SERIOUS PLAY

Picture this: a plane cuts across a wintry sky during Friday afternoon rush-hour traffic, red-tickered banner in tow. Circling over the city with no apparent context, the banner pithily announces:

**PRICE IS RIGHT LOSING HORN**

It's a joke that, even if successful, ends in defeat – a reference to the long-running game show's famous soundtrack that has come to comically denote 'epic failure.' Getting the joke requires a certain familiarity with television pop-culture and its mapping via internet memes, an experience shared by many, but not all. Framed as a simple, deadpan statement within an exaggerated gesture, Doya Mehra overstates and underscores this idea of failure in what may be her biggest stunt yet. And while this aerial proclamation could have gone largely unnoticed, its photo-documentation can circulate as art object, or through the streams of contemporary mass media (like the losing horns themselves), accruing meaning and symbolic value along the way.

Mehra is wise to the game of power and its representations; she subverts the obviousness it oper- ates, captures it, and puts it on display. Hybridly and the negotiation of cultural identity, while elements of her work, are grounded in these broader observa- tions about power in our globalized, media-saturated world. Subverting aesthetic and narrative expecta- tions: she sleuths out the insidious ways it oper- ates, its audience effectively enough to convey all of this. It's a joke that, even if successful, ends in defeat – a reference to the long-running game show's famous soundtrack that has come to comically denote 'epic failure.' Getting the joke requires a certain familiarity with television pop-culture and its mapping via internet memes, an experience shared by many, but not all. Framed as a simple, deadpan statement within an exaggerated gesture, Doya Mehra overstates and underscores this idea of failure in what may be her biggest stunt yet. And while this aerial proclamation could have gone largely unnoticed, its photo-documentation can circulate as art object, or through the streams of contemporary mass media (like the losing horns themselves), accruing meaning and symbolic value along the way.

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