ARTSLANT

FACING THE BLACK MIRROR: SEAN FADER'S AWESOME YEAR

BY THE ARTSLANT TEAM

Oscar Wilde famously suggested great art "reveal beauty and hide the artist." For the 2017 BLACK MIRROR exhibition at SPRING/BREAK, more than 100 curators will feature artworks that explore the dance of identity the artist undergoes—between showing what's unseen and hiding in plain sight—especially in the face of modern technology, political unrest, and glimmers from ghosts of Art History's past.

ArtSlant will be exhibiting the ArtSlant Prize 2016 Winners at SPRING/BREAK. In expectation of this uniquely site-specific, curatorial fair, we're featuring interviews with participating curators and artists, asking them what they see reflected in the black mirror.

Previous interviews: Eve Sussman and Simon Lee on curating Jack & Leigh Ruby, Janusz Jaworski on chashama, and Michael Holman

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If the original black mirror, the Claude glass, hid the artist to reveal the idealized subject, then Sean Fader's 365 Profile Pics is its modern day progeny indeed. Despite comprising some 365 images of the artist's face, the expansive artwork reveals very little about Fader himself, turning its lens instead onto contemporary culture, image making, and consumption.

Every day for a year, Fader has uploaded a new profile picture on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Using sites like Fiverr and Craigslist, the artist hired image retouchers from around the world to fabricate profile pics for him, pulling from 400 green-screened selfies and instructions to "make me look amazing and my life look awesome." Over the course of the year, posting a new pic each day, Fader encouraged captions and comments from his followers.

Through the exercise, Fader's face became the medium through which others projected their ideas of awesomeness, individuality, or conformity. In concert, the images are a broad register of generic moments, surreal scenes, and cultural and political touchstones from the past year. Pouts and red flannel shirts abound, as do well-lit offices and tailored suits. The artist had brief stints as an astronaut and a mega-church preacher. He went surfing, walked some red carpets, and stood behind Melania Trump at the Inauguration.

At SPRING/BREAK, in a presentation by Denny Gallery, Fader transformed his year of profile pics into an ensemble wallpaper. An augmented reality app allows viewers to hover their phone over an image to see the social media comments it received over the past year and to contribute new ones. Like a proud voter fulfilling their civic duty, participating viewers walk away with an "I commented" sticker. Because there's a little bit of us all reflected in Fader's black mirror.

365 Profile Pics 15/365, 2016-2017. Archival inkjet print. 30 x 45 in, Edition of 1 + 1 AP & 16 x 24 in, Edition of 3 + 1 AP

How does it feel having your likeness proliferated like this? Have you come to identify with these images?

My father wanted to direct movies and my mother was an amateur photographer, so I grew up thinking about my body as a stand-in or stage for many types of ideas. Until my mid-twenties I trained for a career in musical theater, so my view of my body and my performance of self were malleable. I did believe that there was a one "true" me that I was trying to reveal, but as a performer I also believed that I could transcend myself for the "character." So many of the Seans you see in this project are 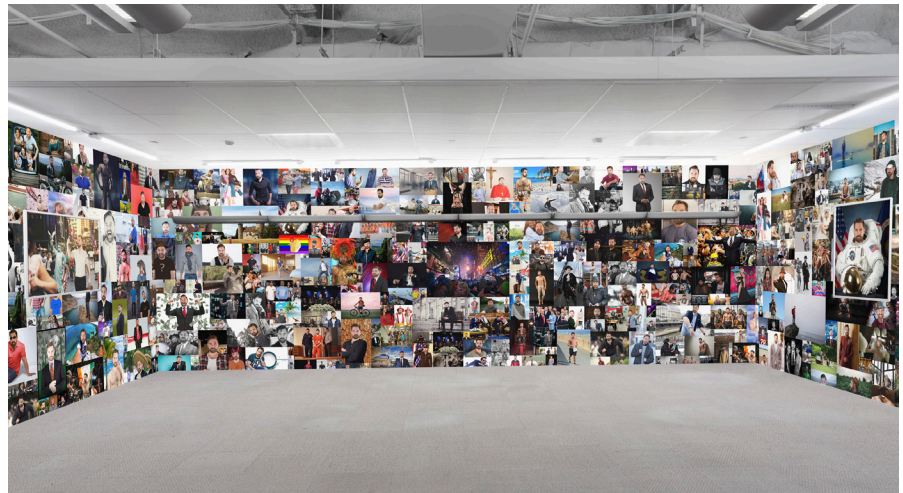characters of someone. Whenever I would get an email with an image of me that seemed exciting, I did feel excited. Look, that's me as an astronaut or a cowboy! Don't I look like a good businessman, or a sad bro?

They all feel like me and yet they're not me at all—but isn't this what everyone is doing these days? People distill themselves into a snap, a gram, a tweet, or a status. These tiny bits are meant to project who they are, but in fact these images are and are not them.

When I started this project I was thinking a lot about the profile pic as a performance site. For instance, when a stranger emails me, I look them up on Facebook and I click as fast as I can through all of their profile pics, which is a little performance of their identity in a tiny square on my computer screen.

Talk to me about ownership.

It is so hard to think about authorship these days without viewing the Internet as a place where you can steal another's work or be stolen from. In the United States (and the West) we value creativity as a commodity. We want to make one thing that we can get residuals from for the rest of our lives, and we want to claim things as our own. Funny thing, in the "Art World" much of the work is outsourced labor to studio assistants, fabricators, and craftsmen,

365 Profile Pics, 2016–2017, Installation view at SPRING/BREAK Art Show, February 28–March 6, 2017

but somehow because I didn't take the picture or compose these images there is a question of authorship.

What's your conception of the Black Mirror and how do you see 365 Profile Pics engaging with it?

Honestly when I read the concept text for SPRING/BREAK this year I thought, OMG I think they are writing about my work. I mean...

Innovation has enhanced the way in which the self is documented, exhumed, and proliferated on the day-to-day. A "keeping up with the Joneses"–style attention to self-portraiture on social media, an embrace of video communication software in the live stream, even the self grooming to meet standards of omnipresent surveillance documentation, or bystander photo-bomb, all keep us constantly rebounding from our subjective experiences back to a meditation on the "me."

In addition to being obsessed with the performance of the profile pic, I was also looking at how people cultivate fame in social media and how we are outsourcing much of that work. Today celebrities and brands have people that manage their social media accounts; sites like Fiverr are dedicated to retouching people's photographs for five bucks, you can buy followers; there are social media analytics companies; and there are PR firms that only work in social media. I wanted to use these very same mechanisms in this project, so I decided to outsource the PR of my own identity on Fiverr. I would pay anyone who was interested to take a crack at it. What is the most important thing in social media? To look amazing and to make your life look awesome, so those were my instructions for the retouchers.

What's the role of the online viewer, and how crucial is a commenting social media community to realizing this project?

I'm a huge fan of Cécile B. Evans so I feel like the answer is "Hyperlinks or it didn't happen" (an amazing piece of hers). Look at Google: their algorithm determines what we know about the world and is based on PageRank, the original algorithm that determines a website's importance by the number and quality of links to a page. It's all about connections. I really wanted to understand how the Internet's hive mind thinks through images. Memes rise and fall in a day but hover in our subconscious, so people commenting in social media is a key component to the project. On the final page of the book I have a thank you page that lists everyone who made images and/or commented on social media. They are all part of this work and continue to be.

365 Profile Pics 25/365 (Trump got me all like: Preparing to get the fuck out of here!), 2016-2017. Archival inkjet print, 37 x 30 in, Edition of 1 + 1 AP& 20 x 16 in, Edition of 3 + 1 AP

I have been feeling like these dual lives—social media and my studio practice—have been the same. The photo print on the wall and the photo shared on Instagram feel like they are parallel practices. I wanted to make the space of the exhibition the liminal space where these two practices collide, so I worked with Erin Ko and Alex Cuff to create an augmented reality. At SPRING/BREAK, people can download the PhotoArtStar app (named after my Insta handle) and point their iPhone at the images on the wall. For 100 of the photos, the app will pull all the Instagram comments on that image and will overlay them on top of the photo. You can also press a button to open that very image in your own Instagram. If you do that and comment, I will give you an "I commented" sticker for you to wear IRL. The stickers look very much like the "I voted" stickers from elections. I'm doing this because, first, I love giving things away. I also love the idea that participation and having your voice heard is a badge of pride, but this also has the angle of a marketing campaign. So it works both ways.

What are some of the weirdest moments you've experienced working on 365 Profile Pics? Were you ever uncomfortable with any of the retouched images?

I was disappointed by how many people depicted me with all the tropes of a straight white American man. You can see how deeply American mass media has penetrated the planet by how many of my retouchers assumed that

365 Profile Pics, 2016–2017, Installation view with App at SPRING/BREAK Art Show, February 28–March 6, 2017

is who I wanted to be. In many ways my prompt of make me look amazing and my life look awesome — combined with the availability of hi resolution stock photography — was intended to critically activate these stereotypes in order to address how they propagate heteonormativity, whiteness, and consumerism. Throughout mass media and visual culture, these circulate as assumptions what normalcy looks like, so I designed the prompt to draw to them surface and to allow us to critique them. The scale of the project (and its humor) mark these normally unmarked assumptions, and it challenges their power by making them ludicrous and revealing the clichés they rely on. By working with a global team of collaborators on this, I was able to show how widely these stereotypes circulate and how they have fed into a narrow and problematic stereotype of American culture. Any one of the images can be funny or innocuous, but 365 of them shows the force of these norms operating in visual culture. By visualizing them, we can turn that humor against them to reveal how hollow and fragile they really are.

Did you learn anything from working on this project for a year that you hadn't anticipated at the beginning?

I was shocked people believed that these images were real. On Instagram we seem to suspend disbelief in this way. For those of us that grew up around computers, the idea of realness is no longer tied to an objective photographic reality in the traditional sense. We don't look at an image and decide it is real because x, y, and z things were in front of a camera at a specific time and the camera shutter was pressed—the decisive moment. But it still was funny that people thought the images were real in this way.

The 365 Profile Pics don't necessarily describe a traditional photographic reality but they are still real photographs because all of them do represent something. Many of us seem to be expanding what we think of as real and that is really exciting. I also love that the images on the Internet are small and digital and low-resolution so they actually look more convincing as decisive moments, and I continue to post pics of my own day between each of the profile pics so they even sit side by side. When you see them blown up and printed, the illusion of Photoshop composites often falls apart.

I also learned that outsourcing is really complicated. Many of the retouchers I worked with did not want to be creative. I gave them tech specs and total creative freedom, which made a lot of them angry. They wanted to be told exactly what to do and they wanted to execute it. They also didn't want to follow my tech specs and kept telling me I didn't need a high-res image, even when that was outlined in the original advertisement. I also spent so much time back-and-forth arguing with them that it would have taken me less time to do it myself. I felt bad about paying five dollars an image but felt gouged if they wanted 10. It churned up so much Western guilt and complex ideas about the global market and my idea of my position in it.

I was happy to find that lots of people loved this project, and getting to participate and comment was so much fun and funny.

The SPRING/BREAK Art Show Curator List Is Finally Here
There's a lot to look forward to next week.
Sarah Cascone, February 24, 2017

New York's SPRING/BREAK Art Show has finally revealed the list of its 2017 curators responding to the theme "BLACK MIRROR," based on the idea of identity and what artists chose to reveal to the world of their personal selves.

It's an organizing principle that is drawn from the Claude glass, or black mirror, used by the Old Masters, but is all the more engaging given the demise of privacy thanks to modern technology.

