

ARTFORUM

“Heathers”

ROWING

3 Leighton Place

September 19, 2014–October 25, 2014

This exhibition in a small, single-room gallery displays twenty-two works by nine artists. It should feel claustrophobic, but the curation by Alex Ross is acutely balanced and simple without being too austere or overly Minimalist. Comprising a variety of mediums—digital prints on fabric, embroidered canvas hung on metal rods, painted papier-mâché, and printed sleeves inside PlayStation game cases from a series of works addressing recent, highly publicized school shootings—the works on view would give the impression of being thematically related, given its organization under a title taken from the 1988 black comedy *Heathers*, yet it is the acute focus on materiality that each piece has in common.

Daniele Milvio's glazed clay works, including colorful bowls and ashtrays, are hung on walls and have toothy, wicked grins cut into their bottoms as if delighting in rejecting a more functional use.

Two canvasses by May Hands, both made of polythene and netting stretched over aluminum, have fragrance test strips affixed to the backs. Titled *Endless Euphoria* (Calvin Klein), and *Guilty*, (Gucci), both 2014, these have a sensual appeal that engages our sense of smell, widening the typical boundaries of interaction with artworks. The pieces in this exhibition demonstrate a compelling, contemporary engagement with craftsmanship, luxuriating in their technical, tactile qualities. The overall impression is a bit like that of a teenager's bedroom, filled with handmade objects serving as signs of embellished individuality slightly detached from the outside world, cumulatively creating a deep sense of intimacy in a public space.



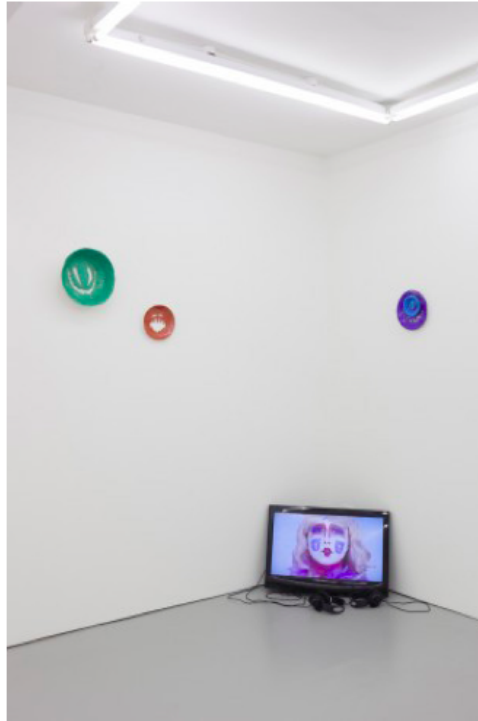
View of “Heathers,” 2014. From left: May Hands, *Guilty*, (Gucci), 2014; May Hands, *Endless Euphoria* (Calvin Klein), 2014.

— Ajay Hothi

Flash Art

Heathers

Rowing Projects / London



Heathers, installation view
at Rowing Projects, London
(2014). Courtesy the Artists and
Rowing Projects, London

A rapid flow of information, bright colors and shiny surfaces greet visitors to Rowing Projects' new space in North London. The overall impression is of a layered puzzle of pop and prosumer references and packaging materials.

The group show *Heathers*, curated by New York-based Alex Ross, draws its title and narrative logic from the 1988 black comedy of the same name, set in a cliquish high school.

The exhibition features works by Erica Cerruzzi, Andrea Crespo, May Hands, Lisa Holzer and Bradford Kessler, among others, and it centers on the role of contemporary art in portraying the contours of a school queen's heart, thus addressing the film's assimilation of arts production to confuse narrative articulation in popular cinema.

A cryptic numeric sequence functions as a press release that isolates film frames depicting Wayne Thiebaud's 1980's *Cake and Lipstick* paintings and Barbara Kruger's *Untitled (I Shop Therefore I Am)*, (1987),

calling into question pop's implications and the psychological indexing that impels the acquisition of art.

Stratified references appropriated from cinema, entertainment, science fiction, pop and consumer culture are formalized as diverse combinations of functionalities, materials and content.

Three PlayStation game disc cases are redesigned by American artist Andrea Crespo and completed with quotes from high-school spree killers (*A Ω*, 2014; *Thoughts of Dreamer*, 2014; *Sturmgeist*, 2014); May Hands' *Endless Euphoria* (*Calvin Klein*) (2014) and *Guilty* (*Gucci*) (2014) reference designer products and luxury consumption; and Kait Mooney's *third label* (2014) combines polyurethane tubing with garment care labels.

Looking at contemporaneity through the eyes of its dominant culture, the artists in this show use post-Fordism as a visual strategy and a malleable material.

by **Attilia Fattori Franchini**
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