

David Lewis

Jeffrey Joyal

Deepfake

November 8 - December 22, 2019

Roman Polanski's, *The Ghost Writer*, opens with an unattended car left on a ferry; the owner, having driven the car onto the boat at its port of origin, has presumably disappeared. Not only does the film begin with this absence, but it sees to it that it is an absence never filled. Instead, a political conspiracy builds around the death of the car's driver, a ghost writer working on the biography of a former British prime minister.

Enclosure. Is there a difference between physical claustrophobia and the paranoia of being surveilled? The dead man's successor, after taking on the job of finishing the manuscript, quickly believes he is nothing more than a "tethered goat." The discovery gives a feeling of omnipresence. The spectre – of what? of whom? – looms large.

Hangout, or "limited hangout," a term favored by the once-named 'clandestine service'... its a rare thing when the loose ends of the story are exactly what makes it. Like a ransom note, never received, nor answered ... the trail doesn't go cold but leads precisely – to nowhere.

Entering the space, we find relics of a working-class commodified: let the boys get dirty on the rugby field, where the toss-and-tumble becomes a point of pride, a badge (a varsity letter); not unlike the quotidian artifacts of protest hung in middle-class homes – aestheticization of a solidarity more imagined than realized, a politics chipped away from the comforts of home. And as above, so below: tokens of a labor class eating its own tail: real men sleep in uniform.

"All I'm trying to do is figure out how to put a pig on the tracks."¹

R/deepfake, the subreddit that originated the term, was banned from the site in 2018. We cherish our own faith in systems of identification. The corporation Cattlemax sells electronic ID tags to ranchers, implants in the ears of the cattle, rather than physical tags. Visual identification is unsound, obsolete. We are told that the image can be doctored, that the eye is no longer the way to see.

Seasickness. They say it's best to stare at the horizon, that your 'sea legs' are located, mostly, in your brain. Like spotting in a pirouette. But when the horizons' multiple?

Are we on the train, or are we the train itself? Jeffrey Joyal's *Deepfake* presents three lines of vision: above us – cameras, endless reels of messaging – hang like a threat. "In a one way future consisting only of growth,"² we see the world from our windows, watch the horizon vanish as we fly down the tracks, making a home of our moving carriage. Below us – rubber meets road.

Licensed transgression, this is what we settle on: "Those occasions societies set aside, such as initiation rites or Saturday nights, when the rules of decorum are relaxed or transgressed, by permission, as it were, thus making of transgression a complicated business indeed, partly rule breaking, partly rule conserving. In such a situation is obscenity truly obscenity, and what then of unlicensed transgression?"³

Words by Esra Padgett

1, 2. Ursula Le Guin, *The Fifth Estate*.

3. Michael Taussig, *Obscenity in Everyday Life*.

Jeffrey Joyal (b. Boston, MA, 1988) lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Raze the Little Feelers*, David Lewis, New York, NY in 2016. Selected group exhibitions include *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; *The Hard Facts on Tragedy in April*, Lomex, New York, NY; *The Leftovers*, curated by Franklin Melendez and Romain Dauriac, Simon Lee Gallery, New York, NY; *Hütti*, an installation by Veit Laurent Kurz & Ben Schumacher, MINI/Goethe-Institut Curatorial Residencies Ludlow 38, New York, NY; *Eric Schmid is an Idiot*, curated by Kavita B Schmid and What Pipeline, Cave, Detroit, MI; *Tre Amici*, organized by Eleanor Cayre, Jacob King, and Alex Zachary, Tre Amici Restaurant, Long Branch, NJ; *These Are Not My Horses*, curated by Alexander Shulan, James Fuentes, New York, NY; *The Story of O(OO)*, David Lewis, New York, NY; Pérez Art Museum Miami, Miami, FL; *The Bar at the End of the Night*, David Lewis, New York, NY; *All the Food is Poison* with Valerie Keane, Bedstuy Love Affair, Brooklyn, NY; *First Viewing*, Salon Ford, New York, NY; and *Ten Ten*, Jason Alexander, New York, NY, among others.

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