

Artforum · **Michel Auder** · Eugenio Viola · September 2, 2007

“Dope and Narcotica Series” is the first show in Italy by French-born, New York-based artist Michel Auder. A pioneer in the field of video, Auder began his career as a filmmaker, looking to Jean-Luc Godard and Andy Warhol for inspiration. Auder has often used the medium as a form of personal expression, and most of his works are live recordings or fragments taken from his immense archive, which he often recomposes decades later to form an “archaeology of the present.” Auder’s work is consistently autobiographical and characterized by a “diaristic” approach; he has relentlessly subjected his private life to the camera, focusing largely on his addiction to drugs, as well as on his marriages to Warhol Factory star Viva and artist Cindy Sherman. In *Dope*, 2006, Auder creates a video collage, collating frames from a 1971 black-and-white film with footage from 2004. The two periods are joined by the reiteration of the same gesture, sniffing cocaine. In *My Last Bag of Heroin (For Real)*, 1986, sequences depicting the preparation of a dose of the drug are narrated by the artist, who provides a dramatic first-person account of the experience. Auder’s intention is not pedantic: His is a “phenomenological,” observational gaze, distinguished by an unflinching voyeurism, allowing him to dwell on small details that evolve into the essential particulars of his poetics.

*Eugenio Viola*

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Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.