



Joe Gibbons and Joe Zane teamed up to produce a video, being screened at the Allston Skirt Gallery, based on a scene from "The Nutty Professor."

Identity crisis

Two guys named Joe took over Allston Skirt Gallery while proprietors Randi Hopkins and Beth Kantrowitz were at the Miami art fairs earlier this month, and they turned the space into a comic, twisted laboratory for exploring identity, authorship, and performance.

Artist and filmmaker Joe Gibbons has been in three Whitney biennials. Artist Joe Zane hasn't been around as long, but last year he had a crackerjack show at Allston Skirt along these same lines. Here, the two Joes offer a howlingly funny video based on a scene from "The Nutty Professor," in which Jerry Lewis, in a lab coat, makes a Dr. Jekyll-to-Mr.-Hyde transformation. Joe's video loop has Zane make that same transformation to Gibbons, and then Gibbons to Zane.

Which is the real Joe? Is there one? A vessel full of prescription pill bottles for psychotropic drugs suggests that personality is malleable. The two Joes have also put together a fake edition of Parkett, the German scholarly art journal, featuring articles about "Jõe." It's a parody, yes, but it raises provocative questions about who anoints the next big thing in art. "Joe" is zany, but beneath all the humor it has guts.