

Sadie Coles

HQ

JONATHAN HOROWITZ
Pillow Talk

17 Oct to 16 Nov 2002
private view 17 Oct 6-8pm

For his first show at Sadie Coles HQ, Jonathan Horowitz presents *Pillow Talk*. The installation centres around the video work *It's Magic/Acting the Part: the Biographies of Doris Day and Rock Hudson*. On two separate monitors the life stories of these two film icons run parallel, each one freezing to accommodate the other. Horowitz appropriates footage from television biographies of the stars' lives, focusing on their final television reunion, when Rock appeared as the first guest on Doris's talk show on the Christian Broadcasting Network. Suffering from dementia caused by HIV related illness, Rock showed up at the studio in a shockingly haggard state. Rock had not yet revealed his condition to Doris or the rest of the public, but when images from the recording were broadcast around the world, Rock was forced to acknowledge that he had AIDS.

With this admission the heterosexual, macho image Rock had maintained throughout his life was instantaneously shattered. As the footage demonstrates, his life and career would become a footnote to his homosexuality and death. In contrast, as portrayed in the Doris Day biography, the adversity that Doris experienced in her personal life served to reinforce her professional accomplishments and make her character more sympathetic.

In *It's Magic/Acting the Part*, Jonathan Horowitz explores the peculiar balance between the public and private lives of stars of the small and large screens. In an age in which viewers believe they know intimately the actors they are watching, television becomes the only vehicle through which these actors can communicate with each other and perhaps even themselves.

Extending his focus from the romantic fiction of the Rock and Doris partnership, Horowitz examines the weird world of the celebrity couple. A mattress lies on a plinth in the gallery, on which rest two pillows silk-screened with the names of an improbable romantic pairing. On the walls above are photographs of over 100 sets of pillows, each bearing the names, in different typefaces, of more odd-ball partnerships: Dumb and Dumber; Leverage and Shirley; Liza and David; Ben and Jerry. Horowitz highlights the pivotal role romantic couples play in popular culture and assesses the way this has forced people, and in particular gay people, to identify with the most unlikely characters. Horowitz employs video to deliver a sharp critique of the socio-political manipulation of television and the impact it has on our lives.

Jonathan Horowitz was born in New York and continues to live and work there. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Greene Naftali in New York (2002) and at Kunsthalle St. Gallen in Switzerland (2001) and group shows in the U.S.A. and Europe, including at the Kunstverein Hamburg (2002) and *The Americans* at the Barbican Art Centre in London (2001).