

On View

Still Life (Betamale), 2013
HD 16:9 video, 4:54 minutes
Music by Oneohtrix Point Never

New Age Demanded (A voice within the ark), 2014
Archival pigment print

New Age Demanded (Irreversible witness), 2014
Archival pigment print

New Age Demanded (A citadel asunder), 2014
Archival pigment print

New Age Demanded (Mazeman Black), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and black chrome finish

New Age Demanded (Swerveman Silicone), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and silicone

New Age Demanded (Speed Demon Concrete), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and concrete finish

New Age Demanded (Ridgeman Copper), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin, acrylic, and copper patina

New Age Demanded (Future Angel Racer), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and
gray-to-black color-shifting acrylic

New Age Demanded (Elegant Vessel Gold), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin, acrylic, and gold leaf

New Age Demanded (Futurismo Marble), 2014
White Carrara marble

New Age Demanded (Elegant Rock Virus IKB), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and blue powder pigment

New Age Demanded (Cyberswirl Marble), 2014
Norway pink marble

New Age Demanded (Pointer Man Chrome), 2014
3-D photopolymer resin and chrome finish

All works courtesy the artist and
Zach Feuer Gallery, New York.

Jon Rafman (b. 1981, Montreal) lives and works in Montreal. Recent solo exhibitions include the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and *The Nine Eyes of Google Street View*, Saatchi Gallery, London. Rafman's work has been featured in group exhibitions, including *What Is a Photograph?* at the International Center of Photography, New York, and *Free* at the New Museum, New York.

Jon Rafman: The end of the end of the end is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Chief Curator.

This exhibition is generously supported by Zach Feuer Gallery, New York.

Related Programs

Free and open to the public. For a complete list of programs, please visit camstl.org.

Artist Talk: Jon Rafman

Thursday, June 26, 7:00 pm

Opening Reception

Friday, June 27, 6:00–9:00 pm

Friday Evening Tours

Fridays, through August 8, 6:00 pm

Take advantage of CAM's late hours on Friday evenings and stop by for a special 30-minute tour of the exhibitions.

First Friday

Friday, August 1, 5:00–9:00 pm

A complimentary drink for Young Friends members and above. Cash bar.

Enjoy an evening of art, music, and culture the first Friday of every month. DJs and musicians present music in dialogue with the exhibitions, Museum staff lead tours, and the bar and café are open. Arts organizations throughout Grand Center are free and open the entire evening. For a complete list of participating institutions, visit firstfridaysgrandcenter.org. Special thanks to KDHX 88.1 FM.



**Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis**
3750 Washington Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63108
314.535.4660

Connect with CAM

Visit camstl.org
Follow [@contemporarystl](https://twitter.com/contemporarystl)
on Twitter
Like [contemporaryart
museumstl](https://www.facebook.com/contemporaryartmuseumstl) on Facebook
Sign up for enews
at camstl.org/news
Download the
CAM STL app from the
[App Store](https://www.apple.com/app-store) or [Google Play](https://www.google.com/play)

Jon Rafman:

Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

June 27–
August 10, 2014



The end of the end of the end

For emerging Canadian artist Jon Rafman, the real and virtual worlds are not two distinct realms but rather are a single—at times sordid—conceptual space. Throughout his diverse body of work, Rafman conflates digital and physical experiences, urging viewers to reconsider the sometimes porous boundaries between online and offline existence.

The end of the end of the end is a multidisciplinary installation that includes recent sculpture, photography, and moving image. Rafman's work exposes the paradoxes and eccentricities of modern culture, particularly those mediated by online interactions. Sourcing imagery from Tumblr to the depths of the Deep Web, Rafman foregrounds how the Internet operates both as a tool of connectedness and a conduit of estrangement.

Drawing largely on the vernacular of Internet subcultures, Rafman acts as both amateur observer and critical anthropologist, simultaneously participating with those communities and assuming a removed, objective stance. Rafman's work often includes images of social and sexual deviance found on the Deep Web—the majority of the content on the Internet, inaccessible through standard search engines, where a number of illegal and underground practices thrive. Through his 3-D-printed sculpture and digitally layered photography, Rafman blurs the line between representations and their tangible subjects. The artist points out that the virtual is no longer a secondary escape from reality. Rather, the two ostensibly distinct realms cohere into one entangled social space; digital, online experiences now assume concrete form. With a tone that is both detached and actively engaged, Rafman excavates the immanent tensions of contemporary life.



New Age Demanded (Zigzagman Stardust), 2014.
3-D photopolymer resin, auto body paint. Courtesy the artist.



Audio Tour
Download the CAM app at camstl.org/app or
ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from
the artist and curator on the audio tour.

