



<< BACK



CONTACT



SEARCH



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



Samantha Persons, *Boy lust HYdra*, 2011, stickers, markers, googly eyes, highlighters, pen, white out, collage images of "Hot" boys from *BOP* magazine, on a Justin Bieber Popstar poster.

winkflash

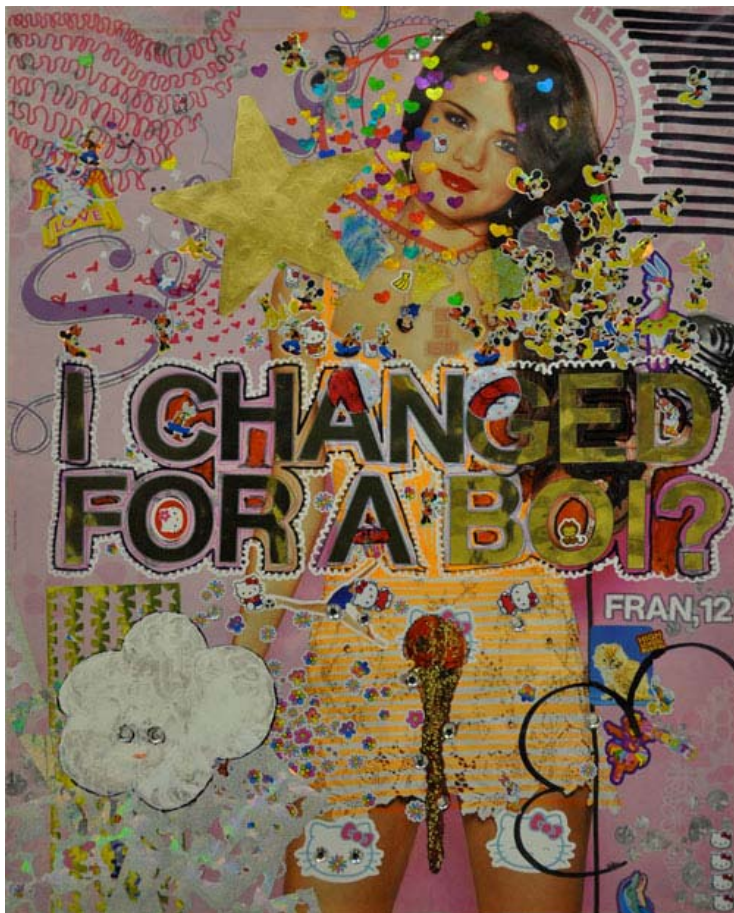
**60% off**  
YOUR CANVAS  
Create art with your own digital photos

[TELL ME MORE >](#)



Kimberly Austin, *Bullet, Gun, Penis*, 1995 Van Dyke print and cyanotype on silk and muslin.

## Snapshots and Media from an Age when One Knows for Sure



Samantha Persons, *I Changed for a Boi*, Fran, 2012, stickers, highlighters, ball point pen, fake blood glitter, White Out, vinyl letters, markers on a Selena Gomez *Tigerbeat* poster).

**Cara and Cabezas Contemporary**

1714 Holmes Street

816-332-6239

Kansas City

*Now Knowing*

March 23-May 5, 2012

By BLAIR SCHULMAN

*Now Knowing*, at Cara and Cabezas Contemporary, is an exhibition of photographs, paintings, drawings and sculpture which draws a kaleidoscope of identities featuring "artworks that address early sexuality and the discovery of sexual orientation."

Coming as it does on the heels of the 25th anniversary of the founding of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), this show is timely. Not hinging on any one sexual ideal, it runs the gamut of all identities in a post-NOW-Stonewall-AIDS society. I am at once offended that it isn't sexual enough, and thrilled that it exists at all.

*Now Knowing* is inspired by the theme of the Heartland Men's Chorus production of *When I Knew* and a conversation with HMC Development Director Cliff Sciappa. A portion of the proceeds from exhibition sales will be donated to the Heartland Men's Chorus.

The palpable anger my generation felt facing AIDS in conjunction with discovering one's own identity is barely present here. 23-year old CJ Schrat, who co-curated *Now Knowing* with gallerist Megan Cara Lewis, didn't know who Larry Kramer is, the public health advocate, LGBT activist, co-founder of Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) and a founder of ACT UP, when I brought him up in conversation. But a generation has passed; art exhibits centered around the AIDS crisis is not the defining issue it once was and Kramer's name is a different conversation. People live with HIV as a manageable condition, and young people today aren't forced to experience the seemingly unending passing of friends, lovers and mentors that my own generation lost. They have other problems.

The works shown here are less militant and somewhat muted from what I would've expected from an exhibit concerning sexual knowing. These artists don't lean on the context of Robert Mapplethorpe and David Wojnarowicz whose ballsy, brave styles defined a generation of what it meant to come of age as a sexual person. Works that approach high conversation like, *Bullet, Gun, Penis* (Kimberly Austin, 1995 Van Dyke print and cyanotype on silk and muslin), *Watermarks: Vagina* (Shea Gordon Festoff, 2003, archival pigment print) and *Empire* (KC Crow-Maddux, 2012 archival pigment print and plywood) really tests the waters with thought-provoking ideas. Linda Lighton's three clay and/or ceramic wall pieces touch on fertility and sensuality.

