

Most Popular | Most Recent

Sign up ▼ Log in ▼



Search Village Voice [input] [search icon]

By signing up for VOICE DAILY DEALS Brought to you by: VOICE

TOP arts STORIES



Features Spiral and the '60s

By Martha Schwendener



Features Visionary David Greenspan "The Patsy"

By Michael Feingold



Features Un-Orthodox Jews

By Alexis Soloski



Features "Victories: Choices in Reaction": Queasy Does It

By Alexis Soloski

Share Like 43 18 retweet 0

P.S.1's 'Greater New York 2010' Is Worse Than the Biennial

The Museum's Gotham artist round-up becomes a talent-sucking bog

By Christian Viveros-Fauné Tuesday, Jun 1 2010

Comments (15) [font icons]

The history of ideas is often the history of their displacement. In our own time, cell phones turned pay phones obsolete, cable news made mincemeat of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and Facebook and Twitter rendered actual human relationships redundant (*too touchy-feely!*). In the visual arts, postminimalism recently gave way to *Some New Thing*, though no one has yet been able to identify that slouching beast. At times like these, I am reminded of the words of Samuel Johnson: "There is nothing uglier than that on the verge of beauty." Let it be said that this is probably the most charitable thing I will write about the "Greater New York" show currently on view at P.S.1.

A quinquennial exhibition to match the Whitney Biennial and the New Museum's "generational" triennial (barring a miracle, all three will go head-to-head in 2030), "Greater New York 2010" is—in the serrated lingo Tennessee Williams used to describe Horton Foote—a pineapple ice cream soda. Squarer in its American Apparel nonconformity than a tramp stamp, this show is the spiritual heir to car commercials scored by Dirty Vegas and backward trucker hats, as well as an unflattering mirror held up to certain obscure micro-trends in Chelsea and Lower East Side galleries. Now in its third iteration, this "Greater New York"—curated jointly by MOMA's Klaus Biesenbach and Connie Butler, with freelancer Neville Wakefield—doesn't so much own the discovery



Courtesy the artist

The wearing of the green: David Benjamin Sherry's *Self-Portrait As the Born Feeling Begins*, 2009

Details

'Greater New York 2010'
P.S.1
22-25 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City
718-784-2084
Through October 18

Related Content

Most Popular Stories

- Best in Show: 'The Atomic Explosion' at Peter Blum**
Plus: 'New Prints 2011/Summer' at the International Print Center; Luca Pizzaroni at Fred Torres Collaborations
 - Unnatural Acts: The School for Scandal**
Plastic Theatre's play tells the not-so-gay story of how Harvard treated gay students in 1920
 - 'Ostalgia': A Walk Around the Bloc**
The New Museum looks back at life during Communism
- [More Most Popular>>](#)

DEALIGHTFUL!



of new art developments as much as lease their passing novelty. The forms of newness are there, but inside P.S.1, it is—to quote the *Sex Pistols*—pretty vacant.

If I had to find a single word to describe this exhibition, it would be "muddy." A mish-mash of 68 artists and artist collectives with barely a memorable piece in it, "Greater New York 2010" makes much of its laudable emphasis on "the process of creation and the generative nature of the artist's studio and practice." It has given over museum galleries "as studio space to create work on-site," embraced a workshop aesthetic that enables artists to present ongoing pieces ([Ryan McNamara](#), for example, will invite professionals to teach him how to dance through the duration), commissioned productions by art-world insiders ([Sharon Hayes's](#) bloated five-channel installation features the, yawn, radicalness of gay-rights rallies), and generally allotted entire rooms to emerging folks to use "as if each were mounting a small solo show."

But what happens when—to take a page from [Courtney Love](#)—the artists are *way* not ready for their close-up? The answer is the stuttering artistic opacity clouding the whole of this year's model. Rather than a proper survey of emerging art in the five boroughs, this exhibition pips cool, energetic, largely clueless young artists for a rundown that proves a swampy, unproductive, talent-sucking bog.

