

NEW YORK

Boris Groys

APEXART

291 Church Street (between Walker and White)

February 20–March 29

In Boris Groys's three video collages, clips from popular and obscure movies pass in silence as the philosopher reads dense lectures on religion, immortality, and film. While they handle similar subject matter, the images do not illustrate the texts, nor do the texts interpret the images; oblique associations proliferate in the gap between words and pictures, casting doubt on either's capacity for effective communication. *Religion as Medium*, 2006, juxtaposes Andrei Tarkovsky's and Mel Gibson's visions of faith as Groys's voice investigates the role of the sacred today. *Immortal Bodies*, 2007, pairs zombies from *Night of the Living Dead* and stomach-turning scenes of necrophilia with notes on utopian philosopher Nikolai Fedorov's challenge to scientists to prevent and reverse death, so that the oppressed workers of the past and present can enjoy the justice of the communist future. Then Madonna kisses an animate statue in the "Like a Prayer" video, with full audio. *Iconoclastic Delights*, 2002, describes how YouTube, TiVo, and ambient television have eroded film's power to make audiences sit still. Digital technology has subdued film by restoring the viewer's option of movement, Groys says, just as film once subdued older media with illusions of movement and celebrated that iconoclastic victory in images of destruction, like the obliteration of New York and Paris in *Independence Day*.

Groys the philosopher does not let his turn on display pass without critiquing the gallery from within. The exhibition, titled "Thinking in Loop," takes issue with the role video art has been allotted—moving eye candy to be glanced at and ignored. Besides broaching this problem in *Iconoclastic Delights*, Groys offers a solution in the exhibition's installation, which provides ideal conditions for close viewing. There is a sofa in front of a big screen that shows the three videos in succession, while in the gallery's rear, separate consoles for each video have rewind buttons, so viewers can sit down and watch the works from beginning to end. Printouts of the texts lay on a table flanked by deep leather armchairs. Do not go to "Thinking in Loop" unless you can spend an hour there. Echoing the ambitions of the early Soviet avant-garde, Groys has transformed the gallery from a space that welcomes a leisurely shopper's gaze to one that demands engaged reading, watching, and thinking.



Still from *Iconoclastic Delights*, 2002, single-channel color video with sound, twenty minutes.