

Derosia

Simone Krug, Kaleidoscope, May 6, 2014

# KALEIDOSCOPE

## STOP BY Essex Flowers, New York

Essex Flowers is a gallery space that lies below a flower shop in New York's Lower East Side. The artist-run venue opened in June 2013 after the flower shop's owner, Bill Frazer, offered his basement as a project space to a group of young artists. In the spirit of DIY, nine artists collaborated in renovating the 400-square-foot basement, also converting a back room wall and garden into an exhibition area. In addition to taking turns curating exhibitions, the group rotates programming duties and gallery tasks. Last summer's inaugural exhibition, titled "Group Show," presented the nine artists' works. Subsequent shows have featured community-themed projects such as "Frequencies Vol. 2," a collaboration between visual artists and DJs at nearby Beverly's Bar and The Institutional CriTiki Lounge; upcoming events include a backyard book launch of Bunk Club's FAN OF: JOSHUA SMITH and a poetry reading event by Keith J. Varadi, Lucy Ives and Andrew Durbin (May 9th). Flowers are mostly absent from the gallery setting, save for Lizzie Wright's trio of wooden sculptures embellished with lime-green blooms from a piece featured in "EZ Spirit," a show organized by the artist in collaboration with Saira McLaren and Janine Polak. The current show, "Lion King" by Andy Meerow, features monochrome beige two-word diptychs, which share the basement space with life-size casts of salted pretzels under Plexi frames. Word combinations such as "body/text" and "system/prison" float around in the same space as the popular carbohydrate. Just upstairs, the flower shop functions with little sign of the innovative programming beneath the bouquets and floral arrangements.

- Simone Krug