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KATHRYN ANDREWS

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BY SAMANTHA GREGG

In Kathryn Andrews' exhibition "Run for President," now on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the artist has permeated the space with a sense of solidarity. Through an induction that is at once liberating and highly mediated, Andrews' installation is packaged like a captivating presidential campaign—it is assertive, inflated and seductively memorable. A terse group of sculptures and wall works made over the past five years acclimate, amidst the filtrate of their own content and previous contexts, to the gallery through the company of four large-scale and at times humorous photomurals featuring archival images of Sammy Davis Jr. with President Richard Nixon (1973), the Oval Office during the Reagan Administration (1981-89), First Lady Nancy Reagan with Mr. T at the White House Christmas Party (1983) and Bozo the Clown, ap-
positely, running for President (1984). The works quite literally submit to their surrounding images, with a significant use of polished metals such as chrome, stainless steel, aluminum and bronze reflecting the hard-edged patina of affect that has come to package them.

But as is common in Andrews' practice, asserted containers are always teetering adrift, and, quite unlike a venerable presidential campaign, authorship can often fracture out of reach. For one, the artist decisively thwarts any overarching political context through the inclusion of numerous wall works and sculptures adorned with certified film props or costumes. This familiar gesture in her work elicits ostensibly irreplaceable readymades, infused with the presence (authority; capital) of other cultural commodities, such as American celebrities Jack Nicholson and Tobey McGuire, to function as a form of parodic authorship. The artist appoints further incongruity by integrating

Kathryn Andrews (American, b. 1973) is an artist who lives and works in Los Angeles. She is represented by David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

Kathryn Andrews's first U.S. solo exhibition, "Run for President," is currently on view at MCA Chicago through 8 May.

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Bozo™ The World's Most Famous Clown, 2014
Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Photo credit:
Fredrik Nilsen

a number of readymade objects from Hollywood prop shops, with ultimate possession relinquished in favor of a terminal rental contract (for *Gift Cart* (2011), the agreement is currently set at 99 years). In artworks such as *October 16* (2012), the maintenance of the piece is carried out by the collector, who must agree to replenish its supply of celebratory helium balloons each year on the date of its (entitled) birth. The determinacy of an artwork is also complicated, as Andrews has crowned three of her sculptures, each wrapped in the graphics of an officially licensed image of Bozo the Clown (though devoid of his iconic red wig, which was authoritatively erased by the artist), with upturned stools for the potential of an "occasional performance" by a comedian. Even if it implicitly serves as subject, possession for Andrews is never the protagonist.

With this in mind, the exhibition yields from a space of empire, where illusions of power attempt to distract from larger issues of class and race. Throughout the exhibition, the profound privilege of cultural capital expounds on this space in countless plays upon the very systems that regulate identity value. The title itself, "Run for President"—a metaphor that describes action in the service of, for the promise of, a title of cultural prestige—directly concedes the performance required to obtain a recognized position of power. While the works in this exhibition may be recontextualized in the light of a new framework, they ultimately continue to serve as props, or stand-ins, towards the greater pursuit of attraction. In the end, humor begins to surface as the most effective source of cultural and political liberation, leading the presidential efforts of Bozo the Clown to emerge, with grace, as a true measure of American freedom. ☺

SEDUCTION AND CULTURAL CAPITAL PLAY AGAINST THE ILLUSIONS OF POWER AND AUTHORSHIP

HIGHLIGHTS