

Magic Kingdom

by Charlie Schultz

Defrosted: a life of Walt Disney

Postmasters

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Salvador Dali once said of Disney that he was the only true surrealist in America. Were Dali to rise from the dead and peruse Adam Cvijanovic and David Humphrey's exhibition, *Defrosted: a life of Walt Disney*, I think he would wholeheartedly approve. A large mural presents the arc of Disney's life as a highly refined spectacle; an installation evokes the melee and slapdash associations of artistic collaboration. And then there is a crypt with a low-fi remake of the Disney classic "Steamboat Willie" projecting out of the crotch of a melting Mickey.

In the main gallery a floor to ceiling mural, painted by Cvijanovic, covers three of the gallery's four walls. It charts Disney's life from his boyhood home in rural Marceline, Montana, through the Disneyland vistas of Hollywood, to the weed eaten dilapidation of his Epcot dream. On top of the mural Humphrey has hung additional paintings of landmark Disney moments like the time Walt rode a pig in the mud or when he was bare-assed and watching his old man cut a switch with which to spank him.

Paired with the mural is a roughly hewn installation constructed of wood slats and bedecked with paintings, drawings, and sculptures executed by Humphrey and a slew of guest artists. In the center Mickey hangs from a noose, there is an illustration of squirrels copulating, at the apex a multi-tiered cake. The thing is organized about as well as a hyper mob, but it bursts with a kind of raw energy that seems true to the nature of creation.

The back gallery has been converted into a crypt, which ironically is the only place in the biography with music and animation. Humphrey's painting *Walt's Grave* paired with his *Dead Walt*, which looks like Mickey melted into the floor, playfully debunk the myth of the Disney being cryogenically frozen.

Normally I'm all for people doing the jobs they're good at. After all what good is a pair of forceps in the hands of a plumber? But artists are like shape-shifters. They have the freedom and critical backing to do almost anything and declare it art. Whether it's good or bad is beside the point, what's important is that the artists raise questions about the nature of the thing they're usurping. In this case it's the biography, which is a good thing. I've seen far too many biographies in print to have only seen one as an exhibition.



--Charlie Schultz

Images: David Humphrey, *Polo Accident* (2010), flash acrylic paint on wall and tyvec; Adam Cvijanovic and David Humphrey, *Defrosted: a life of Walt Disney* (2010), installation view. Courtesy the artists and Postmasters.