

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS New York

Josh Kline

47 CANAL

47 Canal Street, 2nd Floor

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“Quality of Life,” Josh Kline’s second solo exhibition, feels like a culmination of sorts, certainly in regards to the resurgence of posthumanism in contemporary art—in the context of his work, bodies that have surpassed the human condition and its inherent weaknesses—the discussion of which Kline has galvanized by his corporeal artwork and unflagging curatorial endeavors. Two years after his solo debut at 47 Canal, Kline’s new installation trades the sterility of a Duane Reade for that of a cryogenics lab, replete with glowing walls, sardonic empowerment cocktails hanging in minimally branded IV bags, and refrigerated coolers containing blood transfused with twenty-first-century “necessities” like Wellbutrin and agave nectar.



View of “Quality of Life,” 2013.

Hyperbole is at the root of Kline’s work, so it follows to compare the urgency of “Quality of Life” to the canonical series of social critique, Martha Rosler’s “House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home,” 1967–72, though the space of Kline’s political crisis is more interior than Rosler’s domestic rooms: Our bodies as a site for branding, consuming, and the pushing of biological norms.

Masterfully unsteady, Kline’s videos quietly pull the rug out from under us as viewers by indirectly addressing our complicity in seemingly benign societal behaviors, whether unpaid internships or attempts to remain young. Within the installation, two videos-cum-sculptures, *Forever 27* and *Forever 48* (all works 2013), take the form of interviews between a Diane Sawyer-type journo and the late tragic icons of generations X and Y, Kurt Cobain and Whitney Houston, who are here both alive and well (despite a few bumps along the road). Spry models pose as the eternal stars, their familiar faces digitally composited onto the actor’s, in part underscoring our society’s celebrity fixations and the hierarchy of contemporary consumption (e-cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, and so on). *Kurt & Whitney (Extras)*, the most compelling (and anxiety inducing) work in the exhibition, documents Kline unflinchingly posing a slew of personal questions to the off-duty models—still clad in celebrity simulacra—ranging from supporting oneself financially to juicing. Perhaps too far gone, identity politics in 2013, Kline seems to lament, is no longer defined by one’s form of protest; it begins with the supplements you pick to get you through the day.

— Beau Rutland