



The leading source of art coverage since 1902.

Search this site

[Subscribe](#)
[Give a Gift](#)
[Back Issues](#)
[Digital Editions](#)

NEWS



DREAM WARRIOR: AN INTERVIEW WITH, AND ABOUT, FREDDY, A PSEUDONYMOUS NEW BALTIMORE GALLERY

BY *Andrew Russeth* POSTED 08/12/14

'Freddy is Dada in spirit. We're interested in work that blurs the lines between fact and fiction.'

Like 99 8+1 0

Back in early June, an e-mail landed in my inbox from someone named Freddy announcing the opening of a gallery in Baltimore that would show work by “burgeoning, established, and enigmatic artists,” beginning with a two-person show by young artists Tisch Abelow and Peter Harkawik.

It quickly became clear that Freddy is not a real person. The letter continues, “Outside of Baltimore, the gallery exists on the screen like Freddy Krueger exists in dreams.” That sounded intriguing—Reena Spaulings meets Wes Craven!—and so, after following the gallery’s action online for the past two months, I reached out to Freddy to see if he or she would be willing to do an interview. Freddy agreed, on the condition that we not discuss the rumors about his or her identity. That seemed like a fair deal. Our e-mail conversation follows below.

I’m pretty sure that the first I time I heard about Freddy was when your e-mail announcing its opening landed in my inbox back in early June, and then you started popping up on Instagram. What made you want to start the gallery, and why in the middle of the summer?

The former artist-run gallery, sophiajacob, hooked us up with the space when they decided to close up shop a few months ago. The storefront itself is a large part of why we started the gallery. We love the location in general—a nice low-key spot just south of historic Seton Hill. sophiajacob put so much care into the aesthetic that once it was in our hands it was literally good to go. Our only adjustment was to put bars on the window and door. We were excited to get started right away so that’s why our first show opened on Friday, June 13th.

The bars look great in the photos I’ve seen of the space, but I take it that was an insurance/security precaution?

Thanks. We put the bars on for security purposes, but we also like that they reference the first *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (at the end of the film there are bars put on all the windows and the doors of Nancy’s house to protect her from Freddy Krueger. Of course, bars can’t hold Freddy!).



Installation view of ‘Tisch Abelow/Peter Harkawik’ at Freddy in Baltimore, June 2014.

FREDDY



William Crawford, *Untitled*, circa 1990s.

FREDDY/AMPERSAND GALLERY

In the letter you sent out announcing the gallery, you said that, “Given its unique location outside of a major art metropolis, much of Freddy’s audience will be online.” What’s the in-person audience been like? Have people ventured over from those metropolises? Are collectors swinging through?

Both openings have been well attended by the local artist community. I think there’s a good buzz around the space because it’s new and we’re doing something different. Local press has been paying us attention, which is welcomed. Cara Ober of BmoreArt wrote an interesting article about the William Crawford show titled, “Bringing UnSexy Back.” That show ruffled a few feathers. A few artists and at least one curator from New York have made trips to Baltimore to see the gallery. We like that it’s off the regular beaten art track. You might have to travel a few hours or more to come here to see a show, but we think that makes the experience more memorable because you also get to visit the city of Baltimore. There are other art venues to visit in Baltimore such as Rowhouse

Project, Franklin St., and Springsteen.

Really interesting about the audience, and cool that people are coming through. I’m also really curious about the online aspect of this. There’s been a lot written recently about the ways in which the distribution of digital images is altering the way art is made and displayed (thinking of Michael Sanchez’s “2011” in *Artforum* particularly). Where do you feel you fit in relation to that phenomenon? Are you thinking about how the jpegs will read on *Contemporary Art Daily* and Instagram? (With the exception, maybe, of Tisch Abelow’s work, in some incidental way, it doesn’t seem like what you’re hanging is in any way involved with that.)



