PRESS RELEASE

Do Not Disconnect
Heather Stamenov, Alyssa Matthews, Yelizaveta Masalimova
Dave Sinaguglia, David Cool

22 May – 16 June
Opening reception: 24 May 5-8pm.
Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6pm. Admission is free.

SOHO 20 Gallery Chelsea proudly presents *Do Not Disconnect*, an exhibition of new work by recent graduates of The University of Connecticut Department of Art & Art History's MFA Program. Gathered to one neck of the woods, in an off-campus collection of studios called VARC, these artists consider what it is to exchange in this contemporary moment. They connect their concerns of gender, identity, performance, consciousness, and nostalgia, and their practices overlap in the fluidity of these queries. Working from varying perspectives, they converge in their search for clarity. This exhibition represents work from endeavors that were honest and fragile, ironic yet always romantic, and heroic to a fault.

Heather Stamenov work springs from an ongoing fascination with body image, human behavior, and social interactions. Through paint, photography and video she presents her own ideal in which cellulite is glorified, performance is play and where nothing is inappropriate.

Alyssa Matthews's figurative oil paintings and videos celebrate tableaus of femininity to explore tensions between gender, sexuality, and the gestural mark. She asserts a feminist language of excess and prettiness that supplants established conventions of Beauty.

Yelizaveta Masalimova explores themes of collective struggle and human desperation through prints and charcoal drawings. Her images express an emotional atmosphere that asserts itself when language fails.

Dave Sinaguglia explores the social rewards promised to those who choose to embody the stereotype of the capable, well-rounded man. His videos and sculptural environments result from explorations of masculine desire for autonomy, mediated through performance.

David Cool's work merges digital technology and metaphysical exploration. Perception is altered he manipulates hardware, software programming, sound, and lighting to mediate unconscious interactions among viewers.