

# SMALL A PROJECTS

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## **ARE YOU WITH ME?**

**Jessica Jackson Hutchins  
Jennifer West  
Jesse Willenbring**

**January 4 – February 8 2009**

**Opening reception January 4, 4-8 pm**

In accordance with New Year's Eve customs of augury, bacchanals, and resolutions, we are all invited to join in a search for meaning in the seemingly prosaic realm of food and drink. Janus – January's namesake – was the two-faced god of Ancient Rome, the patron of both concrete and abstract beginnings and endings. Able to see both the future and past, she represented the middle point between barbarity and civility, youth and adulthood and by extension the muck of the past and the hope of the future.

Are you with me?

Jessica Jackson Hutchins provides a dinner table of eccentric yet functional vessels that point equally toward the sublime and the mundane. In a private dinner shortly after the opening, the vessels will be used for a meal; wine will be imbibed, relationships affirmed and hope expressed for abundance or prosperity. Like the ancients, we may pray for rain or some other form of subsistence (it looks like we may need it). Guests will participate, dirtying ceramics, and assisting with a collaboration between Jennifer West and Jessica Hutchins as film stock is subjected to alchemical processes, physical mess, and social ritual.

A projected film by Jennifer West, *Skinnydipping Carbon Beach Malibu Film – In front of David Geffen's House* is the hypnotic, hallucinatory backdrop for this tableau. West's films pass fluidly between abstraction and representational imagery and explore how sensual experience is felt in both bodily and mental ways. The films are made by direct physical actions to the film emulsion; West has ridden motorcycles on film, cooked it and set it on fire. The extended title is the recipe for a happening as well as a the visual object: *16MM Color and B & W film negative sprayed with fried pickle juice, painted with Bloody Mary's using celery stalks & ash from the Malibu fires, submerged in the ocean – skinnydipping by Renee Lotenero, Lia Trinko-Browner, Karen Liebowitz & Jwest – lit by the full moon & search lights*. West's titles are both literal and evocative and in this work freedom, democracy and expression meet the formal language of abstraction through food, drink and play.

Jesse Willenbring is a painter, a dinner host and a co-conspirator. Willenbring's paintings make evident an unabashedly optimistic approach to painting, where references, appropriation and intuition are sources of pleasure. His material investigations are both self-indulgent and generous; as any good host he provides and partakes in the meal. Sometimes he makes a joke. Willenbring describes his paintings as a swashbuckling

adventure through a thicket of brambles. Thorns, sap and goo leave us bloodied and sticky with sweat. The painter and adventurers emerge, however, holding a lovely flower unique inside shrub shit.

Jessica Jackson Hutchins has had recent solo exhibitions with Derek Eller, New York and Small A Projects, Portland, Oregon. Her work is included in the upcoming group exhibitions *Dirt on Delight*, ICA Philadelphia, *Expanded Possibilities*, the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum and *The Shape of Things to Come* at The Saatchi Gallery. Jennifer West's recent solo exhibitions include *Vilma Gold*, London and *White Columns*, New York and a forthcoming exhibition at Marc Foxx in Los Angeles. Recent group exhibitions include *The Station* in Miami (curated by Shamim Momin and Nate Lowman), *ARTLV 08* at the Tel Aviv Museum, and *Drawing on Film* at the Drawing Center. Jesse Willenbring is an MFA candidate at Hunter College and the organizer of *Rose Colored Glasses*, a series of dinners hosted at Gavin Brown's Passerby in 2008. Both Jennifer West and Jesse Willenbring were included in *Me, You, You (A Ventriloquy)*, a group show organized by Carter Mull at Small A Projects, Portland in 2007.

The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday, noon-six pm. Please contact the gallery for images or more information.