

ALEX ISRAEL

AS IT LAYS

MARCH 11 – APRIL 8

When I think about Los Angeles, I think about the groundbreakers, the iconoclasts and the eccentrics – the individuals who shaped and molded this city, a city that I'm proud to call home. I had an opportunity to sit down with some of LA's most fascinating personalities. Among them, I met a hitmaker, a billboard queen, an antichrist superstar, a California Dreamer, a witness, a Hustler, a Housewife, the voice of a generation, and a man who changed the world with a pair of scissors...

For his debut exhibition in New York, Los Angeles-based artist Alex Israel presents *AS IT LAYS*, an installation anchored by a series of thirty televisual portraits of iconic and influential Angelenos.

Filmed on a sunset-hued set that Israel constructed in his Pacific Design Center studio and on locations in and around Hollywood, a DIY talk show conflates the traditional art of portraiture with the Pop technology of mainstream media. In episode after episode, guests respond to different sets of twenty questions that were randomly selected by the artist, who plays the role of TV host. Bret Easton Ellis, Michelle Phillips, Marilyn Manson, Bobby Shriver, Rosanna Arquette, Vidal Sassoon, Ian Ziering, Oliver Stone, Whitney Port, Quincy Jones and other somewhat crepuscular personalities appear on a TV screen within a comfortable “waiting room” consisting of beige sofas, potted palms and a marble coffee table that once furnished the artist’s father’s office in the 1980s. Nearby, the *AS IT LAYS* set is on view, featuring air-brushed “flats” and a sky-themed backdrop that were fabricated on the back lot of Warner Brothers.

AS IT LAYS is a hallucinatory swatch of L.A. space and time dropped into downtown Manhattan. Here, the abstraction of celebrity presence and screen time are re-framed via an artwork that appropriates the repetitive, sedentary structure of the TV talk show. Israel, appearing in a suit and sunglasses, idly shuffling through his deck of questions (“Have you ever thrown a party when your parents were out of town?”, “Do you read your daily horoscope?”, “What are the key ingredients for your dream salad?”, “What are your thoughts on teen pregnancy,” “Have you ever been arrested?”...), functions as host, interrogator, decorator and deadpan spirit guide to the panoramic, spaced out, HD landscape of Los Angeles.

The invitation to *AS IT LAYS* was distributed in the form of a YouTube link to a “trailer” for the show. During the run of the exhibition, episodes will be released serially via Asitlays.com. Israel is also the founder of Freeway eyewear, whose products are featured in *AS IT LAYS*.

Alex Israel's recent exhibitions include *Property* at Peres Projects/Berlin, 2011, *Greater L.A.* and the California Biennial, 2010. Upcoming projects include a screening of *AS IT LAYS* with L.A. MOCA, a solo show at LAXART, and a solo show at Amine Rech/Paris. Israel's web series *Rough Winds*, 2010, can be seen at Roughwinds.com.

Gallery Hours: Thursday through Sunday, noon to 6pm.