

S.M.A.K. is delighted to present the first substantial museum exhibition by Jordan Wolfson (°1980, New York), which is built up around a 'trilogy' of his recent animation films. 'Con Leche' (2009), 'Animation, masks' (2011) and 'Raspberry Poser' (2012) are being shown in a labyrinthine exhibition layout that reflects the complexity of Wolfson's blend of Internet images, autobiographical elements, art history references, popular culture, scraps of schmaltzy music and analogue and digital animation.

Wolfson's work is characterised by twisted and interwoven themes and storylines. Condoms filled with plump little hearts flutter around, small Coca-Cola bottles hurtle by, mutating red blood cells and a caricature Jew are just a few of the players in the biotope of dazzling images. The films contain similarly blunt references to everyday desires and fears as to universal themes as life, death and love. In 'Con Leche', 'Animation, masks' and 'Raspberry Poser' Wolfson uses both the flatness of 'old-fashioned' hand-drawn animation and the three-dimensional hyper-reality of the latest computer animation.

As an artist, he is interested not only in the expressive potential of animation, but also in animation as an artistic genre, in sculptural terms. He approaches the developments in analogue and digital animation as essential steps in the history of modernity and modernism: animation has redefined our relationship with the representation of images and objects. Animation transcends borders: the differences between life and non-life, stasis and movement, the human and the animal, reality and imagination are systematically destabilized – and these differences, again, are fundamental for the culture we live in. Thanks to animation, Wolfson is able to let passive, disinterested objects such as bottles, noses and condoms make a statement.

An exceptionally important strategy in the three films is Wolfson's own presence: in 'Con Leche' and 'Animation, masks' the artist turns up as a voice-over and in 'Raspberry Poser' as the personalised cartoon Angry Kid and as a punk-like character. The introduction of these multiple selves (but without a body) blurs the boundary between the artist and the artwork, which thereby shows up aspects of performance. But Wolfson's presence (direct or indirect), as fragile as it is irritating, is above all typical of a generation whose identity is defined by the fusion of its own self-image and digital space. Our lives can be read as a play with countless roles and masks which, as a result of such phenomena as social media, can almost endlessly be multiplied and enhanced. In that sense the title of the exhibition 'Ecce Homo / le Poseur' refers to this contemporary state of mind: about this wild darkness between the ego and its image.

To accompany this exhibition at S.M.A.K. and 'Jordan Wolfson: Raspberry Poser', a show that was

on at REDCAT in Los Angeles from December 2012 to January 2013, a book was published entitled 'Jordan Wolfson. Ecce Homo / le Poseur' (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 2013) with contributions by Aram Moshayedi, Esther Leslie, Linda Norden, Martin Germann, and Philippe Van Cauteren.

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