The scrappy fair, known for transforming unusual historic buildings into temporary contemporary art venues, has a new home this year, trading the decommissioned 34th Street post office at Skylight at Moynihan Station for 4 Times Square, the former home of Condé Nast.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the new venue, owned by the Durst Organization, comes with a new creative partner: Anita Durst's non-profit curatorial group chashama, which has held programming in the building before, will be the recipient of the proceeds of SPRING/BREAK's annual benefit auction, in addition to presenting the work of five artists, curated by Janusz Jaworski.

"Re-thinking what 'art space' means and how to provide artists and art professionals with more has always been [chashama's] vision, and that vision has changed the city we live in for the better," said fair co-founder and co-director Andrew Gori in a statement.


Sean Fader, 365 Profile Pics 25/365 (Trump got me all like: Preparing to get the fuck out of here!). Courtesy of Denny Gallery.

Projects to look forward to next week include Sean Fader's "365 Profile Pics," presented in a special project booth via New York's Denny Gallery.

The artist offered up 400 green-screened selfies to Photoshop pros around the world, hiring them to turn the images into profile pictures that "make me look amazing and my life look awesome." The artist shared the results on his various social media channels every day for a year.

A Young Artist Debuts at Gagosian, Thanks to Richard Prince

by **Benjamin Sutton** on October 23, 2014
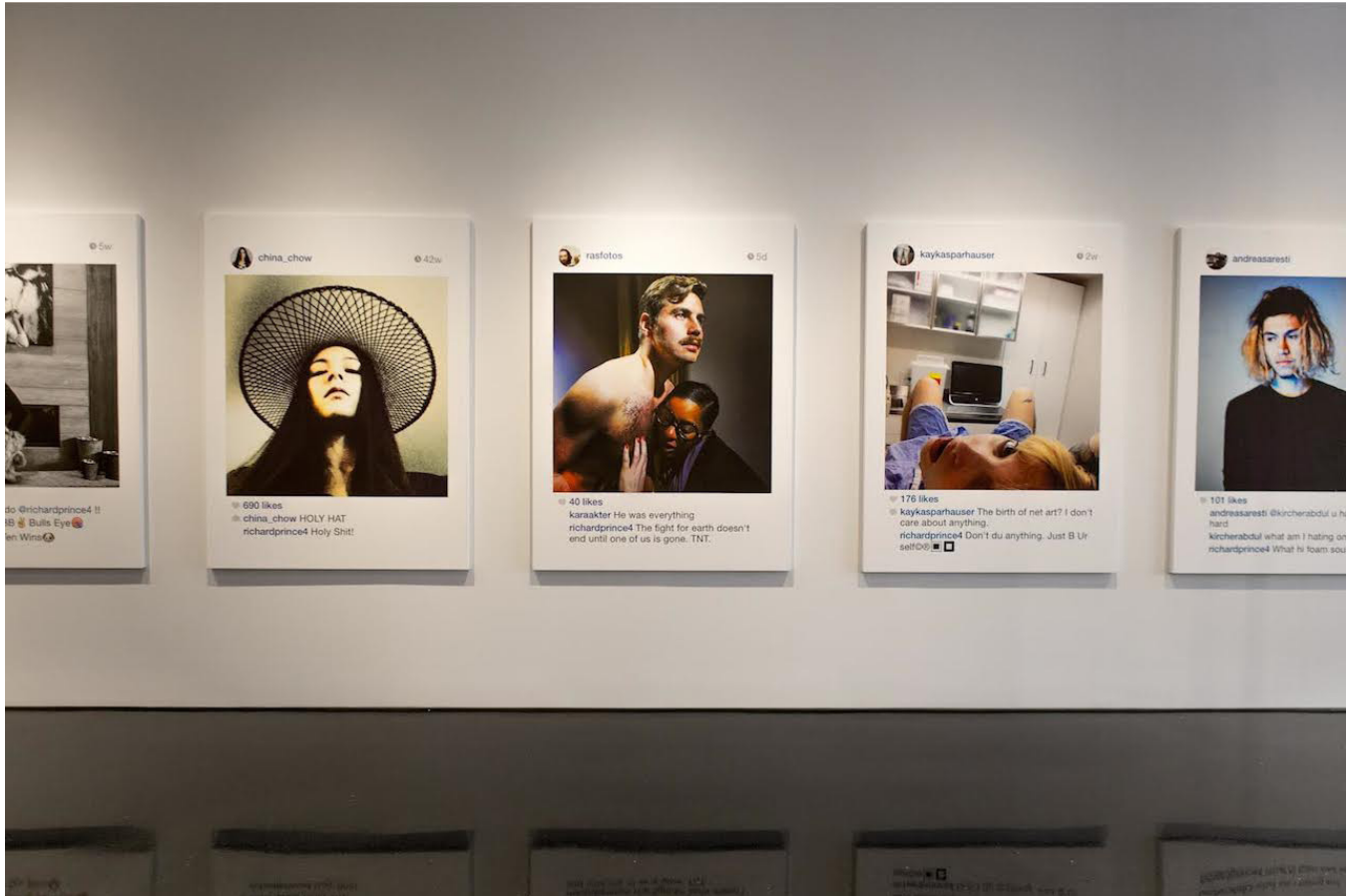
Installation view, 'Richard Prince: New Portraits' (2014), Gagosian Gallery, New York (all photos by Sean Fader)

Richard Prince unwittingly gave an emerging conceptual artist his Gagosian debut.

The appropriation artist's current Gagosian exhibition *New Portraits* — which Hyperallergic's Tiernan Morgan dismissed as "an amusing exercise, but it doesn't translate as great art" — features an Instagram photo from Sean Fader's social media art piece "#wishingpelt." For that piece, Fader prompted participants to make wishes as they took selfies and rubbed the artist's chest hair. So long as the photos were posted on social media, he promised, the wishes would come true. In May one of those wish-granting selfies ended up in Prince's Instagram feed, and has now it has made its way onto a canvas at 976 Madison Avenue. But for Fader, this is hardly a dream come true.

"There's obviously that part of me that's mad because I'm a poor starving artist with six-figure student loan debt, and you're just a giant that runs through Instagram pillaging, taking things into your own museum, and calling them yours," Fader told Hyperallergic over the phone. "If I sued him it would make the work look better. If I sued him it would make him look like he's thinking about rights in digital spaces, and that the work is questioning authorship in contemporary society. But that's definitely not what he's doing, I don't even think he's thinking about much, he's just thinking, oh, this would be cool."


Sean Fader taking a selfie in front of his "#wishingpelt" photo in 'Richard Prince: New Portraits," Gagosian Gallery, New York

Rather than sue, Fader saw an improbable opportunity in Prince's appropriation.

"I'm really interested in the idea of re-appropriating my own work and taking the work out of the frame that he's put it in, re-engineering it to continue the conversation that I was interested in from the beginning, and shifting the work back to that space," Fader said. "I struggled for a while to decide how I felt about it. When I went and saw it I was fuming. I would be psyched to be appropriated into work that was good. I just think the work is flat. It flattened the work in a way that I was not thrilled about its denial. By not communicating with me, by not talking to me, he denied every level of shared authorship, or engagement, all of those things that were so important to

me in the work. That's what irked me about the whole thing. So Prince made his move, now I'll make mine."

Instead of dwelling on the way that Prince's work emptied his participatory social media project of all its meaning and context, Fader engineered an appropriation of his own, sending out a press release inviting the public to see his work at Gagosian "in an exhibition organized by Richard Price." The incident has been instructive, helping him to focus his practice and his interests.
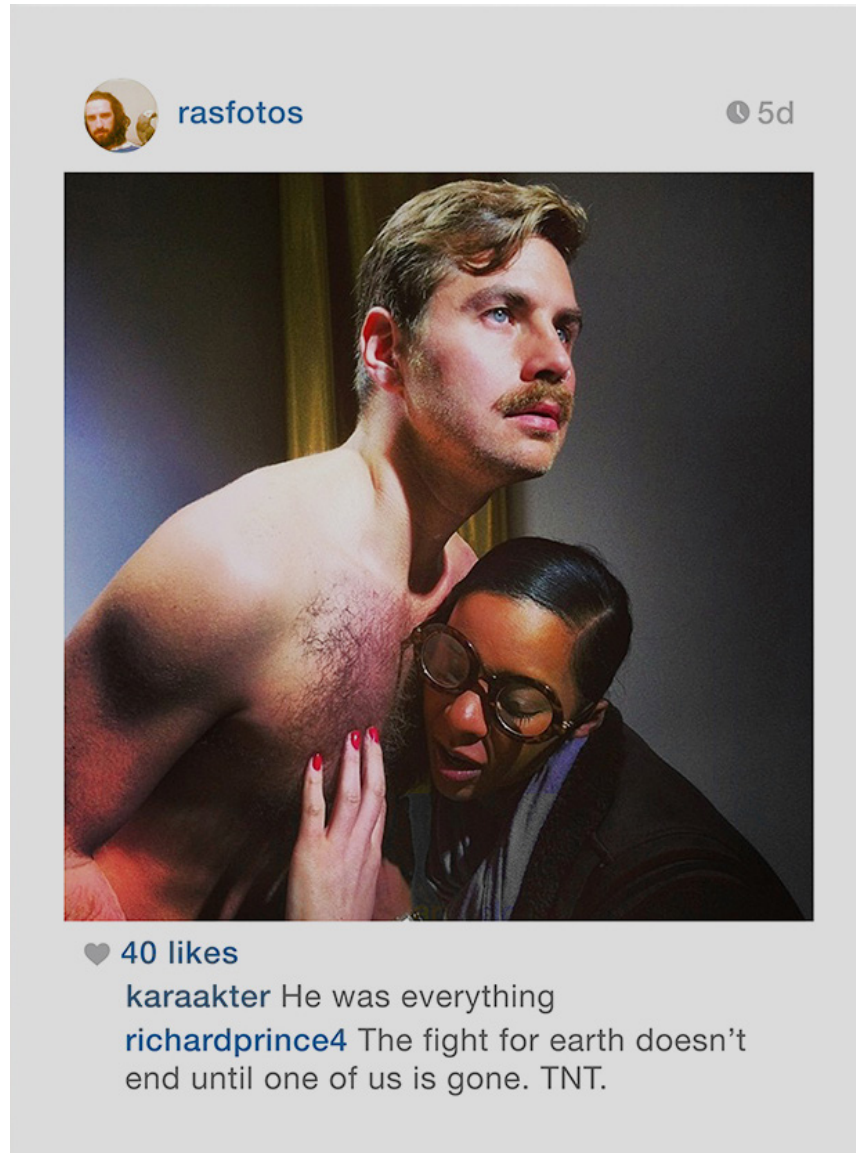
Sean Fader, "#wishingpelt" (2014) at Gagosian Gallery, New York

"In a weird way it's been really helpful for me to clarify for myself the kind of engagement I want to continue to be doing," Fader added. "It's one of those moments when you see someone do it all wrong and you're like, oh god, don't ever wanna be that guy. It helped me clarify my relationship to working in digitally and socially engaged spaces. What that looks like, why I do it, what my value system is in that space. And that is always a good thing."
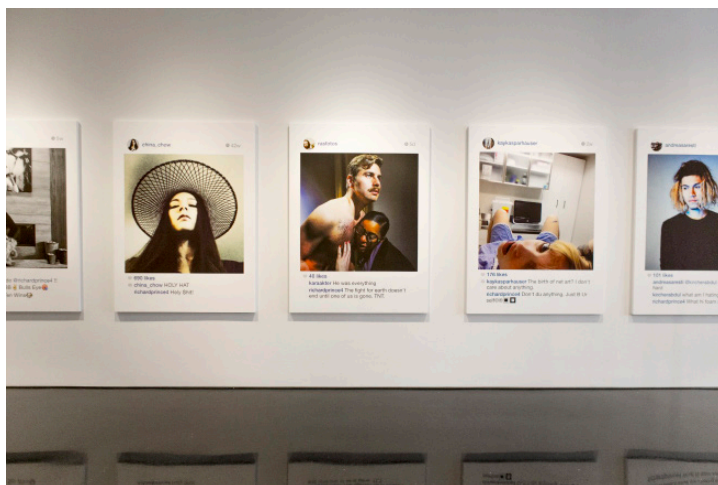
Richard Prince: New Portraits, *including Sean Fader's "#wishingpelt" photo, continues at Gagosian Gallery (976 Madison Avenue, Upper East Side, Manhattan) through October 25.*

SEAN FADER

See Sean Fader's *#wishingpelt* in *New Portraits* @ Gagosian Gallery Organized by Richard Prince

FINAL WEEK:
See Sean Fader's *#wishingpelt* in *New Portraits* @ Gagosian Gallery Organized by Richard Prince

Now in its final week, Sean Fader's *#wishingpelt* is on view at Gagosian Gallery's Madison Avenue Store in an exhibition organized by Richard Prince entitled *New Portraits*, September 19–Saturday, October 25, 2014.

