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Art in Review

Alix Pearlstein

'Talent'

On Stellar Rays
133 Orchard Street
Lower East Side
Through May 23

The rarefied world of avant-garde performance art is closer to Broadway than you might think, and not just at Marina Abramovic's Museum of Modern Art survey. Consider Alix Pearlstein's deft homage to "A Chorus Line," now showing on the Lower East Side. In two videos, each about 10 minutes long, Ms. Pearlstein revisits Michael Bennett's 1975 musical with an eye to art of

the same vintage.

In "Talent," male and female actors line up before a mirror in a dance studio with abundant natural light. They brandish their headshots, strike signature poses and perform a series of choreographed actions. The camera tracks slowly and laterally (you can see it, as well as the artist and her crew, in the mirror), giving each actor a few seconds in the spotlight.

In "Finale," shown in the gallery's basement, the hour is later (to judge from the darkened windows) and the action looser. The actors and crew roam around the space, muttering to themselves as they go through some of the motions from "Talent." The camera rotates from a central position, disorienting the viewer and making the studio seem much larger.

If "Talent" echoes video performances by Dan Graham, "Finale" is more of a Nauman. Yet neither piece is strictly derivative, because the actors seem to resist being cast as artists. They vamp and preen and work it like the "Chorus Line" hopefuls, auditioning for the big stage even as Ms. Pearlstein smartly invokes the small screen.

KAREN ROSENBERG



ON STELLAR RAYS

"Talent," one of two videos in a show by Alix Pearlstein.