

WOTSIT ALL ABOUT

WINDOW PROJECT:
JAMES OSTRER

Preview:

30/07/2014

Window Project Dates:

31/07 - 11/09/2014

Location:

Gazelli Art House
39 Dover Street
London W1

*I love to eat - Kit Kats or cookies-and-cream
ice cream. I need sugar like five times a day -
Kim Kardashian*



Image © James Ostrer, 2014

As part of the Window Project, Gazelli Art House will present the commissioned photographic works by National Portrait Gallery Curator's Choice, artist James Ostrer, from the 30th July 2014. The images, referencing icons of contemporary sugar worship, Ostrer's imagined result of a corrupted globalization and increasingly dangerous methods of food production, will occupy the glass facade of the gallery and spread over the ground floor. A glimpse into a post apocalyptic world which has been destroyed by mass production, we are encouraged to question the decisions that are made for us: *Wotsit all about?*

James Ostrer's (England, 1979) photographs of sugar adorned subjects allude to the history of primitive art, synthetic dietary sugar intake, and an irreverent twist on the absurd in which societal practices of ingestion oscillate into a nightmarish world of abject effrontery and nutritional disillusionment.

The works are feverishly and painstakingly created tableaus with layers of sweets and foodstuffs being applied to a human subject, often the artist himself, which, when staged, are photographed and patterned for re-consumption through the distribution of photographic practice. Speaking largely on the twentieth and twenty first centuries' dietary concerns and sugar's uncomfortable place within this, Ostrer's photographs conjure metaphorical allegories as Ketchup flows as tears down frosted cheeks and Kit Kats' mouths bark back with menacing grimaces. This adornment becomes a mask of what we eat which then becomes entwined with a hyper-pop sensibility and an obsequious inquiry into the great volumes of sugar that flow through our bodies.

GAZELLI ART HOUSE

Much like Paul McCarthy's or George Condo's seminal works, the photographs form a bizarre pattern of tribalism and cartoon-like absurdity. They are rife with a sense of ritual endeavour and colour-saturated sensitivity; a palpitating nostalgia for the sweets we are presented with and the potential havoc they wreak within our collective bodies.

The works become a catalogue of self-destructive behaviours, and are also managed in such a way that while transgressing themselves as odes to great works of historical art practice, they become re-packaged eye candy for uncomfortable consumption. They are bittersweet to the point of decay and emphasize much of our contemporary society's needs for synthetic glucose praise, and, in doing so, proselytize the image as a new catalogue of self-harming sugar worship.



James Ostrer's work often tests the limits of the body politics in the ever evolving analysis of the western body, sexuality, and society. In 2009, Ostrer staged "Customer Container"; an installation in which the artist used photographs of himself taken by six different prostitutes under which the only condition was that they order him to perform as they wished. In 2011, his portrait of Nicky Haslam in Lucien Freud's chair was chosen for the Taylor Wessing exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. The artist lives and works in London.

Words © Brad Feuerhelm

NOTES TO EDITORS

Gazelli Art House opened its first permanent gallery space on Dover Street, London, in March 2012 after hosting conceptually interlinked off-site exhibitions across London in 2011. In October 2012, the gallery re-opened its original space in Baku, Azerbaijan where it held exhibitions with Azeri artists since 2003.

As part of Gazelli Art House's on-going commitment to art education, the gallery will host a series of events and talks to run alongside the exhibition. As an art organization they are dedicated to providing a new setting for the understanding and deeper appreciation of art.

The Window Project provides artists with a complete creative control of the gallery's frontage for a period of time either between the exhibitions (therefore independently run from the program) or as an extension of the gallery-held shows.