



Fantasy, the blind spot, and the art exhibition: Hadi Falapishi's *Young and Clueless*

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The title *Young and Clueless*, which has served to nominate three of Hadi Falapishi's (formerly Fallahpishéh) recent art exhibitions in London, Athens, and Dallas evokes notions of childhood and children, and of naïve, limited perspectives that have since been overcome. In contrast, with its various examples of ambiguous mixed media, *Young and Clueless* masterfully dethrones and decenters the conceits of certain knowledge, revealing that our personal and cultural perspectives are always only perspectives. As psychoanalysis demonstrates, our viewpoints and experiences revolve around how we encounter the lack at the heart of subjectivity and the lack in any socio-symbolic matrix. In other words, whether we are encountering an art exhibition or a lover, fantasy structures our experience. In what follows, I will guide you through the seen and the unseen of the exhibition by commenting on selected pieces; aided by psychoanalytic notions of fantasy, nostalgia, castration, the fetish, empathy, and the uncanny, I will speak to the ways in which someone might experience and interpret the art. It should be noted that *Almost Perfect* (2023), the most recent exhibition of Falapishi's as of the time of writing, bears many similarities to the exhibition under discussion but—like the *Young and Clueless* exhibitions—has undergone modifications based on the city and space in which it is shown.

Falapishi's *Young and Clueless*, as it was exhibited in Dallas, Texas at The Power Station in 2022, demonstrates on a number of levels—some literal, as the exhibit was split into a main floor and a mezzanine—the interpretive and experiential possibilities afforded by different ways of encountering a contemporary art exhibit. A quick glance around the space reveals a variety of media: light drawings (C-prints) hung on the walls on top of quilts, oil paintings and clay on canvas, tripods offering viewpoints of those paintings via various types of lenses (the Mirage

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series), stuffed animals (most often teddy bears, but also several monkeys and a bunny rabbit)—many of whom are submerged up to their arms in colorful, frequently polka-dotted glazed ceramic pots—anthropomorphized, hat-wearing pillars of ceramic pots, railway tracks, the wooden frame of a house, and even a rowboat suspended in midair. *Young and Clueless*, with its manifest depictions of childhood and childish material, powerfully calls forth not only our own lived childhoods but also how children, childhood, and family life as they intersect with race, class, and positions of privilege are situated ideologically in our society. Memory and history, both personal and societal, shape how you find something of yourself when making your way through the exhibition.

Fantasy, Nostalgia, and Sentimentalization

Some pieces call forth ideas of childish play or renditions of the world, such as the repeated smiling cartoonish humanoid, mouse, cat, and dog figures in the light drawings of the ground floor or the crayon scrawling that adorns the rowboat. Near the entrance you will find “Blind Painter” (glazed ceramic, stuffed animal, paint brushes), which features a stuffed animal whose head is stuck inside a vase, lying face down on a bed and holding a paint brush. The “painter,” perhaps a dog or a teddy bear, has painted colorful and haphazardly arranged splotches of paint on one side of the vase. Together with the wooden twin bed, whose headboard is decorated with stenciled flowers, the blind painter is part of a larger piece, entitled “Well known pleasures” (wood bed, canvas, glazed ceramic pot, stuffed animal).

We all too easily engage in reductive and simplistic notions of children and childhood, not to mention family life, in ways that are personally and culturally defensive and symptomatic. “Blind Painter” and other pieces in the exhibition might easily be taken up through the lens of nostalgia—whether for the childhood you imagine you had or the one you wished you had had. In nostalgia, the subject wishes to return to a fantasied prior state in which life was supposedly better, more enjoyable. Instead of mourning the irretrievably lost object *a*, created at the moment of the birth of subjectivity as having been relinquished to the Other, the nostalgic subject fantasizes about recovering the lost object and restoring the complete state of satisfaction that it imagines it used to have. In viewing “Blind Painter,” you might thus see a nostalgic sentimental portrait of a cute stuffed animal who has been subjected to the characteristic silliness of children, or empathically imagine a childhood bed where the artist or perhaps his sibling may have dreamt sweet dreams, and of the joys of simplistic childhood attempts at creating art. Such are the sweet, unsullied pleasures we attribute to the blind innocence of children.

