

Minh Le, "Seth Price: Redistribution 2026-2007," Brooklyn Rail

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Seth Price: *Redistribution 2026–2007*

By Minh Le



Installation view: *Seth Price: Redistribution 2026–2007*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, 2026. Photo: Dominique Croshaw. Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ.

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In 2007, the year Apple launched the iPhone and made visibility the point of self-documentation, Seth Price began something like a retrospective. He took footage from a Guggenheim lecture he'd just given on his own practice and spliced it with a grab bag of clips—documentary, stock imagery, animation—covering everything from the Lascaux caves to the uncanny valley, and has since kept tweaking the receptacle as new pathologies crop up in image culture. The video, still in flux, is called *Redistribution*. If Price meant it as a frame for scattered projects and orphaned ideas, it's now the kind that eclipses the pictures: an unwieldy magnum opus. This eleventh edition, at Sadie Coles HQ, runs 140 minutes, three times the original length; its four nominal parts organize the material the way a line organizes cocaine: barely and briefly. It feels like a high, too.

At one point, apropos of nothing, a random flower appears. Then we see the marquee tool tracing its petals, then the laptop that contains the software, then the tray table in business class where this work is happening. *Redistribution* is full of these nested frames hammering a basic postmodern premise—meaning isn't inherent to the image—except it proves this like a fevered algorithm, the examples sprouting past the point of argument into an unspooling of intrusive thoughts.



Seth Price, *Redistribution*, 2007-2026, 2026. Single-channel video, color, sound, 140 min., 14 sec. © Seth Price. Courtesy Sadie Coles HQ. Photo: Dominique Croshaw.

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There's Price cropping a Pieter Bruegel the Elder scene of play to the section where a child prods something brown with a stick, which the voiceover divines as our relationship to excrement and waste. Later, we're offered Thomas Edison printing his films frame by frame and copyrighting each one as a photograph. The reference sprawl, if nothing else, gets at the madness within any creative life when ideas arrive like revelations with their wild demands. It hits delirium when the video gets to Price's dOCUMENTA (13) fashion show. As we see military-derived garments stamped with names of financial institutions like "FDIC" and "Paychex," captions spiral from how fashion profits from minor variations to a dark, Joan Didion echo: Why are there no child serial killers? Because children haven't developed the "psychological compulsion" to tell a story again and again until it's right.

So what story are we telling ourselves today about what art needs? In studios and comment sections alike, we insist AI can't make good art because it doesn't pick at scabs or fear that God keeps the receipts; it lacks our irrationalities. Well, I'd wager one day it might learn them, and then our only defense is that ours matters more because we're the ones making it. But if the stories are ours to tell, we'd better understand our role in them. Price's masterwork appears to reproduce digital chaos, but one of its sharper effects is to indict us for the habits that made the deluge of AI slop inevitable. In the 2010s, the video's zany graphics and manic transitions made our inability to look away from an agitated stream of images, text, and noise feel like standing beside a pressure cooker about to blow. But as it bloats and bloats, the incoherence takes on our own inertia. Hours disappear in scrolling. A guy shouting on Twitch all day becomes the left's last hope against a billion-dollar conservative media ecosystem.

But Price operates differently in this system. The glut choking our feeds makes people want to be visible in ways that make them invisible. Show your face to speak, even if what you say is something the prowling algorithm has trained and will discard tomorrow. Price can't disappear into his points of interest, no matter how many he adds.

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He keeps breaking through because the link between what’s on screen and whatever he claims it’s about is too tenuous, or frankly bizarre, to ignore. We learn that Price sourced the horse drawings on his 2006 PVC sculptures not from Lascaux but from a replica built to protect the cave from tourists. It’s one of many instances where a work can’t cast enough light for what Price calls the shadow—the “so-what”—to emerge clearly, or be worth chasing down. Not unless he explains it. And yet by the end, his refusal of clear causation clicks into its own fragile, stuttery beauty. One stops expecting proof and starts surrendering to a singular mind as he reaches and fumbles and makes a mess turning himself inside out. There’s something moving in that persistence, a kind of blind faith in reconciling the work with what he’d hoped it would be. *Redistribution* is as much a great work about not-so-great works as a restless prayer.

It might just be that Price knows, as he revisits his practice, he has failed more than he has succeeded. The rare moments of earnestness come in photos and videos from his early New York years. Whether in his own voice or through stand-ins and modulators, Price always narrates in the second person, as though he couldn’t retrieve how it really felt to live that life. How could he, now museum shows and tax brackets away from the version of himself who had a floor mattress and a collapsed ceiling? This space between selves is *Redistribution*’s central tension made raw: wanting versus making. And in it is something like an inventory of old dreams—some realized, some not, many impossible now. Still, Price knows it’s better to try and fail.

<https://brooklynrail.org/2026/05/artseen/seth-price-redistribution-2026-2007/>