Fader's *#wishingpelt* uses the social world of Instagram as its medium, and is a forum in which to perform work. Related closely to live events, the Instagram photograph is for Fader a contract with his participants, sealing a bond and producing a shared experience across the thousands of his participants who have not yet met. The images are not documentation. They are performative and utopic commitments.

Prince, by placing *#wishingpelt* in his exhibition, now serves as witness to those many declarations, wishes, hopes, and confessions that are the content of Fader's social media performance. Providing a venue for simple acts of sincerity and honesty, Fader's work values the desire for meaning and hope that is often disallowed in the prevailing orthodoxy of cool irony. It took a great feat of self-denial for Prince to set aside his role as the poster child of such safe sarcasm and, instead, to promote sincerity by lovingly re-posting Fader's work in his own exhibition.

At first glance, one might be led to believe that Richard Prince's intentionally naïve commentary on Instagram images to be merely a last gasp at colonizing the work of others. Rather than just a replaying of that white male privilege as an attempt to stay relevant in a world he doesn't understand, Prince's curatorial effort represents a new turn in the form of his affectionate and deep engagement with the work of his peer, the photographer and performance artist Sean Fader.

The New York live event for Fader's performance of *#wishingpelt* was held in 2014, produced by AKArt at the PULSE Art Fair and previously at SPRING/BREAK Art Show curated by Elizabeth Denny. Over the course of nine days, Fader stood motionless on a platform for a total of 80 hours. Visitors to the *#wishingpelt* were invited to whisper a wish in Fader's ear, run their hands through his chest hair, and seal the wish with selfie tagged on Instagram or Twitter with #wishingpelt. Their wishes are forever private and their photos were immediately made public. The website wishingpelt.com and Instagram's #wishingpelt hashtag aggregate these photographs, thus creating a growing archive of the public's experience with the *#wishingpelt*.

In today's media-saturated environment, where the private is regularly broadcast as public, there is little room for intimate and private honesty. We are constantly reminded how social media is altering our capacity to know others. Rather than deny or flee from this condition, Fader's work fearlessly makes space for sincerity in the heart of social media spectacle. What at first seems like a ludicrous proposition—rub a guru's chest hair and make a wish—became the vehicle for participants to express wishes, confess crimes, and have a single incontrovertible moment of physical intimacy and honesty. The spectacle got them there, but the private moment of intersubjective rapport between artist and participant was theirs alone. The Instagram photograph taken with their own cameras seals the contract, producing this moment for the demands of social media, and allowing them to participate in the fictitious communities that make up our networked world. What seemed like a preposterous ritual instead became deeply felt and infectious. During the two performances, over 2500 individuals made wishes to Fader, documented in the photographs they uploaded to Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook. After the performances, Fader received countless emails from visitors thanking him for making their wishes come true and for changing their lives. What at first seemed like a preposterous proposition was, instead, a dialectical and disarming way to produce intimacy within social media's compulsory exposure.

Prince's re-posting, in the physical space of his exhibition, is a testament to the fearless performances of attachment and rapport that Fader's participants found. Prince has extended the potential of Fader's social media art, becoming a viral host for hope. Fader's work could not have existed without the circulation of images that is Instagram's aim. The performance was documented on Instagram but also happened through it—being enacted by all those who took photographs of themselves with Fader and declared their participation in that online community of those who dared to wish. Prince honors the thousands of participants who shared with Fader a belief that—even while mediated and broadcast—the singular moment of connection counts.

To see all the images search for #wishingpelt on Instagram or go to wishingpelt.com. To follow Sean Fader on Instagram, follow @photoartstar. For more about Sean Fader visit seanfader.com.

For further information please contact the Sean Fader at sean@seanfader.com or at 917.374.8690. All images are subject to copyright. Sean Fader's approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

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Fantasy Versus Reality in the Online Dating World
By David Rosenberg

Signing up on 16 online dating sites and going out on 100 dates in a year might not be something you'd talk to your mother about, but it does provide fodder for an interesting photography project. Sean Fader did exactly that beginning in January 2010 and suddenly found himself enmeshed in a project in which he felt like an "emotional train wreck."

Fader didn't start out that way. "Sup?" began much like all of Fader's projects: from a fountain of ideas that constantly springs into his head, often out of the blue. His thought was to send a message to an attractive guy he found online. The two would meet at the person's apartment where, immediately upon arrival, Fader would get to work creating a portrait based on his preconceived ideas of who that person might be based on his online profile and previous communication. He would set up lights, rearrange furniture, and rummage through closets looking for the right clothing.

20twenty22: "Straight acting" is a code for "self hatred." Educate yourselves.

You are a stellar guy Sean Fader. See you soon :)

You are a stellar guy and you bring out the best in me. It's so good to have you around.

Ok so I assume you got my text messages. This is my last one. You can text me and tell me I can expect a phone call from you today or never call me again. The choice is yours.

20twenty22, Dlist.com, July 23, 2010

Evan Bolton Hill, Baltimore, July 24, 2010

The two would then go on a date, and whenever it finished (could be an hour, could be the next day), Fader and his date would then collaborate on a second portrait that showed another—perhaps more realistic—side of the person. In addition to the date each portrait was taken, he included the screen name of his date with the initial portrait and the date's real name and city tagged to the second photograph, along with bits of communication Fader felt was significant to their relationship. "I woke up one morning and thought it sounded like fun," Fader said about the project. "I thought no one would do it, but then I sent messages to three people, and they all agreed … and then it was like tumbling down the rabbit hole."

Fader said he would never describe his dates as "subjects." "At worst they are sitters, but they are also collaborators," he said. "I said to them, 'I have a game to play. Do you want to play with me?' And they are the ones who wanted to play with me."

Of the 100 dates, 27 decided to play with game. Some wanted to meet with him first, whether out of anxiety over letting a stranger into their home or to simply to get a better handle about what was going to happen. But even a brief meeting before the first shot would destroy the mystery of the initial portrait. Fader said although there were wide parameters to what could happen after the opening photograph, he kept firm about the no-meeting-before-the-first-shot rule. "I couldn't meet with them to make them feel better," Fader said. "We had to jump in with two feet—both of us."

Although it started out as fun, Fader said combining his personal life, his dating life, and his art into one project quickly began to take a toll. In the past, when one part of his life might be not clicking, he would delve deeper into another part. "When it all clicked, it was the highest of highs," he said of the project. "But when the date was awkward, when the photographs were bad, and I felt bad about myself—everything was about an exterior approval—when someone rejects you, it can be ego-bruising, and when you're supposed to also be making work and when you fail at that, too … it deeply changed me."

On top of all of that, having to constantly make the other person feel comfortable to create the work also began to weigh heavily on Fader. Although at first the goal of the project was to find someone who would make him want to stop the series, Fader eventually decided he needed to cut the project off after the one-year mark. "The work is about the 'other' thing. I had to live [through the dates] to get the other thing. That's why it happened, and it's some of the work I'm most proud of because I did whatever it took to make that happen, and that included a lot of personal sacrifices," Fader said.

underehere:artist
love looking at other guys
trying to gain weight if you have
any tips

WEDNESDY NEXT WEEK MY
PLACE 3ISH?

sounds great

I made 2 back to back appoint-
ments to see my family psychic in
NJ on thursday at 4

Perfect can't wait

Me neither.

Hey gonna have a figure drawing
circle this Saturday. Xo

Shoot. Wish I could.

Jnderhere, Dudesnude.com, July 15, 2010

Jan, Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn July 15, 2010

Although the response to Fader's work was mostly positive, some people felt he was being a user or a lecherous photographer. But Fader said he was completely up front about the work, telling the dates, "I think you're hot and interesting and sexy, and I want to photograph you and have sex with you and have a date with you. How do you feel about that?"

Work from Fader's "I Want to Put You On" series will be part of the group show "Strange Bedfellows" at Columbia College A+D Gallery in Chicago beginning Jan. 16. Fader will also have a solo show at University of Illinois Springfield Visual Arts Department in Springfield, Ill., that opens on March 10.

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David Rosenberg is the editor of Slate's Behold blog. He has worked as a photo editor for 15 years and is a tennis junkie.

QUERYING THE NEW APPROPRIATION ART: IS THIS CYNICISM?

BY JOSEPH HENRY • REVIEWS• JANUARY 8, 2015

The Denny Gallery may have given themselves a curatorial headache with the title of their current exhibition, *Share This! Appropriation After Cynicism*. There are more tricky connections and presumptions in that moniker alone than in the web mantras and second-person addresses that typically sign most contemporary shows. To begin, the title suggests there was an appropriation art of cynicism. To most eyes, the "cynical" historical referent would be the founding generation of "appropriation art," the New York Pictures Generation. The list of names in that canon could fill (and have already) their own museum wing: Cindy Sherman, Richard Prince, Laurie Simmons, Sherry Levine, Sarah Charlesworth, Louise Lawler, James Casebere, et al. One hopes Denny makes such a historical claim in their title with a degree of caution. To assemble these artists under an affective genre of cynicism would unfairly reduce the aesthetic particularities of their respective corpi and rob the political, usually feminist, component of its historical import.

Then what is the new, "sincere" appropriation and what was wrong with the old one? The clue lies in the exclamatory clause of the exhibition title: sharing. As the gallery press release clearly states, *Share This!* displays the work of "artists who appropriate the work of other artists." If the Pictures Generation mined advertisements and Hollywood films for their source material, the new appropriators look to each other for content. This distinction seems to have become more calcified with age: despite the vanguard's analyses of representation and commodity semiotics, they are distinctly *authorial* figures: for

a generation of artists concerned with overthrowing standard notions of creativity and originality, their practices are decidedly and institutionalized – and expensive. No one's confusing (or selling) a consumer-grade copy of a Cindy Sherman for an authenticated equivalent. The artists at Denny, then, have a different relationship to the market and ostensibly, to each other. Sharing is caring.