It should be said that "Greater New York 2010" is nothing if not strenuously politically correct. Some 43 percent of its artists are women (when the ratio of women to men in an exhibition actually changes its quality, someone please let me know), it is overwhelmingly filled with video and installation (as if those mediums don't sell!), appears as the least "white" of such displays on record (if the works devoted to "blackness" are any guide), and proudly promotes itself, in the words of one wag, as "the gayest show ever." No matter—black Jesus floating down from on high with a strap-on would not improve this disaster of an assembly one iota.

The show's impeccable right-thinking, on the other hand, loudly underscores the hippie-dippie self-satisfaction permeating many works on view. It congratulates [Vlatka Horvat's](#) room-size installation, crammed with 30 nearly uniform collages and as many sculptural doodles made from trashed tape and toilet roll tubes. It high-fives [Amy Yao's](#) lazily inchoate painted sticks with bits of *New York Times* headlines stuck to them. And it virtually bro-hugs [Brody Condon's](#) video *Twentyfivefold Manifestation*—a handheld record of a dopily screaming, drum-thumping, flower-power celebration crossed with a Renaissance Fair that makes the tree-hugging New Age inanities of [Robert Bly](#) look positively brilliant by comparison. (*And why is everyone in the video dressed like MGMT?*)

Unfortunately, the neo-tribalist vibe animating Condon's work is just the tip of the iceberg for what is certainly the exhibition's largest trend. What "Greater New York" exposes is a mountain of inarticulate art hiding from the conceptual rigors of the '90s, the salesroom-ready enterprise of the noughties, and the tough responsibilities ahead. Its fallback position is the circularity we

[Williamsburg's Relish Diner Has Closed](#)
July 19, 2010

[Spring Arts Guide: Donald Judd, Reassembled](#)
March 30, 2011

[Summer Guide: On Stellar Rays' Candace Madey Talks Lower East Side Art](#)
May 25, 2011

[Open and Closed: Say Hello to Neely's, Goodbye to Rockography](#)
July 15, 2011

[Culturefix's Ari Stern Talks Art in Bars and the Trouble with NIMBYism](#)
July 6, 2011

More About

[Brody Condon](#) [MGMT \(Band\)](#)
[Tennessee Williams](#) [Indie Rock and Indie Pop](#)
[Visual Arts](#)

Village Voice on Facebook

Like

15,357 people like **Village Voice**.

Amanda Anthony MyungGeen James Glynn

Facebook social plugin

for free stuff, theater info & more!

enter email

Slideshows

[Vans House Party 6/30/11. No Age, HEALTH, Cults, and Ceremony.](#)

[A Tour of Rainbow City at The High Line](#)

[Coney Island Mermaid Parade 2011](#)

[More Slideshows >>](#)

New York Classifieds

buy, sell, trade (10,260)	musician (3,894)
rentals (24,258)	jobs (2,005)
personals (4,310)	adult entertainment (58,420)

Services

Health & Beauty

Beth Israel Med Ctr
[View Ad](#) | [View Site](#)

[More >>](#)

routinely term self-expression. How else to explain, among many other gifts, [Debo Eilers](#)'s hot-pink molds of manhole covers, [Erin Shirreff](#)'s daftly unallusive 28 grayscale prints of nothings, or [Alisha Kerlin](#)'s frustrating combination of sloppy paintings and photos of tubers? Works like these only really make sense inside an MFA program. Before the crit.

Of course, "Greater New York" does include other, less emblematic works. Among these more worthwhile efforts are [LaToya Ruby Frazier](#)'s black-and-white pictures of rust-belt miseries; [Ishmael Randall Weeks](#)'s installation-cum-treatise on architecture and its discontents (which could use some pruning); [Elisabeth Subrin](#)'s silent 16mm elegy for what she pegs the *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands* of Italian-American [Williamsburg](#); and, finally, David Benjamin Sherry's Teletubby-inspired, acid-colored photo landscapes and self-portraits. And then there is [Leigh Ledare](#): A shutterbug whose only subject is his relationship with his exhibitionist mother, his pictures teeter between twisted and unsettling in exact proportion to how they frame the literal meaning of the word "motherfucker."

