



catharine czudej
come to daddy
17 sept - 16 oct 2022

Washington DC: von ammon co is pleased to announce come to daddy, a solo exhibition by New York based artist Catharine Czudej. come to daddy is the nineteenth project at the gallery's current location, and Czudej's second solo exhibition with von ammon co.

Czudej's work frequently based its premises on the archetype of the sins of the father, or the ripple effects of 'boomer culture' as it passes through the various stages of decomposition and meme-ification. come to daddy continues a meta-narrative within Czudej's exhibition history that is specifically concerned with the pseudo-ecclesiastical tropes embedded within populist culture.

The title is a reference to the seminal Aphex Twin track from 1997. Richard D. James (Aphex Twin) describes the track as an exaggerated pastiche of a death metal riff. After its phenomenally successful release, James claimed that he removed the record from circulation for one week, hoping to prevent it from reaching number one; it peaked at 36.

"Come to Daddy" was widely interpreted as a parody of the Prodigy's hit single "Firestarter." A signature cultural artifact from the late '90s, come to daddy embodies the gradual adoption of the previous decade's satanic panic into a lucrative staple at any Hot Topic or Spencer's Gifts nationwide—the feigned resistance of the artists notwithstanding.

Featured prominently on the gallery façade and reflected throughout the gallery on black and red vinyl is R. Crumb's famous keep on truckin' cartoon, which was originally created as an homage to jazz musician Blind Boy Fuller, only to later proliferate without Crumb's consent as a sigil for Hippie nonchalance, and then idiosyncratically subsumed by the shipping and logistics industry as a sort of corporate meme for perseverance irrespective of stress and fatigue.

In Crumb's own words: "There was a DJ on the radio in the seventies who would yell out every ten minutes: "And don't forget to KEEP ON TR-R-RUCKIN'!" Boy, was that obnoxious! Big feet equals collective optimism. You're a walkin' boy! You're movin' on down the line! It's proletarian. It's populist. I was thrown off track! I didn't want to turn into a greeting card artist for the counter-culture!"

A frieze of jumbo-scaled big screen televisions (casted in polyurethane) line the walls of the gallery, barely detectable in the darkest of gray light. This intervention directly quotes the patterned tapestries in Leonardo's The Last Supper—the scene of a betrayal, but arranged using our era's most common, black plastic wall decoration. At the base of the gallery's plentiful black pillars are modified night lights, meant to reassure the visitor's steps through an undefined space, like those lodestars on the floors of airplanes and cinemas—two places where safety was never or is no longer guaranteed. To emphasize this sense of reverence and paranoia, of counterculture subsumed by consensus—and to create connective tissue with the eschatology of Christianity and the agnostic mysticism of erstwhile Hippie Consumerist culture—the space is infused with the smoke of Nag Champa brand Frankincense.