



Scott Ewalt, *BACK IN THE NIGHT: Psychotronic Landscapes, Objects & Souvenirs*  
 March 10 - April 14, 2013  
 Opening Reception, Sunday, March 10, 7-9pm

From March 10 - April 14, 2013, PARTICIPANT INC is proud to present the first major solo exhibition by Scott Ewalt, *BACK IN THE NIGHT: Psychotronic Landscapes, Objects & Souvenirs*. Two decades in the making, the exhibition is a show of nighttime impressions of the visual design of vice. Ewalt's source material is comprised of tactile remnants at the center of psychotronic culture: Times Square from 1966-1996. His close study of historic ephemera and objects leads to portrayals of the alternative, exaggerated, accessible, and base worldview they represent—in which all pleasure is encouraged.

With the early mentorship of neo-burlesque mavericks such as John Sex, Katie K, and International Chryssis, Ewalt came to understand burlesque as the origin of punk. Already interested in the illustrations of John Willie and Stanton, he purchased his first authentic piece of burlesque ephemera, a *Teaserama* poster, from one of its creators, Paula Klaw. In 1987, fascinated with the play of artificial color at night, Ewalt switched from painting to digital painting using the program Pixel Paint, and he began working in nightclubs. He went on to create a short-lived nightclub party called *Burlesque* while finishing his graduate thesis on the dismantling of Hollywood Boulevard. In 1994, The Adonis Theater was closed, and he witnessed the sign sawed into sections and thrown in a dumpster. This sparked his retrieval of larger pieces, such as the marquees from the groundbreaking Eros and Venus theaters. More than just a collector of artifacts, Ewalt set out early on to meet the people who populated these worlds of interest, for example his long-term friendship with Liz Renay, whose exhibition *How to Attract Men* Ewalt curated in 2009 at Deitch Projects, NY.

*BACK IN THE NIGHT: Psychotronic Landscapes, Objects & Souvenirs* is an immersive installation that brings us the underworld of pop culture, providing a glimpse of the saturated layer below. The exhibition opens with nine gradated digital paintings depicting devils on color fields that tear open to show the Deuce—a place in which depravity can be lived in person, not fantasized as in pulp magazines. Each piece has a corresponding steamer trunk, making reference to traveling burlesque performers as well as a nod to the hobo culture that gave us the word *punk*. The trunks are decouped with cigarette boxes similar to tramp and prison art, and lined with color fields soaked in sexuality. Evoking the division between private and public, the final doorway is an homage to Ewalt's favorite architectural element of Times Square—the Peepland keyhole, which kept its wary eye on the devils' playground for two decades.

With landscapes re-imagined from his collection of historical photographs of Times Square, Ewalt's series of digital paintings *Deuce Diableries* cast his friends as models, chosen for their otherworldly looks and smoldering sexuality. The principle character is Ivan Ortiz, Ewalt's inspiration since their meeting at the Gaiety Male Burlesk, who appears in each of the thirteen *Diableries*. These works make reference to 1860s subversive stereoviews, proposing devils as the logical inhabitants of the inverted world of Times Square with its alternative morality. The space is ruled by a large-scale marquee sign bearing the name of the Tura Satana, the undisputed pre-punk icon of film and burlesque.

A reliquary houses a series of *Burlesk Bibles*—used by burlesque and vaudeville performers to transport money from town to town without detection. Ewalt continues this theme with souvenirs that didn't exist, but could have, crafting a series of resin half domes containing the currency of Times Square, oversized pin-up lighters, and t-shirts from male burlesque venues and sex emporiums. A map showing the Times Square district's extensive venues of vice also points out the locations of the *Diableries*. The exhibition is scored by a forty-two hour soundtrack, which changes eras like a radio and showcases the advertisements and music evoking strippers, show people, pimps, pros, and addicts that made the Deuce dangerous and hypnotic.

**Scott Ewalt** is a New York based artist that is primarily known for his digital work. He studied at Princeton University under James Seawright and later received a graduate degree under computer design pioneer Rebecca Allen at UCLA. He first showed a *Diablerie* in a group exhibition at Feature Inc., NY in 1996. His work has been included in exhibitions such as *B-B-B-BAD ... an exhibition with attitudes* (2011) and *Nobody Gets to See the Wizard. Not Nobody. Not Nohow* (2010) at Anna Kustera Gallery, NY and *DEAD FLOWERS* (2010) at Participant Inc, NY and Vox Populi, Philadelphia. His work is on permanent exhibition at the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History, Digital Galaxy Project (1998-present). Ewalt worked with Marc Almond on the publication *The End of New York* (Ellipsis, 2001). He has also collaborated with Charles Atlas, Kenny Scharf, Kembra Pfahler, Genesis Breyer P-Orridge, and E.V. Day; and as lover of LP design has designed album covers for Marc Almond, the Demolition Doll Rods, Jayne County, the Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, Romy Haag, the Toilet Boys, Amanda Lepore, and the Ones; and appeared in films such as Matthew Barney's in *Cremaster 2* and Charles Atlas' *Staten Island Sex Cult*. He continues to work in nightclubs for fun and inspiration.



PARTICIPANT INC's exhibitions are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Archiving and documentation projects are supported by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Our programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

PARTICIPANT INC receives generous support from the Harriett Ames Charitable Trust; The Blessing Way Foundation; Bloomberg; The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston; The Lower East Side Ecology Center/ EcoBizNYC; Foundation 20 21; Foundation for Contemporary Arts; Gesso Foundation; The Greenwich Collection Ltd.; Harpo Foundation; The Ruth Ivor Foundation; Lambent Foundation; The Daniel M. Neidich and Brooke Garber Foundation; Puffin Foundation; The Benjamin M. Rosen Family Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; an anonymous donor of the Community Foundation of Abilene; FRIENDS of PARTICIPANT INC; numerous individuals; and Materials for the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs/NYC Department of Sanitation/NYC Department of Education.

PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. [participantinc.org](http://participantinc.org)