Instead, without the frameworks of nostalgia, sentimentalization, or empathy—all in this sense products of fantasy—we might encounter something of ourselves in these pieces and wonder in what ways and to what realities are we blind, not only as children, but as adults and as a society? Correspondingly, the blind spot might be one way of characterizing what is nearly omnipresent in *Young and Clueless* in its various iterations: including, for instance, a yellowish white circle that appears as an anomaly on all of the light drawings, all of the grey figures that go unseen when the



viewer first looks through the lenses of the Mirage series, a circle that obscures one's view when looking through the lens of the penultimate piece, "Mirage #8," and perhaps even the colorful polka dots that appear on so many of Falapishi's pieces of art (especially on the ceramic pots that house most of the exhibition's personified figures). Blindness itself is a well-known and widespread pleasure insofar as it can help us paint a reality that suits our own narcissistic desire to see ourselves in a good light. The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, in fact, went so far as to posit ignorance, along with love and hatred, as one of the three fundamental passions.

The veil of fantasy obscures another well-known pleasure related to a bed, that of sexual enjoyment. In this vein, Sigmund Freud spoke of the primal scene—of somehow witnessing the parental couple having sexual intercourse—which we can understand in its various forms as the inevitable traumatic encounter that as children we all have with adult sexuality. Freud pointed out in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905/1953) the great aversion we hold to viewing children as sexual beings. Freud remarked not only upon childhood masturbation but also the pleasures afforded by each of the partial drives. The scopoc drive is most obviously implicated in the viewing of art. The scopoc drive involves pleasure or thrill in seeing, in being seen, or even in seeing oneself not being seen (as in the childhood game of hide and seek). In the case of "Blind Painter" and "Well known pleasures," you might see but yet not see the bed as the site of sexuality or your own pleasure in selective blindness.

At the same time, these and some of the other pieces in the exhibition disrupt meaning-making through the lens of (personal and socially determined) fantasy via placement reminiscent of found object art. Whereas a child's stuffed animal can often serve as a kind of fetish object, through Falapishi's arrangement of it in various unfamiliar and ambiguous contexts, its typical meanings are disrupted. This invites an interrogation of the cultural and personal imaginaries that had created what we had formerly supposed to be static or certain meanings (e.g., the innocence of children).

Disavowal, the Fetish, and Castration

To see and yet not to see or to know and yet prefer to believe otherwise is the structure of the psychic defense mechanism of disavowal, the mechanism Freud (1927/1961) located at the inception of the fetish. The fetish serves as but one of the many defenses we have against recognizing the fact of our castration, that our lack of jouissance is a permanent feature of ourselves. The fetish has a particular affinity to the notion of the blind spot omnipresent in *Young and Clueless*. In the ninth session of his Seminar IV, Lacan provides the Schema of the Veil (1994/2020, p.148), in which there is a curtain in the middle, the subject on its left side, the fetish object on its right side, and the nothing which lies hidden beyond the object. The fetish hides "the nothing, which is also the symbol, or the phallus in as much as the woman doesn't have it" (Lacan, 1994/2020, p. 156). The fetish effectively creates a blind spot, a blindness for our own lack and that of the Other—the Other variously



signified as someone in a position of authority, as the system of language, or the cultural world.

Because fetish objects are formed by (typically parental) prohibitions, it is not only the breast that commonly serves as a fetish object but also teddy bears and cartoon characters—items which are frequently featured in *Young and Clueless*. Playing with teddy bears and other stuffed animals is allowed in childhood and prohibited in adulthood, and as such they become lost objects of *jouissance*, signifying enjoyment for those in our cultural system that was relinquished as the price to pay for growing up. Platforms such as eBay allow us to find collector's items of childhood nostalgia, to recoup the object by finding the "exact" Mickey Mouse Mouseketeer Ears Hat you wore or the Winnie-the-Pooh teddy bear which you carried around everywhere as a child, variously snuggling or casting in the roles of best friend, hero, villain, or rival sibling in your pretend play. For every analysand who tells me a tale of an ambivalent parting from their favorite stuffed animal(s) or the traumatic loss accompanied by a parental decision to throw or otherwise give away the stuffed animals without their consent, I hear a story of parents and child aligned in their attempt to give the animals safe passage as stowaways as though keeping the semblance of the object *a* would prevent their magic from being lost.

