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TIM DAVIS: Greenberg Van Doren

Ancient Roman aqueducts upstaged by paunchy men playing golf; an angel filled fresco effaced by scratched-in graffiti; a pink apartment building looming over a crumbling sculpture of a sphinx.

The pictures in “The New Antiquity,” Tim Davis’s recent series of C-prints, oscillate between earnest and playful. It’s never quite clear whether the images should be read as a “tsk, tsk” to those who disregard antiquity or as a friendly reminder that past and present exist on a continuum and can’t be disassociated.

Davis trekked through Italy, China and the eastern seaboard of the United States looking for incongruities – odd layerings of past and present, or outright rejections of history. He fought the most obvious collisions in Italy, whereas his stateside findings were more subtle. There were

boxes of real-estate flyers sitting outside old stone buildings, for example, and faux church steeples for sale on a lawn. The most compelling pictures were the most difficult to place: the small swimming pools propped upright and loosely resembling Stonehenge; the Motel Boomerang sign that appears plucked out of the 1960s; and, especially, the two hefty prostitutes awaiting customers in the woods. (All three of these images were taken in Italy.)

Davis’s only misstep here was grouping China with the west. That’s not to say his photos of China aren’t good – rows and rows of colorful sneakers for sale, an almost-modern mall in an otherwise rundown neighborhood. But what seems lighthearted in Davis’s other pictures is far more melancholy here.

-Rachel Wolff



Tim Davis, *Motel Boomerang (The New Antiquity)*, 2008, C-print, 43 ¼" x 54 ½".
Greenberg Van Doren.