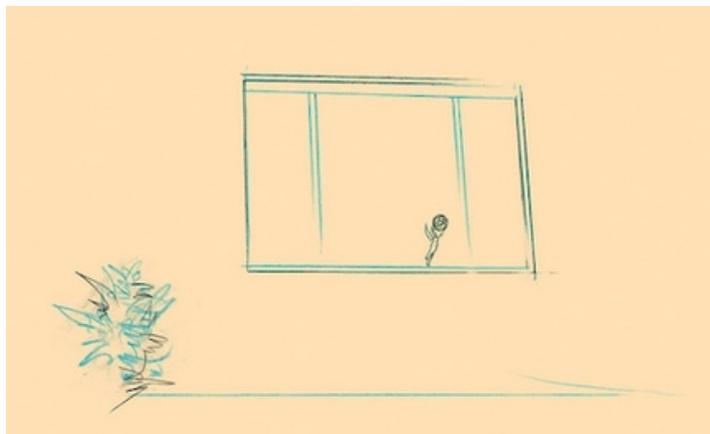


ARTFORUM



Larry Johnson, *Untitled (Achievement: SW Corner, Glendale + Silverlake BLVDS.)*, 2009, color photograph, 28 x 40".

LONDON

Larry Johnson

RAVEN ROW
56 Artillery Lane
June 11–August 9

Modulation of desire, in particular the desire Larry Johnson chronicles in and for Los Angeles, is the artist's principal operation. Thus, it is pertinent that "On Location,"—Larry Johnson's first major solo show in Europe, curated by Bruce Hainley along with Antony Hudek—

starts with *Untitled (Achievement: SW Corner, Glendale + Silverlake Blvds)*, 2009. The piece depicts an Emmy sitting on a windowsill from the point of view of the street, subtly emphasizing the tantalizing if actually impossible nature of the success the statuette embodies, placed at the nose of pedestrian experience.

Johnson's signature technique of photographing his drawings and collages and then enlarging and manipulating each reproduction regulates their respective emotional output. *Untitled (Land w/o Bread)*, 1999–2000, for instance, consists of four pictures, two depicting a drawing of a donkey and two of a goat, based on Luis Buñuel's *Land Without Bread* (1933). Both animals are facing imminent death but are drawn as cheery cartoons, fusing European modernist cinema with the iconography of Disney. Doubling this dualism: One image of each pair is largely obscured by the artist's finger in front of the lens, which draws attention to the physical equipment of the camera, resulting in a tension between the formal language and the violent, emotive content.

See also *Untitled (Perino's Front, Perino's Rear)*, 1998, a diptych of photographed axonometric drawings showing the legendary Los Angeles restaurant from front and back. Though formally muted and concise, the sentiments it evokes—Hollywood glamour and the economics of the city (the rear drawing shows the worker's entrance)—are notably dramatized. While Johnson's method and visual language hews closely to that of Christopher Williams or Louise Lawler, his images are highly charged with pathos, placing him in a unique and fertile zone between melodrama and conceptual photography.

— Yuki Higashino