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Brigid Berlin, a Warhol Satellite Full of Personality

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER OCT. 29, 2015

Brigid Berlin was a bit player in the 1960s and '70s art world, known for her brassy roles in Andy Warhol's films like "Chelsea Girls" (1966). Like many people who hang around artists, Ms. Berlin is an artist too. (Modern women like the ceramist Beatrice Wood and the Dada poet and collagist Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven also come to mind.) This show focuses on Ms. Berlin's work rather than her zany personality, which was on full view in the documentary "Pie in the Sky: The Brigid Berlin Story" (2000).

Yet Ms. Berlin's personality is the backbone for her work. She recorded herself on cassette tapes, usually in conversation with other people, and a selection of these are on display and running as a soundtrack in the gallery. The conversations are mundane and often hilarious — a kind of audio Pop Art that includes gossip about people you don't know and Ms. Berlin reading food product labels.

On the walls are Polaroid self-portraits from the early '70s, many made using a double-exposure that recreates the psychedelic effects of the druggy '60s (of which Ms. Berlin was very much a part). Then there are the "Tit Prints" from the '90s, which Ms. Berlin made by applying colored inks to her breasts and pressing them against paper. In an era when the exposed female breast is once again a political issue (censored on social media and part of a recent "free the nipple" campaign), Ms. Berlin's prints seem less of a lark and more like a strident, celebratory statement by an artist who was never shy about exposing … well, anything.

Brigid Berlin

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