

MEGAN SOLIS

I'M HOT AND READY

April 16 – June 28, 2019 • Foyer Gallery



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Freedman Gallery

I'm Hot and Ready by Megan Solis is a video compilation of past online performances in which the artist highlights the isolation and perils of the generations raised with the internet. Solis created a new work for the Freedman Gallery using the online archives from a project originally produced for Performance Art Houston. These segments feature a portion of her larger project included in *Not Like the Other*, a performance residency on Instagram that was curated by art critic and *Glassstire* publisher, Brandon Zech.

Like a voyeuristic screen sharing episode, *I'm Hot and Ready* begins by viewing the Instagram page for Performance Art Houston via a laptop web browser. Address tabs visible along the top of the recording reveal the artist's most recent searches: CaFÉ (Call for Entry), a comprehensive site that lists artist opportunities; College Art Association, a member-based organization that promotes scholarship and education in the visual arts; ResArtis, a listing site for artist residencies available all over the world; ArtSlant a networking platform, events calendar, and magazine for visual art; NURTUREart, a nonprofit that supports emerging artists; Art21, featuring an amazing series of videos about contemporary artists, Alliance of Artist Communities, specifically showing a page for tips on applying for residencies; and Working Artist Org, a promotion platform for contemporary art — Solis has been busy. The artist allows the viewer to contrast the ideas of good versus bad attributes of the internet by offering a glimpse into past searches. Here, the array of resources now available to artists, thanks to the World Wide Web, are shown directly above the display of social ills also spawned by the internet.

Scrolling through square images, the cursor clicks on the first performance clip of the series. Solis started her Instagram take-over on October 10, 2016, with *30-day shred part 1*. Sporting a synthetic face and wig, Melissa, a soft-bodied figure in an obnoxious velour sweat suit, bounces to the sounds of a Jillian Michaels workout video — ironically exercising while wearing a princess tiara with Little Caesars pizza and Pepsi soda on her mat. As she starts to lose focus, as well as her wig and her motivation, Melissa begins to enjoy

the pizza through the opening of her fabric face, repeatedly getting the greasy pie stuck in her hair. To the right of the video, we are introduced to her frenemy and internet troll, Jessica Von Beautiful, who writes "EW!!!! You are so gross!"

Melissa is the epitome of poor body issues, with a dash of self-grandeur and narcissism which plagues the selfie-taking generation labeled as "lazy, entitled, selfish and shallow."¹ The viewer feels badly for her amplified, ridiculous state. Jessica Von Beautiful personifies the hate-mongering commenters that are now a rampant epidemic online. Von Beautiful highlights how the internet has become the new road-rage setting: a safe-haven for bulling and acting outside the realms of which society considers polite social norms that are expected for in-person interaction. In part 4 Jessica calls Melissa "fat" and goes on to call her "gross" in another post.

