

Jake Yuzna, "Critics' Picks—Pippa Garner," *Artforum.com*, February 2021.

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Steps from the seedy heart of the Hollywood Walk of Fame lies an inaccessible storefront in a recently constructed luxury apartment building. Through floor-to-ceiling windows, we see an unusual menagerie of items, including a pair of kitschy 1970s-style tourist T-shirts that proclaim "CRITIC: Where do you get your ideas from?" and "ARTIST: The sh#t just pops into my head." These mock-souvenir items hang before a sphincter-like arrangement of multicolored cushions and netting, out of which protrudes a single, blinking light bulb.

Welcome to *The Bowels of the Mind*, 2021, a new work by Pippa Garner on view at all hours within Stars Gallery, a satellite of The Gallery @. Walking past the display, one could stumble into the trap of dismissing this as nothing more than a bit of high culture presented as commercial amenity. Such thinking, however, undermines Garner's decades-long detournement of sordid spectacle to pierce America's inflated, mass-market heart. Since the '70s, Garner has infiltrated our premier arenas of commercial culture in the service of subversion, whether by appearing on the *Tonight Show* or by gleefully hawking her parodies of consumer goods on the pages of *Car & Driver*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Vogue*.

Garner has dedicated herself to remaining a critical outsider. Take her gender transition, completed in 1993, which she's referred to as an "art project to create disorientation in my position in society, and sort of balk any possibility of ever falling into a stereotype again." This

transgressive trajectory continues with a new twist in *The Bowels of the Mind*. The work, with its pointedly crass materials and presentation, is nonetheless a sincere ode to inspiration. It also reminds us how the clever deployment of wit and imagination can skewer mainstream culture's more oppressive—and lethally banalizing—forces.

The Bowels of the Mind is an amuse-bouche of the bounty that is Garner's oeuvre. Like America itself, it is a delectable mix of ostentatious consumerism laced with unreasonable radicalism and a pinch of heart. A warmly subversive treat perfectly savored in the center of Hollywood, our great temple to American fantasy.