

Summer School

JUNE 9 - JULY 29, 2016



Installation view of *Summer School* at The FLAG Art Foundation, 2016.
Photography by Genevieve Hanson, ArtEcho LLC.

"...might children respond better to art that does not speak down to them but rather presents itself simply, to people of all ages?"

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Summer School is an expansive group exhibition highlights that artists who ignite our imagination through fantasy, humor, and play. Accompanying educational programming will include artist-led workshops, tours, and events, created with and driven by the interests of children and their families. Artists include **John Baldessari, Gina Beavers, Dan Colen, Will Cotton, Jennifer Dalton, Tara Donovan, Awol Erizku, Tom Friedman, Genevieve Gaignard, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Mark Grotjahn, Alex Israel, Steven and William Ladd, Tony Matelli, Marilyn Minter, Vik Muniz, Charles Ray, Ugo Rondinone, Robert Therrien, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., and Tom Sachs.**

The artworks in *Summer School* resonate across generational lines. "Creative Thinker," John Baldessari's dual-tone proclamation, and Alex Israel's dreamy, Disneyland-inspired self-portrait, set the tone for the exhibition in which everyday ideas are transformed into extraordinary objects of wonder: Robert Therrien's wonky tower of giant plates; Awol Erizku's stacked basketball hoops slyly nodding to minimalist sculpture; Tara Donovan's dizzying and seemingly endless wall-mounted *Slinky*® maze; Gina Beavers's thick, impasto painting of psychedelic soft serve ice cream; and Ugo Rondinone's monumental suspended lightbulb, colored to represent the light of the thirteenth hour of the day.

Other works contain complex, internal systems of logic that are more participatory in their nature: Tom Sachs's riddle and game board, which logs all attempts to play it; Tim Rollins's collaborative work with members of K.O.S. (Kids of Survival), wherein organic patterns obscure Darwin's *Origin of Species*; Jennifer Dalton's colorful gumball sculpture; and Felix Gonzalez-Torres's interactive and shimmering pile of patriotic red, white, and blue candy.

Summer School asserts that art can serve as a platform for children to develop critical and creative thinking, and early exposure can lead to a lifelong interest in art. Leading up to the exhibition, FLAG invited fourth grade students from Harlem Children's Zone, a pioneering nonprofit organization in Central Harlem, to explore their relationship to art and creativity through a participatory Q&A.

Humorous, incisive, and honest, their responses form an inclusive conversation around the themes of the exhibition: Are you an artist? *Yes, because art makes me feel creative and awesome.* (Niya, age 10); How is art a part of your life? *Art is a part of my life because I love expressing myself by pictures and drawings.* (Maki, age 11); What is your favorite color? *My favorite color is red because I have confidence, anger, and strength.* (Baba, age 11). This Q&A, which also includes a drawing component, will be made available to students and children throughout the course of the exhibition, with the aim to expose new ways of engaging and creating dialogue with art.

Footnote:

[1] Shafaieh, Charles. "Tilt: A New Arts Festival That Talk Up to Kids." *BLOUIN ARTINFO*. March 25, 2016.