

## “Neo, Neo-Dada”

★★★★★

**Rush Arts Gallery**, through Nov 3  
(see Chelsea)

With the cult of the new dominating our zeitgeist, it comes as no surprise that Dada, the original antiestablishment movement, would be rebranded by this group show. Despite a prevailing cynicism about the effectiveness of dissent, the exhibition is a sincere effort to stoke the fires of aesthetic and political radicalism.

Zachary Fabri presents one of the more rabble-rousing pieces, a video of a street performance that challenges the common stereotypes of race and class. Using corn syrup and white flour, Fabri pushes sensitive societal buttons by becoming a public “eyesore.”

Kay Reese’s photo-based collages attack the materialism of American culture; while her message is loud and clear (one image shows a woman slicing a designer handbag), you wish that her approach were more formally nuanced. In a comment on waste, Sandra Lee reprocesses odd materials (graph paper, plastic bags and receipts) to create improvised items of clothing. James Jaxxa’s hot-

James Jaxxa, *Pink Football*



pink football celebrates the razzle-dazzle of mass culture while also parodying traditional notions of masculinity. Gender roles are also prominent in Swati Khurana’s dreamy video, an interrogation of the fantasy-laden Bollywood films of her native India. Similarly, Puerto Rican-born Miguelangel Ruiz creates a hybrid comic-heroic character based on his country’s popular culture, as a way of reflecting on his own sense of displacement.

Still, even as the show tries to be provocative, it’s often difficult to tease the “Neo-Dada” out of this smorgasbord of styles. While taking the temperature of the current counterculture is a laudable goal, quirkiness doesn’t necessarily indicate iconoclasm.—*Nuit Banai*