

# SEANKELLY

Schambelan, Elizabeth. "New York Critics' Pick: Slater Bradley," *Artforum*, February 2003.

**ARTFORUM**

New York

CRITICS' PICKS

**Slater Bradley**

**TEAM 527 West 26th Street February 21–March 27**

Slater Bradley's video *Phantom Release*, 2003, is a sort of dramatization of a Nirvana concert in which Bradley's friend Benjamin Brock, playing Kurt Cobain, agonizes his way through the song "Negative Creep." With his stringy platinum hair, Value Village cardigan, and vacant yet soulful gaze, Brock (who also poses in four large-format photos that are on view along with the video) perfectly captures the Cobain mien. A similar impulse toward passing informs the video's style, or lack thereof: Its unfocused zooms and randomly framed shots convincingly imitate the kind of amateur footage that is distributed among fans like celebrity samizdat. In a sense *Phantom Release* is a companion piece to Bradley's video *Factory Archives*, 2002, a counterfeit Joy Division bootleg in which the impressively protean Brock plays Ian Curtis. By putting his friend, who in turn is a proxy for the artist himself, into the personae of these much-romanticized idols, Bradley enacts the dissolution of identity that is the underlying danger of celebrity worship and, maybe, its ultimate thrill.

Meanwhile, at Wallspace, he has curated a show called "I, Assassin" (547 West 27th Street, through March 27) that corrals works by like-minded pranksters and pop-culture fantasists from Martin Kippenberger to Aïda Ruilova. Nobuyoshi Araki is represented by five of his warts-and-all bondage Polaroids, Christian Marclay by an old television set with a mirrored screen, and Lisa Ruyter by a painting of silent-film illusionist Georges Méliès's gravestone. It's a diverse group, and the only common denominator, Bradley has said, is that all the work "just kills me." In Bradley's world, even inanimate objects of affection—dead rock stars, works of art—take on a potentially scary volition of their own.