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"Howard Wise Gallery:
Exploring the New"
Jay DeFeo
"Dieter Roth. Björn Roth"
"Radical Terrain"

Los Angeles

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Robert Gober

Boston

Mickalene Thomas

Lincoln

"PAINT THINGS: Beyond
the Stretcher"

Minneapolis

"Painter Painter"

North Adams

"Oh, Canada"

Philadelphia

Tacita Dean

Providence

Alejandro Diaz

Vancouver

"After Finitude"
Esther Shalev-Gerz

Mexico City

"Las apariencias engañan:
los vestidos de Frida
Kahlo"

London

Geraldo de Barros

Paris

Julio Le Parc

Berlin

Tobias Kaspar

Düsseldorf

Beni Bischof

Berlin

Tobias Kaspar

SILBERKUPPE
Skalitzer Strasse 68
March 2–April 20

Tobias Kaspar belongs to a generation of young artists connected to an international network, producing art that accordingly peers out from the border of its discipline to explore the bridges between art, fashion, lifestyle, and the business of travel. In his latest body of work, Kaspar questions the extent of this consumerist infiltration into his practice by examining prevailing marketing strategies of luxury and celebrity industries.

At the core of the exhibition is a soundless, twenty-nine-minute video, *Hydra Life*, 2013, in which the perfectly stylized aesthetic of advertising collides with the experimental, grainy, and often trance-like quality of films by Andy Warhol. The camera guides our gaze, tirelessly scanning the body of a young woman wearing a terrycloth robe—artist Inka Meissner (known for her roles in films by Loretta Fahrenholz)—who resides in the clean ambiance of a hotel's white bathroom. We watch as she compulsively applies Hydra Life Crème Sorbet Pro-Jeunesse by Dior to her face and hands over and over again, suggesting that the product that promises eternal youth also symbolizes the current socioeconomic imperative to always appear faultless. But soon her face turns increasingly red as her movements intensify; her face is melancholic, eliminating any doubt as to whether she is enjoying this narcissistic self-reflection. The camera then pans over her unmanicured fingernails and unattractive, old woolen socks, a stark juxtaposition to what could have been the crisp image of a television commercial. Even the display of the film reflects this disparity: The floor-to-ceiling projection is shown in a dim former boiler room beneath the gallery's main floor.

In the actual gallery space, Kaspar presents an eight-part set of selected video stills, *Hydra Life (8 Lobby cards)*, 2013, mounted on white matte cardstock, as well as the installation *CoreHL13*, 2013, consisting of two curved Plexiglas objects that act as clear fenders mounted on the wall. In the middle, a carefully trimmed arrangement of vibrant green boxwood leaves sits on the wooden floor, seemingly protected by the invisible barrier that surrounds it. To whom this devout, ceremonial arrangement is dedicated remains unknown. Perhaps it is to commemorate a star yet to come.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.

— Barbara Buchmaier



Tobias Kaspar, *Hydra Life*, 2013, video, color, 29 minutes.

PERMALINK COMMENTS (0 COMMENTS) E-MAIL PRINT

Düsseldorf

Beni Bischof

GALERIE RUPERT PFAB
Poststraße 3
February 2–April 6

Beni Bischof's solo exhibition, "Playful Subversion," opens with a furious scrawl: *Existenzängste* (existential angst) is written in blue on the wall in the gallery's first room and crossed out with a red line. Right below, the word

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Ulrik Samuelson

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Hobart

"Theater of the World"

"Champagner!" is spelled out in red—as if champagne were a tonic for existence. This sets the tone for an installation composed of works that interrogate pop culture through the images that promote and propagate it. There is a poster of *Elvis* (*Elvis Schlitzohr*, 2013) with immaculately cut diamond-shaped negative spaces that have been created by the artist meticulously folding and slicing the image. There is also *Untitled*, 2012, a stack of four hundred identical posters of Scarlett Johansson positioned on the ground with a deep triangle delicately (yet decisively) scraped out of the surface. Cuts of glossy paper taper down the front of her face and the result is pristine, despite Johansson's violated face, as flawless in this work as the Photoshopped poster itself.

Bischof's stated interest in anti-aesthetics—in which the artist practices a form of aesthetic vandalism—is at its most coherent in the second room. Pinned to a wall is a collection of images from the "Meta-Fingers," 2009, and "Sausage Power!," 2011, series: fashion spreads and advertisements with actual fingers and sausages extending out of various bodily parts, respectively. What's stunning about these works is that though they gesture at repulsion, each is marked by a captivating elegance. Despite the obvious ugliness of a finger or sausage hanging from a nose, there is a certain irreverent beauty, as if the artist is suggesting that with enough aesthetic care, the repugnant can bewitch. In *The Americana Issue*, 2013, for example, a cover model's face is obliterated with black paint, creating a cascade of texture that forms a beak over her nose.

The intention is not only aesthetic: In the same room, a collage features a list of words taken from newspaper headlines ("Big Bucks!" "Shame!" "Dying!" "War" and, of course, "Love"), which, like Bischof's other works, exposes the tensions bubbling below popular culture's contested and contradictory veneer to reveal exactly what has been crossed out—*Existenzängste*.

— Stephanie Bailey

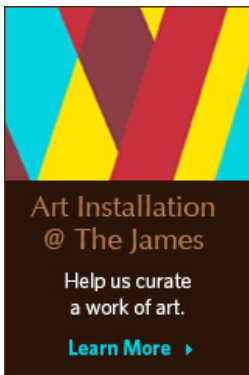


Beni Bischof, *Tush*, 2012, magazine cover, 12 x 9 x 2".

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Last Month's Picks



NEWS DIARY **FILM**

Newest Entries

Nick Pinkerton at the tenth
True/False Film Fest

Melissa Anderson on
Jacques Rivette's *Le Pont
du Nord*

Aily Nash at the 8th Punto
de Vista

Amy Taubin on Harmony
Korine's *Spring Breakers*

Melissa Anderson on
"Foxy: The Complete Pam
Grier"

Tony Pipolo on Matteo
Garrone's *Reality*

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