*Me So Horny* (Lori Raye Erickson, 2012, assemblage) is an example of humor as a way to mask seriousness. Her worded shadow box of sexual tricks like "Dirty Sanchez" and "Felching" (look them up yourself; I won't tell you here!) can make one laugh, but might also be intriguing enough to consider.

The ways humans change themselves to adhere to societal standards couldn't be clearer than *I Changed for a Boy, Fran* (Samantha Persons 2012, stickers, highlighters, ball point pen, fake blood glitter, White Out, vinyl letters, markers on a "Selena Gomez" *Tigerbeat* poster). Persons confront influences that morph into objects of obsession. Perpetrated as a schoolgirl's notebook ponderings, it takes a deeper look at the idealism and chronic suffering one often endures in being attractive to another.

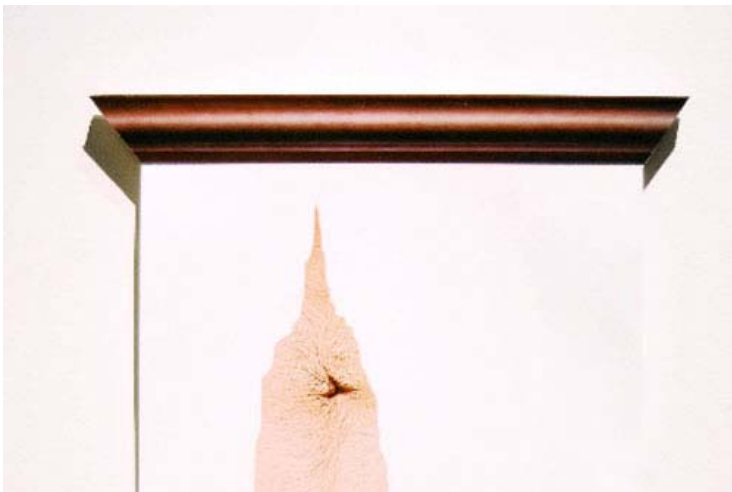
A huge disappointment of this show is the placement of author and columnist Dan Savage's video display of *It Gets Better* (a national youth suicide campaign he initiated) and *Aeon* (Parker Tighman 2010-2011, silver gelatin prints from photogram). The Tighman prints of gay suicides and the Savage video are placed at the back of the gallery. You have to walk past everything else before you come to realize this work comes to the core of how splintered the LGBTQQA community can feel from the rest of society until after the fact. Had these works been more in your face right from the start its impact could have been much, much stronger.

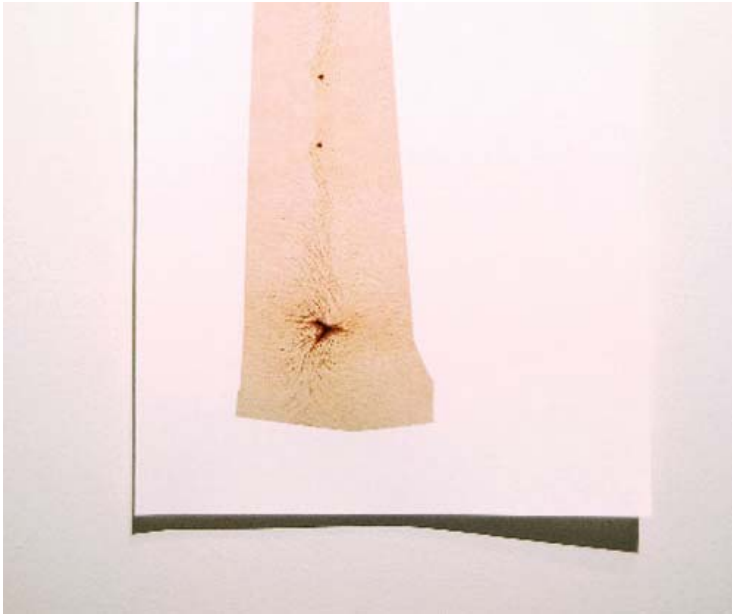
The gay community has always existed with suicide as an unwelcome companion. Young men like Tyler Clementi still jump off bridges because people like Dahrin Ravi cannot get past the existence of fundamental differences and to just let it be. Clementi committed suicide apparently upon discovering his roommate Ravi webcammed and invited people to witness his encounter with another man. Ravi was recently found guilty of hate crimes and awaits sentencing. Stupidity still runs rampant and I wish that were the prevailing motive for this show. American society still faces a lot of puzzling out over the difficulties of being a sexual adult.

This is a really interesting show that portrays true love and bravery in some parts, but also sustains a sensual deficit in others. No matter the theme, I would like to see Kansas City artists and galleries continue plunging into deeper waters that keep people talking like Cara and Cabezas is doing here, that keeps pushing an honest conversation without fear of reprisal. The media hits us over the head with consuming ideals of sexuality and all its flavors. I would like to see more Kansas City galleries plunge into deeper waters without fear of reprisal.



Job Piston, *Hillary*, 2011 photogram.





KC Crow-Maddux, *Empire*, 2012, archival pigment print and plywood, 19 x 21-1/2", 1/5



Linda Lighton, *Stinger, Tube Worm*, 2005, clay, glaze, lustres, China paint, lustres, 14 x 14,5 x 3,5".



Shea Gordon-Festoff, *Watermarks: Vagina*, 2011, archival pigment print, AP from an edition of 5.

Cory Hinesley, *The World May Be Spinning, but here I am Dancing*,  
2011, digital dura trans print, mixed media installation.

