

Reviews

NEW YORK

BFFA3AE

47 Canal // June 26–August 2

“DTR,” the title of BFFA3AE’s exhibition, is an acronym for “define the relationship”—an apt signifier for a shifting young collective (now a duo, Micaela Durand and Daniel Chew) who appear to find themselves defining their relationship to the art world proper, rather than to each other. The show’s two sections are divided into new and old works, an arrangement that brings to light the conflict between their exuberant internet ephemera and the gallery space.

Newer sculptural and found-object works are arranged in the main gallery: a row of T-shirt fabrics, some draped, some stretched inside a frame; slowly deflating helium balloons wedged in a narrow corridor; a temporary-tattooed orange peel pinned in a corner. The sparse display is elegant in its way, but details like the withering peel and T-shirt stains wink at the viewer, as if to say there’s something goofy about putting stuff in a gallery in the first place. All humor aside, and despite bffa3ae’s humble construction methods, many of the pieces offer a lot to unpack aesthetically. A standout hanging sculpture by Durand is composed of a single found bit of vinyl mesh printed with tulips, a pattern that turns transparent when viewed against light coming through the space’s window or intensifies when viewed through layers of the material. Chew’s printed tees also play with draping and legibility, with text hidden in the cotton’s folds. Gallery etiquette prevents unfurling the fabric to read it.



Micaela Durand, *Protected Memory*, 2014. Found vinyl and meat hooks, dimensions variable. Joerg

The restraint exercised in the front room by Durand and Chew makes the adolescent overflow of the back-room retrospective all the more cathartic, with two screens showing films—including a captivating video of Durand’s MacBook screen as she messes around with found images, set to Marilyn Manson and Eminem—among blacklit piles of aughts-era trash. A line of text, perhaps an origin story, stretches across two walls: “Four kids get caught doing bad things and have to reinvent their lives to stay in school. What they discover grows into something larger, an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.” Given the weird humor that links this to their more mature work, one hopes this chaotic space is one they return to, rather than abandon, as their practice develops. —**Thea Ballard**