

Interpassivity is a commonplace that needs no theoretical designation. The term should not exist – nor, for that matter, this show. Yet not infrequently are we asked to *relate* and *engage* in the various containers of culture; this exhibition thus serves to remind that if art were truly to merge with contemporary life, it may grow more interpassive than interactive.

Someone has called it a decentering more radical than interactivity, in depriving us of the kernel of identity. Our pleasures, beliefs, those most intimate guilts...the very wax reserved for society's stamp are cast off, delegated, performed through the big Other. The laugh track laughs, the media mourns on our behalf.

If a kernel is lump, it must exist. And if valued by weight, all the more ready for sale. We are not alone in making these deductions. Daily on the interpassive exchange, one fiction trades for another: the possessive individual for community (imagined or virtual). A sense of belonging emerges from the aggregation of discrete transactions. We see ourselves participating by proxy.

Is there anything sadder than a human being changed into the rubber tube of an enema? These artworks consider the possibilities. One artist, with considerable poetic license, describes her tubular sketch as a portrait of her brother.

An ale cask has been punctured to make room for a head, legs and feet. This drunkard's cloak, the artist notes, was once worn to punitive and comedic effect. She has reclaimed this object expressly for the exhibition, as a reminder that drinking is a pleasure, and art a pain.

In the corner sits a machine that once ran an autistic child by remote control. The artist has worked from the designs of this mechanical boy, fashioning the Blinderator that obstructed his vision and thought, the oil seal protecting him from disembowelment...

Two headphones play Edison Diamond Discs, respectively cataloging the laughs and wails of performers. Why, the artist wonders, were these beguiling tracks consigned to posterity? Did our ancestors imagine that we would lose such affects, and design the discs to instruct?

Someone has called it a decentering...perhaps with contingent effects. Far from just trading away our agency, we return certain obligations that we should never have been made to keep. The subjects we barely were (or told to become) fade from view, clearing a wide blank that we fail to use, but which could be used.

So let the big Other do the work. Give back your guilt. Bask in its glow. We concede that a virtuoso can better perform the part, and you are free to admire – or not.

– Tyler Coburn

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