



Jeanne Claire van Ryzin
Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012

In 2008 when Mads Lynnerup had a solo exhibit at Lora Reynolds Gallery, he showed, among other pieces, "Band-Aid," 1,000 flesh-colored plastic strips arranged on the wall to form a giant bandage.

He also displayed a photograph of himself in front of a giant image of an "I (heart) NYC" coffee cup while wearing a T-shirt that read "I (heart) NYC More Than You Do."

Nearby both "Band-Aid" and the photograph was what looked to be the gallery's front desk, a vaguely minimalist higher-than-average counter made of plain plywood with a tasteful vase and flowers, a guest book and other usual gallery fliers.

As you approached the counter it looked like you could see just the top of someone's head, but it was actually just a mannequin head with a wig propped on a mop.

Called "Gallery Counter," it was Lynnerup's wryly funny comment on the "gallerina," the stylish and attractive young woman employed to sit behind the front desk of New York galleries but who can't possibly be bothered to acknowledge a visitor's presence let alone answer a question.

At the time of his 2008 exhibit — his first solo show, actually — Lynnerup, who is from Denmark, was a graduate student at Columbia University. He's since graduated and now divides his time between Brooklyn and Copenhagen.

Lynnerup is a prankster, distilling social conventions and cultural trends and needling them until they start to fall apart, thus exposing their absurdities.

In his current exhibit, "Help is on the Way," Lynnerup pokes at the usual preciousness of the art object while also simultaneously mocking our aspirational desires and vanities.

Many of the works on display are subtly interactive. If you see a smudge on the white wall behind "Exercising Grill," a muscular geometric metal apparatus affixed to the wall, that's because the thing — though it is also an art work — is actually climbable. It's Lynnerup's ersatz fitness equipment. At the exhibit's opening, Lynnerup and three others climbed and hung from "Exercising Grill" in a brief performance as workout session.

The foursome also made use of "Soul Stretching," yoga mats each embellished with a 1980s-style inspirational photo. They hang on the gallery wall now, and, yes, you can take them down and try out your best tree pose.

And then there's "Body Rock," a deliberately fake-looking boulder made of foam and plywood and painted in rainbow colors. Divided into four pieces, each with a handle, "Body Rock" doubles as a goofy dumbbell set.

Forget that you typically can't touch most rarefied art objects. In this exhibit, Lynnerup not only invites you to touch but also to work out with his art.

Indeed, Lynnerup upends our desire for physical perfection with his "Exercise Your Artist" series of collaged photographs.

Again using a proto-digital aesthetic sensibility reminiscent of the 1980s (think early Photoshop art), Lynnerup gives us exercise demonstration images that in their total awkwardness say plenty about how easily and unfailingly we pursue perfection.

lora reynolds gallery

Like the schmaltzy waterfall and sunset scenes plastered on Lynnerup's quirky yoga mats, the "Exercise" images comment on our never-ending need to idealize, both ourselves and art.