

# updownacross

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## **Nayland Blake performs “Gorge”**

It's an odd match but I'm feeling deep connection to the work and person of Nayland Blake. He's been popping into my vision on many occasions last year and he's finally entered full force and has hit me in a way very very few artists have. I'm currently experiencing some odd otherworldly existential crisis-like sentiments and I'm convinced it's been instigated by him, especially after perusing his very personal, very approachable, very hugable [blog](#).

My initiation to his work involved the face cake frosted make out session video between him and AA Bronson at Brooklyn Museum (I think), a [solo](#) at Matthew Marks, the same video at the [Dientangle](#) show at Andreas Grimm, and a sculpture at the recent White Columns group [show](#). He curated a show at [Monya Rowe](#) asking people to write and print images of guys they'd like to fuck. A friend had him as a professor at the Bard ICP program and she emphasized his bear like qualities and general amazing-ness.



via nayland blake blog

So with this sporadic introduction to the artist and not enough knowledge of his work imagine how flabbergasted and speechless I was upon walking into a gallery full of found objects, bunnies, broken dolls, and in front of a crowd of spectators, lo and behold, Nayland Blake, topless with long salt and peppered waves billowing past his shoulders, a belly as round as the moon, hands limp between legs starring straight out center, breathing in conscious intentional meditative breaths, waiting, chewing, swallowing, drinking whatever forced its way into his mouth.

The restaging of the 1998 performance “Gorge” was an amazing feat and although it comes from simple means and ideas, the act of masochistic violence with the help of viewer participation, it’s the resulting energy and involvement that creates this high octave tension between the feeding participant, the artist, and the spectators. I was absolutely amazed at how these feeders embraced this sadistic powered role against a vulnerable powerless artist and took creative, sexual, humorous twists in action.



For example, one gentleman proceeded to creep toward Blake starring intently into his eyes that did not reciprocate the gaze. He took a tangerine, got to his knees and nudged himself between Blake’s legs as best he could. As he was peeling this fruit he smiled admirably, as if he’s been waiting for this moment and have replayed this scene a billion times before the present. He was Blake’s biggest fan, fantasizing what sexual forays might ensue and



how he might absorb every sweet last second of this secretly exhilarating performance. Once he began to sensually feed Blake and himself individual wedges of this forbidden orange, I can hear the gentleman breathing, heaving, sighing. It was incredible, he was getting worked up and out. The intensity of witnessing such a one sided exchange, where Blake is vulnerable but this man is also at Blake's mercy, a feeding of the gods rather than a reversed power play. Once that tangerine was gone the gentleman slid his hands up Blake's legs just once, got up, gave a final goodbye smile and departed into the audience. Amazing, huh?

There were more than one incidents where the audience member was gay, perhaps an old flame, or a new fan, and they took full advantage of this frolicking opportunity. One Harley riding bearish man in leather took a single bite off a strawberry, took Blake's head and match their mouths to transfer what was contained. It was very brief and to the point.



I think I gasped a little too loudly for this one. A bodacious woman popped her boobs out, stuck a pickle between them and force fed Blake with the best seats for viewing. It was vulgar and grotesque, I was squeamish a bit, wondering what he was thinking “Oh god get these fucking tits outta my face!” And the torture of consuming what represented a phallic symbol, pickle as dick between balls/breasts must have been confusing and sour.



Dominic Vine feeds Blake donuts and chocolate milk making a mess confirming he was hungry and too clean. It was a funny moment and lightened a mood that was getting a bit too intense.

All this being said, Blake is an amazing artist and have crossed and nullified all sorts of lines and genres in art making. He's used his identity as a mixed race homosexual S&M participant to undo rules and regulations governing art history and our everyday life and perspective of the objective. I am also duly grateful for his openness and approachability, especially through his blog that is so accessible, sensitive and delicate, it cooed and opened many stifled knots in my spiritual body. Intense.