

THEODORE DARST

CULT TRASH



The focal point of *Cult Trash* is Darst's eleven minute video, *The Tourist: This Machine Makes Fascists*, which blurs the line between virtual, apocalyptic video gaming and youtube footage chronicling of real-life Domsday Preppers who build elaborate bunkers to maintain their survivalist delusion. While not functioning as a direct sequel to earlier work, *The Tourist: This Machine Makes Fascists* reuses 3D avatars from earlier videos using prosumer software that has since been updated, rendering the same textures and movements familiar in structure but upgraded in their visual interface.

Taking inspiration from conspiracy theory and the media aesthetics of online subcultures, Darst relishes in the ways that digital space and the architecture of post-disaster become a playground for extremism. His exploration of the paranoid subject position examines globalist conspiracies, such as the illuminati and reptilian government takeover. In doing so, Darst highlights the reflexivity of internet communities that adopt the look and feel of fantasy gaming culture to describe real world scenarios.

Drawing on a wide range of sources from illuminated manuscripts to the digital abstraction of CGI explosions in the films of director Michael Bay, Darst explores the construction of ideology through images. As conspiracy theories become increasingly mainstream, we are reminded that the signature aesthetic of contemporary propaganda can be traced back primarily to the invention of the thriller genre of filmmaking and it's subsequent manipulation to various ideological ends. Darst's work exposes the circular relationship between visual culture and our understanding of reality.

Magenta Plains is pleased to announce *Cult Trash*, Theodore Darst's first solo exhibition in New York City encompassing new video works and sculpture.

March 24 - April 23, 2017

Opening reception Friday, March 24, 6-8pm

Theodore Darst (b. 1986, New York City) is currently featured in storefront: This Known World at The Museum Of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, CA on view through June 2017. Darst was included in "Ways of Something, Episode 1" by Lorna Mills as part of Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016 at The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Artists' Film Biennial at Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, England in 2016. His video, WYIE, was screened at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan in 2015. Darst has exhibited his work in New York at East Hampton Shed, 83 Pitt, Microscope, The Museum of the Moving Image and in Chicago at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Roots and Culture, Public Works, and MANA Contemporary. His videos have been screened internationally in Geneva, Switzerland; Munich, Germany; Salvador, Brazil; Mexico City, Mexico; Naples, Italy; Lima, Peru and Dublin, Ireland. Darst received his M.F.A. from Bard College in 2016 and his B.F.A. from School of The Art Institute of Chicago, IL in 2011. His first book, Cult Trash, will be published by Soft City Publishing on the occasion of his exhibition at Magenta Plains. Theodore Darst lives and works in New York.