Family Dramas, Family Traumas

In the center of the ground floor stands "Memory House" (painted wood, quilt, stuffed animals), another piece that makes use of what would otherwise be fetish objects (i.e., the quilt and teddy bears), and, with its depiction of the archetype of the nuclear family home, evocative of the powerful nostalgia held for our childhood home(s). Inside of a blue and pink polka-dotted painted wooden frame of a single-room house we find three teddy bears seated on top of a quilt-adorned floor. On one side of the house you see a "mama bear" with a brown scarf affixed around her neck, behind which another bear hides as if for protection from a teddy bear seated opposite them: a teddy bear who is ragged, skinnier, and of a darker shade of brown than the others, and with what appears to be blood streaming down from its left arm. The scene is ambiguous. We wonder how the darker bear was hurt and by whom? Why, if wounded and in need of help, is it viewed as a fearsome threat? Is the darker bear an intruder, a father, a child? Is the bear hiding behind the mama bear a child or a father? The wooden beams of the house now appear as the bars of a jail cell.

Teddy bears often signify the joy in the cluelessness, inventiveness, and playfulness of children and, as transitional objects, the pleasures in snuggling up next to one's mummy or daddy. In the play of children, as in this exhibit, teddy bears are common stand-ins for the human family. We forget that, as such, teddy bears are loved as well as hated. To function as transitional objects, as D. W. Winnicott (1971/2005) taught us, they must survive our instinctual love as well as our hatred and aggression. The mama, papa, baby, or sibling bear is subjected to the same ambivalences we have for our family, and can variously serve as a rival, a villain, or a fairy godmother. And let us not forget the power and viciousness of live



bears. A fetishistic relation to the exhibit's teddy bears would be to disavow the hatred side of the ambivalence, and to retreat into the nostalgic fantasy of childhood as pure bliss (Swales & Owens, 2020). "Memory House" and other pieces in this exhibition place in juxtaposition both the happy, loving, playful side of human relations with the aggressive, hateful, lonely, suffering side. *Young and Clueless*, through the placement and usage of objects and themes of childhood in ways that subvert expectations, masterfully evokes our habitual ways of using childhood, nostalgia, and related fetish objects to hide from ourselves and invites us to put our perspectives under interrogation.

A trauma, loosely speaking, is a sudden reversal of one's expectations about how the world (should) work(s). At some level, trauma makes its mark on us all, and no matter how privileged it may be, no childhood is exempt from life's traumas. Aside from the everyday sufferings of loneliness, being misunderstood or otherwise unseen or unheard, competition, failure, undergoing transitions and losses—sufferings which nostalgic views of childhood omit—we all undergo the traumatic encounters with the fact of death and of sexuality. Add to that the specific traumas all too many children suffer of racism, poverty, violence and sexual abuse, and we would be hard-pressed to solely identify childhood with the smiling cartoonish figures in the light drawings on the ground floor. Trauma introduces a cut or gap in time, place, and memory, and has its effects on individual speaking beings and our larger socio-symbolic world alike. Freud teaches us about the *nachträglichkeit*, or after the fact, *après-coup* nature of some trauma, whereby with the inception of a symptom we are hit with the full traumatic implications of what was registered at some level in childhood but not fully comprehended or not fully allowed into our awareness. The supposed cluelessness of being young, then, is not without registering at some level aggression, confusion, aloneness, sexuality, and so on. It is this previously unassimilable material that we later have a moral obligation to reconsider, not only for our own histories but for how we as a culture perpetuate wrongdoings on a mass scale in the names, for instance, of our young and clueless neoliberal system of capitalism or of nostalgia for a prior fantasied time when the nuclear family was not sullied by so much divorce or "nontraditional" family structures.

Neoliberalism, Lacan's Discourse of the Capitalist, and Xenophobia

Many pieces in *Young and Clueless* invite questioning not just of childhood but also of family life. The exhibition includes four pieces entitled "Couples," each of which is evocative of different kinds of couplings and familial relationships. Upstairs, on the mezzanine level, you find "Couples (R. & S. Rajabi)" and "Couples (L. & R. Campari)," comprised of pillars of ceramic pots wearing old-fashioned hats and situated next to two different train tracks. Although the scene captures nostalgia for time when travel by train was more commonplace, what is also pictured are the effects of racism and xenophobia in the United States, which can be fueled by nostalgia. Unlike the British and European last names of the "Couples" on the main floor, both couples are signified by a last name evocative of targets of racism in the



