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painter project - version 4 (still), 2016

painter project - version 4 | Simon M Benedict

AUGUST 20-27, 2016 | OPENING RECEPTION MONDAY, AUGUST 22ND FROM 6-8 PM

TPOLOGY is pleased to launch our newest initiative in support of emerging artists and curators: **Summer Sessions**, a program through which we are making free space and staffing support available to graduates of local and regional colleges and universities to present their thesis exhibitions. For our first session, University of Guelph MFA candidate Simon M Benedict presents his performative video installation, **painter project - version 4**.

In her 1971 essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", Linda Nochlin deconstructs the notion of the genius artist. She questions art historical accounts and their assertion that the great masters somehow emerged independently of the optimal conditions set up by the social systems they inhabited. Nochlin describes the quasi-hagiographies of these artists thus: "What is stressed in all these stories is the apparently miraculous, nondetermined, and asocial nature of artistic achievement", and notes that throughout history we have let this bias form our understanding of artists. Failing to recognize the heroic artist narrative as an enduring undercurrent of art production and dissemination means maintaining it as a mythological order.

If Nochlin's observation is accurate, and artists' histories are constructed in a way that highlights the idea of "nondetermined" greatness, then our understanding and interpretation of an artist's life and work is also fashioned from these deifying portraits. This scenario lays the foundations for the production of artist biopics, which through a conflation of biographical facts and anecdotal embellishments, further entrench a select few as relevant in the Western art canon. Functioning as mythological byproducts, these films feed from and into the aura of the artist and their work, reaffirming their value as cultural and financial capital.

painter project - version 4 playfully and critically explores the portrayal of artists in biographical films. Appropriating pre-existing footage from films such as *Frida*, *Pollock*, and *Turner*, Simon M Benedict puts various biopics in dialogue with one another, following a sequence which changes every time the work is shown. Benedict activates the piece by using the computer's input and output devices—mouse, keyboard, monitor, projector, speakers—as interfaces for his loosely scripted performative gestures. These gestures, live manipulations of short looping video clips, are recorded in situ as a screencast. For the duration of the exhibition, this audiovisual recording will be displayed using the same outputs employed in its production.

Using pre-existing audiovisual material to create new narratives, Simon M Benedict playfully explores the myths and conventions of artistic identity in fine and popular art realms. Benedict recently completed an MFA at the University of Guelph (2016) and also holds a BFA from Concordia University (2011). His work has been exhibited in Canada, the United States and France. He currently lives and works in Guelph.

TPOLOGY

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SPECIAL EXHIBITION HOURS: AUGUST 20-27, 2017 FROM 12-5 PM EVERY DAY, AND BY APPOINTMENT