

# STEPHEN TOMPKINS

## REANIMATED



# Jan Arnold

P R O J E K T

### **Stephen Tompkins - Reanimated**

Vernissage: 30.6.16, 19-22h

Exhibition: 1.7. - 17.7.2016

Location: MQ - Electric Avenue, Museumsplatz 1, A-1070 Vienna

Curator: Sebastian Schager

*Artist statement:*

### **Unmasking the Promise of the Shiny Surface**

“And the most terrifying question of all may be just how much horror the human mind can stand and still maintain a wakeful, staring, unrelenting sanity.” - Stephen King

Cartoons and comics on the surface have always provided a source of escape for me as a boy and throughout my life. we knew that Jerry could blow Tom up with a bomb and that Tom would somehow, against all odds, come through it and be OK and again and in pursuit chasing his archenemy (and sometimes pal) Jerry. what doesn't kill you. Tom is a tough cat as they might say.

Like recycling of Tom in each scene, The surface and the shine of the american dream had a promise despite the ugly. What we see now more then ever is corrosion and decay of promise, the ugliness of the underbellies of an earlier shiny promise being eroded and unmasked. We have to stand it. We have to take it.

These promises inevitably come packed with the recipe and formula for rebirth if they fail, albeit in a more insidious form. Things never die. As a truth unmasked and the abjection and rejection of the beautiful shine of the surface erodes, a new form arises, though still pulling itself off the operating table as a zombified cat ala Reanimator.

We live in an insane age of horrible phenomenon that is readily there and present like a ghost that refuses to leave the party: mass shootings, robots joking that they will kill us, mutant livestock, Zika babies, death by selfies, growing humans from scratch...

One still has to reconcile these bizarre phenomenon with the hopeful world, the seemingly mundane, that is, the washing-your-dishes-after a meal kind of SAFE. The inevitable is upon us.

My work, in the end, has always represented these polarities and truths in images that once came to me as friends... but have returned after facing the turning and turning of the earth's play with all the sublime and horror wrapped into this giant burrito, and these horrible and beautiful-ugly truths beneath the shiny promise of the surface still continue, despite what we are going through, to push up a few daisies.

*Stephen Tompkins  
Cleveland May 2016*