

# The New York Times

## Art in Review

By HOLLAND COTTER

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### 'THE PRACTICE OF JOY

Before Death'

It just would not be a party without you

Scaramouche

53 Stanton Street, Lower East Side

Through Sunday

Scaramouche, a new Lower East Side gallery, feels like an emanation of the one that preceded it in the same space, Fruit and Flower Deli. And as its predecessor did, it packs a lot of art into a minute storefront space for its inaugural group exhibition.

The show has been organized by Die St?g Collective, a loose affiliation of artists that includes among its associates Arlen Austin, Jason Boughton and Keil Borrman, all 2008 graduates of the M.F.A. program at Columbia University. This is a mostly Columbia show, combining the work of recent and current students with that of faculty members, among them Daniel Bozhkov, Mark Dion, Dana Hoey, Jutta Koether, Paul Pfeiffer, Blake Rayne and Kara Walker.

The installation, courtesy of Die St?g, is ingenious, consisting primarily of a wraparound wooden bench with display cases tucked underneath and open walls above. Among the items at floor level is a big lump of cosmic chewing gum by Seth Scantlen;

a Gabriel Martinez handbag affair; a miniature Afro-Pop installation by Valerie Piraino; Einat Amir's video of a comedian, John Carlton, working the room on opening night; a wicked little Federico Solmi painting; a pink plastic window by Davis Rhodes; and an Andrea Merckx video with a two-syllable soundtrack: "Like, uhhh."

Above the seats, Ann Liv Young has a Piero Manzoni update, Cara Benedetto a pair of inscribed toilet seats, and Alyssa Pheobus an immaculate drawing that suggests a Minimalist textile. A sculpture by Carlos Sandoval de Leon is worth a look, as is a sort of cooking video by Oz Malul in the gallery office. Mr. Borrman's non-St?g contribution, a movable combination of soup kitchen and gallery, is front and more or less center: meals-on-wheels meets paintings-to-go, the essential ingredients for a good art party. HOLLAND COTTER