

My House

**Mike Kelley &
Ryan Trecartin**

December 19, 2015 – March 6, 2016

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Mike Kelley & Ryan Trecartin

Guest Curator: Tobin Gibson

How about acknowledging that this image is not some ideological misconception, but a thing simultaneously couched in affect and availability, a fetish made of crystals and electricity, animated by our wishes and fears—a perfect embodiment of its own conditions of existence?...It doesn't represent reality. It is a fragment of the real world. It is a thing just like any other—a thing like you and me...Images are violated, ripped apart, subjected to interrogation and probing. They are stolen, cropped, edited, and re-appropriated. They are bought, sold, leased. Manipulated and adulated. Reviled and revered. To participate in the image means to take part in all of this.

- Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, Sternberg Press and e-flux journal, 2014, p. 51-3.

My House traces a lineage of performance, satire and social critique in American video art through seminal works by Mike Kelley and Ryan Trecartin. The title of the exhibition alludes to an archetype in dream symbolism and psychoanalytic practice whereby the house and its rooms represent various personas and psyches. This symbolic imagery further draws upon aspects of family interaction and a collective unconscious, while questioning boundaries of ownership, community and collaboration, themes that recur in the narratives of Kelley's and Trecartin's work.

The importance of collaboration in the work of both artists cannot be overemphasized. For Mike Kelley, these artistic affiliations were formed after moving west from Michigan to study at Cal Arts in Los Angeles, a city whose acute anxieties around society and celebrity were to profoundly inflect his thinking and artwork. There he began collaborating with other artists closely tied to performance and video art in Southern California, such as Paul McCarthy and Tony Oursler. Ryan Trecartin received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Art in 2004, where he began an ongoing collaboration with fellow student Lizzie Fitch. Relocating to various cities across the United States, he settled in Los Angeles in 2010. Through these changes in residence, however, he has continued to work with the same cast of family and friends, only recently inviting his surrounding community of Hollywood to take part.

Occupying the West and East Galleries are four of Trecartin's movies—a term he uses for his moving-image work. Two movies centre around parties, *A Family Finds Entertainment* (2004) and *Junior War* (2013), and are exhibited together for the first time in the West Gallery. In *A Family...* Trecartin plays the protagonist, Skippy, an unstable and tormented young boy who locks himself inside a bathroom of his home during a party thrown by his parents. He eventually exits his safehold to be immediately met with death, and subsequent resurrection. *Junior War* involves a group of high-school students who gather in the woods at night and deal with the associated angst of adolescence. The footage, predominantly shot with a night vision camera during Trecartin's senior year of high school in exurban Ohio, has been cited as a formative experience for the artist, one that has to some degree shaped his unique perspective.

In the East Gallery, families, corporations and their hybrids are analyzed as social institutions in two movies from Trecartin's series *Trill-ogy Comp* (2009). The actors in *K-CorealNC.K (section a)* represent "Koreas" (homonym of "careers")—i.e., nations-turned-corporations (USA, Canada, Mexico, Hungary, Morocco, Argentina)—trapped in an endless meeting inspired by the UN and presided over by CEO Global Korea. In *Sibling Topics (section a)*, Trecartin returns to the idea of "family-as-business-enterprise," further exploring the use-value within these bloodlines and relationships.

Three of Kelley's videos are presented in the Centre Gallery. *The Banana Man* (1983), considered to be his only solo video, reconstructs the psychological motivations of a minor character in a children's TV show from his youth. *Kappa* (1986), a close collaboration with Los Angeles artists Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, places the eponymous Japanese Shinto god within a Oedipal scene, giving a Hollywood veneer to Freudian psychosexual theories. *Day Is Done* (2005-06) recreates found high-school yearbook photographs of extracurricular activities as a feature-length "musical" lasting just under three hours. On the wall, Kelley's *Street Sign* (2004), a handwritten text panel with the word "Audition" underlined with a large arrow in red and black, points towards a main doorway to the Gallery.

In thinking of the myriad personas, scenarios, and aesthetic effects in Kelley's and Trecartin's work, echoes and resonances are found in the building that houses their exhibition. Constructed in 1902, the Presentation House Cultural Centre has served at

various times as a schoolhouse, police station and temporary city hall, before its latest incarnation as a museum, theatre and gallery. In 2017 it will undergo a further change when the gallery moves into a purpose-built facility on North Vancouver's waterfront, opening space for another, as yet unidentified, iteration.

