



**Rappraxiscope:** the device that enables one to avoid the trip wires of an over saturated media hyperbole.

With titles like “chickpull/St. hippolytus”, “Bubblemation”, “x-rated/hermaphrodite in outer space”, “Galloping horse/muyStrRB”, “Body with/without Organs” and the more placid “Man Walk Fast”, it can almost be construed that there lies behind one of some of the most gorgeous brown stone facades in Brooklyn, an irritated scientist disenfranchised by budget cuts in research and developmental projects with a penchant for portable technologies and a reminiscent impulse. In fact these tags align themselves to the insinuating complexities and net workings of not only the ideas that are addressed but the actual structural configurations of the video installations and sculptures from the artist Ray Rapp.

Ray’s earlier work brutally demonstrates “How to prepare a bottom feeding fish” and is aggressive in “Interactive beach ball” as the ball is bounced seemingly towards the lens of the camera/viewer and against the inside of the “glass picture tube”. It is threatening when a bow releases an arrow in “St. Sebastian”, again ostensibly at the viewer continuously while “The truth in painting” mischievously finger paints the inside of the TV screen with the same yellow colour the components (that have been removed but not disconnected from the set itself) are coated in. Both “St. Sebastian” and “The Truth in Painting” display a subtle brutality and poignant insistence that strike a chord as when an animal is hit by a vehicle and its entrails are pulled out yet remain connected to the now shell and moments before the animal becomes road kill, it has its last gasp of lucidity. This battery of work illustrates a painter’s conscientiousness and a sculptor’s awareness of the space they occupy and possess a cache of historical references any anthropologist would be proud of as a conceptual base. Yet their installation(s) are handled with a proficient whimsical feel that accentuates the sardonic qualities that seem all too deficient in contemporary art work engrossed in digital media and address the relationships with how we not only view information on the television screen and our physical position to the appliance but also challenge our complacency with how we discern its content.

In the later work the hardware that is used to power the pieces holds its structural integrity and is a drawing tool for the rummaging fun when engaging the work where the video quotient is merely an inherent player without upstaging its physical host as the main event.

Amongst the assortment of box plates, extension cords, transformers, adapters and coiled cables, not to mention the Coby portable DVD players and the wallet size LCD display screens (“Soap Dish”), there seems a consistent theme of motion and transference that infers some of the pioneering developments in sequential photography dating back to the late 1800s with the invention of the zoopraxiscope enabled the imagery to be projected upon a wall premeditating the advent of motion pictures and also lead to the title of this article.

Ray takes full advantage of the ever increasing commonality of digital technology and the economic benefits of the markets’ abundance of the low cost paraphernalia it rolls out. This in no way undercuts the freshness of the materials and technology he spins into his own lexicon of quirky electrolyte objects and installations. In fact I am affectionately jealous at the ease and adeptness with which he reveals the inner workings of his thought and imaging processes whilst retaining the intrinsic mechanisms that go off in one’s mind enough to arrest the “so that’s how it’s made” impulse that can be the kill joy of an artwork or experience.

The subjects in Ray Rapp's current work appear to have been extracted from a rather docile context of familiarity and beamed into the cramped quarters of video portals as if in a state of quarantine for malicious introspection and further diagnostics. They are not exploited for their flexibility and nimbleness but are rather seized for their graphic qualities and come off as digitized hieroglyphics and appear restricted and isolated. This tension is critical to his method and is where the pathos lies in their misappropriation.

Simplicity engineered with a rip of wizardry can really resonate when coming upon an art object or entering and leaving an exhibition space. The psychologically aggressive and emotionally confrontational early works of Ray Rapp embody a sense of urgency and essentiality in their formation. But I must give it up to the energy and inventive playfulness of the most recent pieces with their acid color-forms caught in a current of digitized Jello-tine backgrounds. Spy out "I Spy", the new work opens at the Black and White Gallery in Chelsea the 21<sup>st</sup> of November.

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