

ART CITY

We Went to Chelsea: Blue Chip Edition, Part Two

by PADDY JOHNSON WHITNEY KIMBALL AND CORINNA KIRSCH on MARCH 28, 2013



Brandon Lattu, "Not Human." Installation view. Image courtesy of Leo Koenig Gallery.

Brandon Lattu, Not Human, February 28th – April 6th

Leo Koenig, 545 West 23rd Street

What's on view: A slideshow of photos layered by overlapping the central face in each image (so that the backgrounds change, but the eyes stay in the same point); another video slideshow juxtaposing visually similar images (via image search); and monochromatic wall-mounted rhombus sculptures with photo environments printed on the sides.

Corinna: This exhibition brings up one of my minor pet peeves: Internet-related art that merely illustrates how the Internet works. In Lattu's case, he's showing how Googling works, which isn't really novel. "Lattu brings to light the problem that one search term will bring back a myriad of results" is, by now, a way of life. I've had enough with Internet 101-type art.

Still, Lattu's videos do have an almost melodic pacing to it, making it pleasing to zone out to inside Koenig's dark viewing room, watching one image melt into another.

Paddy: I think your summation of the work is a little dismissive. To begin with, Lattu is working with an archive of over 120,000 images culled from the internet or scanned, and to amass that kind of volume takes a certain amount dedication. In so far as I can tell, the work doesn't have much to do with Google, as it does what constitutes similarity. One the screen, images are arranged so that one image has absolutely nothing to do with the next. We see a happy face, then a face on a photo, framed, then a panda and a yellow dog with the use of picture frame repeated. Even though the artist had gone out of his way to make sure the images had nothing to do with each other, I found myself instinctively seeking connections. And of course, there were some. There always are.

On the other screen, Lattu runs his images through Google for similar objects and presents the results. I wrote down the sequence of images I saw while I was there: Bones, rocks, snake, rocks, flowers, rocks. Video tape, red rainbow, wine, red purse. They were easier to group for sure, and the slide show felt a little like toggling through images on the net.

Based on my experience with the first screen, I suspect that comparison to surfing is less substantive than I think it is; it's probably a similarity I saw because I was looking for one. I don't know how deep that message is, but I can enjoy it for what it is.

Corinna: OK, I am probably being unfair to Lattu, but I'm still not convinced that his logic of grouping by similarity is that great. Honestly, I'm conflicted: I'm interested in Lattu's obsessive collecting and how we deal with all the images we hoard on our hard drives, but I'm just not sure what's the best way for Lattu—or anyone else—to succeed at showing that compulsion in the gallery. The answer's probably not a slideshow.

Johnson, Paddy and Corinna Kirsch. "We Went to Chelsea: Blue Chip Edition, Part Two" *Art F City*, 28 March 2013. [ill. *Not Human* (2013) installation view] [online]