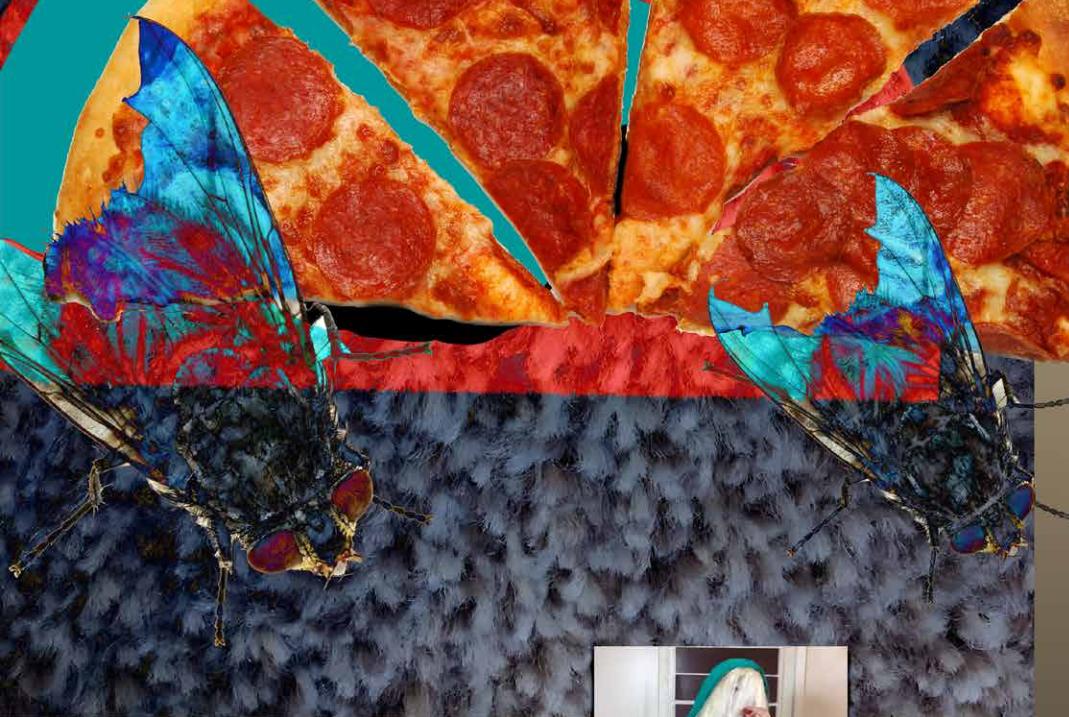
Zech's curatorial statement explains that he gathered artists who "occupy a liminal role in their environment," and that "Megan Solis deals with aspects of social anxiety and hyperawareness." Solis embodies characters in her performances that in many ways reflect elements of herself or her generation. The artist works with ideas of body dysmorphia, general unease, and a bold but self-deprecating humor.

Solis's multifaceted practice encompasses easel and mural painting, assemblage, collage, soft sculpture, installation, and performance. This body of work connects to a longer lineage of post-internet practice within her oeuvre that offers commentary and critique on the impact that the internet and technology have on culture and human interactions, including online dating and social media.

In an *Artists Looking at Art* lecture series² interview with the McNay Art Museum's Head of Curatorial Affairs, Rene Paul Barilleaux, Solis said she filmed *I'm Hot and Ready* largely using a selfie-stick, wishing to demonstrate the "spectacle" and "train-wreck" of the lives we witness on social media.

¹ Joel Stein. "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation" *Time*. May 20, 2013. <http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/>

² *Artists Looking at Art* Series Interview with Rene Paul Barilleaux, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX. August 17, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/231585983>



I'm Hot and Ready, 2018
digital collage

Solis is a graduate student with a concentration in sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design. She has exhibited at Czong Institute of Contemporary Art Museum, Gimpo, South Korea; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas; and Ghost Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to the online residency with Performance Art Houston, Solis has had on site artist residencies with exhibitions and publications in Arteles Artist Center, Haukijärvi, Finland and Hello Studios, San Antonio, Texas. Her work has been written about in many media outlets and she is one of the seven artists highlighted by *Glasstire* in 2018 as “The Most Twisted Texas Artists.”

The Freedman Gallery at Albright College, named after former Albright trustee and alumna Doris Chanin Freedman, is located on the ground floor of the Center for the Arts. Since its inception, the gallery focuses primarily on contemporary, living, American artists and hosts approximately twelve exhibitions each year rotating in the Main Gallery, Project Space, and Foyer Gallery. Freedman Gallery is located at 13th & Bern Streets, Reading, PA 19612. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m. The gallery is closed on Mondays, holidays, breaks and summer. ([See Albright.edu/calendar](http://www.albright.edu/calendar)).

Founded in 1856, Albright College educates creative, curious students to become adaptable, global citizens who discover and reach their full potential. The college's flexible interdisciplinary curriculum encourages students to combine majors and disciplines to create individualized academic programs. Close faculty mentorship, numerous experiential learning options, and a diverse, supportive and nurturing community of scholars and learners help students exceed their own expectations and graduate with a commitment to a lifetime of service and learning. Located in Reading, Pennsylvania, Albright enrolls more than 1,800 full-time undergraduates and 700 adult learners and graduate students.

Follow the CFA and the Artist on Instagram.



Text written by Alana J. Coates, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, Freedman Gallery

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Cover image: *I'm Hot and Ready*, 2018 digital collage