

# A HISTORY OF THE BRAND

B I L L Y

A P P L E

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6 - 23 December 2005

Recently Billy Apple has been reviewing his project, repackaging his past to better reveal his work's scope and penetration. This exhibition is no exception. It brings together historical works made in three locations – London, New York and Auckland – which document his ongoing exploration of the Apple 'brand', and places these alongside a suite of new paintings that turn those locations into new sites for product placement. There is an interesting tension here between two trajectories: one moving from past to present through historical artefacts that track the extraordinary persistence of the artist's primary gesture (his adoption of a new identity); the other narrativising that progress to grant it significance. What matters here is that Apple, perhaps inadvertently, has modelled larger historical processes. We see the eerie suspension of the real, as subject (the artist) and object (apples) become empty signs, in eager anticipation of the advances of global capitalism, mapped across a terrain that shifts from actual to virtual. And we witness the artist's wish-fulfilment to find his place in history, not as a creative subject but as a global brand, so marking the ultimate demise of art's transcendent claims.

Christina Barton

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