

HYPERALLERGIC

Jacolby Satterwhite Keeps Reality Virtual

By Alicia Eler December 15, 2014



Jacolby Satterwhite, "How lovely is me being as I am" (2014), neon (all images courtesy of OHWOW Gallery Los Angeles)

LOS ANGELES — Jacolby Satterwhite's solo exhibition *How lovely is me being as I am* is born out of a maternal virtual hive mind. Satterwhite fills OHWOW, a spacious white cube in West Hollywood, with 10 large-scale C-prints from the series *Satellites* and *En Plein Air*, four nylon-and-enamel sculptures called "Metonym," and the six-channel video "Reifying Desire." The visual centerpiece of this show, for which it is named, is a purple-lit neon sign, which sets the tone for this exhibition's breezy tour through a hyperactive virtualized video game imagination.

The artist makes appearances in practically every screen-like object in this exhibition. At once we see 3D animated videos of the artist-as-hero avatar bouncing and flying through the virtual universe, copulating with objects of desire (men), multiplying out of semen droplets spouting from a giant phallus (army), or destroying everything around him using a long, braid-like tail stemming from its head. No matter the space — whether it's on a

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platform floating disc in the middle of a cloudy post-futuristic world as in “En Plein Air: Abduction II” (2014), or creating a giant fleet-like, air-roaming vessel in “En Plein Air: Vassalage III” (2014), Satterwhite makes each new realm more vast than the last. When he appears more physically in videos, we see Satterwhite fluidly voguing, twisting his body into various shapes and angles, parading into post-gendered territory.



Jacoby Satterwhite, “En Plein Air: Abduction 1” (2014), C-print in artist’s frame.

The generous gallery space at OHWOW demands a high number of works, which gives an almost mini-retrospective feel to the exhibition. At times that means the paintings begin to blend into one another, appearing like slightly duplicated screen grabs of a whole. For an artist who broke through during the 2014 Whitney Biennial, an exhibition

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as big as this one is indeed an accomplishment — but it is also a sign of the corporate art world pushing its hot young product from coast-to-coast. These are the terms of the art market, and it's mostly in the realm of video that monetary rules shift.

The *Reifying Desire 1–6* video series is a collision of layered storylines that encompass Jacobly's very public performances of American culture layered with virtual reality renderings of his mother's late-night drawings of practical inventions, conceived while watching late night TV commercials that apparently offer monetary lottery-style rewards for such ideas. In one video, we see tiny cloned duplicates of Jacobly spawn from a giant penis head. Then the electrified, illuminated letters of his mother float in, and they read: "A Pool Cleaning Robot, a Vacuum for the Pool." Elsewhere we see the artist, clad in a one-piece hyper-patterned jumpsuit that he design, sitting in the middle of a green-screen-like valley. His head twirls about, bouncing in rhythm with his body's vogue-ing gestures, with giant, antennae-like wands whipping through the air.



Jacolby Satterwhite, "Metonym IV (Gold)" (2014),
nylon, enamel, and artist's pedestal

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In an interview with *Guernica*, Satterwhite notes that his hyperactive digital aesthetic is informed by owning a plethora of consoles such as Sega Game Gear, Sega Genesis, SNES, Nintendo 64, and Sony Playstation. In this queered zone of escape, we see the body visualized, projected into a video game that no one can control. With trippy time travel through freeform virtual space, the artist is released from the constraints of physical reality, traversing the reimagined video game aesthetics of his childhood.