JORDAN WOLFSON
RASPBERRY POSER

DECEMBER 2, 2012–JANUARY 27, 2013

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Raspberry Poser is produced in collaboration with the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, Belgium.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST
Jordan Wolfson
Raspberry Poser, 2012
Digital video with CGI and hand-drawn animation
13 min. 55 sec.
Courtesy the artist and Johann König, Berlin
Raspberry Poser (2012) is a world inhabited by silvery heart-filled condoms, mutating red blood cells, a lock and key in coitus, a listless punk, a destructive shapeshifting kid, and a rubbery anthropomorphic HIV virus. Set against a backdrop of still and moving images and a soundtrack of pop music, the actors and animated objects float, bounce, and pulsate from one scene to the next, their rhythmic activities framed by high-end design stores in SoHo, children’s bedrooms, Parisian parks, and the paintings of Caravaggio.

The systems of reference in Jordan Wolfson’s 13:55 minute animated video are elastic and disparate, and they contrast the inherent flatness of hand-drawn animation with the illusion of depth and hyper-reality afforded by recent advances in computer-generated imagery (CGI). The image-forms that populate this world are jumbled and technologically adrift; they are orphaned and never appear to be “at home.” They are forced to share the same visual space with one another, in spite of their own dissonance and discord.

Culling together materials from Internet image searches and the histories of art and popular entertainment, Raspberry Poser touches upon such pervasive themes as life, death, and love. Wolfson’s sleight of hand undermines and contaminates these themes just as quickly as they might cohere around any revelatory signifiers. To “reflect” on ideas as big as these is itself a ridiculous undertaking, not without narcissism and pathos; and it is sometimes hard to utter these words—life, death, love—in relation to art without cringing inside. It is often just assumed that all art making intimates such themes or, alternatively, that any art work struggles to even approximate these concepts.

It might be easy to get hung up on the references that are made in Raspberry Poser, on the allusions to the artist’s reckless persona, to an artist who poses as a poser, or to a mutating virus that continues to claim countless lives. It might be as easy to say that the references are empty, that any and all meaning has been evacuated from this assembly of found images, sampled music, commissioned animations, and scenes that make up this perverse world. However, the threat of viral contamination, of those things that encroach upon the fallible body, are unavoidable parts of Raspberry Poser, just as they are unavoidable in our world. Perhaps it is a utopian fantasy on offer, where a strain of HIV viruses can dance in the streets of New York to the synthesizer bass line of Beyoncé’s “Sweet Dreams.” But, true to life, these rhythmic viruses embody the lack of concern that a deadly infection has for those it infiltrates.

The video’s other co-stars—an angry, self-destructive cartoon kid and Wolfson dressed as an anachronistic punk—project out from their world and into ours, unscathed and cocksure, with an annoyingly boyish smirk and a deadlock stare. Like much of Raspberry Poser, the characters’ direct address is borrowed from a history of animated cartoons, where a disregard of the fourth wall and a malleable and permeable cinematic frame took hold early on as the industry standard. By addressing the space beyond the frame of the image, a channel is formed—a direct link from one impossibly irreverent world to another, where repulsion and attraction tighten their respective grips. Seemingly limitless in possibility and scope, Wolfson’s video relies upon the technical abilities and skill of digital and hand-drawn animations to convey another world and the forms that inhabit it. Any relation to life as it is lived is askew, because the world that animators create is one that is constructed from and by a sea of existing images and materials. To overcome this divide between some supposed reality and an alternative universe of computer graphics and moving pictures, Wolfson defers to indifference, to finding a way to navigate the detachment of objects that inhabit and share our natural world, no matter how disagreeable and hostile they might be.

Animation allows for otherwise passive and indifferent things to be activated, made animate, and forced to engage through means that they would rather avoid if left to their own devices. The picture that is unanimated, like the inanimate object,
leads a sedentary life—reclusive and inward with only latent energy awaiting being turned on by some other thing or object. Animation offers an alternative to the fate of a used condom that ends up deflated and discarded in a garbage bin. The condom in Raspberry Poser, for example, endlessly pirouettes and overflows with glossy red heart bubbles, its usual dispassion derailed in the process.

Through the endless repetition and mutation of forms that gyrate, writhe, and move in unison throughout Raspberry Poser, the detachment that is inherent to indifference is laid bare. Each character that performs in this context might even be taken as part of an army of Wolfson’s surrogates who collectively mimic the many roles and shapes one takes when inhabiting a world that never holds true to its promises. More and more, this animated world reflects the world it detaches itself from, and the artist’s many constructed personae and surrogate selves are the conduits through which empathy and aversion are engaged. The conflation of these sentiments onto one plane is akin to the ambivalence in finding human qualities among that which has been dehumanized, in sharing feelings with that which has been deemed a monster.

