

# VANITY FAIR

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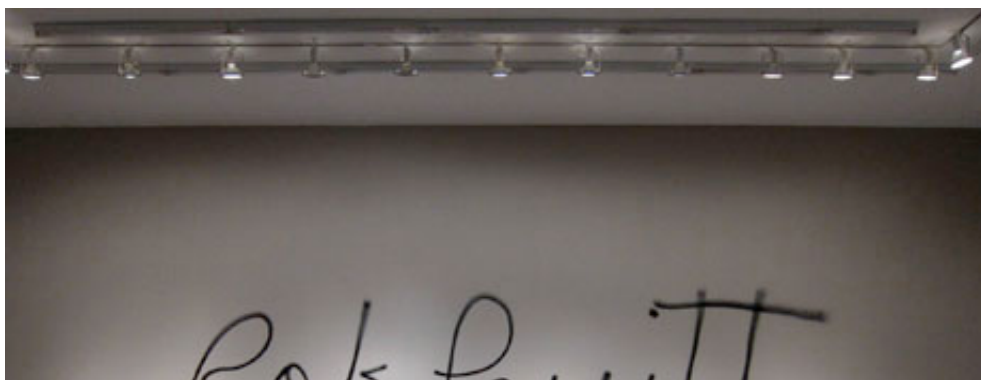
## Two Parties. Two Locations. And a Whole Lot of Art-World Love

by *Todd Eberle*

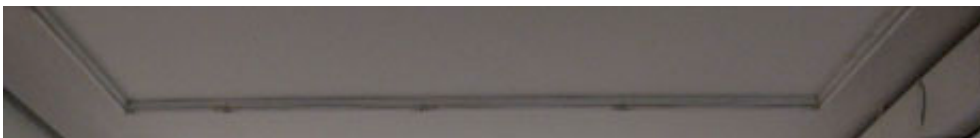
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Last Saturday night in downtown Manhattan, the art world indulged in a "meta" mutual lovefest in two locations, a few blocks apart, in parallel time. **Rob Pruitt**, famed for his Andy Warhol-inspired canvases of glittering panda bears, was signing copies of his new monograph, *Pop Touched Me*.

