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THIS TALK WE HAVE / THIS TALK WE HAVE HAD / THIS TALK WE HAVE/ HAVE HAD

7 July - 5 August

David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Pausing halfway through one of his uniquely crafted, anti-grammatical songs, a sweaty Brendan Fowler stated, 'This is body art, but this isn't bossy body art.' Certainly, Paul McCarthy's ketchup flinging Bossy Burger was nowhere to be seen on this night, replaced instead by a collective happening of experimental music and soft politics. Fowler, who curated this exhibition, brought together three performances on the opening night, a series that was repeated across three nights in the show's first week.

Each evening, Fowler opened and was followed by Luke Fishbeck (under the name Lucky Dragons) and, later, Chris Johanson. Two participants in the exhibition were present in documented performance, a spoof video newscast submitted by Wynne Greenwood and K8 Hardy, entitled *New Report* (2005), and photographs of participants in a human pyramid by Emily Roysdon, *Strategic Form* (2006).

The mood of the opening night performances was simple: see it, hear it, be it. As each performer took their place, the audience became an inescapable collaborator. Fowler opened the evening with his convulsive songs, each coming across as an ad-hoc speech set to the beat of its own lyrical intonation. Fowler's jagged personal accounts and affectionate interaction with the audience left attendees feeling an emotional proximity to the performer. Fishbeck followed appropriately, unveiling his cuddle-inducing electronic music machine built of

long, yarn-covered wires and a sampler. The wires wound their way through the audience, soon revealing that each human touch to these dangly instruments created tonal amplification; when someone holding the wire was grasped by someone else, the sounds further warped. The process, complete with awkward giggles and glances, quickly transformed the audience into a writhing, massaging body.

Following this soft-core engagement, Chris Johanson appeared as an alien and extolled the virtues of peace, love and understanding, dressed in an appropriately naïve costume. The gallery was left pulsating as Johanson ended his performance with an extraterrestrial-infused, steel drum music dance party.

The following day, in a gallery emptied of audience and performers, an exhibition was left over. Those who had performed left only the barest documentation of their antics, while those who had not, mounted only documentation. Fowler left two scrawled sheets of song lyrics pinned to the wall. A linguistic record of a performance past, these broadsides also insinuated future performance on the part of their reader, effectively multiplying Fowler's song beyond the artist himself. Though none of the works in the show were interactive, they each instigated this notion of audience imitation. Johanson's vacant costume strewn on an empty stage, or Roysdon's shots of amateur acrobatic actionists, appealed to a sense of collusion. In this scenario, the line between audience and performer dispersed, a hierarchy appeared broken, and art's typical politic of restraint was demolished, at least for a moment. *Chris Balaschak*

Wynne Greenwood & K8 Hardy,
New Report, 2005, digital video,
12 min, video still.
Courtesy the artist and Reena
Spaulings Fine Art, New York