

## 'WE ARE NOT 30 UNDER 30, NOTHING TO SAY HERE, MOVE ALONG': AN INTERVIEW WITH BODY BY BODY ABOUT THEIR CURRENT LOS ANGELES SHOW

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Body by Body, "Virgin America," 2016, installation view.

COURTESY CHATEAU SHATTO

The New York-based artist duo Body by Body's newest exhibition "Virgin America" contains a large amount of quick works made mostly on paper with a variety of materials. The show also contains a junkyard-like installation room lit in a way that brings to mind Virgin America, the airline. The new exhibition, on view now until July 23 at Chateau Shatto in Los Angeles, is just the next sideways step for a duo, who were last seen staging an opera about a New York landlord in an actual Soho loft, and have in the past collaborated with special effects make-up artists to interesting ends.

Below is an email interview with the duo of Melissa Sachs and Cameron Soren.

**So, this show has a pronounced focus on drawing?**

Yep, pretty much all drawing.

**Was there any principle guiding how these drawings were conceptualized and produced? There seems to be a looseness to the work.**

Sort of, the main principle was to produce a lot. We made 200 within a span of like two months. Also, the last two projects we did before this, the opera *BDSMozart* and the Eli Ping Frances Perkins show "Fucking Fuck Fuck Fuck" were pretty draining, so we wanted to just restart and do something light. Ironically, it ended up being probably harder than those.

**Could you talk about the junkyard-like room that exists within the larger installation?**

It's the leftovers of the previous show we curated at the same gallery last month called "Intimate Wine Reception." So there was a big rubble pile, a magenta carpet, and these custom-made light purple plinths from that show. The use of purple from the previous show was not about Virgin America but instead fit into Chateau Shatto's aesthetic since they use a lot of pink and purple on their site and various press materials.

The original point of the room was to house the drawings since they're all small and Chateau Shatto is really big. But then we made way too many drawings, and they didn't fit in the room. At that point, the room was already built. It was either leave it empty or find a way to make it useful. So we're storing the previous show in there until someone can come and pick up the junk.

Also the circle door is sort of a reference to the Commes des Garçons store in NY, but it ended up looking more like a "Hobbit hole." That's what everyone kept calling it.

**How did you settle on "Virgin America" as a title? Have you ever flown the airline? I can't help but think of Virgin America's chill-out room-esque interior lighting motif when looking at the purple hues inside of the "junkyard room."**

Virgin America is usually what we fly between LA and NY, and yes, the purple lighting was a reference to that. But also, the words “Virgin America” are really loaded when you take them out of their corporate context. It’s almost like you would expect a big epic show at a museum like “Uncertain States of America” or something but the work is not like that at all. We couldn’t rise to the occasion that the title demanded... We are not 30 under 30, nothing to say here, move along, etc. etc.

**The press release for this exhibition states that you prefer to “linger on the surface.” Could you extrapolate a bit on this?**

Sure, like above with the decisions about purple. First it was the brand of the gallery, then it was the plane we fly in. Or another example are the decisions about the small room. All of these things are very surface-level. I think that’s what that quote is getting at. We don’t see any problem with this, since it’s this kind of approach that distinguishes us from machines.

**You often make work that in some way is critically reacting to the current contemporary art environment. Do you think that seeped into the drawings at all?**

The point was to try and not do that. I think we succeeded in the individual pieces, but overall, the idea of doing a show of just small, unframed drawings with no overarching theme was partly reactionary. To do something without any purpose or larger meaning felt good (at that moment). And then to execute it really unambitiously was even better.

We wanted to get away from over-determined novelty (novelty in materials, especially), which we see in a lot of work nowadays, including some of our own in the past. This ongoing arms race with tech and materials. The punchline is that we’re left with a burdensome room that takes up most of the space, and drawings that someone said look like art school. But we’re happy with that.

**What kind of culture are you currently interested in? Does it often fall outside an art context?**

By culture, do you mean something more like genre (music, books, movies, etc.) or do you mean something else, like some sort of outside source/subculture that we draw our dark energy from (like Murakami with otaku), that kinda thing?

If it’s the first, yeah. If it’s the second, not really... Things are too fragmented or already captured by “art” ... There is this tailor in midtown named Paul Winston a.k.a. Chipp2, the way he discusses clothing, fabrics, history would maybe be a good analogy with our attitude towards the way we would like to use culture. It’s beyond just “fashion,” it’s a close attention to the coded details and signifiers in the material itself, how they play off each other in different contexts. When it comes to visual aesthetics, that’s what we try and peddle in.