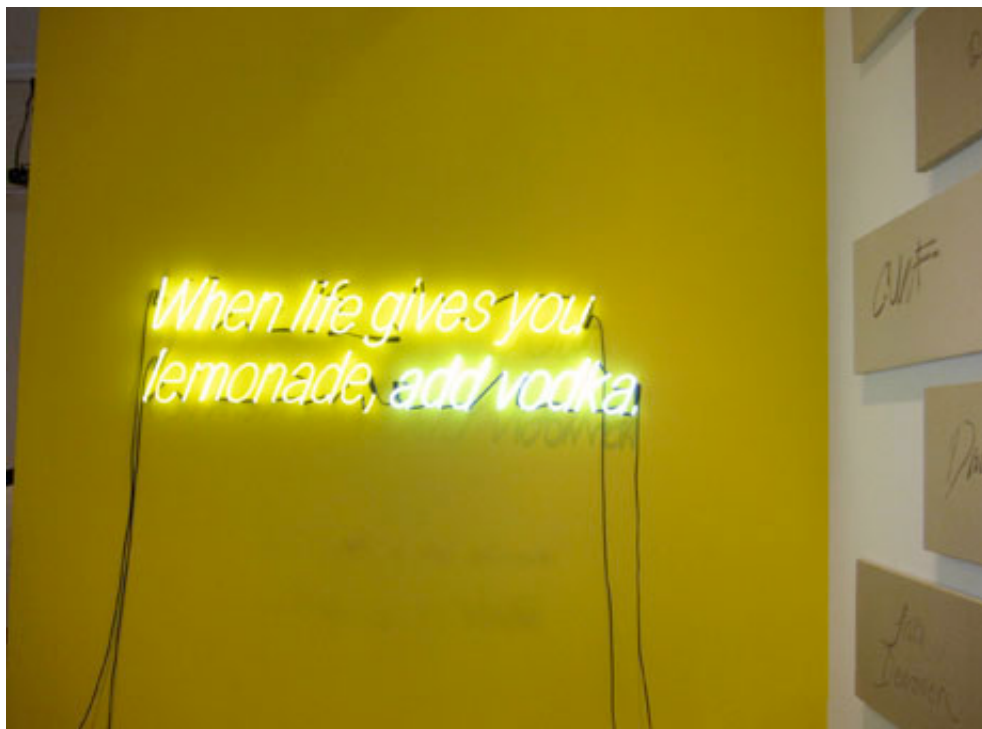
Covering the walls of **Gavin Brown's** Enterprise gallery with a couple hundred autographs of art-world royalty, Pruitt offered a historical survey, and evidence of his title. Off and on for the last two decades, he's gotten art notables and others to put their signatures on one-by-three-foot pieces of raw canvas with a big black marker. One of the non-art signatures is that of the former president of France **Jacques Chirac**, noting the date as 1989. Almost all of the rest are art-celebrity scribbles, which fill the standard-size canvases with an unpredictable spatial variety. One is particularly extravagant: gallery owner **Tony Shafrazi's** signature stands out big and bold—one wonders if his defacement of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* some years ago prepared him to "touch" Pruitt. Some of the other names include new MOCA director **Jeffrey Deitch**, Warhol superstar and art collector **Jane Holzer**, fashion designers **Marc Jacobs** and **Valentino**, downtown legend **Malcolm McLaren**, art critics **Jerry Saltz** and **Roberta Smith**, model **Claudia Schiffer**, filmmaker and art collector **John Waters**, and on and on (**Michael Bloomberg**, **Farah Diba**, **Brian Eno**, **Boy George**, **Peter Brant**, **Lauren Hutton**, **Dakis Joannou**, **Karl Lagerfeld**, **Courtney Love**, **Stella McCartney**, **Jesse Norman**, **Glenn O'Brien**, **Mary-Kate Olsen** ... ).



