

## New York

### CRITICS' PICKS

#### "Knockabout"

SPENCER BROWNSTONE

39 Wooster Street

July 25–September 13

"Knockabout" presents works by seven artists who manipulate and reconfigure commonplace objects. It's not the most original concept, but that doesn't really matter once you see the stellar group of works collected by curator Mark Orange. Mathieu Mercier, winner of the 2003 Prix Marcel Duchamp (France's Turner Prize) presents primary-colored plastics arranged in Mondrian grids. Oli Watt's school desks are radically transformed, one by wads of bubblegum covering every inch of its surface, the other by an intricate desktop carving that reads LIZ-N-OLI. Cornelia Parker mines her signature crack-archaeology vein with photos of excavated objects purchased on eBay and replanted in different sites. Perhaps the most inspired works, however, are Scott Wolniak's DVDs: *11/02/00*, in which plein air painting is taken to new heights in the back of a moving pickup truck; and *Fruit Ghost*, 2001, a fruitarian fantasy in which the spirits of apples and strawberries hover over their chopped-up carcasses. The show's press release prompts viewers to reflect on "atypical functionality," but Wolniak also makes you wonder at his (possibly chemical) source of inspiration and at the impetus for the transformation of perception—which, after all, is at the root of all art objects.



Oli Watt, *American History*, 1999.

—Martha Schwendener