



Eric Anglès and Matt Sheridan Smith

COHAN AND LESLIE

By chance, my initial visit to Eric Anglès and Matt Sheridan Smith's combined solo debuts at Cohan and Leslie was on a Wednesday. Ordinarily, perhaps, this would be an irrelevant detail, but here my timing meant that I was present for the full implementation of the artists' one collaborative work, *Closed on Wednesdays*, 2007.

Not that it would have been difficult to visualize the effect if one were to arrive on, say, a Friday. The work, comprising a red velvet rope that cordoned off the (empty) back gallery, was simply looped back on its hook on other days. On Wednesdays, the closure was largely ineffectual anyway. But that was hardly the point. As with the other works in the exhibition, it was the thought that counted, and in this case Anglès and Smith were more interested in examining "the essence" of closure, the engines of desire and disappointment fueled by occlusion—even when, as in this instance, there was nothing to "miss." That it happened on Wednesdays could have easily been an exercise in whimsy; it certainly had the aura of arbitrariness.

The pair's similar brands of unruffled, clever Conceptualism were further articulated in the remaining seven works in the show, three of which were by Smith and four by Anglès. If there was a single centerpiece to the exhibition, it was Smith's *Untitled (Congratulations)*, 2007, an installation of thirty-eight clear glass vases arranged in a grid, one for each day that the exhibition was on view. Every morning, a fresh bouquet of purple irises was delivered to the gallery and placed in a vase. As the show continued, the grid of vases gradually filled up with rows of flowers, arranged in order of wilted to newly blooming. A sort of parody of Minimalist serialism in the service of perpetual celebration, the work was also a terse statement on the relationship between alterity and chronology, the way in which the passage of time becomes marked by acknowledgment from another.

The exhibition was filled with other, more or less aleatory conceits, pseudo-jokes about the demands of exhibiting and selling, about the relentless rhythm of time, about authorial control of meaning and the curious mechanics of dissemination. It was

Felix Gonzalez-Torres by way of Jacques Derrida, a pas de deux that had both productive resonances and a few significant drawbacks.

One of Anglès's more compelling works, *Open edition eQX*, 2005—an installation comprising a wire stand filled with uninked newspapers that had been run through a printing press with empty plates—also resonated with recent works by Wade Guyton, on view concurrently around the corner at Friedrich Petzel Gallery. For his own exhibition, Guyton ran unprimed linen canvases through a large-format Epson printer to produce monochrome paintings. The results were starkly opposed (Guyton's works are sturdy, unique, expensive; Anglès's ephemeral, multiple, free), but their blank reflection of the machines of media bore an uncanny resemblance.

Anglès and Smith share a desire to make the exhibition mutable, to turn everything into an occasion for artistic intervention. Indeed, even the pricing structure for Anglès's 2005-series "Open Edition"—an algorithm for works "presented in a two- or three-person exhibition" which derives prices according to whether a piece is purchased on an even- or an odd-numbered day—was featured as a work of art (titled *Open edition 2RN*, 2007) on the checklist. The press release, too, became a site of interpolation, as the artists appended short excerpts from texts by Adam Kleinman and João Ribas. Occasionally, Anglès's and Smith's work came across as too precious, too airy, too aloof. But in the context of the current glut of highly commercial objets, a little breathing room was much appreciated.

—David Velasco

Eric Anglès and
Matt Sheridan
Smith, *Closed on
Wednesdays*, 2007,
velour-covered rope
with brass ends, wall
plates, and screws.
Installation view.

