

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Time Out New York
Art Reviews: "Christopher Miner: 'How Beautiful Heaven Must Be'"
By Merrily Kerr
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Reviews

Christopher Miner, "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be"
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, through
Sat 11 (see Chelsea).

You may never have heard it argued that Jesus had it easy. But,

in one of two videos in his second solo show, Christopher Miner points out that at least the son of God had a purpose in life, something the artist worries he doesn't. Such unorthodox thoughts—and the total disregard for political correctness in his second video—indicate that Miner is unafraid to grapple with the hot-button topics of faith and race in America.

In *The Best Decision Ever Made*, Miner trains his camera on the memento-filled rooms in his late grandparents' house, while comparing their stable lives and happy marriage with his own endless string of jobs, girlfriends and homes. It's a twist on the classic prodigal-son story:

Miner leaves home dissatisfied and returns disillusioned, with no one to welcome him back into the fold. By the closing shot viewers are wiser about the title's "best decision" as the artist listens to a gospel song by another prodigal artist, Johnny Cash.

In the back gallery, *Self-Portrait* finds Miner sitting in a dimly lit room, playing the role of a foul-mouthed African-American man. In a rambling phone conversation, which includes a tirade about how wrong it is for "a white man to talk like a black man," Miner creates a disturbingly complex closed circuit of self-portrait as self-censure.

Both videos employ monologues, a classic trope of introspection, but neither is gratuitously self-obsessed. Instead, they are at once brutally honest and confoundingly evasive, leaving viewers eager for more.

—Merrily Kerr



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