

Frenz

June 18, 2009 through August 29, 2009

Opening reception: Thursday, June 18 from 6pm through 9pm

Performances: Friday, June 19th at 7pm. Seating is limited.

The long, hot summer months bring a group exhibition of artists and works selected by Will Oldham. Frenz, on view June 18 through the end of the summer, will include work by Shary Boyle, Able Brown, Lori Damiano, Kyle Field, Jill Gallenstein, Sammy Harkham, Alan Licht, Ashley Macomber, Joanne Oldham, and Spencer Sweeney.

Frenz started with the simple thought of asking Will Oldham to put together a selection of contemporary visual artists whose work he found compelling and of inspiration. It seemed that it was highly likely that we could find more than a few connections between Will Oldham's deep intuitive practice and diverse interests (Oldham has appeared in numerous independent films, has had guest roles in videos with Kayne West and R. Kelly, has performed stand-up comedy and his music is visually rich and his albums artful, lovely objects) and Fleisher/Ollman's 57 year history of working with self-taught artists and those contemporary artists who are informed by intuitive practice. Both Oldham and the gallery's program seem to have one foot firmly rooted in mainstream history and the other deeply planted in the margins. Both voices are distinctly vernacular and elusive, falling happily between the cracks of any definable genre or category.

What resulted is Frenz, a beautiful and provocative cacophony of creativity fueled by ten artists-new friends, old friends, heroes, partners, family- that are working to make and challenge culture. As Oldham said about his selections, his "soul [was] attracted to their souls, like we were already pals in the ether." It is easy to find affinity and nourishment between his practice and their music, films, poetry, comics, paintings, performances and books.

Spencer Sweeney's psychedelic abstract paintings, while firmly rooted in the historical canon, show a complete disregard for convention and consistency of identity, much like the artist himself who is known for his assumed personas and performances (he is part owner of Santos Party House and a former member of the anti-band Actress). Snippets of cartoons, comics and pop references, text, disembodied limbs and prismatic passages of toxic color aggressively coexist with good old-fashioned abstract painting. The aggressively beautiful paintings are not quite one thing or another and thus, prove to be equal opportunity antagonizers.

Able Brown, part-comedian, full-time Park Ranger, and life-long drawer, makes immediate observational sketches of nature and of man. The artist jots down seemingly insignificant bits of language and events-people's conversations and habits, signs, personal thoughts, names of people's dogs, passages from library books and uses the text to fuel his crude and sometimes rude drawings, which the artist refers to as "things he wants to see". The resulting works are inventive, funny, absurd, poetic and generous.

Along with Brown's nearly 20 drawings, Kyle Field's intimate ink and watercolor works share an affinity for cryptic bits of language and non-sequiter information. Each of Field's works explores the intersection of nature, commerce, and community through the convergence of personal experiences, inside jokes, imaginary creatures and imagined advertising. Field absorbs content from all over, blending vague narratives that can be read in all directions.

While Brown and Field purposely deny legibility in order to re-present the ridiculousness and beauty of daily life, Jill Gallenstein's paintings and drawings explore the natural systems that we interact with and influence. For Frenz, the artist has created a three-part pen and ink drawing, "On The Hunt for John Wilkes Booth" which perfectly presents the artists exploration of order, beauty and chaos with meticulous, elegant detail.

Lori D.'s sublime and thoughtful narrative animation six years in the making, entitled Lord I: The Records Keeper, is a 15 long journey through xxxxx

Joanne Oldham, Will's mom, has been making powerful, narrative collages from collected images for over 30 years. While these discreet works have been exhibited only once at Family Bookstore in Los Angeles, Joanne's visionary collages have been widely seen on the covers of the Bonnie Prince Billy albums such as I See A Darkness and Lie Down in the Light.

Sammy Harkham graciously invites the audience to spend some time relaxing and reading a selection of comics and zines, including his own comic works, Crickets and Poor Sailor, and Kramer's Ergot, an influential comic anthology that is edited and published by the artist.

Leslie Shows is represented here by four uniquely collaged prints that present to the viewer four versions of an ominous moment. A beautifully gestural central toxic event (all which reference the body through color and title) shares the page with a mass of collaged images of junk food, the grim reaper, abstract design, and various detritus. The horizon line created by the opposition of objects and event is clearly legible as reaction, cause and effect, nature versus man.

Alan Licht's sound piece, A New York Minute, consists of spliced together New York City weather reports, one from each day of January 2001. The piece 15 minutes long is an exercise in futility of predicting the weather and a comment on the limited range of activity of day to day life, as illustrated by the repetitive use of fairly vague and generic descriptions: snow, warm, rain, partly sunny, sunshine, party cloudy, little bit of sunshine, some sunshine, clouds moving in, plenty of clouds, clouds in place, mixed precipitation, sunshine taking over, etc.

Shary Boyle's epic, historical installation, The Clearances, is named after a bitter period of 19th Century Scottish resettlement that forced many from their homes and their lands. Boyle's powerful depiction of visual mythology based on fictitious and factual narratives explores the collisions of power and culture with murals, painted and cutout figures and superimposed projections of light.

Ashley Macomber humorously dark and imaginative paintings-here of conjoined cheerleaders and a disembodied clown nose-reveal the complexities of human relationships and the fundamental entanglement of power, vulnerability and love.