

***Yeah we friends and shit***

**Nin Brudermann   Marti Cormand   Austin Eddy   Anton Ginzburg   Kirk Hayes  
Sharka Hyland   Chris Johanson   Matt Keegan   Andrew Kuo   Natalie Labriola  
Mingering Mike   Sam Roeck   Mathias Schmied   Ryan Schneider  
Ken Solomon   Devin Troy Strother   Julianne Swartz**

***Making Friends:*** a series of performances and events curated by Sam Roeck will take place every Wednesday at 6:30pm starting July 11th.

June 28 – September 8, 2012  
Opening reception: Thursday June 28 from 6 to 8pm

Josée Bienvenu Gallery is pleased to present “Yeah we friends and shit”, featuring seventeen international artists. The title is from a work by Devin Troy Strother: “Titles come before the work is made. I have a book that I keep of funny shit I hear or comments I hear that are kind of interesting (...). The titles come from things I hear in rap songs or things I hear family members say, things friends say”. His three-dimensional paintings are populated by naked black women or guuuurls made of cut paper.

Consumed and confused by the increasing presence of social media in our lives, do you ever get the feeling that you are not actually closer to any of your friends. In fact, does your virtual popularity affect your lonely reality? How many of your thousand friends on Facebook can you actually claim to be there for you in an emergency or even just to show up for your birthday party? The exhibition brings together a group of artists separated by six degrees, in one form another -aesthetic affinities, studio neighbors, distant cousins- all making work that expounds on the casual state of friendships in a digital world and the resulting casualties. The works presented tickle the peculiar emotions that are triggered, the understandings and misunderstandings, the funny, tragic, happy and awkward moments.

Mingering Mike is the soul superstar you've never heard of. Between 1968 and 1977, he recorded over fifty albums, managed thirty-five of his own record labels, and produced, directed and starred in nine of his own motion pictures. How is it that such a prolific musician has gone under the radar for more than thirty years? The answer is that all took place in Mike's imagination, and in the vast collection of fake cardboard records and acapella home recordings that he made for himself as a teenager in Washington, D.C. in the late 1960s. Mingering Mike is making a come back this year with three new records.

In "Head rest for Deana Carter (Did I Shave My Legs for This?)", Natalie Labriola's expresses the short distance between nostalgia and humor, archeology and science fiction. Anton Ginzburg's post-it notes and other everyday artifacts made of painted bronze also alludes to an archeology of the future and belong to an ongoing cabinet of curiosities.

Marti Cormand documents inconvenient migrations and relationships. Clay cigarettes, rubber bands and ripped cardboard are painted to look exactly like themselves. Kirk Haye's quirky compositions seem to be collages of torn paper, yellowing masking tape, or scraps of plywood, but are in fact meticulously painted with just oil on canvas: the word is a lonely stage of manipulated information, there is no subordination between reality and its representation.

In his own words, Chris Johanson makes “art about looking at and being a part of life. We need to be a part of each other. If we separate we are alone. That is a world of walking dead people.” Andrew Kuo turns moments of his life into paintings of graphs, charts, and lists such as "The 24 Minutes Waiting For you / Accordion Book" . Ken Solomon’s slows down and reverses our relationship to our on-line-eyes-on-screen personas in paintings of Pandora record covers and stills from You Tube music videos.

Matt Keegan’s works expands on the readymade -or ready said- using words, phrases, and images, taken from his mother’s ESL vocabulary flash cards. His text pieces are specifically vague as in the wall sculpture it’s not you, its me. Sharka Hyland’s graphite drawings of passages from great novels suggest that there are instances of literary rendering in which the image is so flawlessly formed by language that it cannot be transposed into another medium. She presents a paragraph from Proust’s "Swann’s Way", in French and English. Based on a found collection of love letters and phone messages, "Mocktalk" by Austrian conceptual artist Nin Brudermann (a collaboration with Arfus Greenwood) is a perverse operatic duet of desperate intentions played on a cracked iphone.

Mathias Schmied alters magazine pages and comic strips. Impulsive gesture and calculated obliteration coexist. Ryan Schneider’s paintings are collages of situations and emotional states. Austin Eddy’s stylized portraits of corrugated cardboard and canvas reach utmost expression with great economy of means. Julianne Swartz uses low-tech mechanisms to articulate architectures of frailty. Her wire sculptures use attractive and repulsive magnetic powers to stage the vulnerability, tension and weight of relationships.