

05/2014  
Show

Martin Arnold, Arturo Herrera *Ready for the*

**READY FOR THE SHOW** In fragmenting characters from animated films, both artists invite associative readings on the recomposition of mass-cultural elements to explore their impact on the viewer. They consequently decode the known into something unknown from another world: or to be more *precise* into something that exists between the worlds one knows. The films of Arnold emanate the poignancy of a freeze frame capturing the most intensified moment of a scene such extending the chill factor into a longlasting memory. Herrera's still image provokes quite the opposite; it extends itself into a moving narrative that sparks endless story possibilities in the viewer's subconscious.

### **ARTURO HERRERA**

Arturo Herrera's multilayered body of work includes collages, photographs, cut felt pieces and wall works. Using a fragmented language - whose lingering references range from popular culture to art history - to decontextualise inherent narratives without eradicating the coded referentiality of the image. The resulting works shift in between the explicit and the implicit. A pliability of meaning is played out through the ambiguity of figurative and abstract forms. Arturo Herrera was born in Caracas, Venezuela. He currently lives in Berlin. Herrera's solo and project based exhibitions have been held at at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK; The Art Institute of Chicago; daad galerie, Berlin; CGAC, Santiago de Compostela; Art Gallery of Ontario; ICA Philadelphia; The UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; MoMA, NY; and the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago

### **MARTIN ARNOLD**

A strong archeological impulse subtends Arnold's cartoons. They critically dissemble the confluence of technology and technique that defined the dominant aesthetics and mode of production of animated films for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through a method he refers to as "de-celing cel animation." [I] The development of cel animation around 1915 economized and rationalized the labor required, thus fragmenting the bodies of both the characters being drawn and the artists who drew them. Kristin Thompson explains the process as "separating portions of a drawing into different layers to eliminate the necessity for re-drawing the entire composition for each movement phase." [II] The trunk, facial mask,

limbs, and mouth and tongue of a character might all be produced on separate transparent cels later stacked in layers to comprise a single image. The dismembered body parts that twitch and gesticulate throughout Martin Arnold's cartoons suggest a fantastic practical in gross anatomy. [III] Gross anatomy traditionally proceeds by means of the dissection and analysis of cadavers. It aims to produce a cumulative, generalized knowledge of the morphological structures and relations of distinct components to the whole functioning body.

[i] Arnold's cartoons generate a slightly perverse anatomical atlas of phantom limbs, phantasmatic bodies, and dynamic *corpuses* that emphasizes the contingency and porosity of bodies. (...) The Möbius strip structures of the loops enclose everything within a terrifyingly intense *present*, an eternal recurrence that Arnold describes as "the hamster wheel effect".

[II] Round and round they go in an exhausting cycle without escape, ends, or resolution: the spectacle of phantom limbs stuck in phantom limbo.

[III] Gross anatomy has played a key role in animation history, particularly at the Disney studio, where a naturalist was brought in to dissect deer cadavers for the benefit of the artists working on *Bambi* (1942). See Casey Riffel, "Dissecting Bambi," *The Velvet Light Trap* 69 (Spring 2012): 13.

[IV] Conversation with the artist, Zagreb, 14 December 2012.

\*1959, Vienna. He currently lives in Vienna, Austria. He studied psychology and art history at the university, Vienna. He works as an artist and film maker since 1988. He is internationally known with a series of 16 mm films, among others *pièce touchée* (1989), *passage à l'acte* (1993) and *Alone. Life Wastes Andy Hardy* (1998). In the last years he created the video works among those are *Shadow Cuts* (2010) or *Haunted House* (2012). He was represented at numerous international film festivals (f.i. Cannes, Rotterdam, New York) and in Cinematheken (amongst others at Centre Georges Pompidou, Cinèmathèque Royale Brussels, Tate Modern and MoMa New York) and institutions (like the Barbican Art Center London, Witte de With Rotterdam, Bozar Brussels, Kunsthaus Zurich and Hamburger Kunstverein). Numerous assignments as guest professor, a. o. 1996/97 at the San Francisco Art Institute, 1998/99, Städelschule Frankfurt, 2000/01 Bard College New York and 2008 at CalArts Los Angeles. RA