

Cherry and Martin

Shaw, Michael. "Continuing and Recommended," *ArtScene*, February 20, 2012.



CONTINUING & RECOMMENDED, FEBRUARY 2012



Brian Bress, still from "Cowboy (Brian led by Peter Kirby)," 2012.

Brian Bress's "Under Performing" is a uniquely boundary-busting extravaganza that also manages to remain true to the artist's baroque, photo collage roots. The show is fronted by a 20-minute video called "Creative Ideas for Every Season," a rather high production value affair featuring an older woman on a car ride accompanied by various bizarre characters en route. It's far more intriguing visually than as a narrative, and sets the viewer up for the series of freakishly charming video portraits in the main room. Like photographs, only moving slowly and in much higher definition, the portraits include characters – such as "Fancy Dress Ball (Brian)" and "Janus" – that, in their elaborate get-ups, meld in and out of their backgrounds as they rotate in a slow circle. Among the group portraits, the faceless-masked "Family (Devin, John, Jason, Lewis)" and "Relatives" (same group), wear masks made collage-like as they bob in front of a rolling backdrop of painted waves. The most memorable portrait is "Cowboy (Brian led by Peter Kirby)," in which an all-white cartoon-ish cowboy character (the costume is a full-torso and head covering made out of what appears to be a white rubber or foam), draws a caricature portrait of his own on a transparent glass surface that's level with the screen (a technique also employed briefly in the "Creative Ideas" video). Though "Under Performing" in general, and "Cowboy" in particular, are open to a wealth of interpretations, it's all so visually innovative and idiosyncratic as to be appreciated even through its incredibly forthright self-consciousness (Cherry & Martin, Culver City).

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