

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Roberta Smith, Holland Cotter, Jason Farago, "The Best Art of 2017," *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, December 6, 2017



ART & DESIGN

## The Best Art of 2017

By ROBERTA SMITH, HOLLAND COTTER and JASON FARAGO DEC. 6, 2017

*The art critics of The New York Times Roberta Smith, Holland Cotter and Jason Farago share their picks for the best art of the year.*

Roberta Smith



Florian Troebinger performing in the artist Rirkrit Tiravanija's frame-by-frame re-creation of a Rainer Werner Fassbinder film, at Gavin Brown's Enterprise. Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York/Rome

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**ANOTHER ONE** At Gavin Brown's Enterprise in Harlem, Rirkrit Tiravanija continued his Johnsian devotion to inventing nothing with a masterpiece: a loving and infinitely touching frame-by-frame re-creation of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1974 film "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul." The story centers on Emmi, a widowed German cleaning woman, and Ali, a much younger Moroccan migrant worker, whose unlikely romance and marriage elicit every species of bigotry from those around them. The Tiravanija version has an exquisite corpse of a title: "skip the bruising of the eskimos to the exquisite words' vs. 'if I give you a penny you can give me a pair of scissors.'" It was an in-house job, shot in the gallery in four weeks with a cast consisting almost entirely of artists, friends and employees, on sets that then became part of the exhibition. The stiffness of the amateur acting gave the proceedings an odd clarity, and the random casting unsettled stereotypes, as did giving the leading female roles to men: The Swedish artist Karl Holmqvist played Emmi; Florian Troebinger, the film's only professional actor, portrayed Barbara, the blond Germanic bar owner and Ali's sometime lover. In keeping with Mr. Tiravanija's relational-aesthetics pieces involving the serving of free food, Mr. Troebinger tended the bar throughout the show. As Ali, Hamid Amini, who has worked with this artist on various projects, gave the remake its center of gravity as well as a touch of Hollywood dreamboat.

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