

16 October 2020

**PRADA PRESENTS “RUBBER PENCIL DEVIL”, A PROJECT BY  
ALEX DA CORTE AT PRADA RONG ZHAI IN SHANGHAI  
FROM 13 NOVEMBER 2020 TO 17 JANUARY 2021**

Prada presents “Rubber Pencil Devil”, a site-specific intervention by American artist Alex Da Corte, with the support of Fondazione Prada. The project will be on view from 13 November 2020 to 17 January 2021 in the premises of Prada Rong Zhai, a 1918 historical residence in Shanghai restored by Prada and reopened in October 2017.

Conceived in 2018, Rubber Pencil Devil is a video work composed by 57 chapters and a prologue. In Rong Zhai the work is presented by the artist in a site-specific exhibition format featuring 51 of the 57 acts on 19 large rear-projection multi-colored video cubes displayed in the two main floors of the building, giving a new spatial configuration to the artwork according to the new venue.

*Rubber Pencil Devil* is a looping, two-hour-40-minute stream of highly stylized videos inspired by a wide range of iconographical and cultural sources from vintage television imagery to 20<sup>th</sup>-century animation, from queer icons to campy Americana. Da Corte’s artwork functions as a hypnotically slow choreography performed by popular and recognizable figures. They are immersed in an over-sized and over-saturated universe composed of everyday objects, domestic symbols and familiar codes. One of *Rubber Pencil Devil* performers is the artist himself, who mutates into various food puppets and iconic characters such as Pink Panther, Sylvester the Cat, Mister Rogers and the devil.

According to Da Corte, “Rubber Pencil Devil” is a “Gesamtkunstwerk”, a total work of art, an immersive experience combining video, music and architecture, rich in allusions to avant-garde visual artists, experimental writers, pop singers, show-biz personalities and cartoon characters. For the spaces of Prada Rong Zhai Da Corte has conceived a fragmentary and vividly-hued display, a kaleidoscopic and dream-like journey in which his wish “of pushing beyond an image or breaking through the screen and actually touching the thing on-screen” can be fulfilled.

Manipulating and repurposing consumer culture and art history, Da Corte explores themes of alienation and human desire with a subversive humour and a psychological introspection. His intellectually provocative, exuberant and absurd fantasies not only provide a critical take on contemporary reality, but also try to “reimagine normative systems of power” and to create “new ideas and new beginnings”.

### Alex Da Corte - Biographical notes

Alex Da Corte (b. 1980, Camden (NJ)) obtained a MFA in Sculpture from Yale University, New Haven (CT) (2010) and a BFA in Printmaking and Fine Arts from The University of the Arts, Philadelphia (PA) (2004). Da Corte is a conceptual artist, working across a range of different media including video, performance, installation, painting and sculpture. He often unites these elements to create fantastical and vividly-colored immersive environments that amount to Gesamtkunstwerks. His work is informed by Pop Art and Surrealism, regularly combining high- and low-brow American cultural references – from branded items found in domestic life to figures from popular culture – in order to explore and interrogate personal and cultural politics, alienation and the psychological parameters of the human experience.

Da Corte's works were most recently included in the Venice Art Biennale 2019 "May You Live in Interesting Times" curated by Ralph Rugoff, as well as the 57<sup>th</sup> Carnegie International in Pittsburgh (2018). His most recent solo exhibition was held at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Köln, Germany (2018). Other recent solo exhibitions include Secession, Vienna, Austria (2017); Art + Practice, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts (2016); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2015); and the collaborative work with Jayson Musson, *Easternsports*, which was exhibited at ICA Philadelphia (2014) and subsequently at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016).

### Press contacts

Prada  
T. +39 02 567811  
corporatepress@prada.com  
prada.com  
pradagroup.com

Fondazione Prada  
T. +39 02 56 66 26 34  
press@fondazioneprada.org  
fondazioneprada.org