

In his latest exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ, Jonathan Horowitz presents a series of new works – spanning video, installation and digital printing – which address some of the defining issues of contemporary politics. Extending the threads of political critique, understated humour and allusion to both art history and mass culture that have defined his practice from the beginning, the exhibition stands as an incisive commentary on our current era.



In a new four-channel film video, *Transfer of Power (Gucci Soul)*, Horowitz juxtaposes four found video sources that reflect the complex dynamics between power, branding and appropriation. One video shows Kellyann Conway – the advisor and confidant of Donald Trump – on the day of the president's inauguration, walking through the corridors of the Capitol in a Gucci coat. Her fashion choice was widely lampooned on social media at the time. Another shows a Gucci fashion show at Westminster Abbey in 2016, where Conway's outfit first appeared. The fashion show was conspicuous for its near exclusive use of white models. A third video shows a Gucci fashion video from the same year, featuring an all-black cast of models wearing Gucci outfits and dancing to Frankie Valli's *The Night* (itself an example of Northern Soul – a British appropriation of black American music). The grid is completed by the video for Beyoncé and Jay-Z's *Apeshit* (2018), which was shot in the Louvre and features luxury brands alongside masterpieces of western art.

Horowitz's video starts from the premise of 'Trump' as a pseudo luxury brand. In one sense, Conway's outfit is an arbitrary, comedic accident. She likely bought the outfit simply because there is a Gucci store at Trump Tower. But it is not an accident that there is a Gucci store there. Like Tiffany, which occupies the other building on Trump Tower's block, the power of 'Trump' is the power of a designer brand. Horowitz highlights the close interplay between power, fashion and mass culture, pointing to the larger social and historical realities that predetermine it. Conway's power-dressing (like Trump's corporatized, gold-plated image of himself) evokes the uneasy proximity between far-right politics and glamorous trappings that Susan Sontag famously identified in her 1975 article 'Fascinating Fascism', quoting Jean Genet's maxim that "Fascism is theatre". Playing concurrently, Horowitz's interwoven, collaged videos combine into a meditation on the aesthetics of power, as much the power of aesthetics (from Gucci designs to cultural heritage) to reflect and reinforce ingrained structures, including racial divisions and the privileged category of 'high' art – the ultimate luxury good.

The trappings of consumerist society are also the subject of a large-scale vinyl diptych, which extends the format of Horowitz's long-running 'Coke/Pepsi' series. In *Coke/Pepsi Diptych (2016 containers)*, expansive grids of drinks cans and bottles – arrayed like Pop Art cyphers – create the impression of a pluralist utopia of free choice. The impression is belied by the knowledge that the two drinks conglomerates own all of the products shown – one panel consists of all Pepsi products, the other all Coke products. In another work, *Power*, Horowitz reproduces the iPhone pop-up menu generated by clicking on the 'yellow fist' emoji, showing the fist in five different shades. The individual shapes are printed on cut out of PVC board, creating the effect of a digital space come to life. The corporate decision to subject the symbol to a gradient overlay has resulted in a clash of registers: ranging from black to brown to Simpsonian yellow, the raised fist becomes loaded with different and contradictory imports, pressing the viewer to make a choice.

In a second video piece, Horowitz has compiled the names of the eighty-seven accusers of Harvey Weinstein into a dissolving sequence of paired 'credits' accompanied by the soundtrack and background imagery from the title sequence of Douglas Sirk's *Magnificent Obsession* (1954). The classic movie is ironically redolent of an era of innocence in which Hollywood myths (such as that of the movie's star, Rock Hudson, as a heterosexual romantic lead) were indestructible and all-pervasive. Projected in the centre of a wall hung with red velvet drapes, the work is like a minimalist memorial. In the wake of #MeToo and wider debates over gender politics, the installation brings down the curtain on the deeply rooted abuse of power within the Hollywood film industry.

Jonathan Horowitz (b. New York, 1966) has exhibited work internationally since the early nineties. Recent exhibitions include *1612 Dots*, the Oculus, World Trade Center, New York (2017); *Occupy Greenwich*, The Brant Foundation Art Study Centre, Greenwich, CT (2016); projects at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit and the Swiss Institute / Contemporary Art, New York (2016); *Your Land/My Land: Election '12*, staged concurrently at seven museums across the US (from the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles to the New Museum, New York, 2012); *minimalist works from the holocaust museum*, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, Scotland (2010-11); *Apocalypto Now*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, (2009); and the retrospective exhibition, *Jonathan Horowitz: And/Or*, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2009). Horowitz lives and works in New York.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com