

**"Hello, all but forgotten piece of 1970s feminist Earth Art, have you ever seen a transsexual before?"**

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Sight, acknowledgment, and shared experience all figure prominently in *Hybrid Narrative: Video Mediations of Self and the Imagined Self*, currently at Mac Arthur B Arthur in Oakland, CA. Artists Liz Rosenfeld, Chris E. Vargas, Sofia Cordova and Shana Moulton make themselves "seen" though video, film transfer, installation and performance.

Rosenfeld's *Untitled (Dyketactics Revisited)*, a 16mm film transfer to video, brings us to another time both via its material, and the performers themselves. A near-direct reenactment of filmmaker Barbara Hammer's *Dyketactics* (1974), Rosenfeld's work is non-narrative and lyrical. A small group paints their faces, necks and arms, and bind themselves with tape in what appears to be abandoned urban and industrial spaces. The short film is an analgesic; these desirable and compellingly filthy bodies lull and please, but also unabashedly idealize. *Untitled* recalls the '70s not just in its aesthetic but also in its evocation of community - Hammer's original film sought to make visible the 1970s lesbian-feminist art coalescence. Rosenfeld's work is decidedly queer and pictures a similar community present at the margins of the larger contemporary art market.

Chris Vargas uses his body comically in *Have You Ever Seen A Transsexual Before?* (2010). The artist visits several photo-worthy locales, each with particular artistic or pop-culture significance: the LDS headquarters in Salt Lake City, the Las Vegas strip, the salt flats of Utah, a windmill noted as "Americana," and - most notably - Nancy Holt's Sun Tunnels (1976). In each location, he asks the uninhabited space "have you ever seen a transsexual before?" - pulling up his shirt and exposing his chest. Vargas grows increasingly frustrated with the lack of response, dramatically flopping on a hotel bed or scurrying out of frame. *Have You Ever Seen A Transsexual Before?* takes an unanticipated turn via the artist's frequently used low-fi green screen technology, transporting Vargas to other, faraway locales as he searches out and finds a Painted Bunting, a bird native to the American Southeast. The brightly colored bird is, in this writer's humble opinion, pretty gay. They are also easily misread as exotic or distant by the untested eye, although they remain ubiquitous throughout much of North America - perhaps an interesting parallel for one's sexual or gender orientation.

**Time and place are also critical to the show's other two works, Sofia Cordova's installation and video, *Fiebre Fanta [Fanta Fever]* (2011), and Shana Moulton's series *Whispering Pines* (2004- 2011). Cordova's installation includes black-and-white prints (including what might be a picture of the artist as a toddler), a video projection with stuttering images, an electric palm tree, and the sound of storms, running water, and club music. The jumble of media brings to mind how identity traverses time and place: the artist, as a baby, particularly butch in a white A-shirt, and then again, recognizable as her "self" in the ostensible present.** Moulton also splices time and fantasy with the early '90s splatter paint, faux marble madness that is *Whispering Pines*. The TBN-worthy soundtrack and ample use of clip art both critique and revel in technology, not to mention self-help literature from the recent past and notions of beauty.