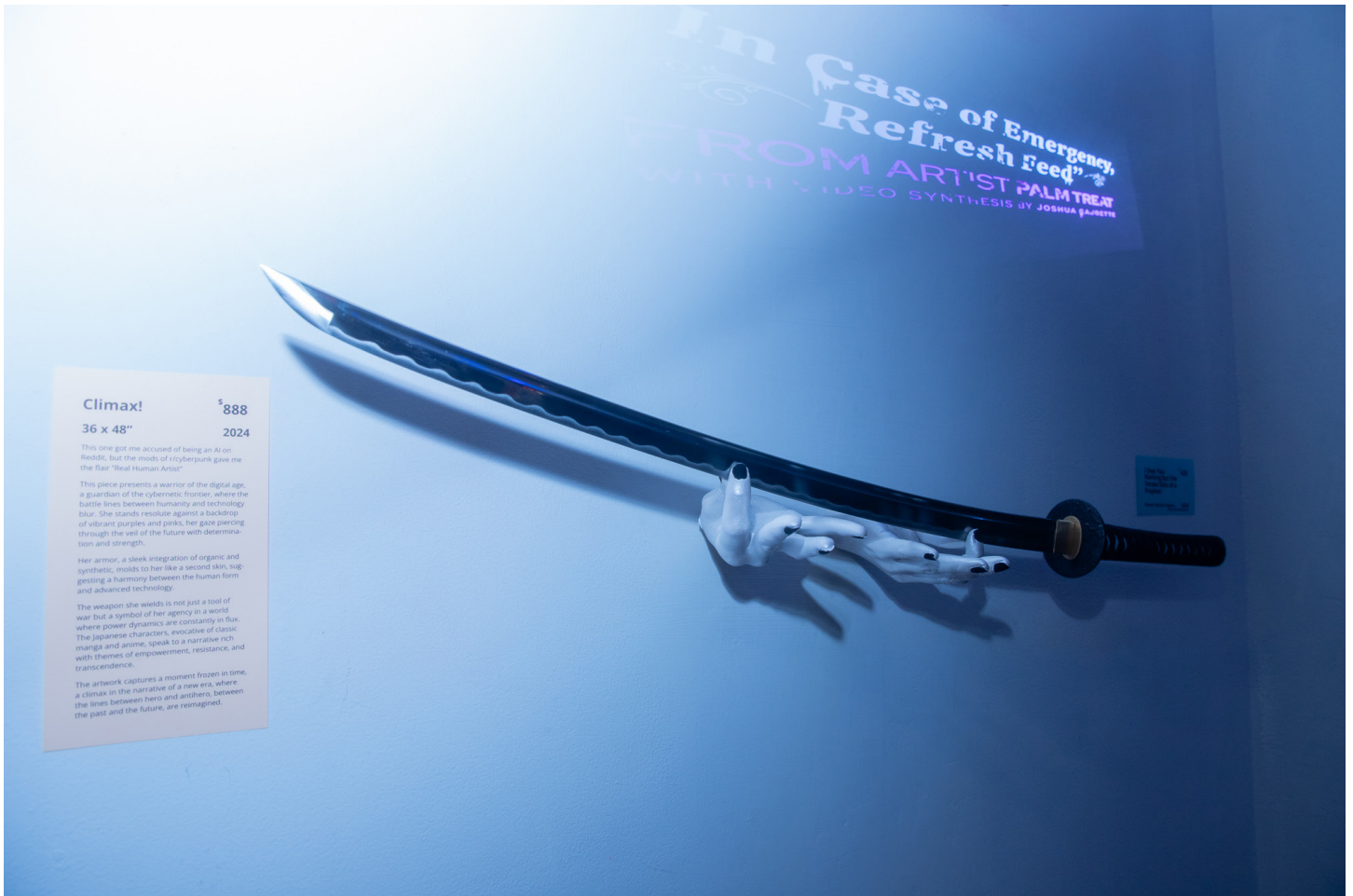


Palm Treat at The Voyeur Bordello

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On the southwest side of Detroit along a desolate stretch of Michigan Avenue is a small pocket of punks whose practices explore the creative realms of illustration, graphic design and fashion. What used to be the headquarters of EAT DA RICH Apparel by Simone Else is now the Jobstoppers Inc. tattoo parlor, and right next door is The Voyeur Bordello. They share an audience of artists and outlaws who keep Detroit's rock and roll spirit alive.



Fast & Furious, Pussycat 1666
36 x 48" 2024

For a series, I began to explore the intersection of pop culture and the subculture of the car. I wanted to create a character that was a mix of the two, a character that was both a fan and a participant. I wanted to create a character that was both a fan and a participant. I wanted to create a character that was both a fan and a participant.

