

Darren Bader
Wonths every few Monce

Regent Street viewing room,
62 Kingly Street W1
22 September - 22 October 2022

JLG died last week. He was old (I'm not young). I've largely refrained from reading the obits/tributes because I want to continue to regard him and his preternatural gifts as I do (or prefer to): word and image, word and image, word and image, word and image, word and image, word and image—their confluence and dissonance (their never-to-be-consonant), their hauntings and their bliss. Spectac(u)larity.

I finished reading *The Recognitions* a few days before. It couldn't but bring to mind persistent thoughts from my mid-aughts: (don't) pity the artist who wishes to speak with new voice in this vast, decades-old organism of global cultural exchange—its audacious optimism, its shipwreck of meaning across countless shores—that artist was born decades late.

Postmodernism, as it was once quasi-commonly called. Not that (fairweatherly) fashionable, frequently-Francophonic facet of it fashionably denigrated in the conservative press, nor the ghoulish neoliberalism and/or late capitalism dogging many on the left. Rather [I reverently write]: the righteously quixotic embrace of everything—the utopia and vertigo of information, of exuberant semiotic superabundance, insatiable maw of manic (panoptic) panoply, sublimely fanciful farce.

Decadent indeed, but damn gorgeous. (Strange that it's spiritual twin, and aesthetic opposite, could be Warhol's *Screen Tests* (among other early films).) The recent update appears to be: *augmented* profligacies/protheses of truth, buffering blindly, dined-on by digital cancers, waiting for age-old enchanted relief. And how can I fail to mention the travesties of Instagram and Twitter (with endless content they lack form?)?

Though there's a compulsory madness/stupidity to embracing "all," there's nothing particularly Postmodern [nor Modern] about that all-too-human (always-already-artificially-intelligent) habit. A supragenerational reeling.

In any case, I didn't intend to write this [no shortage of people writing about similar things of late]. But perhaps it will highlight and color both this exhibition and some of my prior arting. Though in no way trying to embrace an "all" in this exhibition, the works herein are (mostly) new documents of word and image. They speak as (partial) me: one who finds extraordinary comfort in the parade of cinema[tics] and literature that flowed over the course of the latter half of the last century, and is still bleeding into the present one. Word and image, word and image, and image and word, and image and word and image (and word).

Enough is never enough. But aesthetic transport, not to mention sheer amusement, is rousing compensation.

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Darren Bader (b. 1978, Bridgeport CT) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Mends of Scott Friendes*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2021); *Bootlicker Suite*, MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome (2021); *Fruits, Vegetables; Fruit and Vegetable Salad*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2020); *more or less*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2018); (*@mined_oud*), The Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina – MADRE, Naples (2017); *such are promises*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2018); *The World as Will and Representation*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2015); *Reading Writing Arithmetic*, Radio Athènes, Athens (2015); *Images*, MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2012). Group exhibitions include *Mirage: Contemporary Art in Augmented Reality*, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2020); *May You Live in Interesting Times*, 58th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Venice (2019); *Stories of Almost Everyone*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018); *Political Populism*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2015); *La Vie Moderne*, La Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (2015); *2014 Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2014); and *Empire State*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2013).

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