—Aram Moshayedi
JORDAN WOLFSON
Born 1980 in New York
Lives and works in New York

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2012
Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Con Leche, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, Germany
Svit, Prague, Czechoslovakia
Alex Zachary Peter Currie, New York

2011
T293, Rome, Italy
Schmela Haus, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany

2010
Con Leche, Jousse Entreprise, Paris, France

2009
Con Leche, Johann König, Berlin, Germany
Frieze Projects, Frieze Art Fair, London, United Kingdom
Untitled (2009), Yama, Istanbul
The Exhibition Formerly Known as Passengers,CCA Watts Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, California
Kabinett für aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven, Germany

2008
untitled false document, Swiss Institute, New York
T293, Naples, Italy

2007
Rowley Kennerk Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
Fondazione March, Padova, Italy
Johann König, Berlin, Germany
Eldorado, GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy

2006
Wako Works of Art, Tokyo, Japan
(with Gabriel Lester)

2005
Jim-no-Pedti, T293, Naples, Italy
Neverland, Jordan Wolfson, Yvon Lambert, Paris, France

2004
Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland
Nostalgia Is Fear, Ima Vep Lab, Reims, France
Infinite Melancholy, Galleri Brandström & Stene, Stockholm, Sweden

2002
Radar, Galleri Brandström & Stene, Stockholm, Sweden

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND VIDEO SCREENINGS

2012
The New Festival, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Dimensions Variables, Institut d’Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, France
Inside the Banana, Alugs Greenspon, New York

Nuit Blanche, Musée d’Art et d’histoire du Judaïsme, Paris, France

2011
Happy Holidays Drawing Show, Alex Zachary, New York
Livret I, Irmaep Scule, Schleicher/Lange, Paris, France
No Color In Your Cheeks Unless the Wind Lashes Your Face, IOP, Glasgow, Scotland
The Second Strike, 3rd Herzliya Biennial of Contemporary Art, Herzliya, Israel
Formally Speaking, Haifa Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
Dystopia, CAPC, Bordeaux, France
Off the Wall, Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal

2010
Prospectiv Cinéma, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Eternal Tour Festival, Jerusalem and Ramallah
Nineteen Eighty Four, Austrian Cultural Forum, New York
Uncertain Spectator, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, EMPAC, New York
Surviving H1N1, Contemporary by Golconda, Tel Aviv, Israel
Julia Stochesk Collection: I Want to See How You See, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany
Anticipation Time, Museum of Bat Yam, Israel
And so on, and so on, and so on...
Harris Lieberman Gallery, New York
Ibrido, MiArt, Pavilion of Contemporary Art, Milan, Italy
An Invitation for an Infiltration, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Sehsucht, Uqbar Art Space, Berlin, Germany
Anthology Film Archive, Courthouse Theater, New York
About Us, Johann König, Berlin, Germany

2009
Parenthesis, Western Bridge, Seattle, Washington
Chapter Four: Word Wraps, About Change Collection, Berlin, Germany
Auszeit, Kunstverein, Amsberg, Germany
Sequelism Episode 3: Possible, Probable, or Preferable Futures, Arnolfini, Bristol, United Kingdom
The Columns Held Us Up, Artists Space, New York
Mermaids vs. Unicorns, I-20, New York
Manchester International Festival, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, United Kingdom
Mesure du désordre, Videok.01, Pau, France
Just In the Dark, Mercat di Tralino, Rome, Italy
Made for TV, Bar Tokyo Eat, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
The Uncertainty Principle, The MACBA Chapel, Barcelona, Spain
Timeout, Artnews, Berlin, Germany
Of Vagrant Dollers in the Houseless Woods, Or Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

2008
No Information Available, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
Grey Flags, Alogon Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
Presentation Collection, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium
I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl, Asian Song Society, New York
Wrap Your Troubles in a Dream, Lautum Contemporary, Oslo, Norway
When a Clock Is Seen from the Side It No Longer Tells the Time, Johann König, Berlin, Germany
T2 Torino Triennale, Turin, Italy
The Eternal Flame: On the Promise of Eternity, Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttenz, Basel, Switzerland
Prueesspress, Rental Gallery, New York
You Complete Me, Western Bridge, Seattle, Washington
Delirious Beijing, PKM Gallery, Beijing, China
Légendes, Domaine de la Chamaron, Chamaron, France
Site Projektionen, Sitegalerie, Düsseldorf, Germany
Passengers, CCA Watts Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, California
Promin Britsche, Tuch Greenfort, Jordan Wolfson, Salon 5A, New York
Stake in the Mud, a Hole in the Reel, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico
Countdown Sequence, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
Blank Complexity, Parka Kind Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany
New York States of Mind, Queens Museum of Art, New York

2007
Delicatessen, University Galleries, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida
In the Stream of Life, Bâle Tolosa, Paris, France
Berwick Upon Tweed, Film & Media Arts Festival, Northumberland, United Kingdom
Poetical Political, Simon Lee Gallery, London, United Kingdom
Stardust ou la dernière frontière, Musée d’Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine, France
Stop & Go, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy
To Be Continued, Kunsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
A Leak in the Silence: Noise, Poëziezomer, Watou, Belgium
New York—States of Mind, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany
The Re-Distribution of the Sensible, Gallery Magnus Muller, Berlin, Germany
Absent Without Leave, Victoria Miro Gallery, London, United Kingdom
Learn to Read, Level 2 Gallery, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom
Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia
Some Time Waiting, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France
Insubstantial Pageant Faded, Western Bridge, Seattle, Washington
TV Dinners, LMAKprojects, New York
100 Tage = 100 Videos, GL Strand, Copenhagen, Denmark
Invisible/Invincible, Curators Without Borders, Berlin, Germany