

Art

Art Fag City: Art on the Cheap

By Paddy Johnson

The vast majority of us work with the understanding that objects hanging on gallery walls cost more than we have. This assumption isn't entirely accurate, as there's always some piece of garbage inaccurately adorned with an "inexpensive" price tag, but finding *good* art that doesn't require a small loan to purchase can be a largely unrewarding task.

Thankfully, Christmas tends to inspire bounty not just in knickknack displays but art ephemera. Andreas Grimm, for example, sells one-of-a-kind, nonfunctioning objects at a temporary museum store located inside a larger installation by Jonathan Berger. An ashtray made out of paper, a ski mask too small to wear, and a shirt dyed with impermanent inks typically run anywhere from 7 to 50 dollars per piece and will last, well, probably about as long as you'd think.

Also in the ephemeral vein, BravinLee's group show, "Ornament: Ho Hum All Ye Faithful," brings together 65 artists working in a variety of media. Ranging from less than 10 dollars to the low thousands, "Ornament" speaks to the idea of the Christmas trimmings inspiring such personal favorites as Jim Butler's gorgeous glowing glass boot and **Joan Linder's** nude paper dolls depicting large-breasted women and hard-penis'd men. Those wishing for their own nudie ornaments will need to act fast; the line for penile Christmas cheer is bound to be long, and as a one-of-a-kind work, it's not likely to stick around.

For those who are working with a very limited budget, online art remains the best place to get a deal. Gallerist Jen Bekman's newest project, "20x200", introduces new artwork twice weekly for only 20 bucks a pop. Admittedly, the works are humble — 8 ½ x 11 inches for the edition of 200 — but Bekman offers a few more size and pricing options than are immediately apparent from the site's name. For \$200, art lovers can purchase a 17 x 22 inch work in an edition of 20, or, for \$1,800 more, a 30 x 40 inch print with an edition size of only two. All of this is a steal, especially when you consider the gallerist represents many of these artists and actively promotes their work offline.

Further mixing online and offline exhibitions, Pocket Utopia's owner Austin Thomas curates "Etsy.com", a show that highlights works selected from the site with the same name. The online outfit dedicates itself to the buying and selling of handmade objects, and while the price range of work varies, it all sells for less than \$300. Participants from this show have chosen to use their online names for the exhibition, which not only adds an honest and authentic touch to the show, but makes finding additional works by the same artist on the site easy.

Speaking to the general idea that identifying good, inexpensive art often leads to other like-minded work, my research has yielded more places than I have the space to discuss. FrontRoom's newly launched editions and multiples gallery, the Lower East Side's Holiday Print Sale, the well known Pierogi flatfiles, Hogar Collection, artforemptywalls.com, McCaig Welles and Cinders all carry excellent artwork for less than \$1,000, a lot of it for much, much less.

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