

Kevin McGarry
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ARTS
Stewart Uoo

In one way or another, artist Stewart Uoo shows us people. His best-known offerings are a breed of decomposing post-apocalyptic mannequin figures that appear to be at once organic and bionic. Following his first New York solo show of these sculptures last summer, his museum debut, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is planned for May, just in time for Frieze New York. His only two videos to date set a girl's voice recounting mostly mundane romantic traumas to a score of appropriated material, including scenes lifted from first-person shooter games and clips from Paris Fashion Week. In these videos he channels the peculiarities of this dissonance into intimacy.

You're better known as a sculptor, how did you make the foray into video?

These are the only two videos I've made and they were really the results of a series of happy accidents that snowballed a bunch of my aesthetic interests together. I went to grad school at Städelschule in Frankfurt where the professors accept students into their specific departments. Mark Leckey and Bonnie Camplin chose me for the video program, where you don't actually have to make videos. But at the end of the year I knew I was going to run out of money and I knew there was an award specifically for video... so I tried it.

How did you approach it?

A lot of the first video (*Confessions, 2011; below*) is screen recordings of YouTube tutorials because I was watching them to teach myself. I was watching a lot of anime at the time with these strong heroines as main characters. My idea with this was to take all these subjective spaces belonging to different identities making confessions, and then when I was looking at all the tutorials and desktops I started looking at those as a kind of interior space that's just as idiosyncratic. It's really intimate.

Who is the voiceover actress you work with in these?

She's an artist named Marie Karlberg, from Sweden living in New York. She is like a muse and we often collaborate on projects. She's a close friend and very performative in every where. I didn't show her any of the video when I asked her to record those teen girl confessions. So she really brought her own thing to it, while reading. She calls her combination of broken English and speaking some things out of order "oral dyslexia" ... I just knew it would coalesce in a way. Almost like a video-game character it's using an avatar to navigate a scenario.

Did you write those confessions? Source them from somewhere online?

They were from an issue of Cosmo Girl with Pink on the cover. I carried it around with me for a while. It had a confessions department — that became the idea — and then I did more research online. I'd always read them with my sister when I was young anyways.

The appropriated runway shows in *Confessions (9 Women)* are a memorable passage. What's your creative relationship to fashion?

I don't know the word exactly....when I think about fashion it's often with a capital F. I can only see it in a very personal way: I notice something that grosses me out or makes me laugh, and if I have that sort of experience then it's hit somewhere. In terms of that section in the video, I just really like that John Galliano for Dior show. There are a lot of really elegant, heavy-handed qualities to it that come across as campy and comical.

That show specifically has so many different identities, in the styling and the costuming, and that's a similar thread to what's happening in the piece.