What exactly is so "post-cynical" about the work of *Share This!* remains an open question, a deficit reflective of the exhibition's multivalent if not entirely elaborated conceptual premise. Not only does little of the art on display offer a decidedly emotional reading, but the feelings they might generate hardly speak to the utopia of life after cynicism: the artists here, to the show's credit, steal, lie, mimic, and plagiarize in a social world more complicated than just smiles and helping hands. *Share This!* offers little resolution to these questions, which, let it be said, aren't entirely novel: in a 1982 essay titled "Appropriating Appropriation," the critic considered most adjacent to appropriation art, Douglas Crimp, acknowledged that "appropriation, pastiche, quotation – these methods extend to virtually every aspect of our culture."

What's new is the alacrity and ease with which appropriation can occur on a mass level. The obvious historical paradigm shift between late and high appropriation is the changed technologies: image duplication and distribution. Michael Mandiberg took this head-on in 2001, in the visually humble installation *After Sherrie Levine*, revived here for the Denny show. Visitors are invited to download a file of Levine's canonical *After Walker Evans*, already a copy of another photographer's work and then reproduce it from a nearby printer alongside a certificate of authenticity. The punch line is Crimp's essay title. Mandiberg's installation works as a historical precedent for *Share This!* and though its very historicity speaks witness to the pace of changing attitudes toward image copying, its premise now rings hollow. The infinite regress of appropriating appropriation is obvious, but what demands a more canny observation is how a print-out of a Levine is definitely not a Levine. The tautological relationship between original and copy, perhaps nascent in 2001, requires a more agile analyst of image economies in 2015 – I think of Hito Steyerl's investigative, shrewd film essays, for instance.

A slightly more contemporary, and thus savvier, dramatization of appropriation is the exhibition's only substantial nudge at its title's good feelings. For a performance last year at both PULSE and SPRING/BREAK art fairs, Sean Fader asked passers-by to whisper a wish into his ear, stroke his chest hair, and document the experience on Twitter, Instagram, etc with #wishingpelt, in reference to the artist's hirsuteness. Richard Prince, influential contemporary-artist-turned-professional-internet-troll, reproduced an image of Fader and a wishing participant for his infamous Gagosian exhibition of Instagram uploads. At Denny, Fader mounts the blown-up 'Gram with a new image captioned, "Our pictures are for each other: #wishingpelt #collectiveauthorship #artselfie," the notion being that gallery visitors reduplicate the experience with a selfie next to a selfie.
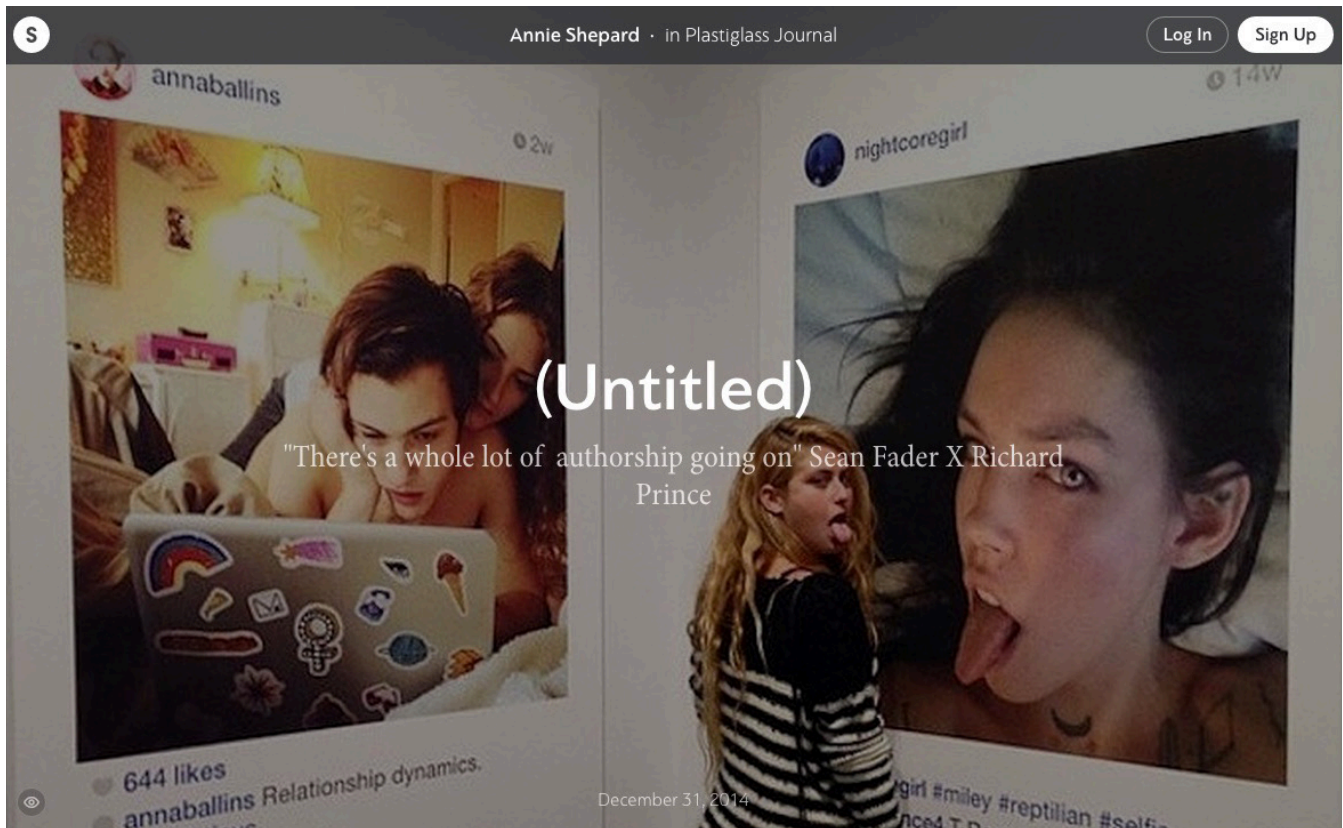
Fader, who's present at the gallery most days to assist with the auto-portraiture, enacts the sharing and caring of the exhibition's title: the optimistic desires of his original performance, based admittedly on a quirky kind of eroticism, necessarily requires its distribution online and on the gallery wall (a counterpoint here is the more enclosed intimacy of the late Adrian Howells's work). I'm not sure the hashtag is an instrument of collective authorship, as much as it is currency for a corporate-minded smart-phone app. But in topping up Prince's own appropriation of the performance, Fader shapes a dialogue on display value and contemporary strategies of (self)-promotion. His connections between the

sentimentality of the wish, the attention of the hashtag, and the creativity of the artist are fertile in their implications, if perhaps naïve in their politics.

But both Fader and Mandiberg teach a primary lesson of appropriation art; the narratives surrounding appropriation, who takes what from who for what, are often far more curious than the aesthetics of the object itself. Artists in *Share This!* who don't convey the complexities of their appropriative networks, like Matthew Craven and Jordan Tate, lose conceptual weight for a scrapbooked, blandly pastiche aesthetic.

Crucial here, then, is a display strategy that performs the networked nature of appropriation art, something that makes me want to know the story behind the object (relegated to press material and a gallery attendant, in this show's case). Adam Parker Smith, for example, re-enacts, in part, *Thanks*, a 2013 exhibition at Lu Magnus wherein Smith assembled and sometimes sold works stolen from studio visits with other artists. At Denny, a sampling of the objects is presented with its components exchanged for others throughout the duration of the show. *Thanks* hits on the contemporary vogue for the archive no doubt, but it's an archive composed with emotional tones of betrayal, camaraderie, and collaboration. None of the artists objected to Smith's thievery and at Lu Magnus, he often sold their work for them. In a similar case in *Share This!*, Ana Teles riffed on objects made by colleagues under preparation for an MFA crit, copying and modifying them for her variations as she saw fit. Smith, and to a lesser extent, Teles, externalize the concatenation behind artistic influence that requires some plagiarism, some originality, and constant interaction.

What *Share This!* does best is illustrate a microcosm of the relationships between artists not yet at blue-chip-level incomes, especially in an environment as simultaneously hostile and supportive as New York. Many critiques of the neoliberal economy have identified "the artist" as the frightening paradigm of new kinds of labor – underpaid, stripped of benefits, and supported by the attritional pursuit of one short-lived opportunity after another. Taking stock of the networks between working artists, then, is a crucial task. The historicist examples of appropriation art in the exhibition differ little in tactic from their precedents thirty years ago (like artists in *Share This!* quoting from antiquity or neoclassical sculpture). Yet Denny's exhibition puts together a useful micro-history of new appropriation art that highlights myriad responses to current social exigencies. What demands emphasis is not the sharing and sincerity among acts of appropriation, but the sharing and sincerity among appropriators themselves.

(Untitled)

"There's a whole lot of authorship going on" Sean Fader X Richard Prince

December 31, 2014

## Picasso famously said "Good artists copy, great artists steal."

But in the age of the re-tweet and the re-gram, is sharing the same as stealing? How has social media changed our sense of authorship? Sean Fader and Richard Prince's tiff over an Instagram photo illuminates new ways of thinking about these issues.


Richard Prince's 'Untitled (Cowboy)' 1989

#Wishingpelt

It all began with a wishing pelt and a selfie. And by wishing pelt, I mean Sean Fader's chest hair. For his piece, *#wishingpelt*, Sean invited viewers to whisper a wish into his ear, run their hands through his chest hair, and photograph themselves doing it. To seal their wish they had to post the image on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, or Tumblr, with #wishingpelt. On the first day, @rasfotos posted a pic to instagram with #wishingpelt, beginning an art world avalanche.

0:44

Pelt Grooming
sean fader
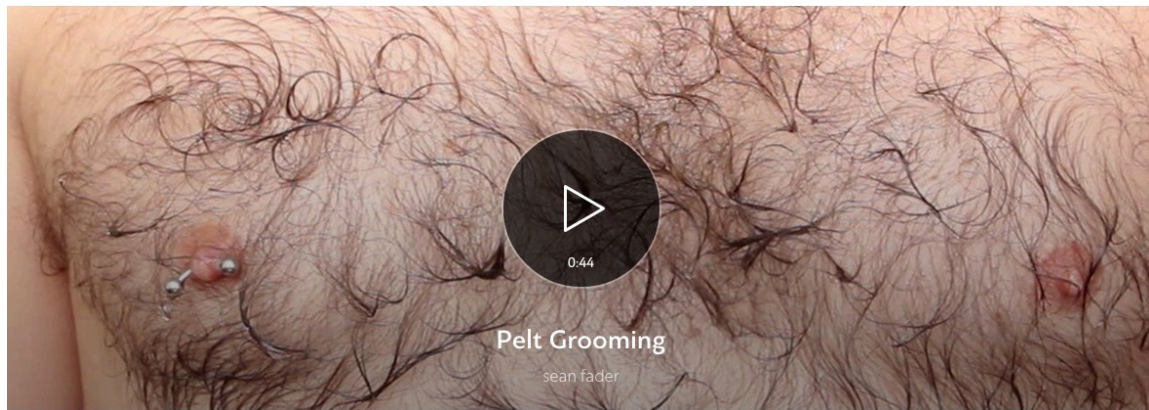
#Wishingpelt at work
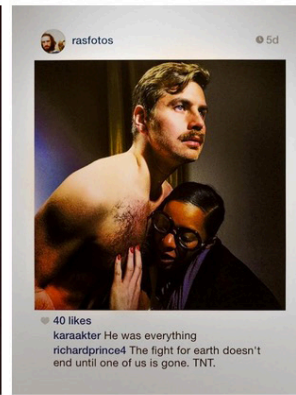
*The post that started it all*

#NewPortraits

Richard Prince or @RichardPrince4 (read more on the story of Richard Prince's Instagram here) saw the photo, and commented on it. That is normally where this story would have ended, but it keeps going: Richard Prince then made a monumental print of Fader's image from @rasfotos's feed on canvas and put in his *New Portraits* exhibition at Gagosian Gallery.

