David Mach at Forum

David Mach's large-scale collages (all 2007) are composed of thousands of postcards, placed upon each other so that only a fraction of the image is visible. Shards of postcard images ranging from Marilyn Monroe to a Hokusai wave are meticulously arranged on a wooden backing to make up a rendering of an American flag or a portrait of Vincent van Gogh, respectively. The eight works in the show, each 6 feet square, are marvels of industry and pop insouciance; Homer Simpson and Elvis Presley are among the American cultural heroes Mach honors. The Scottish artist, who now lives in England, has always developed works with painstaking care: since the 1980s he has devised wooden-match constructions representing a brown bear, a Buddha or a gorilla, and coathanger representations of the human form. In the postcard collages, as with the sculptures and installations, the artist diligently aggregates small elements to make the bigger picture.

Promised Land, a striking image of the American flag, is built up from postcards of Marilyn Monroe. At the far left, Monroe's head can be seen, but she disappears in the overlaps elsewhere. Mach mimics the effects of wind and sun on the banner, including ingeniously created shadows. The work combines two icons, symbols of patriotism and pleasure that the whole world knows.

David Mach: *Promised Land*, 2007, Marilyn Monroe postcards collaged on wood, 72 inches square; at Forum.

Another work, the mostly black and white *Big Apple Homer*, is made of "I ♥ New York" postcards. In the upper left, one can clearly make out a couple of red hearts and the initials "N.Y." Overall, the title figure's bulging eyes, snub nose and open mouth, complete with curling tongue, are absolutely readable.

Royal Connections is a portrait of Elvis Presley put together with Queen Elizabeth postcards. Particularly impressive is Mach's image of the head of a golden Buddha, made from a picture of Rodeo Drive, the shopping avenue of Beverly Hills, with its notable discrepancy between spirituality and materialism. Ultimately, the collages describe pop culture without judgment; Mach relies on overwhelming the eye, but not changing the mores, of his audience.

—Jonathan Goodman