

PUBLIC



Adam Cruces

Chimera

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What differentiates the familiar and the foreign, the self-same and its other? The foreign may be, as Mary Douglas wrote of dirt, nothing other than 'matter out of place', the known transported out of its customary context and made strange, abstracted by its new home, like a bird spotted inside an airport or someone wearing camouflage in the city. In *Chimera*, Adam Cruces interrogates the slippage between the absurd and the everyday by staging total environments in which these displaced entities appear as interlopers, threats or eruptions of the uncanny. The objects of these encounters – the strawberry blown up to inflatable size or the hunter's ghillie suit transplanted from the rural to the urban – might seem arbitrary, but such is the experience of being uncertain about the typical order of things. The objects are not all that bizarre in themselves: Cruces is interested in the weird in the everyday, the familiar friend and its false twin. The Chimera, a mythical representation of illusions of the mind, is after all both a fantastic beast and a composite of ordinary creatures: lion, goat, and serpent.

For this exhibition Cruces reprises various materials to create ersatz objects, like a 3D printed shirt that can't be worn or a pair of jeans made of denim but stretched into a rectangle, somewhere between the object itself and its image. These works operate like conjuring tricks, a sleight of hand between reality and illusion, but also describe things that are in transit, caught between states of being, like émigrés who fit in neither at home nor in their adopted countries. Conforming, with a white picket fence and well-tended garden, is always in itself an artifice, another form of camouflage, which works hard to appear effortless. But like a cardboard box used for deliveries, the émigré is most at home when travelling between points on the map, hiding the multitudes within.

Throughout the exhibition, objects converse with their doppelgängers, sometimes with one side triumphing over the other, like fabricated strawberries towering over their real counterparts. At other times categories are confused: doubles shift into opposition, mirror images turn out to describe inverse positions, and a parody is both twinned with and differentiated from the object it mimics. As the boundary between natural and artificial starts to lose shape, so too do those other distinctions which follow: truth/falsehood, reality/dreams. Perhaps we are in the grips of what Andre Breton called the 'magical-circumstantial' form of 'convulsive beauty', where the familiar takes the form of the foreign and reality exceeds its own boundaries to become surreal.

Adam Cruces (b. 1985 Houston, Texas, USA) lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland. He graduated in Interdisciplinary Art from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2008, and completed his MFA in Art and Media at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste in 2013. Cruces has exhibited at Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel, Switzerland; Istituto Svizzero, Milan, Italy; kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, Latvia; Kunsthal Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark; and Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland. He has held residencies at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France; Rupert, Vilnius, Latvia; Cripta747, Turin, Italy; and Nordisk Kunstnarsenter Dale, Dale, Norway.

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