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MATTHEW DE LEON
WINDOW DRESSING

January 10 – March 16, 2013
Opening: Thursday, January 10, 6-8pm

"You know you are the first thing I've created in a really long time that made me feel like an artist." –Jonathan Switcher

Mixed Greens is thrilled to present a site-specific installation by Matthew de Leon. Repeated large-scale portraits of the character Jonathan Switcher (played by Andrew McCarthy) will confront viewers passing under the Mixed Greens windows on 26th Street. For the first time, as viewers look in, their gaze will be returned.

In the 1987 movie *Mannequin,* Jonathan Switcher is a young, frustrated artist who has difficulty keeping a job until he makes the perfect mannequin. De Leon focuses on the moment in the movie when this antihero, downtrodden and depressed, views his creation in a department store's window for the first time. The still frame de Leon recontextualizes is the moment Switcher presses his hands against the rainy window, ecstatic and inspired by the sight of the mannequin and the feeling that he is a real artist. When he believes in himself, his creation comes to life.

As a young boy, de Leon watched this movie repeatedly, in love with the flamboyant characters and the science fiction romance. As an adult, the film resonates with him in a different way. Switcher's resiliency and the euphoria he shows when making art inspired de Leon to think about someone else, albeit a fictional character, whose art became his life.

The transformed, repeated image of Jonathan Switcher in the Mixed Greens windows refers back to the source's medium as a film. The piece plays with this language of film and Switcher's gaze. Typically an art viewer finds an object of his or her gaze, but here the gaze turns back on the viewer in a look of absolute wonder, joy, and epiphany. In *Window Dressing,* it is the West 26th Street viewer who is the artist's creation and is brought to life in this contemporary Pygmalion story.

Matthew de Leon was born in New York, raised on Governor's Island, and currently lives in Brooklyn. He received his BFA from the University of Connecticut Storrs, and his MFA from Parsons The New School for Design. Since graduation in 2009, he has been included in numerous group exhibitions including ones at The Kitchen, NYC; Gallery 151, NYC; Queen's Museum of Art, Queens, NY; New York Studio Gallery, NYC; Austin Peay University, Clarksville, TN; and Microscope Gallery, Brooklyn, NY. He was included in Gimme Shelter at Mixed Greens in 2010. He also performs as his drag persona, Untitled, at locations throughout NYC.

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