

Edo Stern

Postmasters Gallery

New York

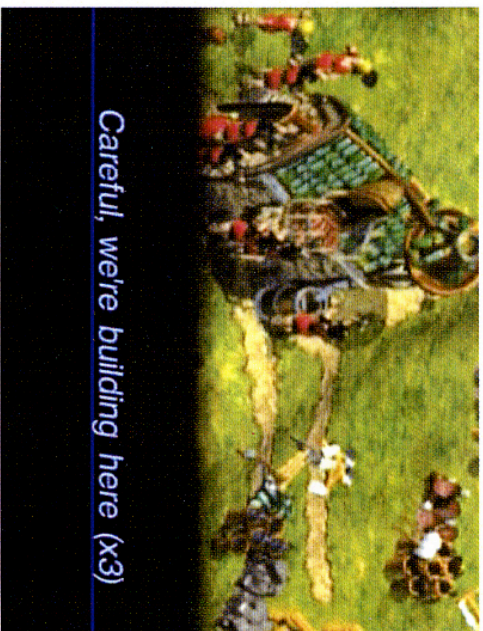
In a unique spin on being "true to the medium," Edo Stern appropriates clips from violent video games to reconstruct historical events. For his first New York show, the Israel-born artist presented the video *Sheik Attack*, a history of Israeli military attacks on Palestinian leaders during the 1990s. In the back gallery, Stern pulled together a mini-exhibition of Afghan war rugs decorated with images of weaponry used in the fighting between the Mujahideen and the Soviets during the 1980s.

Sheik Attack begins in 1966 with an army of little men and women from a simulation game building a house to the upbeat sounds of a nationalistic 1960s Israeli folk song. The video cuts to 1999 and a view of an unending metropolis created with the computer game *SimCity*. Later, nighttime commando raids, sampled from games like *Command and Conquer* and *Nuclear Strike*, are contrasted with an Israeli pop song about a peaceful night of rest and dreams. In another room, handwoven Afghan rugs from the '80s and '90s lined the wall. At first glance, they appeared to be decorated with traditional

| Edo Stern *Sheik Attack*, 2000, still from digital video.

abstract and floral patterns, but on closer inspection the decorative elements turned out to be precise renderings of helicopters, AK-47s, and hand grenades. *Sheik Attack* has been described by the curator as a video "woven" from various inspirations, suggesting a parallel between the artist's vernacular medium and that of the rug makers. The weapons on the rugs bear a striking similarity to some of the low resolution digital video images in his work. And now that the Israeli military's attacks on the leaders of Palestinian political groups are front page news again, the work has even more relevance. Stern's use of video game imagery implicates viewers, who are usually the active agents in the game, drawing us into the Middle East conflict in a highly personal way.

Merrily Kerr



Careful, we're building here (x3)

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reviews

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