



Banks Violette

i like america and america likes me

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Well I heard there were people who were forced to move from their houses, and some of them left their dogs behind and coyotes came down from the hills and fucked 'em. After a while, wild dogs...

von ammon is pleased to announce *i like america and america likes me*, a solo show by American artist Banks Violette. The project will be primarily composed of moving image works: looped projections on transparent scrim which will generate hologram-like specters in the gallery space. Recent sculpture and works on paper will accompany the moving-image works.

Using footage sourced from *Suburbia* (1983, d. Penelope Spheeris), the main gallery space will foreground two projections of the wild dogs that punctuate the movie's plotline. These animals travel in packs through the movie's neglected inner-suburban setting—a stagnant community apparently coming undone alongside its derelict tract housing. The animals embody the myth of foreign elements corrupting a sacrosanct American idyll: the beloved archetype of the family dog is miscegenated and corrupted by the coyote, to return as a fearsome revenant—concerned citizens gleefully execute these mongrels via drive-by gunshot. The animals—foils of the teenage squatters who anchor the drama—represent the merry menace of counterculture descending upon a staid yet moribund twentieth century.

The two looped videos in the gallery are drained of color, soundtrack, backdrop and context. Slowed down to a crawl, they cross the screens in irresolute, stuttering loops. Using a stage illusion called pepper's ghost, commonly used in amusement parks and haunted houses, they seem to hang in midair like holograms or specters. A solitary shepherd dog slowly falls to its death, only to run and die again and again. While the end of the twentieth century promised us the synthesis of two worlds—the norms and traditions of the prior epoch dovetailing with high tech and globalization—the two are evidently insoluble. New cultural and technological forms appear briefly, simply to degrade into novel vectors of loneliness, ennui, and rage.

The show's title is the same as that of Joseph Beuys' famous 1972 performance (also known simply as *Coyote*). Meant to conjure the trauma inflicted on Germany in The Second World War, Beuys' shamanistic pantomime—involving a living coyote—feels lifeless and chillingly silly in the context of its vaunted subject matter. Violette's pantomimes conjure a similarly haunting yet bathetic effect: thrilling cultural ferment and upheaval reduced to skips on the cultural record.

Banks Violette (b. 1973, Ithaca) lives and works in Ithaca, New York.