

Josh Kline

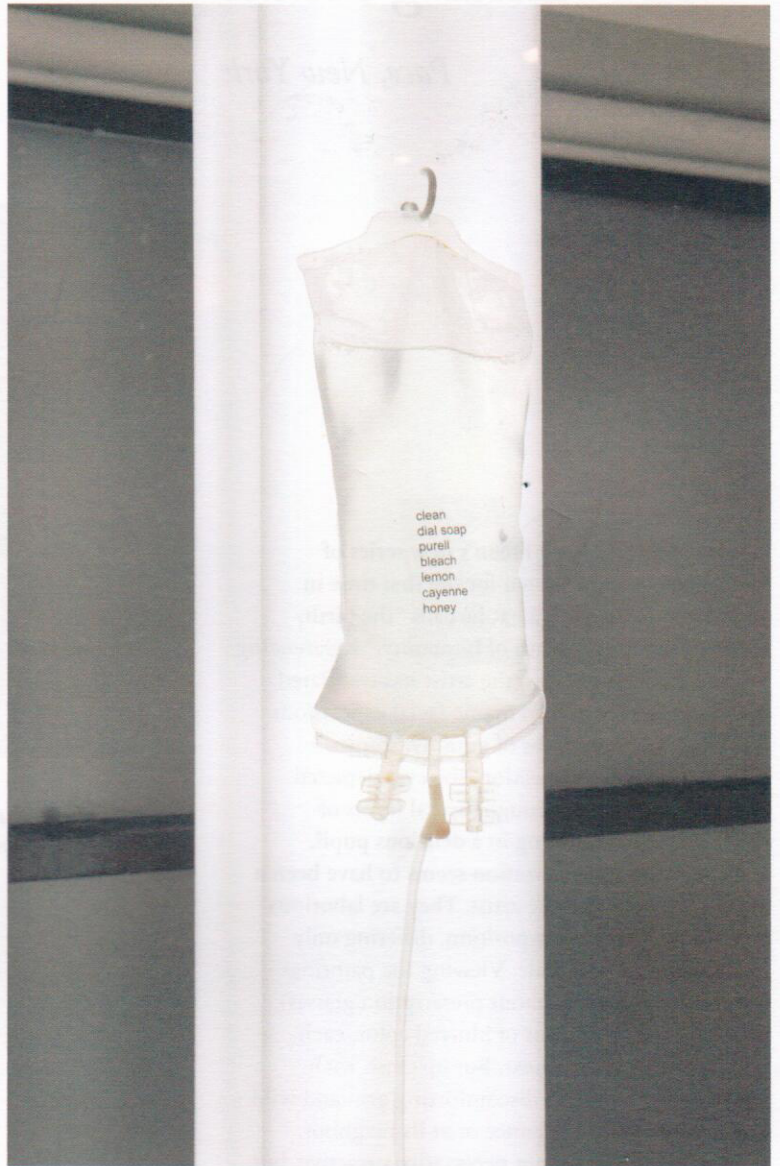
47 Canal, New York

The theme of Josh Kline's exhibition is youthful desire, as promoted around the world by the narcissistic American pop culture media machine — the preeminent cash crop of the USA nowadays. Whitney Houston and Kurt Cobain have been singled out as subjects that exemplify this for their success and subsequent self-destruction. Both are portrayed here by actors in video interviews.

A green-haired Cobain looks grungy in a torn plaid lumberjack shirt. His whining voice mingles with that of the belligerent Houston character across the room. As one or the other loop reboots, various phrases are isolated. When I arrived, Cobain's mimesis was explaining his position on suicide and firearms. Kline scripted eighty percent of the verbiage, while the rest is taken from actual quotes. The shots of the musical pop stars are choppy and distorted like skipping vinyl, while interviewer Diane Sawyer is smooth as silk in her designer garb and annoyingly patronizing mellifluous voice. Yet neither interviewee masticates and spits out Sawyer in the way that a sadistic young Bob Dylan might have in real life or in Todd Haynes's movie *I'm Not There* (2007). Rather, they mostly complain about the trials and hardships of fame and fortune.

In addition, we are presented with the trappings of medically sustained false youth. A couple of IV bags are suspended on glowing pillars with facetious contents printed on their skin. There are also three cases on pedestals — they look like lunchboxes and contain blood doped with an anti-depressant. A few hollow heads festooned with patterns from fashionable designers are presented atop acrylic cubes filled with their favorite liquors. So, all in all, we have remedies for the pains and truths of aging, and statements from two of history's good-who-died-young. It's a deservedly contemptuous critique of what is marketed as important to our society as a whole because, well, it *is* what is important to our society as a whole.

by CHRISTOPHER HART CHAMBERS



Josh Kline, *Clean Drip*, 2013. IV Bag, Redbull, Yerba Mate, Emergen-C, sugar, spirulina, Provigil, gasoline, lightbox column (plexiglas, LEDs, wood).

Courtesy 47 Canal, New York.