

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

March 19, 2007

LaChapelle & Greenberg

Filed under: [crying & flying](#), [editorial photo](#) — alecsothblog @ 1:36 am

LaChapelle & Greenberg / Commercial & Fine Art



photographs by [David LaChapelle](#)



photographs by [Jill Greenberg](#)

21 Comments

1. Do you think she gave Gwen Stefani a lollipop and then took it away?

Comment by lexi — March 19, 2007 @ [9:35 am](#)

2. I saw the LaChapelle new work while in NYC last week. Amazing photography technically, and the conceptualization is pretty striking, too.

I am simply in love with Greenberg's work. She's achieved some notoreity with "End Times," but I wouldn't trade a single one of those images for two hundred more smiling children photos.

Comment by [Stephen Haynes](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [10:42 am](#)

3. Pretty brave person that tries to take a lollipop from Gwen Stefani !

Comment by [Lee Clackson](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [11:10 am](#)

4. No, sorry, don't like this work (don't like Sam Taylor-Woods' crying men either, though I like the concept). Too glossy, too calculated. This doesn't "subvert" anything, it just opens up new avenues for exploitation — look for crying models in ads any day. As for the woman wearing a football...

Comment by Vinegar Tom — March 19, 2007 @ [11:57 am](#)

5. they're just flat and (to be harsh) boring. what the hell is he trying to say juxtaposing the images of the little girl and gwen stefani??? I agree also with the above comment about opening new avenues for advertising, I mean bloody hell they're already posing kids in adds like adults!

Comment by pj — March 19, 2007 @ [6:13 pm](#)

6. Why can't glossy and calculated subvert?

There is something I like about Greenberg, but also something I don't. I also hate that she takes lollipops away from kids.

Comment by [Nate Twedten](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [9:29 pm](#)

7. PJ I think you missed the point. It seems to me that Alec posted these to compare the commercial and "fine art" work of these two photographers. Stefani and the crying kid are both by Jill Greenberg, they are not usually juxtaposed.

I like LaChapelle's total embrace of gaudy, excessive culture and use of it in his commerical work. I think it's a lot more subversive then Greenberg's silly "make kids cry and blame George W. Bush" work.

Comment by Horton — March 20, 2007 @ [9:59 am](#)

8. Milan Kundera on kitsch: "Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch."

Comment by Vinegar Tom — March 20, 2007 @ [10:51 am](#)

9. I'm still waiting for someone like James Nachtwey to say his work is there to remind the world of all the kids who have had their lollipops taken away from them.

Comment by colin pantall — March 20, 2007 @ [10:57 am](#)

10. I hate lollipops.

Comment by [Paul McEvoy](#) — March 20, 2007 @ [11:02 am](#)

11. yeah i didn't read the whole blog post and just shot my mouth off...sorry. still don't like the work...at all.

Comment by [pj](#) — March 21, 2007 @ [12:25 am](#)

12. I think Greenberg may have been better off titling this series "the raging lion, " after Youseph Karsh's time magazine cover photo of Winston Churchill... except that I somehow doubt Greenberg is aware of this image and its relevance. This work is about developing an aesthetic and exploiting a (white hot) art market... rather than bringing something to the table to really chew on.

Comment by [cracker](#) — March 21, 2007 @ [9:10 am](#)

13. These posts on the relationship of art and editorial in fine art photography have been very interesting. It seems a fine line to walk artistically and financially and LaChapelle and Greenberg have pulled it off in the photographs above. It is also interesting as it is an old battle. While watching Edward Steichen's 1964 interview for the documentary Masters of Photography, the interviewer discussing his commercial and fine art work narrates over that Steichen named the pond on his property Jergen Pond because of the Jergen's advertising work that paid for it. When he was asked if he wanted to remove his name from some of the more commercial work he refused, even though it brought criticism from his contemporaries.

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/doubleissue/photography/ads.htm>

Comment by [Charity Vargas](#) — March 21, 2007 @ [4:15 pm](#)

14. I'm not so sure about either of these as a point of conversation. I mean, I guess La Chapelle is somewhat compelling (in context of his temperment and career.) But as for Greenberg, I dont find the work adequately expresses the other side of the coin. Mind you, I enjoyed her images of primates, but that was more for its scientific appeal than anything remotely photographic.

I appreciate the provocation, but it seems much better spent on the likes of Juergen Teller who rightfully confuses the issue. Besides, is this really a suggestion that Greenberg's work is not commercial? Hardly.

Comment by [jerimiah](#) — March 21, 2007 @ [10:15 pm](#)

15. "Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art."

– Andy Warhol

Comment by [Nate Twedten](#) — March 21, 2007 @ [10:16 pm](#)

16. I find both their work greasily repellent; though in Greenberg's case it's presumably deliberate in a sort of sub-Koonsian way.

I just find the whole flirting with advertising aesthetics thing tedious and redundant.

Comment by [guybatey](#) — March 22, 2007 @ [6:31 am](#)

17. sub-Koonsian... Great.

For those who haven't made up their minds about Greenberg, check out the [video of her at work](#).

Comment by [rob](#) — March 22, 2007 @ [1:33 pm](#)

18. banal.

Comment by [pj](#) — March 22, 2007 @ [7:48 pm](#)

19. I was going to keep my mouth shut, but Greenberg just grates on my nerves a bit too much. I don't see anything artistic in what she's doing. And she failed miserably when it comes to making a statement against current US Administration. I'd say Paolo Pellegrin's work in Guantanamo, for example, does much better job of it and it does not exploit anybody in the process. She is causing distress to children (however inconsequential) and then sells their frustration as art with some bogus pretext. What the heck were the parents of those kids thinking???

Comment by [Fuerst](#) — March 22, 2007 @ [10:40 pm](#)

20. Alec.

Hey. I thought there was an interesting connection between the Lachapelle photograph on the right, and the second part of this video by the Klaxons. Nothing to really do with the post, but interesting, maybe?

Best.

Comment by [Justin](#) — March 22, 2007 @ [10:48 pm](#)

21. Little Kim's Make Up by NZINGHA. A small piece of trivia I know only because she lived next door to me from about 2001-2004.

Comment by [Paddy Johnson](#) — March 26, 2007 @ [1:14 am](#)