

Weiskopf, Dan, "Teen Paranormal Romance," *Artforum.com*, Critics' Pick, November 22, 2014

ARTFORUM

"Teen Paranormal Romance"

11.22.14

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10.25.14-01.17.15 Atlanta Contemporary Art Center

The paranormal romance genre thrives on selling teenagers fantasies of transformation in which lonely outsiders only find their true selves and true loves by becoming something monstrous and strange. Saturated with a jittery mood of adolescent anxiety, this exhibition, curated by Hamza Walker, explores variations on these themes of mutability and self-creation.

The sculptural works on view have deep affection for marginal materials that range from thrift-store discards to near-trash. Guyton Walker's mattresses printed with colorful abstract digital images lean like soft monoliths, and Chris Bradley's *Grease Face*, 2011, meticulously replicates a stained pizza box, in bronze, aluminum, and spray paint, overlaid with a circle and two dots that suggest an outlined cartoon head. Bradley's work jokingly toys with teen anxiety over potentially blemished skin, and Jack Lavender's sculptures similarly depict faces as unruly and ill-shaped conglomerations cobbled together from junk food remnants and other found objects. **With adolescent visages and bodies being such unreliable things, the search for acceptance is sometimes anchored elsewhere, in social rituals such as taking the perfect hit from a beer bong—as depicted in Jill Frank's *Bong (Shawn)*, 2014—or in performances for others, like the face-to-face confrontation between two fenced-in walls displaying graffitied bear heads in Kathryn Andrews's *Friends and Lovers*, 2010.**

The dark heart of the exhibition is Ed Atkins's giddy and bleak *Even Pricks*, 2013, an exemplary slice of Dada teen spirit packaged into a commercial montage narrated by a digitally rendered chimpanzee, featuring a wayward, intermittently erectile thumb with a habit of penetrating navels, ears, and eyes. Even in this uncanny, high-definition world, there is no escape from our chaotic, monstrous bodies.