

Mangamorphosis 2009/10

Digital prints and video animations by Farrell and Parkin



Manga

A Japanese genre of cartoons, comic books, and animated films, typically having a science-fiction or fantasy theme and sometimes including violent or sexually explicit material.

ORIGIN Japanese, from man 'indiscriminate' + ga 'picture.'

In early 2009 Farrell and Parkin began to manipulate some of their existing self portraits and through a process where transgressing from the norm became the norm, they startlingly began morphing themselves into what could only be described as manga-like comic characters. One of the very first works 'Genesis' appears to have them gestating inside an egg, and a following picture "Waiting for Mothra" became the pivotal point in acknowledging the Japanese manga/comic direction that future works would expand upon.

Eventually three characters evolved: two winged flying monsters and one meta portrait which is a combination of both of the artists faces into one. This golden winged figure represents Farrell and Parkin as a solo entity, a force for good, yet may be a vigilante.

Animating manga was a logical step for Japanese manga artists, and so too Farrell and Parkin have also sent their trio of characters into action in "Physiology of Spite" where the winged flying monsters display the spite from which the video takes its name.

A second animation "Manga Securities" focuses on two of the main optic images in the exhibition and relies on the audio soundtrack to lead the alert viewer through seven different empty zones.

Or are they empty?

Farrell and Parkin are no strangers to the comic genre as twenty five years ago their Film Noir series was originally based on gangster comics. Some of the very first un-exhibited works directly referenced images from "The Spirit", a comic book character created by Will Eisner in the 1940's. Many of the Film Noir photographs had highly saturated colours in stark contrast to the very dramatic B&W films of the 1930's and 1940's that the series paid homage to.

This combination of highly saturated colours combined with the influence of comic images (Japanese manga/anime) bring Farrell and Parkin full circle into their own post-post modern environment where digital pixels are now shape-shifted and blasted with electric colour, instead of drenching the grain of analogue photography with vivid colour which in 1985 was a very contentious issue.

Farrell and Parkin have now stepped out of their 'traditional' analogue photographic Tardis into a different universe by metamorphosing their 'normal' self portraits into creatures that only have a slim relationship with what would be in some cases be considered human.