

## Cherry and Martin

BRIAN BRESS  
IN LIEU OF FLOWERS SEND MEMES

April 29 - June 17, 2017

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Installation view of Brian Bress: In Lieu of Flowers Send Memes

**Cherry and Martin is pleased to present new sculptures and wall-mounted video works by Brian Bress.**

Brian Bress has described himself as coming to video with the agenda of a painter. His single and multi-channel videos address the connections between film, photography and painting, and the two-dimensional picture plane these mediums share. In his video works, Brian Bress plays a range of characters: chefs, cowboys, firemen and farmers. These characters look directly at the viewer, breaking the so-called fourth wall. Despite our familiarity with the conventions of theater, when a character breaks the fourth wall - the imaginary division between the stage and the audience - it comes as a shock, upending the moment, turning passive watchers into active participants. The same is true with regard to screens and pictures. Bress pulls apart the assumption that picture looking - or screen-watching - is a passive, one-sided relationship.

This is important, given our current political moment, when fake news and the notion of public address is on everyone's mind. How are the screens through which we receive so much of our information constructed? How can we be more critical with regard to understanding these platforms of modern messaging? In the recent, "Commercial Break," an outdoor exhibition organized by Daniel Palmer of the Public Art Fund, Bress took on this idea directly, presenting his work on the mammoth advertising screens of Times Square, where it interrupted the constant stream of commercial messages transmitted to the crowds below. Several of the works included in Bress's exhibition at Cherry and Martin continue the themes explored in his Times Square piece: the way in which abstract symbols are infused with meaning for signage, or propaganda; and the visual stylization of modern art movements of the early 20th-century like art deco, art nouveau and futurism.

All the costumes we see in Bress's works are made in his studio, as are shallow sets in which his characters act. While the mechanics of the camera rationalize Bress's actions two-dimensionally, the action in the studio is physical. It is the movement of Bress's own body that creates the shape, or form we see in these works: Bress's body moves like a sculpture; the costumes he wears are sculptural, too. Bress comments, "My last shows have been about the picture plane and touching that surface. This show is about the relation between sculpture and video, the play of light, and using form in that space rather than flattening the space out. The drawings that generated a work like the Public Art Fund - which is about two-dimensionality - flattened my body. Here I tried to turn my body into the sculpture, and found that my body was extruding form." Bress will show several new sculptures in his show at Cherry and Martin, as well as several costume-paintings. Bress notes, "The resolution of these pieces as painting is interesting because I made the fabric with an eye to wrapping them around my body, and I made decisions in that manner. Making it a painting again meant that it's a strange painting, like a computer made it or something."

"In the Box: Brian Bress" is on view at the Chrysler Museum of Art through May 7th; "The Imperfect Tense (for Josef Albers)" (2017) is on view at the Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore, MD) through September 20th. Brian Bress's work will be included in the upcoming, "Screens: Virtual Material," at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, (Boston, MA). His work was recently included in "Commercial Break" (Public Art Fund, New York, NY); and "2016 Moving Image Biennial" (Centre d'Art Contemporain Geneva, Switzerland). In 2015-2016, the touring exhibition, "Brian Bress: Make Your Own Friends," opened at Utah Museum of Fine Arts (Salt Lake City, UT); and traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (Denver, CO); and Orange County Museum of Art (Newport Beach, CA). Bress has had solo exhibitions and projects at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA); Museo d'arte contemporanea (MACRO) (Rome, Italy); Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Santa Barbara, CA); and New Museum (New York, NY). He lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.