Our Take On “The Cat Show” at White Columns—With Kitty Pics!

by CORINNA KIRSCH on JUNE 20, 2013

Elad Lassry, "Two British Shorthair Cats (BSH)", 2009.

The Cat Show at White Columns has everything and nothing to do with cats. Everything, because most of the 134 artworks show cats or cat-related ephemera—like litter boxes, scratching posts, or yarn. Nothing, because the themes of many of these works aren’t about cats at all. I like the works; they’re whimsical, and often silly.
Here's the cat-and-squiggle wall, featuring Graham Anderson's "Untitled," an op art-y canvas of two cats seemingly stuck in a continuous scroll and Mark Leckey's "Flix," a short loop of a thick, black doodle that resembles a cat's tail. Laura Aldridge's "Cats Are Not Important" is pretty good, too, showcasing pretzel-shaped fabric bundles and a similarly posed cat.

On select days throughout the months of June and July, White Columns will be hosting cat adoptions with the Social Tees Animal Rescue. On those days, the "cats-in-residence" get to hang out in this wacky jungle gym house designed by architects Freecell and Gia Wolff. Inside the "cat house," there's cat-inspired artworks including a Rob Pruitt's zen litterbox.

Cat ladies would make ceramic cat pots, so we appreciate Karin Gulbran's commonsense approach to potmaking. On the back wall, Sadie Laska paints a telling family portrait of a cat as the fuming, red-headed stepchild.

WEIRDO CAT IN A CAGE. Up until this point in the exhibition, contemporary art cats seemed too sane.
Back to normalcy, Daniel Heidkamp's "Twinkletoes and Hammertoes" shows a nicely lit, tranquil domestic scene. It's one part Henri Matisse to Alice Neel. Or something like that—it looks too familiar.

A contemporary cat art show would be incomplete without Cory Arcangel's keyboard cat, "Drei Klavierstucke op. 11" (2009). To note: 2009 was also the year the Keyboard Cat meme was launched.

Yes, "The Cat Show" was so inspiring that this guy happened to be taking notes on all the works in the exhibition. On the right sits writer T. Cole Rachel's personal collection of ceramic cats. It's impressive.

An up-close look at T. Cole Rachel's amazeballs ceramic cat collection.
I'm not sure what fetish exists for cat-girl-transformers, but outsider artist Antonio Adams has definitely sold me on how this could be a thing. I was charmed.

Michael Auer's "Cat Stranglers" and "Cat in the Afternoon" brings up the femme qualities of cats. In "Cat Stranglers," there's a naked figure behind the sheets playing with...well, you get it.

Ew. I guess you can't have a cat art exhibition without some pussy. Or a James Bond reference.

Spotting trends, here's another keyboard and ceramic cat.
For a tour through the show, I’ve included photos and commentary below.

Entering "The Cat Show," you get the type of crayola box of contemporary art we're familiar with where anything goes; it just so happens that this work features cats. Lisa Anne Auerbach's "Trap, Neuter, Release" knitwear covering a plastic bust hovers over the entrance in a witchy sort of way.

Will Benedict's photo-paintings have been making the rounds. We last saw this gouache cat face and swirls painting at Bortolami's April show "Vertical Club". It's a great example of an artist not taking himself too seriously, and the silly subject matter seems to help. On the left, from top to bottom: Elad Lassry, "Two British Shorthair Cats (BSH)" and Kay Rosen, "Kitty Katz".

Ann Cathrin November Haibo's "Documentation is Everything," a buddha cat installed atop a tripod serves as a reminder that every photograph you take needs a bit of luck to turn out alright.

When you're leaving the gallery, this is the view of Lisa Anne Auerbach's cat lady outfitly. On the back wall, you'll see Steven Shearer's triptych "Self Plaster Catdrum".
This is why there's an adoption drive.

Eric Ginsburg 12 x 12 in. acrylic cat portraits were thoughtfully expressive. This kitty seemed inspired by a sour-faced Einstein.

Dozens of works later, here we are, at the end of the exhibition. Apt for 2013, the show ends up online.