

VOGUE



Blue Deb, Deborah Kass

Photo: Courtesy of the Artist

The LGBT Community Center Relaunches with a Powerful Art Exhibition

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by EDWARD BARSAMIAN

This week marks a historic moment for New York LGBT advocacy organization, the Center: After an extensive and exhaustive renovation that started in July 2013, the landmark West Village building will relaunch tomorrow. From a new lobby with a more loft-like feel to updated auditoriums featuring state-of-the-art technology, the Center's update is almost complete, concluding in early spring with final touches on a repaved garden that will newly include seating, lighting, planting beds, and irrigation. To celebrate the first part of the improvements, the community center is hosting a ribbon-cutting reception and exhibition titled "Once Upon a Time and Now," which revisits art originally commissioned for the nonprofit almost 30 years ago. "In 1989, a group of artists were invited into the Center to create within our walls and make the building a home," says executive director **Glennnda Testone**. "The goal is to pay homage to our history, while celebrating the future." To that end, the Center employed **Ian Alteveer**, an associate curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as a volunteer to compile work for the exhibit. "We wanted to celebrate multiple aspects of LGBTQ diversity in the arts," notes Alteveer. The resulting show includes pieces by **Glenn Ligon**, **Robert Storr**, and **Deborah Kass**, among others. "We asked Ian to help create a reflection of who we are as a community and a representation of some of today's most interesting LGBTQ contemporary artists," says Testone. Alteveer says that those assembled represent "the various modes in which artists are working, through abstraction, figuration, photography, or text-based work to deliver their messages." The message will be heard tomorrow evening as guests take in the environment, sipping coffee in the new in-house café, Think Coffee, along with cocktails by St-Germain, who supports the Center's mission to provide arts programs and health initiatives for the community. "The renovation celebration provides the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to these artists by inviting people to see the improvements and connect with LGBTQ history," says Testone.

"Once Upon a Time and Now" opens on February 3 and runs through April 6 2015.