



SHAMUS CLISSET,  
MANIFEST DESTINAUT

Madeline Coleman

Beeramid, 2010 c-print



Shamus Clisset has found a way to explore new worlds even as he creates them. The artist, who works entirely in digital imaging software to make his work, fills his gravity-upending scenes with the kind of detritus you'd find at a suburban Walmart, painstakingly rendering lite-beer pyramids, sports sunglasses, barbecues, and real-tree camouflage. Then he centers it all around a single recurring character who he calls "Fake Shamus"—half Clisset-stand-in, half digital golem, all American male. Every piece in the series, subtitled "Manifest Destinaut," is then printed big, as a seven-foot-tall high quality c-print.

Clisset sees his digital world as a frontier where Fake Shamus, the Destinaut in question, can loom large. "If we get this limitless space with limitless potential—what do we do with it?" asks Clisset, who lives a stone's throw from New York's Times Square. Clisset has been watching a lot of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, a more encouraging vision of the future than the one he sees unfolding: "I mean, now that we have super computing power, most people just use it to check Facebook." Fake Shamus is Clisset's challenge to internet sloth, a "conquering, destroying figure" and a maximalist all the way.



SWASS (Long Charm), 2012 c-print



Happy Death Day!, 2011 c-print

Clisset, who grew up in Colorado, went to art school in New Mexico to study painting. Both those places were hotbeds for what he calls the “hunter guy” aesthetic reflected in the series: that camo, those Oakleys, the guns and the beer. Before he got there, though, he started learning Photoshop by using it to paint minimalist abstracts. Then he started dropping in Fake Shamus, the debauched Superman to his Clark Kent, and really got crazy. The name “Fake Shamus” was inspired by a study he once read about children’s imaginary friends, and Clisset has found that focusing the series around an over-the-top fictional character has made it easier to take risks. “He lets me cut loose,” he says of Fake Shamus. “It’s interesting how my work has changed from doing what I thought galleries would want. It’s like when a rapper has an alter ego—reinventing yourself gives you a framework to explain different ideas.”

His picture “Happy Death Day!,” featured on previous page, was inspired by a collaborative painting he did about ten years ago with a group of friends who got together every week to paint on the same canvas and screw around. “It was about trying to one-up and insult each other through painting,” he remembers. Weekly themes were chosen by blowing a dart at a list of possibilities. This one was “Party 2000.”

Many of the Fake Shamus pictures feature the same objects, which the artist scatters throughout like Easter eggs—this isn’t the first, or last, time that super soaker has popped up. The images reflect an internal logic without abandoning, Clisset hopes, the kind of spontaneity that comes from choosing your theme with a blow dart. “But, obviously,” he adds, “in a really intricate 3D rendering.”



*Jock Dove*



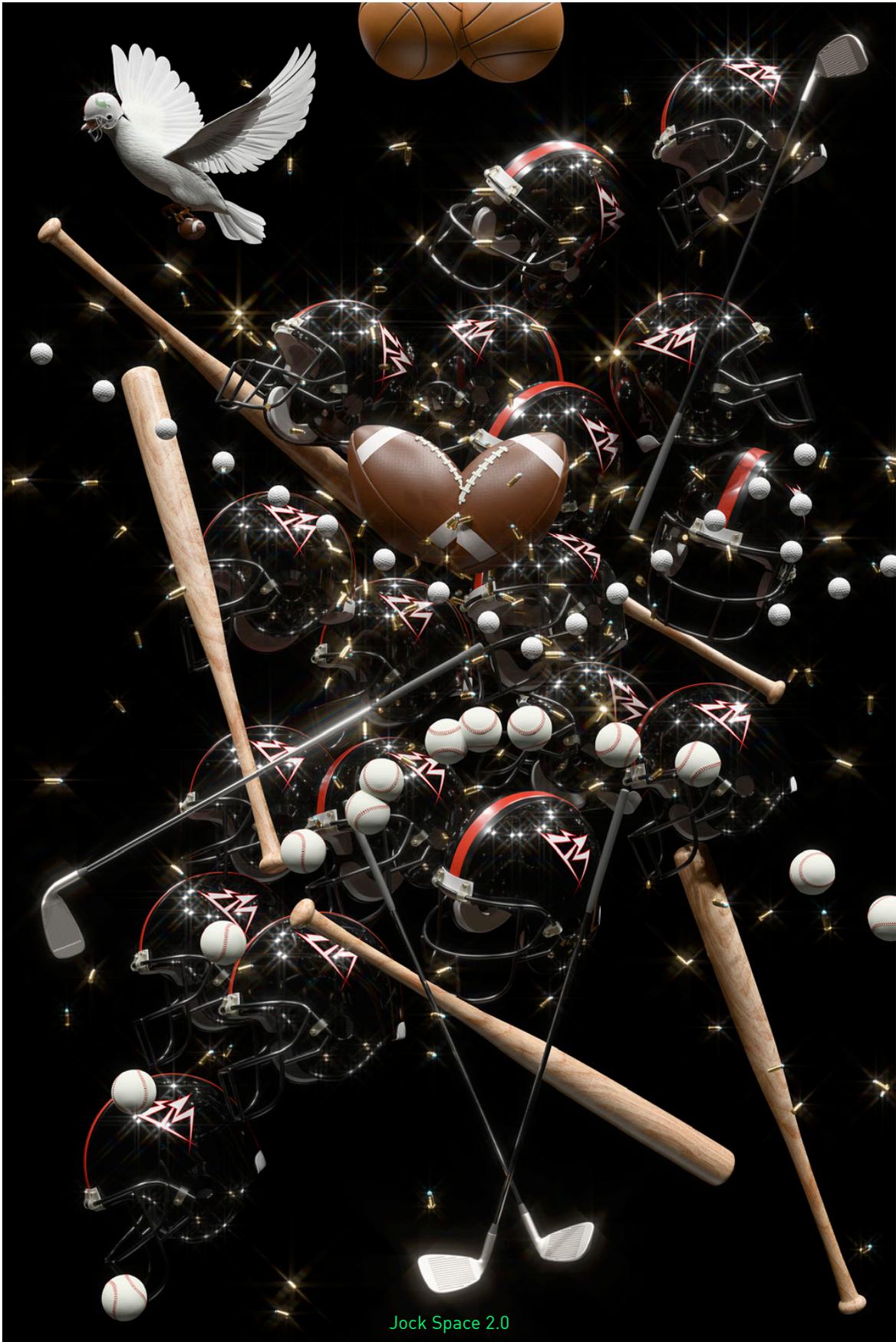
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*FakeShamas Conjuring the Countach, 2010 c-print*



Tourist Trap: Everything Must GO!, 2012 c-print



Jock Space 2.0



Shamus Clisset's work will be on view until November 16 at the group exhibition "Das beste Mittel gegen alles Identische? Identität" at Berlin's Galerie Thomas Flor. His work will also be shown in NYC at the group exhibition "Para-Real" at 601Artspace starting November 6.

Orthographic Bender, 2013 c-print