



Thing Inside Myself: 02

Wild At Heart

Fay Ray's sharp and dangerous collages take on a life of their own
by Tamsen Greene, Aug 2008

Artist Fay Ray's collages are alive and moving. Like a snake pit, the elements writhe, intertwined, becoming a single monstrous entity with many individual parts. Although her collages project an elusive air of danger, they're also strikingly beautiful. These dense and astral works seem like heavy miniature planets teeming with life in collapsed space. They are the best parts of an action movie compressed... vying for attention, each element equally captivating — car chases, shoot-outs and femmes fatales.

Selected from the piles of fashion and porn magazines that fill her studio, specific images are carefully filed, then compiled until they are transformed into a new being, framed as discrete works. Part of her series was included last winter in Gagasia. Gallery's "Fit To Print," a round-up of artists working in the collage medium. Ray is overjoyed that these images are not returned to their original context — the glossy magazine — creating a cyclical continuation of her inspiration.

Ray's other collages include obsessively mono-themed works of jewels, gold or porn, subjects related to desire and want — the longing for sex or luxury. No matter how much we see, whether it's a grid of money shots or countless diamonds, her work mirrors our desire to possess and consume. In addition to collage, the New York-based artist also creates sculpture and performance art. Heavily influenced by her everyday life, she is now developing a series of jewelry displays inspired by Manhattan street vendors. Not of the Tiffany's persuasion, her source materials are the ubiquitous jewelry vendors themselves who are an indispensable part of the city's landscape as they peddle their wares. But taken out of context, they become something entirely different — much like her collages. Ray's work can be seen this summer at Smith-Stewart and Exit Art in New York City. interesting example of urban renewal before its time, maybe the advent of housing projects, but like you said earlier there is also Le Corbusier. I guess you could say I am fascinated with instances where black esthetics and modernist esthetics collide.



The New York Times



Art Party at the Wooly. From Left, Betil Dagdelen, Lars Fisk and Fay Ray.

Subversive Artists Host a Party at the Wooly

The Wooly, the semi-secret lounge in the basement of Woolworth Building, has hosted a smattering of private parties since opening in 2009. Fashion designers have presented after-parties there. Socialites-in-training have celebrated their birthdays (one Sweet 16 was even serenaded by Nicki Minaj). And various artists have left their mark on its faux-decaying walls and cluttered five-and-dime nooks

That tradition continued Thursday night when Amy Smith-Stewart and Invisible-Exports, a tiny subversive gallery on the Lower East Side, unveiled two new works. Fay Ray, an artist, created a cancerous-looking collage behind the D.J. booth from hundreds of magazines clippings. And Alexander May photocopied black leaflets with one-liners — all funny, some dark — taped haphazardly on the odd-angled walls.

The party, which coincided with the start of the Armory Show, also honored Eric Shiner, the new acting director of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, who wore a navy blazer and Pee-wee Herman-esque red bow tie for the occasion. Flashbulbs flickered off his shiny bald head.

“I was 16 years old when Andy Warhol died, living an hour outside of Pittsburgh, watching MTV and wishing I was here,” Mr. Shiner said, waving at people across the room, clearly enjoying his moment.

The event drew a fashionably disheveled crowd of artists and art-world insiders including Genesis P-Orridge, Lisa Kirk and Deborah Kass. Penn Badgley, the young heartthrob from “Gossip Girl,” also showed up, but a long list of V.I.P.s. distributed beforehand, which had included Alan Cummings and members of the Scissor Sisters, were no-shows.

Others arrived fashionably late. “We couldn’t get here until ‘American Idol’ finished,” said Christopher Makos, who was Andy Warhol’s portrait photographer and now half of the art duo The Hilton Brothers. He and his partner, Paul Solberg, wore identical gray metallic suit jackets and skinny half-ties they designed themselves and had made in Beijing.

“If you want to be an artist now, go to the 798,” he said, referring to the Chinese capital’s art district. “It’s incredible, like New York City in the 70s.”

The Wooly was elbow-to-elbow until the open bar, courtesy of Tanteo tequila, ended around 11 p.m. Among those who stuck around was Jun Nakayama, a club kid dressed like a baby doll in platinum wig and pinafore. She had just returned from Japan, where she took care of her sick mother for six months. “Tokyo is so boring,” she said. “Everyone smokes and I hate it.”

