

ARTnet: 'Bruce High Quality Foundation at Lever House.' by Rachel Corbett. May 24, 2012.

Bruce High Quality Foundation at Lever House



Photo: Tom Sachs "Wind-Up Hello Kitty" at Lever House in 2008

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It seems the Bruce High Quality Foundation gave up its scrappy, anti-establishment stance when it took part in the 2010 Whitney Biennial. And now, the pseudo-anonymous collective of art-school grads is boring directly into the core of the avant-garde art market with an exhibition at Lever House, June 28-Sept. 28, 2012. The prized showplace, owned by real-estate magnate and collector Aby Rosen, has previously housed exhibitions by Rachel Feinstein, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons and Tom Sachs.

Of the three works in the show, which is officially presented by Vito Schnabel and titled *Art History with Labor*, the most salient reference for contemporary viewers is probably the 12-foot-tall cast bronze rat replica of the blow-up "scab rats" often stationed at labor protests. Its title, *The New Colossus*, obviously refers to the Emma Lazarus poem engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

Another work looks at one of the most famous, possibly manufactured images in history, the Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of soldiers raising the flag at Iwo Jima. According to historians, the flag actually went up twice, after the first one went missing. Some accounts say that the original flag looked too small so it had to be replaced; others say that Navy secretary James Forrestal just wanted to keep it for himself as a souvenir. Either way, soldiers raised a second flag, and possibly staged the photo op while they were at it. The Bruce's response is a mirror image of the iconic photo silkscreened onto two eight-by-eight foot panels.

The final work in the exhibition is a combined oral history of labor and art, transmitted via little radios attached to utilitarian props, like a wheelbarrow, a briefcase and a mop bucket. The work's title, *Art History with Labor: 95 Theses*, pays homage to Martin Luther's 1517 treatise protesting clerical abuses, particularly the notion that the pious could atone for their sins with donations to the church.