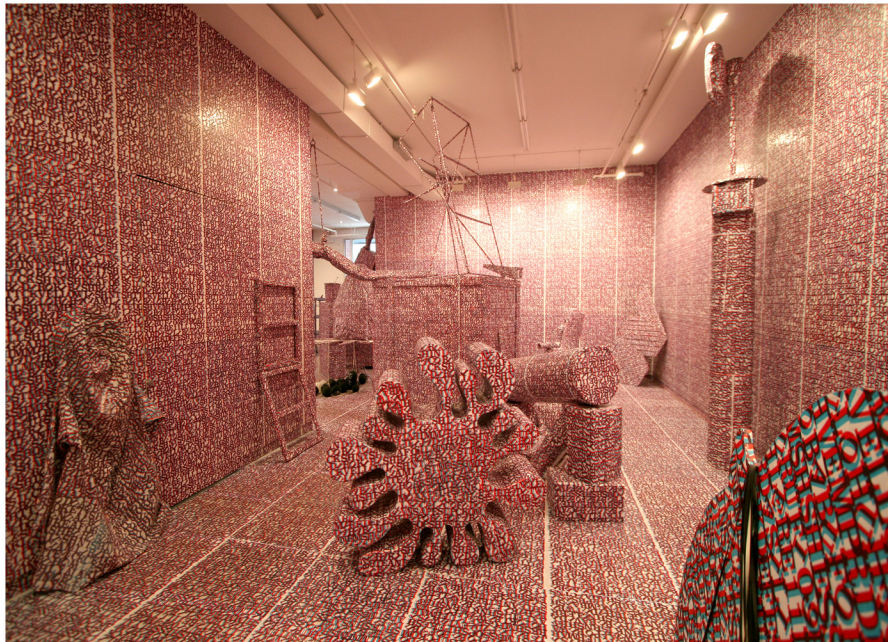


## assume vivid astro focus at John Connelly Presents

Assume vivid astro focus (aka Eli Sudbrack) has made a number of installations characterized by an exuberant profusion of kitschy pop images, decorative motifs, light and sound. He often works in collaboration with other artists. For a show at John Connelly Presents, avaf arranged for viewers to circulate among several drastically different rooms, each tuned to affect a different combination of the senses. There was a video installation in the rear by U.K. artist Giles Round, and a dark, narrow basement corridor fitted with a row of five neon sculptures accompanied by a pulsing, looped soundtrack. However, the show's dramatic focus was the dialogue set up between the main, L-shaped gallery and the project room in its right rear corner.

In the main gallery, every surface was completely covered with the same wallpaper: Robert Indiana-esque two-by-two grids spelling out a variety of emotion-words were also covered with the wallpaper, although their shapes were recognizable. The withdrawal of all local color and texture, combined with the relentless pounding of the printed text, produced feelings of unease and disorientation.

The project room was closed off except for several viewing portholes. To peek in required a series of exertions, from bend-



View of assume vivid astro focus's exhibition "a very anxious feeling," 2007; at John Connelly Presents.

ing over or kneeling, to climbing into one of the long fabric sheath dresses attached to each hole, to pushing aside the hair from the wigs covering the inside openings. Once one awkwardly wriggled into position, the project room burst into view, presenting a flamboyant installation conceived for avaf's 2006 Tokyo show. The arrangement resembled a disco version of the Brazilian carnival. It included ornate, multicolored wallpaper, circular neon lights, colored reflective hexagons, a cardboard cutout of a muscular, bushy-tailed man labeled "Sodomy," an enormous feathered and sequined stiletto-heeled boot coming out of the rear wall, and

confetti on the floor. (It was also the scene of a performance series over the exhibition's duration.)

This show reframed the idea of the viewer's compulsion to look, as in Duchamp's canonical *Etant donnés*. The party glimpsed through the peepholes looked both irresistible and unattainable.

—Benjamin Lima