



SHOW WORLD  
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by Vince Aletti

Tim Davis, whose previous shows have all focused on the American commercial landscape at its most gorgeously mundane, went indoors for his newest group of photographs, all of which involve pictures on museum walls (at Brent Sikkema, 530 West 22nd Street, through October 11). Like Davis's recent images of neon signs shimmering garishly across the windows of suburban homes, these are about reflection—about light's ability to illuminate and obliterate. In this case, it's the effect of overhead spots and other ambient glare on works of art, rendered here as intricate topographies of cracked paint glazed by electric light. A constellation of white globes replaces the face in a van Gogh self-portrait, miniature spaceships skitter across a Sargent nude, and one of Matisse's apples on a plate turns into a blazing sun. Other paintings—by Eakins, Manet, Whistler, Vermeer—are virtually eclipsed by their own hyper-articulated crazing. The subject dissolves and the object takes over. With this series, slyly titled "Permanent Collection," Davis seems to share Vik Muniz's delight in the conflation of ephemeral phenomena and in-your-face materiality. It may not be the smartest show in town, but it's ready to take on all challengers.