Jake Vogds

Multifaceted pop performance – exploring contemporary pop tropes, failures, intros, outros, acoustics, live performance, lipped performance, taking strategies from the Great American Song Book and contemporary notions of such.

250 words

As both a vocalist and performance artist, my work has recently concerned itself with creating literal stages and objects that dissect and exaggerate different forms of American consumption, celebrity, and capitalist/work-oriented structures. In this performance, I plan to exhaust the notion of the pop concert with a multi-faceted, multi-stage, one-man show. Looking into the organization of time, intros and outros, encores, intermissions, energizers, and costume changes, this piece will borrow from such designs to fabricate a mirage of camp, moving from one room to the next and reconfiguring/revealing the rediculum of the pop icon.

The piece will begin with a slow motion entrance from the hallway into the main performance space. Everyone will be in the hallway waiting to enter as well. The bulletin-board/floor will be littered with advertisements for my performance. I will enter and climb atop my first platform where five minutes of contemporary pop-energizers such as “Let’s Go!, Here We Go! YAS! I see you!” will ensue. The platform as well as I will be covered in silk flames. The projector will be mirroring the performance with a camp fire video until five minutes has been reached. Here, the screen will go dark. I will transition to the center of the room where one flesh toned microphone self portrait is waiting in a spotlight. I will sing an emotional accapella *song* at this time. After the song is finished, I will run into the other room where the encore will occur. Here I will be handcuffed to a larger look-alike microphone stand dressed in denim and a white t-shirt (as I will be), performing one last, aparrently endless song. Two phones will be placed on the walls and projecting live (via Layar) in the other room for audiences to watch on the big screen. At the projector, several chairs will be in place for audience members to sit. However, these chairs will have push-automated sound recorders playing cheering sounds. The song will slowly fade and a ‘Thank you’ Sequence will ensue.

The creation of the ‘songs’ will take inspiration from The Great American Song book as well as contemporary youth culture, slang, and American pop-dialect. The audience will often be placed next to prerecorded reactions of a supposed audience during the performance to discuss consumer expectations and optimism.

The main costume within the work will be the white T-shirt and denim jeans look coined classic by the late James Dean. An American image, but also the image of the every-man, the worker, the casual, the norm-core of America. Thus, this pop icon that I embody actually embodies that of the American Idol Complex; the idea that we are all akin to celebrities via social media, ego, and the self. In my work, I am constantly looking at etymologies of trend and how they relate to the American/global psyche. I find that celebrity culture, though ever growing, is beginning to feel like a dated, obliterated concept as we all become closer to such statuses through the mixture of the virtual and the ‘real’. I have developed a strong criticality towards the technologies we surround ourselves with and the icons we both idolize and create out of ourselves, both indulging and retracting from such notions.

This microphone, muppet self-portrait of myself begins to uncannily mirror the celebrity it depicts. Who is louder, the microphone or the celebrity? Who are we paying attention to, the celebrity, the person or the persona, the human or the image, the icon themselves or the paraphernalia, the alluring smoke and mirrors. I physically put myself through such an accelerated version of the celebrity apparatus in search for a hyper-awareness of the exhausting socio-political-economic-cultural phenomenon that it provides to its consumers. And for what reasons?