

BURNAWAY

The Incredulity of Jacoby Satterwhite

BY BURNAWAY STAFF | APRIL 05, 2024



Resurrection in the form of digital clones and questioning mortality in fantasy worlds. Jacoby Satterwhite copes with battling illness, both personally and in proximity to himself, by visually rendering immortality. Using gaming as a platform in which to manifest these worlds, Satterwhite implements the digital sphere and modern technology to poke at this commercialized desire to live forever.

Born in Columbia, South Carolina, Satterwhite was diagnosed with cancer at a very young age. He recounts how playing *Final Fantasy* video games in the hospital affected him during such a traumatic period. This formative entertainment morphed into an artistic practice that creates life from virtual nothings. Through dancing avatars and a sculptural world made from digital space, Satterwhite investigates performance, embarrassment, and masculinity in American culture. "Having a public practice that circulates in galleries and museums is vulnerable because you're publicly archiving yourself in ways that you might not feel are flattering in the future. It's a masochistic performance gesture to say the least," notes Satterwhite.

The loss of his mother in 2016 further introduced themes of ritual and regeneration into the artist's work. Satterwhite turned his mother's voice, songs, and drawings into virtual reality records and 3D printed objects. The work reflects on the power of legacy and memory, allowing his late mother to exist and create after her death.

In turn, Satterwhite recreates himself in his work over and over again. For example, in a digital version of his likeness, the artist becomes the Doubting Thomas. In his interpretation, every figure in the biblical scene is Satterwhite, prodding the wound that he himself bears, but also serving as an observer. Satterwhite's works are a testament to the ability to encircle oneself in seeing and speculation in order for the artist to believe he is alive and present in the living world, despite all odds.

This film is part of Burnaway's partnership with Art21, an organization that produces award-winning documentary films about the world's most groundbreaking contemporary artists. The collaboration intends to deepen an understanding of visual art that hails from the South today.