



# CRITIC'S VIEW: Revelations and Secrets Inhabit Spring Break Art Fair

March 8, 2014

by Gabrielle Selz

Public-Private is the loose theme of the 3rd Spring / Break Art Fair. The topics of exposure or revelation and secrets seems the perfect subject for a fair that inhabits an old four-story Catholic schoolhouse in NoHo with work that compels interaction, turning the art fair experience into a playground.

Instead of a gallery directed fair, Spring / Break invites curators to select the artists and works. Wide classrooms, narrow hallways, white tiled bathrooms, even the closets have been transformed by more than 300 objects and performances that seek to examine “the high visibility of the self in 21st Century every-day.”

Right off the front entrance, Jordan Eagles—known as “the blood artist” for his bovine blood spattered environments—has bedecked the space with an elaborate patterning of plasma. Heated, burned, mixed and pressed between Plexiglas plates that are projected onto the walls, floor and ceiling, the effect is of passing through a luminous, lacy terrain: a copper colored, hemoglobin birth canal that is both grotesque and magical.

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“Blood Illuminations” by Jordan Eagles, 2014. Site Specific Installation - Blood, Petri Dishes, Plexiglass Plates, Projectors. Curated by Tracy Causey-Jeffery and Amy Kisch. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

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Down the hall, an installation by the artists Fall on Your Sword (Will Bates & Sarah Bereza) has the charm of an early Edward Kienholz installation, full of 1950s Americana and found assemblage. (Although when I asked the curator if the artists knew of Kienholz’s work, she said, “Who?” Never mind.)

The room was dark and as chill as a winter garage. A run-down Aston Martin sat in the center, a drive-in movie theater for one flickered on the wide screen wall. Entering the car, viewers could honk on the horn, vibrating the seats, while up on the screen Danny Zuko kissed Sandy Olsson in the film “Grease.”

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“Private Drive-In” by Artists: Fall on Your Sword (Will Bates & Sarah Bereza), 2014. Interactive Multi-media installation. Aston Martin car body, video, interactive sensorama elements. Curated by Maureen Sullivan. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

In *Rule 34: Charm*, Sigrid Sarda has created a mixed media piece that is a gross self-caricature, complete with her own human hair. Casting her entire body in wax, she has fashioned a full-scale sculpture of decrepitude. A skeletal corpse covered in painted gold maggots lies in bed and, with what appears to be her dying gasp, clutches a cell phone that depicts the image of a penis.



“Rule 34: Charm” by Sigrid Sarda, 2013-14. Mixed Media; wax, human hair, 70 x 33 inches. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

Sean Fader has poignantly melded the topic of private intimacy with public exposure in his performance piece, *Wishing Pet Project*. He stands bare-chested on a pedestal in a closet. Viewers are invited to whisper a secret wish into his ear, then to stroke his magical chest for good luck, like an itinerant Blarney Stone, while their photo is taken.

To complete the process, the photo must then be posted on Instagram and Twitter with the hashtag #wishingpet. (Hint: Please post my photo so my wish can come true.)



Art critic and author Gabrielle Selz participates in “Wishing Pelt Project” by Sean Fader, 2014. Site-Specific Performance Art. Curated by Elizabeth Denny. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

Scott Avery, aka Amani Olu, is struggling with the question of a different kind of exposure: the liar. After filling out a questionnaire, participants are hooked up to a lie-detector apparatus and filmed answering questions. “Is money the key to happiness? Is there anything a woman can do that will make her a slut? Have your parents ever used the N word?”

Of course, there is really no way to verify the information, or for Avery/Olu to know the honest answers to his questions. So the truth remains opaque.

Interested in exposing the inception of the creative spark, Lia Chavez performs a meditative piece dressed in a billowing white wedding gown. In *Luminous Object: Reimagining the Large Glass Bride*, she has not only entered a contemplative state, she has transformed herself into Marcel Duchamp's most famous installation, *The Large Glass: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*.

As the bride, trance-like Chavez teases us with thoughts that arise from the depths of her consciousness and which she transcribes on her iPad (and on a live Twitter feed.) The nine bachelors originally depicted by Duchamp as piston-shaped mechanical apparatuses are now flashlights arrayed on a glowing glass pedestal. The piece is sensual and optical, although the various forms of Duchampian proliferation and re-interpretation never cease to amaze me.



"Luminous Objects: Re-Imagining The Large Glass Bride" (presented by Two Rams) by Lia Chavez, 2014. Durational Meditational Performance Art. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

Steven Dobbin has chosen to represent his students' interior lives with a tapestry of paint cans. This might be a broad stretch on the fair's theme, but that's part of the appeal of this fair; and his piece, *Colors of Our Lives*, an array of muted white paint can lids, is arresting and refreshingly soothing to look at.



"Colors of our Lives" by Steven Dobbin. Paint can lids, 5 x 3 feet. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

In *We Are Made to Endure: Portrait of the Donner Party*, Robert Saywitz investigates storytelling and memory within family history. In a series of watercolor portraits of Donner Party members over graphite texts, Saywitz confronts the question of the individual versus the group, and what happens to that group when the needs of the individual take precedence.



"We are Made to Endure: Portrait of the Donner Party" by Robert Saywitz, 2014. Watercolor, graphite, and collage, various dimensions. Photo by Kathy Zeiger.

Funky, sincere, bawdy, voyeuristic and personal, Spring / Break offers a relief from the hectic art-buying frenzy of the Armory. Presenting a glimpse of the work of the moment, from a younger generation, the show feels fresh because the work of these artists has not yet been codified and is still in the process of being formed.

**BASIC FACTS: Spring / Break Art Show** presents its third edition from March 4 to 9, 2014 at Old School, 233 Mott Street, New York, NY 10012. Fair hours are noon to 8 p.m. Admission is \$5. [www.springbreakartshow.com](http://www.springbreakartshow.com).