

Brice Dellsperger

AIR DE PARIS

One-upping Hollywood clichés of voyeurism, transvestism, and blood-lust, Brice Dellsperger's employs conceptual and visual mirroring, looping, and duplication in his videos for maximum camp appeal. The artist's series "Body Double," 1995–, includes some thirty-odd re-created scenes from cult movies by the likes of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, David Lynch, and, most frequently, Brian De Palma. The recent presentation of six works from the series (four starring the artist himself in multiple roles) was a self-referential fun house of sorts—wherein a mirror, multiple projections, and a double-sided screen installed in the gallery brought a certain physicality to Dellsperger's filmic reprises.

In addition to recalling De Palma's eponymous 1984 movie, the phrase "Body Double" describes the physical and psychological reduplications that characterize Dellsperger's fragmentary remakes. Fittingly shown on an outmoded television set, *Body Double 28*, 2013, re-creates a manhunt from the 1984 pilot of the *Miami Vice* TV series. In a sequence of quick crosscuts, a woman (Dellsperger in drag, accessorized with a bad wig, pink fingernails, and a handgun) pursues a shifty-eyed, androgynous gunslinger (also Dellsperger). The video begins with the camera panning to the left. As the woman walks forward across a stretch of wet asphalt, her foe appears to back away into the shadows. About midway through the nearly three-minute scene, the action begins to reverse itself. Now walking backward and to the right, the woman passes through the same gritty *mise-en-scène* as her adversary approaches from the left. Shown in an endless loop, the twinned nemeses waltzing back and forth across the TV make unnervingly ambiguous the delineation who is chasing whom.

Body Double 30, 2013, is based on De Palma's tawdry whodunit *Dressed to Kill* (1980), in which a sexually frustrated housewife undergoing psychoanalysis has a one-night stand with a mysterious stalker and winds up brutally murdered. Reinterpreting a scene in which the housewife (originally played by Angie Dickinson) comes on to her therapist (Michael Caine), Dellsperger recasts the encounter as one between two women, both played by the artist in drag. In addition to turning coquettish dialogue into an intense psychodrama with overtones of multiple-personality disorder and narcissism, Dellsperger's reenactment plays off the surprise ending of De Palma's film (in which the murderer is revealed to be the therapist's cross-dressing alter ego.) A mirror installed on the wall opposite the projection traps the viewer inside an echo chamber of double entendres.

Dellsperger has worked from *Dressed to Kill* twice before—notably in *Body Double 15*, 2001, also shown here. Based on a scene in which a man silently stalks Dickinson's character through New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the remake sees two Dellspergers—clad identically in female attire of black wig, beige coat, white pumps, white gloves, pearl choker, and large diamond ring—playing cat and mouse in the galleries of Germany's Museum Wiesbaden. Readdressing the motif of losing and finding one's self, Dellsperger underscores the intimate relationship between the hunter and the hunted while drawing attention to cinematic artifice via intentionally campy performances, amateurish camera work, and jumpy editing. The fact that this particular De Palma scene is itself a remake of sorts—an homage to James Stewart trailing Kim Novak through San Francisco's Legion of Honor in Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 *Vertigo*—adds another layer to Dellsperger's simultaneously reverent and cheeky hall of mirrors.

—Mara Hoberman

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Brice Dellsperger,
Body Double 30,
2013, digital video,
color, sound,
2 minutes
29 seconds.