After learning that Richard Prince had claimed #wishingpelt as his own work (and profited from it), Sean set out to re-appropriate the appropriated piece. Sean sent out a press release that invited viewers to see his work "at Gagosian, in a show organized by Richard Prince." He put Gagosian on his resume, sent his press release out into the world and was "done with it." But then Hyperallergic picked up the story and the article went viral.
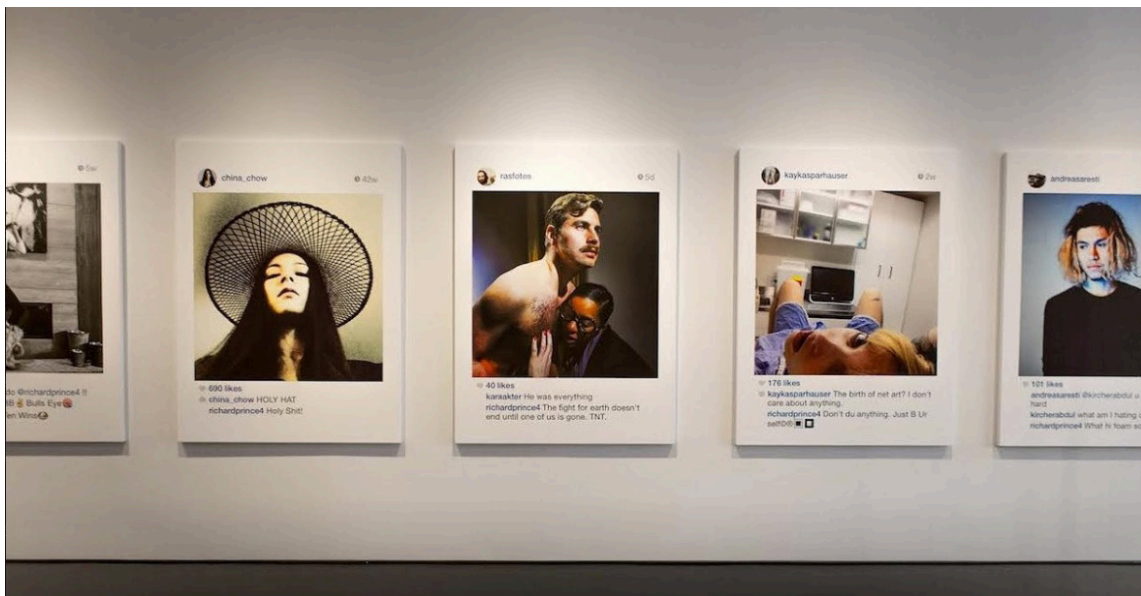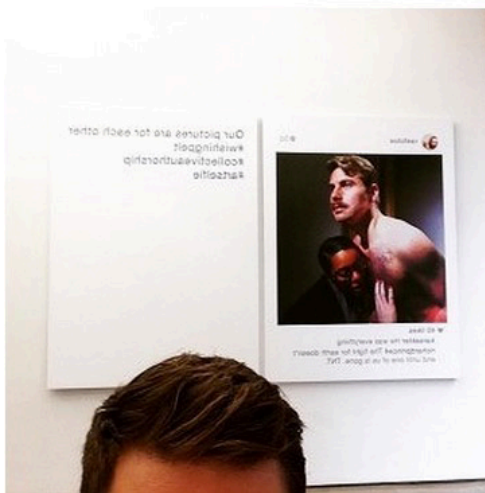
#ArtSelfie

For his current show at Denny Gallery, Sean used Richard Prince's print from the *New Portraits* show and added a second panel to create a diptych. Printed on the second panel is "Our Pictures Are For Each Other #collectiveauthorship #wishingpelt #artselfie." This last hashtag explicitly invites viewers to photograph themselves with the piece, thus sending the image back to Instagram
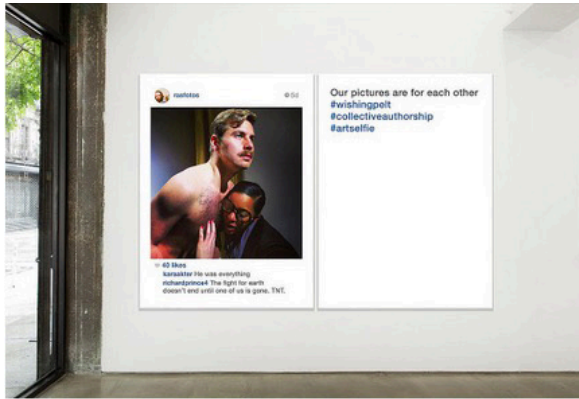
'Backdrop for the rebirth of the collective author' now on view at Denny Gallery


#artselfie

#artselfie

#artselfie

#CollectiveAuthorship

So who deserves the credit for this body of work?

· Is it Instagram, for facilitating the sharing of photographs?

· Is it Sean, for creating *#wishingpelt*?

· Is it the *#wishingpelt* visitor who was in the photo?

· Is it @rasfotos for sharing the photo with his followers?

· Is it Richard Prince for creating a physical piece and lending it his fame?

· Is it Hyperallergic for publicizing Sean's work?

· Is it Sean for re-appropriating the work?

· Is it the viewers for taking and sharing #artselfies at Denny Gallery?
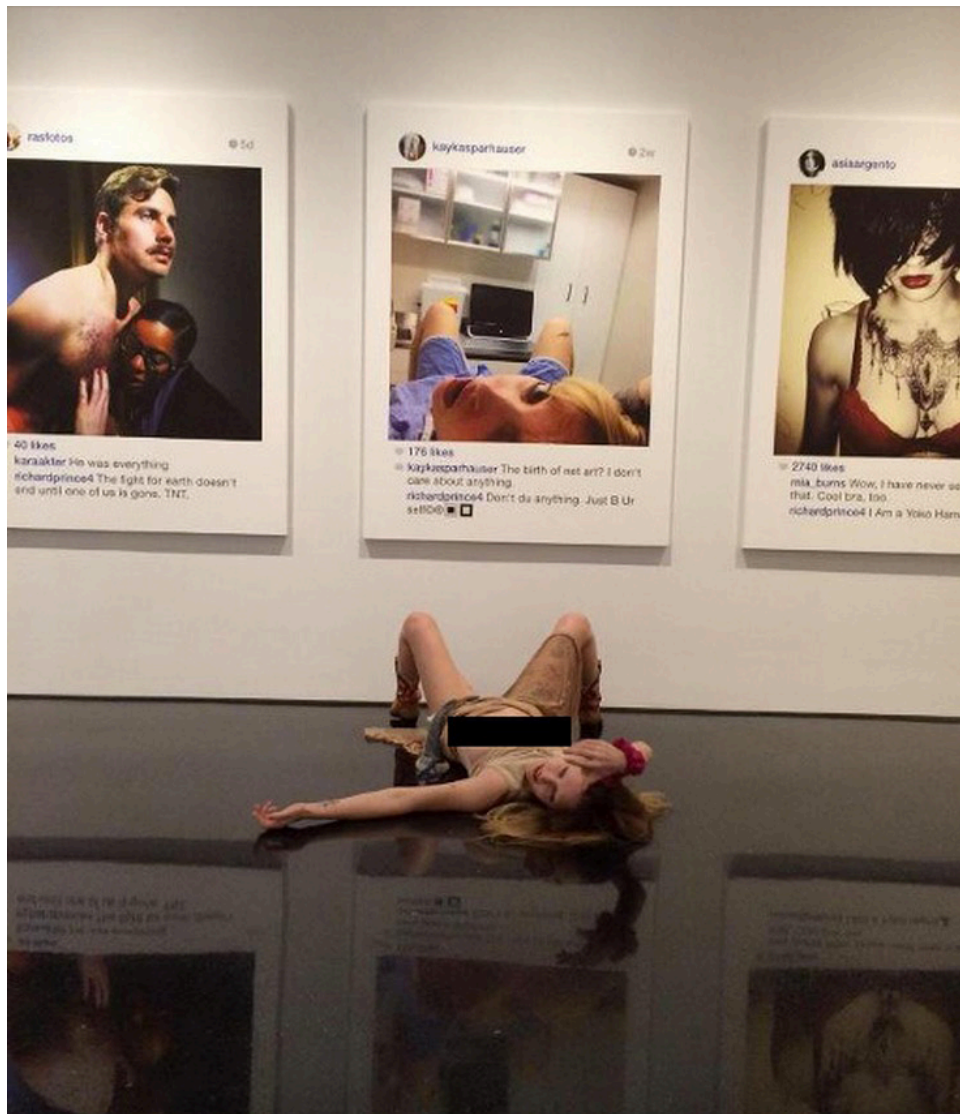
Instagram re-enactment

#Conclusion

This piece rejects the idea that *the author is dead*. Instead, its title, *Backdrop for the rebirth of the collective author* ("*There's a Whole Lot of Authorship Going On.*" - Richard Prince) declares the rise of collective authorship. It's not about who made what, but about engaging with a larger

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Written by Annie Shepard

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Sean Fader's piece "Backdrop for the Rebirth of the Collective Author ("There's a Whole Lot of Authorship Going On." - Richard Prince)" is now on view through January 25th as part of Denny Gallery's "Share This! Appropriation After Cynicism". The show explores work that has been appropriated from others.

PICTURE YOURSELF
Selfies, Cellphones, and the Digital Age

February 2–April 10, 2016

THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER ART MUSEUM

Sussel Gallery
Burton D. Morgan Gallery

Daniel Arnold

Sean Fader

Luis Flores

Rollin Leonard

Farideh Sakhaeifar

Andy Warhol

The six artists in PICTURE YOURSELF are concerned with constructions of the self in an era of mass consumerism, rapid technological advancements, urban chaos, vast inequalities, online dating, shifting norms in gender and sexuality, and communities beyond the borders of our physical worlds. Their works ask us to rethink selfies as something other than vanity projects for public presentation. Instead, created with refracted, distorted, and manipulated technologies, these artists shed light on how we perform the self in and for a multivariable world.

Andy Warhol's iconic self-portraits (1963–1986) are prescient images of self performance that play with notions of gender, sexuality, and youth. Warhol's unapologetic expressions are meant to push against our ideas of propriety— whether in lipstick or a fright wig—and reconsider our ideas of what is or is not acceptable or respectable. Like Warhol who casts himself as the subject for analysis, Luis Flores examines the relationship between masculinity and performance in the knitted, life size version of himself angling an iPhone toward his face. On the wall in front of the figure, a red neon sign reads, *Whatever You Want It To Be*, literally illuminating the desire to satiate an audience.

While Warhol and Flores foreground the masculine self, Daniel Arnold and Farideh Sakhaeifar appear in their photographs subtly, almost ghostly; the self is present in the faces of strangers. Shot on an iPhone, Arnold's subway photos capture subway riders immersed in their own worlds. He appears only as shadow or reflection against tired faces or wide-eyed children. Sakhaeifar's *Workers Are Taking Photographs* is a series dedicated to Iranian men working in construction sites or grocery, wood, and metal shops. She enters these male-dominated spaces and asks them to photograph themselves by saying, "hold the cable and release when ready." Behind them, feminine hands hold a white backdrop. Like Arnold, Sakhaeifar controls the image but only appears fleetingly, seeking instead to illuminate the other.

