



ARTFORUM



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JASON RHOADES (INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, PHILADELPHIA; CURATED BY INGRID SCHAFFNER) Combing the layered arcana at the base of the cafeteria-table Babel that is Rhoades's *Creation Myth*, 1998, I was startled when a foot-wide smoke ring grazed my head and, a few yards on, vanished into thin air. A fitting metaphor for Rhoades's art and (too-short) life, the ephemeral emanation underscored the inherent challenge of retrospecting an artist whose living sculpture means nothing sans the carnival that gives it breath. For this reason, the occasion is inevitably a bittersweet one, which is all the more reason to celebrate the ICA and Schaffner, who, with modest space but maximum sensitivity, attempted the impossible—and kept the flame alive.



6. Jason Rhoades, *The Creation Myth*, 1998, mixed media. Installation view, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2013. Photo: Aaron Igler.