

CHRISTIAN HOLSTAD, *Light Chamber (Part 2)*

X Initiative is pleased to present a new installation by American artist Christian Holstad. For the rooftop of X, the artist elaborates upon his previous project *Leather Beach*, realized in 2006 in a derelict deli in Mid-town Manhattan. In that work, Holstad turned the defunct shop and a subterranean space into an installation referencing underground leather sex clubs and the legacy of gay subcultures from the seventies.

For *Light Chamber (Part 2)*, the artist integrates elements from the previous project, such as a usable tanning bed, and inverts the notion of an underground bunker by situating it on the rooftop. This new installation marks a transition from a sex club into a high-end spa, outfitted with a hand-made colonic machine, whose clients have left their soiled underpants strewn about. The bunker walls are painted a military metallic and are lined with “sandbags” whose contents appear to be alternately army surplus and chamomile. These various juxtapositions reference contemporary society’s warped obsession with the body in its relation with nature and its worship, and the mutated eco-health movements that have resulted in an effort to connect our bodies to the environment. It also calls to mind the kinds of radical figures operating in fringe groups and marginalized society that may eventually be revealed to be more visionary and rational than the mainstream.

In this work, Holstad also confesses a secret obsession for the 1960s day-time soap opera “Dark Shadows,” a gothic series populated by vampires. A dark atmosphere reverberates throughout *Light Chamber (Part 2)*: the tanning bed eerily recalls a casket and a choral arrangement of cheery music quickly overpowers the senses.

The music that accompanies the installation is *In the morning (choral version)* by Alicia Bay Laurel. Special thanks to Canner MEFE.

Holstad has had solo exhibitions at the Galleria Nazionale d’arte Moderna, Rome and Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami. His work has been featured in *Unmonumental*, New Museum, New York ; Lyon Biennial of Art, Lyon; Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia; *Uncertain States of America*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; *Gaity; Discovering the Lost Art (in Absentia)*, Kunsthalle Zurich, Switzerland; *Formalismus*, Moderne Kuinst, huete, Hamburg; and the 2004 Whitney Biennial, The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY.