

Jordan Wolfson

(New York, 1980)

Considered one of the most provocative and controversial artists of his generation, Jordan Wolfson started out in the field of video, around which he experimented without subscribing to a specific technique, working with pre-existent footage, with animated drawing or with computer graphics. While at the beginning he took his images from popular culture – the eyes of Michael Jackson in *Neverland* (2001), or the bottles of Coca Cola in *Con Leche* (2009) – further on he gave rise to a rich range of imaginary characters, such as his caricature of the Jewish man in *Animation, Masks* (2012).

In more recent works, he also applies new technologies to sculpture and installation, virtual reality in particular: face recognition, movement sensors and animatronics. It is by turning to this last technique, deployed in the entertainment industry in order to give an independence of movement to mechanical puppets, that Wolfson has produced his best-known sculptures. *Female Figure* (2014) has the body of a woman with long blonde hair, dancing in a seductive manner in front of a mirror, with a pole stuck into her at chest height and a horrible mask that disfigures her face. Instead, *Colored Sculpture* (2016) has the innocuous semblance of a child with red hair and freckles: tied to three heavy cables, he is dragged up above the floor before being violently thrown to the ground in front of the onlookers, who cannot but empathise with his suffering, however mechanical.

The development of animatronics also made it possible for Wolfson to create the work purchased for the collection, titled *Real Violence* (2017) and conceived as a virtual reality station. After putting on the headset and visor, the sensation of disorientation that many experience with this kind of technology is heightened by a sudden reversal of the point of view. While we gaze at the crisp sky above Manhattan with the sound of traffic in the background, the perspective changes suddenly and we find ourselves on the pavement in front of the main scene. A man we recognise to be the artist strikes a second man kneeling on the ground using a baseball bat with unspeakable violence. The episode takes place right in front of our eyes and, due to the isolated position from which we witness it compared to other visitors, we are all turned into witnesses and accomplices of this fury. Physically unable to intervene, we may only choose to remove the visor or morbidly keep watching the scene. Although the video was created in a studio with an animatronic sculpture and then subjected to a post-production process, Wolfson actually interpreted the role of the aggressor, brutally striking out against the man. It's for this reason that, as the title warns, the violence that we are party to is 100% real, albeit created with the use of technology.

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