

# ARTFORUM

Washington, DC

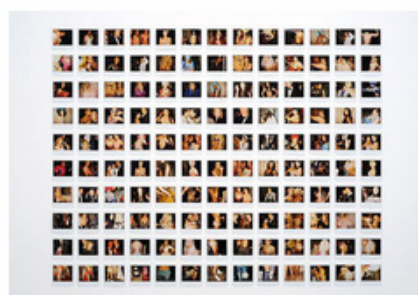
## Jeremy Kost

CONNER CONTEMPORARY ART  
1358 60 Florida Avenue, NE  
January 16–March 13

The JPEG has largely supplanted the analog photograph as the preferred medium for party documentation, conveyed through endless image streams dedicated to the fleeting and residual impressions of last night's party. In his exhibition "Anyone Other than Me," Jeremy Kost strives to reclaim lost ground for the photograph, capturing one thousand (and then some) celebrity and nightlife portraits using Polaroid instant film. In this effort, he is partly successful. The Polaroid deliberately signals to the viewer an effort at displacement: The vernacular, democratic camera stands at odds with the access that gives him truck with the elites of New York's glam subculture. This contrast is most successful when presented in large grids comprising snapshots taken in unedited sequences over the course of a single evening.

These document an array of individual genderfuck performances: A photo shoot of the animated twenty-two-year-old drag star Rainblo underscores the celebrity of both subject and photographer. But with his collages—in which parts of performers are overlaid messily to map out the whole—Kost's Warholesque point grows redundant. His subjects want to be plastic, their identities constructed not just for the camera but by the camera.

Redundancy is a risk in this show. A cautious video featuring a drag queen in full dress promenading in New York reiterates the theatricality of performative identity. But video of drag stateliness is too deliberate to convey the urgency depicted in Kost's Polaroid grids—the inexhaustible social striving that is ultimately his subject and process. Though rare, there are some candid slips—an exhausted grimace or sheen of sweat. These glimpses through the facade tempt the viewer to focus on the familiar among the exotic. Rather, Kost's Polaroid matrices—mapping so many repetitive permutations of access, location, and artifice—make the meticulous mundane, emphasizing the notion that any gender identification is ineluctably performance.



Jeremy Kost, *Life Ball 2009 (the Party Don't Stop) May 18, 2009: 9:30pm to 4am (Vienna, Austria), 2009*, 130 Polaroids, 47 x 61".

— Kriston Capps