



Alix Pearlstein, video still from *Egg Yang*, 1995.

## Alix Pearlstein, *Egg Yang*

Lauren Wittels, through Oct 7

Alix Pearlstein's installation *Egg Yang* is a high cholesterol and somewhat scrambled affair that follows the simple rhythms of a child's counting game. A 15-minute video features performances by two characters, Yolk Chick, who lays eggs, and The Red Handed Rooster, who gathers and cooks them. The installation includes a limited-edition object that figures prominently in this performance: a yellow plastic dispenser, titled *Tissue Ball*, from which Yolk Chick plucks a similarly colored Kleenex to wipe herself each time she lays an egg. A parable for making art, *Egg Yang* is on the order of Big Bird meeting Annie Sprinkle. The result is as interesting for what it doesn't accomplish as for what it does.

Pearlstein employs a stream-of-consciousness method of working with media imagery, which makes her choices seem arbitrary. Yolk Chick, for example, is presented armored, in matching

white turtleneck and jeans, with a smiley-face orb for a helmet. A demure opening for laying eggs is strategically cut in the crotch. The effect is wry and minimal, but it also suggests Pearlstein wants to insulate herself from the medium of television, which she appears to regard with mild disgust, necessitating another wipe of the tissue. *Egg Yang* is ultimately reportage without revelation, which, of course, may be the point, since she obviously means to mimic the vapidness of TV. One keeps wishing, however, that Pearlstein would take a few risks and reveal more of herself in this balancing act between perfect homogeneity and perfected idiosyncrasy.

On its own, *Tissue Ball* is far more successful. In her previous sculpture, Pearlstein has demonstrated a clear understanding of how shopping has supplanted sex and spirituality as the height of cultural expression; *Tissue Ball* is a perfect abstraction of the sterility of plastic and society's penchant for wiping away life's little messes.—Anne Doran