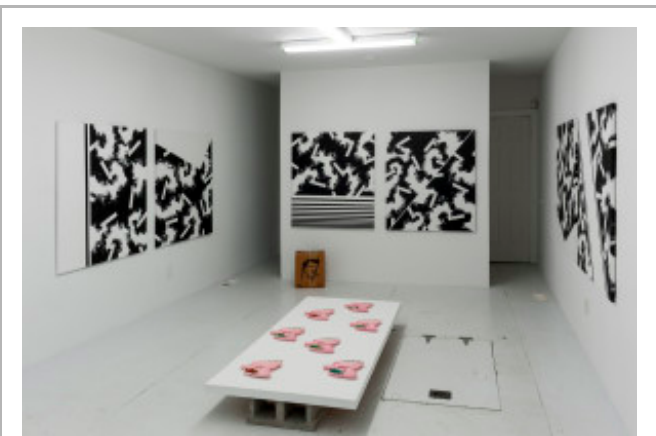
Installation view of ‘Tisch Abelow/Peter Harkawik’ at Freddy in Baltimore, June 2014.

FREDDY

First, I should say, that Freddy is an art project in and of itself. We're interested in Baltimore as a location specifically because it is not an art center. If you are viewing the shows via your iPhone or computer then there's a strong possibility that you are located elsewhere. This immediately creates a certain level of removal and perhaps mystery. We're thinking a lot about location and how location informs an art-viewing experience. In this instance, a visit to Baltimore to see a show at Freddy would most likely require special planning since most of us don't spontaneously end up on West Franklin Street in Baltimore on a daily, weekly, monthly, or even yearly basis.

To discuss this as an art project—and I'm sorry, because I'm sure everyone has asked you this question—how did you decide on the Freddy Krueger name? Pretty sweet choice. And what's your favorite Krueger film?

When I was in high school I rented every horror movie from the local video store and watched one or two a night for an entire summer. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) is still one of my favorite movies. The scene when Freddy's arms are extended as he chases Tina down the dark alleyway makes me smile every time. My favorite Freddy death scene is in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3–Dream Warriors* (1987), when Freddy appears on the television and then kills a young aspiring actress by shoving her head into the TV after exclaiming, “Welcome to primetime, bitch!” Freddy is so dark and twisted and funny.



Installation view of 'Freddy's Addiction,' with work by MacGregor Harp, Becky Howland, and Robert Loughlin.

Thank you for those clips. Nice stuff. (Horror films scare the hell out of me.) “Dark and twisted and funny” is an interesting string of adjectives. That would seem to fit a fair amount of the art you're showing, like William Crawford. What's your criteria for what to show, and how did you get into Crawford?

Freddy is Dada in spirit. We're interested in work that blurs the lines between fact and fiction. The first time I saw William Crawford's drawings was about a year ago at the NY Art Book Fair. I thought they were unforgettable—not like anything I'd seen before—a perfect fit for Freddy. We were so happy that Myles

Haselhorst of Ampersand Gallery in Portland agreed to consign us twenty framed works for the show. Myles was [just interviewed by Cara Ober in BmoreArt](#), which I recommend checking out if you're interested in learning more about the back story. We're interested in presenting exhibitions that wouldn't happen in Baltimore otherwise—exhibitions that are critical minded. [Nicholas Buffon](#) will be showing new work at Freddy in September. Buffon's show is titled, "Hit The Road," and deals with the idea of a road trip.

Love Nicholas Buffon. That sounds like a great show. And thanks for the link to the interview with Myles Haselhorst, which nicely explains those ruffled feathers. This past Friday you opened show number three, with works by MacGregor Harp, Becky Howland, and Robert Loughlin—a pretty unusual mixture of artists. ([Very impressed that the photos are already up, by the way.](#)) What other plans do you have for the space, and are there any other forms you'd like Freddy to take? (Does Freddy make work, for instance?)

Yea—Buffon is great! We're also obsessed with Becky Howland's "Lung Cancer Ashtrays." The first time I saw the ashtrays was only a few weeks ago in New York at [a group show James Michael Shaeffer, Jr. put together at Grand Century](#). It was love at first sight. Plans to do a show of paintings by Keith Mayerson are in the works. We're also excited to present an exhibition of photographs spanning more than a decade by Ross Bleckner. Title for the Bleckner show is "Freddy Presents Dick." Freddy hasn't made any work yet, but thanks for the idea, Andrew—that's an interesting thought. Freddy is a temporary, site-specific project, but it could easily mutate into other forms in the future.



About Andrew Russeth

Co-Executive Editor of *ARTnews*

[View all posts by Andrew Russeth](#) →