United States: one Italian, the other Iranian. “Couples (L. & R. Campari)” is situated next to one of the railway tracks, appearing to wait for a train. However, as the saying goes, it is impossible for their “train to come in,” because the tracks end at a nearby wall upon which is hung “Temptation” (light drawing unique c-print, quilt). “Temptation” features a kneeling mouse who is smiling slightly and gazing up at a barred archway—a portal that has been nailed shut with two wooden boards, forming an X. The temptation in question might consist in longing to be “going forward,” to cross a threshold from which you have been denied entry by some authority. The mouse as dirty vermin, like the xenophobic take on the Italian and Iranian couples, is viewed as an unwanted guest and kept outside, on the margins, like “Guest (Mouse)”—a large pink and blue polka-dotted metal structure that is literally outside of the building. In contrast to the Italian couple, whose hats and relative stature suggest a mother and child, the taller Iranian couple both wear men’s hats and might thus be brothers, a father and son, or a homosexual couple. In contrast to “Couples (L. & R. Campari)” who were positioned adjacent to a railroad track, “Couples (R. & S. Rajabi)” stand further away but also in the direct path of their respective railroad track, which abruptly stops short some distance ahead of them. What is more, their track depicts a “tunnel” aperture in the wall so tiny that either it is well-suited to actual mice or is impossibly far away. With Islamophobia currently raging, the positioning of “Couples (R. & S. Rajabi)” thus suggests that they were more certain of being “on the wrong side of the tracks” and of the impossibility of their train coming in.

What is evoked by these couples is not only the ongoing xenophobia against immigrants and attempts to keep them out but also, once residing in the States, the ways in which the neoliberal system of capitalism continues to find ways to keep them on the outside. Indeed, for both those on the margins and those on the inside, there is an unrealizable “American dream” of capitalist enjoyment. This American dream is fueled by proliferating fantasies that if only one could obtain this or that step forward, this or that experience or product (as S_1 or the semblance of the object a) then one will be truly satisfied, happy, uncastrated. Lacan’s (1978) discourse of the capitalist describes this contemporary version of the social bond which has only strengthened since the dawn of the neoliberal era in the 1970s, whereby despite obvious evidence to the contrary, the structural necessity of subjective division, of castration, is disavowed through claims that there exists an S_1 or master signifier that fully answers the distress and dissatisfaction of the split subject.

Neoliberal capitalism is dependent upon fueling fantasies that the cause of its failure to deliver the promised dream come true is that the racialized other or undocumented immigrant has stolen (a nostalgic sentiment) or is perpetually threatening to steal (a paranoid belief) the object a . Marginalized peoples are seen through the lens of neoliberal ideology as enjoying too much and working too little, thus immorally eating away at the happiness and success of supposedly more deserving citizens. As such, capitalist discourse enunciates the moral law that disenfranchises marginalized groups (e.g., ensuring the overrepresentation of racialized others in the prison system) while disavowing responsibility for so doing.

The final and titular piece in the exhibition, “Young and Clueless (bunny, monkey, bear),” depicts three stuffed animals submerged up to their armpits in



glazed ceramic pots. A bunny and a teddy bear hold hands with a monkey, who is in the middle. Reminiscent of the ubiquitous Amazon package sits a taped-up cardboard box decorated with colorful crayon scrawling. The ceramic pot holding the monkey is perched between and on top of the pots of the two other stuffed animals, not touching the package. “Monkey in the middle” is obviously evocative of the children’s game by that name, in which the person playing the monkey stands in between two other players, and the two others proceed to attempt to throw a ball back and forth to one another without allowing the “monkey” to catch the ball. A childish “young and clueless” perception is thereby portrayed of the three players in the game of our capitalistic socio-symbolic order; they are the best of friends, happily holding hands with no one left out, and with the monkey being kindly supported by the generosity of the other two. Via disavowal, this childish perception is one shared by many adults in our neoliberal society: that it is all just a game, no one is in the position of the monkey, and everyone receives equitable treatment and resources in the end as long as they work hard. Instead, to be a subject in the order of neoliberal capitalism is to depend upon someone always being the underprivileged, hated monkey who does not get the ball because they fail to deserve it, not being agile, smart, educated, or worthy enough. As Lacan comments, the discourse of the capitalist—unlike other forms of the social bond—attempts to bypass the appeal to an other to address the subject’s discontents by aiming directly at an S_1 , the fetish object. While we suffer, perhaps like many of the figures in *Young and Clueless*, from loneliness and longing for connection, for a hand to hold or a helping hand, under neoliberal capitalism we actually ensure our state of disconnection from others.

