

## THE LO-DOWN

NEWS FROM THE LOWER EAST SIDE



### Art Worth Seeing on the Lower East Side

By Traven Rice in Arts, Featured on May 31, 2011 4:15 pm



*As the spring gallery season winds down, we asked artist and teacher Audrey Hope to recommend some exhibits in the neighborhood. Here are her thoughts:*

The Lower East Side is just choc-a-bloc with art exhibition spaces of all kinds. Some of my favorites are currently hosting a variety of imaginative exhibitions. The following shows offer a diverse range of entry points for anyone interested in checking out some art.

My favorite things in the neighborhood right now include Hilary Harnischfeger's sculptures and wall-mounted pieces at **Rachel Uffner Gallery** (47 Orchard Street between Grand and Hester). Her work is on display until June 19th and deserves a careful viewing.

These pieces are a good example of art that is about its medium—the work contains references to its objecthood as ceramic sculpture. Beyond this, the pieces are just gorgeous. The materials collide and rub up against one another at

smooth juncture points. The nearly-functional ceramic objects contain secret geodes and cross-section-like layers. Harnischfeger combines vibrant colors with neutral grays in the collection of free form, three-dimensional and wall-mounted pieces.

Next up is a solo show of work by Rebecca Chamberlain at **DODGE Gallery** (15 Rivington Street). The freestanding frames used to present the drawings, painstakingly-made using lithography ink on architectural paper, are quite fascinating. I really like the pieces near the entrance that are framed and hinged together to create a functionless room divider.

The photorealistic drawings depict uninhabited interiors of depression-era spaces. They are impressive for their affective quality and their devotion to craft. Always check out the art in the bathroom at DODGE Gallery, especially in case you want to think about how the artwork there might look above your commode.

Hunter Reynolds', "Survival AIDS," at **Participant INC** (253 East Houston Street) is set to close on June 5th. The show is visceral, it forces viewers to place themselves inside of their own bodies. While this reworking of twenty years worth of one artist's extremely personal reflections on the AIDS crisis wraps up, **Mixed Messages: A(I)DS, Art + Words**, an exhibition that considers the epidemic from a myriad of perspectives is slated to open at **La Mama, La Galleria** (6 East 1st Street) on June 5th.

Mixed Messages, curated by John Chaich of **Visual AIDS**, will feature an overwhelming array of media – focusing on the use of images and text as a tool for reflection and action. It should be both stimulating and moving, and could serve as an excellent introduction to a multitude of emerging and renowned artists. There will also be a series of interesting public programs throughout its run.

**No Longer has Empty** taken over the storefront at 215 East Houston Street until June 12th for the exhibition "About Face." In addition to a selection of media-based and participatory projects, the space provides a backdrop for related public programming, and several participatory pieces.

"Cultural Tips For New Americans" by Alina and Jeff Bliumis stands out as particularly relevant. It incorporates roughhewn cast books, which are both beautifully-crafted and funny, as well as several telephone booths around the neighborhood which have been modified into artworks.

All right, that should get you started! There's just so much to see and explore, so many different spaces, and a lot of very cool stuff to wonder at. Get to it.

*Audrey Hope is a sculptural artist and the Young Artists Program Coordinator at the Educational Alliance Art School. The Art School offers classes for youth and adults in darkroom photography, ceramics, drawing and painting, and more.*

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