Rollin Leonard and Sean Fader also distort the self, but concentrate on technological manipulations and socially engaged digital spaces to do so. In Leonard's *Spinning Wheel of Death* he photographs his face through water droplets created by spraying a hydrophobic liquid on glass. We encounter his face not as a whole but as broken up, distorted, and reshaped in each drop of water. Fader examines the self-generated depictions of men on online dating and hook-up sites. In *Sup?,* which takes its title from an informal greeting, Fader juxtaposes two images of the same man. The first picture is a reflection of who Fader imagines them to be from their online profile, the other is taken after they have met. There are striking differences between Fader's fantasies and how the men see themselves.

In deftly manipulating technology and cultural norms, the artists in PICTURE YOURSELF highlight how self-representations are acute responses to the world we inhabit as well as testaments to versions of ourselves that we look away from, closet, or seek greater intimacy with. Together, these artists examine how we can see each other more clearly by obscuring, refracting, and reflecting a version of ourselves that betrays who we imagine and project ourselves to be.

Leah Mirakhor
Assistant Professor, Department of English
The College of Wooster

Sean Fader (American, b. 1979)

Sup? is a lived performance piece. For 365 days I trolled online dating and hookup websites looking for men who interested me. I looked at their profile and pre-visualized a portrait of who I thought they might be. Then I contacted them and asked them out on a date. The date consisted of arriving at their home (never having met them in person) pouring a glass of wine, and photographing them immediately. I directed them to enact my preconceived ideas of who I imagined them to be. After our shoot, I took them out on a date. This allowed me to consider how I might alter my first portrait of them. After our date, we collaborated on creating an image that we both felt represented them.

—Sean Fader

A conceptual artist working in photography, performance, social practice, and the Internet, Sean Fader explores projection, artifice, and self-reflexivity in his work. In his 2010 project *Sup?*, Fader investigates perceptions about self-curated online depictions and profiles.

Combining text and image, Fader's *Patryk* and *Evan* are time-based documents; each begins with the text conversation in the middle panel. The chronology then moves to the left of each triptych, and reflects what Fader imagined about that person after reading their dating profile. Taken by Fader as soon as he meets them, both Patryk and Evan are posed bare chested, seated, and are photographed from the front. The photographs on the right are shot post-date, and again, there is a similarity in how Fader sets up these portraits. Post-date Patryk and Evan are now clothed, lying down, and are viewed from above.

While the photographs should ostensibly be the provocative aspect of *Sup?* (other subjects in this series are posed quite differently), it is the text that reveals the reality of meet ups in digital social spaces. Notably, Patryk and Fader's text exchanges are both explanatory and solicitous, while Fader's exchange with Evan is edgier and has the ring of communication miscues with comments such as, " 'straight acting' is a code for 'self hatred'," and "This is my last one. You can text me and tell me I can expect a phone call . . . or never call me again." An abbreviation of the urban slang "Wassup?," Fader's *Sup?* explores codes and signifiers that abound on most dating sites. He intentionally uses these sites as a way to consider what happens in spaces designed for online self-representation.

—KMZ

About the Artist

Sean Fader received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, an MA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, and BFA from the New School, New York. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally in Dubai, Canada, Mexico and England. Fader was named a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow in 2013 and a Blade of Grass Fellow in 2012–2013. He received the Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Award for Emerging Photographers in 2012. Select exhibitions include: *Share This! Appropriation after Cynicism,* Denny Gallery, New York (2014–2015); *Sup?,* a solo exhibition at the University of Illinois in Springfield (2014); *#wishingpelt,* performed at Defibrillator Gallery, Chicago, Spring Break Art Show and Pulse Art Fair, New York (2013–2014) ; and *White Boys,* curated by Hank Willis Thomas and Natasha L. Logan, Haverford College (2013). Fader has received press coverage in *MOMUS, Hyperallergic, Art F City, Huffington Post,* and *Slate.com.* Fader lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, and is represented by Denny Gallery, New York.

Art gallery's new exhibit addresses online dating

ALEX COOP / ESTEVAN MERCURY

JANUARY 20, 2015 01:13 PM

The photo on the left is how New York based artist Sean Fader imagined his date would look like, while the photo on the right is the real portrayal.

It's no surprise that online dating is a form of interaction used by millions across the globe, but several artists' in depth look at the world of digital dating opened many eyes at the Estevan Art Gallery and Museum.

On Jan. 15, the opening of I'll show you mine, if you show me yours: Love in the modern age in Gallery 1 was accompanied by the work of three artists who each brought a unique perspective to a topic that is often shrouded in misconception.

"It used to be a very taboo thing, but today, it's very much the norm," said Amber Andersen, curator of I'll show you mine and director of the EAGM, before the exhibit's official opening.

She noted the exhibit was an excellent opportunity for everyone, both who are familiar with online dating and those who aren't, to enter a "safe" environment and gain a fresh understanding of the interactions taking place at the tips of millions of fingers.

Unique pieces dotted the gallery, each approaching the topic of the night from a variety of different angles. Whether it was a mirror with an attached transcript of those conversations or paintings of hopeful animals looking to fulfill their online desires, there was no shortage of creativity.

"People seem to be very comfortable with animal representations," Andersen said about Belinda Harrow's work.

Harrow is known for using animals in her work. "She has these two opposing ideals in her pieces … because people have different reasons for being on there."

Sean Fader, an artist based out of New York, spoke with the Mercury after the exhibit and talked about his work in the gallery, a project, he said, which took him over a year to complete.

"It was one of the most intense things I've ever done," he said.

Between Jan. 2010 and Jan. 2011, Fader went on 100 first dates, all of which stemmed from countless interactions on dating websites.

He would try and create an image of the person on the other end of the conversation based off their interactions. Then, upon their first meeting, he would photograph his date who would be dressed as Fader initially perceived them. A second photo was later taken, portraying the real person Fader was dating. In the gallery, the first photo concept was on the left, the second on the right. A short transcript of some of their interactions is placed in the middle between each photo.

"Working on this changed me in an extreme way," Fader said, admitting it was an incredible experience, while acknowledging the difficulties that came with his personal life and his work becoming a single entity, a consequence he initially underestimated.

"Going on 100 dates in one year is a psychological minefield," he said. "By the end I lost 15 lbs., I went from a brunette to bleach platinum blonde, I definitely developed an eating disorder at a certain point, and all of my generated self-worth was based on external approval," he said. "When a date or a photo was terrible, I felt like a giant failure and I took all of it on at the same time. But then if the photo, the date and the sex were great and my date wanted to see me again, it was a high I never experienced in my life."

Fader said a popular misconception surrounding online dating is the end result of an encounter, which he said many believe is a long-term relationship or marriage.

"What's wrong with meeting different people and gaining different experiences? So what if your date is a disaster, you'll have a story to tell later on," he said.

Fader and artist Shannon Yashcheshen spoke with visitors at the EAGM through an online conference call and talked about their work and online dating.

This photographer explores the relationship between online and real-life identities with his series of photographs, Sup?

By Will Pulos

(Sean Fader)

If you've ever met up with someone you've talked to online, you know that reality can often be quite different than expectations. That tricky relationship between online personas and real-life identities was what inspired photographer Sean Fader's most recent project, Sup?

The series of photographs capture men that Fader went on dates with through sites like Dlist.com, and apps such as Manhunt and Grindr. One of the images of each guy is styled in the way Fader expected his hookup to look based on their online profile, while the second captures something closer to their actual personality.

"I began thinking about how we project our identities into digital spaces," he says. Fader had been doing a lot of online dating, and the idea for the series stuck with him. "I thought no one would ever say yes, but I sent out three messages proposing the date/shoot to boys I was interested in," he explains. "Every one of them said yes. So I thought, 'well now I have to do this.'"

Choose one in each grouping:

Dating Too: **Scruff**, **OKCupid**, Grindr, Manhunt
Scruff and OKCupid. I like them both but sometimes it depends on my location.

Go-To First Text: Hey, Hey What's Up?, What's Going On?, **Sup?**
Sup? Of course. But honestly I cater to what the boy is giving off. I got very good at reading profiles by the time I finished Sup?

Short Answer:

Who's before and after photos changed the most?
You haven't seen him yet. I have only released 6 of the 27 boys.

What most surprised you about doing this?
How much it changed me in a really deep way.

Were that many guys reluctant to have their photos taken?
Loads. Many of them wanted to meet first or talk on the phone. I knew that just hearing their voice would change everything for me. I only photographed boys who trusted me enough to let me walk into their apartment, costume them, restage their apartment and photograph them within the first 20 minutes of meeting them.

Did you meet anyone who was about the same before and after?
Yup. I got real good at reading profiles

What's your go-to drink?
Rye Manhattan

What photographers inspire you?
Taryn Simon, Hank Willis Thomas, Felix González-Torres, early Cindy Sherman

What were you trying to get people to think about with this project?
A bunch of things. How we project our identities into digital spaces, how the digital spaces we take part in often dictate who we believe we are, how we see others and how we understand ourselves being seen, what options we have when picking identities, who gets to decide what the options are, what it means to make a photograph in the age of digital objectification, what intimacy can look like, the search for our "other half," and what happens when you use your own life to learn and grow.

Are you still in contact with any of the guys featured?
Yup, lots of them. In fact, I'm having coffee with one of them this week.

What are current trend you wish would die?
Internalized homo and transphobia within the gay community

What's in your fridge?
Loads of vegetables. I make fresh cold pressed green juice every morning.

What's one of your favorite quotes?
I always tell my students two things. "If your parents like your work you're doing something wrong" and "Go big or go home"

What's your favorite bar in New York?
The Narrows in Bushwick or Beverly's on the Lower East Side. But... you will find me most frequently at Metropolitan Bar for it's cheap drinks and even cheaper men.

What's your favorite clothing item you own?
My jean fanny pack and my gold Michael Kors shoes.

Hair performs gender, but by removing it from its representational role '*how to do things with hair*' remakes male body hair as a technology of the body charged with transformative potential.

How to do things with hair

An artist's experience of their own body shapes their encounter with the world, and when this mediated experience is transformed into a work of art it demands that the viewer look carefully at their own social encounters

In 2011 I sat in **Raed Yassin's** studio and stared at him staring back at me through a stalk of broccoli. I felt implicated, uneasy, and I couldn't avoid connecting the contours of vegetables and hairy bare skin to artistic critiques of representations of 'the exotic other'. By positioning these fruits and vegetables as banal accessories Yassin's hairy body can coopt their successful assimilation into global cuisine. Raed Yassin's self-portraits do not call for a paradigm shift in representational practices, and instead offer a methodology rooted in quiet observation.

Monira Al Qadiri extends her narcissistic association with masculinity and hair to her first sculptural work, a white plaster cast replica of her face wrapped in a long sheep's wool beard. Al Qadiri crafts a kind of cosmology of the beard throughout her work as she inserts her bearded visage into spiritual iconography. *Dreamer* has a particularly austere and reverential aesthetic that reinforces the connection between portraiture and symbols of power and authority.

A large pile of dismembered black cotton cords sit amidst a flurry of coloured cotton thread in the middle of **Dalal Ani's** studio. Her source material is the '*agal*, a mass-produced accessory that holds a Gulf Arab *ghutra* in place. The artist unbraids this tight cord and recontextualizes it as a garment worn during a distinctly feminine threading to draw attention to the alienating qualities possessed by technologies of hair.

