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# DALSTON SUPERSTORE

## 'BEAUTIFUL FREAKS' from RALF OBERGFELL + TONY HORNECKER

### Alex Noble, Dalston Superstore Gallery London, 2009

The 'Beautiful Freaks' exhibition was a true force to be reckoned with, a whirl wind of wigs, balloons, peep holes, masturbation, suicide, costumes and voyeurism, offset by a back of Ralf Obergfell's portraits of London's most iconic and contemporary performance artists, caught in their many transvestite and avant garde guises.

Tony Hornecker created a maze of ram shackled hut like boxes in the downstairs, reminiscent of some back alley in Amsterdam, but as if Amsterdam is some district on Mars, home to the Beautiful Freaks housed inside, performing their many wonderful and depraved acts. The audience were invited to watch, but teased with just glimpses of what was happening inside as viewers pushes each other to peer through the tiny pin holes and cracks.

Upstairs Tony built large abstract podiums, in one Ryan Styles perched like a Dolly Parton, bird of paradise, dangling her legs into the crowd and inflating hundreds of red balloons with which she decorated her perch. At the other end of the bar stood a glass box in which Jonny Woo would appear, seeing only himself in his enclosed two way mirror prison, each time he would have created a new character for himself, from 'business man' to cloaked transvestite terrorist. Performing for the masses but also only too himself.

Beautiful Freaks also premiered the launch of London's first 'Trannie Toilet', hosted by Jonny Sizzle, a place to have a cocktail, a gossip, and have a pee under the skirt and through the legs one of London's legendary Trannies!

The culture of night life today, especially in East London, has seen a huge trend for portrait photography, there are many web sites where after a night out, you can instantly see yourself air brushed, saturated and have a social networking profile picture ready to go! As successful, fun and popular this is, it is easy to loose track of the importance of work like Ralf Obergfell's, this show entailed a huge editing process and this photography isn't to satisfy the needs of a web site or trend for a sub cultural vanity. His images are for appreciation of these talented artists of our time, his muses and also his good friends, images that will become historical, and mark a period in time.