

Art in Review

'New Economy'

Artists Space
38 Greene Street, SoHo
Through July 28

This has been a busy year, following the art world's September-to-September calendar, for João Ribas, a young New York-based curator. He jointly organized a series of shows at Bellwether Gallery, became a curator at the Drawing Center and has now assembled "New Economy," an exhibition that explores contemporary art making in relation to the global information economy.

As you might expect, the Internet is front and center. Ursula Bie-mann's video "Writing Desire" looks at Internet sex and courtship; Heath Bunting's "Skint — The Internet Beggar," from 1995, is a Web page with Visa and Mastercard options for helping the cyberpanhandler.

Several works address how primeval needs — food, clothing, shelter — are met in a global economy. Kader Attia has set up a sweatshop in the gallery for producing Hallal-brand T-shirts and sweatshirts, and Mike Bouchet's homemade diet soda, My

Cola Lite, is displayed in plastic bottles and runs through a drinking fountain. A work by Rirkrit Tiravanija from 1991 includes two open suitcases containing small bags of potato chips.

Those old-economy titans Karl Marx and Adam Smith get some attention, as do alternative forms of exchange, like bartering, and art about labor and immigration. All of this is interesting, yet the show's premise feels somewhat dated. Mr. Ribas also has a weakness for the kind of critical jargon that peaked a decade or two ago. (His catalog essay includes an epigraph from Peter Drucker's 1994 book, "Post-Capitalist Society," and refers to the "post-industrial economic order" as a "knowledge-driven form of post-For-dist capitalism" in which "the dominant economic model became that of the circulation of disembodied entities.")

If anything, "New Economy" feels like an exercise in self-education for Mr. Ribas, a crash course in sort-of-recent ideas that may be helpful for a curator with outsize, possibly global ambitions.

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