

'New York Minute,' Snapshot of a City's Art Scene

By [Ivan Juritz](#)

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The phrase a “New York minute” means an instant — a speedy moment reflective of that fast-paced, vibrant city. The exhibit of that name on at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture does expound on the drive, the speed and danger of a city, but it can also leave you a little dizzy.

Curated by Kathy Grayson, art critic and director of New York’s Deitch gallery, the exhibit brings together 60 artists who all know the city and each other very well.

“All these artists have exhibited together, partied together, dated each other, studied together, or painted together with less than two levels of removal from each other,” Grayson said in a press release. “This exhibition truly represents a cross section of an expanded artist community.”

Among those on show are Dash Snow, Aurel Schmidt and Barry McGee.

The exhibit is split into three subheadings, “Street Punks,” or frank and controversial art, “Wild Figuration,” more comic and graphic work, and “New Abstraction.” The name of the exhibit and the subheadings are a very vague guide, as even some artists such as Canada’s Aurel Shmidt, known for her highly detailed if often disturbing pencil drawings, weren’t too sure how they ended up in which section: “I’m not a street punk — whatever that means!” Shmidt said.

It’s unlikely that any of the artists had the Eagles in mind, but the band’s 1990s song “New York Minute” has the lyric: “Things can get a little strange / In a New York minute.” And things often do in Garage, too.

The sexually explicit, in varying forms, proves a central fascination for many of the artists, as does an obsession with junk.

Dash Snow’s brilliant collage of Polaroid prints of a pregnant woman and a baby, interspersed with gaudy pictures of derelict swimming pools, toilets and other symbols of waste seems to question the idea of offensiveness. Blown up and displayed in a group of 50, the photos seem distasteful, without actually containing anything directly offensive. Even after close inspection it is hard to shake the feeling of looking at something illicit.

Anton Belov, Garage’s curator, suggested that the exhibition would be fine for children as long as they are accompanied by an adult, even though Garage’s web site does officially state that the exhibit is not for children under the age of 16.

“It is up to the guide to make the exhibition suitable,” Belov said. Best of luck to whoever is chosen to be that guide.

As part of “New York Minute,” Garage will also show a series of documentary films about the city called “New York: Downtown.” The 16 films look at the city mainly during the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, featuring New York figures like Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Andy Warhol and even Salvador Dali, whose visit to the city turned into a performance of its own.

Screenings will start with the much-acclaimed 2010 documentary “William S. Burroughs: A Man Within.” All films will be shown in English with Russian subtitles.

“New York Minute” runs at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture until June 5. “New York: Downtown” runs June 17 to July 19. 19A Ulitsa Obrastsova. Tel. 645-0520, www.garageccc.com.

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