

BOSTON

Joe Zane at Allston Skirt

This show of Joe Zane's multi-medium works from 2006 was a witty mix of homage, parody and wishful thinking. His oil-on-canvas paintings, colored-pencil drawings and sculptural objects take as their themes art fraud, sincere imitation, close replication and hapless fakery.

Eight small paintings (20 by 16 inches) are portraits of well-known European art forgers. Eric Hebborn is an affable-looking Brit who, the label says, made convincing copies of Rubens, Bruegel, van Dyck, Poussin, Tiepolo and Piranesi. Elmyr de Hory, meanwhile, is said to have sold a fake Matisse to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in the 1950s, and also fooled the curators at Harvard's Fogg Art Museum. The portraits are thinly painted in a colorful slick-graphic style. The back story and clever conceit, fully disclosed on labels, is that the portraits themselves were copied from black-and-white photographs Zane sent to assembly-line artists in Xiamen, China, that he located through the Internet (RoyalPainting.com).

Zane's own attempts at graphic copying—a series of album covers in colored pencil on paper—resemble the kind of drawings one might find in high-school art displays. They were designed for tribute bands, which seek fame by mimicking more famous groups (one is named Bon Giovi). Headphones were available if one wanted to listen.

Empathizing with these rocker wannabes, Zane made a mock Nauman-esque neon word sculpture titled *My Name in Lights*. Wall-mounted vinyl tubing spelled out Zane's signature, and though it was just a prop and nothing was lit up, dangling electrical cords and a fake outlet added to its verisimilitude.

Meanwhile, lying casually on a table, the hand-bound *Phaidon Book* was the most authentically ersatz. The book is titled (what else?) *Joe Zane*. Its convincing pages offer lavish color photographs of Zane's past and current work, various texts by real and made-up critics, and a somewhat rambling interview between Zane and the artist Julia Scher. In the back, a series of funny letters to the gallery owners reveal Zane's last-minute vacillations and creative blocks in planning the show. —Ann Wilson Lloyd

Joe Zane: *Phaidon Book*, 2006, cover of handmade book, inkjet on paper, 11½ by 10 inches; at Allston Skirt.

