

# PARTY HQ

VOTING IS JUST THE BEGINNING

**Pratt**  
EXHIBITIONS



# PARTY HQ

**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  
[www.pratt.edu/exhibitions](http://www.pratt.edu/exhibitions)**

## 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

# PRATT FALLS

**POLITICAL SATIRE AT PRATT MANHATTAN**

**A POLITICAL CABARET OF PERFORMERS  
PRODUCED BY LARRY LITT**

## PERFORMERS

SCOTT BLAKEMAN  
DJ KID MAGIC  
JEFF KREISLER  
LARRY LITT  
JOE PONTILLO  
SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE  
MARTHA WILSON

## 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 low-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, punches and counter punches, and irreconcilable poll data. How is one to 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 politics and political campaigns past and present, the works suggest that politics is an activity that is simultaneously deeply important, absurd, humorous, fulfilling, and infuriating. Despite their clear-headed awareness that our political system is anything but picture perfect, they reject the cynical view that purer hearts should refrain from the corrupting touch of politics. Instead, they throw themselves into the fray, using all the weapons in the artist’s arsenal to counter the distracting and often deadening effects of the mass media political campaign.

To this end the artists rework various visual genres, ranging from high art and political caricature to political advertising and architecture, using these diverse formats to present alternatives 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 Haw 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, here evokes the chaos and excitement of contemporary political conventions, revealing how spectacle and entertainment tend to overwhelm their supposed deliberative function.

Borrowing the rapier sting of the traditional political cartoon, Tim Rollins and the Kids of Survival (KOS) update their classic Reagan-era *Animal Farm* caricatures with faces from the current presidential field. Jack McLean takes a more general look at the political field with a set

of satiric representations of politicians enacting their roles with an almost kabuki-like set of gesticulations. In his series *American Icons*, Dan Mills conflates various public figures with their (usually very unflattering) cartoon alter egos. He also contributes a reworking of Emanuel Leutze’s 1851 painting, *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, providing a mock heroic spin to the aspirations of the Democratic Party to retake Washington, D.C. in 2008.

In a similar spirit, Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung uses a rapid fire, video game-like format in fast moving digital collages that replay the recent primary campaigns as narratives of greed, fatuousness, obfuscation, and overweening 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.

In a performance and its residual wall drawing, Claude van Lingen takes a more sober look at the consequences of our presidential choices, suggesting that we bear a responsibility, not just to ourselves, but also to those who will suffer the harshest consequences of failed policies. Nora Ligorano and Marshal Reese suggest the

fragile nature of our commitment to democracy with a video of an ice sculpture whose slow disintegration suggests an elegy to our finest political aspirations.

Other artists bring the outside world into the gallery and the gallery into the outside world. Kyle Goen 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 Wexler 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 reach and widespread impact of the impulse 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

*Shamnesty 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, 11½ x 8¼"

