

THE NEW YORKER

Art Club 2000



ART CLUB2000
Untitled (Times Square/Gap Grunge 1), 1992–93
Color print
11 x 14 inches

Is it possible for a project to be a flash in the pan while playing a long game? Yes, judging by an engrossing retrospective of the short-lived New York-based collective Art Club 2000, whose meta-critical photos, videos, and installations look both dated and prescient at Artists Space (through Jan. 9). In 1992, seven ambitious undergrads at the Cooper Union found an ally in the downtown art dealer Colin de Land, whose American Fine Arts, Co. was as much an anti-commercial subversion as it was a gallery. For their first show there, "Commingle," the group staged a faux ad campaign (including "Time Square/Gap Grunge 2," above) mocking youth-obsessed collectors and curators with blank expressions and matching outfits from the Gap (normcore avant' la lettre). The series forecast a near future in which the meaning of "downtown" would shift from haven of misfits to retail mecca; it also attracted the very hype it derided, minting Art Club 2000 as an art-scene brat pack. The collective deployed its best-of-both-worlds approach until it disbanded, in 1999. Now, as New York's mega-galleries operate like publicity-hungry big-box stores themselves, Art Club 2000 is ready for the spotlight again.

— Andrea K. Scott