

CLAMP

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Eye Candy | Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt & Bill Costa

May 9 – July 2, 2026

CLAMP is proud to announce *Eye Candy*, an exhibition pairing the intricate sculptures of **Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt** (b. 1948) with the evocative photography of **Bill Costa** (1944–1995). This exhibition celebrates a unique creative dialogue between two New York artists who, despite working in disparate media, found a shared language and mutual appreciation for the male form.

In the early 1990s, Lanigan-Schmidt and Costa forged a friendship rooted in mutual artistic admiration. At the time, Lanigan-Schmidt was already celebrated for his "trashy opulence"—a signature style that transformed humble materials such as aluminum foil, cellophane, and pipe cleaners into maximalist mixed-media constructions.

Concurrently, Costa had established himself as a master of the male nude, known for his high-contrast, black-and-white portraits of models posed against decaying urban backdrops.

The works on view at CLAMP are the result of a rare exchange: Lanigan-Schmidt requested imagery from Costa to integrate into a new series of "playful sculptures." Costa responded with contact sheets from his most iconic portrait sessions. From these, Lanigan-Schmidt fashioned a series of crowns, bouquets, and candy dishes, embedding Costa's imagery into glittering, kaleidoscopic objects.

Eye Candy features these sculptural works displayed alongside Costa's original lifetime prints, reuniting the subjects and the art they inspired. The exhibition captures a moment of peak creative



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synergy between two gay artists of the same generation, reflecting a shared obsession with the sacred, the profane, and the beauty of the human body.

About the Artists

Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt is a pioneer of the maximalist aesthetic. A veteran of the 1969 Stonewall uprising, his work has long challenged the sterile boundaries of Minimalism and Conceptualism by blending high art with kitsch and religious iconography with queer sexuality. While his practice has been a major influence on contemporary decorative arts—highlighted by a major retrospective at MoMA PS1 in 2012—his radical contribution to the American canon remains an essential area of rediscovery.

Bill Costa (1944–1995) moved from a successful corporate career to become a respected photographer of his era. Originally from the artist colony of Gloucester, Massachusetts, Costa developed work characterized by its sensual elegance, technical

precision, and gorgeous natural light. His photographs have been the subject of numerous monographs and international exhibitions. *Eye Candy* serves as a poignant tribute to Costa's legacy; he passed away at the age of 51, shortly after this collaborative series was completed.

For more information and images, please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see clampart.com.

Image 1: © Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt; "Untitled (Crown)," early 1990s; Foil, plastic wrap, pipe cleaners, clear contact paper, staples, and black-and-white photographs; 13 x 8 x 7 inches; Courtesy of CLAMP, New York

Image 2: © Bill Costa (1944-1995); "Embracing the Slab," 1993; Gelatin silver print; 13.875 x 11 inches, sheet; Courtesy of CLAMP, New York