

Previews

Alan Currall

Rupert Goldsworthy Gallery,  
Sat 12-Oct 10 (see Chelsea).

The U.S. debut of Scottish video artist Alan Currall at Rupert Goldsworthy's gallery will be a pretty spartan affair—just a TV monitor and a couple of chairs. The videos are spare too, but even if Currall's work is strictly lo-fi, it asks engaging questions.



Alan Currall, still from *Lap*, 1998.

Currall's tapes last no longer than six minutes; still, they have a way of testing your endurance. How many different ways, you wonder, can Currall stand alone in a room and say "You're fired" into an unplugged telephone? And why does he feel the need to recite

to a tiny computer chip, in a tone that's alternately patronizing and compassionate, the myriad word-processing tasks he expects it to perform? Clearly, both videos are meant to be absurd, but they contain a good deal of substance as well: In each, Currall assumes a role of authority precisely to demonstrate his contempt for authority with every monotonous, perfectly delivered line.

In fact, the more economical the piece, the deeper it seems to become. In *Sit*, Currall draws a chair on a chalkboard, then tries (unsuccessfully, of course) to sit on that chair. The minute-long *Lap* begins with another chalkboard drawing, this time of a pitcher pouring water. Currall systematically licks the "liquid" off the board, leaving a shiny trail where the chalk once was.

Perhaps Currall wants us to think about the difference between an object

and its representation. Or maybe we're supposed to scratch our heads and wonder, Was that really chalk? It only takes 60 seconds for Currall to leave you with these sorts of lingering questions—proof that there's more to this artist than meets the eye.—Sarah Schmerler