

New York

CRITICS' PICKS

ELIZABETH DEE GALLERY

545 West 20th Street

April 26–May 31

It's revolution, baby, in an installation laid out a little like a bedroom without furniture: shelves arrayed with baubles, magazines, and dirty pictures; none-too-fancy paintings, works on paper, and photos on the walls; TV murmuring on the floor. While shopping carts burn and Baader-Meinhof look-alikes vamp, German-born Meckseper pays out the cultural strands knotted post-'68, ties them to the present, and loops them back again. A grainy, sun-shot video documenting a summer-of-love-style day in the park turns out to depict a recent "No Blood for Oil" rally, and a collage juxtaposes the flower power of an opium poppy (Afghanistan's number-one crop) with that of a topless "hippie" from a '70s men's mag. Meckseper concedes—though doesn't quite accept—that rebellion is instantly sexualized and subsumed by fashion; nevertheless she remains patient and curious. Riot police, photographed in their berets, look as sexy as a snapshot maid in fishnets; even crass consumer junk, like panels of mirrored tile, a shelf made of reflective plastic, and a wire filament globe slumping under its burden of costume jewelry, achieves a numb eroticism by association—until the glamour, like the globe, bends and deflates. The piece's quiet logic and confidence make it surprisingly warm and open-ended: Disdaining agitprop, nostalgia, and kitsch, Meckseper putters around a confusing, polarizing history. It's a victory for the quiet armies of the wide-eyed and mildly perverse, if not for world revolution.

—Domenick Ammirati



Untitled (Berlin Demonstration, Television Crew), 2002.