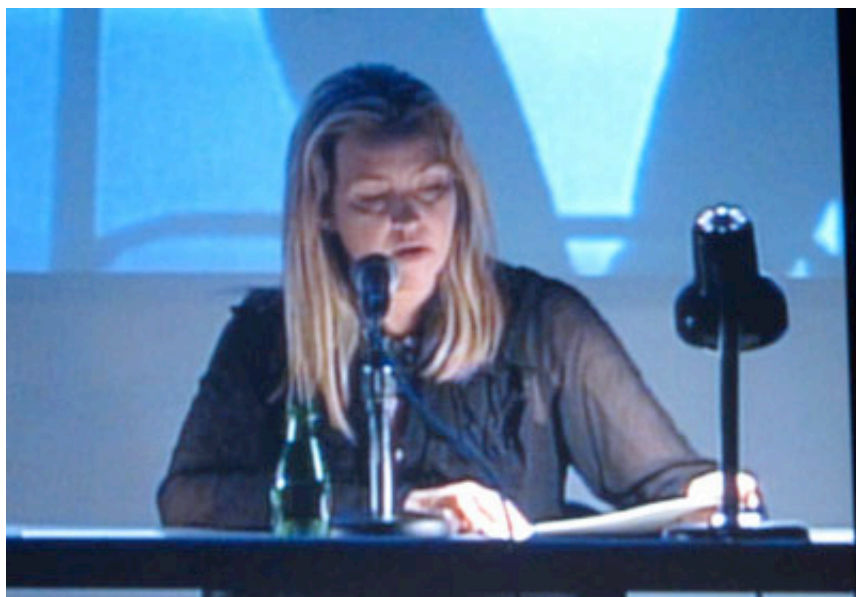








A two-minute walk away, Pruitt's cuddly-as-a-panda pop event (cookies, popcorn, and vodka lemonades were served) morphed into a hardly warm and fuzzy group performance reading of artist-writer Sean Landers's book *[SIC]*, co-presented by Art Production Fund and White Columns. It took place over eight hours with 22 readers in a vast raw space at the Saatchi and Saatchi building on Hudson Street. There was a meta aspect to the proceedings: about 10 of the readers had also signed Pruitt's raw canvases. Originally somewhat of an underground art cult book, first published in 1993, *[SIC]* was just reprinted by **Glenn Horowitz**. In an absolute contrast to Pruitt's candy-colored volume, it's choleric, toxic, and confessional, chock-full of banal and anxious rantings, at least a few of which every creative alpha type can sympathize with. Painter **Lisa Yuskavage** convulsed with giggles of embarrassment at having to narrate Landers's vividly detailed account of his failed sexual experiment at age eight. Photographer **Jessica Craig-Martin** took a more subtle approach and imbued his frequent use of second and third voices with some hysterical shadings.





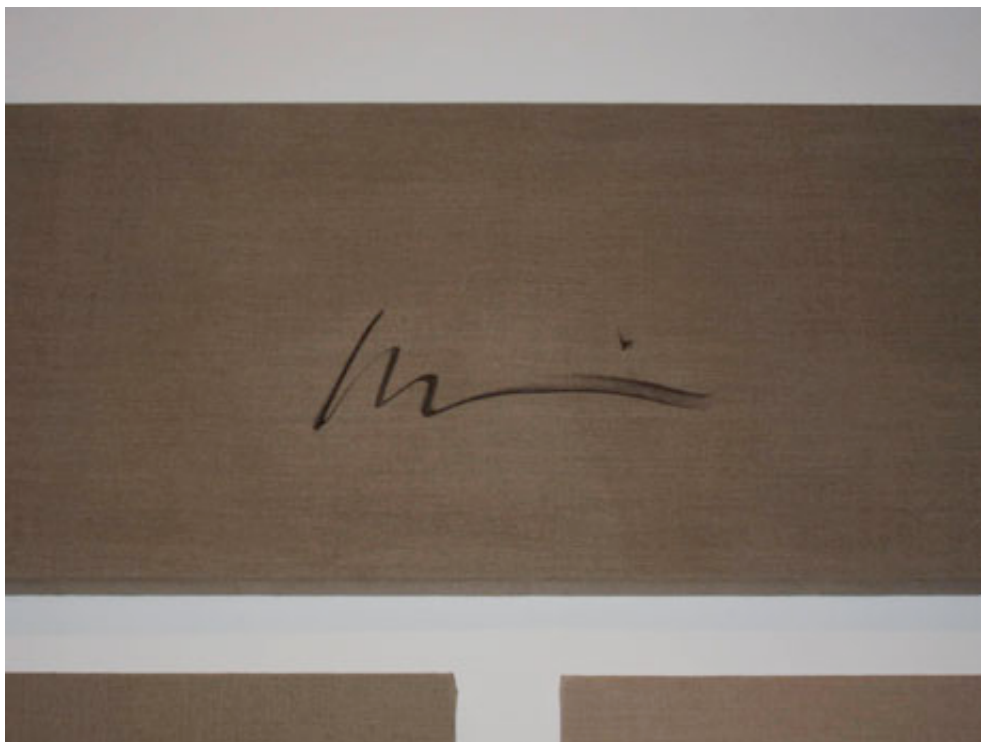
One only wishes those pretty straight and sometimes monotonous readings of Landers's deeply insecure thoughts and words, drenched in the sexual and scatological, and all wrapped neatly in his oft-mentioned "Catholic guilt," had been given a more dramatic read. Or maybe not. It's horrendously shocking stuff, and maybe even more appropriately titled than Pruitt's, which is, by all accounts, pretty great.

