

John Miller *Pillars of Salt*

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Pillars of Salt

Imagine a television show devoid of human beings, devoid even of human voices. Now imagine that this show is a game show. The camera freely peruses a deserted set, where various products and prizes come and go with requisite degrees of fanfare. No figures or faces obstruct the camera's course. Yet it has only a tableau to investigate and soon reaches the limits of its proscenium-arch world. Still, it obeys the unspoken rules, recording the given facade from the front only. The lighting remains flat and unchanging, immediately dispelling any hope that the tableau might be haunted.

When might such a program go out into the world and who would be its audience? Its appeal would be clearly be limited. Yet, in this era of closely defined media cults, a show like this could nonetheless muster its own audience, even if that were only those who simply chose to watch out of frustration with television's other offerings. The ideal broadcast time would be any time during the hours of the normal working day. Then, the program would more likely reach an audience with enough time on its hands to pursue arcane interests, an audience impelled to seek its own likeness among the props on stage - like a retiree absent-mindedly finishing a picture puzzle.

(John Miller, Berlin 1999)

Pillars of Salt is John Miller's third solo exhibit at Galerie Barbara Weiss. This show uses the theme of television game shows to take an ironic and critical look at the values of commodity culture.

The installation features five paintings whose images were taken directly from broadcast television with a "video grabber" and digitally altered. These are combined with sculptures (as interior design elements) and ambient sound affects.