

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Sam, Sherman. 'Reviews: Anthea Hamilton'. *Artforum* Online. October 2012

ARTFORUM

Anthea Hamilton FIRSTSITE

Lewis Gardens, High Street
September 8 - November 25



Anthea Hamilton, *Karl Lagerfeld Bean Counter*, 2012, thermoformed acrylic, wood, digital print, Désirée potatoes, buckwheat, dimensions variable.

Visitors to this public space are greeted by three gigantic images of John Travolta's heads taken from his *Staying Alive* days on an arching curved wall, while music from *Saturday Night Fever* from a nearby video work playfully wafts in the air. Youthful masculinity such as Travolta's seems to be a point of interest for Anthea Hamilton's art. It is not just the male body that garners attention here, though: In a gallery painted entirely with chroma-key blue, large white cutout silhouettes of women's legs held together by clamps and pieces of wood create a surreal parade of standing sculptures.

Essentially assembling work through a cut-and-paste aesthetic, Hamilton takes bricolage to another level by creating installations and knee-high horizontal assemblages as if she were unpacking a Joseph Cornell. Leo Steinberg's analysis of Robert Rauschenberg's compositional

logic as that of a flatbed picture plane, where information is distributed across a real horizontal surface as on a desktop rather than in a fictive naturalistic space, seems equally applicable to the way Hamilton structures her sexy and playful output.

The sexuality on display also possesses a campy trait, comparable to the arched innuendos of British "Carry On" films, such as *Carry On up the Kyhber* (1968) or *Carry On Matron* (1972). For example, a large reclining black-and-white cutout of a hairy-chested man in a mankini—or wrestling outfit, which is more likely—turns out to be a young Karl Lagerfeld, whose sexiness is deflated by several Désirée potatoes and a pile of buckwheat included in the piece. Hamilton's iconography seems to be referring to different forms of base desire, one the province of the eyes and another of the stomach.

— Sherman Sam

<https://www.artforum.com/picks/anthea-hamilton-36442>