, Boucher. They're sort of excuses for people to have high-class pornography in their homes. This is nothing new. Go back to the Italian Renaissance with the nude male and female figures. They're religious subjects but have lots of prurient interest, too – for people who are in circles where they cannot have *Playboy* calendars pinned up to their walls.

5 Comments

1. "The contemporary art world is so closely tied to the fashion world"

People say this, but I only see it manifest in the worst, most forced ways.

Comment by [ross](#) — November 12, 2006 @ [1:22 pm](#)

2. I subscribe to both mags and was at first excited about Stephen Shore in the art issue of W. That is, until it arrived. The images are tiny and show off Brice Marden's house. Big deal.

Comment by [david](#) — November 12, 2006 @ [2:33 pm](#)

3. It states later in the article you attached that the photo releases allowed for this type of publication. (A letter was also sent but Mr. Pitt seems to not have seen it...this smells of PR house trying to create mini scandal to up someone's visibilty?) How sensationalist mr. Soth...

Comment by [caleb](#) — November 12, 2006 @ [7:35 pm](#)

4. "I subscribe to both mags and was at first excited about Stephen Shore in the art issue of W. That is, until it arrived. The images are tiny and show off Brice Marden's house. Big deal."

Me too

Comment by [zbs](#) — November 13, 2006 @ [10:20 am](#)

5. oh brother...

Comment by [harold hollingsworth](#) — November 14, 2006 @ [1:41 am](#)