Fast & Furious is a movie franchise that has become a cultural phenomenon. It is a series of action movies that follow a group of car enthusiasts who are involved in illegal street racing. The franchise has become a global success, with multiple movies and a dedicated fan base. I wanted to explore the intersection of pop culture and the subculture of the car. I wanted to create a character that was a mix of the two, a character that was both a fan and a participant. I wanted to create a character that was both a fan and a participant.

Surrounding the central figure are various elements that represent the franchise and the subculture. There is a car, a globe, a scorpion, and a hand holding a gun. The text 'Fast & Furious' is written in large, bold letters at the bottom. The word 'Pussycat' is written in a smaller font above it. The overall style is a mix of pop art and street art, with a color palette dominated by black, white, and vibrant reds and yellows.



The Voyeur Bordello is “some kind of knock-off Art House” run by Nomadic Madam and Connery McDowell. Their grand opening in May of this year was celebrated with a group exhibition of over twenty artists, inaugurating a program of regularly scheduled shows that share space with a professional photography studio. It is clear that The Voyeur Bordello’s course of action does not quite align with the intellectualism that may be found at other galleries around town, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that they are irrelevant. There are many types of histories in this city, and one of them is the era of C-Pop and Detroit’s participation in the Lowbrow Art Movement. Visual artists like Niagara, Glenn Barr and Robert Williams ushered this populist aesthetic from 1960s LA into the 21st century Midwest with work rooted in underground comics, punk music, and graffiti. The cheeky humor and psychedelia that defines what is also known as “pop surrealism” can be found in Palm Treat’s newest exhibition *In Case of Emergency, Refresh Feed*.



The walls are packed with paintings hung side by side and salon style, many of which are accompanied by a backstory allegedly written by the artworks themselves. From canvas to canvas, there is a consistent sentiment of nihilism that is communicated through haphazard references to violence and drugs. There is also a highly liberated application of languages and symbols that integrate as seamlessly here as they do in sci-fi movies like Blade Runner or The Fifth Element. Japanese video games clearly provide a template here for American branding to don. Icons and logos that dominate visual landscapes around the world are incessantly morphed into subliminal messages, illustrating a kind of meaninglessness that can only be born out of hyperconnectivity. The point, as presented in the exhibition's press release, is to highlight the impact that the Internet has had on the preservation of tradition. Truths that have been sustained for centuries unravel when challenged by an infinite array of worldviews. Bots have become the primary content generators. Algorithms build echo chambers for users to free-fall into. The quality of goods and services is compromised by our desire for speed as we willfully exchange age-old values for a stream of wild and precarious newness.



Good or bad, forecasts of the future show a merging of physical and digital realities that favors artificial sentience over organic human activity. This thought is represented through Josh Gaudette’s video synthesis that complements the two and three dimensional works on view. While Palm Treat touches on contemporary pros and cons through their writing and hand-painted compositions, they also demonstrate a continued reverence for the past. Their early work actually contributed to the emergence of Vaporwave, a microgenre of music and design from the 2010s that blended aesthetics of the early Internet, ancient cultures, and cyberpunk technology into an imaginary world of tranquility and timelessness.



Palm Treat's anarchistic appropriation of popular culture also entertains maximalism as part of their "anti-design" methodology. Whether it be calm or chaotic, cross-cultural syntheses encourage consumers to reconsider their established constitutions of beauty and usability. Since launching their global brand online in 2013, Palm Treat has gained widespread notoriety for their all-inclusive approach. They have been invited to collaborate with like-minded artists at Vapor95, Macintosh Plus, Meow Wolf and Lonely Kids Club, further perpetuating the melting-pot philosophy within the realm of visual art.



Video synthesis by Josh Gaudette



Since 1973, Artificial Intelligence programs have been generating art using a similar method, compounding various elements together into a surrealist composition per its user's request. The final works have ranged from simple black and white line drawings to complex collages that resemble DMT hallucinations. As the gap between the robot and the human continues to dwindle, the application of AI in creative production will be increasingly difficult to spot. Palm Treat is an artist who has been accused of using AI to generate their work. A simple look at their Illustrator and Photoshop files would put that argument to rest, but this raises a question that is potentially even more interesting than that of authenticity. How will our value systems change as we move into a future populated by hybrid bodies and cyborg minds whose creators are ambiguous?



In Case of Emergency, Refresh Feed opened on November 15th and is on view through December 6th, 2024.

The Voyeur Bordello
5629 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI

Check out more work by Palm Treat at <https://palmtreat.design/>



In Case of Emergency, Refresh Feed by Palm Treat at The Voyeur Bordello.

**Images by AURESCENT*

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