Symptomatic Empathy Versus the Uncanny

“Couples (R. & S. Rajabi),” with its Iranian last name, might arguably be the most obvious target of an autobiographical reading of *Young and Clueless*, because visitors who read the artist’s bio will have learned that Falapishi was born in Tehran, Iran. That being said, Roland Barthes’s “the death of the author” is a hard pill for many to swallow, as there is an appealing comfortable ease that corresponds to encountering art from the interpretive lens of the biography and fantasied intentionality of the artist. In essence, this stance is an empathic one. Doing so gives us a firm footing; we are here and the artist and his art are over there. The array of possible meanings and ways of encountering the art are thus reduced and we do not have to deal with as much anxiety of ambiguity or uncertainty. Given the title of the exhibition and its manifest depictions of childhood and childish material, empathic viewers will encounter *Young and Clueless* via their fantasy of Falapishi’s subjective state: especially as an immigrant, the exhibition’s creation must have been fueled by his nostalgia for his childhood and his childhood home. Although in our culture empathy is almost universally touted as a virtue (Swales, 2022), empathy is one mode of experiencing art which, through enacting an othering of the exhibits, precludes the fullness of our subjective encounter with the art—an encounter that holds the potential to open up new perspectives and to question former ones.



What might be called “symptomatic empathy” is motivated by a negation of thoughts and feelings that might challenge deeply held beliefs about oneself and the fabric of our social world. Unlike projection, the type of symptomatic empathy under discussion does not rely upon thrusting one’s unwanted experience onto an other but rather its opposite: it foists one’s preferred experience or perspective onto the other. As such, symptomatic empathy operates in Jacques Lacan’s imaginary order, which is the order of human experience based on the image and the other senses, and on how things appear from our narcissistic perspective. The imaginary is also the order of rivalry, competition, love of what or whom is seen as similar to the self, and hatred of what or whom is different. As such, in *Young and Clueless*, it is possible both to employ symptomatic empathy on the side of narcissistic love through positing an artist similar to the self and to employ symptomatic empathy motivated by hatred of the other, of what is—falsely—viewed as foreign to the self. This involves imagining the other to harbor somehow repugnant or even nefarious motivations and states of being. This interpretive path can often result in a dismissal of the import of the art. Whichever type of symptomatic empathy is practiced in the encounter with an exhibit, not only does it distance the viewer from the art itself, but it also rejects seeing in the art—much less in the self-experience—anything which would invite self-reflection or threaten one’s egoic perspective.

Empathy stands in contrast to Freud’s (1919/1955) notion of the uncanny or *unheimlich*, which has to do with how surprisingly connected are the familiar and unfamiliar. We undergo the unsettling affective experience of the uncanny when what had been familiar suddenly transforms into the unfamiliar, the strange or eerie. A horror film featuring a haunted house, for instance, aims to provoke the uncanny insofar as what had been the benign, familiar place of the home somehow transforms into something animate, looking at you instead of you looking at it. The uncanny destabilizes our perspective in the emergence of what, in fact, is something that is typically hidden from the self being brought disturbingly into view. The uncanny is the stuff of the drives and the unconscious, jolting you into the awareness that it is not the supposedly bounded ego that runs the show. In contradistinction, in empathy you know perfectly well who and where you are so that you can afford to give something of yourself because of the other’s supposed otherness and exterior position. The uncanny destabilizes this conceit of empathy, revealing a fluidity in our encounter with the other. Through the ever-present lens of fantasy, there is something of ourselves that we put into the other. As Arthur Rimbaud put it back in 1871, “*I is an other.*”

In “The ‘Uncanny’” Freud gives us an example of the uncanny from his personal experience. Freud was in his train compartment when the door swung open, and an elderly gentleman entered. Freud “thoroughly disliked his appearance” (1919/1955, p. 248). As Freud jumped to correct the man’s error and send him back to his own compartment, he realized that the intruder was himself, reflected in the mirror. Instead of being frightened by his *doppelgänger*, or his image in the mirror, Freud initially failed to recognize himself. The uncanny can reveal something of ourselves to us equally through a mirror (which, indeed, is a horror movie trope) or a work of art, perhaps by the “couples” standing next to the train tracks. Although *Young and*



Clueless does not provoke horror, it is successful in many ways in the unsettling of assumptions and interpretations that inspire a reflexivity regarding your viewpoint.

