

TimeOut
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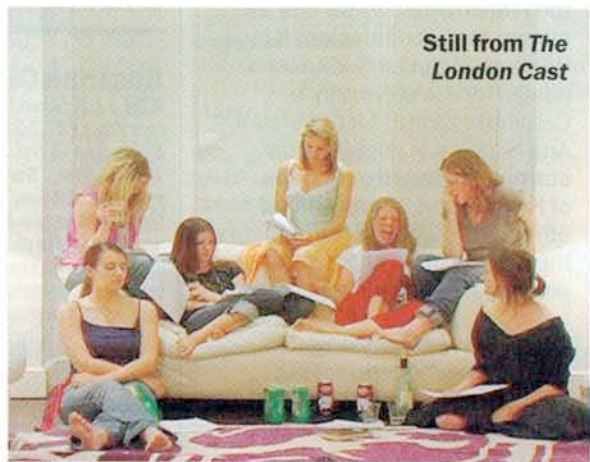
John Pilson
Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery,
through Sat 1 (see Chelsea)

Documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple (*Harlan County, U.S.A.*) once said that the point of reality TV is to bring people together and see if they will fight. While John Pilson's videos are by no means that reductive, they do operate according to a similar principle: that corralling people and watching them interact, whatever the pretext, makes for fascinating—and often highly entertaining—viewing.

The setups for the four videos in Pilson's current show are simple but ingenious. *Sunday Scenario* is a three-screen projection featuring three men on a conference call, bantering about sports. Images of the players they discuss—Vince Carter, Jason Giambi, Mike Piazza—pop up on the screen, illustrating the meandering path of their conversation. In *Wisdom and Charisma*, five middle-aged men

gather in an office for a 12-hour session of *Dungeons & Dragons*, while a third video finds seven British women staging a reading of David Mamet's play *Glengarry Glen Ross*, which calls for an all-male cast.

In two of these works, Pilson is clearly working against the grain, having men well past the age of fantasy games play one—in the workplace, no less—and casting women in a testosterone-laden drama. As he reveals the way people tend to communicate through contrived and codified means, Pilson also dismantles gender stereotypes of the “men are from Mars, women are from Venus” variety. Still,



Still from *The London Cast*

the pleasure of these videos derives not from any politically correct position, but rather from watching the action unfold. “That feels so good,” one woman says, after putting down the script at the end of the *Glengarry Glen Ross* piece. Pilson's audience couldn't agree more.—*Martha Schwendener*