

SUCK  
1991 Ongoing

The ongoing piece SUCK consists of ten bouquets from seven cities of handmade fancy straws and is meant to be shown in an atmosphere of convivial exchange in which art is viewed such as at Art Fairs or openings. Originally shown at Kenny Schachter's "Open Bar" at Flamingo East, the bouquets are arranged in the bar/lounge/cafe area as one might find flowers or candles used as decorative accents creating ambiance. As a courtesy or infiltration, throughout the duration of the event, the bartenders/waitpersons adorn each libation with a decorative straw—whether the drink would normally call for such accessory (margarita), or not (espresso). In this way, each potential viewer is given the possibility of recognizing the straw donation, as the object that it is, as art, gift, or trash. By addressing the in-between boundaries with which drink decorum is associated, much less the art viewing process, the piece aims at redefining the relationship in between public display and performance, ownership and collecting, freebie and trash. This attitude is further reiterated by the conscious or unconscious realization of the piece as art or utilitarian fancy, in which case decisions of worth take on completely different meanings. By recognizing the piece as art, the question of preservation becomes apparent while also ridiculous, and the utilitarian aspect destroys the very existence of its art intent. This rift between preservation and utility is the crux of the piece, as slowly the bouquets themselves are depleted (used) and through the literal destruction of the bouquets, the piece in its entirety, lives—a play on Inherent Vice. And rather than letting the piece simply die what would seem a rather natural way, a second set of straws has been made, and is exhibited as a relic in a fair booth or gallery space. So in the end, there is a visual reminder that the bouquets are a piece, as the casual viewer to the fair or opening sitting for a drink, has the potential to cite from memory, the very thing recently encountered. Lastly, the title, "Suck" refers to both the literal function of a straw, an objective opinion in the slang negative, the sexual innuendo of those reclaiming everything including libido.