Here's a list of some of those who made appearances at both events, one on canvas and one as a reader: artist **John Currin** and his wife, artist **Rachel Feinstein**, artists **Lisa Yuskavage**, **Richard Phillips**, **Liam Gillick**, and **Adam McEwen**, artist and curator **Matthew Higgs**, art-scene legend **Clarissa Dalrymple**, Jessica Craig-Martin, art critic **Linda Yablonsky**, and **Gavin Brown**.

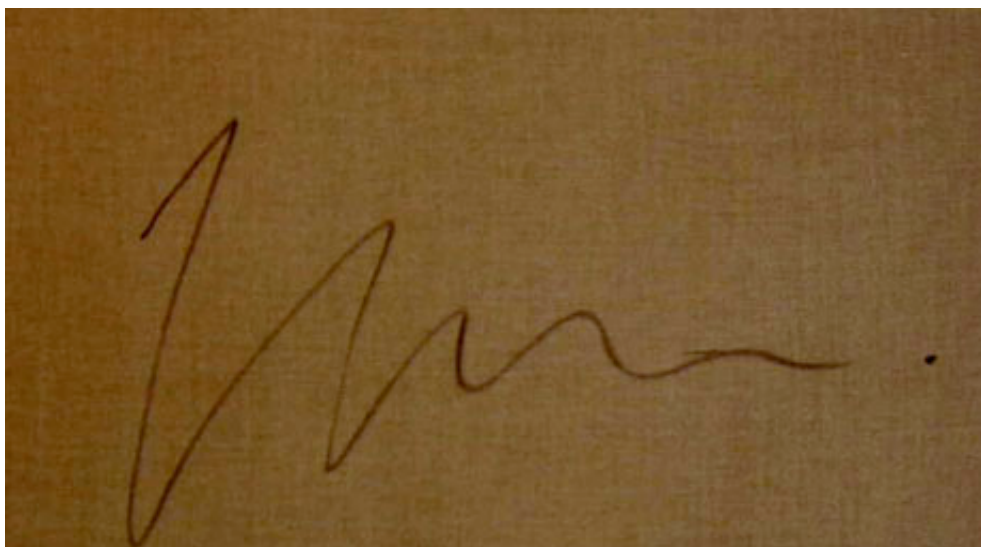
I found some of my own parallels that night, especially on the early side. On view at G.B.E., under glass, was Andy Warhol's *Exposures*, his under-the-radar book of up-close black-and-white snapshots of the "beautiful people." Not only was that book an epiphany for me as a teenager growing up in the middle of nowhere but it

also exposed me to Warhol's world. *Exposures* was the reason I came to New York City and it's why I take pictures of the art world. I have to admit I was plenty envious that Pruitt had gotten Warhol to inscribe the title page to him. And Saturday was like *Exposures* come to life again, although with an entirely new cast.

And then there was another oddly personal moment. My signature is also on display, and I'm quoted in Pruitt's book (this being the claustrophobic art world—it's much smaller than one would think). Anyway, a canvas high up on another wall stopped me in my tracks with a scrawl eerily similar to my own. Like mine, it's indecipherable, impossible to identify the name, and has an odd embellishment: a period at the end. I was a bit startled to read the identification key that accompanies the canvases. The doppelgänger signature to mine (or mine to his?) is that of the gallerist who owns the place where I show my work: **Larry Gagosian**. On an evening of mirroring, it was just one of many coincidences, but, like I said, it was a meta night in Manhattan.



Larry Gagosian's signature.





Todd Eberle's signature.

**Keywords:**

**ANDY WARHOL, ART WORLD, BOY GEORGE, BRIAN ENO, COURTNEY LOVE, DAKIS JOANNOU, FARAH DIBA, GAVIN BROWN, GLENN O'BRIEN, JACQUES CHIRAC, JEFFREY DEITCH, JESSE NORMAN, KARL LAGERFELD, LAUREN HUTTON, MARC JACOBS, MARY-KATE OLSEN, MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, PETER BRANT, SOCIETY, STELLA MCCARTNEY, TODD EBERLE, VALENTINO**

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