

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

76 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NY 10013



BEC STUPAK

RADICAL EARTH MAGIC FLOWER

**January 12 – February 25, 2005
76 Grand Street**

Deitch Projects is pleased to present a new exhibition of video, sculpture and performance by Bec Stupak. Couched in an exotic harem-esque interior reminiscent of 1940's B movies, her installation uses video, sculpture, performance, elaborate set design, body paint, and projected light to create a sense of euphoria.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is Bec's blind remake of Jack Smith's legendary film *Flaming Creatures*. Using members of her demimonde, including performance drag group The Radical Fairies, Philiip, Agathe Snow, and other downtown celebrities, she recreates the 1963 cult classic based only on the impressions she's collected from others of what the film consists of. Where costume matters more than actor or actress, anyone can get dressed up, loosened up, and sucked into this world of bestial, mystical erotica.

Opposite Bec's blind remake will be screened the banned original Jack Smith film, and flanking the intermediate walls will be video slideshows of her storyboards, showing how she bridged the 42-year gap. The original film, which has inspired artists from Andy Warhol to Susan Sontag, features drag queens, mermaids, vampires, and other creatures loping around cheaply alluring sets of pastiche old-hollywood refuse. Bec's approach of a blind

remake was useful in removing the "aura" from this classic work to explore the broad and complex influence of the piece in the surrounding discourse. In this manner, Bec examines how the piece has been reworked by memory, how it is integrated into her friends' personal experience. Her piece serves to build a compilation of personal history as a way to pay homage to a highly personal and subversive piece of art history.

As the illuminated palm reader-esque sign on the gallery façade might indicate, Bec is well versed in the hokey theatrics, the sleight of hand, and the song and dance that mystics often use to bring about alternate states of consciousness. In accordance with that objective, she has installed her exhibition in a way to dazzle and entice, lead and mislead. Her tripartite trompe-l'oeil passageway that serves as the entrance to the main gallery: with the same Islamic-esque archway constructions that once bedecked Jack Smith's East Village residence, Bec's three video-filled passageways will be the first thing to indicate that not all here is as it seems. Under the pursuing gaze of lenticular signage, LED lights, and crisscrossing neon tape, the exhibition's terrain of video and sculpture morphs and expands, explodes and vanishes.

This show explores the different uses of video today, comprised in one artist's work who has collaborated with many other artists and performers: the central piece's narrative style comprises one type of cinema-style video art, while the dynamic and flexible VJ-style video installation in the storefront room suggests another use entirely. Bec learned how to use video to make people psyched on the rigorous training ground of early-90's raves. Her first art audience was five thousand teens packed into the DC Armory, pupils the size of dinner plates, wanting to see her visual synthesis of all they were feeling and listening to. In this installation, the viewer will be able to manipulate the different video tracks Bec has created to experiment with the functionalities of VJing. Here in a gallery setting, there are also provided opportunities for more architectural uses of video. In various parts of the exhibition, Bec combines sculptural elements, lighting elements and shaped video projections to make hybrid display.

Bec Stupak is an artist living and working in New York City, and is also the founding member of Honeygun Labs, an experimental video project that after a few years blossomed into a collaborative effort that at any given time had several people creating and experimenting with different styles and techniques. In 2002 Honeygun Labs began to

create work with the NYC-based art collective Assume Vivid Astro Focus. Their first project, *Freebird*, was an animation set to an endless loop of the Freebird guitar solo and led to further collaboration on *Walking On Thin Ice*, an un-official music video to Yoko Ono's song of the same name presented at Deitch Projects and Peres Projects in San Francisco.

In 2004, HGL collaborated again with AVAF to create a piece for the Whitney Biennial (*Garden 8*) which featured the band Los Super Elegantes and an LED lighting component to make the walls breathe and a site-specific video piece that was created using live mixing techniques. As an offshoot to the Whitney project, Bec started a DVD zine called Scissorfriends, which was developed in the Eyebeam artist-in-residence program and features everything from little dogs dancing to cough-syrup induced music to a deranged lady exhibiting her queefing skills. Her phenomenal video made in collaboration with Philiip for his song, *Elemental Childe* was the standout piece in Philiip's *Divided By Lightning* show at Deitch and was definitively radder than anything you might chance upon on MTV. Never to be content with just one thing, Bec also plays guitar in the band, *Saint Eve*, and hula-hoops with the precision hula-hoop troupe, Groovehoops.

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