

FLAUNT



18 DECEMBER 2014

BODY BY BODY

Overwhelmed Is the Calmest I Get

Body by Body is the collaboration of Californian Fine Arts graduates Cameron Soren and Melissa Sachs. Their work melds kitsch pop culture with psychedelics, repurposed graphics, crude computer generated imagery, and scrawling street art, then tangles these formats into a wide variety of audio, visual, and structural mediums.

They embrace and revel in bad taste, with works in a variety of clashing themes and aesthetics assembled into mangled tributes to Internet and meme culture. There's a self-conscious irony to their work, as is exhibited in their video *performing lol*, yet determining exactly who the joke is on proves elusive.

They acknowledge the role of heavy drug use (mushrooms, acid, kratom) in the creation of their work, and disentangling the deliberate from the deranged is quite as hopeless as they (possibly) intend it to be.

“Our work is... subject to a plethora of schizophrenic role-playing identity crises swimming in a spleen-erific horror film marred by flowers and traditional beauty. In other words, ‘what it all boils down to, is that no one’s really got it figured out just yet.”

They have had seven solo shows in Europe and the United States, and have participated in 13 group exhibitions.

Where do you feel you’ve come from, where do you feel you’re going?

Melissa Sachs: Baby by Baby. We started out as a cute Asian baby and soon we’ll be a cute old black man. Yea baby yeaaaa (in *Austin Powers* voice).

Cameron Soren: Slow motion (slow motion) we so gone on Patron, we don’t know how we getting home later on. But seriously, the world seems like it’s ending soon, everybody acting like characters in a movie’s denouement, you just have to be cool about it.

Viewing art on the Internet differs from viewing art in a gallery. In your work, where do those two experiences meet? Where do they diverge?

MS/CS: Oh we always thought of them as pretty similar, I’m not sure why people make such a big deal about it. You can spill coffee at your computer and you can spill coffee in a gallery, either way you’ll get wet.

What about technology scares you? What about art scares you?

MS: Bourgeois deference to public opinion. Just kidding. Sometimes Cameron cooks dinner for me, which usually means ordering Indian food. But sometimes he makes soups from recipes he’s found online. I don’t love the way they taste, but I appreciate the gesture.

CS: 7.5 on Pitchfork, 84% on Rotten Tomatoes.

Do you see your phone as being particularly smart? In what way?

MS: When I was in elementary school and we were learning about using computers, I remember the teacher always saying, “You are smarter than a computer, because a computer has to be told what to do.”

CS: Sure, looks like fun with all the posting and whatnot. Y’all got videos and little pictures and stuff. I like it a lot, makes me happy.

Has autosave ever failed you?

MS/CS: Is this a veiled question about love? It sounds like it so we’ll answer accordingly. You can’t rely on autosave but you can’t constantly be disrupting your creative process to manually save. Sometimes it’s not about autosave failing you—it’s actually about you failing by depending on it.

What effect does technology have on your sense of wonder?

MS: Life hacks mainly.

CS: We just built a robot so you can ask it and we will wonder if it responds.

Does information overload interfere with your creative practice?

MS/CS: You either have retinal impatience or you don't, and we do, which means that there is no load-bearing limit within us that reaches capacity and rubs against our creative practice. Even if you decide to opt out of information—the kind provided by letters, numbers, moving images—and you go and make a salad, that salad is full of information and expression. Then what do you do, meditate? And we all know how much detail can be extrapolated from the idea or presence of the void, so even contemplating information as something that one has to manage the intake of is perilous and stressful.

"Creep," (2014). Plexiglass. 6 x 8 inches. Courtesy Interstate Projects, New York. Photo: Marc Tatti.

Installation view from *Freelance Hellraiser (Studio Visit)*, (2014). Courtesy Interstate Projects, New York. Photo: Marc Tatti.

"Blues Metal Apartment," (2013). Sublimation print on faux fur. 56 x 45 inches. Courtesy Appendix Space, Portland.

"SHICHI by painter_john99@yahoo.com," (2012). Mixed media on canvas. 20 x 16 inches. Courtesy Courtney Blades, Chicago.

Written by Peter Bosche

Photographed by Marc Tatti

Image courtesy of Courtesy Appendix Space Portland, Courtesy Interstate Projects New York, Courtney Blades Chicago