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review

What You See Is What You Get: 'Tauba Auerbach: Float,' at Paula Cooper Gallery and 'Screw You,' at Susan Inglett Gallery



By Will Heinrich 6/05 5:51pm

There's nothing new under the sun, it's not what you do but how you do it, and there's no accounting for taste. Yet another place where art and pornography overlap is in the tense and hostile neediness of provocation, of the act of exhibition that tries to seize attention, disavow the need for it, and disparage the viewer for giving it up, all with a single raspberry. "Screw You," a group show curated by David Platzker at Susan Inglett Gallery, shines its light right down into this sticky, eye-catching, sick-making area of overlap—and into the moment, in late '60s and early '70s New York, when avant-garde art and avant-liberation nudie magazines were pushing very nearly the same buttons, and such titles as *Screw*, *The East Village Other* and *Kusama Presents an Orgy of Nudity, Love, Sex & Beauty* made the overlap concrete. The show's title is written in big black letters in the gallery windows above a black-and-white portrait of *Screw's* founding publisher, Al Goldstein. "No," you may think, "screw you," but still you walk inside.

In this show, it's the pictures that serve as a beard for the text. Videos by Yayoi Kusama, Andy Warhol and Stan Brakhage; photos by Carolee Schneeman, John Chamberlain and Brigid Berlin; a few adorable small etchings by Picasso; and even R. Crumb's second-most famous incest cartoon, which ran as a centerpiece of *Kiss*, can't really compete with the brash, bizarre, dated, typographically gleeful, frequently ridiculous covers of *Rat*, *The New York Review of Sex* or *Cuckoo: The Paper with Nuts*. The *Los Angeles Free Press* illustrates its article "Are Mexican Abortions Dangerous?" with a picture of Ms. Kusama naked and covered in polka dots; the 11th issue of *Avant Garde* published the pleasantly indifferent erotic lithographs of John Lennon, as well as an interesting story about a Black Panther sentenced to six months in New Jersey for calling a cop a "motherfucker" and his lawyer's attempt to contest the presumption that this was necessarily an insult; and the second issue of *Gay*, published in 1969, asks, "Is Mick Jagger On Top?"