



ARTS

'Row Home'/'Blood, Sweat, & Mostly Tears'

Co-Lab Projects' N Space and new HI5H Gallery are invigorating additions to the gallery scene Both highbrows and lowbrows will want to browse these new artspaces

REVIEWED BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., MAY 25, 2012



From "Row Home" by Mark Johnson

'Row Home' Mark Johnson

Co-Lab Projects' N Space, 905 Congress, 300-8217

www.colabspace.org

Through July 14, by appointment

'Blood, Sweat, & Mostly Tears' Bart Kibbe, Tony Diaz, and Brian MacLaskey

HI5H Gallery, 1111 Chicon, 750-5406

www.hi5h.com

Through June 2

Something about brows here. Maybe about the differences, actual or perceived, between what's called highbrow and lowbrow culture. Maybe about how a gallery's visitor, regardless of such differences, comes to *browse* what's on display, to enjoy graphic beauty and the inferred efforts of rendering, to gain possible insight into the world (or anyway the artist's world) by witnessing the results of intentional creation.

The results of Mark Johnson's creation look sort of like Peter Greenaway and Will Shortz staged a series of explosions in a type foundry. No, that's a *good* thing, as evidenced by Johnson's exhibition "Row Home" at Co-Lab's new N Space in the elegant lobby and offices of Nelsen Partners' architecture firm Downtown. Opened in time for the inaugural West Austin Studio Tour, the show boasts several large type-embellished paintings: complex and colorful mixed media works in which painted letters are patterned in cypherlike sequences to form messages on the canvas, message-

resonant objects are part of the lexicographical tableau, and actual letter forms often extend on thin rods from the vertical plane to *right in your face* almost a meter outward. Intriguing and challenging in their arcane communications, the works are also instantly and lingeringly stunning in presentation.

The way those letters branch out from Johnson's paintings is as effective as the way Sean Gaulager's longtime Eastside space Co-Lab is branching out into this new venue, lettering its language of artistic experiment and exploration into a more formal setting. We mean: It's highly effective. It's the sort of thing about which you could imagine the organizers sharing a high five.

You could share a high five yourself – in this case, a visit to the new HI5H artspace brought to you by Austin Museum of Art-Arthouse's graphic designer Bart Kibbe, Tony Diaz of Industry Print Shop, and Squid Ink Kollektive's Brian MacLaskey. Here you'd go from the fine art and fancy-office vibe of N Space to a small bare cube of a room on the Eastside, next door to the coffee-pimping, wi-fi-enabled East Village Cafe. But that small cube of a room is now *formerly* bare; since the HI5H collective took it over last weekend, the space is the opposite of barren, its walls adorned with the results of many hours and hours of printing. (Hint: This show's called "Blood, Sweat, & Mostly Tears.")

Original posters, murals, broadsheets, even a gorgeously designed commemorative zine – whether silkscreened (simply and starkly, or in so many layered colors it makes a mind boggle) on paper or wood panels or otherwise – turn the HI5H gallery's interior into something Frank Kozik might recall from a troubled, beautiful dream. Diaz says the gallery will offer a new exhibition once a month or so with other events – live music, book releases, public floggings(?) – in between.

We suggest that it doesn't matter what level your brow habitually resides at, that a visit to either HI5H or N Space (or, better, both) will invigorate your sense of this city's vibrant and burgeoning visual arts scene. At least, citizen, *at least*.

More Arts Reviews

Now Now Oh Now

Twelfth Night

Born Yesterday

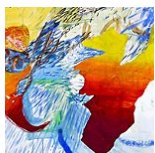
Accidental Death of an Anarchist

A note to readers: Bold and uncensored, *The Austin Chronicle* has been Austin's independent news source for over 36 years, expressing the community's political and environmental concerns and supporting its active cultural scene. Now more than ever, we need your support to continue supplying Austin with independent, free press. If real news is important to you, please consider making a donation of \$5, \$10 or whatever you can afford, to help keep our journalism on stands.

SUPPORT THE CHRONICLE →

READ MORE

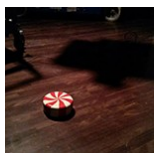
MORE N SPACE



"Ryan Cronk: Migration Wisdom, Chalk Lines,..."

This solo show explores new existential threats in sharp analytical prints and layered chaotic collage

SETH ORION SCHWAIGER, SEPT. 5, 2014



'Peppermint Doorstop'

This lighthearted exhibition by Matthew John Winters has a perspective as refreshing as the candy in its title

CAITLIN GREENWOOD, MAY 23, 2014

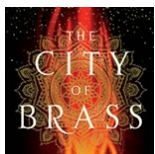
MORE ARTS REVIEWS



UT Department of Theatre & Dance's ...

This production of Lucy Prebbles' play smartly recounts and reframes the corporate beast's rise and fall

T. LYNN MIKESKA, MARCH 2, 2018



The City of Brass by S.A. Chakrabarty

This debut fantasy novel is appealing, in part because it draws on legends of the Arab world for its magic

ELIZABETH COBBE, MARCH 2, 2018

MORE BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER
