

In *Limitless Growth* at Hua International in Beijing, **Jenkin van Zyl** draws from the world-building of his film-based project and installation, *Surrender*. Referencing dance marathons of the 1930s Great Depression, as well as queer nightlife and Japanese love hotels, *Surrender* follows the experience of rat-faced guests to the *Paradise Engineering Endurance Partnership (P.E.E.P.) Hotel*, who compete in a series of increasingly strange tournaments in the hotel's ballroom that play with the limitations and expansiveness of the body.

Dance marathons emerged amidst an America obsessed with the idea of public endurance, with contestants pushed to their limits whilst dancing continuously for days in exchange for food, shelter and the possibility of a prize. Assigned partners, participants had to follow strict rules that often led to often bizarre workarounds: beds on the dance floor where contestants could rest for intensely short periods of time, as well as the completion of basic tasks, such as eating and bathing, whilst continuing to dance. If one half of a couple failed to adhere to strict competition rules and stopped moving, both contestants would face elimination. With storylines manipulated by their producers, these marathons often combined suffering and entertainment in a method that foreshadowed reality-TV and our contemporary attention economy.

In a pair of sculptures encircled by corridors of 2-way mirrors, *Everybody Loves a Winner (Chrome Limitless Growth) i & ii* (2024), van Zyl depicts chromed duets of dance marathon competitors. Teetering on stacks of energy drinks, and reflected infinitely within surveillance vitrines, the couples oscillate between collapse and endurance, seeming to compete out of an insatiable yearning, a desire for escapism, or a search for intimacy.

Caught in this state of strange grace and despair, the couples pivot on the pressure point at which barriers between the original and the copy, between self and other, collapse. Anchored in ambivalence, and supporting one another in mutual states of collapse, the sculptures relate archival photographs of collapsing couples in the 20th Century's marathons to contemporary issues of productivity and the commodification of rest and activity.

Two buzzer systems, *P.E.E.P. buzzer xiii & xiv*, flank the vitrines. Referencing room selectors found in love hotels and instruments of bureaucratic or scientific experiments, the buzzers tease the promise of a locked doorway—the chance to revise, the chance to redo - to disappear, if only briefly— and take on mischievous and contradictory combinations.

Despite these frameworks of control and alienation the couples persevere. Van Zyl suggests that "as much as the project of *Surrender* is about The End it is also about beginnings, with a view of the self which isn't wholly individualized and is consequently inseparable from relations of care and interdependence." The partners in *Limitless Growth's* marathon exist not in their permanence, but in the resilience with which they together might instead recover, re-recover and reform, encapsulating what Samuel Beckett named in *The Unnamable*: "... you must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on."

**Jenkin van Zyl** is a multi-disciplinary artist based in London who makes hallucinatory, narrative installations, typically centred on film. With initial projects ignited by guerilla filmmaking on the ruins of Hollywood movie sets, van Zyl's projects orbit around fantastical countercultural communities: ghouls breeding cakes in aircrafts, latex inflatables hazed in a desert fortress, and rats competing in dance marathons.

Conjured with a queer irreverence, one that is attentive to the power and politics of fantasy, his films perform carnivalesque explorations of abandoned yet grandiose neoliberal landscapes. Through this world-making van Zyl initiate an underworld revolt of transient spaces: the hotel, the airport, the desert, the casino, the stage, the set. Binaries of front and back-stage, self and other, desire and revulsion are displaced by instability, entropy and multiplicity, and here characters cycle through patterns of creative and destructive phenomena, in attempts to move away from the tyranny of individual identity towards a communal celebration of collapse. Beyond the screen these worlds have a material legacy as sculptural escapees, and are often shown within cinemas built from reconfigured materials such as pneumatic tube systems, infinity mirrors and fuselage.

Jenkin van Zyl received a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Academy, London in 2021 and was the recipient of the Gold Medal Prize. His work has been profiled in Frieze, ArtForum, The Guardian, Spike art, Vogue, The White Review, i-D magazine, Art Monthly and was recently named as one of London's best young artists by Time Out.

Van Zyl's recent presentations include solo presentations Surrender, FACT, Liverpool, and Edel Assanti, London; Machines of Love, Tramway, Glasgow; Vore, Rose Easton, London; Cabin Pressure, Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, London; Oblivion Industry, The Horse Hospital, London and selected group presentations at Barbe à Papa, CAPC, Bordeaux; Transmediale, Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin; Kiss my Genders, Hayward Gallery, London and The Horror Show!, Somerset House, London.

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