Sean Fader stood bare-chested on a platform at dfbrl8r Gallery in Chicago as members of a public audience rubbed their fingers along his chest hair, made a wish, and captured their encounter on their smartphones. The photographs in *#wishingpelt* track the fluid movement between our every day lives and our online reality to model a way to sustain intimacy and privacy in a digital age where personal information and communication is always public. While the image of the person's encounter with the pelt will always circulate online, via #wishingpelt, their wishes are kept secret. #wishingpelt indexes a video installation Pelt, a two minute long chest hair grooming session that has been lengthened to a thirty minute video to underscore the transcendent quality of ritual self-care.

Rokni and **Ramin Haerizadeh's** collaborative work *Recovering* typifies the spirit of *How to do things with hair*, and lends it a playful air as a small flower perches precariously on a mound of chest hair. This triptych is an invitation to the viewer to engage in a poetic encounter with an other world.

Raised in Ridgewood, NJ, **Sean Fader** spent most of his life as an actor, acting, singing, and dancing since he was five years old. After attending Northwestern and The New School University he performed on several national tours with stops both on and off-Broadway. Sean then earned his MA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, where he was the recipient of the Murthy Digital Arts Award and his MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He was named Fringe Underground Magazine's "Art Star" in their Fall 2005 issue. In 2007 his work was featured in First Look II: the best of the new artists in the U.S. at the Hudson Valley Center For Contemporary Art. He was also awarded the Critics Choice Award in the Professional category at the 11th Annual Chicago Art Open. Sean was the recipient of "3rd Ward's Fall Solo Show" prize and was named as one of the winners of the Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Award for Emerging Photographers. Recently Sean was named A Blade of Grass Fellow for 2012-2013. Sean resides in New York City.

*#wishingpelt instagram
image 39,*
Archival Pigment Print
60 x 60 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP
2013
Courtesy of the Artist

#wishingpelt instagram
image 83,
Archival Pigment Print
60 x 60 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP
2013
Courtesy of the Artist

#wishingpelt instagram
image 42,
Archival Pigment Print
60 x 60 cm
Edition of 3 + 2AP
2013
Courtesy of the Artist

TimeOut Dubai

Art

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An art show about body hair in Dubai

Barrak Alzaid explains the rationale behind his unique show at thejamjar Discuss this article

◄ Picture 1 of 2 ►

Barrak Alzaid explains the rationale behind his unique show devoted to body hair.

Featuring six artists from across the world, curator Barrak Alzaid's exhibition at thejamjar in Al Quoz uses body hair to explore narratives ranging from masculine narcissism and feminine beauty to people's sense of self and their cultural beliefs.

The artists take a number of different approaches, from an unsettling video of a hirsute gent from New York blow-drying his chest hair, to a disturbing installation of sheep's hair surrounding a deathly cast of a woman's face via eye-catching prints.

For Dubai, the exhibition is both liberating and challenging – it's almost impossible not to have some reaction. Yet shocking an audience is the opposite of what Alzaid is actually looking to achieve. When asked what he was aiming for with his show, he says: 'I didn't want people to feel that I was confronting or challenging their perceptions of what they thought was acceptable. '

For starters, Sean Fader's video installation is intimate and unusual. Alzaid describes how his work bridges the 'boundaries between social experiences online and social experiences in the real world.'

This is particularly apparent in the artist's prints on gelatine paper.

The project is called Pelts, and involved an experiment where the public was invited to rub Fader's chest and make a wish. The participants were photographed and the images became the basis for the art.

Raed Yassin's art involves classically posed portraits of the artist alongside vegetables. The idea came from Yassin's residency in Amsterdam, where he became acutely aware of his Arabic cultural identity in contrast to the Dutch population in the city. This was opposite to what he found with food in the city, grown and sourced from across the globe.

Alzaid believes that, far from being a critique of segregation or an attempt to highlight the hypocrisy of social prejudice in relation to individuals' relationship with foods, it's an observation: 'The story of food is inextricably linked to the formation of ourselves and our understanding of culture. He's just bringing it into a contemporary context.'

Dalal Ani's work is possibly the most eccentric aspect of this show. The

Christmas in Dubai
Meal deals, festive features and Christmas cover version vids

artist focussed her work on the agal (the black cord which holds the ghutra or headdress in place). Once unravelled, the black cords reveal colourful threads, which are embedded inside. Ani then used the materials to create a chaotic outfit, which she wore on the streets of New York. She happened to stumble across a threading shop and the results of this unusual juxtaposition between Hani's unconventional attire and her complicity in a beauty ritual that many women experience were photographed.

In comparison to the often addressed subject of the Islamic veil in art, the agal is not something which is in our moral consciousness. Despite the potentially polarising subject matter, Alzaid is measured, quipping: 'I don't have an opinion one way or another but I think studying the phenomenon is interesting.'

Other artworks include photographs of the bodies of Dubai-based brothers Rokni and Ramin Haerizadeh. The colourful duo are pictured with delicate flowers against their torsos, creating a contrast between the beauty of the flower against the human imperfections of their bodies. Cleverly, the pictures were photographed in the frame of the computer screens on which they were projected, raising pertinent questions about our relationship with social media and the increasingly interchangeable roles of our virtual and actual experiences.

The final, centre piece of the exhibition is perhaps the most intriguing. The artist, Monira Al Qadiri, focuses on the topic of male narcissism and the symbols of this authority, in this particular case, the male beard. The installation, which sits inside a glass case, contains slightly disturbing-looking hair, which transpires to be sheep hair, surrounding a dental alginate, or mould, which Monira made of her face. Alzaid delights in telling me a particular reaction to the piece. 'Someone was looking at it on the opening night and said, "that's disgusting". Monira, the artist, who was standing on the other side at the time, responded: "Yeah, this is my work." The woman apologised and Monira said: "No – I like that."'

Intrigued about the reaction that such an overtly candid exhibition would elicit from others here in Dubai, Alzaid is optimistic and upbeat: 'People are so excited to be seeing something that's so different.'

With the contributing artists coming from across the world, it's an eclectic and strangely cohesive exhibition. Yet, Alzaid sees things differently. He doesn't want the nationality of the participants to shape people's perception of what they're seeing: 'I want the work to speak for itself.' Having seen the show, I find it hard to disagree.

The Lowdown
Exhibition: 'How to Do Things With Hair' runs until December 2 at thejamjar, Al Quoz (04 341 1367).
Artists: Raed Yassin, Monira Al Qadiri, Dalal Ani, Sean Fader, Rokni and Ramin Haerizadeh
Price of works: On request

By Peter Feely
Time Out Dubai, 12 November 2013

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Sean Fader Explores The Art Of Online Dating In 'Sup?'

By Priscilla Frank

If you've ever taken your love life to the digital sphere, you're familiar with the stressful, agonizing and self-esteem destroying task that is creating your dating profile.

From choosing accurate yet complimentary photos to summing up your charm, wit and brains in a succinct bio, the challenge at hand is an arduous one. In an exhibition entitled "Sup?", Sean Fader explores the complexities of online representations, mixed desires and the occasional breaches of truth:

Drewkiddo: when i die and go to heaven, i hope to find they've held a seat at the luncheon for me between Katharine Hepburn and Oscar Wylde. we'll be dressed to the nines and fit to chat about breaking conventions without hesitation.

you seem fascinating.also, this is my attempt at striking up conversation.

Don't worry about implying.. I amazing, talented and charming.. you won't be able to keep your hands off me..

Yes, still have the manfriend. He's great and I feel really lucky. So there's that. :) What about YOU? Anything new and exciting on the lurve front?Let's plan something soon. Would love to see your face.

Let's grab coffee or a drink. Would love to catch up.

DrewKiddo, OkCupid.com, April 13, 2010

Drew, Hell's Kitchen, NYC, April 13, 2010

Fader spent a full year exploring 16 online dating sites, creating photographic portraits that illustrate the space between fantasy and reality when it comes to putting yourself on the internet.

Finding men who piqued his interest and visualized his expectations as judged by their profiles, Fader invited each of his subjects on a date, which always began by of pouring a glass of wine and snapping a photograph. The two then got to know each other's IRL selves, talked and collaborated on a portrait that accurately represented their online and offline personas.

Each artwork contains a profile picture, Fader's photograph, and snippets of language exchanged in the process, creating a contemporary portrait of the search for love.

Fader's "Sup?" is part of "The Participants" exhibition, showing at Denny Gallery through July 21, 2013. See more of of the series at http://www.seanfader.com/sup (warning: some photos contain graphic nudity).

ARTIST
FILES

a blade of grass
nurtures socially engaged art

SEAN
FADER

Raised in Ridgewood, NJ, Sean Fader has spent most of his life as a performer, acting, singing and dancing since he was five years old. After attending Northwestern University and The New School University, he performed on several national tours with stops both on and Off-Broadway. Fader earned his MA from the Maryland Institute College of Art where he was the recipient of the Murthy Digital Arts Award, and his MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He was named *Fringe Underground Magazine's* "Art Star" in their Fall 2005 issue. In 2007 his work was featured in "First Look II" at the Hudson Valley

Center For Contemporary Art. He received the Critics Choice Award in the Professional category at the 11th Annual Chicago Art Open (2008). Fader was the recipient of 3rd Ward's "Fall Solo Show" prize (2008) and was named as one of the winners of the Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward Award for Emerging Photographers (2012). Fader resides in New York City.

I WANT TO PUT YOU ON, RAINI, 2007

Archival inkjet print

24 x 30 in.

20twenty22, Dlist.com, July 23, 2010

Evan Bolton Hill, Baltimore, July 24, 2010

SUP?

Left: 20twenty22, Dlist.com, July 23, 2010
Right: Evan Bolton Hill, Baltimore, July 24, 2010

Archival inkjet print

30 x 50 in.

Although the end result of Sean Fader's practice is photography, his real work involves intimate interaction with friends and strangers, and an exploration of how we perceive identity. His practice is informed by his long history of working in theater, which Fader uses when he alternately models the identities of others and asks others to model their own and his ideas about who they are in a unique kind of interactive portraiture.

In *I Want To Put You On*, Fader makes portraits that fuse his body with that of his sitters, who are friends and family. He asks his subjects to pose as the person they imagine themselves to be, takes their portraits, then turns the tables. Assuming the poses from their portraits, he "TELL ME HOW TO BE YOU" asks them, "tell me how to be you." The ensuing conversation reveals unexpected nuances of personality, as demeanor and facial expression are tweaked and adjusted until the right balance is struck. Fader then uses Photoshop to fuse his own likeness with the sitters' bodies, superimposing a zipper on the torso, which makes it look like he is "wearing" his subjects' bodies. Through this process he assumes the identity of the sitter, asking viewers to question the gap between self-perception and the way we are seen by others.

You are the first and ONLY person
to get this pic...
Please do not share :)

You tell that to all the boys

You know, in the name of
art.... and in the name of
Adventure, I think you should
come directly to my place and we
should have our first date in my
room. Raw. Real. What better
place to get to know me?

Ps I woke up to this from you last
night. "If you were Amy awe-
somer you would   dpinta-
niaoously combust.". I nearly
shat my bed I laughed so hard.
We were both there together be-
cause I didn't notice the misspell-
ins last night.   Hehehehe.

I hate men. Let's get coffee this
week.

