

# Next Year's Best & Brightest in Movies, Music, Art, & More

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## THE NEW PERFORMER: XAVIER CHA

xaviercha

"It's always been a challenge for me to conceive of a straightforward sculpture or painting," says Xavier Cha, the Bushwick-based performance artist whose past works have involved a bodysuit carpeted in comrows, a broodingnagian-size Horn of Plenty, and a dancing shrimp. "For me, it's an attraction to the tangibility of space—how objects, people, and ideas expand beyond the physical space they occupy."

Though mostly raised in Dallas, Cha was born in Los Angeles, the city where she returned to cut her artistic teeth by transforming performers—herself included—into human advertisements (note the dancing shrimp). A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, she presented her first gallery show at New York's Taxer and Spengemann in 2006. In a smart riposte to the strictures of her field, she invited performers of all stripes—strippers, jazz musicians, opera singers—to join her in an unhinged, '60s-style happening. In the same space three years later, she merged satellite pictures of Saturn's rings with spa imagery "to speak to the sterile spirituality or 'zen' that's often associated with treating yourself," she says.

Last summer, for her show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, she outfitted performers she'd selected with a camera rig called the Doggicam Bodymount (though distinct, it shares much in common with the SnorriCam, a favorite of horror movie directors)—the lens pointed directly at the face of each performer as he or she moved individually about the museum's lobby. The resulting footage was screened while the next performer saddled up.

"When I experience something powerful, especially in film, literature, music, or dance, there's a specific feeling of heart-wrenching emptiness, of being a thin cold hollow shell, like your being has been sucked out, or falls out from beneath you into a black hole," she says when I ask what it is she hopes to communicate with her art. "Not to be dark, but I love when things make me feel like this. I hope to make others feel it to some degree. It's like being reset."

With performance art on a steady climb—historically, the genre has thrived in tough economic times—Cha is eager to keep busy. "I have future performances brewing, just awaiting the opportunity and funding to produce them," she says. "I guess I just need to remember how potentially powerful and influential one person can be—and to always enjoy." —MC.  
*Photo by Nick D'Emilio.*

**XAVIER LIKES:** Tandem Bar, NYC