

the village VOICE

Art

Introducing William Lamson, Heide Hatry, and Carrie Moyer

Three New York City artists you probably don't know, but should

By [Various writers](#), Monday, July 20th 2009 at 5:43pm

We asked three of our critics to each select a local artist they thought deserving of much greater attention. Below, **R.C. BAKER** on his pick: William Lamson.

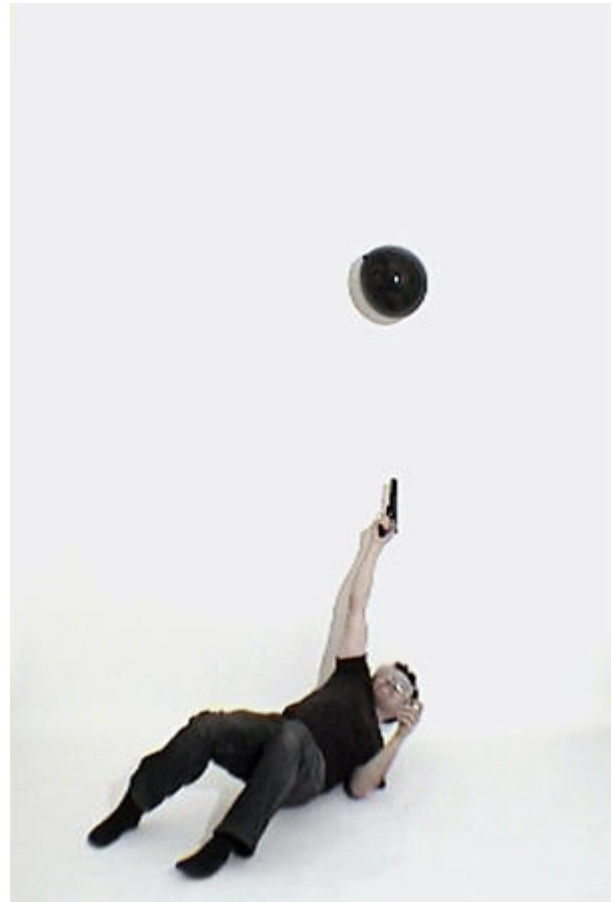
William Lamson: Controlled Serendipity

"I don't want to work with real guns," says William Lamson during a phone interview from his residency at the MacDowell Colony. "I want to turn the machismo thing on its head—to shoot a balloon, there's something so nothing about that."

Indeed, the 31-year-old multidisciplinary artist—based in Brooklyn—visits a holocaust upon flocks of balloons in his *Actions* videos (2007–08). In *1/33*, he jumps on a teeterboard, sending nine of these innocent playthings bounding upward, then deftly shoots them with pellet guns, their shadows dissipating across a white wall. Other victims are skewered with darts, lacerated by Exacto blades, and deflated under crushing boards. Revenge of a sort occurs in *9/33*, when Lamson rolls into the scene like *24*'s [Jack Bauer](#) and, grunting and squirming, keeps a single balloon aloft with shots from low-velocity pistols. Ammo depleted, the artist finally lies as flat as Manet's dead toreador, while the balloon descends to lightly brush his forehead.

Lamson is equally skilled with a bow, using box cutters mounted on arrows to sever the shoestrings of sneakers dangling above [Brooklyn](#) intersections. Ignoring passing garbage trucks and rubbernecking drivers, he puts his new acquisitions on his own feet and tosses the pair he was wearing back up over the power lines. The vaguely socialistic impulse of this 15-minute video, *Hunt and Gather*, was expanded upon in Lamson's recent show at Pierogi Gallery, "Work and Trade." The artist exchanged abstract drawings he created using a ceiling fan, string, and a marker for whatever viewers wanted to give in return. The final exhibit comprised 285 offerings, including artwork, dolls, a line of cocaine, and even a stranger's apartment key. Lamson notes that the last item "is a weird and personal thing, but not really," since the address wasn't included.

In the shadow of some illustrious forebears—think of [David Hammons](#)'s flambéed fur coat, [Robert Watts](#)'s swaying tree-branch drawings, and Fischli and Weiss's cinema of mad science—Lamson's thoughtful mayhem is dead-on. **R.C. BAKER**



An image from William Lamson's *9/33*