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[James Franco & Kalup Linzy: Collaborations at Bob Rauschenberg Gallery](#)

Shotgun Reviews are an open forum where we invite the international art community to contribute timely, short-format responses to an exhibition or event. In this Shotgun Review, Danny Olda reviews James Franco & Kalup Linzy: Collaborations at Bob Rauschenberg Gallery in Fort Meyers.



James Franco and Kalup Linzy. Courtesy of the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery.

Since *General Hospital* [brought the two together](#) in 2010, [James Franco](#) and [Kalup Linzy](#)'s collaborative work has been rooted in a shared sense of camp, performance, and a fusion of art and show business. However, as is clear in [James Franco & Kalup Linzy: Collaborations](#) at Fort Myers's [Bob Rauschenberg Gallery](#), on view through June 3, Franco and Linzy arrive at and move beyond their collaborative work in tellingly different ways.

The exhibition is structured, physically and thematically, around *Ozara and Katessa* (2017), a new ten-part video installed in a structure resembling a TV production set. A wooden cube built for the series fills nearly a quarter of the large gallery. The structure's impromptu character adds to the artifice. At the center of the series are its namesake characters: Ozara (Franco), a theatre director with aspirations to "cross over" into film by way of her latest project, and Katessa (Linzy), an actress dedicated to her craft, and the star of Ozara's new project. Like many of Franco and Linzy's past collaborations, *Ozara and Katessa* draws heavily on the narrative conventions and melodramatic stylings of soap operas set against dialogue voicing that is digitally altered and overdubbed.

Throughout, Franco overacts, genuinely enjoying the pantomime and lip syncing. He is abidingly self-aware and folds contemporary art into light entertainment so thoroughly that it's disorienting. Linzy is comparatively subdued. In contrast to Franco reveling in farce, Linzy digs into something much more personal. For example, another video in the exhibition, Linzy's [*First Soap Opera*](#) (1994), deploys a typical soap opera story arc to detail the deterioration of the ozone layer, in a video replete with emotional havoc and histrionic dialogue and music. Notably, this piece was originally a high school science homework assignment. While many of his peers may have doodled in diaries and sketchbooks, a then-teenage Linzy utilized soap operas as a mode of personal expression—a deep well from which he still draws. Although *Collaborations* features a partnership, it is Linzy's emotional heavy lifting—earnest in its campiness—that gives strength to the exhibition.

James Franco & Kalup Linzy: *Collaboration will be on view through June 3, 2017.*

Danny Olda is a freelance art critic and editor. He currently lives and works on the west coast of Florida.