PARTY HQ
VOTING IS JUST THE BEGINNING
PERFORMERS
SCOTT BLAKEMAN
DJ KID MAGIC
JEFF KREISLER
LARRY LITT
JOE PONTILLO
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE
MARThA WILSON

ARTISTS
CLARK CLARK(EN)
KYLE GOEN
CHERYL HARPER
KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG
LIGORANO/REESE
JACK MCLEAN
ARNOLD MESCHES
DAN MILLS
TIM ROLLINS AND KOS
CLAUDE VAN-LINGEN
PETER SAUL
ALLAN WEXLER
YEE HAW INDUSTRIES

A POLITICAL CABARET OF PERFORMERS
PRODUCED BY LARRY LITT

A POLITICAL SATIRE AT PRATT MANHATTAN

VOTING IS JUST THE BEGINNING
A PRATT MANHATTAN GALLERY EXHIBITION
GUEST-CURATED BY ELEANOR HEARTNEY AND LARRY LITT

September 26–November 4, 2008
Opening reception: Thursday, September 25, 6–8 PM

Nick Battis, Director of Exhibitions
Jen Osborne, Assistant Director of Exhibitions
Pratt Manhattan Gallery
144 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011
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Introduction

Voting for president is one of the most important duties of American citizenship, but presidential campaigns often seem to have more in common with competitive sports, circus spectacles, and love-brow comedy routines than with serious deliberation about the future of the country. Often referred to as “the silly season,” the months leading up to a presidential campaign serve up democracy as a form of entertainment as the airwaves, newspapers, and other media explode with non-stop attack ads, 24/7 talking heads, punch lines and counter punch lines, and irrefutably false data. How can we make sense of it all? How can one push aside the noise to make a responsible choice?

“Party Headquarters: Voting is Just the Beginning” presents the work of artists or artists’ groups who have focused both on the art of persuasion and the persuasion of art. In a group of works that draw on aspects of presidential campaigns, past and present, the artists rework various visual genres, ranging from high art and political caricature to political advertising and architecture, using these diverse formats to present alternative visions and critiques and visual critiques of mainstream media’s presentation of politics, current events, and current policy debates. For instance, Clark Clark(En) presents a reworking of Robert Indiana’s famous LOVE logo to persuade us to engage in the electoral system. In an age of branding, his VOTE logo can take many forms—from small stick-on labels to wall-size murals, all of them serving as a reminder that those who don’t participate have no cause to complain. Yee Haa Industries/ Kevin Bradley, a print workshop specializing in old timey woodblock and letterpress prints and posters, here presents a witty reformulation of the presidential and vice presidential campaigns as a wrestling match. Familiar characters face off against each other with a pugilism that is anything but exaggerated. Arnold Mesches, a politically involved artist for over five decades, recently referred to as “the silly season,” presents a bit of historical context here with a work from the Vietnam era that offers a precedent for the toxic mix of presidential and vice presidential campaigns as narratives of greed, fatuousness, obfuscation, and overwhelming ambition. Cheryl Harper uses an older art form—the ceramic bust and vessel—to create pointed caricatures of some of the most prominent players on the current political scene, suggesting, literally, their clay feet. And Peter Saul, a master of the witty skewering of politicians, presents a bit of historical context here with a work from the Vietnam era that offers a precedent for the toxic mix of machismo and sex that pervades the current political discussion of America’s role in the world.

Other artists bring the outside world into the gallery and the gallery into the outside world. Kyle Green has created a shrine to the hopes and fears raised by this year’s campaign. Visitors are invited to take a copy of the U.S. Constitution and to contribute to the political ephemera, campaign pamphlets, buttons, stickers, and publicity photos that operate as offerings to the dream of a better future. And finally, Allan Weissler took a specially commissioned voter registration booth to the streets in the weeks before the close of voter registrations in New York, at once drawing attention to the importance of political participation and offering practical help to those who want to be eligible to participate in this fall’s presidential election. Accompanying the works on view is a looped slide show suggesting the long art historical track and widespread impact of the impulses toward political satire and political commentary.

“Party Headquarters,” along with “Pratt Falls,” its accompanying performance series, is devoted to the idea of serious fun—politics may be a horse race and a spectacle, but it is one whose consequences could not be more profound. Voting is, indeed, just the beginning.