Signed, dated and numbered recto

Edition of 120

Courtesy David Nolan Gallery, New York



38/120

Commy GAL

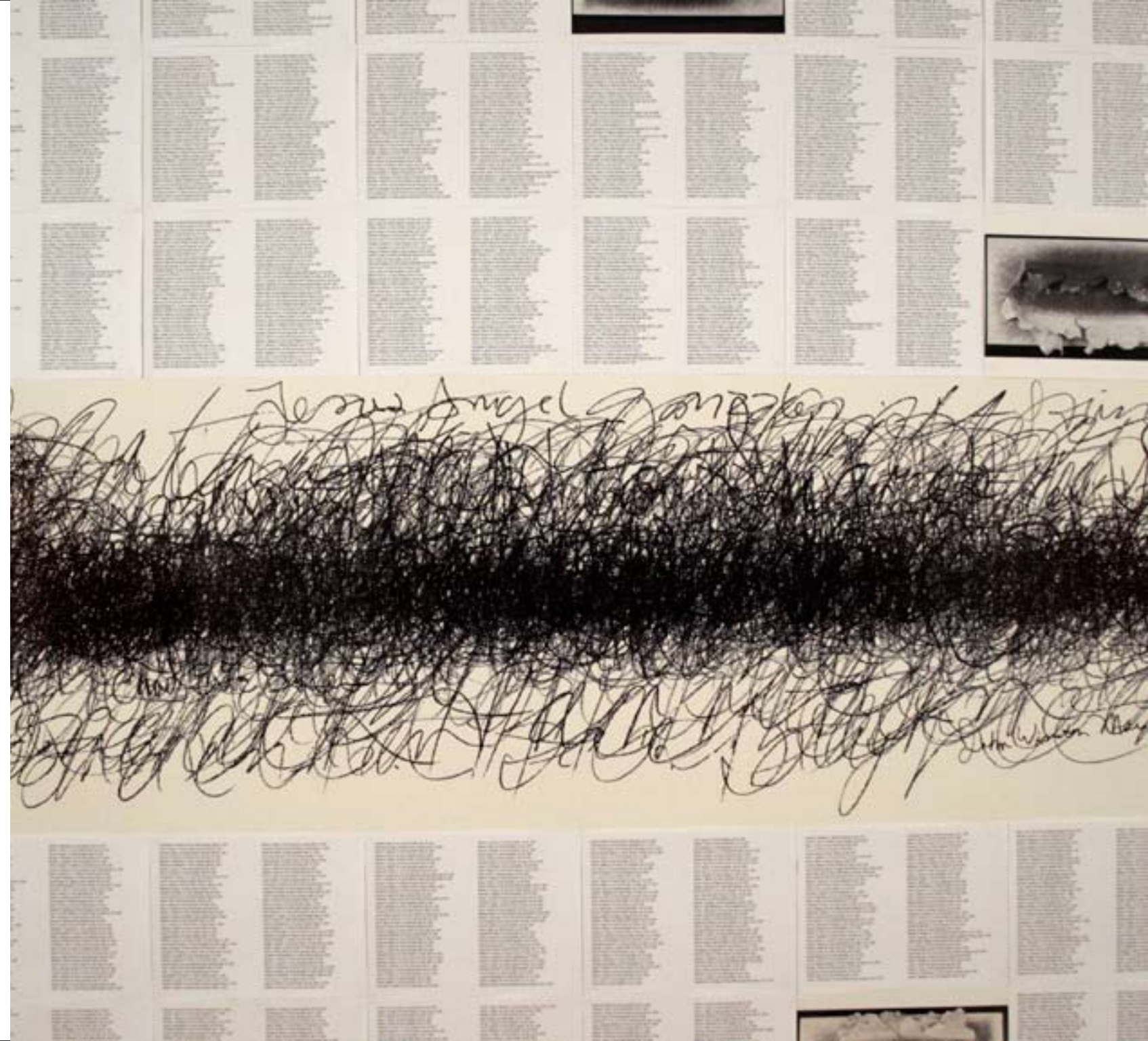
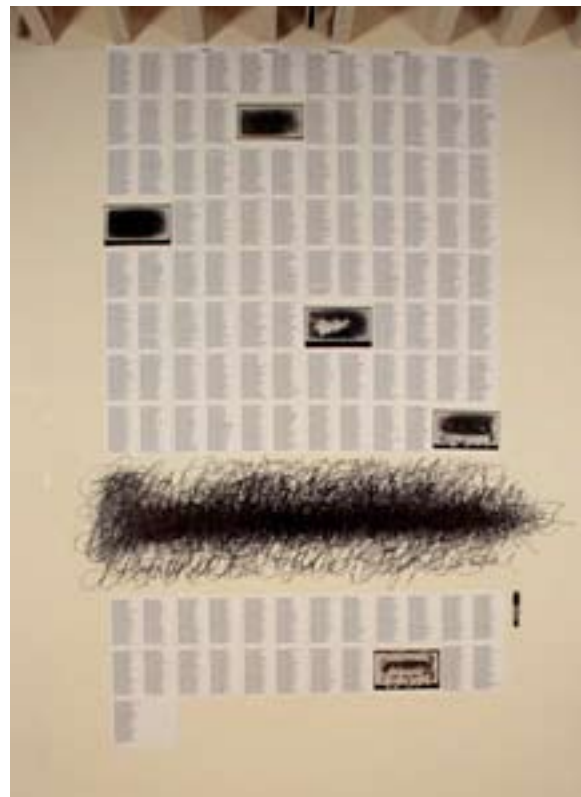
SAUL '67

