

Cory Arcangel: *Hot Topics*

10 April – 20 May 2015

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Seven congregations of anthropomorphic objects constitute Cory Arcangel's solo exhibition in Milan, which is a complement to the artist's concurrent exhibition at the GAMeC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea – in nearby Bergamo. Both spaces have been populated by groupings of sculptures made from pool noodles, colourful cylindrical flotation devices, which stand in for figures, or in this case, for representations of youthful tribes and typically American sub-cultures.

Arcangel first encountered these unadorned objects as found or readymade works of art at his local Walgreens pharmacy, where he noted: "Half of the store seems dedicated to catalysing chronic bodily decay, and the other half seems dedicated to the fallout." By dressing these foam lengths in shop-bought accoutrements and clothing, he attributed each with certain humanoid characters, built around three pre-determined sub-sets of contemporary consumerist America: teenagers (or 'tweens', the more specific category for those aged in-between 10 and 12), middle American fans of the rock-rap star Kid Rock and Wall Street traders. While the collective title for this series – *Screen-agers, Tall Boys and Whales* (2011-14) – mirrors each of these categories, each of Arcangel's new foam noodle assemblages also have their own titles and tribal allegiances.

Leafs, for example, is a solitary green cylinder, subtly embedded with two large-gauge earrings (like those found in extreme body piercing and earlobe stretching practices) each decorated with a marijuana leaf. The work titled *Clarity* is a pink float wearing black headphones and an armband proclaiming a love of dubstep – the same genre of electronic music that can be heard emanating from the iPod mini, similarly strapped around its limb-like circumference. *High Life* depicts three pink and blue striped-sock wearing jocks, one with a beer can attached to its drink-holder summit, while other groups of reconfigured swimming aids include the goth-like band of *Misfits*, who wear skeleton print leggings and are accompanied by a floor-bound stereo, again playing their favoured style of music.

Aside from Arcangel's acute portrayal of contemporary American identity as the sum total of its readily available, mass market hyper-branded goods, his agglomerative sculptures also refer back to specific moments in recent art history, such as the Minimalist 'planks' of John McCracken, the consumer good presentations of Cady Noland or Haim Steinbach and, most specifically, to the striped, painted poles of André Cadere. With the latter in mind, the largest installation in *Hot Topics* is entitled *Your Performance* and consists of seven multi-coloured pool noodles covered with vertical bands taken from tracksuits or sportswear items bearing the famous three stripes of Adidas. Arcangel's exhibition in Bergamo, *This is all so crazy, everybody seems so famous*, includes a further 20 pool noodle works, as well as a new carpet piece, early modified computer games and four of his recent *Lake* works (reflective, meditative flatscreen videos), all of which will be presented in the historic Sala de Giuristi, the oldest municipal building in Italy.

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About the artist

Cory Arcangel is a leading exponent of technology-based art, drawn to video games and software for their ability to rapidly formulate new communities and traditions and, equally, their speed of obsolescence. It was in 1996, while studying classical guitar at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, that he first had a high-speed internet connection – inspiring him to major in music technology and start learning to code. Both music and coding remain his key tools for interrogating the stated purpose of software and gadgets. In *Super Mario Clouds* (2002-), for example, he disabled the vintage Nintendo game to leave only the iconic backdrop of blue sky and clouds; in *Drei Klavierstücke op.11* (2009) Arcangel recreated Arnold Schoenberg's 1909 score of the same name by editing together YouTube clips of cats playing pianos, note for note, paw by paw. Outcomes can be surprising, funny and poignant, whether in the final form of installation, video, printed media or music composition, in the gallery or on the world wide web. Reconfiguring web design and hacking as artistic practice, Arcangel remains faithful to open source culture and makes his work and methods available online, thus superimposing a perpetual question-mark as to the value of the art object.

Cory Arcangel was born in Buffalo, New York in 1978 and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He received a BM from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2000. He is the youngest artist since Bruce Nauman to have been given a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2011). Other major solo exhibitions include Reykjavik Art Museum (2015); Herning Museum of Contemporary Art (2014); Fondation DHC/Art, Montreal (2013); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2013); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2011); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2010) and Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami (2010). He was awarded the Jury Prize of the 2005 New York Underground Film Festival.

Exhibition Facts

Opening Hours Mon-Fri 10am-6pm (closed 1-3pm) Sat by appointment

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