

A couple of issues ago, we quoted Jan Dibbets's assessment of **Jeff Wall** as a man who merely puts lightbulbs behind photographs. The analytical Canadian evidently bridled at the reminder, and as a rebuttal – we're speculating – has swiftly organised a retrospective in Munich. Here, 20 admittedly backlit transparencies will unite various private collections of the trailblazing photographic artist's work in the Bavarian state capital. Produced in close cooperation with Wall, *Jeff Wall in Munich* mostly revisits the 1980s and 90s: these were banquet years for his taut, referential composing, fakery of the naturalistic and alloying of painterly, photographic and sculptural concerns, and so the show includes benchmark works such as the Rodinesque

The Thinker (1986), a swirl of intimations occasioned by a figure of indeterminate nationality and status perched overlooking Vancouver with, it appears, a sword lodged in his back.

Wall, though, was only early rather than anomalous in engaging with art's potential to deceptively fictionalise. Is a fiction truly a fiction if it is presented as truth, if it circulates as a rumour or phantom reality and reshapes the real? **Agnieszka Kurant** wonders, asks and tests. The young Polish artist has previously trained parrots to speak in an alternative language (*Ready Unmade* at the Frieze Art Fair, 2008) and, using the services of a clairvoyant, presented the news from 2020 in an edition of *The New York Times* (*Future Anterior*, 2007–8).

In Kurant's new film, with the working title *Cutaways* (2013) – a collaboration with film editor Walter Murch, who worked on *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *The Godfather: Part II* (1974) – she resurrects a handful of characters left on the cutting-room floor in Hollywood films, combining discarded footage with self-shot material to create a new narrative.

Cannibalising, rewriting and reshaping old cinematic stories are the impulses, too, behind **Brice Dellsperger's** ongoing *Body Double* series of 30-odd films, begun in 1995 and extended in his latest show, *Bons Baisers d'Hollywood*. In these, a simple-sounding idea – remaking scenes (or sometimes entire films) from cinema using a cast of transvestites – proves an abundant

theoretical seam, opening onto concerns of authorship, doubling, otherness and gender politics. The Frenchman is currently working on, or perhaps has just finished, scenes from *Dressed to Kill* – a long-term hobbyhorse – *Carrie* and *Basic Instinct*. Likely to remain consistent here, though, is Dellsperger's constructed zone of fidelity and contradistinction, which speaks allegorical volumes about crossing over from one world to another, the performance of self, the playing of roles.

Another route vis-à-vis art fiction: persuade that the outlandish is true by aesthetic forms of persuasion and by sheer inventive profusion. *It Means It Means!*, **Charles Avery's** collaboration with curator and writer Tom Morton,

is supposedly set in two spaces – Pilar Corrias's London gallery, and a totally fictive Museum of Art Onomatopoeia on 'The Island', the Borges-meets-Compton Mackenzie isle populated by men and mythical beasts that the Mull-born Avery has been mapping via vivacious pencil drawings, taxidermy-animal hybrid sculptures and more since 2005. The latter show, evidenced at Corrias in drawings, 'features' works by artists ranging from Watteau to Tino Sehgal, with Duchamp, Marina Abramović, Eva Hesse and many others popping up amidships. Given that the Island is structured according to philosophical principles, naturally this doesn't merely represent a simple reflexive turn; we're invited to consider how Avery's population, who inhabit

an ontologically different realm, might take these works. And to accept the fact that some of them are invisible, or visible only to the Island's inhabitants.

A decade or so ago, painter and former graffiti-bomber **Barnaby Furnas** would indicate truthiness by spraying blood-red paint through a tube across his canvases – paintings that, contemporaneous with the last Iraq War, were full of mordant references to battles, American history and videogames, yet whose reanimation of history painting employed the genteel and slippery medium of watercolour. The Philadelphia-born artist is, present evidence suggests, still drawn to huge historical arcs, to the potentials of dusty genres, to technical



3 Brice Dellsperger, *Body Double 28*, 2013, digital film, 2 min 46 sec, looped.
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