

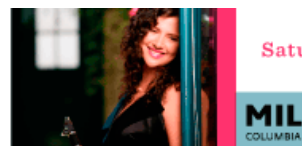
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## Anal Penetrations and Some Strange Doings in Miami

New video works from Santiago Sierra and Shadi Habib Allah

By **Martha Schwendener** Wednesday, Sep 22 2010

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In art, the body seemed to disappear in the past decade, along with everything else. Artists ditched objects in lieu of participation and became fascinated with ghosts. Even buildings could vanish, according to MOMA architect **Yoshio Taniguchi**, who famously bragged that, given enough money, he could "make the architecture disappear"—if not literally, at least into a neo-modernist, minimalist mirage.

In precincts where money is scarce, however, objects and bodies remain central to human existence. This is particularly true in recent videos by **Santiago Sierra** at Team and Shadi Habib Allah at Reena Spaulings. Although the artists approach their subjects from different perspectives, both show the body not as some dematerialized abstraction, but as a primary tool of commerce, politics, and power.

Sierra, a Spanish-born artist, has grown famous for creating works in which people are paid to perform not just menial but completely pointless tasks: pushing heavy stones around a gallery, holding up a wall, or having a line tattooed on their back. He's often accused of exploiting his employee-performers, although his supporters claim he's using art's rarefied context to make visible how the global economy has driven millions to financial desperation, at which point they'll do virtually anything for money.



Courtesy Team Gallery and the artist

Political sphincters: Sierra's *Los Penetrados*

### Details

**Santiago Sierra:**  
**'Los Penetrados'**  
Team Gallery  
83 Grand Street  
212-279-9219, [teamgal.com](http://teamgal.com)  
Through October 23

**Shadi Habib Allah:**  
**'The King and the Jester'**  
Reena Spaulings  
165 East Broadway  
212-477-5006, [reenaspaulings.com](http://reenaspaulings.com)  
Through October 17

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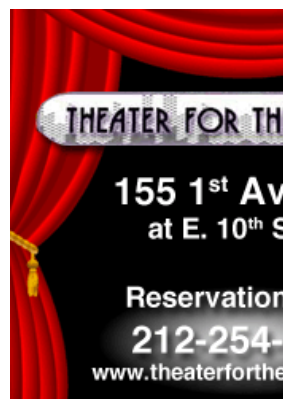
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Considering his art-world profile, Sierra's work has been shown surprisingly little in this city. His last solo show was at Ace Gallery in 2002. The work at Team is not merely representative of Sierra, however; it's extreme Sierra. *Los*

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