

BLAKE GOPNIK on art

AT POSTMASTERS, CATE GIORDANO'S HENRY VIII HOLDS A MIRROR UP TO A CERTAIN RECENT LOSER

THE DAILY PIC is an installation shot from Cate Giordano's show "Rex" at Postmasters gallery in New York. The project is built around a video, still in progress, in which Giordano – who uses the pronouns "they" and "them" – tells the story of an overweight leader so full of self-regard that he's willing to risk war to satisfy his ego and appetites. His poor courtiers, desperate to please him, are at constant risk of defenestration if they don't. Of course, such a person could never rule in a modern democracy; Giordano's video is set 500 years ago, at the moment Henry VIII married and then unmarried Anne of Cleves.

While I liked the resonances that Giordano's story has for today's politics, I was particularly taken with the absurdly basic production values that they deployed: Costumes, props, script, acting, videography (much of it by Zoom) – nothing was more polished than it needed to be to get the story across. Where so much art adds bells and whistles just to prove that it's art, Giordano keeps their eye on the communication they want to achieve, letting all other details take care of themselves.



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GALERIE CHRISTOPHE GAILLARD
www.galeriegaillard.com