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GalleristNY

Shooting the Lobster, Martos Prepares Independent Project Space



The announcement for Chris Martin's exhibition.
(Courtesy Shoot the Lobster)

As far as gallery names go, it's hard to think of any as wonderfully bizarre as the one debuting in Chelsea tonight: Shoot the Lobster.

"It's from a Clash song," curator Mary Grace Wright, who's heading the project, explained. (Sure enough, the band's 1981 single "Magnificent Seven" contains these lines: "Italian mobster shoots a lobster / Seafood restaurant gets out of hand.")

Shoot the Lobster will occupy the back room of the Martos Gallery at 540 West 29th Street. "We've decided to completely transform it and just have it be a project space," Ms. Wright said. "It's going to be a whole separate entity with its own programming."

First up, tonight, is Brooklyn artist Chris Martin, who's best known as a painter and recently had a superb one-person show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, down on 26th Street. Here he's showing an installation, which is not for sale. (In the front room, Martos is opening a four-person show called "New Traditionalists.")

“He was just flipping through a *National Geographic*, and he found the reference material that [Martin] Kippenberger used for *Return of the Dead Mother with New Problems*,” Ms. Wright said, referring to a 1984 painting that the German artist painted from a photograph. The original magazine page has found a place in Mr. Martin’s installation.

Going forward, Ms. Wright said, Shoot the Lobster will hosts shows of both young and established artists, as well as performances and larger, curated group shows. (A show by the young painter Joshua Smith is scheduled for April 26.) Some projects may only last a night, others perhaps just two weeks—a welcome antidote to the glacial pacing of many programs at large galleries in the neighborhood, where two-month-long shows have become increasingly common.

“I think it’s important because it gives us more flexibility to work with artists,” Ms. Wright said, when asked about the space’s model, which is somewhat unusual for Chelsea. She added that Martos has also stopped representing artists, instead working on a project-by-project basis. “It just stems from us wanting to produce what we want to produce, instead of worrying about rules.”

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