



STEDELIIJK MUSEUM: RAFMAN – VIRTUAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam presents Canadian artist Jon Rafmans installation “I have ten thousand compound eyes and each is named suffering”. Rafman explores the social impact of digital media through his highly original mixed media virtual landscapes. Examining how the boundless possibilities of the Internet and virtual platforms affect, shape and perhaps even redefine our behavioral biometrics, social, and personal identities. Like a visual anthropologist – Rafman delves deeply into the subcultures of the online world, analyzing the behavior multiplayer online gamer cliques and 3D virtual communities like Second Life.

His works are frequently populated by obsessive characters whose lives orbit a diverse core of online tribesman – who are equally driven by a hyper-individualized, multi-layered locally defined mindset that exists somewhere in the space between organic life and digital reality. As virtual reality viewers like Oculus Rift and Microsoft HoloLens become readily available to consumers, immersion in a world where reality and virtuality overlap will become a mainstream experience for a broader public.

Rafman offers an unbiased exploration of this modern phenomenon, without moralizing or making judgments. His videos and installations are witty and full of wonderment, yet often tinged with a profound melancholy. Rafman’s installation works are nestled in a cradle of atmospheric blue light, evoking a sensation of stepping into an alternative reality. Visitors can take a seat in one of the furniture sculptures, or even isolate themselves completely from the museum’s public, losing themselves in a world of avatars, online subcultures, and fetish communities in the far-flung corners of the deep web.

Where: Stedelijke Museum Amsterdam
When: May 21 to August 14, 2016

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