

Time Out

New York

SEPTEMBER 27–OCTOBER 3, 2007
ISSUE 626 \$2.99 TIMEOUTNEWYORK.COM

Ryan Trecartin, “I-Be Area”

★★★★★

Elizabeth Dee Gallery,
through Oct 13 (see Chelsea)

What would happen if all the characters appearing in those flickering videos on YouTube got together and decided to put on a show? They might look like the films of Ryan Trecartin, the 26-year-old wunderkind who was the youngest artist in the 2006 Whitney Biennial. Trecartin makes movies with a pack of friends who embody the clones, poseurs, avatars and wanna-bes of contemporary Internet culture. The plots are slippery and almost non-narrative, but his style is so original and refreshing that the work could never be called boring. Often, in fact, it's downright thrilling.

The show is centered around *I-Be Area*, Trecartin's latest film, shown in its 100-minute entirety in a darkened room in the gallery. It's worth watching from beginning to end as it traces a day in the life of I-Be II, the superindependent clone of I-Be, played by Trecartin with a Southern accent. Veering between surrealism and science fiction, Trecartin takes on multiple personae, including a witless Valley girl named Oliver and Pasta, a he-she sweetheart with a Dutch-boy haircut. The artist made all the sets and costumes, giving the film the look of an amateur theater



production—but in a good way, like the work of Kenneth Anger or Paul McCarthy. Pay attention to the script, also written by Trecartin: It's packed with witty allusions, taking shots at the art world, Internet chatrooms, cell-phone filmmakers and self-designated blog stars.

The installations on view at the gallery are made from materials reclaimed from the movie set. *Jamie's Band*, a sculpture built out of school lockers and classroom desk-chairs, is one element of the final scene when the narrative devolves into a brawl-like be-in for a generation that doesn't quite know what it wants to be or even what *being* means. With his multitude of talents, Trecartin is poised to become the next Matthew Barney, the perfect artist for an era when iPhones, MySpace and *Project Runway* dominate contemporary aesthetics.

—Barbara Pollack