Eleanor Heartney and Larry Litt, guest curators
Clark Clark(en)

Love to Vote, 2008

Site-specific painting on
gallery windows and wall

Courtesy of the artist
Kyle Goen

*Altar of Hope and Fear, 2008*

Mixed media installation, 8 x 8' room

Courtesy of the artist
Cheryl Harper

Count on Me–Obama Bank, 2008
Stoneware, 15 x 8½ x 9”

Condoleezza Sphinx, 2007
Stoneware, 13 x 8 x 17”

Hillary Bride Doll, 2008
Paper clay stoneware, 21 x 10 x 13”

Hillary Sphinx 2, 2006
Stoneware, 17 x 13 x 7”

Pot Calling the Kettle, 2008
Terra cotta, acrylic, phone cord,
10 x 19 x 10”

Courtesy of the artist
Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung
Shannesty Straight Talk Express, 2008
Digital print on canvas, 36 x 64"
Courtesy of the artist and Postmasters Gallery

Borat Obama Change We Can Cash In, 2008
Digital print on canvas, 36 x 64"
Courtesy of the artist and Postmasters Gallery

Residential Erection, 2008
High definition video, 5:00 minutes
Created and directed by Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung; narration written and performed by Tim Blue; music by John Blue
Ligorano/Reese
*The State of Things, 2006*
DVD, 1 minute, 15 seconds
Open edition
Courtesy Jim Kempner Fine Art, Chelsea

*Democracy, 2007*
Lightbox, 13 x 25 x 3½”
Edition of 25

Courtesy of Jim Kempner Fine Art, New York
Jack McLean
*Top Prime Cut Meat #1, 2008*
Charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 16½"

*Top Prime Cut Meat #2, 2008*
Charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 16½"

*Top Prime Cut Meat #3, 2008*
Charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 16½"

*Top Prime Cut Meat #4, 2008*
Charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 16½"

*Top Prime Cut Meat #5, 2008*
Charcoal on paper, 23¼ x 16½"

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Thom
Arnold Mesches
*Conventions, 2007*
Ink on paper
3 panels, each 11¾ x 24"
Courtesy of the artist
Dan Mills

*Democrats Crossing the Delaware, 2006*
Digital c-print, edition 1/3, 22 x 30”
image size, 30 x 38” framed

*Condoleezza Fatale, 2006*
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 11”

*Uncle W., 2005*
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 11”

*Dick, 2006*
Watercolor on paper, 18 x 9”

Courtesy of the artist and Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago
Tim Rollins and KOS
Animal Farm ’08 (after George Orwell), 2008
Mixed media on canvas, 54 x 72"
Courtesy of Lehman Maupin Gallery, New York
Peter Saul

Commy Gal, 1967
Lithograph, 11⅝ x 8¼”
Signed, dated and numbered recto
Edition of 120
Courtesy David Nolan Gallery, New York
Claude van Lingen
*The Dead Don’t Vote, 2008*
Performance and 6 x 6’ drawing on wall
Courtesy of the artist
Allan Wexler

*New York Voter Registration Center, 2008*

Mixed media, pegboard, American flag
Courtesy of the artist

The *New York Voter Registration Center* travelled to various locations in New York City from August 26 – October 10, 2008 and registered nearly 1000 voters.

Photographs: Larry Litt
Yee-Haw Industries/ Kevin Bradley

*Presidential Wrestling, 2008*

Handprinted letterpress, 42½ x 30”
Edition of 100

*Vice Presidential Wrestling, 2008*

Handprinted letterpress, 42½ x 30”
Edition of 100

Courtesy of the artist
Comedian Scott Blakeman, October 3, 2008

Comedian Jeff Kreisler, October 10, 2008

Comedian Joe Pontillo, October 17, 2008

Martha Wilson as Barbara Bush, October 24, 2008

Comedian V.J. Michael Richardson, middle, with D.J. Kid Magic, far right


“Party Headquarters” guest as George W. Bush

“Party Headquarters” guest as Sarah Palin and Larry Litt, hosting from the “V.F.W. Hall”

“Obama Girl,” guest at party

Flashpants Ai Lait, Miss Emilia, and Billy the Kid of Suspicious Package perform three skits

Larry “Christeby” Litt, mock auction, “What is Political Art Really Worth?”

Guests reacting to election results

Comedian Angry Bob Flashpants Au Lait, Miss Emilia, and Billy the Kid of Suspicious Package perform three skits