

61 *The Artists Alone Decide*

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Can is an exhibition space run by artists. Decisions concerning what is being shown are influenced by such common notions as solidarity, curiosity and formal appreciation—mostly the love of art.

*The Artists Alone Decide* was the title of American artist Bradley Kronz' 2015 Mathew Gallery Berlin solo exhibition. It stuck with us and we never forgot about it. Kronz says: "In fact, I took it from the jazz/avant-garde record label ESP-Disk. All their releases have printed on the artwork: "The artists alone decide what you will hear on ESP-Disk." You can take this any way you want. Maybe the cynical reading is that of the artist's primal bondage; the romantic one, a little more jester-like—which is probably why we're still here—is that of the artist's stubborn freedom. Recently, in a conversation with our friend and artist Andrew Green, we talked about a pair of words to describe the persistent tension between artist and audience: pretentious and cringe. The first is an attempt at intellectual or formal aloofness, a defense against perception or apprehension. The second aims at ingratiation. Both sound shit. Don't think we think there's any escape. Let us give you an example: at Can, we pretentiously refuse to have a door sign. However, because we want to be loved, we insist on serving free beer.