



Eric Doeringer's Eastern Standard Time: Best Rip-Off of Pacific Standard Time

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Courtesy of Eric Doeringer

One of Doeringer's imitations, entitled Cowboy Photographs (After Richard Prince)

Forget about original artwork. Even the Ancient Greeks complained that it was impossible to innovate anymore.

That's the premise of Eric Doeringer's tongue-in-cheek show at [Another Year in L.A.](#), entitled Eastern Standard Time. Doeringer's exhibition is one of the more amusing rip-offs of the mass [Pacific Standard](#)

[Time](#) hysteria that's sweeping the museum and gallery world of L.A. right now. In EST, the New York artist -- who became notorious in the art world several years ago for his "bootleg art" series -- shamelessly and boldly copies works by West Coast greats, appropriating them as his own.

Take, for instance, a photo series of Doeringer standing deadpan in front of a white background, modeling his entire wardrobe in photograph after photograph. Sound familiar? That's because it's an exact copy of Charles Ray's groundbreaking 1973 photo series *All My Clothes*, part of which is owned by the [Broad Art Foundation](#).



Courtesy of Eric Doeringer

Doeringer's work *All My Clothes (After Charles Ray)*

Except Doeringer's piece (entitled *All My Clothes (After Charles Ray)*) quite deliberately exists independently of Ray's, too -- after all, he's using himself as a subject and merely appropriating the concept. He says slyly, "There's an East Coast-West Coast divide, where he only has one winter piece and I have much warmer winter clothing," noting the main difference between his reproduction of Ray's work and the original.



Charles Ray *All My Clothes*, 1973. 16 Kodachrome photographs mounted on board 9 x 60 inches overall. The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica

Charles Ray's original artwork, almost indistinguishable from Doeringer's in execution.

But Doeringer doesn't see his work as an easy rip-off of West Coast art. He began working on copies in 2001, with a "bootleg project" in which he made knockoffs of paintings by contemporary art stars and sold them on the streets of New York, just a few doors down from the galleries where the originals

were hanging. However, he doesn't just copy any piece. "I'm interested in the idea of copying, so I've been attracted to pieces where the original work was about authorship or authenticity, where the hand of the artist was taken out of it," Doeringer explains.

He has gotten into trouble for his philosophy on reproductions, however. In 2005, a very unamused Takashi Murakami tried to put a stop to Doeringer's bootleg copies of his work. During his lectures at Manhattan's School of Visual Arts, he has had angry audience members confront him about his practices. Asked if he expects any trouble this time around, he says, "I hope not, but you never know. Someone could always be offended by it. I think with the new work, there are less copyright issues because they're mimicking the look of these pieces but not infringing on their typography."



Courtesy of Eric Doeringer

Doeringer's *Throwing Three Balls In The Air To Get A Straight Line* (after John Baldessari); note the oak trees in the background, rather than the palm trees of the original.

Instead of an art-world con man, Doeringer sees himself as a contemporary commentator on mash-up culture and sampling. "There was this really good essay in Harper's by Jonathan Lethem called '[The Ecstasy of Influence](#),' about how artists should be more generous with their copyright, and how important it is to build on things that have happened before. In my work, I look at other appropriation artists, such as Richard Prince or Mike Bidlo, who are kind of my ancestors."

In Eastern Standard Time, gallery-goers can see Doeringer's takes on [John Baldessari's](#) *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line*, an L.A. map project based on On Kawara's *I Went*, a remake of an [Ed Ruscha](#) photo series of vacant lots and apartment buildings around L.A. and a series of photographs imitating [Richard Prince's](#) Cowboy Photographs, among other works. Doeringer has carefully picked original pieces that are completely deskilled -- for Baldessari or Kawara, artistic ability was irrelevant for the creation and composition of the piece. This makes Doeringer's reproductions of them all the more fun, since effectively, there's not much in terms of artistic skill that can distinguish them from the originals.



Courtesy of Eric Doeringer

A view of 3rd and Pico, in Some Los Angeles Apartments (after Ed Ruscha)

Layers of artistic reproduction become very blurry indeed in the Prince pieces, which started out as copies of Marlboro Men ads. "In his cowboy photographs, [Prince] ripped out pictures from Marlboro ads, cropped them and removed the text," Doeringer says. Rather than directly copying Prince's work, Doeringer scouted out the same Marlboro ads, took photographs, and then blew them up to the right size. "With me, I'm adding another level. Are they photographs of cowboys, are they photographs of actors pretending to be cowboys, or are they photographs of photographs?" The cycle of derivatives is endless.

It'll certainly be funny for gallery-goers who don't know of the original pieces, and take Doeringer's art seriously in its own right. And what about people who are just confused by the copying? "I'm interested in operating in that gray area where it's somehow familiar and somehow not," Doeringer says. "What happens when you recreate something that's happened before you? Am I merely an echo of the earlier artist's work? Is it a homage? Is it threatening to the artist?" Let's just hope a law suit doesn't shut down the show before its time.

"Eastern Standard Time" is on display at *Another Year in L.A.* through November 4. The gallery is open from Tuesday to Friday, 1-5 p.m.

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