

Time Out New York

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BANK, "Press Release" Rupert Goldsworthy Gallery, through Oct 16 (see Chelsea).

Those who believe the London scene consists of nothing but overhyped art stars should go see "Press Release." The first New York showing by the London collaborative BANK, it

might as well be subtitled "Silliness as a Welcome Antidote." The group, whose current members are John Russell, Simon Bedwell and Millie Thompson, is probably best known for its satirical zine, which sends up the London art world in the style of a London tabloid. A few months ago, BANK performed its first corrective action in New York by marking up press releases, term-paper style, and faxing them back to the galleries that sent them. Twenty such examples are on display here.

Some of the critiques are of the schoolmarmish variety: "Commas missing" (directed at Marianne Boesky); "it is debatable whether a painting can be both 'gestural' and 'abstract'" (directed at Matthew Marks). Most simply give satisfying voice to the kind of snarky commentary (crap, pretentious, meaningless) that usually runs inside one's head when skimming such gallery puffery.

Because BANK doesn't know New York, the satire isn't always dead on; the comments sometimes come off as ignorant, rather than knowingly bitchy. Still, there are many gems. Gavin Brown's re-

cent Rikrit Tiravanija release mentions "curry," to which BANK innocently queries, "He's not still on that old chestnut, surely?" And when Sonnabend trumpets that they're "pleased to announce a show of new paintings by Ashley Bickerton," BANK snidely interpolates, "I'll bet you are."

Adding to the hilarity, the releases are reprinted on handmade rice paper and decorated with silly watercolors of things like kittens and country landscapes. For one Andrea Rosen release, which reproduced a review by powerful *Times* critic Roberta Smith, BANK painted a bad AbEx painting floating above a sea of talking heads. Sean Kelly's release for James Casebere's "Self-Constructed Realities" is decorated with a gondola scene—an appropriate reference to the Venice Biennale, last summer's art-world playground.

The show also includes two blown-up front pages from BANK's inimitable tabloid. One bears the screaming headline GALLERIES 'ALL OWNED BY RICH PEOPLE' SHOCK. Funny, that's exactly what I think at the start of each new season.

—Carol Kino



BANK, *Press Release*, installation detail, 1999.