AM82, Grindr, Feburary 28, 2010
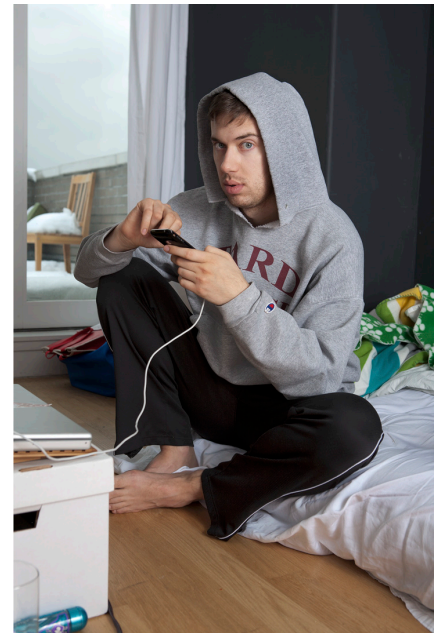
Adam, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, February 28, 2010

SUP?
Left: AM82, Grindr, February 28, 2010
Right: Adam, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, February 28, 2010
Archival inkjet print
30 x 50 in.

In another project, the performative aspect of the work involves a deeper commitment. For *SUP?*, Fader spent a year trolling online dating sites, looking sincerely for good matches and imagining in advance what the men might look like. For each, he engaged in only online conversation in advance—no phone calls. If they agreed to a date, Fader asked to make a portrait of each man, depicted as Fader envisioned him from his online profile. He explained that he would like to begin the encounter at their place, with a portrait made using their clothes and a backdrop staged using their possessions. After the portrait session they went on the date, and then the sitter invariably offered an unsolicited account of who they "really" were—their families, lives, past experiences. Apparently the portraits created an aura of trust and openness, which encouraged a confessional atmosphere. Following the dates, Fader would re-photograph the men based on their self-descriptions, allowing them to stage their own portraits. He continued to date some of them for up to several months.

Fader calls this approach "lived performance" because he recognizes that the art is inseparable from his daily life experiences. The two images are presented side by side, allowing viewers to compare the preconceived idea and the self-presentation. This work focuses on the way people edit themselves to appear more desirable, and the disjunction between our public and private selves. Fader uses photography to create intimacy between people, and bring awareness to how we imagine ourselves as a way of achieving greater authenticity.

- KB, EG

I WANT TO PUT YOU ON, DAD, 2007
Archival inkjet print
24 x 30 in.

Ifōn' seksl:
Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy

University of Illinois Springfield
Visual Arts Gallery
March 4 – April 11, 2013

Jurors:
Michael J. Murphy and Dave Kube

Gallery Director:
Jeff Robinson

Gallery Manager:
Allison Lacher

Catalog Designer:
Kim Seiz

Research Assistant:
Alex Williams

A primary task of the visual arts is to bring to light those societal issues that are buried just below the surface of our collective consciousness. In this role, art forces us to confront the most intimate aspects of our being and demands that we expose our deepest vulnerabilities to one another. The diverse range of works featured in Ifōn' seksI: Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy address how the meaning of sexual intimacy has been renegotiated in (fluorescent) light of advances in digital technology. I want to thank those artists who, through their ideas and artworks, have contributed to this necessary conversation.

My deepest gratitude to Dave Kube, Visiting Assistant Professor of Digital Media in the department of Art, Music, and Theatre at UIS, and to Michael Murphy, Assistant Professor in the Women and Gender Studies department at UIS. The theme of this exhibition was conceived by Professor Kube and Dr. Murphy, and the curatorial effort behind the project would not have been possible without their respective scholarly expertise.

Finally, thanks to all who have made the exhibition and this catalog a source of scholarly excellence. Allison Lacher, manager for the Visual Arts Gallery, put extensive efforts into the preparation, installation, and promotion of the exhibition. Dr. Murphy contributed an enlightening essay to the catalog. Kim Seiz spearheaded the terrific catalog design. Alex Williams collected and organized documents in preparation for the catalog. Additional funding for the exhibition was provided by the UIS Friends of the Gallery and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Jeff Robinson
Director, Visual Arts Gallery
Instructor of Art
University of Illinois Springfield

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It does not require a salacious inclination to have noticed the raft of celebrities, politicians, and other public figures who have been brought low in recent years due to revelations of illicit sexual desires or behaviors expressed or realized via digital devices (think Eliot Spitzer, David Weiner, David Petraeus, etc.). Sex scandals, of course, are nothing new, nor is the moral outrage (real or feigned) that accompanies them. Sexuality, however much it feels private, has always been mediated by legal regulation, social conventions, language and visual representation. There is not and can never be such a thing as personal or private sex. Sexuality is always already social, cultural, economic, and historical. As the feminist philosopher and cultural critic Susan Bordo has argued, "When bodies get together in sex, a whole history, cultural as well as personal, comes along with them."

Yet, the advent of handheld digital technologies seems to have heralded something entirely new. The meaning of dating, relationships, romance, and even sex itself is currently being renegotiated in light of the fluorescent glow of iPhones, Blackberries, and Androids. These technologies are transforming what it means to be sexually intimate in the 21st century, inaugurating new languages ("dicpic"), behaviors ("sexting"), desires, expressions, communities, identities, and legal and regulatory frameworks. The identification and interaction with others on the basis of a shared sexual identity, orientation, inclination, or "kink" has never been easier, nor have sexual performances or masquerades—scripted or spontaneous— ever been as ephemeral or transient.

The intersection of microcomputer and global telecommunications technologies threatens to collapse longtime distinctions between public/private, personal/political, strange/familiar, distant/immediate, fleeting/ eternal, and connection/alienation. Familiar boundaries of self, relationship, community, and nation are easily bridged as desires and technologies combine to put an adult bookstore, singles bar, brothel, and gay bathhouse in your purse or pocket. We are witnessing a revolution in human intimacy and this one will be televised…via the XTube mobile app on your iPhone 4GS.

In light of this, how should we view the transformation of intimate relations enabled by handheld digital devices? The artists selected for this show exploit three main strategies to answer this question: the interpretation of sexualized digital imagery through older artistic conventions and strategies; the translation of such imagery into other media; and, helping us 'see' these new representational conventions by working to make them 'strange.' The artists and works included in Ifōn' seksl: Digital Devices and the Transformation of Intimacy go a long way to help us become more cognizant of this burgeoning phenomenon and help us think through some of the issues it occasions.[1]

[1] Portions of the above were borrowed from the call for the show that this essay accompanies, which was co-authored by co-juror Dave Kube.

OLDER ARTISTIC CONVENTIONS

A number of works selected for the show offer evidence that artists are attempting to grapple with the intimate effects of new tech by situating it in the context of older artistic conventions. Striking in this regard is the work of Michael Max McLeod and Cory Peeke. McLeod's self-portrait *#jock #bear #selfie #gaybear #beardporn #menwithdogs #dontwoofatme*, uses very recent digital technology—a cell phone, the photography application Instagram—to compose an image of himself as he'd like to be seen: a hirsute, hyper-masculine male with all the prerogatives that entails. His very, very postmodern body and identity are belied by a much older, and conservative aesthetic style typically encountered in Old Master paintings and prints by artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn. A very narrow color palette of rich browns and blacks, a raking light source, and triangular composition lend a sense of stability and gravity, counterbalancing the transient life passage that the image narrates—one that many might find unduly obsessed with the importance of surfaces rather than substances.

The three works selected by Cory Peeke are from his much larger *Wallflower* series, which consists of mixed media collage, improbably uniting such diverse materials as amateur Internet pornography, vintage wallpaper, and wax. Such materials connect these works to a much older history of image making and art historical conventions for representing the naked human form. The strategic location of leaves or flowers to obscure the genitals in Western painting, sculpture, and printmaking is well known. Such a strategy was essential to legitimizing and de-sexualizing such images by locating them within the artistic conventions of "the nude." Paintings with pigment and wax (encaustic) were very popular in Medieval and Renaissance art. But the floral wallpaper, with its over-determined connection to feminized domesticity, also helps to undermine and soften the aggressive masculinity of the photographs' subjects.

Notably, where historical nudes used flora to obscure the genitals, here it obscures the faces, and hence identities, of the photographic subjects. Students of the representation of men in film and photography have shown that the masculinity of male film stars and celebrities is often 'salvaged' through direct physical and visual confrontation with the camera, and by extension, the viewer. But the use of floral imagery in these works short circuits that strategy, reducing the subjects to passive objects available for easy sexual objectification—as is so common in representations of women's bodies. Such self-objectification is rampant in the new digital landscape, whether intentional, as image makers attempt to salvage their anonymity by excising identifying details out of their images, or circumstantial, as the act of self-picturing using a cell phone camera necessitates that some part of one's body will not be pictured. Peeke's work helps us understand the complexities of sexualized self-representations now being casually exchanged on cell phones and websites, as well as the artistic instinct to understand these images through reference to older artistic and representational conventions.

SEAN FADER

'SUP?

Artist Statement: About *'SUP?*
I spent 365 days trolling online dating and hookup websites looking for men interested in dates and sexual encounters. When I came across someone who interested me, I looked closely at their profile and I visualized what my photographic portrait of them would be.

 "I'm working on a new project that focuses on the ways in which we edit who we are for the web. So I am blind photo dating strangers. Basically I want to come to your place and make a photograph of you immediately based on your online profile.

Then we go out for a drink/date/dinner etc so that I can get a sense of who you are in "real life" and then I re-photograph you appropriate to your personality. You game?"

My dates consisted of my arriving at their home, having never met them in person, pouring them a drink, and photographing them immediately. The shots were staged and often costumed from their own wardrobe. I directed them to perform my preconceived ideas of who they were. After our shoot, I would take them out on a date: often dinner, sometimes drinks, sometimes simply sex on the living room floor. The conversation on our date was always heightened: talking about who we are, our expectations of each other, and always how I misunderstood them.   This allowed me to consider how I might alter my first portrait of them.   After our date, we collaborated on creating an image that we both felt represented them.

Adam: You are the first and ONLY person to get this pic...
Please do not share :)

Sean: You tell that to all the boys

Adam: You know, in the name of art....and in the name of Adventure,I think you should come directly to my place and we should have our first date in my room. Raw, Real. What better place to get to know me?

Sean:Ps I woke up to this from you last night. "If you were Amy awesomer you would dpintaniaoously combust.". I nearly shat my bed I laughed so hard. We were both there together because I didn't notice the mis-spellings last night. Hehehehe.

Adam:I hate men. Let's get coffee this week.

AM82, Grindr — Adam, Williamsburg, Brooklyn

20twenty22: "Straight acting" is a code for "self hatred." Educate yourselves.

Evan:You are a stellar guy Sean Fader. See you soon :)

Sean:You are a stellar guy and you bring out the best in me. It's so good to have you around.

Sean: Ok so I assume you got my text messages. This is my last one. You can text me and tell me I can expect a phone call from you today or never call me again. The choice is yours.

20twenty22,Dlist.com — Evan,Bolton Hill,Baltimore

Drewkiddo: when i die and go to heaven, i hope to find they've held a seat at the luncheon for me between Katharine Hepburn and Oscar Wylde, we'll be dressed to the nines and fit to chat about breaking conventions without hesitation.

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Drew:Yes, still have the man-friend. He's great and I feel really lucky. So there's that. :) What about YOU? Anything new and ex-citing on the lurve front?Let's plan something soon. Would love to see your face.

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DrewKiddo.OkCupid.com — Drew,Hell's Kitchen,NYC