

TIF SIGFRIDS

ARTFORUM

“Studio Sessions”

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

151 Third Street

July 3–September 13



Joe Sola, *Studio Visit*, 2005, still from single-channel color video, 8 minutes.

Sandwiched between shows of Richard Avedon, Ansel Adams, and Georgia O’Keeffe, “Studio Sessions,” is a heartening find and an ode to artistic anxieties by slightly less established artists. Five video works, selected by curator Tanya Zimbaro, wittily probe processes and self-doubts—the kind of uncertainties artists, particularly white male ones, don’t usually reveal. The show humanizes artmaking by revealing various means by which artists endure public scrutiny.

Two pieces rely on broadcast television for moral support and distribution: General Idea’s *Pilot*, 1977, is a made-for-TV manifesto that reveals the trio’s use of media to create a tight conceptual structure. The piece focuses on the seven years leading up to their 1984 Miss General Idea pageant, a faux beauty contest riffing on art-world popularity, staged in a mythical pavilion. The artists have their work cut out for them, as they spend their time coaching their audience to cheer them on. Christian Jankowski’s cheekily entertaining *Telemistica*, 1999, finds him seeking reassurance about his impending Venice Biennale project from Italian fortunetellers—more than one thinks he needs more willpower. Jankowski, ironically enough, comes across far more sincerely than General Idea—or is everyone playing tricks?

Joe Sola definitely goes for pratfalls in his stunt-laden, *Candid Camera*-ish work *Studio Visit*, 2005, and the hilarious reaction shots as he plunges out a window reveal the most about the artist-curator relationship. Mads Lynnerup’s fly-on-the-webcam *Presentation*, 2001, shows his mom and a friend watching a reel of his performance work, while he’s presumably miles away—and they shriek with laughter at the absurdity of his art. “I do see how he’s different,” the friend says, between giggles. Kevin Atherton’s *In Two Minds—Past Version*, 1978/2006, is something of a dialogue loop, in which the British artist interacts with a video of himself made thirty years ago, and they argue about the effectiveness of the medium. It makes one wonder how the artists in the other galleries might spar with their earlier work.

— Glen Helfand