

accidents, and deliberate intention, a web of forms and ideas. The common element is the studio, which unites the images and at times seems to generate the work. It is not surprising when some of the main characters appear in other photographs in supporting roles: The festooned slat from *Girlfriend!* can be seen at the very edge of *Web Site*, and the pile of yarn from *Yarnia*, or one very much like it, hides under a table in *Daun*.

Many of the photos are printed at a large size, investing every detail, every piece of yarn or screw, with a degree of stature. They almost seem alive. In contrast, a group of smaller photographs feel somewhat dull, like snapshots of a chaotic room. In this show, at least, the artist's studio (and the creative process it represents) is more compelling when we can clearly see its moving parts.

—Emily Hall

## Jacolby Satterwhite

RECESS

Many times when we say collaboration, we actually mean task-based audience participation, or even, simply, appropriation. Think, for example, of how “collaborative” processes such as workshoping and inviting audience contributions often result in a single-authored artwork—the artist has annexed others’ efforts as his own. Jacolby Satterwhite literally dances amid these semantic distinctions, producing a body of work that mines the slippery word for all it’s worth. To create his fantastical videos, the artist makes CGI renderings of speculative consumer products drawn by his mother, and pairs these animated digital graphics with footage of his own performing body. In his current show, he also solicits actions from members of the public that later become part of the works. His practice is rooted in a personal history that, to some, would sound particularly fraught. Previous projects have dealt not only with his experience as an African American growing up gay but also with his childhood battles with cancer (at age seventeen he went into remission after several rounds of chemotherapy), and in this exhibition, his mother’s schizophrenia was the organizing theme.

But like the feel-good vibe of rhetorics of collaboration that may ultimately veil asymmetrical power dynamics, Satterwhite’s use of his mother’s drawings in the current body of work is complicated, and in many ways enriched, by her diagnosed mental illness, symptoms of which involve a compulsion to create diagrams for improbable inventions. The devices are sometimes tweaks of existing products—a “carocell,” for example, is a rotating complex of reclining lounge-chairs, and a shoe roller-coaster helps organize closets—while some stray into the realm of the bizarre, freighted with sexual connotations. One sketch proposes various flavors of a “lipstick” for “between the legs,” while a “whiskey flasher” apparatus with “diamond cocks” can be attached to the tops of liquor bottles. These items are rendered with a feverish pencil latticing that looks remarkably similar to the trusswork of radio towers or the faceted polyhedrons of geodesic domes. Satterwhite inserts digitized versions of the drawn objects into his videos as props for outlandish dances, for which he wears shiny, skintight jumpsuits and preposterous headdresses fitted with glowing screens while voguing on street corners, subway platforms, and other highly trafficked urban areas.

Papered floor to ceiling with taped-up grids of the drawings, the gallery walls presented a disorienting and repetitive agglomeration of designs by Satterwhite’s mother. At the center of the space, the artist set up an ad hoc video-recording studio, where audience members were invited to select a drawing from the 260 on display and mime interacting with the depicted item in front of a green screen. Satterwhite was on hand to record these actions, and throughout the course of the show



View of “Jacolby Satterwhite,” 2013.

he combined the resultant footage with that of his own performances. On display on a nearby monitor were Satterwhite’s earlier works and parts of the videos-in-progress that involve fantasias of penis-like tiered cakes spewing miniature versions of writhing Jacolbys, or of a leaf-blower-like tool (described by his mother as a way to help “turn the smell of pussy off”) manipulated by the artist among a crew of mannequins strapped with flaming merkins.

Satterwhite has said that “the blurring of the authorship” in the work is important; he aspires to make “the most personal thing[s] in my life my work.” And here is the crux of his form of collaboration: Satterwhite, in his role as artist, is able to organize and reenergize the rituals of therapeutic imagemaking to which his mother, part of a tight-knit family, repeatedly returns, while simultaneously inviting the wider public to engage, possibly empathetically, with the moments of eccentric creativity in her obsessions. In spite of his mother’s fluctuating mental health, Satterwhite admires the way she’s managed to sublimate her condition into drawings that also serve as creative fodder for his work. In order to effect what he has called a queering of art, Satterwhite tests conventions of race, power, propriety within the family, sexuality, and behavior in public space, and troubles those codes as they relate to others surrounding authorship and originality.

—Eva Díaz

WALTHAM, MA

## Jack Whitten

ROSE ART MUSEUM, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

A visible presence among New York painters since the mid-1960s, Jack Whitten has recently received a surge of attention. Within the past couple of years, his work has been featured in multiple solo gallery shows and major group exhibitions such as “The Encyclopedic Palace” in Venice and “Blues for Smoke” at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles—not to mention on the cover of this magazine in February 2012—and a retrospective, scheduled for the fall of 2014, is currently in preparation at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. The theme of rediscovery continues at the Rose Art Museum’s small but eye-opening show curated by Katy Siegel, where moments of acquaintance occur for both the public and the artist himself: The exhibition focuses on the years 1971–73, during which Whitten launched unprecedented investigations into the material possibilities of acrylic and pigment. Most of these works had never been exhibited, having been promptly rolled up and stored in the artist’s studio for four decades, seemingly forgotten; Whitten himself had never before seen the show’s