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HYPERALLERGIC

A Guerrilla Campaign Is Replacing Ads with Art Around New York City

Art in Ad Places will install a new work by a different artist in a payphone kiosk every week this year.

Carey Dunne JAN. 4, 2017



Adam Wallacavage's work installed in a payphone kiosk in Brooklyn, the first work in the Art in Ad Places campaign (all images courtesy Art in Ad Places)

As flowers bloomed last spring, a billboard advertising \$1,000 off a Brazilian butt lift popped up outside artist Caroline Caldwell's Brooklyn apartment. It pictured a giant, airbrushed ass in a skimpy bikini against a beach background — an image Caldwell had to look at every day. “I laughed it off at first, but the billboard was designed to make me feel self-conscious, and I got tired of it,” Caldwell told Hyperallergic. “I became determined to fill my life with art that would make people feel anything else.”

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Cheryl Pope's contribution to Art in Ad Places

nonexistent punchline is," Wallacavage says. The image is part of his *Shipwrecks of Unicorn Beach* series, which stars model ships found at yard sales and which the artist describes as "a play on using modern camera phones to mimic antique film cameras."

"We're disturbed by the way that advertising makes people feel inadequate or privileges certain types of messages and people over others," Rushmore says. "Consuming advertising is unhealthy, and with outdoor advertising, there's no way to opt out, except to remove it." The organizers and participating artists were inspired, in part, by the tenets of the [Global Ad Hack Manifesto](#), which holds that:

- Outdoor advertising is visual pollution.
- Outdoor advertising can be psychologically damaging.
- Outdoor advertising is pushed on viewers without their consent.
- Outdoor advertising marks underutilized venues for other messages.

"By replacing advertisements with artwork, Art in Ad Places provides a public service and alternative vision of our public environment," Rushmore continues. Most of the artworks to be featured aren't specifically about advertising, but they indirectly address its ubiquity by virtue of their

That Brazilian butt lift ad inspired [Art in Ad Places](#) (AiAP), a 52-week campaign launching today that will replace advertising in public spaces with art. Each week, the organizers — co-curators Caldwell and writer [RJ Rushmore](#), photographer [Luna Park](#), and videographer Annie Horner — will partner with a new artist to install their work at a payphone kiosk in New York City. The installations will be announced weekly on Instagram, [Facebook](#), and the project's [website](#). The lineup features [Molly Crabapple](#), [Jon Burgerman](#), [John Fekner](#), [Tatyana Fazlalizadeh](#), [Tod Seelie](#), [Cheryl Pope](#), and [Jeffrey Gibson](#), so far.

The campaign launched Wednesday with a piece by artist [Adam Wallacavage](#) installed in a payphone kiosk on Metropolitan Ave and Lorimer St in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The work reads as a vintage sepia photo of a pirate ship sailing on stormy seas, but it's actually a heavily filtered iPhone photo of a small model ship floating on the Jersey Shore. "I like the idea of someone seeing my piece and wondering what they're supposed to be buying or where the

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placement. Pope's work is a red, white, and blue banner that reads "I hate the sound of silence," for example; Seelie's is a photograph of a grimy, stained mattress on a forest floor. "If we put these pieces of art in the middle of Manhattan, it's an interesting juxtaposition," Rushmore says, given the late-capitalist backdrop.

With a name inspired by the public art campaign [Art in Odd Places](#), Art in Ad Places is far from the first art campaign to hijack outdoor advertisements. As inspirations, the organizers cite such mass takeovers as Jordan Seiler's [Public Ad Campaign](#) and [Brandalism](#) in Europe. The main difference is AiAP's sustained, long-term approach to revising the cityscape. Previous ad takeovers have tended to "go for one day of shock and awe," Rushmore says; in Brandalism's case, hundreds of artworks are installed around a city under cover of night, photos make the rounds on social media, and then the art is usually removed by authorities. AiAP will unfold over a year, one artist at a time, each providing a statement about their reasons for participating. "It's more about giving artists a space and less about the fact that the space happens to be in advertising venues," Rushmore says.

The campaign was originally set to launch in the second week of November 2016, but was postponed for a two-month mourning period after Donald Trump won the US presidential election. "In the immediate aftermath of the election, we felt that people's attention should be focused on planning to resist Trump," Caldwell says. "We did not want to distract from that work." But while Art in Ad Places is not explicitly anti-Trump, "it feels even more important given his victory. Trump's popularity is linked to outdoor advertising's language of violence, body shaming, and unattainable luxury. Plus, some of the posters we'll be installing are straight-up protest posters."

As for the Brazilian butt lift billboard, it was recently replaced with a liquor advertisement. Next year, perhaps Art in Ad Places will turn it into a canvas.