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Aunt Nancy at Night Gallery

By Pablo Lopez | June 16, 2016



Aunt Nancy at Night Gallery (2016). Installation view. From left: Andy Robert, *Sunflowers* (2016); Alexandra Noel, *Where is this supposed to be* (2016), Anna Rosen, *Time Table* (2016), Sam Lipp, *Untitled* (2015). Image courtesy of Night Gallery. Photo: Jeff McInane.

Video artist and cult figure, Nelson Sullivan, left behind thousands of hours of footage documenting the drug-addled, debauched, and happily dissolute denizens of the '80s NYC downtown scene. Night Gallery's current show, *Aunt Nancy*, is a speculative return to Sullivan's work and life. Less concerned with Sullivan's downtown exploits, focus is placed on his somewhat depressive domestic origins and habits.

In homage to Sullivan, and in an effort to reimagine and recontextualize his life and practice, the show consists of works by six contemporary artists (including four videos by Sullivan). Sculptures are juxtaposed with paintings of varying scale and scope in an effort to personify the complex incongruities of Sullivan's life, split between his drab South Carolina roots and downtown NYC. The works are

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idiosyncratic and intentionally banal (apropos of Sullivan's documentary style), and most allude to American domesticity as they plumb the internal machinations of personality and memory.

A darkly whimsical tone is struck in Sam Lipp's inkjet-printed portrait of Michael Jackson (*Abuse of Weakness*, 2016), that commands attention throughout the gallery as it intersects with numerous sightlines. Full of lighthearted gravitas, Chloe Seibert's untreated plaster sculpture (*Big Fist*, 2016) adds yet another wrinkle as it hunkers down in space. A consistent kitsch-infused aesthetic and general attitude of irreverence prevails.

Expressionistic and blurry-eyed, an unfamiliar composition of Sullivan's interior life emerges to the delight of those already fascinated with Sullivan's work. For those less interested in the artist's life, *Aunt Nancy* may appear tangential and disjointed, despite its smartly finessed curatorial approach.



Anna Rosen, *Time Table* (2016). Image courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery. Photo by Jeff Mclane.

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