

ARTFORUM

Peter Caine

FROSCH&PORTMANN

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Much Trump-related art pokes at the president's perceived physical inadequacies, faltering at superficiality and failing to elucidate concerns within our body politic. Peter Caine's exhibition "The Old Man and the Sheep" is an eviscerating exception.

Known for videos and installations of animatronic sociopolitical tableaux and pop-cultural critique, as well as animal husbandry presentations, Caine has an idiosyncratic on-screen persona lightened by cynical wit. Here, he shows three kinetic works with four life-size figures of a rapturous Trump in various stages of sexual degradation. Aping the protagonist's theatricality, the mixed-media constructions operate only in response to spectators. With pendulous genitalia, the president variously brutalizes a sheep from behind; masturbates in an altered Nazi uniform into a melon; and seems ready to engage in rapey oral sex with a kneeling man. All of this is set to the pneumatic sound track of juddering, mechanical intercourse.

Despite this pungency, Caine's principle assets are refined insight and layered meaning. As Trump rams the sheep, the term "golden fleece" gets reinterpreted—one wonders if the unfortunate beast represents America or his own voters. The kneeling individual in *The Great Wall of Trump*, 2017, wears a sign identifying him as homeless and offering to "suck dick" as Trump's gripped phallus protrudes through a fragmentary wall. The subjugation and humiliation of marginalized groups raises Trump's omnipotent tendencies and victory-mongering. Particularly horrific is the wretch's face, which is a livid, pink mirror of Trump's features, a detail that is biblically egomaniacal in recalling an earlier figure that cast man in his own image.

— Darren Jones



Peter Caine, *The Great Wall of Trump*, 2017, mixed media, animatronics, dimensions variable.