

ARTslant Los Angeles

The Slant



THE STAND IN (OR A GLASS OF MILK)

Group Exhibition

Public Fiction

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Between Reality and Reverie

by Christina Catherine Martinez

The basic structure of society is not amenable to surrealist states.

Louis Aragon's vision-soaked stroll through the passage de l'opera in his preeminently surrealist novel *Paris Peasant* reads like foggy brainspace turned inside out and made into poetry, coloring reality itself with its instability. Umbrellas dance, a lock of flaxen hair—seen only in a flash—mercilessly seduces.

Instability is the reality of *The Stand In (Or A Glass of Milk) Phase 1: An Unbiased Teal*. There's relatively little happening on the walls, but quite a bit everywhere else. To get from one end of the room to the other involves weaving around Lucas Blalock's cryptic *555555*, 2012, a chromogenic print of telephone cords feeding into themselves that is perched on the floor, ducking under Sara VanDerBeek's lavender-washed photographs of marble Roman ladyheads (broken-nosed classicism preserved in lavender) and Blalock's hypnotic checkerboard print with the slightest hint of glitch in a buzzing strip across the middle of the field. I particularly loved Scott Benzel's performance-cum-video-cum-assemblage *Supergroups 3 - 8*, 2013—four-channel synchronized footage of iconic rock groups ranging from the precious (Beatles) to the avant garde (Throbbing Gristle) with a few cameos by the artist himself. It's a good piece to stand wobbily in front of, getting lost in the deceptively humble-looking performance-object, permeating the limits of its own physicality.





For all of the deliberately haphazard methods of generation, the desire for sex, poetry, dream, and reality to become the single amalgam of everyday life, Surrealism's Surrealism is so often circumscribed by the object, and the white cube dichotomy—pictures go on walls, sculptures go on stands—so rarely allows energies to layer and mix like sexy perfumes.

Can the frisson of instability be folded into the act of curation, the physical reality of art objects in space? It makes galleries at large seem terribly old-fashioned that these simple acts of unstable arrangement—an unhinged hang, if you will—can be so radical, but Aragon had only to squint his eyes to make the scarves in a green-lit shop window turn into dancing mermaids for his enjoyment, blurring the line between reality and reverie, becoming his reality alone, and no less real because of it.





The reality of *The Stand In...* belongs to the objects themselves. They have to talk to each other now, instead of being glued to opposing walls like the frightened denizens of a middle school dance. Suddenly the ringing lines of Erika Vogt's charcoal and plaster *Receiver*, 2013, lend Blalock's telephone cord ouroboros the ache of longing. I'm tempted more than once to sit on Sara VanDerBeek's wood and plaster-coated floor piece, but never for more than a second, because being situated in front of Benzel's super group video loops simultaneously lends it the inviting air of an arena bench and the cold grandeur of a new-age rock god.

This heady mix of energies blurs the line between exhibition and installation, perhaps even artist and curator. It's all going to change in a few weeks. The result, I think, will be much greater than the sum of three openings.

—Christina Catherine Martinez

(All images: *The Stand In (Or A Glass of Milk)* Installation views, Courtesy Public Fiction.)