

## Geo Wyeth

Kate Werble Gallery // January 5–7

FOR HIS THREE performances of *Out of Body Ow! Tuf Body*, the musician-performer Geo Wyeth colonized a corner of the gallery by hanging two perpendicular plastic sheets from the ceiling. Lit from behind by blue fluorescents, they formed a large, eerily transcendent glowing cube. Fluttering slightly, it evoked the familiar glass façade of the organismic Apple flagship store on Fifth Avenue, in New York. This was not coincidental, as Wyeth's recent employment at the company was the subject matter of much of his set list, and the work was framed, vis-à-vis the press materials, within a Situationist lineage—a tall order for a talented and gifted performer-songwriter who, by the very nature of his practice, has little in common with Apple's deceptive media strategies and image appropriations.

The exception was perhaps Wyeth's draped plastic, a canny "deceptive *détournement*," in Situationist terminology, of Apple's iconic architecture that rendered the retail landmark as flimsy and opaque—even schlocky, with its creepy horror-film-science-lab look. This effect reached its camp crescendo when two volunteers from the audience stood directly behind the plastic sheets, brandishing knives. On a specific lyrical cue, they were charged with ripping the plastic apart in giant lateral motions, thus inflecting Wyeth's opening number with a bit of Gutai hysteria.

In comparison, the rest of the performance seemed tame, with Wyeth crooning over a piano, surrounded by pillowy plastic crumples and bathed in atmospheric lighting. Sounding like a more playful, irreverent Rufus Wainwright in his singer-and-piano prime, Wyeth slyly illustrated in his songs the drudgery of his employment with the megabrand, the corporation par excellence that compels



consumers to line up in droves for its new-product releases and hires up-and-coming performers like the artist to serve as peons in its ranks. Accordingly, his most clownish moments, as when he sang and danced with a strange, glowing plastic puppet, seemed all the more appropriate: They humorously conveyed the absurd lengths to which we go for economic survival. —David Everitt Howe

**Geo Wyeth**  
Performance still  
from *Out of Body  
Ow! Tuf Body*,  
January 7, 2012.