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Working Space 08

Cuchifritos, through Sept 20

In this annual exhibition, residents in the Lower East Side Rotating Studio Program showcase the fruits of their yearlong labor. Selected by Tatiana Arocha, the eight artists in this eclectic cycle share an interest in the natural world, but are mercifully spared the task of exemplifying a master thesis.

One of the most remarkable pieces is Miwa Koizumi's *Pet Project Jelly*, an installation of shimmering jellyfish fabricated from water bottles. They contrast with Julie Anne Mann's *Mortifera*, a series of mutant creatures configured from a medley of animal parts. Transmutation also drives Jane Benson's *Naked Swans*, a photograph of two regal swans perverted by the artist's plucking of their plumage.

The ugly duckling assumes human form in Alice O'Malley's *Kenny Kenny-Dandy*, a digital photo of the celebrated '80s New York club kid, pictured as a corseted, gender-bending clown. All social masquerades are shed, meanwhile, in Megan Cump's *Bloodbath*, a nude, bloody self-portrait taken in a forest. The show turns more abstract with Claire Watkins's electricity-channeling machines, Heeseop Yoon's masking tape and Mylar renderings and Mary Valverde's fractal-based drawings and installations.

Bringing art into the social space of the Essex Street Market has long been Cuchifritos' goal. This year's residency exhibition, abutting a cornucopia of food stands, proves that the mingling of these two spheres can be both tasty and productive.

— *Nuit Banai*

Installation view
Photograph: Courtesy of Cuchifritos