

UP NOW

Robin Rhode

Lehmann Maupin

Through March 9 at Chrystie Street location

For this pair of exhibitions at both Lehmann Maupin spaces, Berlin-based South African artist Robin Rhode wryly

his arm extended, a large black feather appearing to bloom from his open palm. As he leans progressively backward, he sprouts another feather and then another, until he is finally crowned by a fan of them: a human peacock.

Such youthful energy was echoed in his downtown show, "Paries Pictus," which he produced in collaboration with Time In, a local arts-education organiza-



Robin Rhode, *Twilight* (detail), 2012-13, eight mounted C-prints, each 16 1/4" x 24 1/4" x 1 1/2" (framed). Lehmann Maupin.

tion for underserved elementary-school children. Here, Rhode literally opened up the walls, applying the black outlines of sunny vinyl graphics—from sailboats to birds in flight—directly to them and inviting the

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—Emily Nathan

subverted the principles of street art to activate and enliven urban space. While murals and graffiti traditionally hinge on the anonymity of the author and exist as the defiant, branded vestiges of an insurgent artistic impulse, Rhode inserted himself into his images and laid bare his process.

At the Chelsea venue, "Take Your Mind Off The Street" featured nine photographic works, all 2012-13, that track the development of an outdoor wall painting in a sequence of still frames, like a deconstructed flip-book. Appropriating the gridded, stop-motion esthetic of zoetropes, Rhode used his own body to guide the action; as he modified his position in each shot, so did the painting behind him progress.

Rather than engaging street art's weighty history, Rhode chose to depict juvenile, even vaudevillian motifs, from flaming juggler's sticks to jacks. In both *Almanac* and *Blackness Blooms*, he hams it up, miming great struggles under the weight of enormous combs tipped with pigment, which he hauls across the wall to create varied textures and patterns. *Twilight's* eight C-prints present the artist crouching against a white building with