- *Tobin Gibson*

Mike Kelley (1954, Wayne, Michigan – 2012, South Pasadena, California) is considered one of the most influential artists of our time. He worked in an array of genres and styles, including performance, installation, drawing, painting, video, photography, sound works, text and sculpture. Recent solo exhibitions include *Mike Kelley*, Hauser & Wirth, New York (2015); Gagosian Gallery, London and New York (2011, 2005); WIELS Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels (2008); and Musée du Louvre, Paris (2006); and the touring retrospective *Mike Kelley*, which traveled to the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; MoMA P.S.1, Long Island City, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and MOCA, Los Angeles (2012–14).

Ryan Trecartin (1981, Webster, Texas) came to prominence nearly a decade ago, and is known for his video and sculptural work. Posing radical challenges both aesthetically and linguistically, his prescient work has become synonymous with the seismic shifts in culture that have defined our post-millennial moment. His solo and collaborative projects with Lizzie Fitch have been the subject of numerous exhibitions including *Ryan Trecartin/Lizzie Fitch*, Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2011–12); *Ryan Trecartin: Any Ever*, which in various iterations traveled to MoMA P.S. 1, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; Istanbul Modern; the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and The Power Plant, Toronto (2009–11).

West Gallery — Ryan Trecartin:

A Family Finds Entertainment, 2004. Video, colour, sound; 42 min.

Junior War, 2013. HD video, colour, sound; 24:25 min.

© Ryan Trecartin. Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York.

Centre Gallery — Mike Kelley:

(clockwise from desk)

Kappa, 1986. Video, colour, sound; 26 min. In collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yonemoto.

Day Is Done, 2005-06. Video, colour, sound; 169 min.

The Banana Man, 1983. Video, colour, sound; 28:15 min.

Street Sign, 2004. Two-colour silkscreen on white, baked aluminum panel with three puncture holes.

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East Gallery — Ryan Trecartin:

Sibling Topics (section a), 2009. HD video, colour, sound; 51:26 min.

K-CoreaINC.K (section a), 2009. HD video, colour, sound; 33:05 min.

© Ryan Trecartin. Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

Public Programs

Friday, January 8, 2016, 7pm

Discussion on Mike Kelley and Ryan Trecartin, with Tobin Gibson, exhibition curator, and Mary Clare Stevens, Executive Director of the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts.

8pm

Opening Reception

Saturday, January 16, 2016, 2pm

Exhibition tour with curator Tobin Gibson

Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 7pm

Screening of Mike Kelley's *Day Is Done* at DIM Cinema, The Cinematheque, 1131 Howe Street, Downtown Vancouver

Extending his examination of trauma, abuse and repressed memories, refracted through the prism of personal and mass-cultural experience, Kelley's feature-length video is composed of live-action recreations of high-school yearbook photographs of "extracurricular activities," or, as the late artist himself termed them, "socially accepted rituals of deviance." These carnivalesque disruptions of the normal school schedule, in the form of pageants, recitals, variety shows and dress-up days, mirror events in the broader cultural arena. This is only the third time *Day Is Done* has been screened in a cinema.

Mike Kelley, *Day Is Done*, 2005-06. Video, colour, sound; 169 min.

Tuesday, March 1, 2016, 7:30pm

Sessions: *Kelley and Trecartin* at DIM Cinema, The Cinematheque

Two rarely seen videos highlighting the effects of language, translation and silence in the work of Mike Kelley and Ryan Trecartin. Kelley's silent, twofold video jumps between protocols

of scientific animal study and modernist choreography in a surreal laboratory environment. On view for the first time outside China, a unique version of Trecartin's *The Re'Search (Re'Search Wait'S)* (2009-10), made with Mandarin subtitles for an exhibition at the Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art in Beijing in 2014, further complicates the artist's repurposing and layering of language.

Mike Kelley, *Test Room Containing Multiple Stimuli Known to Elicit Curiosity and Manipulatory Responses* and *A Dance Incorporating Movements Derived from Experiments by Harry F. Harlow and Choreographed in the Manner of Martha Graham* (1999). Video, colour & black-and-white, silent; 59:54 min.

Ryan Trecartin, *The Re'Search (Re'Search Wait'S)*, 2009-10. HD video, colour, sound; 40 min. Translation by 尤伦斯当代艺术中心 Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.

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WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY, 12 PM TO 5PM

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