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PRESS RELEASE

THE THIRTEEN MOST BEAUTIFUL... COLLECTIVE SHOW

DALLAS - CYDONIA is pleased to announce its thirteenth exhibition: ***THE THIRTEEN MOST BEAUTIFUL... FEATURING FRANCES BAGLEY AND INTRODUCING JAYCE SALLOUM, MONICA TAPP, CONRAD VENTUR, AND SUN YOUNG***. THE EXHIBITION OPENS SATURDAY, JUNE 18 AND CLOSES ON SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2016. FRANCES BAGLEY AND CONRAD VENTUR WILL BE PRESENT FOR THE RECEPTION ON SATURDAY, JUNE 18 FROM 6 TO 8PM.



Conrad Ventur, *13 Most Beautiful / Screen Tests Revisited*, 2009-2011, Video recordings, 4:00 duration each, dimensions variable. (Mario Montez)

When the duration of suspension supersedes the moment, we are able to reflect on the representation of those qualities of life that engage us. Beyond mere seduction, beauty as agency functions as a wellspring of fascination and contemplation. The synthesis of dialogical opposites, surface and meaning, creates an alternative portrait unbound from convention. In *13 Most Beautiful*, Brooklyn-based artist Conrad Ventur revisits and records Warhol's subjects 45 years after the original footage was taken. For Ventur, utopia is found in people, not destinations. Participation, in all its forms, must be an emotional journey. People transport us. Unlike Warhol, he is not consumed with fame and celebrity. Ventur unhinged the personas Warhol flattened. He humanized them through the development of real, sincere relationships with those filmed. Warhol's *Screen Tests* were the origins of what we have come to know as reality television. Ventur attempts to clarify that history, its staging and curation.



Through thirteen individual works of art, five artists unmask diverse attitudes about pleasure for the eyes. Instead of grouping together art illustrating Kant's definition, beauty as the action between an object and the brain, as embedded with moral value, *The Thirteen Most Beautiful...* exhibition escape classical notions of exoticism borne from the "second" sex or the myth of the woman. Beauty is not the message; beauty is the medium in a show dominated by photography and sculpture.

A large-scale photo installation of flowers by Lebanese-Canadian Jayce Salloum serves as a second anchor of the exhibition. Salloum's photography and its documentary traditions work in conjunction with typology. "[A]rt – its making, curation, and dissemination – becomes one of many means of achieving" and deeper ontological inquiry.¹ For Salloum, *flower collection 2004 – 2016* represents notions of 'the natural,' of our relations to nature and beauty. Photography functions as a process to reflect on how to begin to understand notions of what is natural and beautiful. His photos attempt to create some sense out of "an 'imitation of life' that never comes close enough." Where does this sense of longing come from?

Poetic, painted images of photographic snapshots by Canadian Monica Tapp generate soft observation. Sculptures by Brooklynite Sun You charm by employing beauty tropes while being composed out of meaningless materials found in junk shops and hardware stores. Dallas-based Frances Bagley's bronze *Cleopatra's Collar* commands a presence without ever directly representing female anatomy. *The Thirteen Most Beautiful...* presents diverse results of engaging beauty for more than its façade.

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THE THIRTEEN MOST BEAUTIFUL COLLECTIVE SHOW OPENS ON SATURDAY, JUNE 18 AND RUNS UNTIL SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2016.

CYDONIA is a contemporary art gallery dedicated to supporting careers of emerging artists whose practices have cultural and historical insight, conceptual rigor, or they are an original voice within their generation. CYDONIA programming unites our stable and supporters through co-operative practices that underlie an imperative towards posterity. We value art as a cultural good related to praxis and discourse. The gallery is open 11AM – 5PM Tuesday through Friday and from Noon – 5PM on Saturday.

For more information, please contact info@cydoniagallery.com, call 214-296-4848, or visit www.cydoniagallery.com.

¹ Budney, Jen. (2009) History of the Present / Map of the World. *Jayne Salloum: History of the Present*.