



Jon Rafman

You Are Standing in an Open Field (Waterfall), 2015
Inkjet print mounted on Dibond, resin, polystyrene
152.5 × 228.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Kool-Aid Man in Second Life, 2009
Video, variable length
Collection of the artist

Photos: Courtesy the artist

Jon Rafman (b. 1981) is a Montréal-born and based artist who, for his first major museum exhibition in Canada, has assembled a vast body of work in a variety of photographic works and video installations. While this selection covers a relatively short period of time, it articulates how as an artist he stands in for other archetypes such as the tour guide, the *flâneur* and the ethnographer. The exhibition will also feature recent developments in the artist's approach to sculpture which, on many levels, bridges the gap between the virtual and the real.

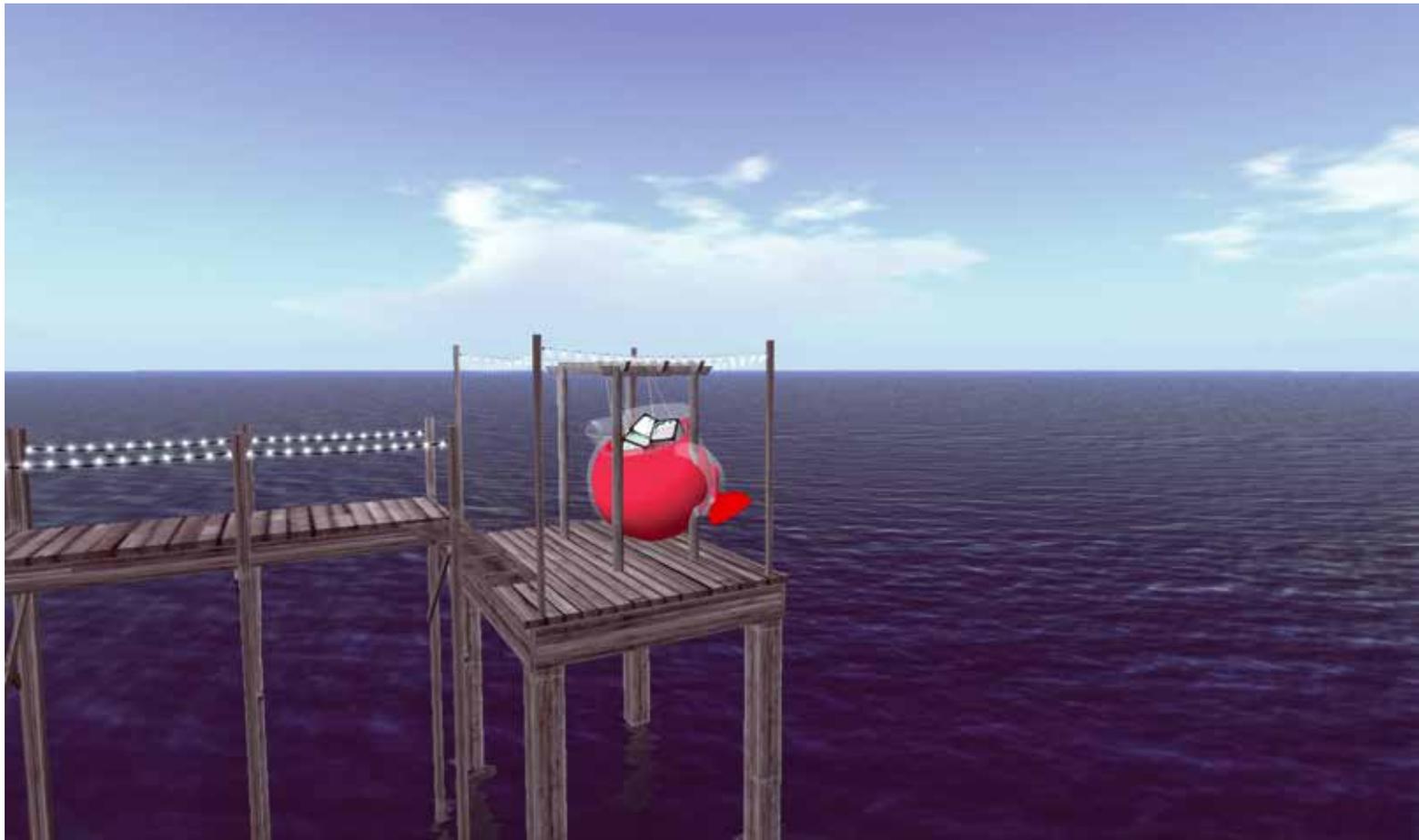
Rafman's rapidly evolving and diverse practice is not marked by clear-cut stages or periods. Rather, he condenses many concerns into individual works, and varies the emphasis accordingly. For example, the *New Age Demanded* series of images and sculptures exists simultaneously as an online catalogue, database or photoblog, and unique printed images and sculptures that reference modernist poetry (the title of the series is taken from a poem by Ezra Pound) and sculpture (the forms are evocative of Constantin Brancusi, Hans Arp and Henry Moore), as well as classical statuary. They are symptomatic of so-called "post-studio" production means in their application of digital manufacturing technologies (imaging software, 3D printing, computerized milling). More importantly, though, Rafman's use of these technological tools allows the works to evoke a sense of futurity that is at once past (as related to modernist imagery) and present (in their seductive techno-fetishistic finish), hence underlining our constantly changing relationship to the future.

In Rafman's work—especially in his videos—there is a form of layered nostalgia that manifests itself through nods to high and low culture, such as Internet memes, art history and video games, to name a few. Most of these works are presented here in DIY-crafted viewing stations that reference both high-end design from the early 1980s and vernacular suburban furniture from the sixties and/or seventies.

One of the major characteristics of the work in this survey, which is often associated with online culture, is the way it allows viewers to rethink their relationship to technology. More specifically, Rafman questions how it is that we, as a society, have established a new technological order based on a utopian ideal, only to then discredit any and all utopias as organizing principles for our societies. Our over-reliance on—as well as fascination and disappointment with—the Internet and the digital realm as potentially radically non-hierarchical democratic spaces is at the heart of these works.

Mark Lanctôt, Curator

June 20 to September 13, 2015



To coincide with this exhibition, the artist is presenting three selections of works from the series *The Nine Eyes of Google Street View* in locations outside the museum: on Jeanne-Mance south of Sainte-Catherine, along the Lachine canal near Atwater market and along Monk boulevard in the Sud-Ouest borough. These presentations are organized by the Maison de la culture Marie-Uguay and the Ville de Montréal's Public Art Bureau in collaboration with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.