

KQED Arts

Surprises Even at the Bathroom Sink in “Spirited Probabilities”

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March 1, 2018



Lisa Jonas Taylor, *Portal*, 2018, plexiglass, vinyl, confetti, plywood, carpet, floor lamp, red bulb (detail). Installation view from *Spirited Probabilities* at Southern Exposure in San Francisco. (Photo: Mik Gaspay)

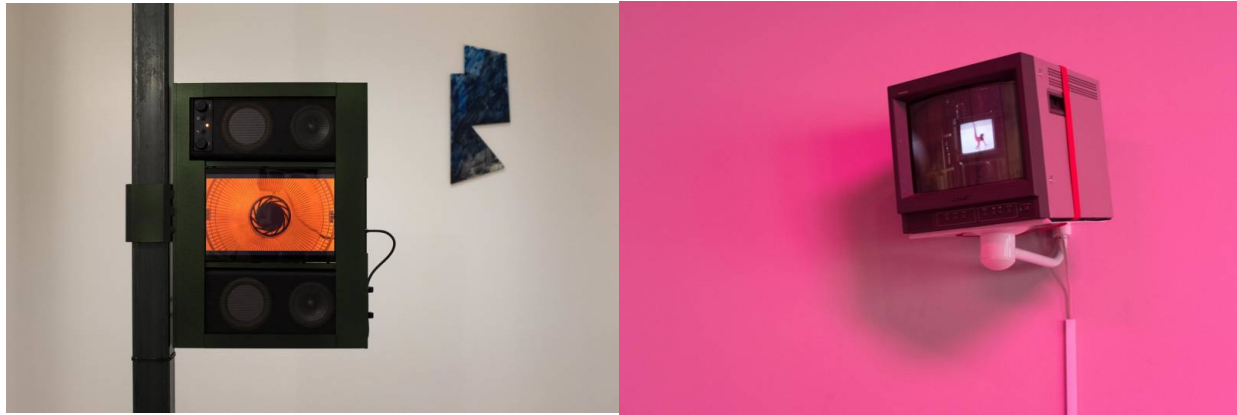
At *Spirited Probabilities*, currently at Southern Exposure, curator Mik Gaspay has summoned a baker’s dozen of Bay Area artists for a group show in which careful consideration and “playful interventions” give way to chance encounters. Gaspay’s stated goal is to consider “the flexibility of institutional structures and their physical architectures”; the institutional structure with the starring role being Southern Exposure itself.

The artists use the space’s composition as a blueprint, but they don’t approach it as a limited, fixed premise. Instead, they employ all of its parts and leave no section of Southern Exposure’s available square footage undisturbed. Charlie Leese’s sculptural installation even extends into the restroom foyer in an investigation of “architectural hierarchies and overlapping physical and digital spaces.” Visitors can actually interact with Leese’s work while washing their hands at the bathroom sink.

Lisa Jonas Taylor’s piece *Portal* confronts visitors as they enter the center of the exhibition. At once, folks are greeted by an obstacle course of shiny sculptures and an array of materials (Plexiglas, vinyl, gravel, confetti,

plywood, and carpet) accumulated in judicious piles on the floor. Colored flood lights illuminate various parts of Taylor's work.

Following the idea of a boundary-less institution, Simone Bailey stakes claim over the grand picture window facing Alabama Street. The untitled stained glass work is composed of a mixture that includes a raw form of lanolin, paprika, and activated charcoal. This piece is best witnessed in the afternoon as it manipulates the natural light that enters the space during the day. Nature's elements, too, lend a hand in the planned happenstance of *Spirited Probabilities*.



Left: Installation view of Charlie Leese's *Internal Structure* from *Spirited Probabilities* at Southern Exposure in San Francisco. Right: Luca Antonucci, *Contraction and release*, 2018, video loop on CRT monitor. Installation view from *Spirited Probabilities* at Southern Exposure in San Francisco. (Photos: Mik Gaspay)

Luca Antonucci offers up four of his works for the show, but *Here we are again, running out of time* is especially memorable for its meta quality — it is a meditation on spaces within an exhibition that meditates space. Copies of the 112-page softcover book rest within and on top of a bookshelf made of wood and neon Plexiglas. The makeshift library creates the sensibility of a hideaway nook, inviting visitors to indulge in a bit of respite and flip through a book of images procured from San Francisco-based narrative films (as well as locations scouted for their ability to serve as stand-ins for San Francisco).

George Pfau also caters to nook-loving, alcove-seeking individuals. Resting unassumingly in a darkened corner — save for a reading light — of Southern Exposure's front entrance, a small rectangular white table and stool invite intimate parties to sit and flip through a hefty book of black-and-white drawings of dreamscapes and imaginary settings. Each page explores how "black lines can be used to circumscribe boundaries between things; in particular, the porousness between bodies and their environment." Viewers can see meticulous illustrations of people physically melting in the workplace or against anonymous palatial backdrops. In other drawings, Dalmatians frolic alongside whales and bears. Pfau presents a potpourri of curious, clashing surroundings that interrupt understood notions of environmental borderlines.



Installation view from Maria Guzmán Capron's *Amadora* in *Spirited Probabilities* at Southern Exposure in San Francisco. (Photo: Mik Gaspay)

Maria Guzmán Capron's *Amadora*, scales the length of a large column at the center of the space. And in terms of vantage points, the playfully imposing textile sculpture wins in that it can be seen from just about every corner of the room. The figure, made of a colorful patchwork of fabric, batting, stuffing, and wire appears to be upside down, but grips the column in a comfortable manner that suggests it is an agile creature. A sort of elephant in the room, this work joins in on the enthusiastic pursuit of testing out unexpected locations in a larger-than-life way. What was once a nondescript structural fixture, a column, is transformed into one of the main focal points of the building's interior.

Spirited Probabilities' exuberant probing at the possibilities of space is contagious. Once they get the hang of it, visitors become super sleuths, determined to detect even the most inconspicuous works in the show.