

LUBOV

Rawr means I love you in dinosaur

organized by Daisy Sanchez

August 15 – September 22, 2019

Rawr means I love you in dinosaur initiates a dialogue between two bodies of recent work through which Philadelphia-based painter Riley Hanson and Frankfurt-based multidisciplinary artist James Gregory Atkinson utilize digital photography as a means to investigate the connections between the gendered dress expectations and emotional vulnerability in various subcultures.

Hanson's portraits of emo and scene teenagers paint a tender tribute to the seditious youths that pioneered transgressive self definition through a merging of online and actual identity, and embraced gender expectation defying modes of dress and embrace of emotional vulnerability. Hanson's portraits of scene and emo teenagers are rendered from found images culled from a variety of online sources. Painted in swift strokes, the quality of Hanson's execution recalls the crude pixelation of early digital phone and webcam photography—profile pics showing off fresh snake bites, moody mirror selfies in tight fitting tees, and tagged shots of friends in heavy eyeliner and helmets of dyed hair—online relics of this community. These snapshots aren't intended to resurrect individual likenesses but rather construct characters that embody and enliven their collective memory.

The emo subculture that emerged in the beginning of the new millennium initially sprung from a genre of alternative rock characterized by dark, emotional lyricism. Members of this milieu of disenfranchised youth existed both on and offline in the disparate landscapes of ethernet realms and real world terrain. Alienated from their normie peers and the confines of mainstream culture, they were relegated to the fringes of early social media platforms Friendster, MySpace, and later Tumblr; they congregated in the mall Hot Topics whose signature camp aesthetic, part sinister, part whimsy, came to define their defiant style in which differences in gender presentations were slight or not existent.

Atkinson's large scale digital photographs, *Hypersensitive (Blowing things out of proportion) II and III*, capture moments of emotional and identity performance through closely cropped shots of crying eyes wearing costume contact lenses. Atkinson's photographs nod to the relationship between the photographic lens and the ocular lens, both transmitters of visual information and mechanisms for creating images, which often serve as the basis of identity formation. Bulbous tears well up the inner eyelids and lashes of the 'hypersensitive' glazed over eyes sporting lenses printed with a pink heart motif and black and white zebra print. As their titles suggest, the scale of these inflated images depicting intimate moments of vulnerability alludes to an overblown, emotional response perhaps emboldened by the masking effect of the costume lenses. Conjure up associations with The lenses obscure the iris and conceal the wearer's identity, which is further abstracted by the close crop, enabling them to take on a constructed identity of their choosing.

Costume contact lenses have been donned by countercultural icon Marilyn Manson or more recently, sported by models on the Balenciaga FW19 runway. Manson's provocative persona is born out of gender fluidity and the Balenciaga brand is in part defined by their similar resistance to gendered expectations, having defied industry standards by integrated their men's and women's runways into a single unisex presentation backdropped by the techno club music.

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Rawr means I love you in dinosaur, often abbreviated as Rawr XD, may be read as an infantilistic statement indicating regressed maturity could alternatively be understood as a signal of social progression. The cutesy linguistic maneuver of this memetic 'baby talk' phrase resonated with many across the vast digital plains as a way of expressing affection without having to explicitly state emotions or be directly vulnerable. The online ubiquity of this early memetic 'baby talk' phrase, entered into the sphere of mainstream culture as a popular t-shirt slogan. Thanks, in part, to the emos and the ravers who were, by self definition, scene and club "kids". On the cultural vanguard both on and off line, their agony or ecstasy was contingent on the music at the core of their subcultures in which costume is social currency and rejections of cursory gender performance paved the way for their radical embrace of vulnerability.

Riley Hanson (b.1995, Akron, Ohio) lives and works in Philadelphia. Hanson earned a BFA from Michigan University. Hanson's recent exhibitions include *Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Duck. Tom Cruise*. No Place Gallery, Columbus OH, *Bunk Notes group show*, curated by Olivia Williams, Pilot Projects, Philadelphia, and *When You Care Too Much Your Guts Slips Out*, Gallery Bypass, Detroit, MI.

James Gregory Atkinson (b. in Bad Nauheim, Germany) currently lives and works between Seattle and Frankfurt. Atkinson earned a degree in Photography and Design from Lette-Verein, Berlin, has studied at the Cooper Union School of Art, New York and holds a Meisterschüler from Städelschule, Frankfurt. Recent exhibitions include "*SHOW ME YOUR SHELVES!*" conceived by C& at the Detroit Public Library and *Re: Re: Black Macho. Unleash The Queen*, PPC Philipp Pflug Contemporary. Frankfurt, Germany. *Rawr means I love you in dinosaur* was organized by Daisy Sanchez with the support Francisco Correa Cordero <3

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RILEY HANSON

Not yet titled, 2019

Oil on canvas

14 x 11 inches



RILEY HANSON

Not yet titled, 2019

Oil on canvas

45 x 35 inches



JAMES GREGORY ATKINSON

Hypersensitive (Blowing things out of proportion) III,
2018

Archival pigment print on dibond

65 x 43 inches



RILEY HANSON

Not yet titled, 2019

Oil on canvas

36 x 38 inches



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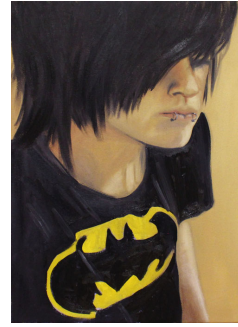
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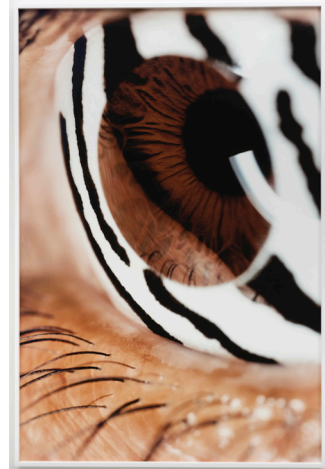
RILEY HANSON

Not yet titled, 2019
Oil on canvas
24 x 18 inches



JAMES GREGORY ATKINSON

Hypersensitive (Blowing things out of proportion) II,
2017
Archival pigment print on dibond
65 x 43 inches



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