

Best in Show

Beate Gütschow at Sonnabend Gallery; 'Chance Encounters' at Ludlow 38; MOMA's 'Polish Posters, 1945-89'

By **Robert Shuster**

Tuesday, May 26th 2009 at 3:14pm

'Chance Encounters'

Don't ask for a menu at the Restaurante Jorge Americano, because—like the food—it doesn't exist. But [Tobi Maier](#), who co-directs Ludlow 38, a satellite gallery of the [Goethe Institute](#), will gladly serve you a Brazilian soft drink and discuss the show's unlikely mix (for art) of [South America](#) and psychotherapy. The restaurant is, in fact, an installation by [Tim Braden](#), who has re-created, on the surface, a cantina he once visited. Braden has previously conjured an idealized 1950s classroom of artificial ([Hollywood-ish](#)) nostalgia, and here, it appears, he's testing our ability to distinguish sanitized ideals from the truth. Even without a single odor of cooking, the visual details of Braden's space—garish green walls, watercolors of soccer teams, a folding table, various Brazilian knickknacks—have been "authentic" enough to fool numerous passersby.

Intended by Maier as a conversation area, Braden's work feels more like a front for the backroom operation: the 16mm projection of [Pablo Pijnappel's](#) serene and tender *Walderedo*, a 26-minute quasi-documentary about his grandfather, who worked as a psychiatrist in [Rio de Janeiro](#), and his lost-soul father, an artist who left the filmmaker's family to start another in [Japan](#), where he sank into depression. Like other work from Pijnappel, the film frequently shifts time and location, leaving you grasping for logical associations as if in a session with a shrink—and then delivers a satisfying epiphany just before the time's up. *Ludlow 38*, 38 Ludlow, 212-228-6848. Through June