Located just prior to “Young and Clueless” on the mezzanine, the uncanny is powerfully produced in “Mirage #6,” “Mirage #7,” and “Mirage #8”. With these pieces, Falapishi plays with the fixed, established viewpoint of the camera by way of inviting you to look through various lenses to see three canvas paintings (and chalk drawings) hanging on the far wall. The word “mirage,” of course, signifies the realm of fantasy, of seeing what you want to see rather than what is actually present. With the naked eye—if you have good eyesight—you can see, hung on the far wall, three different paintings of a bird perched on a branch. Seemingly in order to see the paintings more clearly, you must look through various lenses: of a binocular, a monocular, and a camera. However, peering through each type of lens brings its own surprise—surprise being associated by Sigmund Freud with a brief opening of the unconscious—when your typical expectations of what and how you will see are disrupted.

Through various intentional movements of your eye(s) and body, additional sketched figures in the paintings are revealed on their borders, including the disconnected heads of a dog, boy, and cat, and sometimes also the heads of a second boy or a man, a dragonfly, and a mouse. Although the placid traditional paintings of the bird are easily spotted, these figures are marginalized and not in color. Unlike the figures depicted in the light drawings downstairs, these are drawn with a more advanced artist’s hand and are unsmiling. In contrast to having a “bird’s-eye view,” not only are you unable to see all of each painting at once through these lenses but you are also unable to see some parts of the painting at all. The body and the symbolic both have their limits.

As the viewer then, you are forced to reckon with your construction of each mirage along with your blind spot(s). Ingenuously, apart from having a viewpoint which is focused on a part of the painting, each mirage provokes something of the uncanny. In order to try to see more of the painting, you must variously shift bodily position and the direction of your gaze. For “Mirage #7,” you peer through a monocular to find a very wobbly, impossible to fully control perspective. Looking through the viewfinder of the camera in “Mirage #8,” on the other hand, yields a blind spot in the form of a circle obscuring the very center of your perspective. Far from the fixed viewpoint expected from the medium of the camera, “Mirage #8” seems to have some ephemeral object inside such that when you move your eye ever so slightly just through the imperfection of standing—we are always moving, this teaches us—the inner part of the circle appears variously as completely white, black, or half of each. The Mirage series demonstrates just a few of the ways in which *Young and Clueless* encourages visitors to broaden their perspectives beyond “black-and-white thinking.” How, we might ask, are we complicit in constructing mirages and in creating our personal blind spots? How are we complicit in the capitalist discourse and the suffering it causes? Via its evocation of something of the uncanny, the Mirage series unsettles us, puncturing a hole in the veil of fantasy. As Lacan has commented, analysis enables the analysand to receive “from the receiver his own message in an inverted form” (1966/2006, p. 30); in its own way, *Young and Clueless* effects a turn in your way of listening to and perceiving yourself and



your perspective that is akin to what occurs in psychoanalysis, via the analyst's discourse.

With the *Mirage* series and the circle in the light drawings, in radical opposition with the fetish which hides the subject's view of the nothing, you are face to face with the circle as the nothing, as the fundamental lack in the Other and in the heart of subjectivity. You are thus ethically called to notice your blind spots, to wonder what they obscure and, moreover, to see the fundamental limits in human perspective. This experience teaches an essential percept of phenomenology: that there is no such thing as an objective perspective, and that each perspective reveals but also conceals. Freud's so-called second Copernican revolution is relevant as well: that no matter how hard one tries to control how one sees, thinks, speaks, and behaves, the ego is not master in its own house. The unconscious insists upon being given its say, even if its utterances are disguised and distorted such that, like the elements of *Young and Clueless* that defy easy categorization from the standpoints of symptomatic empathy, the fetish, nostalgia, and the capitalist discourse, they are all too often dismissed as absurd, meaningless, or bizarre. *Young and Clueless*, however, with its evocations of the uncanny and its ambiguous, surprising, and unsettling mixed media, provides us with a glimpse of the potential powers of the contemporary art exhibition to help us encounter something of ourselves and our culture that often goes unseen.

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