1 | 2 | [Next Page >>](#)



Find A Coupon

Search by Category Search

Popular Coupons



HAPPY HOUR
SUPERFINE
126 Front St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201



PULSE KARAOKE
Pulse Karaoke

[More Popular Coupons »](#)

Check out this week's featured ad for News

 **Beth Israel Med Ctr**
[View Ad](#) [View Website](#)

[More Ads >>](#)



Like

Add New Comment

Sign in with an option below

or if you don't have an account, please enter a comment and click Post As to comment as a guest

[Post as ...](#)

Showing 5 of 15 comments

Sort by [Newest first](#)

Real-time updating is **enabled**. [\(Pause\)](#)

 **john** 9 months ago

"Brave" ??? what's so brave about this article? Ragging on mostly unknown and powerless artists?, or ragging on a respected museum that will survive his criticism unscathed?. There's nothing brave about Christian's writing, he's merely just picking up where Jerry Saltz left off. Further it's amazing to me that Christian, a former gallerist (the now closed Roebling Hall) who summarily screwed his (conceptually rigorous) artists out of 100's of thousands of dollars when the gallery closed, is now given this forum to



New York Nightlife Guide



Arts Across the Nation

Broward/Palm Beach Arts	Minneapolis Arts
Dallas Arts	Orange County Arts
Denver Arts	Phoenix Arts
Houston Arts	San Francisco Arts
Los Angeles Arts	Seattle Arts
Miami Arts	St. Louis Arts

Now Click This

spread his hateful bile. Ever meet him? does he look happy to you?, ever talk with him? ever have a him visit your studio? I have. He's a bad guy, dude.

Like Reply

 **john** 9 months ago

"Brave" ??? what's so brave about this article? Ragging on mostly unknown and powerless artists?, or ragging on a respected museum that will survive his criticism unscathed?. There's nothing brave about Christian's writing, he's merely just picking up where Jerry Saltz left off. Further it's amazing to me that Christian, a former gallerist (the now closed Roebbling Hall) who summarily screwed his (conceptually rigorous) artists out of 100's of thousands of dollars when the gallery closed, is now given this forum to spread his hateful bile. Ever meet him? does he look happy to you?, ever talk with him? ever have a him visit your studio? I have. He's a bad guy, dude.

Like Reply

 **christopher** 11 months ago

There will always be bad artists. And it's weird how infrequently people are honest in saying if something sucks. In any bad art show the curators need to start getting more of the blame. If there aren't many good art pieces, please don't just pick pieces to fill a space.

Like Reply

 **Bunny Hentman** 11 months ago

This year's Greater New York was an enormous let down, especially compared to last year's Greater New York or this year's biennial. The few pieces that showed both intelligence and craft were installed so poorly you'd easily miss it. I agree that the majority of pieces look like leftovers from a first year MFA critique. I left this show feeling depressed and disheartened.

Like Reply

 **mich** 12 months ago

This show was awful. The art was mostly dull and uninspiring, the hanging and arrangement of the art seemed sloppy and ill-conceived. I honestly couldn't get through it fast enough. It made me feel very nostalgic for PS1 of 10-15 years ago.

Like Reply

[Load more comments](#) [Show all comments](#)

[Become a fan of the Voice on Facebook!](#)

[Sign up for Voice Text Alerts!](#)

[Follow the Voice on Twitter!](#)

[Download the new Village Voice iPhone app!](#)

[Subscribe to The Village Voice Newspaper](#)

[NEW YORK CITY'S BEST DIVE BARS by Ben Westoff ON SALE NOW!](#)

[VOICE Daily Deals](#)

[Contests & Promotions](#)



[Live: Black Rob Gets Back To Basics At The Apple Store](#)



[Presented For Your Enjoyment: A Shot-For-Shot Lego Remake Of LCD Soundsystem's "All My Friends"](#)



[Q&A: Tim Robbins On Growing Up In The New York Music Scene And Giving Audiences Their Money's Worth](#)

[More Music Stories >](#)