

# WEEKEND Arts

The New York Times

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2007

Quirks  
And  
Attitude  
To Burn

HOLLAND  
COTTER

ART  
REVIEW

## God and Crime

For an entire show with something like this sensibility, try “The Museum of Crime and the Museum of God” at Apexart in TriBeCa. This, too, is a group exhibition, though I suppose, strictly speaking it isn’t an art show. Much of the material is mass-produced. All of it is from the collection of the writer Luc Sante, who assembled it here essentially to tell the story of his life.

In a vivid brochure essay, he describes being raised Roman Catholic by a Belgian mother whose faith was “absolute and unquestioned, dark and punishing, image-ridden and all but animistic.” The earliest art he saw was church art that presented the world in joltingly contrasting absolutes: life and death, heaven and hell. From this background he developed a fascination with images of violent crime and religious conversion.

This is what he gives us: holy cards and vintage mug shots; protective amulets and 1930s crime novels; photographs of murder scenes and of river baptisms. Arranged by themes — “The Dead,” “The Family Chapel,” “Stones of Law” — the objects feel deeply, obsessively personal, like mementos long hidden in attics and buried in basements.

All but forgotten, maybe best forgotten, they are truly underground things, the underground in this case being the subconscious. And they make a transfixing show, like nothing I’ve seen anywhere else all year.