

ART & DESIGN

Review: Deborah Kass Takes Mug Shots of the Art World

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In "America's Most Wanted, 1998-1999," a show by Deborah Kass at Sargent's Daughters, the supposed lawbreakers in screen prints are actually major names in the art world, like "Trevor F," Trevor Fairbrother.

2015 Deborah Kass/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Nicholas Knight

Considering Deborah Kass's smart and funny show of screen-printed, black-and-white images apparently copied — and much enlarged — from police mug shots, the casual gallery visitor might wonder: Who are these people? What crimes did they commit? Those who know their Pop Art history will recognize Ms. Kass's "[America's Most Wanted, 1998-1999](#)" as a late-1990s update of Andy Warhol's 1964 work "13 Most Wanted Men," which featured the most wanted criminals of 1962. Seven of Ms. Kass's works, each seven-and-a-half-feet wide, show their subjects in profile and from the front with a fake police identification placard in the lower left corner. Three more are single head shots.

Ms. Kass's supposed miscreants are identified in titles only by first name and surname initial, but denizens of the art world will know them on sight. They include Donna De Salvo, recently named deputy director for international initiatives and senior curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art; Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem; Paul Schimmel, partner and vice president of the Hauser & Wirth gallery; and Robert Storr, dean of the Yale School of Art. Ms. Kass's subjects weren't criminals, of course. They were and still are wanted by aspirants for their ability to elevate artists' careers.

This project — seen here in full for the first time in New York — might seem just a clever one-liner, but it's more suggestive than that. Like Warhol's series, Ms. Kass's calls to mind the popular trope of the avant-gardist as a kind of outlaw, but with curators framed as aiders and abettors. In our intensely professionalized and monetized art world, is it too fantastical to imagine the whole system as an organized crime against the free spirit of art?

Sargent's Daughters

179 East Broadway, at Canal Street, Lower East Side

Through June 28

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