

David Jung

Numark Gallery, Washington DC

In his latest paintings and video installation, David Jung, a Washington, DC-based painter, mined the emotional terrain of television game shows and the hope and despair surrounding the promise of instant riches. *The Price is Right* is Jung's favorite source, and for the past several years the artist has painted stills cribbed from the show's '70s-era episodes in order to lampoon American greed and excess. But Jung's latest suite of works cast a more sympathetic eye on the search for salvation through instant gratification. This time, Jung borrowed romantic images of winning contestants embracing host Bob Barker, painting the scenes in lacquered acrylic on TV screen-shaped wood panels—some flat and some convex—in sizes varying from five feet in diameter to just a few inches across. Jung shows seventeen such paintings, each hovering between abstraction and representation: up close, the images break up into feathery brushstrokes; seen from afar,

they resolve into scenes of contestants and host, some almost unrecognizable owing to the dense horizontal lines he paints to ape poor TV reception. For his accompanying video installation, Jung shot and re-shot a hazy image of a woman embracing Barker, much as an animator might. Each shot—there are about 900—have enough ever-so-slight variations to yield nine minutes of jumpy, jittery footage. The video is screened on six vintage television tubes—each four inches across—interspersed with tiny birch panels of the same size and painted with the same image, like so many ghosts of



David Jung, *Rob*, 2001,
acrylic and epoxy on Baltic birch
panel, 152.4 x 152.4 x 20.3 cm.

the flickering original. Accompanied by a scratchy soundtrack, the installation has a frustrated and anxious quality. The still image Jung chose to focus on—of the young contestant reaching up to clasp Barker, who himself is glimpsed only in profile—could be a scene from vintage film noir, the woman's expression rich with both pleasure and anxiety. Ultimately, such mixed emotions echo Jung's own concerns regarding technology, and our infatuation with the possibilities it offers. Just as game show cash guarantees instant relief from economic woes, so technology promises a more efficient—and happier—future. Jung reminds us that those promises are fraught with as much grief as gain.

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