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## “Big Reality”

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03.15.12-03.29.12 319 Scholes

Curated by Brian Droitcour, this group show of twenty-six artists examines the reach of fantasy role-playing games in everyday life, carefully balancing geeky fandom with a critical stance. The negotiation of identity in RPGs is one of the central themes of the show, and, as Droitcour explains in the catalogue, this personal exploration within a structured system often extends to other platforms—such as social media sites. Hence, in a nod to Joseph Beuys’s well-known maxim, Droitcour declares: “Everyone is a gamer.”

Shana Moulton’s deformed 1980s-era dress *Hemorrhoid Pillow Dress with Assorted Props*, 2002–12, which she wears while performing in her video series “Whispering Pines,” hangs on a mannequin next to David Wightman’s comically exaggerated medieval suit *Fortress of Amplitude Costume*, 2008–12, a garment he uses for his fantasy-inspired heavy metal project *Fortress of Amplitude*. Kitschy and nostalgic, the costumes reveal how masks help become an important site for distinguishing one’s identity in a world caught up in fantasy. Nearby is Oregon Painting Society’s interactive installation *Floor Game*, 2012, where palette-shaped wooden planks obscure analog synthesizers that ring and buzz according to the movement of handheld conch shells. The installation comes alive during the collective’s performances: Each member dons a surreal outfit and participates in bizarre rituals. *Floor Game* signals the sense of magic that emerges when the real and the constructed commingle.

The portal is an element in many of the works, and as a space of traversal between the real and game worlds it attests to the close bind between fantasy and reality. Daniel Leyva’s *Save Point*, 2012, projects scenes from *Final Fantasy* and other long-playing games onto a white children’s bed. The bed is a reference to the “save point” in many games: A player can pause progress through the game by putting their avatar in bed. No longer an icon but a veritable “save point,” the bed is an entrance to the dream and game space, which are one and the same.

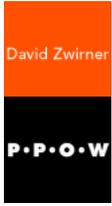


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