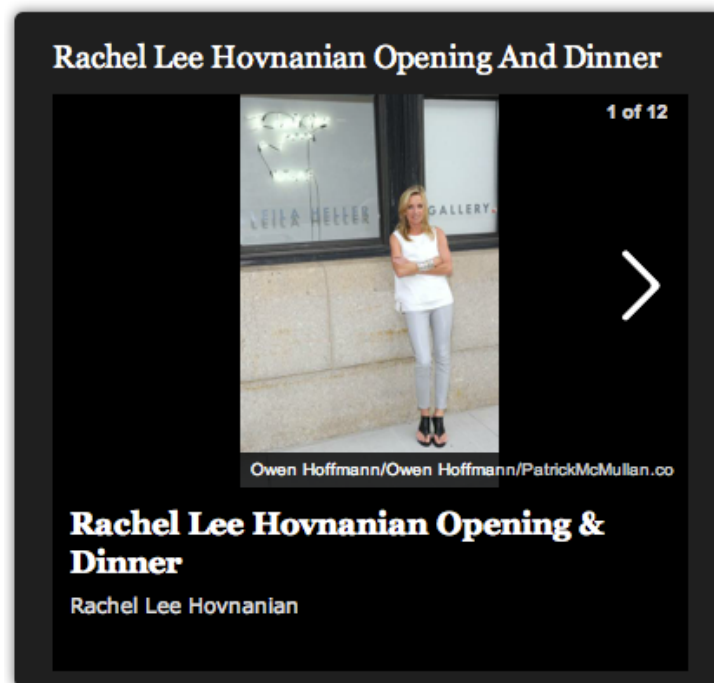


LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Zilkha, Bettina. "Rachel Lee Hovnanian's Plastic Perfect Opens At Leila Heller Gallery, Attracts Serious Collectors"
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Rachel Lee Hovnanian's Plastic Perfect Opens At Leila Heller Gallery, Attracts Serious Collectors



Artist [Rachel Lee](#) Hovnanian's show, *Plastic Perfect*, opened Thursday at Leila Heller's [Chelsea](#) Gallery, followed by a dinner for 250 people. Guests included serious collectors Brooke Garber Neidich, [Jane Holzer](#), and Danielle and David Ganek. The show will also open October 8th at the Pechersky Gallery in [Moscow](#).

"I examine obsession, narcissism and intimacy in a collection of interactive installations, sculpture, video and photography," said Hovnanian. "My work focuses on our dependence on technology and its benefits by linking our cultural addiction to sweetened cereals in the way both were marketed to us as being time-saving and entertaining. Cereals were marketed to our parents in the 60's as being quick, easy and fun. Technology is time saving and fun- I think it is helpful to pause and take a look at these issues, especially since sugar and tech addictions seem to be firmly in place in our culture."

"[Sherry Turkle](#), the research professor at the [MIT](#) New Media Lab, says that 'our digital devices have the power to change us fundamentally...to redefine what it means to be human,' Hovnanian continues. "Dr Turkle describes a connection between digital devices and a loss of intimacy within the family and in other social settings. Turkle was once on the cover of *Wired* magazine as a poster child for how [digital technology](#) is improving our lives. Now she is warning us against the loss of intimacy. New digital technologies make us more secure, they save us time, they entertain us, they connect electronically to people or "an army of media followers" far away — which is great. But they also seem to replace the intimate reality of authentic experience with digital simulation. I myself am pretty much connected throughout the day and find it a bit difficult to unplug. A favorite comment in my family is, 'you are your installation' ".

The gallery was packed. Guests reacted strongly to the "Perfect Babies" Hovnanian had on display to be held and Instagrammed, to the video of a giant mouse eating out of a life size refrigerator, and to the teddy bear that had been stabbed by a white knife surrounded by white mice.

"This is art following life," said Ariadne Calvo-Platero in disbelief. "I was cleaning out my son's closet after he left for college the other day. We had had a problem with mice earlier in the year, and I looked in the bag that had all his cuddly toys when he was a child. The mice had been in there with a vengeance. I had to email him at school and tell him all his cuddly toys had been massacred by the mice. He wrote back and said, 'Not 9/11 bear!' My children went to school downtown, and there was a charity that gave teddy bears to all the

children that lived downtown during 9/11. So I had to email back, 'Yes, 9/11 bear was murdered by the mice.' Then I went to [Rachel's](#) opening two days later and saw she had the same experience."

"Rachel is so clever," said [Alex Hitz](#). "The collection is reassuring but it also takes us to the edge. It's very provocative."