



How! Happening: an Arturo Vega Project Invites You to Be Seduced



ALONE AT LAST

An Interactive Installation Exploring Gender, Sexuality, and Desire Before the AIDS Crisis

By Artists Pat Ivers and Emily Armstrong

Opening Reception: Friday, November 13, 2015, 6–8 PM

How! Happening: an Arturo Vega Project is pleased to present Pat Ivers and Emily Armstrong's interactive installation, *Alone At Last* from **Friday, November 13 to Sunday, December 6, 2015** at How! Happening, 6 East 1st Street (between Bowery & 2nd Avenues). (917) 475-1294. Live streaming 24/7 at howlarts.org.

Alone at Last was conceived in 1981 as a video installation that explores issues of gender and fantasy at a time when traditional views of sexuality were not just being challenged but overturned. Created by artists Pat Ivers and Emily Armstrong, both pro-sex feminists when pornography was a hot-button issue in the women's movement, *Alone at Last* invites the viewer to initiate an encounter with a stranger in the dark and be seduced, in the process becoming part of the artwork.

Designed in the pre-AIDS era when bath houses and back rooms, no-strings sex and role playing were all part of life in downtown New York, *Alone at Last* invited artists, musicians, and locals with an offer of self-representation, a chance to enact what desire, romance, and even manipulation meant to them. Seizing on the trope of the Time Square peep show

booth, Ivers and Armstrong redefine notions of sexuality, extending a come-on—not with the clichéd sentimentality of broadcast TV or the banality of hardcore porn, but consistent with the artists' truth.

This is how it works: A participant (for she/he is no longer just a viewer) enters a darkened booth, and using a touch screen, answers a series of questions: Gay? Straight? Do you like boys who strip? Two girls? A foreign affair? Finally, a video screen brightens. On it, a potential lover—including well know club goers, artists, and personalities of the time—appear and attempt to seduce the participant with a performance ranging from 30 seconds to seven minutes.

The 52 seducers represent a spectrum of gender and sexual choices, in a revealing portrait of the wide-open freedom of expression and pursuit of pleasure that characterized Lower Manhattan before the AIDS epidemic changed things forever. *Alone at Last* compels the viewer to participate through conscious choices and sudden decisions delving into private, perhaps hidden, sexual feelings. It also winks at the idea of television as the ultimate seducer—but, through interactivity, changing the dynamic and making it new.

Alone At Last is a feature of the GoNightclubbing Archive: <http://www.gonightclubbing.com/TheArchive.htm>

[About the Artists](#)

[About How! Arts](#)

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