

## HESSE FLATOW

Schwartz, Chip. "Intrigue of Technology and Self." *Knight Foundation*. Online. May 8, 2012.



ARTS

# Intrigue of technology and self at Grizzly Grizzly

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[Grizzly Grizzly](#) is currently exhibiting a two person show called "Microwave" that demands attention. On display are an installation by [Charlotte Hallberg](#) and a short video by [Johannes DeYoung](#). Conceptually, each artist only has one work apiece, although in the case of Hallberg, the installation is quite large and spills over onto three walls.

Immersing oneself in Charlotte Hallberg's installation is at once fun and familiar despite its abrasively bright colors. Since it does wrap around onto three separate sides of the room, it is possible to find a spot in which you can see nothing else; the glaring boxes take up your periphery and become very present. At the same time, the viewer also becomes very aware of their own bodily presence among the variegated shapes and blocks suspended from the walls.

All of the forms seem so recognizable because of their analogs in the contemporary world. It seems almost as if part of some closed-circuit television security booth or world domination control room straight out of a science fiction novel. The idea that being confronted by swaths of brightly glowing boxes is so normal immediately trounces all the fiction, however, in favor of science (and societal) fact.

The walls appear like a thumbnail gallery in which visitors may entertain themselves by clicking or enlarging these saturated icons. While the content seems inexhaustible, the physicality of the paint is perhaps the final impression. There is, of course, no mouse, no button, no link and no window. Hallberg's installation surrounds you in an apparently digital format with no way to input or interact, a revelation that is both anxious and somewhat refreshing.

Johannes DeYoung's looped video is entitled "Ego Loser." The HD monitor stands in direct contrast to the other painted rectangles enveloping the room. On the screen is the animated clay face of a person, which exists in constant flux. The face is hardly the same for a few

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seconds, and its eyeless gaze acts as a means for instant self-reflection. Instead of noticing oneself in the space, the observer sees the figure as a mirror.



From here, the face proceeds to recite in the most monotone of voices, a variety of self-help mantras and positive reinforcements. The pleasant, tropical setting and the warm lens flares paired with the droning voice do, at some point, make the ego degrade. The loser aspect stems, perhaps, from the idea that an individual would need to watch an outside source in order to feel comfort in their own skin. One of the most repeated phrases in the short loop is "My thoughts are under my control," which, when heard so many times in repetition, begins to lose its sincerity. The voice ultimately sounds skeptical and one wonders to what extent their thoughts are their own versus controlled or manipulated by outside sources.

In "Microwave," Hallberg and DeYoung proceed to make a powerful critical analysis of media, technology and the self that often gets lost in or otherwise occupied by these forces. By utilizing entirely different techniques, both artists meet at a very similar crossroads. Staying mindful of oneself in the face of impersonal digital gratification or relentless advertising is not always easy. At Grizzly Grizzly, one can find two wonderful perspectives that act as starting points in this journey.

*Grizzly Grizzly is located at 319 N 11th St, 2nd floor,  
Philadelphia; [2xgrizzly@gmail.com](mailto:2xgrizzly@gmail.com) or [grizzlygrizzly.com](http://grizzlygrizzly.com)*