

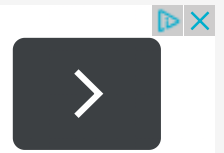


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ART ARCHIVES

# The Dynamite 'Feedback,' Curated by Leo Fitzpatrick, Explores Collaboration in Art

by JENNIFER KRASINSKI

July 25, 2017





Art is rarely if ever created in absolute solitude — the world will always provide either fact or friction to be wrestled with — but what of the artists who intentionally open their practice up to outside forces, if even for a moment, or for a single work of art? To answer this question, actor-cum-curator Leo Fitzpatrick has brought together the work of more than seventy artists for “FEEDBACK,” a lively and astute exhibition that’s also one of this summer’s most enjoyable group shows. On the surface of things, Fitzpatrick’s exhibition addresses collaboration in its many unruly forms, but a subtler thread to follow throughout is one that outlines the many registers of intimacy, diving into the nuances of relationships as they shape a creative process and shake up the tidiness of authorship.

The art market has always favored uncomplicated capital, revering the purity of the lone maker — or, perhaps more accurately, of the artist “on brand” — while the creators in turn have reveled in the confusion over who came up with what: from Duchamp’s readymades to Warhol’s Factory, from Fluxus performances to found objects. Fitzpatrick himself has long been a collaborator, curating shows downtown with (and for) artist friends like Larry Clark, Rita Ackermann, Harmony Korine, and Hanna Liden and Nate Lowman, with whom he opened the project space Home Alone in 2012.

One of the great propellers of art is of course romantic love, as in Vito Acconci’s “Tests and Measures” (1972), a series of performances he made with his then live-in lover, Kathy Dillon, as “ ‘checkpoints’ for a particular relationship, ‘trial runs’ for certain aspects of a relationship.” (On view are photos and texts Acconci made to document the work.) In one action, she kisses his bare torso, covering his chest and arms with lipstick; in another, Acconci tries to pry open Dillon’s eyes as she fights to keep them closed — the power of romance inextricably entwined with the romance of power. Art is also born of familial love, as it was in Dennis Oppenheim’s *A Feedback Situation* (1971), a tender collaboration with his son Erik in which the two stood side by side, drawing on each other’s backs with markers. The artist instructed his son to blindly mimic the traces of his father’s hand as it moved across his skin. “What I get,” wrote Oppenheim in the



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system — an extension of his creative impulses via a being he too helped to create.

Family can also be painful, complicated, its intimacies breaching the same bonds it fosters. In the photographic portrait *Orion* (2014), Leigh Ledare captures his mother lying in bed wearing sheer black thigh-high stockings and high-heeled shoes, her legs shamelessly splayed to make public her waxed privates. Her face is scribbled over in oil stick in a childlike hand, a heartbreaking gesture expressing embarrassment, anger, and a desire to protect all at once.

There are the fleeting, impersonal collaborations that retract political distances between an artist and an unwitting cohort — if only for the duration of a shutter click. Laurie

Anderson walked around New York with a camera, shooting the men who called out to her, for *Fully Automated Nikon (Object/Objection/Objectification)* (1973). “Wanna fuck?” said one; “Let’s go for a ride, cutie,” said another. Documenting her harassers, she noted that each seemed proud to pose when she aimed her lens at him. Suzanne McClelland’s *World Leader: Putin \$200.000.000.000.XX* (2017) takes aim at the financial rewards reaped by the Russian leader’s predatory actions. Around collaged found images of a heroic Putin swimming, fishing, riding horseback, she scrawls messages with palpable fury about his unjust net worth.

Some artworks cinch themselves around absence, shaped by who or what is missing. Eleanor Antin constructed sculpture-portraits of people she knew, or knew of, out of generic consumer products: *Harold Beard* (1969/98), a Japanese émigré to San Diego, is depicted as a camouflage suit hung on a wood clothes tree, surrounded by four decoy ducks; *Merritt* (1969/98), a man shot by the California Highway Patrol, is here a gas can topped by a brush hat decorated with a peace sign. Stephen J. Kaltenbach’s *TIME, Lee Lozano as remembered by Stephen Kaltenbach, 1969–2017* is simply a washer hung between two parallel strings pulled tight between two pairs of nails. It’s a spare, aching sculpture, the washer bringing the strings nearer to each other, yet not near enough to touch.



sculptures of people who live in their South Bronx community; the crisp collegiality of Chris Wool’s hand-painted sign for Martin Kippenberger’s conceptual *MOMAS. Museum of Modern Art Syros* (1994); the tepid confessional act of Clark’s *First Rehab Piece* (1991), a framed copy of an official medical document for which he lists the year-by-year history of his drug use; the bracingly funny “Sears Class Portraits” of Mike Smith, which he takes with his MFAs every school year, playing to perfection the dual roles of paterfamilias and class clown.

And then there are the aesthetics of simply dicking around. Tom Marioni’s iconic performance/installation *The Act of Drinking Beer With Friends Is the Highest Form of Art*

(1970–2017) almost explains itself, the artist believing that socializing is as much an art form as any — or at least that art is the finest excuse for a party. A table and chairs, a bar and a fridge, all carve out a space to hang out inside the gallery where, gallerist permitting, the highest form of art might just erupt. One of the show's wildest works, *Tell Me Everything*, is an audio recording made by Robert Gober and Richard Prince sometime in the 1990s when the two were palling around, shooting the proverbial shit. (It must be noted that the date is unspecified, and the “work,” such as it is, isn't for sale.) For two minutes, looped, the artists crack each other up by telling each other the same joke in two different ways. Summed up: “I've got good news and bad news,” a doctor tells his patient. The bad news? A painful death for which there is no possible cure. The good news? “I'm having an affair with my secretary!” Smart, silly, finding a giggle in the face of a grim reality: yet another way for artists to inject some much-needed oxygen into art.

## FEEDBACK

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This article from the *Village Voice Archive* was posted on July 25, 2017



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