Still Life (Betamale), 2013

In Rafman's single-channel video, *Still Life (Betamale)*, a score by the experimental musician Oneohtrix Point Never serves as the backdrop for a provocative moving-image collage. If the "alpha" of any social community is the designated leader, then Rafman's "betamale" functions as the subordinate or secondary persona. Here, the "betamale" is suggested by the male figure muzzled by training bras and girl's underwear. He is a prism through which the recesses of the Internet are made explicit, situating viewers as voyeurs into the world of the Deep Web: a site of rampant criminality and pornography where the global black market for hit men, bulk credit card information, and illegal drugs thrives—all inaccessible through standard search engines and invisible to the average Internet viewer.

Still Life (Betamale) presents a series of discordant GIFs and video clips, borrowing from the aesthetics of imageboards¹ and pointing to the "ordered disorder" of the Internet. Through a hypnotic, digitized voiceover, Rafman guides viewers through the vignettes, navigating the "endlessly winding paths" of Furry fandoms², pixelated 8-bit video game GIFs, "troll caves,"³ and manga pornography⁴.

¹ A type of Internet forum (such as Tumblr, 4chan, and Reddit) operating primarily through users posting images. This style of forum comprises a substantial portion of Deep Web sites.

² The Furry fandom is a (sometimes erotic) subculture dedicated to the emulation, celebration, and fetishization of fictional anthropomorphic animal characters. Members of the animal-costume-clad community typically gather on online forums to share fan art and chat.

³ The term "Internet troll" is typically used to describe any obnoxious, vulgar, or malicious online commenter, often characterized as an Internet-obsessed homebody. "Troll caves" reveal the abject real-world conditions of Internet trolls.

⁴ A genre of pornography in the manga (Japanese comic) or anime (Japanese cartoon animation) style, popular in certain underground Internet circles. The genre branches off into several more specific subgenres, such as "hentai" (a catch-all term for deviant sexual preferences) and "eroge" (erotic games).

The video begins in the space of the troll cave, depicting images of dejected mattresses and filth-encrusted keyboards, followed by an animated bed and the first scene of Furry pornography. A series of "yiff"⁵ and kigurumi⁶ video clips ensue, framed by pixelated video game landscapes and punctuated by frantic, accelerated sequences of fetish imagery. Rafman establishes a symmetrical narrative, gradually returning to the troll cave conceit and the betamale photograph. This narrative redoubling implies a womblike circularity, accentuated by the final 8-bit scene of a woman's underwear being pulled aside to reveal the infinite constellations of the Internet.

Rafman's assemblage of visual Internet vernacular suggests a discordant moment in contemporary culture, and specific images echo throughout (a person in a fox costume sinking in quicksand, for example), underscoring the artist's interest in how Internet memes⁷ proliferate. *Still Life (Betamale)* elaborates on Rafman's earlier video works, using virtual landscapes to foreground issues of otherness and alienation and giving the underground practices of the Deep Web a public platform.

⁵ "Yiff" is the vernacular for Furry cybersex.

⁶ Related to the Furry fandom, kigurumi cosplayers (short for "costume players") impersonate cartoon characters. Kigurumi enthusiasts dress in humanoid costumes and are known colloquially as "dollers."

⁷ Integral to contemporary Internet culture, memes are any image, idea, or topic that spreads quickly throughout the Web. They can be images, videos, text-posts, or hashtags that are shared (often jokingly) on social media sites and other online forums.



Still Life (Betamale), 2013. HD 16:9 video, 4:54 minutes. Music by Oneohtrix Point Never. Courtesy the artist and Zach Feuer Gallery, New York

New Age Demanded, 2014

Ezra Pound's 1920 autobiographical poem, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, serves as a point of departure for Rafman's *New Age Demanded* series of sculptures and photographs. Yearning for classical Greco-Roman forms of beauty, Pound's speaker states, "The age demanded an image / Of its accelerated grimace. / Something for the modern stage / Not, at any rate, an Attic grace." Rafman's "modern age" revises the canonical bust form with a futuristic, digitally-driven aesthetic. The alien-like busts suggest a hybrid of traditional portraiture and contemporary technologies.

The series's 3-D-printed and robotically carved busts, as well as the digitally-layered photographs, underscore shifting real and virtual representations of Rafman's subjects. The three-dimensional sculptures and two-dimensional prints blur the techniques of photography and 3-D digital modeling. By incorporating each work's underlying material in its title—*Speed Demon Concrete*, for example—Rafman grounds a visually unfamiliar form with a recognizable, physical point of origin.

The respectively gilded, glossy, and grainy surfaces convey sensuality, while the warped formal qualities suggest indeterminate sexual, social, and cultural identities.



New Age Demanded (Irreversible witness), 2014. Archival pigment print, 60 x 72 inches. Courtesy the artist and Zach Feuer Gallery, New York.