

ARTFORUM

"New Economy"

ARTISTS SPACE

38 Greene Street, 3rd floor

June 15–July 27

Kader Attia, *Hallal Sweatshop*, 2007, mixed media, dimensions variable.

A ceiling fan, sewing machines, Spanish-language radio, middle-aged women who smile cordially as you come to grips with your sudden and unexpected entry into a sweatshop: Kader Attia's installation at Artists Space is both provocation and production facility, the barbed anchor of an intelligent group exhibition concerned with the strategies of critique available to artists in a "New Economy" of immaterial labor, information exchange, and commodified social relations. The artists selected by curator João Ribas engage with this political economy not just for material support but for subject matter, making two-bit attempts at entrepreneurship, such as Joe Scanlan's traveling-salesman routine and Mike Bouchet's marketing of a home-brewed cola, or steering straight into capitalism's moral hazards, exemplified by Santiago Sierra's twisting of the Minimalist vocabulary into the visual expression of exploitation. Attia's and Sierra's confrontational projects suggest that the onset of the "postindustrial" era has permanently ruptured the traditional alignment between artists and the working class, an argument further advanced by Harun Farocki's documentary *Workers Leaving the Factory*, 1995, which addresses labor movements only indirectly, through the mediating agent of an early Lumière-brothers film. Searching for alternatives to the mantras of flexibility, dispersal, and unregulated circulation, Oliver Ressler translates radical agitprop into commercial signage, and Carolina Caycedo documents a sustained experiment with the barter system. Still others return to the founding texts of Marx, including Milica Tomic and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, who rebrands *Das Kapital*. A furtive prod of the boxes purportedly packed with new volumes, however, distressingly confirms that they are empty.

—Colby Chamberlain

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