

apexart



WONDERMARE

JULY 8 - AUG 8, 2009

KICK OFF PARTY
JULY 8, 6-8PM

CURATED BY SUSAN MCINTOSH
AND ALBERT WILKING

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Sophy Bot, Ken Cypert, Sean Dineen, Teqan Flanders, Mimi Fontana & Manhattan Tribal, Adrian Harpham, The Highline Erotic Arts Gallery & their beautiful team, Natali Jones, SH Lace, Vivien Lewit, Kelly Lincoln, Ian Phillips, Alberto Pinto, Charlie Reis, Martha Williams (The Movement Movement), Dred Williams

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

Rick Raquso who put countless hours into making *Wondermare* a reality, and Phyllis Bickham, for her tireless camera work and enthusiasm.

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"I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole – and yet- and yet – it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life! I do wonder what can have happened to me! When I used to read fairy-tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one! There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write one."

Alice, *Alice in Wonderland*
Lewis Carroll

Stories allow us collectively and as individuals to safely "play" within narrative structures. The characters on screen, in a book, on a stage – particularly when we are children – become extensions of our collective fantasies enacting both our fears and desires. They stay with us, almost as ghosts in our subconscious, resonating throughout our dreams and experiences, often defining our "real" life construction of what reality entails.

For the *Wondermare* exhibition, we have chosen the narrative template of *Alice in Wonderland* where childhood serves as a grand metaphor for the stages of development and the often nonsensical rituals that we must travel through in order to obtain a civilized or adult persona in the world we see through our looking glass. The construction of reality that we, as individuals, must engage to emerge as "functioning" entities in society is increasingly dictated by the illusion of media and technology, both of which are

projections of fabricated, idealized identities. Becoming aware of our own construction of an identity is perhaps the first level of conscious awareness that we, as thinking people, can undertake. The fixed certitude of the role that we are playing at any given time is the measure of our commitment to either a social position or our sanity – either of which is a

fluid state depending on the circumstances we encounter.

'But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.

'Oh, you can't help that,' said the Cat 'we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.'

'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.

'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'



HOW DO YOU KNOW I'M MAD

Wondermare is based on the notion that much of the behavioral conditioning in our subconscious is the unhealthy byproduct of a world out of balance, a house of cards on the brink of catastrophe; the truth of which is obscured from us by our own myopic pursuits and illusions.

We believe that society, and identity itself, are truly at a crucial cultural juncture. As safety nets disintegrate – i.e. the guarantee of entry into bourgeois life and, if one plays by the rules, its trappings of

financial security – prove to be mere illusions and such constructs of “lifestyle” and “luxury”, in their excessive nature, continue gambling with the future of the planet and all living species that inhabit it.

The prominent question then is what role will you choose to play in the grand scheme of this consumptive “tea party”? Perhaps you are Alice, a naïve child/woman who wraps

herself in consumer goods and the protective gendered power of passive subjectivity. Or maybe you are the Mad Hatter, the bad boy enabler who gloriously advocates addictive destruction; or the

Red Queen, a sadist who revels in the servitude of subordinates who languish in their own lack of personhood. Or maybe you are the Rabbit, someone who pursues their identity through technological masks and

veils, whose interactivity shields them from real human interaction and the

messy byproducts of emotional entanglements. Do you see yourself as the Mother/Duchess, a role either chosen or forced upon you due to the state

and social consciousness. As such, *Wondermare* will seek to unravel these narrative notions by asking you, the gallery visitor, to become a participant in your own story, choosing to play one of the above characters or one of your own and allowing your voice to emerge through the process.

We ask you to “pick a card” and answer a question against a live camera in front of a *green screen*. The *green screen* will allow us, in a final

edit, to place you anywhere and against any backdrop. The narrative of the story will no longer stay fixed and instead a new plot will be enabled as you become the star and a new film emerges from each interaction.

As you become part of this video installation, *Wondermare* will ask you to reexamine and redefine your relationship to the world and the stories you

MARCH WITH THE RED QUEEN



of one’s biological or cultural determinism? Or maybe you’re the zealot: the Muslim, the Jew, the Christian, the Cop, the Revolutionary, the one who immerses their identity in favor of an ideology, a dogma that obscures their need for questions concerning one’s own place in the social hierarchy.

It is the task of the new hero and heroine to navigate these roles and unfamiliar channels and at last emerge from this illusion forging a new personal

and social consciousness. As such, *Wondermare* will seek to unravel these narrative notions by asking you, the gallery visitor, to become a participant in your own story, choosing to play one of the above characters or one of your own and allowing your voice to emerge through the process.

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have spun, internally and externally.

Immersed in an eight-screen video landscape, you will feel compelled to address the parts of yourself that are hidden, repressed and denied. As an interactive exhibition, the show creates the opportunity for a psychological rebooting or do over, where you will have another chance at addressing your own rights of cultural passage that you may or may not have gotten right the first time around.

PICK A CARD



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‘Who are you?’ said the Caterpillar.

Alice replied, rather shyly, ‘I – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I

must have been changed several times since then.’

‘What do you mean by that,’ said the Caterpillar sternly. ‘Explain yourself.’

‘I can’t explain myself, I’m afraid, sir,’ said Alice, ‘because I’m not myself, you see.’

For some minutes the Caterpillar puffed away without speaking, but at last it unfolded its arms, took the hookah out of its mouth again, and said,



‘So you think you’re changed, do you?’

‘I’m afraid I am, sir,’ said Alice.

It is time to fall down a rabbit hole, to play a new role and forge a commitment to a different reality.

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WELCOME TO WONDERMARE



PLAY A ROLE