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Art in Review

Men With Balls

'The Art of the 2010 World Cup'

Apexart
291 Church Street, near Walker
Street
TriBeCa
Through July 11

Noting the tournament's sponsorship by Coca-Cola, Budweiser and McDonald's, an obnoxious introduction in the brochure for "Men With Balls: The Art of the 2010 World Cup" observes, "The World Cup is an image of our age at its worst and most gaudy."

It ends on a positive note, though, with this: "At its best, football is about shifts in the intensity of experience." Few of the works in this exhibition grasp that

subtler point, though the show's guest curator, the philosopher Simon Critchley, offers an affecting personal essay about growing up as a soccer fan in England.

Miguel Calderón's cut-and-pasted video projection of a fantasy match in which Mexico defeats Brazil, 17-0, is only a clever joke. Uri Tzaig's video of a game he organized in which a team of Jewish Israelis play a team of Arab Israelis, using two balls, is politically pretentious Conceptualism. Mark Leckey's 15-minute video of found footage, mostly of young people dancing, is supposed to be about soccer and drug culture, but you never see any actual football playing.

Liam Gillick's white-on-white spray-painted graffiti saying, "Forget about the ball and get on with the game" (quoting his father) and "You'll never make it to the station" (a hooligan threat to visiting fans) is coyly oblique. The one piece that truly connects to the soul of the game is Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's 90-minute film focusing almost exclusively on the great French player Zinedine Zidane over the course of a match. It is beautiful and hypnotic.

Meanwhile, televised matches are being projected on a big screen during gallery hours. Beer is being served, with proceeds going to the Fresh Air Fund.

KEN JOHNSON