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BUTCH QUEEN REALNESS WITH A TWIST IN PASTEL COLORS

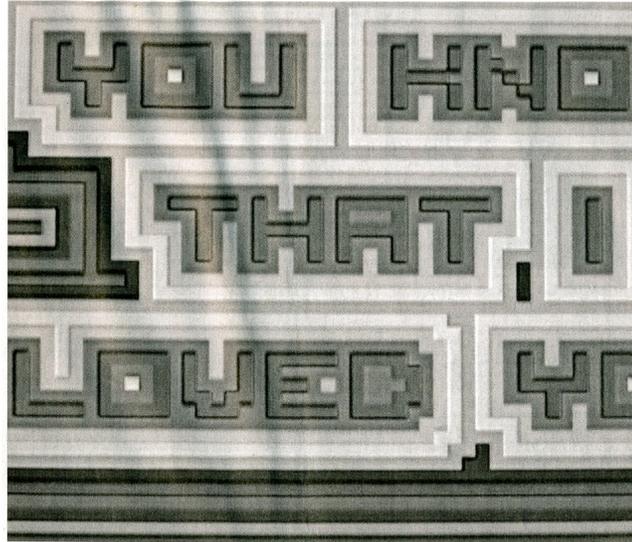
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*John Connelly Presents
625 West 27th Street, Chelsea
Through Wednesday*

My favorite group show of the summer so far is a video program organized by the artist Assume Vivid Astro Focus and running continuously in a room off the main gallery. This artist-curator's own work is based on pop-cultural collage and pastiche, and that's what he brings us in the 62 back-to-back short videos — average length three to four minutes — he has assembled here.



From Giles Round's "Hallucinating Love (for someone in particular)" video in "Butch Queen Realness." John Connelly Presents

They include a handful of historical pieces by Oskar Fischinger, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Paul Sharits, as well as work by the contemporary underground giant Charles Atlas. But most of what's here is experimental stuff by interesting young artists, from Miguel Calderon, Takeshi Murata, Mike Bell-Smith, Sebastian Buerkner and Giles Round to collectives like Derraindrop, Black Leotard Front and LoVid.

Characteristically, the curator makes no distinction between "gallery art" and any other kind of art. This means we get a slew of glorious music videos, among them serious blasts from the past (Blondie, Grace Jones, Jefferson Airplane, Kraftwerk), as well as more recent productions by Le Tigre, Devin Flynn, Kembra Pfahler and Zoie Rizzuto.

In general the show has a strong documentary bent, reflecting the high nostalgia quotient of Assume Vivid Astro Focus's art. Here it encompasses 1970's "Soul Train" and Nelson Sullivan's invaluable recordings of Pyramid Club performances in the 1980's, but it extends to recent vogue balls in Harlem, which are extraordinary events.

And, look, where else in the city these days can you see immortals like Klaus Nomi, Sylvester, Dick Jewell and Raw Sewage on the same bill? Connelly's viewing room is small, but there are seats and air-conditioning, and with the program's four and a half hours of running time, you can jump out and back in at will. My guess is you'll stay for a nice long soak.

HOLLAND COTTER