

texas

New New York

Jones Center for
Contemporary Art
700 Congress Ave.
Austin, 78701
512/453-5312

Any show that calls itself "New New York" had better be on its toes. Such a claim automatically whips up challenges: What defines "new"? How are artist and place connected? How are these notions specific to New York? That this feather-light sampler of contemporary art organized by artist and curator Alejandro Diaz has sprung up in Texas shifts these questions out of the New York context altogether. A San Antonio native and founder of Sala Diaz gallery, Diaz is a recent graduate of Bard College's

Center for Curatorial Studies and a relatively new New Yorker, as are most of the artists assembled here. Three are from Texas or have significant ties to the state, while the others come from across the United States, Canada, and Germany, suggesting that "what's new" in New York might be related to "who's new" to the city.

Newness is clearly evident in the sparkle, humor, and youthful, romantic postures of the selected work. The winsome Shannon Plumb features herself as a comic entertainer in faux-aged film shorts that reference Charlie Chaplin and "I Love Lucy." Nostalgia turns up again in other time-based works. In the video projection *The Chronic*, Danny Hobart slows a clip from the classic teen flick *Sixteen Candles*, transforming actor Anthony Michael Hall's geeky dance of heartache into an act of heroic grace. Anthony Goicolea's black-and-white photographs also revisit pubescent angst

with digitally manipulated scenes of sexual experimentation in which the artist plays all the parts.

The remaining New Yorkers fall into the formalist, Minimal, or process camps, but like the above group their work tries to persuade by shifting from one context or medium into another. For example, Josephine Meckseper shifts popular magazine covers from the news rack to the fine-art setting. Decorated with glitter, the magazines hang in plastic bags along with objects that resemble glitter-coated Color Field paintings, flipping the low/high script in the opposite direction.

Corey McCorkle is the most inventive and engaging of the group, with a row of handmade chairs titled *Orthopedic Pathway for a Motivational Speaker*. Indistinguishable from their mass-produced cousins, these *objets d'art* are "hidden" in plain sight. Viewers encounter the chairs, which are dismissed as a functional set-up for a gallery talk, but fail to consider them with respect to the rest of the exhibition. McCorkle's *Selections for Another Oshi-ita* makes these cultural and material shifts delightfully transparent. In this captivating "movie within an installation within a photograph" an enlarged film still of actress Shirley MacLaine serves as

the literal base for over 400 traditional *ikebana* flower arrangements, which McCorkle has photographed and presents as a small-format slide show.

"New New York" has the swift, hit-or-miss variety of a day of Chelsea gallery hopping, but the show plays better in Texas. Far from a New York exclusive, Diaz's playful grouping emphasizes the multifarious nature of contemporary art practice. The artists' trans-regional origins recall recent conversations about the 2000 Whitney Biennial and the decentralization of the art world away from New York. Like the city itself, "New New York" reflects art trends beyond itself, which is perhaps the show's most intriguing revelation. A Texas show with Texas artists living in New York could be judged an easy call, or a sign of the times.

John Ewing is a writer living in San Antonio.



Corey McCorkle

Selections for Another Oshi-ita (detail), 1999,
from "New New York." Slide projection.
Courtesy of Texas Fine Arts Association.