## 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"

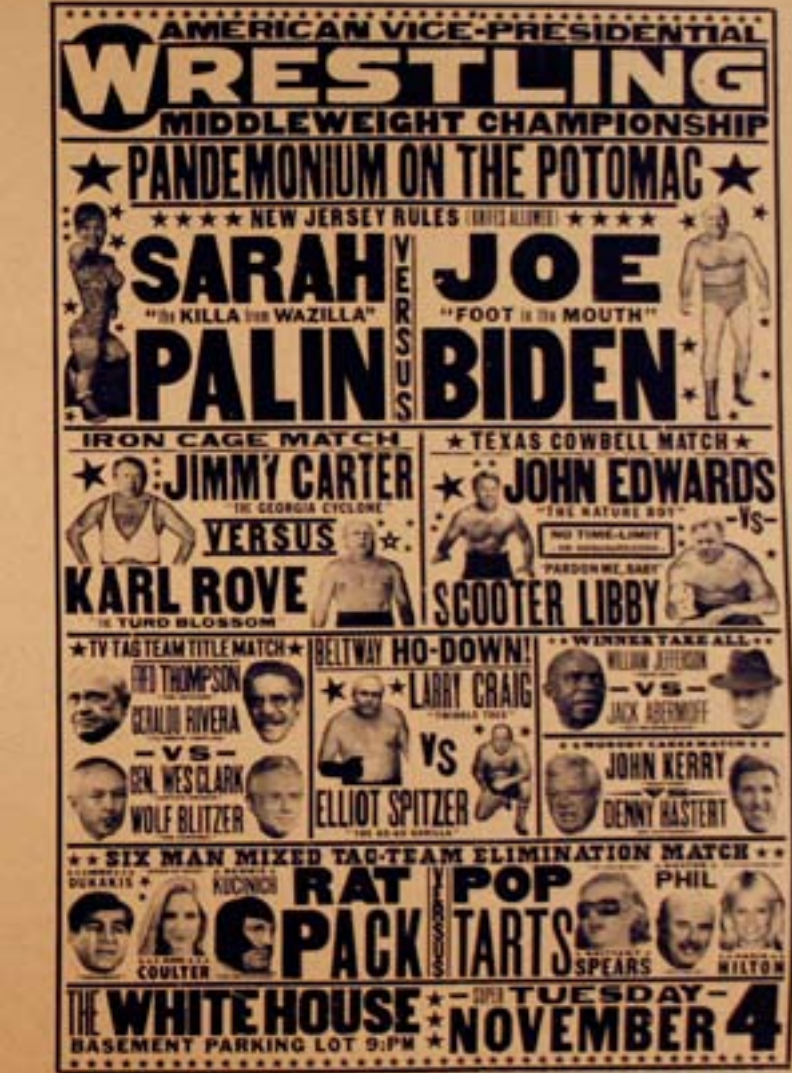
Edition of 100

*Vice Presidential Wrestling, 2008*

Handprinted letterpress, 42½ x 30"

Edition of 100

Courtesy of the artist





# PRATT FALLS



Top: Comedian Scott Blakeman,  
October 3, 2008



Top: Comedian Jeff Kreisler,  
October 10, 2008



Top: Comedian Joe Pontillo,  
October 17, 2008



Bottom: Larry "Christeby" Litt,  
mock auction, "What is Political  
Art Really Worth?"  
October 17, 2008



Top: Martha Wilson as Barbara  
Bush, October 24, 2008



Bottom: Martha Wilson as  
Barbara Bush interviewed  
by Larry Litt as Prince Turki  
al Zar Hazel of Saudi Arabia  
broadcasting for "Al Shmazeera  
RV," October 24, 2008

## PARTY HQ Party Headquarters

CLOSING PARTY/ELECTION NIGHT WATCH PARTY, NOVEMBER 4, 2008



Top: "Party Headquarters,"  
guest-curators Eleanor Heartney  
as Sarah Palin and Larry Litt,  
hosting from the "V.F.W. Hall"

Bottom: "Obama Girl," guest at  
party



"Party Headquarters" guest as  
George W. Bush



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



Middle: Guests reacting to  
election results



Bottom: Comedian Angry Bob



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

