

## **Josh Finck, *Easton Irregular Art Profile*, Feb. 2012**

Eastonians would recognize Josh Finck as one of the servers at Terra Café or The Lafayette Bar; yet, mention the abandoned amplifier you passed in the alley and you'll see his eyes light up and the mental machinery kick into action. He's our local DJ/magic maker/man behind the curtain/genie of wires and electric art. Josh obtained a B.F.A. in Graphic Design from Kendall College of Art and Design in Michigan in 2009; but he prefers to tinker with electric organs, TVs, video equipment, cameras, tape decks, synthesizers, computers, oscilloscopes, drum pads, colored lights and sound mixers. He showed me a four-track tape deck connected to a mixer board, playing half-erased sounds through a distortion box; lurching, haunted-house sounds emerged. Generally, he works first on the music part of a production, then experiments with visual feedback by pointing a camera at a TV, while a "splitter" in the loop projects the final image on a large screen. He places found medical images and fashion magazine stills into the visual loop, shifting them on the TV screen's surface, which reminds me of the video work by Nam June Paik, the media sculptor Jon Kessler and phantasmagoric 60's light shows. Improvising and exploiting his mistakes, Josh is literally immersed in the installation, surrounded by adopted, donated and rescued equipment. Also, he rigs shows that invite audience participation, giving the machines a life of their own. The root of his creativity lies in the "delay" between source and image or cause and sound: the gap where the machine's limitations are exaggerated through loops and feedback. He confuses signals on purpose, often plugging an audio signal into a visual receiver. Ever alert for a system's foibles and fallibilities, he humanizes and softens technology's expected cold affect. Check out Josh's work online at [plasticstm.tumblr.com](http://plasticstm.tumblr.com) and [kcnifhsoj.tumblr.com](http://kcnifhsoj.tumblr.com). Also, LUMPEN Magazine, Issue #114, 2010, published his satire about disabling parking meters with a dubious character named Panther.

Josh participated in "\_Technifying," a group show at Soft Machine Gallery, a "white box" and multi-use arts space in Allentown. When I asked Eva DiOrio why she opened an urban style gallery in Allentown with partner John Mortensen, she said she "felt Allentown needed a gallery," even if it would be easier to sell work and tap into an audience in Philadelphia or New York. The gallery will soon be move to a 5,000 square foot live/work/exhibition space by the Lehigh river, taking part in Allentown's civic revitalization program.

"\_Technifying" was a show for artists who "incorporate, relate to and revolve around technology," and included were local and non-local artists

Matthew Blum, Steven Condra, Pam Farrell, Daniel Green, Wes Heiss, Joseph Iacona, Josh Miller, John Mortensen, Eva DiOrio, Lavanya Patricella, Brett Stuckel, Reinaldo Valentin and Greg White. The show could have been unwieldy, having so many artists and such a broad, easily demonized subject as technology, yet the prevalence of layering, of using found material and of making order out of excess information was unifying. Josh's piece, "Shrine to Saint Clare, Patron Saint of TV" was participatory: when people played on an electric organ, horizontal stripes of varying widths appeared on eight TVs. On November 19th, Josh gave a live show at the gallery along with the BodyFields Performance Collective from Philadelphia and performance artist Phil Lightner. Wrapping it up that night after numerous near disasters, Josh's pet machine, a bright red, two foot high, plastic cube, a party light that somehow survived the 70s, suddenly turned itself on and started blinking. A do-it-yourself maestro with his arsenal of mysterious things, he laughed, unperturbed and asked if there were any questions.

— Elizabeth Johnson